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Members Only: Place and Performativity in the City of London

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Declaration

This is to certify that

- (i) The author of this thesis declares that it does not include work forming part of a thesis presented successfully for another degree,
- (ii) All work presented represents the author's own original work except for when referenced to others,
- (iii) This thesis is less than 80,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, references and appendices.

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Abstract

Through its focus on the City of London as a particular work sector and setting, the thesis emphasizes the symbolic and material significance of place to understanding organizational life. The analysis, drawing primarily on Lefebvre's theorisation of space as socially produced and on his work on rhythms, emphasizes how the socio-cultural and material aspects of the City are co-constitutive and both compel and constrain particular behaviours. These are explored with reference to fieldwork based upon photographic and interview data, as well as through embodied, immersive research methods. The thesis extends analyses of organizational space by asking how people both sense the wider space in which they work and how they *make* sense of it through their lived experience, and it enhances our understanding of the day to day experience of working life by extending the boundaries of what we usually think of as organizations. Asking what is particular about certain work places, both materially and culturally, and what this means for those who work within them, it begins with a review of the literature which discusses organizational space and place, the City of London as organizational setting, and the role that gender plays here. The methodological approach to the research is rooted in embodied, sensory methods based on experiencing the rhythms of place. The thematic findings are presented in two sections, and the discussion chapter moves from the empirical to a conceptual and theoretical analysis. In combination, the insights invite analysis of the conditions of membership – and the price of belonging– to the City of London. Arguing that places dominated by one particular industry sector can function as clubs, in that they have conditions of membership based upon being 'fit for purpose', what this means for those who are both 'in' and 'out' of place here is the main focus of the research.

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For Heather, in loving memory.

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Introduction

The City has such an unusual intensity of purpose ...there is just something in the air here (Claire, research participant).

This thesis is concerned with place; specifically, the way in which organizations are placed, and the way in which people experience the place in which they work. It is about our relationship to a place of work, in its widest context, and about the feelings and fragilities of belonging - and otherwise. It aims to recognise work setting as ‘a dynamic nexus of meaning and materiality in which work is embedded’ (Tyler, 2011: 1481), exploring what the relationship between the socio-cultural context and the material setting means for workers in a place dominated by a particular industry sector. It also aims to consider how ‘organization’ itself can be defined; can ‘organization’ be studied beyond the confines of individual organizations to encompass a wider scale? In this way, the thesis is concerned with the boundaries of what has traditionally constituted organization studies.

As Taylor and Spicer (2007) point out, although a rich understanding of organizational spatiality has emerged over recent years, most studies have focused on the ‘micro’ scale, since scale may be defined as the spatial level at which social activity takes place, and is usually considered to be contained within the walls of a particular organization. Yet as Hirst and Humphreys (2013) remind us, in their study of edgelands as organizational space, the assumption that organization is contained in this way leads to a neglect of where organizations are placed. Paying attention to the ‘non-contained’ leads to more focus on what constitutes an organization, a theme that the thesis develops in relation to how City workers identify with their wider place of work and its locale, rather than to their individual organizations. In this way, the City becomes not merely a setting in which organizing takes place, but an organizing force in its own right. The study therefore aims to look beyond what

Ashcraft, (2007:11, cited in Hirst and Humphreys, 2013: 1506), calls the ‘container metaphor’, and organization as ‘a finite place where work gets done.’ It is via the rhythms of place, the thesis argues, that a better understanding of how these ‘organizing places’¹ are sensed, how shared meanings are accrued and what might lie behind the established narratives, or indeed protestations, of diversity and inclusivity in the City.

Theoretically, I take Lefebvre’s (1991) conceptualisation of space as socially produced as a starting point for an exploration of how social and spatial practices are mutually constitutive, arguing that where events take place shapes their form, and vice versa (McDowell, 1997: 42), in other words that geographical setting and the materiality of place cannot be excluded from an examination of organizational life and the events that unfold therein. Researching the City of London, the centre for the United Kingdom’s financial services industries, a city within a city which is widely recognised as a distinct and bounded place, is architecturally recognisable, maintains historical traditions which set it apart from many other work settings, and employs approximately four hundred thousand people², allows for an exploration of how meaning, materiality, sector and place come together, and what this means for the people who work there. I also draw upon Lefebvre’s later work on the analysis of rhythms in urban spaces to inform the methodological approach.

I begin with an exploration of place within organizational theory; can place be said to be merely a neutral backdrop, or, as Tyler claims above, are places constitutive of particular organizational phenomena, and if so how? How does an association with particular types of organizations in turn shape the places in which work is embedded? If places constitute the material setting within which social relations take place, then it has been argued (Tuan, 1977,

¹ A discussion of institutional theory (see DiMaggio and Powell (1991), Scott (2008) inter alia) is beyond the scope of this thesis, since my focus is on understanding the lived experience of the City as a workplace, however this could provide an alternative way of conceptualising and analysing the City.

² Cityoflondon.gov.uk, accessed 15th May 2016

Cresswell, 2013) that people develop attachments to particular places and produce meaning within them. Yet a sense of place can also be shaped by the opposite, by a sense of not belonging (Tyler, 2011). This thesis explores what a socio-material analysis of place, that is an approach which recognizes both the social and the material as not only symbiotic but mutually constitutive, can tell us about who, and which behaviours, are deemed to be acceptable, and ‘in place’. What can this tell us about how organizational place is perceived, sensed and experienced? We are told that the places in which employees work ‘do something to them’ (Hirst and Humphreys, 2013: 1524). What does the City of London ‘do’ to the people who work there? The City³, the heart of the UK financial services sector, is documented throughout its history as being the preserve of men (McDowell 1997), yet it nevertheless presents itself as meritocratic, modern, and gender neutral; ‘a great place of opportunity’, as one of the interview participants in the study describes it. As the financial and business hub of one of the leading global cities, the City, or the Square Mile to use its metonym⁴, promotes equality⁵; yet is still perceived as a place where certain people ‘fit’. What the particular rhythms of place mean for who and what is acceptable and fit for purpose in the City underpins this research.

The formulation of research questions

Unlocking what is specific and different about the City of London, and how this difference is perceived and experienced, means paying attention to the interrelated web of time and space in this place. What can an analysis of the spatial and temporal flows and shifts of the City tell

³ The City of London employs approximately four hundred thousand people, mainly in the financial services industry (Cityoflondon.gov.uk, 2016).

⁴ The City of London is one of the few places in the UK where its name (and its metonym) refers to both industry sector and geographic location, another example being the Potteries in the Midlands; see Sarsby (1988), in relation to the Potteries, and also Strangleman (2001), for an example of occupational communities and their relationship to a sense of place.

⁵ 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 against these targets, and appoint a senior executive responsible for gender diversity and inclusion(www.gov.uk, 2016)

us about the lived experience of working there? What can be added to our knowledge of how people experience their working lives in a setting that is historically, architecturally and culturally distinctive? Does domination by one particular industrial sector mean that the space and setting is sensed and experienced in a particular way? These questions lead to an exploration of how the rhythm and movements of urban space might be researched.

My interest in the City was initially ignited by the years I spent working there, in a variety of different organizations and roles. I became interested in its history and the narratives of resilience and endurance which permeates much writing about the City, but also by its distinct geographical boundaries, its architecture and its sense of particular culture; in summary, you simply *know* when you are in the City, even if you do not consult a map or a guidebook. Some years later, and pursuing the idea of a research degree in Organization Studies, I vividly remembered my City days, and began to wonder why this sense of the City as such a particular locale endures, and what this might mean to people working there; do they identify with their work setting, as opposed to their individual organizations, as I did, (answering ‘I work in the City’ to questions about what I did for a living), and if so, what does this mean for how they experience their working lives? What shapes this particular culture, and can anyone and everyone become a City insider? What role do the performances of gender play, and what, or who, can be said to truly belong in this place? Who, or what, is excluded, and why? In summary, what is it that gives the City its ‘distinctive patina’ (Thrift, 1996: 238). And what does this mean for our understanding of where organizations are geographically located and embedded, and what does it mean for those who work there?

Specific research questions evolved and became refined as relevant literature on place, and more specifically on the City, was read and as I began to explore how best to research the setting. Firstly, I aimed to discover what it is that makes the City distinct; does geography

matter to how it is perceived and experienced as a work setting, and, if so, how does a place such as this accumulate shared meanings? As part of this question, can understanding and paying attention to the rhythms of specific places helps us to better understand the experience of working in this place, the connections between the social and the material and the way in which the human actors perceive and sense it? What can this tell us about how the City functions and is perceived to function?

Secondly, what can we discover about how it is perceived, and who, or what, is in place (and vice versa); as it is documented as being the preserve of men, what does this mean for the performances of gender here? Can the City be said to be a ‘performative’ place, and what does this mean for who, and what, is included, or ‘in place’ in the City, or otherwise?

Lastly, I wanted to investigate what the expectations of the place are, and what the conditions of membership are here; if it is perceived and experienced as a distinct and performative place, then what is the price of belonging to the City?

These questions are explored in relation to the City and its socio-materiality, both historical and contemporary, in order to focus on how ideas about what the City *is and does* are materialized in *what and where* it is, and of course, vice versa. I argue that this approach, one that seeks to ‘put the City in its place’, helps us to understand the City as an organizational sector and setting, and to explore what this can reveal to us about the City as a work place, about performative places, and about work and place more generally.

Why the City matters

As the financial and business hub of one of the leading global cities, the City of London promotes gender equality; yet is still perceived as a gendered space. 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. As Höpfl (2010) tells us, organisations themselves are gendered, often conforming to masculine dominated concepts of who, or what, can belong:

Membership is determined by male notions of what constitutes *the club*, by what determines the pecking order, and by who is able to exercise power' (ibid: 40, original emphasis).

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. The basis of the thesis is, therefore, an empirically immersive understanding of this particular place as the lens through which gender performativity is analysed.

Through its focus on the City as a particular organizational sector and setting, this thesis emphasizes the symbolic and material significance of place to understanding organizational life. The significance to understanding organizational life of the specific locations and settings in which people work continues to remain an under-developed and relatively peripheral theme within organization studies. Yet understanding the relationship between space, place and work is important because, as McDowell (1997: 5) has noted, in one of the few studies focusing exclusively on the City of London, more critical attention needs to be given specifically to '*where* things take place'. With this in mind, the underlying aim of this thesis is to consider the socio-materiality of this particular organizational setting, and to explore the role of place in shaping perceptions and experiences of organizational life there. My aim is to emphasize that, as organizations are 'performative and processual' (Beyes and

Steyaert, 2011: 47), they are also situated within a particular place, and that the particularities of their situation are important to understanding the organizational performances and processes enacted within them.

According to Tyler (2011), work clearly does not take place within a social or material vacuum, yet there is relatively little research into the ways in which setting shapes the lived experience of work, or how the dominance of a particular work sector can shape it as a place. I argue that organization studies has paid relatively limited attention to the relationship between work and place, and this thesis is an attempt to engage with and extend the emerging body of work.

Lefebvre reminds us that 'spatial practices can only be evaluated empirically' (1991: 38). The methodological approach adopted to research the setting uses a combination of methods; a highly subjective, embodied walking method, named streetwalking, which uses the body to become immersed in the setting, noting the rhythms, perceptions, and emotional experiences which emerge, along with rich, detailed interviews with participants who narrate their experiences of working within this setting.

In this way I place an immersive, embodied and reflexive socio-material analysis at the heart of a social science tradition, integrated with geographic, historical, cultural and anthropological studies, and, therefore, bring an analysis of setting into the mainstream of organizational theory with spatial narratives - that is, narratives of a particular organisational setting - to what has hitherto been a relatively neglected area within organisational studies (notable exceptions include Allen & Pryke, 1994, and McDowell, 1997). The intention is to build upon McDowell's aim outlined below by extending the usual understanding of organizational space to focus on the external environment:

I want to bring a specifically geographical imagination and suggest that the location and the physical construction of the workplace – its site and layout, the external appearance and the internal layout of its buildings and surrounding environment – also affects, as well as reflects, the social construction of work and workers and the relations of power, control and dominance that structure relationships between them (McDowell, 1997: 12)

The City, widely understood by research participants as a geographical place, with its distinctive materiality, traditions and codes, history and mythology, creates particular shared meanings for those who work there. Physically built to reflect the themes of power, control and dominance which McDowell highlights above, how the materiality here influences the social and the cultural, and vice versa, what this means for who and what is acceptable and fit for purpose in the City, and what this in turn means for those who spend their working lives there, underpins this research.

Thesis Structure

The first chapter of the thesis explores the relationship between space and place and their relevance for organizational life. Whilst my focus here is on a specific place and how it is perceived and experienced, the symbiotic relationship between the two is threaded throughout the research; arguing that, like night and day, each exists in relation to the other; space is not place, it is not named or experienced and is understood in the abstract, and place, apparently fixed, named and stable, is emphatically not empty space. Yet each cannot be understood in isolation, or as a simplistic duality; here, the main theoretical framework is based on Lefebvre's work on space, extended to a methodological exploration of how his theories can be empirically understood in relation to a particular place.

Chapter Two investigates the history and mythology of the City, arguing that both these and the materiality of the research setting has helped to sediment it as what Zukin (1991) refers to as a 'landscape of power'. This leads to a consideration of that which is not powerful in the City, and how this setting relies upon exclusion of that which is 'other'. Chapter Three develops a critique of the literature on gendered organisations and applies this to the setting of the City, uncovering who or what might be excluded from the dominant meanings here. Specifically, it focuses on the complex and often competing multiplicities of gender performance in evidence in the setting, considering how these relate to patterns of inclusion and exclusion Chapter Four details the methodological approach, and Chapters Five and Six present the findings from the data, dealing with each stage of the methodology in turn. Chapter Seven offers an analysis of the empirical research.

My argument, explored during the empirical work and discussed extensively in Chapter Seven, is that space becomes place, and place dominated by a particular sector becomes an organization in itself when it becomes *particular*; that is to say, when there is a shared understanding of what the place is and what it does, and when it assumes particular cultural and material associations. The discussion of the theoretical insights gained from Lefebvre extends his theories of the social production of space, and the rhythms therein, to what is often experienced as a highly performative work setting which compels and constrains particular ways of enacting and embodying gender. In other words, the City is analysed as a performative place which compels particular gendered performances; this gendering is examined through the lens of place. This theme of the City as a performative place is threaded throughout the thesis, and is discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

Research Aims

This research is not a traditional case study in that it is not concerned with investigating a single organization at a particular time (for example Wasserman and Frenkel, 2015). Here, the mode of analysis is a geographical place – the City of London - and the thesis explores place *as* organization. Arguing that shared meanings are accumulated through the culture and materiality of the locations where people work, the approach here is to research the external socio-materiality of work setting rather than a traditional approach of analysis within one organization. As evidenced during the empirical research, ‘working in the City’ means something to the people who work there. Examining what it means, and why, helps us to better understand this place which is the everyday workplace of thousands of people, which contributes £45 billion (3% of the UK’s entire economic output)⁶ to the economy of the United Kingdom, and which exists in the public imagination as a particular geographical location, with a distinctive materiality, a distinctive culture and where distinctive behaviours are manifested.

To summarise, the aims of the thesis are to make contributions to the management and organizational literature in the following ways: firstly, to make a conceptual contribution to how we understand space and place, and in particular to help extend our understanding of an ‘organization’ to include the wider setting, that is, to argue that organizations can be experienced on a wider scale than is often considered. Secondly, I aim to make an empirical contribution by investigating a setting of global importance which I argue is currently somewhat under researched. The third aim is methodological, in that I am aiming to develop an organizational rhythmanalysis⁷ which incorporates other elements of observational and embodied approaches to researching a setting, and which I argue is a relatively under-

⁶ Cited in research carried out by the Centre for Cities and Cambridge Econometrics on behalf of the City of London Corporation, June 2015

⁷ Following Lefebvre’s *Rhythmanalysis* (2004), to be extensively discussed in Chapter One

developed method for organizational research. Lastly, the theoretical aim is to apply a Lefebvrian reading of space as socially produced and able to be analysed using rhythms to the City, and to analyse the performativity enacted here in relation to a particular place. The City of London is described in rich, evocative language by those who work there; metaphors used to describe it include a powerhouse, a hub, an engine, a monster ...the City is perceived and experienced by those who work there as both *being* something, and *doing* something; how this happens, why it does, and what effects it has are the subject of this thesis. In *Villette*, Charlotte Brontë, perhaps one of the earliest London *flâneurs*, or observers of urban street life, describes the emotional effects of this place, its rhythms, and the excitement they can generate:

The City seems so much more in earnest, its rush, its roar are such serious things, sights, sounds. *The City is getting its living* In the City you are excited (Brontë, [1853] 1984:109, emphasis added).

I aim to analyse the rush and roar of the City by researching those who get their living there, as well as the streets themselves where this take place.

Chapter One: Spaces, places and organizations

Introduction

This first chapter considers the literature on organizational space and place, in order to orient the argument towards the importance of, and relative neglect of, organizational setting; how it is perceived and experienced, and why this matters. Taking Lefebvre's theorisation of space as socially produced as a starting point, the chapter explores how this can be applied to place and setting.

There has been a historic tendency in organization studies to overlook the spatial in favour of the social (Baldry 1999), and when it has been given attention over recent years, the spatial has often been focused on a small scale interpretation of physical arrangements (Kornberger and Clegg, 2004) rather than on larger scale organizational setting. Moreover, since the importance of place remains a relatively marginal theme in the study of work, (Tyler, 2011) the literature which attempts to place work in relation to its immediate setting will be explored.

In this chapter, the existing literature on social and organizational theory and space is examined and an introduction to socio-materiality and its relevance to setting is offered. In exploring the literature on organizational space, Lefebvre's theory of the production of space (1991) is particularly relevant in this context, in that he systematically integrates the categories of *city* and *space* into a single comprehensive social theory, which can be applied on a larger scale (that of setting) than has usually been considered by organizational scholars; in other words, taking what Kornberger and Clegg call 'the materiality constitutive of every organisation' (2003:76) to encompass the whole of a distinct place given over to

organization. Taking this approach one stage further to encompass the relationship between social space and materiality, I will argue that approaches which argue for the co-constitutive properties of the material and the ideological, and their relevance to events which unfold within them, are rare; for notable exceptions see Jacobs (1996), McDowell (1997), Dale (2005), all of which will be discussed later in the chapter. As well as examining the existing contributions on organizational space and place and socio-material analyses of settings, this chapter will attempt to build upon them by showing how a Lefebvrian reading of the production of space, combined with a socio-material analysis of a specific place, can help to integrate meaning and materiality in order to better understand the lived experience of working within the setting.

Spaces and places: An introduction

Space is generally conceived in terms of abstract geometries (distance, direction, size, shape, volume), detached from material form (Hillier and Hanson, 1989). How such an abstract concept is used, I argue, brings the purely spatial into relations with the social, particularly via architecture:

It is the fact of space that creates the special relation between function and social meaning in buildings. The ordering of space in buildings is really about the ordering of relations between people (ibid: 3).

The distinction between space and place and its epistemological consequences has formed debates stretching back millennia. In ancient Greece, the khora was the territory outside the city and the term was used by Plato to describe a receptacle or an interval in time. Topos, on the other hand, referred to a specific named place. Newton viewed space as absolute, rather than being a collection of spatial relations between objects, in that it would occur whether or not there is any matter within it. Kant argued that, like time, it is as an a priori form of

intuition; both are elements of a systematic framework that humans use to structure all experience (Merrifield, 1993). For human geographers during the last century (e.g. Massey and Allen 1984; King, 1990; Thrift, 1996, Massey, 2005), interest has been primarily to examine the objects within space and their relative position, so the relationship between objects has been central to their studies. Scholars concerned with a sociology of space, such as Soja (1989) and Harvey (1990, 1993) have instead examined the social and material constitutions of spaces, and are concerned with understanding the social practices, institutional power relations and material complexity of how the spatial and the social interrelate and interact. Drawing on theories from Lefebvre (1991), which will be explored below, a sociological conception of the interrelatedness of space and place will be the focus of this chapter.

Social theory, initially via the works of David Harvey, (1990, 1993, 2010), repositioned the understanding of space from something ‘given’ to something socially produced. Writing in *Social Justice and the City* (2010) Harvey argues that all social processes are inherently spatial and he explores the interrelationships between space, social justice and urbanism. Specifically relating space to human agency, he brings the focus onto spatial practices:

The question “what is space” is therefore replaced by the question “how is it that different human practices create and make use of distinctive conceptualizations of space?” (ibid: 13)

Bringing a specifically Marxist interpretation to spatial practices, he argues that capitalism deliberately wipes out space in order to sustain itself; in other words, that capital is in a constant process of ‘making’ a city in its own image, but that this process creates spaces which are not necessarily amenable for citizens. Merrifield (1993, 1996, 2006) draws on this tradition:

Put simply, we can say that capitalist social space is subsumed under the domain of capital, since its command of property, money, power, technology and mass media enable it to dominate and appropriate the space of global capitalism (1993: 521)

Merrifield also writes about the distinctions between space and place and the contemporary burgeoning interest in place during the 1980s (citing Massey and Allen (1984)). He highlights the failure of much geographical research to establish the basic ontological nature of place itself (1993: 516). Arguing for an interrelated dimension to space and place, in that they should be viewed as both a whole and a part, rather than as a Cartesian dualism, and for the need for further conceptualizations to be made, he posits that:

The necessity to understand how the space-place, global-local, macro-micro levels are articulated and mediated, is, I further argue, *vital for theory and for a robust, progressive politics of place* (ibid: 527, emphasis added).

What, then, is place, if described in relation to space? Place is generally considered as relating to the particular, rather than to the abstract (Creswell, 2013: 8). For Tuan (1977: 6), space is connected to movement, and place to pauses in that flow:

What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value ... The ideas 'space' and 'place' require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.

This concept of movements and pauses is connected to rhythms and will be further explored in the section on Lefebvre and rhythms below.

For Tuan, the difference between ‘space’ and ‘place’ has fundamentally to do with the extent to which human beings have ascribed meaning to a specific area. Unlike for Harvey, ‘space’ has no social connection for humans (Tuan, 1977: 6); it has no meaning, but is abstract. This conceptualisation of space as fluid but place as pause in that movement, however, means that place is fixed and static. For Merrifield (1993), space is both flow *and* place, in that it is simultaneously a process and a ‘thing’: ‘Place is shaped by the grounding (the ‘thingification’, if you will) of these material flows’ (ibid: 525). So here too is the aspect of place as static material form as opposed to flow. But importantly for Merrifield, ‘place is where everyday life is *situated*. And as such, place can be taken as *practiced space*’ (ibid: 522).

In this way, place as the situation of everyday life is intimately and always connected with the human and the social. Without naming, or some sort of identification by people, a space cannot be a place; ‘places ...are built or in some way physically carved out’ (Gieryn, 2000: 465). They are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood and imagined (Soja: 1996). Places are not (just) geometrically conceived as a mere part of space, but can be understood phenomenologically as a distinct coming together in space of human agency and social practices (Agnew, 2011). Gieryn (2000: 467) identifies three defining features of place as location, material form and meaningfulness:

Place is, at once, the buildings, streets, monuments, and open spaces assembled at a certain geographic spot *and* actors’ interpretations, representations, and identifications. Both domains (the material and the interpretative, the physical and the semiotic) work autonomously *and* in a mutually dependent way (original emphasis).

This typology is a useful reference point for developing an analysis of place which connects the social and the material in a precisely defined space, and for using the interconnections between them in order to better understand how meaning is created and represented.

A sense of place is not only, therefore, the ability to locate things cognitively, but also evolves from the way that meaning is given to a particular location (Rotenberg and McDonogh, 1993). This attribution of meaning means that fundamental social classifications are built in to everyday material places:

Place sustains difference and hierarchy both by routinizing daily rounds in ways that exclude and segregate categories of people, and by embodying in visible and tangible ways the cultural meanings variously ascribed to them (Gieryn, 2000: 474).

In other words, places are fundamentally imbued with power that is not necessarily connected to the people or organisations that occupy them; this power to control or dominate comes through the location, built-form and symbolic meanings of a place (ibid). The materiality of place cannot, then, be ignored when considering the social practices which operate within them.

An introduction to space and place within organization studies

While there has been something of a burgeoning literature on organizational space over recent years (Kornberger and Clegg, 2003, 2004; Dale, 2005; Halford, 2005; Dale and Burrell, 2007; Herod et al, 2007; Taylor and Spicer, 2007; Tyler and Cohen, 2010; Beyes and Michels, 2011; Beyes and Steyaert, 2012; Wasserman and Frenkel, 2015), it seems fair to say that the particularities of organizational place and location continue to be relatively under-researched. This means that the significance to understanding organizational life of the

specific locations and settings in which people work remains an under-developed and relatively peripheral theme within organization studies.

Previously relatively neglected in management and organizational studies in favour of a focus on the temporality of organizational life, the spaces and places that management 'happens in and through' (Taylor and Spicer, 2007: 325), had been portrayed as relatively neutral containers or settings, yet Soja (1989, 1996) has argued that the spatial turn has ended the modern privileging of time over space, and aids the reassertion of space into social theory.

Indeed, since the 1990s, scholars from within the social sciences have commented upon the inherent spatiality of social life (Lash and Urry, 1994; Soja, 1996; De Certeau, 1998) leading to a work within organizational studies which considers the significance of space within the workplace.

For Parker, (2007, 2015) writing about the spaces of organization (specifically skyscrapers), there is a link between how space is organized and the rise of the modern organization itself (this will be returned to in Chapter Two with reference to the City of London). Other scholars who have turned towards the spatial have begun to work towards an integrated framework for work on space and setting in organization and management studies (Kornberger and Clegg, 2003, 2004; Dale and Burrell, 2007). As Dale and Burrell point out, the relative lack of this within the discipline is odd, 'because it is within the business world that there have been many conscious attempts to re-order spatial practices' (2007: ix), although this interest is in space both as an economic asset and as a way of achieving specific objectives such as enhanced employee commitment and creativity. Kornberger and Clegg (2003) focus on the materiality of organizational space, exploring the spatial arrangement of organizations, and specifically highlighting the interrelation, as they see it, between organizational materiality

and its creative and innovative potential, which they relate to the concept of the generative building (ibid: 76), and, further developing this concept to encompass ‘ the architecture of complexity’ (ibid), reflecting upon the interrelation between different spatial layouts and the innovative ways in they could potentially be used (for example creating informal meeting spaces around a specific problem, rather than bringing a problem to a meeting room).

Taylor and Spicer (2007) suggest that these contributions could still be regarded, however, as fragmented. They argue that although there is a rich understanding of spatiality, ‘it is problematic in developing an understanding of management and organization as fundamentally spatial activities’ (ibid: 326). They posit that part of the reason that it is difficult to aggregate research into organizational space is due to the variety and size of the vocabulary used to define it:

Terms in use include: space, place, region, surroundings, locale, built environment, workspace, environments (fixed, semi-fixed, ambient), private/public space, building, territory and proximate space (ibid).

We might argue that this is because an adequate theory of space also needs to account for multiple levels and *scales* of space, since scale may be defined as the spatial level at which social activity takes place (ibid). This also includes more attention to place as well as to space, since places are where organizational events unfold; in other words, bringing to the forefront of management research the ongoing debate regarding the differentiation and relationship between space and place, including the wider context of organizational setting.

Although seemingly sometimes used interchangeably with space, the importance of place has been relatively neglected within the management literature. Phillips (2010) explores two specific places (both shopping centres in the UK City of Bristol) in order to examine their organizational dynamics, juxtaposing readings of the places based on a specific method of

‘walking’ the places, (which will be returned to in Chapter Four), with readings from poetry texts, using a combination of methods to analyse both the physical and hyperreal places. Yet the connection between place and where things *take* place is relatively under developed. As Tyler (2011) queries, can place be simply accepted as a setting against which things take place, or there is a more mutually dependent relationship with experience?

Is place merely a neutral backdrop, or are places constitutive of work experiences, and if so how? How does an association with particular types of work in turn shape the places in which work is embedded? (ibid: 1480).

Tyler is considering the nature of Soho as a workplace and draws attention to the role of place and locale in shaping the meanings attached to the work carried out there, arguing that an understanding of setting enables us to better understand the meanings attached to a particular type of work, (the sex industry in this case), and the specific locations in which they take place.

In an attempt to build on the importance of specific place and locale, and its entwined relationship with the type of work that is carried out, the literature pertaining to space within organizational studies will now be analysed, demonstrating how a shift from purely cognitive conceptualizations of management processes towards the materiality of organising and organisations leads to a (relatively neglected) consideration of place and setting.

Forms of organizational space within management literature

Taylor and Spicer (2007) use the term ‘organizational space’ as an umbrella construct, in order to give a greater variety of contexts than the notion of place, which can be highly specific. This raises questions as to how a particular research setting can be defined in relation to space.

They develop three conceptualizations to help better define both the concepts and terminology of space (loosely based on Lefebvre's concepts of perceived, conceived and lived spaces, which are extensively discussed later in the chapter). The first concept is to *treat space as physical distance*, based on the Euclidian mathematical tradition which suggests that space is the distance between two or more points; this allows for objective measurement of spatial distance, and therefore also allows geographical fixing of the organizational setting. This is helpful when attempting to define an organizational research setting, allowing for a clear definition based on physical geography, and is relevant to the way that I will conceptualize the research setting of this thesis, discussed in Chapter Four.

This concept of space as physical distance underpins perhaps the most commonly examined approach to organizational space; that is, workplace layout and the relationship between furniture, architectural objects and people working within the space. This conceptualisation is useful for contributing to a definition of space in relation to place and research setting, however as a concept there are limitations, since it does not account for the ways in which actors attribute meaning to space (Halford, 2004), or individual perceptions of space (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Taylor and Spicer relate this lack to a breakdown of understanding between spatial planners and those living and working within spaces.

Their second conceptualisation treats *space as the materialization of power relations*. This is primarily based upon Marx's analyses of newly formed industrial spaces in nineteenth century Britain, which in turn were based on the changing relationships of power in capitalist societies. This concept has particular resonance for studies of urban organizational settings; for just as planned towns such as Port Sunlight or Bourneville in the UK were potent expressions of workforce control, so in the twentieth first century it has been argued (English-Lueck, 2000) that Silicon Valley can be viewed as a version of this nineteenth century ideal, 'where organizational norms leak into non-work space and the sociocultural

order of the region is conditioned by work organizations' (Taylor and Spicer, 2007: 330). As well as materializing power relations *within* the workplace, large-scale spaces may also be seen as materializations of power. Analysts of social geography (King, 1990; Sassen, 1991; Amin and Thrift, 2002) suggest that the concept of the city itself is a large scale materialization of organizational power, in that the entire infrastructure provides capitalism with a 'spatial fix' that ensures the circulation and reproduction of capitalism (Harvey, 1990), because privatisation and fortification become the primary forces shaping modern urban development, and businesses themselves often become tightly controlled citadels (Bremner, 2000). This conceptualisation has relevance to large scale organizational settings which define themselves as leading global economic powerhouses (Sassen, 1991).

The third conceptualisation is to examine lived experience, that is, space as both individual and collective experience, and the meaning ascribed to it. The symbolic and aesthetic dimensions of people's responses to organisational space are increasingly recognised as central to understanding them. As well as design, furnishings and the artefacts of organisational life, the buildings themselves tell stories about organizational culture and identity (Berg and Kreiner, 1990). Some analyses focus on how occupants and users can 'rescript' organizational space (Cairns et al., 2003); an analysis which is prophetic with regard to the Occupy movement, the international protest movement against perceived economic and social inequality which began in New York in 2011 but which has since spread across every continent - and other protest movements concerned with reclaiming urban space. These analyses treat space on a broader scale than the organizational building. By focusing purely on experiences, however, researchers can be led away from the physical and material aspects of space, so that 'the basic material realities of geography may be forgotten' (Taylor and Spicer, 2007: 334).

There is, however, still relatively little work that crosses the boundaries between analyses of individual workplaces (micro scales), the boundary between the inside and outside of the organization (meso scales), and the regional or national setting (macro scales) (ibid). There are multiple spatial scales which are worthy of analysis both in and, importantly, around organizations. What seems to be missing is an understanding of the multiplicity of spatial scales within which organizing and managing takes place. With this in mind, conceptualising organizational space and settings as *spatially produced* provides an empirically comprehensive means of bringing space back in (Kornberger and Clegg, 2004).

In summary, ‘students of organizations often miss their materiality’ (Kornberger and Clegg, 2003:75). The shift in analysis away from purely cognitive conceptualizations of management processes towards the physical manifestations of organizations (ibid: 76), leads to a consideration of how materiality may interact with meaning in particular *places* and towards an exploration of the literature which discusses this, with particular reference to urban settings, to which we now turn.

The city and social theory

The importance of cities as places of special interest to urban geographers, historians, sociologists and anthropologists is manifold (e.g. King, 1990; Sassen, 1990; Thrift, 1994; Amin and Thrift, 2002). Whilst there are a variety of popular perspectives on cities and collective and varied interpretations of urban life, the concept of the city as a place of opportunity, of excitement and of heterogeneity is embedded in modern western culture. A view of the City as fundamentally sociological, that is produced via social interests and social values (Castells, 1983), and the tensions and dynamics of an increasingly globalized and urban culture are well attested (Sassen, 1991). As Jacobs (1996: 21) points out, ‘urban space is particularly seductive in terms of the construction of world theories of capitalism’.

Urbanisation itself becomes ‘a revealing social hieroglyphic through which to unravel the dynamics of post-war capitalist development in an increasingly urbanized world economy’ (Soja, 1989: 94). The city therefore stands as an almost mythical landmark for modern socioeconomic and political strategies (De Certeau, 1984, cited in Jacobs, 1996). Indeed, the first world city holds a special place both as the site and signifier of global change (ibid). Global cities (Sassen, 1991) are made and developed by their control of complex transnational services, and they are the homes not only of millions of residents but also of the headquarters of multinational corporations, with their financial centres functioning as ‘landscapes of power’ (Zukin, 1991), shifting from the global geography of empire to the global geography of trans-territorial markets (Sassen, 1991).

Thinking through the City as the site of power, O’Doherty (2013) connects the materiality with human corporeality:

Cities are often thought in terms of bodies—organic in shape and form. Arterial roads, motorways, and other transport routes, act like a cardiovascular system, while the smaller streets, the squares and avenues, perhaps might be thought of as spaces through which the nervous system is manifest and played out (ibid: 213).

He posits that the modern city and its organization can be thought of as a ‘collective non-human psyche, a boundary phenomenon operating across time and space, somewhere in between the individual and the social, but also existing independently outside this relation’ (ibid: 213). In his walking- based research on Manchester, he proposes that the city exhibits or manifests, or even behaves, in certain ways that suggest that it is possible and sometimes useful to think that there is some psychic agency at the heart of the metropolis. This theme of

the city as somehow self-aware, and able to express itself through both its culture and its materiality, is key to this thesis and will be more fully explored in Chapter Four and in the research findings and analysis.

This leads to an exploration of how cities can be understood, or ‘read’ as social constructs, and to why the materiality of place should be explored alongside its social and cultural traditions, which we will now consider.

From the social construction of space to the socio-materiality of place

Much of the organizational literature discussed above draws directly on Lefebvre as a conceptual lens through which to view the social and organizational production of space. In order to examine space as a social product, it cannot be understood or imagined as an independent material reality. Henri 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; as Watkins (2005: 211) puts it, he moves space ‘from the realm of the mental to become the foundation of our engagement with the world.’ Space cannot therefore exist in itself but is produced by human actors. Lefebvre does not understand space and time as material factors, or as pure, a priori concepts, but both are understood as being integral aspects of social and therefore spatial practice, and can only be understood in the context of a specific society.

Lefebvre gives particular attention to the central role that imagination and representation play in producing space. In his search for a uniting theory of produced space, he stresses that such a theory must be able to account for the unity between the physical world, the mental world, and the social; that is, the space of social practice, and space occupied by experience, including products of the imagination. He claims that spatial practices can ‘only be evaluated

empirically' (1991: 38); it is only through an empirical analysis that the spatial practice of a society can be deciphered.

Key to Lefebvre's theory is the view that the production of space can be divided into three dimensions, or processes. Lefebvre also refers to them as 'formants' (1991: 285). These dimensions are doubly designated; he refers to the triad of 'spatial practice', 'representations of space' and 'spaces of representation' (ibid: 38-39). On the other hand, they are also referred to as 'perceived', 'conceived' and 'lived' space (ibid), what Schmid (2008:29) calls a 'twofold approach to space: one phenomenological and the other linguistic or semiotic'.

Lefebvre connects the physicality of materiality with what he describes as its imaginary aspects (its social meanings and memories). He describes different kinds of spaces which occur within the 'umbrella' trialectic, including abstract or cognitive spaces (1991: 24). He makes a clear distinction between *perceived space* (familiar spaces which we experience on a daily basis), *conceived space* (deliberately constructed spaces which embody certain social conceptualizations; this form of space is the dominant form and is central to the production of abstract space), and *representational or lived space* (regularly experienced or lived space which is also socially created and therefore 'imaginary' as it materializes certain semiotic and symbolic imagery; for example high status office furnishings).

Contextualising Lefebvre's theories into a particular setting is not necessarily straightforward, particularly since he does not specifically relate his theories to organizational space, yet his work is highly applicable to both discussions of urban spaces where day to day activities are carried out, and to examining the relationship between the social and the material. He pays particular attention to the urban and the flows of movement in urban settings, and often uses examples from an urban setting as illustrations and as context to

remind us of the importance of lived experience. When writing about medieval churches and their surrounding towns/monasteries, he points out, for instance, how:

This space was produced before being read; nor was it produced in order to be read and grasped, but rather *in order to be lived* by people with bodies and lives in their own particular urban context (ibid: 43, emphasis added).

His dimensions of space need to be treated holistically in order to form what he terms social space; in other words, each dimension cannot be viewed separately if we are to understand the whole of a particular space (Lefebvre never uses the term ‘place’) – there needs to be a trialectical interplay (Soja, 1996) between each factor. Lefebvre describes it as a ‘logical necessity’ (1991: 40) that the perceived-conceived–lived triad may move between them without confusion, and he stresses the importance of their interconnectedness. Watkins (2005), in one of the relatively few analyses of a spatial event in the field of organization studies (a theatrical performance), argues that it is only from the interaction of all three aspects that the totality of the event emerges, since ‘all three aspects of the triad are continually and mutually informed and informing’ (ibid: 220).

An additional benefit of Lefebvre’s theorisation of space in this regard is his insistence on the importance of representations of bodily, lived experiences of space: ‘In seeking to understand the three moments of social space, it may help to consider the body’ (ibid). This emphasis on the body and its relationship to space/place will be central to the methodological approach of this thesis.

Using Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of socially produced space as a starting point, scholars have explored how the interaction of the material with the social can help us to forge a deeper understanding of place and of the experience of living and working within a setting. Dale

(2005) builds on Lefebvre's theorisation by conceptualising the interplay of the cultural and the material as what is termed socio-materiality (see also Orlikowski and Scott 2008; Orlikowski, 2009; Schatzki, 2010, *inter alia*). To concentrate purely on social practices without reference to the setting would ignore the connections between the human and the material; that is, that we as humans not only construct our material environment but live within and through it. As McDowell (2011) puts it: 'Social and spatial practices are mutually constitutive. Where an event or activity takes place shapes its form, and vice versa' (*ibid*: 42).

As Dale explains, 'materiality is imbued with culture, language, imagination, memory; it cannot be reduced to mere object or objectivity' (2005: 652). Furthermore, because humans cannot escape engagement with the material, we are unable to manipulate it without being transformed ourselves by it – therefore the material and the social cannot be theorized as mutually exclusive. Dale uses a riparian metaphor to help explain 'a relationship that does not institutionalize the material as fixed and inert structure, while leaving the social as active and dynamic' (*ibid*: 654). This metaphor is developed so that it is not just at the level of mutual influence that the social and the material (or, to use her metaphor, the river and river bank respectively) interrelate, but that the interplay is so dynamic that both the material and the social each contain both structure and flow and are therefore inescapably entwined. As she argues, the taken-for-granted status of the material, the assumption that it equates simply with a fixed and inert structure, makes its significance both hidden and powerful (*ibid*: 653) and this co-constituted conceptualisation will be developed in Chapter Two in relation to the City of London. Other scholars argue that research framed according to the tenets of socio-materiality challenge taken-for-granted assumptions that work, organization and the material should be conceptualised separately, arguing for an inherent inseparability between the two, often using the relationship between technology and organisations (Orlikowski and Scott,

2008; Leonardi, 2012), or a focus on objects and artefacts which are present in organizational life (Carlile et al, 2013).

Whilst Dale uses the flow of a river as a metaphor for entwined socio-material relationships, for Lefebvre, conceptualisations of space are closely tied to those of time; everyday life, for him, can also be understood as a flow, or more precisely, as a convergence of rhythms – in fact, as another trialectic, that of space, time and energy which collide to form a rhythm. How this is developed from his earlier theory of spatial trialectics is explored below.

Lefebvre and the rhythms of urban space - An introduction to *Rhythmanalysis*

Whilst there is a history within organization studies of research focusing on the temporal rhythms of the workplace (e.g. Shi and Prescott, 2012), there has been a relative neglect of the rhythms of organizational place. Where rhythms have taken centre stage, the focus is on the performative modes of organizing and the link to rhythmic patterns, for example Hatch (1999) uses jazz performers as a metaphor for the fluidity, instability and improvisational potential of organizational practices (it is worth noting that Lefebvre uses orchestral symphonies as a metaphor for listening to and sensing the rhythms of place, more fully described below).

In one of Lefebvre's later works (2004, originally published in France in 1992, later translated into English), he introduces the concept of analysing rhythms, which stimulates new attention to processes, patterns and interaction on both the natural and the social worlds. Long before he published *Rhythmanalysis*, he was writing about movement and repetition in space:

Let everyone look at the space around them. What do they see? Do they see *time*? They live time, after all; they are *in* time. Yet all anyone sees is movements (1991: 95, emphasis in original).

In his essays on rhythm Lefebvre pays particular attention to urban rhythms, in order to extend his understanding of how space is produced to how we are able to understand it; in other words, how by listening and analysing the rhythms of place, we can better understand their particular character and the effects they create. As seen above, he insists on the importance of embodied experiences of space; rhythmanalysis, which he likens to a nascent science, is an attempt to use the body to understand the rhythms of space. The rhythmanalyst perceives the whole of the space, not just visually, but with all her senses, and by using her bodily responses in order to analyse them:

He tries to hear the music that the city plays and to understand its composition. He heeds the tempo, the beat, the repetitions of the tune and the rhythms. He hears the functional interruptions and the arrhythms. His is an attempt to keep the scientific and the poetic apart as little as possible (Goonewardena et al, 2008: 156).

Lefebvre analyses time and its effect on space; more particularly, he focuses on the conjunction of time and space which, he argues, both results in and occurs through rhythm. In these essays, he insists upon a conceptualisation of time and space as being inextricably linked; as Horton describes in his review, ‘spaces are timed; times are spaced’ (2005: 157). Lefebvre writes of time, space and an expenditure of energy colliding as rhythm in particular spaces, and of the importance of observing these rhythms in order to fully understand the place:

Concrete times have rhythms, or rather are rhythms – and all rhythms imply the relation of a time to a space, a localised time, or, if one prefers, a temporalized space.

Rhythm is always linked to such and such a place, to its placeThis does not prevent it from being a time, which is to say an aspect of movement or of a becoming (Lefebvre, 2004: 96).

For Lefebvre, rhythms are never fixed and stable, but are by their nature fluid, susceptible to changes and based on difference – repetition in itself does not, cannot, produce a rhythm. The same note struck over and over again is not a rhythm; as soon as difference appears, a rhythm begins to form. So in the quotation above, Lefebvre is explaining that rhythms belong to, and are shaped by, a particular place, but, at the same time, are always in a process of becoming, like a wave, because they are dependent on time. In this way, he is obliquely describing a unfixed ontology of place; if place is produced by and understood via rhythms, which are always becoming and evolving, then place itself cannot be fixed and stable.

His aim is to encourage the observer to ‘listen’ to a space, to recognise that there is ‘nothing inert in the world’ (ibid: 26) – only diverse and multiple rhythms which characterise a particular place or a particular time. A heightened sensibility to rhythm allows us to identify the particular characteristics of these places and times: to analyse rhythms successfully means becoming ‘more sensitive to times than to spaces, to moods than to images, to the atmosphere than to particular events’ (ibid: 94). He identifies both cyclical rhythms, rooted in nature and the physiological rhythms of the body, which, broadly, involve repetitive rhythms which take place after specific and naturally occurring intervals of time, for example the sun rising or the changing of the seasons, and linear rhythms, which, again broadly, are exterior and imposed (although these two may coincide, for example news bulletins which occur at regularly punctuated intervals throughout the day).

Rhythms are fundamentally based upon repetition, yet repetition inevitably produces difference, in that it is only by the insertion of difference that a rhythm can be perceived. It is

these differing rhythms which he asks us to observe and analyse. In order to be a successful rhythm analyst, we need to both be *outside* of the rhythm, i.e. to observe it from a position of detachment, yet also to be able to take part, to feel the rhythm (ibid: 31). The only way we can do this is through bodily engagement, to use a multiplicity of the senses: ‘he thinks with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality’ (ibid). Indeed, he posits that the only way to analyse rhythms is to use our own bodies and their rhythms as reference points (ibid: 29).

This conceptualization of time and space as fundamentally co-dependent, and that the rhythms produced by their interrelation can be analysed in order to understand a particular setting, has relevance not only to urban spaces, which Lefebvre focused upon, but particularly for such a setting such as the City of London. This geographically small place, situated within a larger place (greater London), is perceived to have its own distinctive culture, and we might therefore expect it to have its own distinctive rhythms. Lefebvre’s concern with bodily engagement with a space in order to understand its characteristic rhythms will be fully explored in the methodology chapter with reference to an embodied methodological approach.

Lyon (2016), in one of the few studies using rhythm analysis as a methodological tool (in this case to interrogate the patterns of the everyday activities of Billingsgate market in London), notes that it is not just temporal patterns which structure a place, but also the activity and movement of people within it. For Lyon, drawing on Lefebvre, ‘rhythm can be seen to operate at different scales and to different beats’ (ibid: 8), creating a distinctive space-time. Lyon shows how rhythm analysis can be an important and insightful tool to examine the interrelations between the body and urban life, and can be situated within a methodology that explores the socio-materiality of an organizational setting. This is relevant to how the methodology for this study evolved, and will be more fully explored in Chapter Four.

Conclusion

Having considered some of the existing contributions on organizational space and place, and highlighted the contributions that a socio-material analysis can bring to the study of place and setting, this chapter has opened the way for an argument about how meaning and materiality can be integrated in order to better understand the lived experience of working within a particular organizational setting.

In summary, although there has been a notable turn towards the spatial within organizational studies and sociology over recent decades, the specifics of place have been relatively under researched. The importance of the organizational setting to the lived experience of work, and to how and why events unfold therein, requires further consideration. Lefebvre's theory of space as socially constructed, and his later work theorising that specific spaces (or places, although he does not use this term) have their own distinct rhythms which can be both *read* and analysed, and, importantly for Lefebvre, *felt* with the body, offer a potential to examine place both as organizational setting and as an organizing force in its own right. In addition, these theories open up methodological possibilities for empirical exploration, which will be extensively discussed in Chapter Four.

Whilst many social scientists, particularly human geographers, have viewed place as something fixed and stable, as opposed to space, which is about flow (Tuan, 1977; Merrifield, 1993; Cresswell, 2013), the Lefebvrian concept of place as being constructed from social and temporal rhythms opens up the possibility that place, rather than being fixed, is in fact processual, in that the rhythms themselves are not fixed and stable, but reliant upon movement and points of difference which are constantly being repeated and re-made. This leads in turn to the interesting ontological view that place itself can be read and understood as being in perpetual flow and movement; ontologically unfixed but forever 'becoming'. In this

thesis I will argue that this process of becoming is connected both to the inscription of social meaning and to materiality, and to the relationship between the two.

Rhythms are formed through a coming together of time and space. 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'.

Extending this concept of the spatial and the temporal to what Lefebvre refers to as rhythms, and how these can be performative and shape performative places, is central to the analysis of the City in this thesis. It is central to the development of the methods used for researching place, that is, how the rhythms can be sensed and analysed, and will be fully explored in subsequent chapters.

Here I return to Gieryn's conceptualisation of place as a collision of location, material form and meaningfulness. He also comments on the inherently symbiotic relationship between the social and the material, since places 'are made through human practices and institutions even as they help to make these practices and institutions' (2000: 467). For the purposes of this research study, I will argue that place, therefore, like time, saturates social life and standardises cognitive, emotional and sensory responses, and that it is a sense of shared familiarity which differentiates it from space. Massey (1991) describes space as structuring interactions, and that these interactions are given impact through place; in other words, space can be seen as opportunity, and place the reality, or the grounding, of the relationship between the social and the spatial.

Agnew (2011: 5), however, whilst pointing out that ‘in the end it is the concrete effects of place what matter more than remaining at the abstract level of conceptualizing place’, nevertheless conceptualizes it as ‘a meta-concept which allows for the particular stories associated with specific places’ – again, a return to the specific – but also points out that a sense of place ‘expresses a certain communality and performance’ (ibid: 22). This sense of a shared cognitive understanding, of a shared sense of place, and of particular, situated, performances, underpins the thesis.

This consideration of place leads to questions about how meaning is ascribed to place, and, more specifically, what a Lefebvrian reading of the rhythms of a specific place and a socio-material analysis of place as organizational setting can tell us about the lived experience of working there. Having reviewed the relevant literature, my understanding of the conceptual relationship between space and place is that place represents a localised intensification or distillation of human experience, where ‘localised’ is taken to refer to a particular setting. Shaped by association, place can therefore be explored via a focus on lived experience and the collective meanings that are ascribed to it. In other words, place is a specific location that comes into being through the way in which it is perceived and experienced through meaningful associations with a particular space. Drawing on the literature discussed in this chapter, this is a largely performative understanding of place premised upon a processual ontology through which I understand place as emerging from the ways in which meaning is attributed to it.

The next chapter will move from a review of the general arguments around space and place to examining the City of London as a particular place and setting which is dominated by a particular type of work. This will enable a focus to develop on what makes the City distinct, and how geography, history, materiality and socio-cultural traditions and practices contribute

to how it may be perceived and experienced, both as a work setting and as a type of meta-organization in itself.

Chapter Two: The City of London

Introduction

Having reviewed how shared meanings can be accumulated in particular places, and how these places can be ‘read’ by analysing both the social and the material, and by a consideration of the rhythms of place, this chapter will move from the general to the particular and examine the literature on the City of London. Understanding it as an organizational setting means appreciating it as more than a collection of buildings, but as a geographical place where workers are situated and experience their working lives. Uncovering the dominant narrative of this place, as explored through its history, its mythology and its place in the collective public imagination, will lead towards an exploration of what the dominant meanings of this space might be, and how these might be shaped by lived experience.

The ‘Square Mile’ remains the visible heart of London’s financial landscape. Notwithstanding recent expansion into Canary Wharf and elsewhere, (for example the establishment of hedge fund headquarters in Mayfair), the City of London is still equated with finance (Allen and Pryke, 1994). In order to define the area for the fieldwork for this thesis, the historical boundary markers of the City of London were used⁸ (maps to illustrate the research setting are provided in the appendices). As argued in Chapter One, the social meanings of a particular place can be expressed via the landscapes, and in the case of finance,

⁸ For the purposes of my research, I was concerned with that part of London which goes by the metonym of the Square Mile, the historic City of London. Although this is a geographical setting dominated by financial services, it does not encompass the entire financial services industry, clusters of which can also be found in nearby Canary Wharf, and, increasingly where hedge funds are concerned, in Mayfair, as well as within other UK cities. My concern was not uniquely with the financial sector, however, but with people engaged in a variety of occupations but who all work within the same geographically bounded, historically recognised, space, which has a concentration of distinctive architecture, making it instantly recognisable to many. In order to define the area, I used the ancient boundaries - today marked by ‘dragon’ statues – although I used the river Thames as the southern boundary, and did not cross over into what was, when the original boundaries of the City were established, the separate city of Southwark, although the modern day Corporation of London, which manages the City, does extend its boundaries across the river.

the importance of finance capital in leading global cities is materialised here. As Allen and Pryke (1994: 455) point out, these places of power are entwined with practices of power:

The ability to endow a site with meaning is an expression of power in the spatial practices of the City, their repetition (or rhythm as Lefebvre (1991) emphasises) and variety, which signifies what may and may not take place in and around the various institutions that make up the City and who is ‘out of place’ and, indeed, time.

This chapter will orient the thesis towards the setting, and aims to explore what is unique about it as a place, and how its particular history has shaped behavioural norms. The aim is to explore the history of the City as a way of better understanding this rich research setting and as a way of apprehending some of the mythology and narratives which have constructed many of the layers of meaning which have accumulated.

Since I argue that the social structures and the history and culture of the City and its material structures are mutually enacting, I will examine the existing literature which deals with it as an organizational research setting, leading to questions about who ‘fits’ in the City and who, or what, is constructed as being out of place.

The City of London: Background⁹

The City is at the apex of a globalised economic space. Despite the fact that this space is in some ways interchangeable with others, (in particular the financial districts of New York, Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo), since much of the daily work is undertaken by an international elite who frequently travel between global cities, most professionals, however, do still spend the bulk of their daily lives in a geographically small place. This space has its own history outside of the greater city of which it forms part, as well as its own cultural norms (Thrift, 1994; McDowell, 1997). These spaces have become partially detached from

⁹ Demographic background and statistics can be found in Appendix A

other cities in their nation states, and have become truly 'global' in that they are spatially dispersed yet globally integrated (King, 1990). London, (along with Tokyo and New York), is pre-eminent among them (Coakley, 1992; Zukin, 1991; Corbridge et al, 1994), with elite workers typifying the individualist attitudes and lifestyles celebrated since the 1980s (until the recent financial crisis), yet it can be argued that the City is still in many ways a territorially bounded culture with a local 'flavour' which makes it simultaneously both like and unlike other financial centres.

In this way, the City is in fact a 'global/local jigsaw' (McDowell, 1997: 5), and can therefore be considered as a 'glocalised' space, rather than a dis-embedded space, as some theorists (Salt, 1992; Beaverstock, 2002) have characterized financial centres. As the core work became more and more global following deregulation in the 1980s a view was espoused that the local would become less important as the global took over, and that place itself would lose any significance in relation to organisational materiality.

I will go on to argue that the local flavour of the City is, however, still very much alive and present and helps to create a very distinctive sense of place.

Glocalization first emerged as a term used by marketers in Japan, by which they meant that products of Japanese origin should be localized, i.e. suited to local tastes and interests, although the products themselves are global in application and reach. Sociologists (e.g. Robertson, 1995) began to notice that many social practices assume a local character despite the origin of the products. This terminology is typical of a proliferation of tropes describing space in analytic terms: 'Binary couplets like core/periphery, inside/outside/Self/Other, First World/Third World, North/South have given way to tropes such as hybridity, diaspora, creolisation, transculturation' (Jacobs, 1996: 13), providing the conceptual frames for interpreting a range of new phenomena . The 'local flavour' of the City is most clearly

expressed, however, via its history, rather than its products, i.e. its material setting, whose power was represented by the material signifiers of stone and brick. A history of the City is introduced in the below section.

A history of the City

This section argues that the particular history of the City has helped to sediment ideas relating to gender and norms of behaviour. As Gabriel (2000:1) tells us:

‘History’ shares its etymological roots with ‘story’; both are from the Greek *historia*, learning or knowing by enquiry, via *histos*, a web, *historien*, ‘inquire’, and from *histor*, a wise man or judge, and, ultimately, from a PIE root *wied* – to see. It is related to Greek *eidani*, to know well. In middle English ‘history’ and ‘story’ were interchangeable.

Storytelling, according to Gabriel is therefore ‘an art of weaving, of constructing, the product of intimate knowledge’ (ibid: 1). The use of stories as organisational communication tools has been widely studied (Gabriel, 2000, Boje, 2001 inter alia) and the history of power, so omnipresent in the City, influences the way financial institutions frame and assemble narratives and images in order to tell their own stories. Not only does the City present its own story as a coherent history of overcoming crises (the Great Fire, the Blitz bombing in World War Two and various financial crises), as narrated by tour guides and in published histories (e.g. Kenyon, 2012), but the institutions themselves (for example the Bank of England and the Museum of London) recount a linear history of the City as being dominated by the imposition of order upon chaos.

Historically, the City *was* London; until the area around the palace of Westminster merged with the borders of the old City and eventually surrounded it (a process which did not really

gather pace until the first stirrings of the industrial revolution during the eighteenth century), all references to London referred to what we now consider the small, defined space of the Square Mile (Kenyon, 2012). Authors as historically far apart as Chaucer, writing in the fourteenth century, Blake in the eighteenth and Dickens in the nineteenth, represented London as cramped, full of squalor and noise, where the mansions and palaces of the rich were located directly alongside the hovels of the poor. In both, however, there is a pervading (and prescient) sense of threatened borders; of a creeping chaos that is just outside the City walls and threatening to erupt – for example Chaucer’s merchant in the *Canterbury Tales* (1478) is much concerned with threats of war and piracy to his beloved profits, and in *Bleak House* (1959[1853]), written in the mid nineteenth century when the City was ceasing to be a residential district, Dickens uses the exterior city setting to represent displacement in contrast to the settled order and domesticity of the interior home. The limits and borders of the old City, in particular, are often places of shadow and danger in modern literature, where violence lurks, (for example Nancy’s steps by London Bridge, from the scene of the murder in *Oliver Twist* (Dickens, 1838)), and this sense of unease is exemplified by the continuing fascination with the real life murders of Jack the Ripper, just beyond the borders of mercantile (and civilised) life. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, London, including the City, became represented as a theatre of corruption, fraud and scandal, and at the same time as a place of unbridled success and power for the ambitious elite (for example in the writings of Sheridan (848) and Charles Lamb (1935)).

The Coffee Houses of London: *making one fit for business*¹⁰

Today’s City is filled with cafes and coffee shops, yet this is nothing new for this part of London. The coffee revolution occurred here much earlier than the twenty first century, in the

¹⁰ From an anonymous seventeenth century pamphlet advertising coffee houses, claiming that coffee made one fit for business. Source: history.co.uk, accessed 15th November 2015

late 1600s and early 1700s; there were estimated to have been as many as 2,000 coffee houses in the Square Mile by 1700 (Ackroyd, 2000: 320). Although the first coffee house in England opened in Oxford in 1652, the first London establishment was set up in St Michaels's alley, off Cornhill, later the same year. Its popularity soon spread, arising from the ashes of the Great Fire, until coffee shops became synonymous with the City of London and its burgeoning trades and professions, in particular finance. Even the popular 'floating' restaurants on boats on the Thames had their origins in the coffee houses; the Folly of the Thames, moored outside Somerset House, was famous and included dancers to entertain you as part of the entrance fee (Pendergrast, 2010). Coffee houses were soon set up for every trade and profession, mimicking the ancient tradition of particular quarters for particular trades, which is still seen today in the City, with particular districts being still associated with Banking, Insurance, Securities or Law, for example. What is interesting is that it was the coffee houses which seemed to distinguish London from all the other great European cities, and which were remarked upon by foreign visitors as being peculiar to the British capital (Ackroyd, 2001). In contrast to the taverns, which were viewed as rowdy, crowded and generally unproductive places in which to do business, coffee was marketed as the perfect accompaniment to business transactions, in that it prevented drowsiness and was the preferred drink of serious men (ibid).

Particular houses began to attract a distinct clientele. Perhaps the most famous example is Lloyd's coffee house on Tower Street, established in 1688, which quickly earned a reputation as the place to go for marine insurance. It later evolved into Lloyd's of London. Chapter's in St Paul's alley was the rendezvous for publishers and booksellers, especially of legal tomes. The coffee houses began to be known as 'penny universities' (the entrance fee was a penny), allowing anyone who could afford this relatively cheap sum the opportunity to discuss politics, scholarships and current affairs with like-minded men. They were not always

popular with women, however, who were not permitted entry (although some women worked in the coffee houses), and the Women's Petition Against Coffee was launched in 1674, by a group of wives critical of the amount of time their husbands spent 'idling' in the coffee houses (The Telegraph, 2012). The atmosphere in the coffee houses was both febrile and judgemental; plays, politician's speeches and novels were all given verdicts by the patrons. A jury of coffee drinkers even sat in judgement on local lunatics, who were brought in to be assessed, the verdict related to whether or not they would be sent to one of the local madhouses (ibid). Ideas, fashions and discoveries were shared and debated; stocks and shares were traded at table tops. The coffee houses encouraged a market in ideas, and in the trading of risks and guesses, as well as of materials; in this sense, they gave birth to modern finance capitalism, still the beating heart of today's City.

Although the coffee house culture began to decline during the eighteenth century as the nation's tastes turned towards tea, as a result of the Indian imperial adventure, the coffee houses lingered well into nineteenth century London. Some became specialised exchanges, (for example the Royal Exchange), others became private Gentleman's clubs or members-only dining houses, preserving the tradition of male only establishments, and linking the exchange of ideas and news, drinking and entertainment, to the idea of membership and insider status.

Heart of Empire

The history of London as a financial centre is bound up with Britain's imperial past. The physical development of the City as a financial centre dates from the mid seventeenth century when the Bank of England was established (McDowell, 1997). By 1750 there were 40 banks in London, and almost twice as many again by the end of the century (ibid: 45), during the prime of Britain's imperial dominance into and including the nineteenth century. Although

during the twentieth century the First World War caused a hiatus in growth as German investment banks left London, with the international depression continuing this slump and the Second World War causing another withdrawal of some German, Italian and Japanese banks, there was a resurgence from the late 1950s onwards which cemented London as one of the small number of global cities ‘which are at the nodes of a complex interlocking network of markets, each the key player in a different time zone’ (ibid: 46). Its importance to the country is not only as the pre-eminent European financial centre, but is also due to its historic importance at the heart of the modern city; the nucleus from which the radius grew, as outlined below.

The City has gone from being the centre of a large Empire to one of the few urban centres given the designation of ‘global’ (King, 1990). Not only is the City itself the oldest part of London, (established as a trading port, Londinium, in AD50 by Roman merchants on the River Thames), the ‘Square Mile’ is the original radius of the capital, the place from which modern London grew. The original city was destroyed by Boudicca’s revolt against the Roman occupying army in AD60, but was rebuilt from AD70 to include public spaces such as a forum and basilica, a palace and amphitheatre (Kenyon, 2012: 12). Geographically, the City is located on the northern side of the Thames. Its current boundaries are slightly extended from the original city walls built by the Romans. The remaining concession to this ancient perimeter is the busy road, London Wall; the original wall was built around AD200 and ran for two miles, with 6m high gateways at road intersections (ibid).

Although this potted history places the City firmly within the heart of empire – a Roman imperial outpost, the heart of the British Empire some 1800 years later – and binds it to notions of trade and money, Welsh/British legend tells a different story. Prehistoric London was peopled by legendary kings, among them King Lud, who, it is claimed, named the embryonic city Caer Ludein, (from which London is derived), and who is apparently buried

at Ludgate. Statues of King Lud and his sons, which formerly stood right on top of the gate, now stand in the porch in the church of St Dunstan-in-the-West on Fleet Street (Ackroyd, 2000: 11-15). This mythological history is of interest partly because of the importance granted to the city in myth; for example, legend foretells that if King Lud's head is unearthed from its resting place, then the great city of London will fall (evoking the later myths of the ravens at the Tower of London), but also because alongside the symbolism of the City as a place of mercantile and rational power sits another mythological history, one connected with crisis and danger. Ludgate circus, where Lud's head is supposedly buried, is where St Paul's Cathedral stands.

St Paul's occupies a significant place in the national identity of the English. 'Old' St Paul's (actually the fourth incarnation of the Cathedral, built by the Normans after 1087 and completed with a Palladian front by Inigo Jones) was gutted during the Great Fire of 1666. The new Wren cathedral soon became one of the most famous and recognisable sights in London, and further cemented its mythological importance when it survived aerial bombing during the London Blitz of 1940/1941 (ibid: 744). During particularly heavy bombing on the night of 29th December 1940, Winston Churchill apparently insisted that all fire-fighting resources be directed at St Paul's. The cathedral must be saved, he said, since the alternative would damage the morale of the country. Thus the cathedral became a symbol of heroic British endurance and survival (Daniels, 1993, cited in Jacobs, 1996).

Architecturally, the biggest influence on the modern City was the rebuilding that took place after the Great Fire of 1666. This gave the City much of its present form and introduced many of its greatest monuments. Unlike the previous random sprawl, which had grown up organically over centuries, the rebuilding was carried out along more orderly and rational lines. Yet esoteric, Masonic and mythological imagery still abounds in the City; dragons mark the major entrances to the City, for example, Temple Bar and Blackfriars bridge,

Aldgate and Bishopgate, Faringdon and Holborn. Christopher Wren's assistant, Hawksmoor, built churches based on a layout of intersecting axes and rectangles, which he described as being based on the 'rules of the ancients'. His work borrows from Egyptian, Greek and Roman architecture, all revered by the Freemasons to which he and Wren are rumoured to have belonged. But it is the alignment of his churches as much as their architecture that has provoked speculation, with some claiming that the churches form triangles and pentacles, and that they guard, mark or rest upon the City's apparent sources of occult power. This contrast between the orderly, rational and modern, and the mythological, sacred and hidden, occurs again and again in the mythology and history of the City (see Appendix A for a map of the City churches).

In terms of the symbolism of the City, it is in a sense both history and mythology made concrete. Even one of the oldest remnants of the City, the London Stone, has its origins shrouded in mythology and folklore. Currently situated on Canon Street, neither the date of the original erection nor its function are known, and whether Roman, Saxon or Druidic, it has recently entered the psycho-geographical writings of Iain Sinclair (1997, 1998) as an element in what has been called London's sacred geometry (Coverley, 2012). This alternative and occult cultural tradition posits that London's most ancient sacred sites are not scattered at random but rather their locations define a precise pattern of geometric shapes – circles, pentagrams, hexagons and stars - which form a vast network across greater London. As discussed above, the stated aim of the post Great Fire rebuilding was to develop the streets along more rational and orderly lines, however esoteric and Masonic aspects are revealed within the plan.

Although the first Grand Lodge was not established until 1717, freemasonry was developing rapidly during the seventeenth century, as were other movements connected to the understanding of the occult; the Royal Society was founded in 1660 with the aim of

‘improving natural knowledge’, which included astrology, sacred geometry, alchemy and numerology as well as what we now think of as the natural sciences. In addition to the apparent alignments between ancient churches and other places of worship, London still has a number of more recently constructed buildings which seem to owe something to the occult traditions; Canary Wharf is topped by a pyramid with a flashing light at its centre. A pyramid topped by an eye is a familiar symbol from the US dollar bill and is an apparently Masonic symbol. Even the nomenclature of the City has masonic significance – the ‘Square Mile’ is actually a rectangle, yet squares feature heavily in Masonic ritual and symbolism (Sinclair, 1997).

To summarise, as Merrifield (1993: 526) puts it, (although not speaking specifically of the City):

The landscape is thus impregnated with symbols and imagery that have an explicit and insidious impact in spatial practice of everyday life. To this end, for Lefebvre, the symbolic landscape is fecund with myths and legends, and hence remains a formidable means of appropriating space.

With this multi-layered history in mind, existing literature on the City and the working lives within it will be explored, with particular reference to how a particular place can be understood as a social construct, and why the materiality of place should be explored alongside its social and cultural traditions.

Literature on the City: Exploring the social and the material

The processes of globalization, so central to the modern image of the City (Sassen, 1991) and the importance of brand and image to late twentieth and early twenty first century organizations (Amin and Thrift, 2002), indicates that place and setting is no longer important;

these organisations are weightless and linked to a global ‘space of flows’, facilitated by new technologies (Castells, 1996; Leadbeater, 2000). This can apply to modern finance, with its phantasmic reliance (De Cock et al, 2009) on future bets, optional bets and hedges. More recent constructions of the digital age, for example the Gherkin and the Shard, are buildings of light and air, glass and wide horizons, symbolizing the flow of global finance through the ether; the classical god of communications, after all, was the winged, airborne and fleet footed Hermes.

Parker (2007, 2015) pays particular attention to the vertical construction evident in modern cities; although he does not write specifically about the City, he discusses how the skyscraper not only symbolizes modern organizations, but is itself a materialization of modern organizing, in that the very fact of its construction involves complex organizing (2015: 218). Yet in terms of their symbolism, he draws attention to the functions of skyscrapers as advertisements for ego; they are often viewed as:

Thieves of light and air and energy; representations of hierarchy and exclusion; and
(of course) compensations for having a small penis (ibid)

He explicitly associates the story of the rise of the skyscraper to the rise of the office building, and so directly to the rise of ‘the office’ and ‘the organization’ (ibid: 217), highlighting their importance to urban modernity, and associating the beginnings of a rationalization of *organization*, with the rationalization of space. Yet despite their dominance, both visually and symbolically, he also highlights their association with vulnerability; writing post 9-11, he notes that ‘hierarchy is vulnerable, even if its soaring heights inspire awe, and can be seen from a considerable distance’, making an interesting connection between fragility and soaring towers. Likewise, De Cock et al (2009), whilst recognising that ‘organizations have arguably always used the built environment as a way of physically and symbolically

signifying power and strength' (ibid: 8), also points out that in depictions of the cityscape in financial advertising, images can be used to signify control over the city itself, which:

Provides a powerful image that at once depicts control and domination but also insulation and protection against the uncertainties of an otherwise uncontrollable nature and force (ibid).

Again, this raises questions about the symbolism of both control and vulnerability which is encoded in the materialism of these high status buildings.

Interestingly, Parker is also indirectly concerned with the older, imperial architecture of the City, at least, if not so much the materiality, in the formation and sedimentation of the narrative symbolism of the Bank of England, in the very heart of the City. In their book *Daniel Defoe and the Bank of England: The Dark Arts of Projectors*, Hamilton and Parker (2016) point out that historians locate the foundation of the Bank at the heart of the emergence of Britain as an imperial and economic power. Nowadays we privilege the rational as a foundation metaphor, yet it is imagination, hazard, the opportunity for deceit, and the tensions between order and disorder, they posit, which were the real drivers. Critics of the Bank, which was seemingly so replete with masculine values of enterprise and risk, accused it of being emasculated; as the authors put it, 'when all else fails, call them women' (ibid: 89). Finance capital, so new, so threatening to the status quo, because it directly challenged the land owning elite, was presented, and reviled, as being fickle and mysterious, a temptress, a seductress; the economic man was a feminized and therefore inferior version of a real man. This poses questions relevant to this study, not only about the traditions of gender inclusion and exclusion in the City, but also about how the material structures of buildings help transform their symbolism – from the risky and uncertain to the stable and enduring.

Less attention, however, seems to have been given as to how this materiality is incorporated into everyday organizational life in the contemporary city (Dale, 2005). Drawing specifically on Lefebvre's writing, where, as outlined above, materiality is not atomized into discrete objects, but the whole make up of a particular space is understood as a combined socio-material interaction, Dale argues that this approach can be used as a valuable contribution to understanding how organizational life is enacted. As Dale explains, arguing such a case means navigating a course between realist determinism and social constructionism 'that only recognises the social and cultural as meaningful' (ibid: 652).

Thrift (1996) discusses how the City was historically reproduced by an interrelated web of time and space, for example, the various temporal routines associated with the management of money, such as the historic cheque clearing systems, along with rules on spatial regulation of the City; for example all Stock Exchange members had to maintain an office within 700 yards of the Exchange building. The recognisably monumental buildings declared the City's financial power (ibid: 240-241). These traditions, rhythms and materiality all combine to form what he calls 'a coherent City space ... confirming the identity of place and person.' (ibid: 241). The network of contacts, always so vital to professional life in the City, has been focused by the City's small spatial extent, so ensuring that the City, was, in effect, kept in the City (ibid:240-241). He also refers to the historic social and spatial segregation of women in the City, when large numbers of women started to work in the City, mainly in clerical roles, following the Second World War, but who were excluded from the homogeneity of the City by the prevailing codes of sexuality, by the gendered nature of the work, and by class distinctions (most were working class women from the East End).

McDowell (1997) explores the changing nature of work in a setting dominated by one business sector (financial services), focusing particularly on the gender relations between the

men and women who work in the City, and examining the multiple ways in which masculinities and femininities are constructed therein. She also explores the inherent contradictions of the phantom, ethereal nature of modern global finance and its physical representation in a solid geographical setting, as well as how the materiality of the built environment and its symbolic meanings are linked to social practices – for after all, landscapes are the concrete expressions of a society and its institutions of power (ibid: 39).

As McDowell argues, organizational scholars are typically analysts of workplace interactions, yet ‘they too often ignore the significance of the local, neglecting what is specific and different about the places they study’ (2009: 2). This section will investigate what is both specific and different about the City of London in the literature. As Gieryn (2000:471, emphasis added) reminds us:

Places are endlessly made, not just when the powerful pursue their ambition through brick and mortar, not just when design professionals give form to function, but also *when ordinary people extract from continuous and abstract space a bounded, meaningful named and significant place.*

Lefebvre’s concept of conceived space is space, usually urban, that has been designed by architects and planners, space where an attempt to define its meaning and purpose has been made (for example spaces for work, leisure, housing, recreation). The dominant form of conceived space, according to Lefebvre (1991: 52), is abstract space. This space will forever remain abstract since it is by nature conceived, as opposed to directly lived and shaped organically. The ideal organizational abstract space is rarefied, cerebral and disembodied where the worker is a rational and calculating instrument (Massey, 1995). The model is a masculine one (McDowell, 2009), and the behaviours that it seeks to contain within the space

‘affirm masculine solidarity ... by excluding women and behaviours that might be associated with femininity’ (ibid: 53). For Lefebvre, it is a homogenous space:

Abstract space functions ‘objectally’ as a set of things/signs and their formal relationships: glass and stone, concrete and steel, angles and curves, full and empty. Formal and quantitative, it erases distinctions’ (1991: 49).

This dominant form of space, exemplified by Lefebvre in the centres of wealth and power (ibid), ‘endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there’ (ibid). Those differences which are excluded, he posits, are forced into symbolic forms of art. As he terms it, ‘a symbolism derived from that mis-taking of the sensory, sensual and sexual’ (ibid) so that these are represented in derivative forms: ‘monuments have a phallic aspect, towers exude arrogance’ (ibid).

This bureaucratic ideal is exemplified in both the imperial buildings of the City and the soaring towers, buildings of power which physically dominate the environment.

McDowell (1997) highlights the ways that in the City, the high status occupations (investment banking, and certain professions such as actuaries, consultants and accountants), represent this abstract idealized version of disembodied masculinity (in the following chapter, I will explore the different masculinities present within the City – in particular the contrast with the disembodied cerebral ideal, and the physical, embodied atmosphere of, for example, trading floors and dealing rooms). In this world of high finance, the worker is: ‘free from the messy, emotional demands of everyday life rather like a medieval monk or old-fashioned Oxbridge academic’ (ibid: 61). Thus in the City, abstract space is both conceived and idealized, although its dominance, as Lefebvre predicts, relies on exclusion:

As Lefebvre noted, abstract space is fundamentally contradictory because while it is a space that encourages homogeneity, it can only exist by accentuating difference. The image of homogeneity and unity that is a central feature of abstract space can, according to Lefebvre, only be achieved and maintained through a continued space-sponsored process of fragmentation and marginalisation that elides difference (McCann, 1999: 171).

Lefebvre explains that because of its exclusion of difference, abstract space does in fact carry within it the seeds of a new space which he calls ‘differential space’ (1991: 52) – because for him a new space cannot be produced unless it accentuates all the things which abstract space excludes. How this might relate to the abstract space within the City will be explored during the empirical research. Likewise, how the dominance of masculine abstract space is maintained in the City will be fully explored in the following chapter with reference to gender; particularly to the exclusion of femininity within the City, but also in relation to other, non-hegemonic, masculinities, such as that celebrated in the noisy, sweaty, ‘carnavalesque’ (McDowell, 1997: 167) atmosphere of the trading floor.

Conceived space is planned space and is materialised by the topography of the setting and by the architecture. In the City, the physicality of materiality and what Lefebvre describes as the *imaginary* aspects, i.e. that which conveys its social, cultural and historical meaning, is exemplified by the distinctive architecture, both historic and modern, and the meanings and memories associated with them. In this way, the City is both a post-imperial city and a postmodern city; the buildings are both imbued with traces of Britain’s imperial past (e.g. the Bank of England), and also modern and replete with another kind of masculine sexual imagery, (e.g. the Gherkin, The Shard). The architecture of the City still draws upon the confidence afforded by memories of eighteenth- and- nineteenth-century empire, and also

exudes a more outwardly aggressive, competitive and modern status, aligning itself with late twentieth and twenty first century competitors, and exemplifying what Lefebvre terms ‘phallic verticality’ (1991: 36).

In the City, the history of power and empire are not confined to the past. Jacobs (1996: 40) describes the history of empire as an ‘active memory’ in the City, and she goes on to say that ‘place plays an important role in the way in which memories of empire remain active’ (ibid). She brings a post-colonial perspective to the imperial nostalgias in this one time heart of empire, and she connects this to the architecture of, for example, the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange and the Mansion House, which can be seen to represent constructs of privilege and power and potent reminders of imperial dominance. In this way, the social structures and the history and culture of the City and its material structures are shown to be mutually enacting. Jacobs pays attention to the specifics of place in preserving memory:

Place plays an important role in the way in which memories of empire remain active. For example, the efforts to preserve the historic built environment in the present are often also efforts to preserve buildings and city scenes which memorialise the might of empire (ibid:40).

Jacobs also draws attention to the ‘urban hierarchy’ (ibid: 51) in the City, where the Victorian buildings play a visually subservient role, a ‘supporting cast’ to the stars – the Georgian imperial buildings, particularly the big players (the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange, the Mansion House). These buildings are replete with classic symbolism, mainly of classical goddesses in various states of undress, reminding us of Lefebvre’s insistence, as we saw above, that those differences which are excluded from abstract space are forced into symbolic forms of art, particularly art concerned with the sensory and the sexual; Lefebvre describes representational spaces as ‘redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements’ (1991: 41). In

this way, the literature points us towards the existence of spaces of representation in the City and their symbolic function – as Lefebvre reminds us, symbolism finds objective expression in these spaces in derivative ways, and is an attempt to mould and dominate, and to reduce resistance and difference

Whilst this thesis describes the City as a specific and particular place, which expresses a certain communality of experience and performance (as conceptualised in the preceding chapter), it should however be pointed out that the experience of place is different for different groups of people. As Massey (1994) explains, place was traditionally perceived as personified by home and what was considered to be the mundane lives of women and children. Whilst the City is not characterized by the domestic or the feminine (in fact the opposite applies), Massey's emphasis on how groups and individuals are differently positioned within the social networks which constitute place are relevant here. How Lefebvre's (1991) theories of space can help disentangle the social networks which make up the City, and what this means for those excluded from the dominant and mutually understood culture of the City, is explored below.

Having identified the materiality of the City as entwined with its social practices, and having identified these social practices as being both conceived as idealized masculine spaces and represented symbolically as spaces of power, it is also important to think about what is excluded from the City. . Allen and Pryke (1994) draw attention to the people who 'disappear' within the City, focusing particularly on those who clean, cater within, and ultimately secure the space of finance on a subcontracted basis. They are interested in exploring how two work forces, one visible, the other invisible, occupy the same place, yet live their everyday lives within different spaces. They use Lefebvre's approach to the production of social space to help disentangle the social spaces which constitute the City of

London. As they point out, the City *is* finance (ibid: 459), and anything not pertaining to this dominant sector is sidelined:

This is even more striking if one looks at the City's latest built form—which at first sight presents a formidable representation of the homogeneity of global finance. This is the goal as it were of any abstract space, which, if we are to take Lefebvre literally, attempts to repress the diversity of space in order to convey a singular image (ibid: 459).

They point to the production of a dominant coding in the City, and to the way in which it has been secured by the repression of differences, and point to its 'cohesive clubbiness, its dress codes, its web of gentleman's agreements' (ibid: 460) as evidence of its legacy of social practices which help cement tradition and which derive from its spatial history, with its roots in the small members-only coffee houses. The buildings themselves operate a form of social exclusions, functioning as sites of power – or 'monumental space' (ibid). They draw a comparison between the 'old' City, that of monumental space, and the new global space, characterized by the faceless structures of steel and glass towers. Whilst making important points about the materiality of the City and its connections to social practices, they also point out that, as Lefebvre indicates in his descriptions of abstract space, that contradictions of space arise through the inability of a dominant space to suppress entirely the diversity and difference within its bounds. In drawing attention to the different work forces (the largely migrant and often invisible workforce of cleaners, caterers and security staff) which occupy the same place of finance, yet live those spaces in markedly different ways, their intention is to show how the power of an abstract space seeks to strip all meaning from other 'users', although never with complete success, since in each case the space can be shown to be lived through different rhythms and practices which weaken the claim of the City to a singular identity (ibid: 472).

McDowell (1997) also draws attention to those who are Othered by and within the City. For women working within a space that is conceived and represented as inherently masculine, their gender and appearance are at odds with the occupations that they perform and the tasks that they carry out (ibid: 153). Indeed, the nature of everyday interactions in many City professions constructs women as Other:

The workplace is distinguished by its rational and bureaucratic social order, an arena supposedly unmarked by emotion or by personal characteristics or attributes, one that above all is associated with all that is culturally valued as masculine¹¹ (ibid: 34).

She found during her empirical research that not only were military and sporting metaphors and analogies common when men were talking in the workplace, but that ways of referring to the actual work carried out in the City (mainly on the trading floors of investment banks) were sexualised, specific examples being the way that a rising market is described as a hard-on, a successful trade is greeted by cries of ‘bollocks out’, exaggerated expense claims are referred to as raping the cards, and deals are consummated and compared to orgasms (ibid: 148). Women are both excluded and Othered by this type of language. The ways in which both the materiality of the City, and the social practices, including the discourse, combine and interact to position women as Other will be more fully explored in the following chapter. For now, the focus is on the City as a place that is constructed for rational man and not for women. Although she is referring to cities, rather than the City itself, Wilson (1992:9) specifically links women to disorder in an urban environment: ‘Consequently, women have become an interruption in the city, a symptom of disorder, and a problem: the Sphinx in the city’.

¹¹ As seen above, (pages 61-62), Lefebvre reminds us that differences excluded from dominant space (and, indeed, the temporal life of the City, see Allen and Pryke (1994)) are often forced into symbolic forms, particularly that concerned with the sensory and the sexual, hence the representation (in the form of statuary) in the City of women as Greek goddesses, or the prevailing image of Britannia on the bank notes issued by the Bank of England.

Disorder is therefore something to be managed out of the place, yet even a brief glance at the history of the City tells us that periods of chaos and disorder are frequently experienced, and cannot be ignored when attempting to understand how social and spatial practices are entwined and sedimented in this place.

Conclusion

To summarise, my definition of place as that which is created by human experience and shared associations, has led to a focus on the City itself as a place replete with meanings and experiences. Considering it as a place where location, material form and socio-cultural associations collide has led to explorations of the literature which focus upon the narrative symbolism of its monumental materiality, and which recognise it as what Thrift (1996: 241) calls a coherent space which confirms the identity of place. McDowell (2011) emphasises how the built environment of the City and its symbolic meanings are entwined with its social practices, leading to a tradition of inclusion and exclusion based primarily on gender.

Through an exploration of the literature I have attempted to uncover the dominant narrative of this particular place. Conceived primarily as abstract space, and with a very particular history encoding social practices which rely upon exclusion, this dominant narrative is based on a version of rational, cerebral masculinity. Despite the apparent lack of diversity in the City which is prevalent in the literature, Soja's (1989) belief that understandings of advanced capitalism lead inevitably to the city is affirmed, since:

Lefebvre's concept of 'abstract space' – space represented by elite social groups as homogenous, instrumental and ahistorical in order to facilitate the exercise of state power and the free flow of capital – lends itself to a discussion of the manner in which

downtown business spaces in ... cities are exclusionary territories dominated by white, middle class males (McCann, 1999: 164).

How Lefebvre's theory of space is materialised in the City, and how it can be understood in relation to other, more corporeal versions of masculinity, as well as what might be excluded or repressed, is the focus of the empirical study. That the City is associated with all that is culturally valued as masculine (McDowell, 1997: 34) leads us to consider not only how masculinity is performed here, and what competing types of masculinities may be vying for dominance, but also that which is 'other' in the City and how this setting relies on exclusion of the other. These questions will be further explored in the following chapter. This chapter has introduced ideas as to how the material and the social combine in the City to both represent and construct dominance and power, which leads us to questions of how the dominant meanings of the City are reinforced by lived experience. As McDowell explains in relation to the City, 'for the majority of its temporal existence it has been the ebb and flow of men who have given meaning (to these spaces),' (1997: 59). What that might mean for those excluded from this place and from its dominant meanings will be the subject of Chapter Three.

Chapter Three: Situating the performance of gender

Introduction

As introduced in Chapter Two, the City of London is imagined and constructed in relation to a dominant masculinity. This chapter seeks to explore the literature which discusses how gender is enacted in organizations; in other words, how masculinities and femininities are constructed both in the workplace in general, and more particularly in this setting. This will open the way for the empirical research which will investigate how the City of London is experienced in relation to this dominant masculinity, what different types of masculinities may be co-existing or competing for dominance in the space, and how this affects both men and women; in Lefebvrian terminology, how gendered performances shape how the space is perceived. Focusing on the *situating* of gender in the City, the chapter opens up the argument that the performance of gender is manifested in and through both the socio-cultural and material aspects of the City.

Much has been written about the dominance of masculinity generally within the workplace (Pringle, 1989; Acker, 1990; Kerfoot and Knights, 1993; Collinson and Hearn, 1994, *inter alia*), about how women are 'Othered' in various ways (Cockburn 1983, 1988, 1991; Höpfl and Matilal, 2007; Young, 2011), and how gender roles are performed (Allen and Pryke, 1994; McDowell, 1997; Czarniawska, 2006; Tyler and Cohen, 2010). Tracing the literature from assumptions of gender as a fixed attribute through an ontological and theoretical shift towards gender as processual and performative, the chapter then explores how gender is materialized within the workplace, which leads to a review of literature examining how masculinities are constructed and performed, and what this might mean within this particular setting. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of the literature which argues for critical insights into the relationship between gender and materiality, and which situates the

performances of gender not only within individual workplaces, but in organizational settings more broadly. In this way, the literature on gender and organization also becomes situated within wider studies encompassing geography, culture and organizational theory so that gender relations are placed at the heart of a socio material analysis of the research setting.

Changing ontologies of gender

The use of the term ‘gender’, as opposed to sex, derives from the oppositions between masculine and feminine which historically extended beyond the relations between men and woman to the consideration of questions regarding the genesis of the universe (Colebrook, 2004). The interaction of these two dynamic but opposing principles - of which physically embodied men and women are but expressions – are often described mythically; for example creation myths often present a formless or chthonic female matter which is impregnated by an active male power: ‘this passive darkness and chaos is presented as feminine and is clearly opposed to the masculine power of light and form’ (ibid: 2). Gender was therefore something that to the pre-modern mind was represented by two opposing forces which interact, with masculinity generally viewed as active, and femininity passive and receptive. Gender extended far from human bodies to describe the underlying forces of the universe. This mythic thinking, as De Beauvoir (2011, originally published 1949) argued, underpins the fundamental structures of modern thought, particularly in the ways in which we relate the self to ideas of the Other, which for De Beauvoir was the most basic category of human thought (Colebrook, 2004: 3), since without the Other, the self could not be defined, and, for her, woman has historically been used to represent the Other in opposition to man: ‘He is the Subject, he is the Absolute. She is the Other’ (De Beauvoir, 2011: 6). Although she acknowledges additional historical Others based on racism and class distinctions, for De Beauvoir woman is the exemplary Other, the inessential formed in opposition to man, the essential: ‘Woman’s drama lies in this conflict between the fundamental claim of every

subject, which always posits itself as essential, and the demands of a situation which constitutes her as inessential' (ibid: 17). She is inessential because she is determined and differentiated by her relation to man, whereas man is not in relation to woman, for he represents both the positive and the neuter so that in most languages, the word for 'man' designates most human beings (she gives the specific example of 'hommes' in French). De Beauvoir challenges the mythic view of gender; she takes issue with the assumption that maleness and femaleness exist outwith the lived experience of men and women. She explains the relations between male and female – and between the subject and the other – as deriving from the physical experience of living within a male or female body rather than from cosmic and sacred oppositions underpinning the natural world.

Until the last thirty years or so of the twentieth century, sex and gender were viewed as essentially separate yet, ultimately, fixed; ascribed at birth (sex), and achieved (gender). Gender as an achievement was generally believed to culminate in the appropriation, at around the age of five, of behaviours constructed culturally and socially (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

From the 1970s onwards, differing theories about sex and gender began to emerge. The parameters of the debate coalesced around questions such as the biological imperatives for ascribing gender (Bart, 1971). Questions began to be asked about the acculturation of gender and whether or not cultural norms can cause fluctuations in gender identity (Acker, 1973). Oakley posits that the rise of social science theory would help to disentangle sex and gender and their relationships with society:

'Sex' is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible difference in genitalia, the related difference in procreative function. 'Gender',

however, is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ (Oakley, 1972, as read in Colebrook, 2004: 9).

The rise of interdisciplinary feminist theory gave a greater prominence to discussions of how gender could be minimised in order to liberate women from biological constraints, and, in tandem, a theoretical and ontological shift in notions of gender began to take shape. A dualistic view of gender as a stable identity, once attained, began to be called into question, and the processual qualities of gender, that is, ideas relating to impermanence and fluidity, came into prominence: ‘being a man or a woman, then cannot be a fixed state; it is a becoming, a condition actively under construction’ (Connell, 2002: 4). From the 1980s, influenced by French post-structuralists and the linguistic turn in social theory, with an increasing focus on how meaning is constructed and re-constructed via language, notions of gender arose that viewed this not as an attribute acquired by a certain age and then fixed, but rather, as something essentially performative and fluid over a lifetime (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Butler, 1988); in other words, gender began to be seen as an outcome rather than a foundation of everyday lived experience.

An introduction to gender performativity

This section will provide a brief overview of the ways of thinking about performance and performativity have influenced the sense that identities are constructed in and through social action, rather than existing anterior to social processes (Gregson and Rose, 2000). Whilst Goffman (1956, 1963, 1967) approached social interaction through a dramaturgical metaphor involving the staged performances of individuals to an audience, with a conscious and performing self behind each interaction (Gregson and Rose, 2000), Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 2004), in particular, has instead turned to a linguistic definition of performativity, which differs from a theatrical or psychoanalytic account of performance; for Butler there is no

social agent existing prior to enacted discourse. She argues that ‘the ‘doing’ of discourse cites already established formations of knowledge and it is this citation which produces social subjects’ (ibid: 436). She theorises performativity specifically to displace the heteronormative assumptions about sex and gender (Butler, 1990, Sedgwick, 1994). Although this chapter is not engaging in a full account of Butler’s rich and deep theorisation, I am offering a selective reading, drawing on specific aspects of her work and ideas in order to help reveal the ways in which multiplicities of gender may be present in spatial settings, and which will be further discussed in Chapter Seven. Butler develops the notion of the Other in relation to gender construction in her performative theory of gender. As introduced above, she describes identity, including gender identity, as performative, constructed within and through language and discourse. As Tyler (2011) notes, Butler emphasizes that it is the continually and repeatedly performed acts of repetition with regard to gender that constitute both gender and gendered subjects simultaneously; we do not simply perform gender, but our performance itself brings our gender into being (ibid:13). Through these interactions and their repetition, such norms and expectations are considered the natural ways of doing gender and so help to maintain a gender hierarchy. Gendered identities are continually produced and reproduced; gender is an act that brings into being what it names; there is no gender identity which precedes language (Butler, 1990).

Both Butler and, before her, De Beauvoir, are preoccupied with understanding the gendering of subjectivity; Butler (1990) emphasizes that stylized acts of repetition are what constitute both gender and gendered subjects. In this sense, Butler can be seen as the direct inheritor of De Beauvoir’s claim that ‘One is not born, but, rather, becomes, woman’ (de Beauvoir, 2011: 153). Butler’s notion of gender performativity (1990, 1993, 2004) has been pivotal in re-thinking gender beyond dualistic concepts of masculinity and femininity. Focusing attention on the fragility of gender categories, scholars have built upon Butler’s theorisations by

exploring gender, sexuality and other aspects of organizational identity as performative accomplishments (Thanem, 2011, Tyler and Cohen, 2008, 2010, inter alia). Other scholars have explored ways in which organizational phenomena such as management can be considered as masquerade or drag (Parker, 2002) highlighting how such identities can only ever be an impersonation or approximation (Harding et al, 2008). It is by emphasizing the disjunction between the body of the performer and the gender that is being performed that performances such as drag reveal the imitative nature of all gender identities (Butler, 1990). Butler's performative ontology of gender forms the basis of queer thinking, which will be discussed below. Butler's theories of gender performativity have helped establish the foundations of queer theory, which originated in poststructuralist, feminist theory and critical theory (Peterson, 1998). Queer theory was intended to scrutinise heteronormativity - and normativity in general – and to disturb, disrupt and transform binary thinking. It challenges essentialist constructions of categories of gender and sexuality (Parker, 2001, 2002, Harding et al, 2011, Rumens 2011, 2012, Pullen et al, 2016, Rumens and Tyler, 2015). It represents a radical opposition to hegemonic normativity, that is, to the dominant norms shaping the conferment or denial of recognition (Tyler and Cohen 2008). Much queer theorizing is motivated by a concern with the heteronormativity of everyday life, including organizational life, and it can therefore 'be understood as a conceptual resource for exposing the unstable and multivalent nature of identity, language and norms' (Rumens, 2016: 40-41). Queering can therefore be viewed as a form of critique that questions the idea of 'normal' behaviour; as Halperin (1995: 62) describes it, 'it is by definition whatever is as odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant'. Parker (2002: 158) describes it as 'an act of unceasing disruptiveness', which is able to destabilize normative visions of management and organizing; it is a 'turbulent and unsettling term' (ibid: 148). He uses 'queering' as a verb to indicate the unsettling of complacencies (2016). Other studies (e.g. Lee et al, 2008, Rumens

and Kerfoot, 2009, Tyler and Cohen, 2008) build upon this disruptive concept of queering to expose the instability and diversity of meanings attached to identity categories and gender binaries and use queer theory to interrogate management, leadership and public administration; as Lee et al (2008: 149) explain, queer theory ‘can develop insights that previously have been inaccessible.’

Rumens (2016) adopts a process of ‘queering’ to analyse the ways in which LGBT individuals experience and negotiate heteronormativity within business schools in the UK. In an attempt to cultivate more reflexive debates within business schools about the mechanisms of hierarchy and exclusion that operate within them, his focus is to help LGBT individuals and their allies develop counter-hegemonic practices that can help business schools ‘establish more inclusive conditions for sustaining myriad perspectives, lives and identities that resist different normative models of being human in the world of work’ (ibid: 49).

Given the dominant corporate and managerialist agenda of UK business schools (Pullen et al, 2016), there are some interesting comparisons to be made here with the City as a site of organizational practices and the dominant heteronormativity, particularly in relation to masculinity, reviewed in Chapter Two, and the patterns of gender inclusion and exclusion which operate there; this can be viewed as an important contribution from queer theory to this thesis. In other words, this particular aspect of queer theory is helpful in developing a critique of the ways in which heteronormativity orders who and what belongs, and on what terms, hierarchically.

In addition to the above, drawing on Butler’s concept of a performative ontology can help ‘queer’ the City as a workplace. Valentine (2002: 145-160), reminds us that ‘space is understood to play an active role in the constitution and reproduction of social identities, and social identities and meanings are recognised as producing material or symbolic spaces’.

Gregson and Rose (2000) argue that more work needs to be done to tease out the performative qualities of space and the gendered practices that bring these spaces into being. What role, then do places of organization play in compelling or constraining gender performances? Examining how and why they achieve this, and how this constraint or compulsion is experienced, the following section will turn to a review of studies of gender in the workplace, and specifically within the City, which can help 'place' the multiplicities of gender in the research setting. The aim is to therefore develop a critique of the City as a performative place, drawing on queer theory's ontology.

Gender at work: A review

How gender relations are constructed and performed within the world of work is important to this thesis, not only because of the hierarchically gendered status of the City, but also because of the importance of the workplace to contemporary society: 'Accordingly, if we are to understand the economic dimension of gender, the structure of production relations, we must examine the corporation' (Connell, 2002: 97). A growing body of work from the 1970s onwards (Cockburn, 1983, 1988, 1991; Connell, 1987; Scott, 1999) focused on women's exclusion from the workplace, gender segregation and inequalities of pay and power. The dominant perspective was to examine the inequalities of power, although within this approach it was assumed that the workers entered employment with their gender attributes both established and fixed (e.g. Massey, 1984). A number of small scale qualitative and ethnographic studies (Pringle, 1989; Cockburn, 1983), concerned with women's positions in relation to power within the workplace, began to identify social practices which acted as obstacles to women's advancement. Gender in the workplace, it began to be argued, is an aspect of socio-structural processes as well as of individual identity (Acker, 1992). Gender hierarchies, it was argued, (Cockburn 1983; Collinson et al, 1990) do not merely result from tradition, but are actively defended in the workplace. Pringle's (1989) analysis of secretarial

work showed how the relations between secretaries and their (male) bosses depended on gendered interactions. In this way, employees and employers both actively construct these gendered positions, and she posits that identities are not fixed when people enter the workplace but instead are shifting and ambiguous. The idea that organisations themselves are not gender neutral, but locations where identities are constructed; places in which people ‘do gender’ (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 126), is further developed by Acker (1990:146), who argues that societal assumptions about gender underline the ways in which organisations are constructed; they are, in themselves, gendered processes which are continually being constructed and reconstructed:

To say that an organization is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine.

Acker, crucially, identifies the missing feminine within organisations; since the idealized abstract worker is a man, the female worker is by definition both subordinate and absent:

Abstract jobs and hierarchies ... assume a disembodied and universal worker. This worker is actually a man: men’s bodies, sexuality and relationships to procreation and waged work are subsumed in the image of the worker. Images of men’s bodies and masculinity pervade organizational processes, marginalising women and contributing to the maintenance of gender segregation in organizations (ibid: 139)

In this way, women are excluded from being full members of the organizations where they work, since only men can truly belong to a group culture dominated by masculine ideals. As mentioned in the Introduction, Höpfl (2010) tells us that organizations function in a very specific way to establish a notion of membership, and the definition of membership is one

that attributes value to certain, narrowly presented, forms of masculinity and ways of being a man.

An introduction to masculinities in work and organization studies

The importance of analysing the gendered nature of power relations within organizations leads to an examination of men and their centrality to positions of power. Yet although, as outlined above, the function of management seems to be synonymous with an abstract idea of the disembodied male, and maleness is therefore central to the discourse of management and to organizational analysis, masculinity itself is rarely the focus of interrogation and in this way men in the workplace are both taken for granted and hidden (Collinson and Hearn, 1994; Knights and Tullberg, 2012). As Simpson and Lewis (2007) point out, echoing de Beauvoir, men are deemed as standing for humanity in general, and their experiences are consequently universalized. In recent years there has been a growth of interest in the study and theorizing of men and masculinities, (Collinson et al, 1990; Kerfoot and Knights, 1993; Barrett, 1996; Connell, 2000), arguing that a critical attention to men and masculinities within organizational studies is essential to an analysis of gendered power relations. Arguing for an approach which addresses the differences and relations between multiple forms of masculinity, Collinson and Hearn (1994) suggest that the management of organizations in relation to gender needs to be studied in much more detail. They posit that because most studies of women within the workplace have focused on exclusion and exploitation, the term ‘gender’ has become conflated with ‘women’ – in much the same way, as outlined above, that ‘woman’ has become conflated with ‘Other’. For example, the discourse of power within organizations is inherently male, which by definition excludes women:

Within organizations, many men do not seem to recognize their actions as expressions of men’s power and male identity. Where men see humour, teasing, camaraderie and

strength, for example, women often perceive crude, specifically masculine, aggression, competition, harassment, intimidation, and misogyny (ibid: 3).

What Collinson and Hearn are pointing out, however, is that this conflation neglects any critical attention to men and masculinities, who remain, paradoxically, invisible, yet still central to analyses of the workplace (ibid: 5).

More recently, the concept of multiple masculinities has been further developed, (McDowell, 1997; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Knights and Tullberg, 2012), paying attention to the diversity of forms of masculinity across time and space. Particular forms may be characterized as hegemonic or subordinate in relation to each other. In terms of an analysis of gendered power, therefore, the diversity of masculinities needs to be recognized, not just in the sense of acknowledging subjective variation, for example in the different ‘types’ of men and masculinities (or women and femininities), but also in the way that these are perceived and experienced and may shift over time and place (Knights and Tullberg, 2012). Analyses paying attention to non hetero-normative perspectives of masculinities (Connell, 1992; Altman, 1996) bring a different focus to emerging notions of multiple masculinities, although Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that what is being criticized in most queer perspectives is not men in general, or even men’s power, but dominant heterosexual men and masculinities. Yet following on from studies which highlight the embeddedness of masculine values in the structure and practices of organizations, however, is a shift towards acknowledging men – and/or types of masculinities – as ‘Other’, as well as women and femininities (Collinson and Hearn, 1994). Although they highlight some key areas of conceptual difficulty in seeking a framework for the exploration of multiple masculinities, they do attempt a typology of masculinities which includes, amongst others, paternalism and entrepreneurialism, both of which are relevant to the City of London and will be explored below.

Indeed, it can be argued that in the City there are two dominant but competing masculinities in play; as described in the previous chapter, McDowell (1997) identifies both the patriarchal, cerebral, almost disembodied masculinity of the ‘old’ City and the noisy, sweaty, ‘carnavalesque’ masculinity of the trading floors. During this thesis I will term these two versions of dominant masculinity the ‘hypo’ and the ‘hyper’ respectively; these terms will be referred to and discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

In summary, a great deal of critical work on gender and organizations over recent years has explored the experience of exclusion and subordination, whilst comparatively less attention has been paid to the gendered conditions and experiences of those who benefit from hierarchical power in organizations. According to Connell (2005), in the huge literature concerned with masculinity, there is not only conceptual confusion, but also a great deal of essentialism (ibid: 9), in other words the presumption that there are innate, essential characteristics which define all men, yet ultimately:

The notion that the concept of masculinity essentializes or homogenizes is quite difficult to reconcile with the tremendous multiplicity of social constructions that ethnographers and historians have documented ... Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. *Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action* and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting (ibid: 9, emphasis added).

The question must be asked, if masculinities are ‘configurations of practice’ that are ‘accomplished in social action,’ how are these configurations also accomplished through *spatial* action, in a particular place or setting?

Masculinities, according to recent studies, are not simply multiple, but are also subject to constant change. As Connell points out, challenges to hegemony are common: ‘The concept

of hegemonic masculinity presumes the subordination of non-hegemonic masculinities, and this is a process that has now been documented in many settings' (ibid: 19). If the City is conceived and perceived as an idealized masculine space (Allen and Pryke, 1994), then questions arise as to what this dominant masculinity might mean for men and women who work in the space, how it both shapes and is shaped by the materiality, and how the performances of masculinity are played out in this setting.

How the concept of an idealized masculine space is treated in the literature concerned with the research setting is explored below.

Masculinities in the City of London

The link between management and masculinities has attracted much attention, although, as with early feminist analyses, the majority of literature has been concerned with inequalities manifesting themselves as an imbalance; a predominant number of male managers, with a small number of women unable to compete for power because of their minority status - in effect, a focus on material inequality (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993; Collinson and Hearn, 1994). Although the proportion of women in the workplace, including women in management, is increasing, the discourse of management is still masculine (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993). As seen above, however, the concept of gender as being continually constructed and reconstructed via performative acts means that the work arena is important for 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 126), and in particular, given its dominance in work organizational discourse and culture, for masculinities.

Knights and Tullberg (2012) problematize concepts of organizational masculinity with regard to the most recent global financial crisis, and offer a gendered analysis of events (ibid: 386). They also argue that self-interest, which underpins the most common epistemological positions on the crisis, is socially produced and reproduced rather than taken-for-granted, pre-

existing and fixed: 'self-interest relies on a process of calculation that is 'dependent upon the complex temporal framing of the relationships in which a person is engaged' (ibid: 386). They also posit that in the business world, economic self-interest is produced, or at least significantly reinforced, by the homo-social bonding which underpins discourses of masculinity, and that the two are co-constitutive:

'Subjects do not enter a market or homosocial relations innocent of already pre-formed senses of economic self-interest that have their genesis in previous networks. Consequently, it may be more appropriate to argue that economic self-interest is both a condition and consequence of the complex temporal framings of network relations that revolve around markets and discourses of masculinity' (ibid: 386).

Discourses of masculinity are therefore subject, in this article, to analysis and re-interpretation. They argue that in contemporary working life, remuneration and hierarchy are important, highly visible yet also symbolic elements of the social construction of masculinities, 'especially that kind of masculinity which we connect to the white business elite' (ibid: 386). Their analysis is based on a view of gender as continually constructed and sustained through different performative acts; gender is continually performed and brought into being, and the workplace is an important arena for this performance. They identify a number of performative elements which produce, reproduce and sustain masculinity in organisations and which include:

Acquiring a managerial status; complying with deeply felt heterosexual norms that sustain male bonding; displaying authoritative expertise; thinking smart; taking risks and not least, securing ever increasingly high levels of remuneration (ibid: 388).

These performative elements have a high impact, they argue, on values, attitudes and behaviour in the context of managerial life in financial institutions. Paying particular

attention to the normative aspects of masculinity, they highlight an interest in its repeated confirmation, in other words, proof that you are a man of material and symbolic substance. They suggest that this behaviour leads to closing ranks when the group is threatened, as, for example, in the challenging of bankers' bonuses by the public, and, since senior management positions in contemporary business life are inherently risky, this type of performative masculinity is fundamentally fragile and precarious. Certainly 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). Since success is dependent on a social recognition within a competitive environment, the need to be seen to have some capacity to control events and establish order confers respect and status. Yet because of the unpredictability of business life, which makes the latter almost impossible to sustain, masculine and managerial identities are extremely fragile, reminding us of Parker's (2015) descriptions of the vulnerability of hierarchy.

That the City has been, both historically and in contemporary society, the preserve of men, is well documented (McDowell, 1997; Mort, 1998). Indeed, for most of the twentieth century (and earlier, as seen in Chapter Two) it has been characterised by the strikingly high involvement of white upper class men running its institutions (McDowell, 1997). The social construction of masculinity, however, has been sometimes taken for granted as seen in the previous section; the emphasis historically has been on the ways in which dominant masculinity in the workplace excludes women, rather than considering the ways in which different masculinities are constructed. As McDowell (*ibid*) points out, Pringle's (1989) study of secretaries at work drew attention to the association between masculinity and rationality, yet she interviewed only women. A more holistic view would posit that alternative

masculinities are also constructed in relation to a hegemonic version of heterosexual masculinity (Connell, 1987). The terms 'men' and 'masculinity' cannot therefore be treated as a single category, as we saw above.

McDowell (1997) 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 may work for the same organization, but they are clearly different in their 'uniforms', their behaviours and their embodied actions. The former, for example, maintain the discreet and immaculate traditional business attire; the latter are more likely to discard suit jackets and roll their sleeves up, in an echo of manual workers on factory floors, where 'real man's work' is carried out (Collinson, 1988). Swearing, sweating and shouting are de rigeur on the trading floors; the highly prestigious inner sanctums of senior management, by contrast, still often maintain the wood panelling and plush carpets of a bygone era, even in more modern buildings. The everyday language and social practices of the dealing room, its 'bodily imagery' (McDowell, 1997: 178) represent an exaggerated version of masculinity, for example the naming (not shaming!) of successful traders as 'big swinging dicks'.

They do, however, share similar performative attributes which constitute their masculine identities, and which include conquest, control and the desire for high levels of remuneration as a mark of social standing, as outlined above (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993). The markets themselves are referred to as either bull markets or bear markets, with traders using the same terminology to describe themselves and their preference for either selling in a confident market or cleverly managing the pitfalls of a contracting market. Even the organisations themselves adopt this terminology; the American investment bank Merrill Lynch was commonly referred to as the 'Thundering Herd', in a nod to the company's iconic bull logo, (Morgenson, 2008)

The ‘old world’ City with its built environment reflecting its imperial expansion is represented by a very specific image of traditional City bankers – the white male upper class world of public schools, top universities and gentlemen’s clubs. The ‘new’ City began to take shape during the 1980s as a result of deregulation and the globalisation of markets, epitomised by the ‘Big Bang’ of 1986, which brought in its wake a new category of professionals, including international lawyers, corporate tax accountants, financial advisors and management consultants (Featherstone, 1990). This change fundamentally altered the financial sector, replacing the conventional, ‘gentlemanly’ ways of doing business, based on the personal networks of a bourgeois elite, with a newer way of doing business, based on an espoused ethos of hard work, selling and aggressive business tactics, and an emphasis on individualist attitudes and lifestyles, risk taking and confidence (Featherstone, 1990; Thrift et al 1994, Beaverstock, 2002).

In summary, if these versions of masculinity dominate the working environment of the City, then they also serve to exclude certain other masculinities, and position women, in particular, as ‘Other.’ As McDowell puts it (1997: 179) ‘power, sexuality, desire and masculinity combine to construct femininity as deficient’. The ways in which gender is situated in the City, with particular relevance to what is both ‘in’ and ‘out’ of place is explored below.

Situating performances of gender in the City

The way in which the built environment both reflects and affects organisational gender relations has not attracted a great deal of attention (Bell and Valentine, 1995, is an exception, exploring sexualities from a geographical perspective, using place to understand how the heterosexual body has been both appropriated and resisted on a community and city scale). Organizations have, however, always used the built environment as a way of physically and symbolically signifying power and strength (De Cock et al, 2009). That the built environment

of the City of London is inherently masculine with its soaring towers has been noted, (especially by Parker, 2007, 2015, see Chapter Two); the obvious symbolism of a corporate tower block is used to depict a version of masculine corporate success or potency; what I have termed the ‘hyper’ masculine

Ideas about potency dominate modern mythologies of men in the City, particularly the hyper masculine. As well as the phallic structures of much of the modern architecture, successful City players are described in sexual terms as having a rampant libido, of having ‘screwed’ the markets, of being virile (McDowell, 1997). Sexualised humour and language on the trading floors centres on an idealised out of control, rampant heterosexuality. Characteristics such as being tough and ruthless, aggressive and explicit in terms of language are highly valued and inherently masculine, albeit at odds with the ‘old fashioned’ values of cerebral disembodied patriarchy. The ‘sheer physical exuberance’ (ibid: 168) of being a male protagonist on the trading floor is a reminder that this type of masculinity is constructed above all else as essentially boyish, in line with boys’ natural interests, instincts and behaviours.

If the female Other is only allowed to be present in mythologised and sterile representations (Höpfl and Matilal, 2007), then when functioning in opposition to the potent male, her role must be to subdue and manage potentially out of control masculinity. These ideas relating to male agency and female containment act against a corresponding female potency or energy. Femininity, in contrast to masculinity, is necessarily deficient. Again, echoing de Beauvoir, Prügl (2012: 21, emphasis added) posits that the financial crisis of 2008 saw the re-emergence of myths of women as financially responsible and men as inherently reckless:

This construction involves a redefinition of woman as a new Other of man, which transferred to the financial crisis explains man’s failure. *To man, the doer, woman, the inessential, becomes a signal of the alternative and remedy.*

According to Prügl, dichotomies of gender were reconstructed during the crisis:

Woman is then lifted into a story that associates her with financial caution and risk aversion and calls forth her civilizing and moderating influences, available to mediate between male aspirations for profit and unpredictable economic vagaries (ibid: 23).

Since the precipitation of the financial crisis was widely seen to be caused by excessive masculinity (Knights and Tullberg, 2012; Griffin, 2013), then woman became associated with financial caution and risk aversion, bringing forth her moderating and civilizing influences; taming and domesticating, in effect, the priapic and reckless male. Prügl views this myth of the crisis as a modern morality tale with the fall of machismo and the rise of the prudent woman as its central theme. As she points out, studies in behavioural finance have shown that women tend to take fewer risks than men (e.g. Barber and Odean, 2001), and such studies gained media attention as evidence that the crisis could have been avoided had there been more women at senior levels in the financial sector. As Prügl points out, as of 2012 there is little evidence of chastened behaviour on the part of financial institutions; it is business as usual (Hellwig, 2010). Although at the height of the crisis there were calls for more regulation within the sector, many bankers dismissed this as ‘nanny state’ interference with no political will behind it to follow through (Admati and Hellwig, 2014); in effect, that whilst they could accept a (maternal?) rebuke, ongoing interference in masculine (or boyish) endeavours was not to be borne. Women may censure, but not dictate (interestingly, in City vernacular the Bank of England, that dominant regulatory institution, is known as the ‘Old Lady’). Women in the City may be constructed as good housekeepers, as matrons and school mistresses or at best honorary men (McDowell, 1997: 152), even as nagging wives and

mothers, but they are still fundamentally alternative and inessential. I will explore how gender is managed, materialized and performed within the setting, with the emphasis on the importance of researching lived experience to better understand all of the above.

Conclusion

A consideration of the multiplicities of gender is central to understanding how the City is perceived by those who work within it, and therefore to lived experience of it as a workplace. In such a masculine hierarchical setting, the ways of ‘doing gender’ in organizations not only reinforce the cultural norms but also position competing gender performances as Other. In this chapter I have attempted a broad review of the large volume of literature pertaining to gender and organization, and I have critiqued relevant literature on masculinities and femininities within the workplace. In applying insights from this literature directly to the research setting, I have considered accounts of the social construction of gendered performances in the City and the relations of power and control which structure relationships between them. Studies focusing on the empirical experiences of men and women and their relative gender performances in the City are rare (McDowell, 1997, is a notable example), and there is little that examines the mythologies of gender performances in the financial services industry and the different forms that they take (Knights and Tullberg, 2012 and Prügl, 2012, are exceptions). Scholars concerned with women’s exclusion from leadership and from certain organizational settings have tended to focus on material issues concerning inequalities of power, yet the relationship with place, i.e. the situated performances of gender in organizational settings and how gender interacts with materiality, has rarely been looked at empirically. In the following chapter I will outline the methodological approach which I took to studying the gendered performances of City life, to help to answer questions about how the City is perceived, and by whom, and how gender might underpin a socio-material analysis of

the setting. An anti-binary epistemology, such as that provided by ‘queering’ the City in order to examine the multiplicities of gender performances here, can help to develop an understanding of the City as a performative place, which is the focus of the empirical work.

As seen in Chapter One, a socio material analysis means that ‘the very distinction between representations and reality falls to the ground’ (McDowell, 1997: 39). I argue that since gender constitutes such an important part of the socio-cultural life of the City, it needs to take centre stage in a socio-material analysis and the way that it is materialised in this setting – and the way that it is in turn directly constructed via the materiality - needs further exploration. In addition, Lefebvre’s (2004) work analysing the rhythms of urban life has not been applied to gender, yet if the way that the space is perceived is affected by gendered performances, then the question of gender is central to the way that the space is used, and its effect on the rhythms of place need to be explored.

An analysis of the literature has highlighted links between women and disorder within the workplace, yet they are also seen as introducing order and as representing prudent financial ‘housekeeping’ into the City. As Knights and Tullberg (2012) point out, the dominant masculinities in the City are often concerned with the management of crisis, yet their managerial positions are inherently precarious. Drawing upon these apparent contradictions, the empirical research discussed in the following chapters situates gender not only within organizational settings but also in relation to the unsettling of fixed binaries in the City.

Before moving on to describe how I undertook research in the City, and exactly how the theoretical approach informs the methodology, this chapter will conclude with a review of what has been learned from the literature so far, and what conceptual, theoretical and methodological gaps have been opened up, in order to situate this study firmly in the streets of the City and amongst City workers. These questions focus on the working self as situated

in a particular place, on the importance of lived experience and how this helps us to better understand the City as a work setting, on how the City presents itself through narratives of stability and order, (leading to a temporal as well as a spatial consideration of place), and on gendered subjectivity at work, in other words, understanding the whole setting as fundamentally gendered.

A critique of the literature on organizational space and place has revealed that the peculiarities of where organizations are physically situated are important to understanding the organizational performances and processes enacted within them, yet the connections between place and where things take place remains relatively under-developed within work and organization studies. Understanding and paying attention to the rhythms of specific places helps us to better understand the time/space here, the connections between the social and the material and the way in which the human actors perceive and sense it. A Lefebvrian reading of the rhythms of everyday life in the City can help reveal how the place is sensed and perceived, how gender performativities are enacted here, and what this can tell us about who, and which behaviours, are 'in place' here. In order to answer the research questions, and to explore the experience of working in the City, a methodology is required which situates embodied experience at the heart of the empirical research. The following chapter seeks to explain the methodology in detail and to orient the research towards the setting of the City streets.

Chapter Four: Research methodology

Introduction

The research seeks to answer the questions outlined at the end of the previous chapter concerning the lived experience of working in the City of London. Since the research focuses on how the social and the material interact within the setting, a methodology is required that enables observations of how actors navigate the material structures of the setting, and which therefore places the fieldwork directly in the streets of the research setting.

A qualitative approach to researching organizational settings, which in this case involves a Lefebvrian reading of the rhythms and flows of place as well as an analysis of actors' perceptions and experiences of working within the setting, demands that attention be paid to the non-rational elements of life, in order to help explain that which has traditionally been hidden in mainstream organisational and management studies. As Warren (2008) points out, whilst more scholars are aware of the theoretical significance of an aesthetic understanding of organisation, suggestions of how to actually carry out empirical research in this regard are less forthcoming. Aesthetic elements of organisation are encountered via the perceptions that people make about their organisational lives, based especially on their sensory encounters with the world around them. Since the primary research questions outlined above (see end of Chapter Three) are concerned with how City workers experience the materiality of the setting in which they work, an examination of how the setting is experienced and perceived needs to be focused on how the space is used and how the social and the material interact and interrelate; in other words, how bodies move within the setting and experience the space and the materiality around them, since, as Casey (2001: 406) reminds us, 'there is no place without self, and no self without place.'

Understanding the spatial dimensions of organisational practice, and developing a better understanding of the interactions between materiality and place, requires a certain methodological creativity and an appreciation of how people treat, use and move within the research setting. The first part of the methodological approach discussed in this chapter places walking at its centre; the purpose is to demonstrate how a combination of a variety of 'walking' approaches, collectively named 'streetwalking', using the researcher as subject, can be used to analyse the spatial dimensions of practices when space is both a co-construction and an active dimension of collective practices in the City. The second part of the fieldwork, discussed in the second half of the chapter, examines the lived experience of others within the setting, by using semi structured interviews to investigate and analyse their perceptions of the setting in which they work. Before considering and evaluating these two dimensions of the research design, the theoretical bases of the study will be briefly recalled.

Theoretical bases of the study

As outlined in Chapters One and Two, the methodology takes Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space as a social product as its starting point. As seen in earlier chapters, Lefebvre is concerned with understanding how the spatial and the social interrelate and interact within his trialectic of perceived, conceived and representational space. The approach outlined here is also influenced by Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) which is itself a methodology designed to analyse the interrelation of space and time as rhythms in urban settings. Again, Lefebvre is concerned here with the body; at no moment during his own analyses does he lose sight of the body, using it as a metronome for understanding rhythm: 'rhythm appears as regulated time, governed by rational laws, but in contact with what is least rational in human being: the lived, the carnal, the body' (ibid:18). One of the difficulties of using *Rhythmanalysis* as a methodological approach is that Lefebvre gives little instruction as to how to actually carry out this method; he gives very few details of his own research. What he does always

emphasise, however, is the importance of listening to the body, and of its centrality to understanding urban settings, an imperative that underpinned an approach described below as ‘streetwalking’, which formed the first dimension of my research methodology.

Methodology part one: Streetwalking

An embodied methodological approach such as walking within a given setting is not novel within sociological and organisational studies, although it is still relatively rare. The act of walking can tell the tale of a town (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2007). Various forms and practices of walking have been used as methodologies by authors for understanding city life and modern urbanity (Edensor 2010, 2012; Elkin, 2016). These multiple incarnations of walking emerge across many scholarly, literary and artistic disciplines, and are a growing sub theme within organisation studies (e.g. Raulet-Croset and Borzeix, 2014). Most recent scholarly contributions have originated from the discipline of geography (Wunderlich 2008, Edensor 2010, 2012; Simpson, 2012, inter alia), and are loosely bound by a shared understanding that seeks to uncover, through walking, a more nuanced and immersed sense of place than can be otherwise achieved. As Edensor explains:

The walking body weaves a path that is contingent, and accordingly produces contingent notions of place as well as being always partially conditioned by the special and physical characteristics of place (2010: 73).

Wunderlich (2008) describes walking as an elemental way of experiencing urban spaces, a multi-sensory way of perceiving space whilst in constant flow, that cannot be disassociated from senses of place. A concern with spatial experience and place has led to a developing interest amongst sociologists and geographers in walking interviews, in an attempt to make a connection between what is said and where it is said, in other words between the words offered by interviewees and the spaces in which they say them. Sheller and Urry (2006: 212)

have discussed the formation of a new paradigm concerning mobilities and a proliferation of research using mobile methods which offer interesting potentialities and pose specific questions:

How do we frame questions and what methods are appropriate to social research in a context in which durable 'entities' of many kinds are shifting, morphing, and mobile? Is there (or should there be) a new relation between 'materialities' and 'mobilities' in the social sciences?

The idea of 'spatial shadowing' (Raulet-Croset and Borzeix, 2014) allows the researcher to physically follow those they are researching, observing behaviour and reactions, and allows for a state of 'being with' (ibid: 28), which 'enables the scholar to compare his or her own feelings, emotions and surprises with those of their companion' (ibid: 29). Such a physical and reflexive engagement that involves alternative ways of experiencing the social, spatial and material terrains of a place develops a deeper understanding of them (Pinder, 2001).

As discussed in Chapter One, O'Doherty (2013) revisits his own urban intervention across the streets of Manchester, based on a series of walks which he describes as 'the interruption of topology' (ibid: 211), which is inspired by the *dérive* (see section on Psychogeography below). His walks, which were designed by the deployment of mathematical formulae, became what he describes as a material inscription of order and disorder in the city, arguing that the scholar can develop the ability to 'read' organization in the city through the practice of walking, and that the language of the city can be found in its architecture, in signs and symbols, and in the patterning of its streets (ibid: 214). Whilst his method of undertaking a *dérive* followed a disciplined order, rather than an aimless wandering (at some inconvenience to himself; he describes hanging from his fingertips over canals, trespassing on private property, climbing warehouse walls and crossing busy intersections in an effort to follow the

prescribed movements imposed by his methodology), he uses his body as a material inscription, not only reading but writing, in a sense, over the city streets.

In a similar vein, and since the aim of this research is to understand the setting from both my own experiences and those of City workers, the first method used is highly observational and subjective, where my own emotions, impressions and observations forms the basis of both field notes and written descriptions of the setting, calling for a high degree of self-reflexivity. The aim was to use my own body to immerse myself within the research setting, noticing the rhythms of both my body and the wider setting, and observing and recording my sensory perceptions and emotional reactions as I moved through the space. Observing my own senses, the materiality of the setting and the way that other actors engage with the setting helped to make strange the familiar, and uncover what had previously been unnoticed by me (when I worked in the setting; see Introduction above).

Research design: An introduction to the streetwalking method

An immersive approach such as the one outlined below is similar to an ethnography, in that an ethnographic approach allows a method of researching and understanding organisations as cultural entities, focusing on the construction of cultural norms and expressions of organisational value. Bryman and Bell (2007) explain that ethnography can refer to research in which participant observation is the prevalent method, but that also has a specific focus on the culture of the group or organisation, but in its wider sense it refers not only to the method(s) used but also to the written product of that research. In this study, where the researcher observes the prevailing culture, behaviour and patterns (or rhythms) in which they are immersed, but also records their own responses and behaviour, the written account is both highly observational and highly subjective, but, rich in detail. In explaining the overall

research design, I also attempt to make a connection with literary accounts of the City of London, placing it in the tradition of symbolic and imaginative accounts of this space.

The Research setting

As introduced in Chapter Two, for the purposes of this research, I was concerned with the historic City, the ‘Square Mile’, a geographically bounded and historically recognised space, with a concentration of distinctive architecture. A master map of the area researched can be found in Appendix F.

Background

I walk because it confers – or restores – a feeling of *placeness* (Elkin, 2016: 21)

In an effort to develop a method of rhythmanalysis which involved all my senses and which was rooted in traditions of discovering and observing the urban, I turned to a number of walking traditions to analyse what could be utilised from each to supplement and augment the exploration of rhythms. 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 flâneurs usually male, (with some notable exceptions, see page 97 below) from the middle and upper classes, who could walk uncontested through the city yet remain essentially detached from the teeming life around them, 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. In this way, their perceptions can be said to deal with the uncanny aspects of urban life in the sense that they observed, and embraced, a sense of something unsettling and unfamiliar in the hitherto familiar city, which had previously been unnoticed or gone unremarked (how the uncanny manifests itself in an urban setting will be returned to in Chapter Seven). Writing of Lévi-Strauss, Elizabeth

Wilson notes that ‘his perception, like that of the dandies, ‘makes strange’ the familiar and disregarded aspects of city life. It inverts our values; what was once seen as marginal becomes the essence of city life’ (Wilson, 1992: 5). The flâneur was essentially a detached observer, identifying with the deviant and the marginal that urban society produced, concerned with the fragmentary and strange quality of modern city life (ibid). Baudelaire is credited with the first description of the flâneur in his 1863 essay *The Painter of Modern Life* (1964, first published 1863). For Baudelaire, Paris is a book to be read by wandering her streets, yet his flâneur was essentially an ideal type, an elusive character from literature (Solnit, 2001) rather than an actual man to be seen out and about in the streets; the art of flânerie could be practised by anyone (male), yet the flâneur himself was illusory. According to Solnit, this is because Baudelaire was essentially nostalgic, responding to the remodelling of Paris being undertaken at the time by Hausmann, altering for ever the labyrinth of medieval streets, so that the city was becoming alien to its own inhabitants, its navigation only available to a select few, who became explorers or even detectives in response to this alienation. Some seventy years after Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin offered an analysis of flânerie in his incomplete account of nineteenth century Paris, *The Arcades Project* (1999). The title evokes the spectacular and beautiful enclosed glass arcades which were the highlight of pre-Hausmann Paris, and which typified the dandified environment of the flâneur. Benjamin repeatedly refers to Baudelaire and the flâneur as symbols of a bygone age; essentially an outsider, a wanderer opposed to progress and industrialization, although his main characteristic, for Benjamin, is the way in which he makes the urban street his home.

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 may be detached, but 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. In this way, there is an interplay between the *flâneur*'s observations of perceived space, and Lefebvre's analysis of the diverse, multiple rhythms of everyday life (Lefebvre, 2004). Lefebvre wants to develop and deepen our awareness and appreciation of the rhythms of urban spaces, and of the effects of those rhythms on the inhabitants of those spaces - hence the notion of perceived space and the experience of everyday life are central to his analysis. In his reading, the flows of crowds and notions of rhythm provide a means of engaging with how time, space and place interrelate.

From the Flâneur to the Rhythmanalyst

What differentiates '*Rhythmanalysis*' (2004), presented by Lefebvre as a nascent science, from more straightforward observations of urban rhythms, is the stress on the body as the mode of analysis. As Lefebvre (ibid: 29) explains, the *rhythmanalyst* 'listens – and first to his body; he learns rhythm from it, in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms. His body serves him as a metronome'. S/he calls on all senses, and does not neglect breath, circulation, heartbeat, speech delivery: 'he thinks with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality' (ibid: 31). The rhythms must be perceived and felt, and an understanding can only be arrived at through direct experience. Lefebvre does highlight a methodological concern, however; 'in order to analyse a rhythm, one must get outside it' (ibid: 95). What Lefebvre is drawing attention to here is the difficulty of grasping the relationship between rhythms that constitute a whole, particularly within our own body. We do not, for example,

pay attention to individual bodily rhythms except when one of them is in a state of pathology, i.e. when we are suffering. As he puts it, ‘externality is necessary, yet in order to grasp a rhythm one must have been grasped by it’ (ibid). He relates this to the sensation of immersion in music and dance; we feel these sensations within our bodies, but in order to understand the experience we must also be able to detach ourselves from it and to observe the effects on others. What he is recommending is both observation and immersion, for we cannot experience rhythms unless it is through our body, and we cannot analyse our experience unless we observe; we need to be therefore both inside and outside, participant and researcher. Relating this directly to my research, there is a need to both walk the streets and experience the physicality of the fieldwork, and to observe and record the movements of oneself and others. Switching between these states calls for a high degree of reflexivity and detailed field notes to record the transience of the states.

Methodological considerations: Some imperfections

This caution with regard to how the methodology is implemented extends to the practice of *flânerie*, which can also be problematic as a methodological tool. In recent years, the idea of being a female *flâneur* (*flâneuse*) was contested by feminists, who have suggested that the city has been historically represented from the point of view of the male gaze, and that women have been restricted to certain limited public spaces, although the intensity of the city has fired the imaginations of women writers. George Sand famously loved the experience of being a *flâneur* in Paris (albeit disguised as a man), and as seen in the Introduction to the thesis, Charlotte Brontë observed first-hand the excitement of the City. Elkin (2016: 3) writes that the *flâneur* was ‘a figure of masculine privilege and leisure, with time and money and no immediate responsibilities to claim his attention.’ She argues, however, that to suggest that there cannot be a female *flâneur* is to limit the ways in which women interact with the city to the ways that men have interacted with the city. Although women have been written out of

the history of walking in the city, she believes that it is up to women to paint themselves back in.

Indeed, the slang term ‘flâneuse’ can be used as a pejorative term meaning a prostitute, bringing a whole other historical consideration of how women can be present and visible in urban streets. Not free to drift visibly along the streets in the way that a man could, a woman historically could not pursue her own sensory experiences in an urban setting but was instead driven to the streets by purely economic motives (Buck-Morss (1991). As she points out, the image of the whore is the most significant female image in Benjamin’s work (although, as Elkin (2016: 11) contests, ‘If we tunnel back we find there was always a *flâneuse* passing Baudelaire in the street.’

Not only is the art of flânerie historically problematic for women, notwithstanding Elkin’s argument that women have always been on the streets and should reclaim them, but in addition to this, in my investigation of flânerie, there appeared to be an element of detachment inherent in the art. In his *Arcades Project* (1999), Benjamin is essentially an observer, one who watches but is not immersed in the setting in the same way that the workers, street vendors, prostitutes and consumers are. Benjamin was concerned with the spatial, suggesting that the flâneur experiences the streets as an interior, almost like a party or other form of social gathering where you can stand back and observe. Although he describes empathy as the tool for awakening the senses, he does not go as far as Lefebvre, who insists that to be a successful rhythm analyst, you must experience the rhythms with your whole body in the same way that those you are observing do. Benjamin, like Baudelaire before him, registers the city as a text to be inscribed and read, then rewritten and reread as a result of repeated meanderings. Yet at all times the flâneur is outside the text, not within it. The flâneur walks idly through the city, listening to its stories, recording its narrative, but apart from them: ‘The flâneur still stand on the threshold – of the metropolis as of the middle class.

Neither has him in its power yet. In neither is he at home. He seeks refuge in the crowd' (Benjamin, 1999: 10).

He represents the resistance of the daydreamer to commerce and business; he cannot also be involved *in* commerce and business, especially given the class dimensions; the flâneur was a gentleman. His vision of the city is phantasmagoric: 'Phantasmagoria is the intentional correlate of immediate experience' (ibid: 804), yet this act of imagining seems to be one step removed from direct experience. On the one hand, the text draws upon Benjamin's lived experiences of Paris, and, on the other, his readings about the history of the city and its artistic representations (especially the poetry of Baudelaire), and his writing is intimately connected to memory, both his own and that of others. There is a wistfulness about the past and the aesthetics of the arcades which adds to the dream like qualities of his recorded observations:

One knew of places in ancient Greece where the way led down into the underworld. Our waking existence likewise is a land which, at certain hidden points, leads down into the underworld – a land full of inconspicuous places from which dreams arise....By day, the labyrinth or urban dwellings resembles consciousnessat night, however ...their denser darkness protrudes like a threat (ibid: 84).

Yet flânerie is not the only walking method that can be used to 'read' the urban. Flânerie focuses on the visual, and rhythmanalysis on the embodied sensations of rhythms, yet there is another tradition of understanding the urban through direct physical experience, but this time with the focus on the analyses of emotional feelings and responses, to which we now turn.

Psycho-geography

Psycho-geography – literally the point where psychology and geography intersect - also influences the methodology for this thesis. The psycho-geographical method of the ‘dérive’, or ‘drifting purposefully’ (Sinclair, 1997: 4) withdraws from the usual patterns of walking and appropriating the city by engaging with its potential for absurdity and play. The intention here is to deliberately lose yourself, not merely in a topographical sense, but in a social sense, in order to cultivate a sense of marginality (Phillips, 2010). The underlying set of practices and ideas of psycho-geography originated with the Situationist International, the avant-garde movement established in 1957, under the loose direction of Guy Debord. Psycho-geography was described by Debord himself in vague terms, as a study of the effects of particular geographic environments on the emotions and behaviour of individuals (Debord, 1955). He was dismissive of attempts to connect psycho-geography with earlier traditions of urban exploration (Coverley, 2012), yet the flâneurs were, essentially, conducting their own similar walks a hundred years earlier. Wanderer, stroller, flâneur, psycho-geographer, rhythm analyst; all are concerned with the act of walking, which, as Coverley points out, in modern cities which are increasingly hostile to the pedestrian, becomes in itself an act of subversion. In this way, walking in the psycho-geographic tradition becomes connected with opposition to authority and with a radicalism which stretches back to the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to writers such as Defoe, Blake and Dickens in London. Walking can be seen as subversive because it allows people to connect directly with their environment, under attack from endless urban growth.

Interestingly, Debord viewed his nascent discipline in much the same way as Lefebvre positioned rhythm analysis, that is, as a rigorous scientific method. Although playful in execution, the emotional and behavioural impact of urban space upon the individual must be carefully monitored and recorded, even to the extent of allocating specific urban zones to the

corresponding emotional reaction that they provoke. He likens psycho-geography to a pure science, and the psycho-geographer must be able to identify and distil the different atmospheres found in an urban environment (Debord, 1955). These emotional zones can be determined by following the aimless stroll (the *dérive*). These ‘strolls’ became more politicised with the creation of the Situationist International in 1957. What had previously been a playful avant-garde movement influenced by the Surrealists with the aim of disregarding the traditional practices of the tourist (Coverley, 2012), became by 1957 a radical organisation keen to overthrow the bourgeois foundation of western society. The *dérive* becomes less of an essentially purposeless submission to unconscious desire, as in the stroll of the surrealists and the *flâneurs*, but more a means of conducting a scientific investigation. Ultimately, however, during the years following the split of the Situationist movement in 1962, Debord came to recognise the essentially subjective nature of the relationship between the individual and the city, sensing that such personal accounts would always be contrary to the quasi scientific psycho-geographical methodology which sought to illuminate it:

The secrets of the city are, at a certain level, decipherable, but the personal meaning they have for us is incommunicable (Debord, Sadler, 1998: 80).

Part of my own research is based on a personal and subjective approach, but, by merging this account with thematic analyses from qualitative interviews, the aim is to communicate how the social and the material interconnect and interact in this setting, and to record emotional responses and urban rhythms; in this way, a methodology which uses elements from both *flânerie*, rhythmanalysis and psycho-geography can help to ‘map out’ a new reading, or a new imagining of the setting, remembering that:

The intention of the *dérive* is to surface emotional responses to urban sites, and is a purposefully observational method, concerned with the way in which certain areas, streets or buildings resonate with states of mind, inclinations and desires and which offer ways of re-imagining the city (Phillips, 2010: 263).

Streetwalking: Arriving at a combination of walking methods

The methodology outlined here is a combination of the three methods described above. On a practical level, the fieldwork involving walking drew on the key themes of observation from *flânerie*, movement and bodily experience from rhythmanalysis, and the more emotionally attuned and intense experience of the *dérive*, with its occasionally occult and mythological undertones which resonate with the ‘haunted’ palimpsest that is the City of London. I have called this approach ‘streetwalking’, which is at once both descriptively accurate and deliberately provocative with its connotations of prostitution, which reflects the historically uncertain status of women in city streets, and the contemporary problems of how women are represented in the streets of the City of London. The streetwalking methodology - literally walking the streets of the setting over the course of several days - is an attempt to integrate *flânerie*, psycho-geography and rhythmanalysis, in order to be both fully immersed within the research setting and aware of my emotional responses (the psycho-geographic approach), aware of my own embodied responses to the rhythms and flows (the rhythmanalyst approach) and able to observe in a more detached way, looking for the unusual and the beautiful in the urban setting (the approach of the *flâneur*). All of these approaches are combined here, and the findings developed from each tradition will be detailed in subsequent chapters. Combining all three methods led to a richer and more holistic methodology, and avoided the pitfalls of using only one walking method; does a *flâneur*, for instance, pay attention to rhythms? Does a psycho-geographer use visual observation? Would a rhythmanalysis used in

isolation include emotional attunement? Taking elements from each allowed a full sensory exploration of the City.

Urban walking as a literary tradition: A tale of two cities

Interestingly, whilst conceived in Paris, the contemporary home of psycho-geography is considered to be London (cf writers such as Ackroyd and Sinclair, who draw on the earlier works of Blake and Poe), whilst the flâneur is undoubtedly Parisien. There exists a visionary strand of English writing in which London is re-created by the fictional and poetic re-workings of successive (male) literary figures, creating patterns that can be detected by those attuned to the city's unchanging rhythms (Coverley, 2012). These 'Cockney Visionaries' (ibid: 16) are able to recognise sites of psychic and chronological importance which can help remap the city. This attempt to uncover the *genius loci*, or 'spirit of place', leads to a sense of an eternal landscape with its own rhythms underpinning our modern consciousness.

Recent years have witnessed the rise of the 'literary walk' throughout Europe and the United States, where tourists are invited to retrace the footsteps of their favourite authors and characters. These pilgrimages to visit the locations of novels or to the author's homes have been popular since the rise of the novel in the late eighteenth century. Yet the very authors whose footsteps they retrace were often themselves walkers, whose imaginations were fuelled by the urban environments in which they lived and wrote. Walks offered to visitors to particular cities and which help to shape their experience of them, derived from the books they have read (or films seen), help to constitute an 'imagined' city, and offer visitors an embodied urban identity (Plate, 2006). Modern day psycho-geographical walks through London follow the trails of Blake, Rimbaud, Yeats, Poe, Dickens and many others. Various forms and practices of walking have been used as methodologies by authors for understanding or critiquing city life and modern urbanity. These multiple incarnations of walking emerge across many scholarly, literary and artistic disciplines, and are loosely bound

by a shared understanding that seeks to uncover, through walking, a more nuanced and immersed sense of place than can be otherwise achieved. It is this latter sense of place which is important to my research, and which, I argue, underlines perceptions of the City.

London visionaries

This act of urban walking, as a method seeking to unlock the authentic in urban experiences by tapping into an imagined city life that exists independently of excessive industrialisation and commercialisation, begins in London with William Blake (1757-1827). Blake has been described by Iain Sinclair as being ‘the Godfather of Psycho-geography’ (Sinclair, 1997: 214). Blake was a walker, a wanderer, a drifter, combining – and anticipating – the future approaches of both the flâneur and the psycho-geographer. His poems describe the various features of London street life as he observed them. His poetry merges his personal identity with that of London, where he was born and spent the majority of his life, and blurs the distinction between the physical city and the metaphysical imagination with which his city teems. In his biography of Blake (1995:20), Ackroyd writes: ‘He had a very strong sense of place, and all his life he was profoundly and variously affected by specific areas of London’. London, for Blake, brought to life in his *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1994, first published 1789), provides an imaginative, mythological counterpoint to the urban realism of the early industrial period – a view of the world which owed much to the pre-modern, to mythos rather than logos as a way of experiencing the urban. In his poem ‘*London*’ (published in 1794, during the period of the French revolution), he writes of the misery created by industrialisation:

I wander thro' each charter'd street,

Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.

And mark in every face I meet

Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

He transforms the familiar streets, the familiar river, into sites of disillusionment and weariness. His legacy to psycho-geography is that he is concerned with atmosphere, with the surfacing of emotions which make strange the familiar, and with a sense of mythological history constantly entwining with the present.

In the late twentieth and early twenty first century, a revival of psycho-geography manifests itself again in a primarily literary form, as seen in the works of JG Ballard, whose texts describe the loss of emotional engagement with our surroundings. Iain Sinclair, whose preoccupation with walking across the City and reviving earlier occult traditions (as seen in his novel *Lud Heat*, which deals with the apparent alignment of Hawksmoor's churches) re-evokes the flâneur in London's streets. And Peter Ackroyd, who recognises cyclical currents unfolding across urban history, invokes the visionary tradition of London writing, using the subtitle 'a biography' for his (2000) study of London to make the point that the City, for him, is alive and self-aware. According to Coverley (2012), this tradition is a form of behavioural determinism in which the city does not so much shape the lives of its inhabitants as dictate it. In this way there is a direct link to the Lefebvrian theory of space being constructed socially, and also to the use of a socio material analysis, in that it is this symbiotic relationship, whereby the materiality of place and the social not only influence but help form one another. Coverley is maintaining that the influence of the material is so strong that the social is not shaped but in fact dictated by it.

This literary tradition is important for the research project, since it not only reinforces the *relevance* of a walking methodology to understand the city, but also places written accounts of urban wandering at the heart of understanding a sense of place. As Sinclair (1997: 4, emphasis added) puts it, with reference to the centrality of walking:

Walking is the best way to explore and exploit the city; the changes, shifts, breaking the cloud helmet, movement of light of water. *Drifting purposefully is the recommended mode*, tramping asphalted earth in alert reverie, allowing the fiction of an underlying pattern to reassert itself.

Since one of the primary research questions is to investigate the rhythms of place in order to better understand the City as a setting of organisational crisis, this ‘purposeful drifting’ is an important method for understanding rhythms and cycles and how they are shaped by the interaction of the social and the material.

It should be pointed out, however, that I also wished to purposefully observe and record how gender shapes the experience of being on the City streets, and my position as a female researcher was central to my perspective. As Elkin points out (2016: 19, emphasis added):

The great writers of the city, the great psychogeographers, the ones that you read about in The Observer on weekends: they are all men, and at any given moment you’ll find them writing about each other’s work, creating a reified canon of masculine walker-writers. *As if a penis were a requisite walking appendage, like a cane.*

The subjective nature of this approach, however, whilst important for me to be able to experience the materiality and the social rhythms of the City, does mean that the research lacks the perspectives of others. The second part of the methodological approach involves research participants, in order to better understand the lived experience of those who regularly work in the setting, and to help facilitate the validation of data gathered. This will be detailed below.

Methods of ‘streetwalking’ data collection

This first part of the fieldwork was carried out mainly over a period of five months and represents ten full days of observations in the City. The first day was carried out with my supervisor, the next eight were carried out alone between the end of February and the beginning of July 2015, and the final one incorporated a guided walk from Cityguides, which focused on the City during the Great Fire and the Blitz, and the way that the City always ‘rises like a phoenix from the ashes’, to quote the guide.

Most of the field days took place during the week, at different times of day; for example some days I travelled early in the morning to see the City wake up, other times I travelled in to coincide with the busiest rush hour period, and sometimes I arrived later and came back in the evening rush hour. I spent two late evenings in the City, and one Sunday. I started in the winter, and ended in high summer.

Temporal Limitations of streetwalking method

As mentioned above, I visited the City at different times of the day and on different days of the week in order to sense the temporal rhythms and how the space/time of the City can differ, however the majority of walks took place during the nine to five working day. Pierce and Lawhon (2015) argue that the central goal of walking is to shape questions rather than support specific conclusions, requiring the researcher to further interrogate impressions generated from walking, and specific questions did arise in relation to the temporal limitations of streetwalking as method; for example, does the composition of people on the streets differ significantly at different times of day? Do the main arteries or flow corridors of the place change in relation to temporal changes? How would my walking pace differ according to the time of day? In sum, is there a rhythmic continuity to the City that exists beyond temporal considerations?

Some of these questions were answered as a result of the fieldwork detailed in the following chapter, particularly from the Sunday that I spent in the City, but others were unexplored, for example I did not visit the City at 5 or 6 am, and was not there beyond 10 pm at night (due to personal circumstances). I did not perceive differences in the composition of the people on the streets during the walks, but this may have been different if I had been there much earlier in the morning. I will return to these considerations and questions in the conclusion to the thesis, when discussing the limitations of the methodology and potential avenues for future research.

In addition to the above considerations of the method, the notion of pauses in the rhythms should be noted, since as researcher I was both ‘inside’ the rhythms (in that I was walking and experiencing the fast rhythms) and ‘outside’ them, in that I was free to come and go from the setting, and could take breaks whenever I wished to. I did take frequent stops for coffee, and to give myself time to write field notes (and sometimes to escape the weather). Walking is intimately linked both to bodily senses and to the materiality of the place, but the focus is on the significance of bodily *movement* in place. Whilst sitting still and removing myself from the rhythmic flow of the streets meant I had the time to observe street life, in particular how actors navigated the streets and the material structures around them, and took pauses themselves, there was a sense of losing the ‘kinaesthetic rhythm’ (Middleton, 2009); the movement that I observed was perceived as a visual flow through windows, and lacked the full embodied sensory experience of being ‘inside’ the rhythmic flow. Insights around pauses and ‘sitting still’ in the City will also be returned to in the conclusion to the thesis in relation to future development of the methodology.

Walking

Maps of each route are included in Appendix D. The routes were 'semi structured' in that I planned to visit a particular area each time, and had an approximate idea of where I would be walking, but allowed myself to take unexpected deviations, and follow points of interest as they emerged, rather than being too prescriptive; in other words, following the spirit of the *dérive*, in which the materiality and geography of the place subconsciously directs you, in order to encounter new experiences, and to pass through different atmospheres which allow different emotions to surface. The walks were based on the historic divisions of the City into distinct wards or areas (see map of the City in Appendix C), with each area having a traditional specialism; although lines and divisions are blurred in contemporary City life, there is still a connection between the insurance sector and the area around Leadenhall Market and Fenchurch Street, with the banking sector and the heart of the City close to the Bank of England, and with Law and Professional Services around Fleet Street and as far west as Chancery Lane. Although I was not consciously interested in those particular sectors on those particular walks, it helped me to manage the walks in a geographical sense, although as explained above I did take various deviations on impulse.

I walked armed with a notebook and pen for field notes and a phone for taking photos. I tried to travel lightly – dressing comfortably and sensibly for a day of walking, not wearing conventional business attire as I would normally do when walking in the City, and carrying a rucksack instead of a bag or briefcase. Despite this attempt at practicality, I often found it awkward to manage taking photos and making notes as I walked, especially when it rained and I was trying to keep relatively dry whilst protecting my phone. I took regular coffee stops to be able to make notes whilst observations were still fresh in my mind. The walks lasted anywhere between three hours and six hours, and often included visits to museums and

historic places of interest in the City. Since I started in the winter and ended in high summer, I witnessed a variety of weather conditions, and the effect these had on both me as a walker/researcher and on the surrounding environment was all noted in my field notes and will be referred to as relevant later in this chapter.

Observing

In line with Lefebvre's insistence on understanding both the external rhythms of place and the way that space is socially constructed and perceived, 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. Particular attention was paid to the materiality: the architecture, and the placing of objects which impacted the flows and rhythms of the space and the behaviour of human actors. I also listened to background noise (often very intrusive), traffic noise, human speech and language, the tones of voices, as well as observing the physical characteristics of human actors – their gender, age, clothing and behaviour. Paying attention to the rhythms of place also meant observing the order in which events unfolded, such as sequential patterns of behaviour, and the significance of the moments when activities routinely take place, in order to develop an understanding of the 'time space' of the City (see Lyon, 2016).

Internal responses were also noted, including sensory perceptions, for example temperature, bodily (dis)comfort, as well as feelings and emotions, reflections and interpretations.

Whilst observing what is present and how they interrelate, I was also keen to observe and record what is notable by its absence, and where these 'invisible' elements leak into the City

and become visible, paying particular note to the boundaries of this clearly delineated geographical space.

Noting and reflecting

I took extensive field notes during the walks. 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, for example including more detailed descriptions, raising questions, making connections, reminding myself of sources to refer to in the literature, so that when I came to type them up I had extensive material and was not working from memory. 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. I did also prepare a draft observation schedule which was useful to help me prepare for the walks (see Appendix B).

Notes from the field days were typed up within a couple of days of each route, and the walks mapped and saved digitally along with photos taken during each walk.

Seeing and sensing

The growth of interest over recent years in the analysis of visual data in qualitative research has been striking (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Visual research is broadly defined to encompass pictures, film, web pages and other multimedia, and three dimensional and lived media such as dress and architecture, and includes research based on pre-existing visual material and studies that use researcher-generated visual material (Bell and Davison, 2013). The social scientific trend towards the visual has also informed the study of organisational life (ibid: 3)

and a visual turn in management studies is starting to take shape (ibid: 7), building on a growing awareness of the importance of aesthetics in organisational life (Linstead and Höpfl, 2000, Taylor and Hansen, 2005).

For the purposes of my fieldwork, I utilised a research-driven approach, collecting data by means of photographs taken during the walks. The purpose was 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.

I took photographs whilst walking, taking many hundreds 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, and/or because at times the road traffic was so heavy that I had limited time to photograph the scene or object that had caught my attention. I took photographs for the following reason:

- As illustrations, to use within the written thesis,
- To help as aide memoire and to recreate the walks and the experience as I thought about them, wrote about them and analysed them retrospectively,
- To record examples of the materiality of the setting, historic artefacts and buildings, 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,
- To record examples of what was unusual or unexpected in the setting; those elements which did not fit with the homotopic nature of the place, or which were repressed but emerged from time to time; what I termed the invisible becoming visible.

In terms of ethical considerations, I did feel uncomfortable at times photographing street scenes which involved people. I tried to be as unobtrusive as possible and was never approached by anyone. When reflecting upon my unease, it occurred to me that if I was a bona fide tourist, I would have had no hesitation about taking photos which included people; my unease stemmed from the fact that I was planning to analyse dress and patterns of behaviour. Given that I had no idea as to the identity of anyone I photographed and they are very unlikely to be identified via my thesis, this unease could be considered to be relatively unproblematic.

Mapping

I mapped each walk onto a master map of the City (see Appendices C and D). 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,
- Help me to see when the walks, in the spirit of the *dérive*, deviated from the planned routes.

I also created a 'rhythmanalysis' map, which shows where and how the rhythms varied and the various corresponding emotions which surfaced in these areas (see Appendix E).

Methodology Part Two

The second phase of the fieldwork focused on the lived experience of those working in the City, in order to better understand how the place is perceived and sensed, and how shared meanings accumulate. A Lefebvrian reading of the space as socially produced leads to an empirical exploration of what is in place here, 'scene', in Lefebvrian terminology, and what

is out of place, or 'obscene'. Returning to specific research aims, I wanted to understand how they experience the materiality and the rhythms of the place, to be able to analyse what, or who, can be said to truly belong in this place; equally, if there are conditions of membership, then who, or what, is excluded, and why? I wanted to investigate what the expectations of this place are, in order to add to my subjective exploration of the rhythms, and to more fully understand what the price of belonging is in the City.

Participant interviews

Eighteen research participants were recruited, who work regularly in the City and who took part in face to face semi structured interviews. Of the participants, eight were personal contacts who I had some degree of acquaintance with. The other ten were recruited via snowball sampling (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 192) from participants. This method of obtaining participants worked well, with all those I asked agreeing and most spontaneously offering to put colleagues in touch with me. The focus of the interviews was on their sensory and emotional reactions to the setting, with particular reference to how they perceive the space according to their gender. The interviews also helped to develop the subjective data gathered in the streetwalking stage, in that the analyses helped with an understanding of the daily rhythms and the lived experience of City workers.

Each interview lasted for approximately forty five to sixty minutes, although two lasted for ninety minutes. Interviews were conducted in a variety of locations; in participant's offices, coffee shops close to their offices, or in private houses (see Ethics section for more details). On one occasion I walked through the City streets while interviewing; the participant in this instance no longer works in the City, and had been keen to recreate her walks to and from the station to her former place of work each day in order to 'feel', as she put it, the bodily effects of the pressured environment once again. This method of interviewing created a nice link

between the two stages of the fieldwork and is something that I would seek to recreate again in subsequent fieldwork beyond the scope of this thesis, should logistics allow for it.

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 (see Appendix H for demographic details). All were of white British ethnicity, apart from one Australian woman with white European ancestry. Since the snowball sample started with my own contacts from when I worked in the City, this perhaps represents my own experience of relatively few ethnic minority workers in management roles in the Square Mile.

The aim was to develop a flexible interview process, with the emphasis firmly on how the interviewee frames and understands issues, events and patterns, but allowing room to pursue additional issues as they arose and ensuring that opportunities to talk about what they felt were important to understanding their lived experience were fully exploited.

Methods of data collection: Stage two

Participants were contacted via email or phone, and a brief summary of the research aims and objectives was provided. In several cases, when the participants were known to myself or to a previous interviewee, verbal agreement to participate had already been given. A hard copy participant agreement form (see Appendix F) was given to all interviewees when the meeting took place, and was signed by them and returned to me.

I had prepared an interview guide (see Appendix G) and I took a hard copy with me, as well as being able to access it electronically if necessary. Doing this gave me a feeling of security in case I forgot the sequence of questions due to nerves, or found it hard to keep the interview roughly on track or manage the timings of the interviews.

Interviews were recorded using a small audio recorder. I transcribed the first interview, as a way of helping me to feel close to the data; after the first interview, due to time considerations, I used a professional transcriber¹².

Research diary

I kept a research diary during this stage of the fieldwork. Although not as detailed as the observational field notes, this was very useful to record my feelings and emotions before and after each interview, as well as noting any logistical issues or problems that I encountered and needed to resolve in the future. I also used it to note any ‘sticky moments’ (Riach, 2009: 260) which occurred, and also to record details of my journeys, impressions of the interview setting and other peripheral observations, in order to help me recreate the interviews as much as possible when reading and analysing the transcriptions.

Fieldwork timetable

Fieldwork was conducted during the calendar year 2015. The fieldwork incorporates both the physical, embodied ethnographic approach of ‘streetwalking’ in the research setting, along with semi-structured interviews with research participants.

The first part of the fieldwork, streetwalking, consisted of ten full days in the research setting, carried out between February and July 2015. The majority of interviews were carried out with participants between August and December 2015. By the end of the calendar year 2015, having carried out sixteen interviews, I felt that I had reached a thematic saturation point, and had enough data to start analysis. I was aware, however, that with ten men having been

¹² With whom my supervisor had worked with on several ethnographic projects, including one on place and setting. I decided to use a transcriber mainly for reasons of timing; given that I was working full time whilst carrying out the research, I was concerned that the time taken to transcribe the interviews myself would mean a long gap between the fieldwork and the analysis. Once the first interview was transcribed, I was reassured that I was still able to feel close to the data, and remember the interview in detail, and the speed of the professional transcriber allowed me additional time for analysis and reflection. I also listened again to each interview recording.

interviewed but only six women, that ideally I would have liked more of a gender balance, so having discussed this with my supervisor, I carried out another two interviews with women in early January 2016. I had already started initial analysis of the data, but these interviews served to reinforce and confirm the emergent themes.

Negotiation of access to participants

Although most initial contacts were people known to myself, some were ‘volunteered’ by friends, or by other interviewees, and in all cases I followed up the information provided by email. Mindful of their busy working lives, I sent email reminders closer to the time. Locations were suggested by mutual consent, although the participants led the way; I usually suggested a neutral but public space such as a local coffee shop, although some (five) suggested their offices as more convenient, and five were interviewed in their own homes. Of these latter interviews, only one participant was unknown to me prior to the interview date, but I was acquainted with his spouse and was aware that she would be present (in an adjacent room) during the interview.

Ethical considerations

During each stage of the research process, I needed to apply a contextual understanding of the particular ethical circumstances of the project. During stage one of the fieldwork, although there was no need for me to seek formal ethical approval from my institution, since this part of the research process did not involve any other human participants, I still needed to be aware of the ethical relevance of the observations that I was undertaking. An example of this was photography; I regularly took photos of people and places as I walked, without seeking permission. Whilst with the prevalence of CCTV, satellite images and more or less everyone’s immediate access to a smartphone, we are all more used to being ‘visible’ than perhaps at any other period in history, I did sometimes feel uncomfortable when

photographing street scenes involving people, as noted above. I was unobtrusive at all times and was never questioned, and it is highly unlikely that anyone would be recognised from my published thesis; I also deleted all photographs once I had saved relevant ones on an encrypted dropbox file, shared only with my supervisor.

With regard to stage two of the fieldwork, the ethical considerations were more complex, and I did need to seek ethical approval from my institution in advance of starting this stage. Firstly, I needed to be aware of the time constraints for many of my participants and negotiate this sensitively; most were extremely busy and there was no direct benefit to them for participating in the study. I drafted a brief outline of the main focus of the research, as well as some background about myself and my current role as a researcher, which was emailed to all participants when asking for their participation. At this stage I also mentioned that I would be recording the interview, only for my transcription purposes, and reassured them of the anonymity of their contribution. I also prepared a consent form, which repeated this information, and which was signed by participants in my presence (see Appendix F).

The data was analysed via the transcriptions, but only myself, my supervisor and the transcriber had access to the raw interview data. The audio recorder used was stored in a locked cabinet in between interviews. The transcriptions were saved (using pseudonyms at all times) on an encrypted dropbox file, shared only with my supervisor. Once transcribed, the interview data was emailed to each participant in order to seek their agreement to use it and to give them an opportunity to make any amendments. There were only two occasions when any supplementary information was offered over email.

Since the focus of the interviews was on participants' experiences of their wider workplace setting, rather than on their organisations, I did not foresee any particular issues regarding privacy and confidentiality, and this did not arise. Although this wasn't specifically

mentioned beforehand, during most interviews the opportunity arose for me to mention that I had worked in the setting myself and was very familiar with it. This helped participants who did not know me prior to the interviews relax, and helped to open up the conversations; they seemed reassured of my ‘insider’ status, an example being when they mentioned specific companies and I was familiar with people who worked there or had worked there myself.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity in its most general sense involves reflecting on the ways in which qualitative research involves not simply the collection of data, but rather the construction of the research findings through a process in which the researcher plays an active, formative role. As well as placing the researcher strongly within the research process, i.e. an active participant themselves, rather than a detached observer, reflexivity also entails ‘sensitivity to the researcher’s cultural, social and political context’ (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 700). At its core is an epistemological concern with how we come to understand or represent another person’s ‘world-view’ (Riach, 2009: 357).

The ideal ‘reflexive attitude’ (ibid: 357) acknowledges the role of the researcher as a central part of the production of knowledge, including a sense of real-time self-awareness from the researcher. This epistemological consideration is critical in order to differentiate reflexivity from reflection. Reflective practices have generally signalled a temporal distance from the task or research process (Schon, 1983, cited in Riach, 2009). Reflexivity is, in another sense, broader than critical reflection, since as well as eschewing temporal distance from the process, it also allows the researcher to interrogate their own epistemological standpoint, which in turns means that some form of action and change must necessarily emerge from the reflexive process (Giddens, 1991). Importantly for Riach (2009: 359), reflexivity ‘requires a fundamental re-questioning of what is knowable in a given context’. She emphasizes

reflexivity as unfolding in situ, stressing the importance of being reflexive throughout the entire process, which was an important consideration throughout the interviews.

According to Riach, (2009), however, reflexivity as a concept within organizational research, has tended to 'put the researcher at the epicentre of discussion' (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 700). Riach argues for participant-centred reflexivity during research interviews, describing a process whereby both researcher and participant reflect on their own and one another's situations or positions, and on that basis can interrogate their own way of understanding the world.

My approach called for a high degree of reflexivity since during the first stage of the fieldwork I was both engaged subject/participant and observer. Each walk that I carried out was recorded by means of field notes and a research diary, and I noted not only my observations but my own emotional responses. Within the written accounts of my walks I referred to my own history as a worker in the City; it is a space that I am very familiar with, yet engaging with it as a researcher was very different to engaging with it as someone who works there every day. For example, although in one sense I was immersed in the setting and therefore 'within', I was also free to 'dip in and out' as I wished, finding dates and times for research which accommodated my other responsibilities. I was not wearing business attire; this sometimes marked me out as an 'outsider', albeit one who is familiar with the geography of the place.

Although I was aiming for a detailed and rich account of my observational walking, and a reflexive account of my experiences are central to the written record, (including embodied responses, drawing on Lefebvre's insistence of using the body as a metronome for analysing rhythms of place (2004: 31)), the approach was triangulated in order to incorporate not only other methods but also other perspectives. This is necessary not only to provide a broader

and more thorough exploration of place, but to ensure that my subjective and reflexive accounts of my experiences did not become endlessly self-referential - what Pels (2000: 14) calls a 'vicious circulatory'. The focus during interviews was on the participants' own sensory and emotional reactions to the setting, with particular reference to how they perceive the space according to their gender. During the interview process a reflexive approach was central to both drawing up a rich and detailed written account, and to understanding participants' experiences - for example, what do they experience that I did not? How might this relate to their experience of working here full time, or to their gender, or to the length of time that they have worked here? What questions did they have for me, and were these influenced by whether or not they perceive me as a City 'insider' or an academic researcher? Qualitative research is concerned with the minutiae of experience; how that is gathered, analysed and interpreted meant a constant process of checking my own position, how I immersed myself in both the process and the setting, and how I might be – and be perceived as – simultaneously both 'insider' and 'outsider'.

During the interviews my own status as interviewer was never fixed, but continually re-made through a process of negotiation; my personal history of having worked in the City for a period of time, and of familiarity with some of the financial services terminology, helped establish me as someone who was not there to be prurient or in some way critical about the post financial crisis City. A degree of anxiety was expressed by all participants with reference to how they might be viewed by the 'outside' world. At other times, however, my status as a University researcher who has not worked in the City for ten years made it easier to express a naivety and interest in their working lives, and helped them to see the need to offer fuller explanations or descriptions of their daily lives.

Data Analysis

The streetwalking phase of the data collection resulted in fifty two pages of field notes. As described above, 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 the notes and the photographs. When writing up the analysis, I visited the setting again and sat writing in coffee shops to bring myself back into the setting.

The interviews resulted in one hundred and twenty four pages of transcribed text, representing fifty five thousand words. 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.

Once all the data was collected, I carried out a systematic thematic analysis of each data set. A more formal analysis was carried out by colour coding themes and matching quotes from my field notes, photographs and quotations from the transcripts against them to create an overarching analysis in this way a thematic narrative emerged. Again, when writing up the findings I returned to the setting to immerse myself in the sights and sounds of the City.

Conclusion

Since the theoretical commitments of this research are focused around a Lefebvrian reading of socially produced space, especially his notion of perceived space, a methodology is required which focuses on perception; both my own, and that of organisational actors in the setting. As Lefebvre informs us, the researcher 'must arrive at the concrete through experience' (2004: 31). Analysing the spatial dimensions of lived experience, and analysing

the rhythms of place in order to more fully understand the socio-materiality of the organisational setting, calls for a creative methodology which not only takes place within the streets of the research setting but places the body, and how the body moves and experiences the flows and rhythms, at its centre. Such an approach, immersed in the setting and concerned with how it is perceived on a daily basis, also requires a method which places a sensory response at its heart. The walking approaches outlined above bring together the embodied approach of rhythmanalysis, the observational art of *flânerie*, and the more emotionally attuned *dérive*, and use the literary and esoteric traditions of writing about London as their starting point, recognising that the City is a unique organisational space with a long tradition of inspiring written accounts. This methodology brings a hermeneutical approach to the organisational setting; in other words, it is both read as a text during the observational fieldwork, and provides a text to be read. This approach calls for a high degree of reflexivity since as a researcher I was both engaged subject/participant and observer; I was both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the research process. My subjective experience formed the basis for part of the fieldwork, but was enhanced and complemented by semi structured interviews with participants, which both enriched and added to my own perceptions. Both approaches use visual material to illustrate and portray the material which is so central, I argue, to understanding the social and cultural environment and which will help to bring to life the ‘genus loci’ of the City.

To conclude, the City of London has long been understood as a place where organisations are set and where organisational actors carry out their work. The empirical aspect of this thesis set out to demonstrate that the setting itself can be viewed as an organisational entity in its own right, with its own rhythms and cycles, and that to understand it through a socio-material analysis needs an embodied methodology that is both concerned with, and set within, the streets of the setting.

Chapter Five: Findings – Sensing the City through Streetwalking

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to present the thematic findings gathered from the first stage of the fieldwork. To summarise, this constituted an embodied approach to subjectively experiencing the rhythms, the materiality and the socio-cultural aspects of the City.

The key themes which emerged can be grouped under the following headings: firstly, gender, including order, control and sanitisation, and exclusion of the feminine; secondly, the performativity of the City, including insider/outsider status, the repression of the outsider and the endless repetition of the insider; and, thirdly, the sense of the City as an intense, rarefied space with distinctive rhythms. How the materiality both shapes these themes and in turn is shaped by them is extensively discussed in each section.

The chapter is structured thematically, but each theme is introduced by means of the methodological walking tradition from which the themes emerged; for example, the visual and observational method of *flânerie* evinced examples of how gendered performances are manifested in the setting, whereas the emotional attunement of the *dérive* evinced feelings of exclusion.

Reflexivity in the setting

One of the most immediate surprises that I had, on starting the fieldwork, was in regards to my own subject position within the setting. I worked in the City for several years in the late 1990s and then again in the early 2000s, a ten year period in total, working for both a ‘Big Four’ professional services organisation and for a reinsurance broker. Following that period, I worked as a self-employed consultant for five years, with most of my clients being City based, so travelled regularly to the setting. As a consequence of this, I know the area well,

associate it with my working life, and thought it would hold few surprises for me. In fact my status as a University based PhD researcher, in the setting not to go to an office job but to wander, and in the course of this to observe, record and analyse, threw my composure considerably. On the first morning that I travelled in for my first day of fieldwork, I felt out of place the moment I stepped on the train. I thought I had been sensible by dressing casually and practically with the weather in mind (it was cold and wet), but my lack of formal corporate attire made me feel noticeable. At Liverpool Street station, whilst dithering as to which direction I should head towards, I found myself walking against the flow and being almost knocked sideways by the crowd. I was nervous about starting the fieldwork and full of doubts as to whether I would actually observe anything of interest; this hesitancy was contrary to the purposive sense of early morning commuters all around me, as this quote from my field notes shows:

The sense of purpose is already apparent – very few people are stopping to get their bearings or consult maps, most move swiftly towards the tube entrance or to the main exits. I can't hear the jumble of languages and differently pitched voices that you hear at an airport or other railway stations – the background noise is footsteps and automated announcements, there is little audible conversation.

On another occasion I travelled in at the end of the working day, arriving just as the rush hour was starting, with workers heading home in the opposite direction to me:

It's really busy, people everywhere, which I expected, but I'd forgotten how intent and focused rush hour crowds can be when the purpose is focused in one direction – out of the City - and onto the platforms or down into the tube. In contrast I am arriving and it is physically hard work moving against the flow, I am weaving in and out of people. It feels very different to crowds in the West End, at, for example, Oxford

Street tube, because although that's even busier, the crowds are all heading in different directions and the shop doorways are as busy as the streets. Here it's more purposeful and directional.

This feeling of being both an insider – someone who is familiar with the geography, used to navigating the spaces, with experience of working here, yet simultaneously an outsider – not dressed conventionally for this environment, sometimes hesitant, looking like a tourist when I took photos, was ever present, and I felt far more of an outsider than I had expected:

I don't feel anonymous as I would in any other part of London; instead I feel conspicuous due to my casual attire, and I feel unprofessional and student-y. It is rare for me to be dressed so casually during the working week and I feel out of place, especially when I take photographs and I feel even more conspicuous.

This sense of 'not belonging' was manifested through the performative elements of the City dress code; formal, preferably dark, business attire marks you out as an insider and confirms the functionality of the setting; this is a place where serious work is carried out. I felt especially conscious of my lack of business clothing during the winter and spring; on the hot days in June and July women were noticeably more casual in summer dresses, and men were more likely to wear short sleeved shirts with no ties, although they were still more formally dressed than I am used to in my own current working environment.

What was interesting was when the transitions occurred. I felt noticeably more out of place at the beginning of each trip, particularly when I was arriving at the beginning of the working day and everyone else was so purposeful. This often coincided with me looking at street maps and working out where I would start my walk; once I started walking, becoming absorbed in

the surroundings with a 'purpose', I felt much more of an insider. Once I stopped to take photos, however, I felt awkward and in the way again:

...taking photographs makes you stand out and potentially seem like a tourist exhibiting a naïve fascination with what is commonplace to insiders.

The insider/outsider status recurred in another unexpected way when I walked; I had never expected to get lost as often as I did. The City is a geographically small area, as is well recognised by its metonym, the Square Mile. I have not only worked there but used to live less than half a mile away for a period of time in my twenties and travelled through it daily. I wanted to follow the spirit of the *dérive* at times, i.e. deliberately changing direction on a whim, seeking to make the familiar unfamiliar, taking routes I hadn't taken before and exploring some areas that I didn't know so well, particularly on the border areas, but I didn't expect to sometimes feel as if I had wandered into an unknown urban setting. Partly this was to do with lack of access, which I will discuss in more detail below; these are frustrating streets to navigate, building work is omnipresent and many side streets and main thoroughfares are blocked or virtually impossible for pedestrians to navigate. But the architecture itself is also to blame; the repetition of the building style makes many streets look identical, and given the repetition of the human actors, mostly identically dressed, identically purposive, moving at the same rhythm, my walks did at times take on a dream like quality as I sometimes walked in circles or searched for a familiar landmark:

I've realised where I am and I know the general direction I need to head towards, but I also realise that all the small streets are pretty much identical - even the churches look the same after a while. I can really relate to Freud's sense of the uncanny when getting lost in an Italian city and constantly turning back on himself. I feel quite

claustrophobic and dwarfed by the buildings, you just can't get a clear view at ground level.



Figure One: Two City streets in the rain, with building styles and human actors repeating

By the time of my final walk, however, I was beginning to feel a sense of ownership of, and identification with, the City which surprised me. On this occasion I had participated in a guided walk, but informative though it was, I felt quite irritated at following someone else's schedule, and felt as if the streets and their rhythms were now imprinted upon me. My 'outsider' status was reduced by my familiarity with the geography of the place and from my adoption of the busy rhythms; I had learned how to navigate the confusing streets, remembered how to walk purposefully, and felt an emotional connection with some favoured areas. This is a place which demands that you work hard for your acceptance; if you don't dress correctly or have the right job, you can belong, to an extent, by understanding and negotiating the space.

Observing as a flâneuse

My interpretation of flânerie in the City was to walk and to gaze, to seek out what was beautiful and enthralling in this urban setting, and 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. For me, there needed to be an element of detachment in my wanderings as a flâneuse; if I was too much of an insider, then my observations might be less rich and less critical. In this sense, my ‘outsider’ status, as described above, was helpful in that when I felt awkward due to my clothes and my lack of purpose, I could pay attention instead to what I observed around me, and my ‘purpose’ became documenting and photographing that which I saw. In another sense, however, it was still problematic being a female flâneur. One issue is that you simply stand out more; despite the presence of very many women in the City, there are still far fewer relative to the number of men on the streets. Over the course of ten days, I saw no groups of women at all on the streets; by contrast, solitary men are rare, except at the beginning and end of the working day, yet groups of men are omnipresent:



Figure Two: Men on Cheapside walking together



Figure Three: men at lunchtime near Liverpool Street – again, uniforms and movements repeat



Figure Four: Paternoster Square, repetition again



Figure Five: Men at lunchtime, Newgate



Figure Six: Men relaxing, but still in uniform, Paternoster Square

This was perhaps my first observation as a flâneur; that men and women use the space differently. 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. They also seemed to use the space as one large office, as noted in field notes:

I notice two separate groups of men greeting one another in the middle of the street – expansive handshakes, loud chat, a quick walk together along the pavement before parting. I see no women greeting one another in this familiar way. Again the sense of being in the corridors of an office is strong – with the (male) executives calling out to each other as the secretaries scurry past.

On days when the weather was cold and wet, I felt a sense of empathy with the women I observed, since they – and I – seemed so much more encumbered than the men. We seemed laden with coats and bags and umbrellas, whereas it was common to see men walking fast through the streets just with files under their arms – passing from office to office, or to Lloyds or the Stock Exchange without bothering to stop to don a coat. My sense of being awkward in the space was often to do with manoeuvring clothing and possessions, of having to stop to put down my umbrella and search for my phone (whilst worrying about it getting wet), and of keeping an eye on my bag. It sometimes seemed like a far cry from being a leisurely gentleman stroller of eighteenth century Paris:

The women seem on the whole to be more encumbered – most are carrying umbrellas and bags and wearing coats and scarves, and seeing one or two trying to manage umbrellas in the wind that starts up, I am reminded of Victorian ladies in uncomfortable corsets carrying parasols.



Figure Seven: Impromptu meeting, Fenchurch Street. The woman in the foreground is encumbered ...

The above image illustrates the sense of the City streets functioning as office corridors; 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 functions as an organization beyond the boundaries of individual institutions or workplaces.



Figure Eight: On their way to a meeting? Fenchurch Street

I observed and photographed many instances of men wearing trainers with their suits, which seemed to be a shared code for being hurried and purposeful; a uniform to wear when rushing between buildings, and, presumably, between important meetings. The presence of groups of men on the streets also signalled noise; their deeper voices carried, and since they were so often in groups, the sound of male voices was common. I rarely heard female voices – although it was women who tended to apologise and make eye contact when I had those awkward encounters when two people walking in opposite directions move the same way and can't get past one another; if this happened with a man, there would be no eye contact or smile. The male propensity to spread out in the streets was noticeable in the nicer weather as well; although women were also pouring out of buildings in the hot June sunshine at lunchtime, again I never observed groups of them sitting together, although men spilled out from pubs and cafes:



Figure Nine: Men inn a group outside a pub, just off Fleet Street



Figure Ten: A sunny mid-afternoon drink, Cannon Street – but where are their female colleagues?

Once again, the sense of the City streets functioning as office corridors or office social spaces was strong, although it was only men who seemed to interact within the space in this way.

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 soaring architecture invites you to look up, from the overly phallic:



Figure Eleven: 30 St Mary Axe, colloquially known as the Gherkin

To the imposing and intimidating:



Figure Twelve: The Salesforce Tower, formerly and still more commonly known as the Heron

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, bringing to mind architectural pornography (De Cock et al, 2011). In the presence of these huge buildings which dominate the skyline, I noticed walking faster and more purposefully. When I was accompanied by my supervisor, we noted how we had to shout to speak to one another, and 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 furred umbrellas, of Gentleman’s clubs and sober respectability:



Figure Thirteen: The Royal Exchange – the statue directly in front is the London Troops War Memorial, commemorating the men of London who fought in WW1 and WW2



Figure Fourteen: Victorian buildings on Gracechurch Street

This imperial ‘centre’ of the City is architecturally coherent (although the ‘phallic verticality’ emerges priapically in the background):



Figure Fifteen: Contrasting architectural styles in the heart of the City, Cornhill

As well as the architectural coherence, it is coherent in other ways; signage is visible and maps are everywhere, giving an impression of order to what is in fact a maze of small side streets, the streets are exceptionally clean and sanitised, and narratives of order are publicly displayed, as is illustrated by a visit to the Bank of England museum. I noted how striking it was that how the story told was one of dominance, stability and security. The narrative displayed in the museum is all about control – all the storyboards are about how the Bank ‘improves the lives of the people of Great Britain by managing the economy’ – the Bank here is less an old lady and more a benevolent uncle or grandfather. Headlines to exhibitions read ‘Security, Stability and Trust.’ This is at odds with the facts; the City has been the setting for

repeated financial crises, so the impression that the bank is performing an alternative history, one based on stability and reassurance, is strong:

The most interesting part for me is the way the financial crisis is depicted as a flow chart, with the main events listed and then the Bank's response, the narrative being one of reassurance and a natural order even to crises, which have been logically managed. There is also a large screen listing all the crises to which the bank has responded and 'saved the day'. Everything is spotless and sanitised:

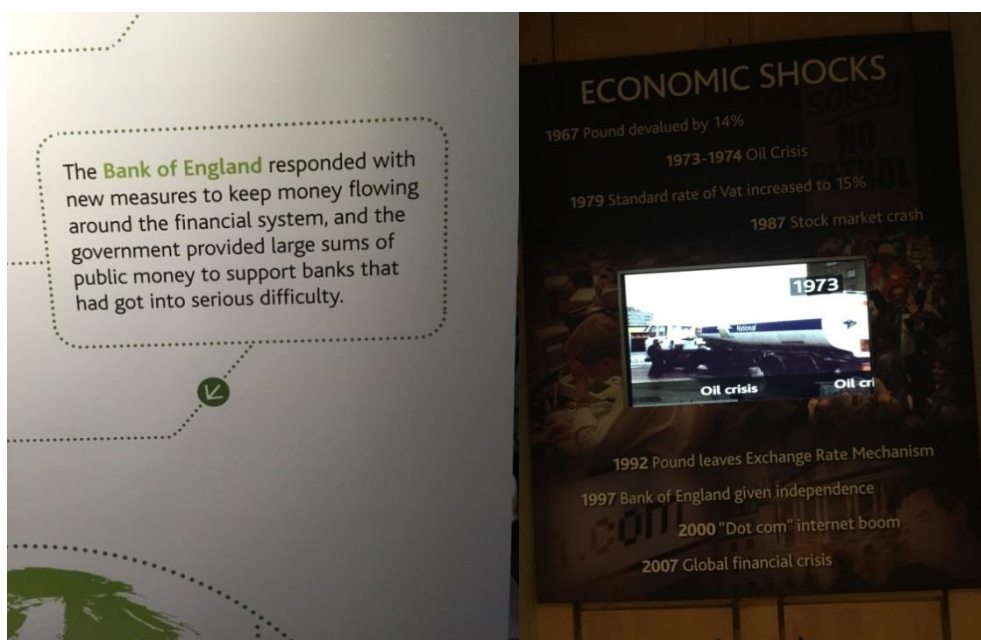


Figure Sixteen: Flow charts depicting the management of crises or 'shocks' in the Bank of England Museum

In this small core of the space, there is a sense of reverence for the past, usually the British imperial past, although nods to the founding of the City in the days of the Roman Empire are also to be found. This heart of the setting is full of embodied imagery of the past, evidencing in material form the themes of control, stability and continuity which the City narrates. Statuary abounds:



Figure Seventeen: Imposing statuary outside the Bank of England: The Duke of Wellington (left), George Peabody, the ‘Father of Philanthropy’ (right)

This theme, so intrinsic to how the City presents and narrates itself, or in other words, how it performs itself, will be further explored and discussed in chapter seven.

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. Blue plaques (indicating the one time place of residence of an important person), original signage and particularly the gilded objects adorning the buildings that might otherwise have been overlooked – all are important artefacts of the City’s history with which the area is replete but which might otherwise have gone unnoticed:



Figure Eighteen: Blue plaques in the centre of the City

Although historic buildings are evident throughout the City, it is noticeable that it is in the more sanitized areas that the history and the statuary is more prevalent and better signed. Heading west, away from the core towards Ludgate Hill, Fleet Street and the area characterized by the legal and professional services industries, history once again becomes the overriding theme of the City narrative; the history of the place is performed through the restored and almost in-authentically well preserved buildings, and through simulacra such as pubs and statues:

I'm starting to find the weight of history almost oppressive as I walk up Fleet Street. This area feels 'cleaner' and wider than in the heart of the City, and the historic associations are really emphasized – the churches (particularly St Brides) have tourists in them, and the pubs have names starting with 'Ye Olde ' ...it feels almost artificially preserved here, as opposed to the centre and east of the City where no-one seems to pay attention to the historic buildings. This is very definitely legal and professional services land, and barristers are visible in their distinctive attire as I get closer to the Royal Courts and the Old Bailey. There is little high rise building here,

and no overtly 'phallic' skyscrapers; the general ambience is more gentlemanly and scholarly.

Each of the geographic spaces within the City performs its own narrative; here it is a sanitised, scholarly and almost touristically aimed version of finance as essentially cerebral and professional. This emphasises the performativity of the place; it is not merely a setting or neutral backdrop, but each area performs who and what the City is, and who is in and out place. This theme will be returned to and explored in more detail in both the following chapter (consisting of data from qualitative interviews) and in the discussion chapter.

Here too, as in the area around the Bank of England, is classical imagery and decoration:



Figure Nineteen: Classical statuary adorning a building, Gracechurch Street



Figure Twenty: Statue of Sir John Soane in classical garb, Lothbury



Figure Twenty One: Architectural detail, Cornhill



Figure Twenty Two: Temple Bar, Paternoster Square

Although as you head west from the City the area becomes more gentrified, less busy and noisy and more in keeping with a scholarly legal district, the northern, southern and eastern borders of the City, on the other hand, tell a different story. I took the river Thames to be the southern boundary, as this was always the historic border between ancient London and Southwark on the south side of the river, although the modern Corporation of London boundary extends just over the river. The eastern border is around Aldgate East and the Commercial Road, where the City adjoins Tower Hamlets (an area of inner City deprivation) and Shoreditch (currently a trendy, expensive and gentrified area). The northern border

extends towards Old Street and Moorfields. These borders are distinct, which I hadn't expected; the City does not peter out into suburbs and cross over spaces as many modern cities tend to do, but stops suddenly, so you are very aware of crossing from one space into another; reminiscent of medieval fortress citadels. It was at these border points that I observed those elements which are both invisible in the heart of the space, and narrated out of the City's own history as it is presented via tourist information, museums etc. At Lower Thames Street, just by London Bridge, I saw the only homeless person during my observation days. At the eastern and northern borders, there is graffiti, occasional boarded up buildings, more small retail premises, e.g. independent newsagents, and more small ethnic restaurants – Jewish delis, Middle Eastern takeaways etc., as opposed to the sanitised corporate buildings and high end retail outlets in the heart of the space:



Figure Twenty Three: Boarded up building, Chiswell Street



Figure Twenty Four: Derelict building on the border of the City at Spitalfields

As the field notes show, this can create an eerie atmosphere:

The contrast at the borders between the City proper and the encroaching area is stark. The people and the architecture which is 'out of place' in the City proper suddenly appear, but disappear again from one side of the street to the next, which is odd.

One of the surprising observations was just how homogenous the working population of the City is. Although I had expected white men to be dominant to some degree, it became startling to notice how few ethnic minority faces there were in the crowds (and those were mostly Asian) and how rigid the age range was – overwhelmingly between early twenties and early fifties. The very young and the elderly were simply not present. Towards the north eastern boundary, by Smithfield market, a relatively residential quarter, I saw a children's playground with a solitary small girl playing - the only pre-school child I saw.



Figure Twenty Five: a typically empty play area on the eastern borders, taken in late afternoon after schools were closed

There are primary schools in the City, but apart from a group of French children in the Bank of England museum, children were not well represented, and public gardens were deserted. The only elderly people we saw were when my supervisor and I headed towards the eastern borders where some immigrant women were walking. The further you venture into the heart of the City, the more the human actors begin to endlessly repeat:



Figure Twenty Six: Repetition again, in the heart of the City

Men who do not fit the homogenous style of the City worker – white, relatively young, smartly dressed in sober suits - were not very visible. They were there - men working on the many construction sites in yellow vests and hard hats, or on cables above our heads, cleaning windows, or street cleaners; yet they did not group together and spread out across the space in the way that the dominant business workers did:



Figure Twenty Seven: Construction work, London Wall



Figure Twenty Eight: Street cleaner, St Paul's

The one group of men who had ‘outsider’ status that I observed was a group of what appeared to be technicians or similar, who were sitting on a low wall close to Liverpool Street station. Interestingly, they were grouped away from the main square, in a small alcove type setting, with their backs turned to the street, quite unlike the business workers who were striding purposefully and confidently around them:



Figure Twenty Nine: ‘Outsiders’, just off Bishopsgate

To summarise, my experience as an observational flâneuse was dominated by the following: firstly by gender; by my own self-consciousness as a non-corporate female in the space, by the varying styles of masculine materiality, and by the men who treat and move within the space so differently to women – and to other types of masculinities who are often reduced to solitary anomalies within this setting. This led to observations of who could be ‘in place’ in the City and who is out of place, and how what is ‘in place’ repeats and recurs, and how what is repressed may nonetheless recur.

The way that the space presents and narrates itself was also dominant; the self-conscious narratives of order and sanitization in the space are symbolic of a setting dominated by

fantasies of control. Added to this, the materiality, particularly in the controlled centre, both manifests and reinforces the sense of performed history and dominance.

These observations lead onto a consideration of how it felt to be experiencing the socio-materiality of the City, and of how these themes are experienced by the body.

The Dérive in the City

I adopted a holistic methodology when walking in the City streets, combining elements of flânerie, psycho-geography and rythmanalysis in all walks. In practice this meant that at times, particularly when stopping to photograph and record, observing with a somewhat detached eye, I behaved like a flâneuse, at other times I photographed less, and felt more; in other words, I paid attention to what I was feeling and the emotions that were surfacing as I walked, in the tradition of psycho-geography. I also deliberately attempted to follow the spirit of the dérive, which was hard in so purposeful a place. Attempting to be playful is difficult in a place which is characterized by work and the acquisition of money. On the other hand, deliberately getting lost was easier than I had anticipated, and turning familiar streets into the strange and at times uncanny was far easier.

The first noticeable emotion that surfaced during the walks was the sense of protection afforded by some of the architecture in the heart of the City. From the first walk that I carried out with my supervisor, we both had the sense of being safe and contained when surrounded by the imperial and classical. The streets close to the borders are chaotic, noisy, with endless construction sites and difficult to navigate narrow streets:

Within the City (compared to the border areas), we felt relatively 'safe' – contained, controlled, enclosed, almost 'surrendered' to the security provided by the space itself, its layout and clear identity.

This feeling of the centre of the City being like the centre of a citadel, a protective fortification almost, lasted throughout my walks. When I walked around the boundary of the entire City, I had an uncanny sensation of being ‘pulled’ by some invisible force, into the heart, which I was deliberately avoiding:

As I continue trudging along towards the Tower, I get the odd sensation – which has come and gone all day – that I’m being sucked back in towards the centre. It feels a bit like the City is a vortex. It feels strange and a bit disconcerting not to be venturing into the heart, as if I’m missing out somehow on all the important stuff. I wonder if this is how it must have felt in the days when town and cities were fortified and you couldn’t gain entry unless you had business there, or else you were shut out at night. I actually have to fight the temptation not to head in.

At the same time as experiencing this flow back towards the enclosed heart, I often experienced a feeling of annoyance and irritation at the artifice that the City presents, even whilst recognising its allure. This, again, was most noticeable when I was right in the centre, by the Bank of England. On the day that I visited the Bank’s museum and was struck by the narrative presented of coherence, stability and order, I stood outside the museum, on Threadneedle Street, and felt an overwhelming sense of unreality:

I have the odd sensation of being on a film set – it just doesn’t feel real. Everything feels so staged and orchestrated in this part of the City, the statuary and classical imagery is overwhelming; it definitely has a feel of ‘protesting too much’. I wouldn’t be surprised to see men in Bowler Hats walking past. It occurs to me that what is absent in this part of the City is truth! Everything seems stage managed.

On a hot, sunny July day, walking through Paternoster Square, the City was ‘at play’; two men were kicking a football around the square (in suits), table tennis tables had been set up and a noisy and competitive game of table tennis was being played, but again it felt unspontaneous, overdone, and unnatural. This theme of structured ‘fun’ and its performative elements will be revisited and explored in Chapter Seven. The facilities do not seem to ‘belong’ to any particular organization, but rather are there for any or all City workers; again reinforcing the sense that the City operates as an organization beyond the confines of individual workplaces.

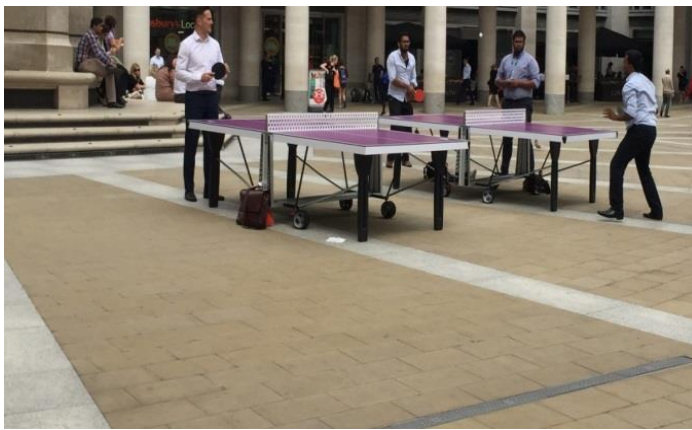


Figure Thirty: Playtime: hot July day in Paternoster Square

This feeling resurfaced at many times during my walks, in many of the areas where attention is drawn to the historic buildings, for example by the Inner and Outer Temple, and by St Paul’s cathedral. The aim seems to be to present the City as inherently stable and unchanging, where flows of people and money are managed and orderly, although this is at odds with the frenetic rhythms of the streets. This was most noticeable, however, on the Sunday when I walked in the City. It was easier to follow the spirit of the *dérive* and simply wander on a Sunday, since the streets were empty, but the overwhelming feeling was that I was a visitor on a set that was being prepared, and raised interesting ontological questions about whether the City existed without the frenetic activity of the weekdays?

Thinking about the afternoon, it occurs to me that the City ‘out of hours’ is like a stage or film set which is being built in readiness for the live action. It has that sense of unreality, the sense of desperation to put up more and more edifices as quickly as possible, of an empty space which should be filled, and a sense of tension and anticipation.

This was exacerbated by the enormous amount of construction work which was taking place in the City during the period of the fieldwork. On the Sunday, the only workers there were male – but all construction workers, speaking languages which sounded eastern European. The empty buildings, with unmanned reception desks seen through the glass doors and the wind howling around deserted streets gave the space a dystopian feel, and the endless noise of the construction sites gave the impression of a space in readiness, waiting to be prepared; a space which wouldn’t properly exist until the Monday morning when it would be put to its proper use and performed its role:



Figure Thirty One: Construction work near Aldgate, Sunday afternoon

These workers were the only customers on the coffee shops of the City on a Sunday, bar the occasional tourist. It could therefore be argued that on such ‘preparation’ days, they use these interior spaces as their ‘backstage’ whilst the ‘street stage’ is being prepared; this implies a temporal backstage as well as a spatial one, since their visible presence in the City is governed by temporal rules.

Again, this reinforces the sense of being in a performative space, one that is ‘ready and waiting’ for when the doors open, figuratively, and the real work can begin. This theme will be extensively discussed in Chapter Seven.



Figure Thirty Two: Cranes dominating the skyline, Cornhill, Sunday afternoon¹³

¹³ Parker (2016: 2), discussing the crane as one sociotechnical element of the entangled processes which make the modern city, describes them as ‘modest giants, hiding from the light,’ which seems an apt description of the cranes in the City – ubiquitous, but barely remarked upon, their gigantic status almost dwarfed by the skyscrapers surrounding them.



Figure Thirty Three: Empty buildings, Sun Street, Sunday afternoon: the windows felt like sightless eyes to me.

This sense of the City being a performative space, in other words a ‘set’ where the actors perform in their costumes/uniforms, according to prescribed behavioural rules which are underpinned by tradition and by narratives of order and stability, is not only at odds with the rhythms of the streets but with my own personal experience of working in the City, which is entwined in my memory with the experience of crisis, as explained by this extract from my field notes from that Sunday, when I was in the Insurance district by St Andrews Undershaft:

I worked here between 2001 and 2004, and memories of the 1992 Baltic exchange bombing and the IRA bomb on Bishopsgate the following year were still very vivid for those who had lived through it; colleagues would often talk about the shock of those days and all those who had been there then always attended the memorial services in the church. The area is associated with trauma for me, since I worked there during 9/11 and watched the towers collapse along with all my then-colleagues on the TV screens on the Executive floor, where we had all congregated by some sort of herding instinct, aware when the internet went down that some major event had unfolded.

Shortly afterwards a bomb threat (later found to be a hoax) to the Stock Exchange meant that people were advised to evacuate the City immediately. I had hung around for a while, not wanting to be seen to panic, but acutely aware of my two year old at home in Suffolk. My boss had worked through the IRA bombings and refused to 'give in' and go home early. In the end I compromised and left a little earlier than normal. Those days were very vividly recalled to me as I stood looking at where I used to work; the reinsurance firm I worked for had an extremely close relationship with Cantor Fitzgerald, the US Investment and brokerage firm, which lost two thirds of its workforce that day. Everyone knew someone who died, often very well; I had colleagues who died, although I had not known them well, but also lost a close personal friend who happened to work there as well, so the memories were acute.

The sense of the endurance of the City against crises is acute; although financial crises are never referred to in the presented histories of the City, except as events which were duly managed in an orderly fashion, the Blitz and other bombings are often referred to and the sense of pride in the survival of ancient buildings is evident. During my guided walk, the theme was that the City is a survivor; destroyed by fire, decimated by plague, and razed by bombing, yet each time, as the guide says, the City rises 'like a phoenix from the ashes', as the accompanying leaflet says, to stand again on the ruins of the past. Once again the narrative is about the City as indomitable, a place where crises might come, but they wash over the place. I used to work beside the church of St Andrew Undershaft, which I visited during the Sunday walk:

The present church dates from the sixteenth century but there has been a church on the site since the twelfth century. I always think of it as a 'survivor' church as it is so old and it managed to survive the Great Fire, the Blitz and the Baltic Exchange IRA

bombing in 1992. The name of the church (and the surrounding square to which it has bequeathed the name) comes from the shaft of the huge (pagan) Maypole which used to be erected each year right opposite the church, and which dwarfed it (I read that the custom died out in the sixteenth century). It occurs to me that it is a startling example of how history repeats itself - nowadays the overriding impression is of a small church absolutely dwarfed by massive tower blocks, the stone holding out against a tide of glass and concrete, the Church holding out against Mammon.



Figure Thirty Four: St Matthews Undershaft Church



Figure Thirty Five: The ancient and modern colliding

Wandering in the City provoked a multitude of conflicting emotions for me. Whilst, for example, I was irritated by and resented the narratives of coherence and sanitization, which seemed to be fundamentally at odds with the historic and present lived experience of working there, I could not help but feel respect for the sheer endurance of the place, exemplified by the endurance of some of the historic buildings, like the example above, and for the bravery of the people who carry on working here despite threats to their personal safety. But wandering through the streets posed a very real problem of access, which both interrupted my attempts to stroll through the space, and both annoyed and unnerved me. As well as the omnipresent construction work, many streets were blocked off for no apparent reason, and attempting to take short cuts through side streets and alleyways proved frustrating and usually unsuccessful:



Figure Thirty Six: Alleyways barred, behind Camomile Street



Figure Thirty Seven: Throgmorton Avenue



Figure Thirty Eight: A reminder that the City is often a private space

The sense of often being barred from walking, and from being excluded from places that I wanted to access or visit, was strong, and made me very frustrated

I'm fascinated by the gates that appear, effectively shutting you off from going down certain alleyways. It turns out that many of these streets are owned by the livery halls and have limited access for cars, pedestrians do seem to be able to walk through, but only if you spot the narrow gap between the gate and the wall where people are walking through. You really need to be an 'insider' in order to navigate this space. I follow them and see a really beautiful garden square, but that too is padlocked. Signs claiming private ownership are apparent, which feels odd in the streets of a city.

And:

I don't really 'like' the City today. It feels both oppressive and aggressive. Analysing this, I think it is because I dislike the sense of 'ownership' that you sometimes come across – notices telling you that you aren't welcome, entrances to streets and cut-throughs blocked... it's almost impossible to wander, especially in the spirit of the

dérive – you have to know where you're going, you have to have direction and purpose, otherwise you feel as if you could never find your way out again, you start to feel panicky and you are very aware of getting in the way.

As you walk, you become aware of how many spaces there are that have been designed to offer respite; many formal gardens with seats and benches, churchyards with seats, squares filled with plants and flowers. Very rarely, however, can you actually take up the offer of respite as you usually can't enter:

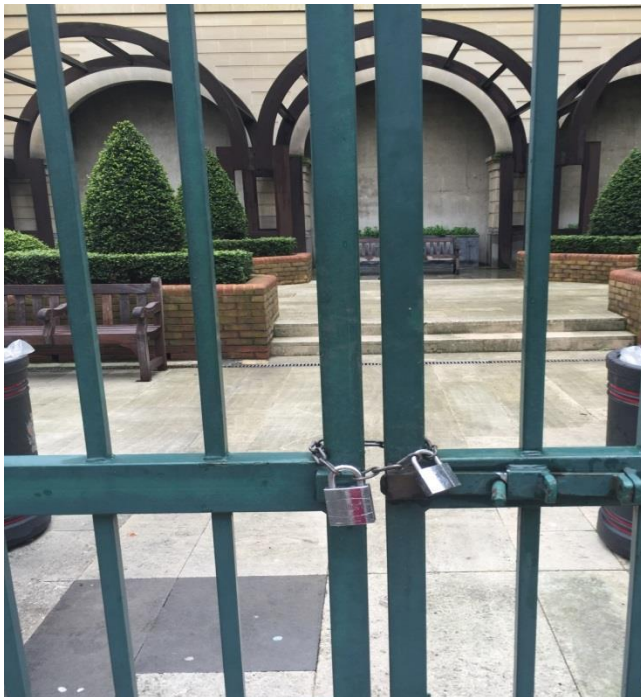


Figure Thirty Nine: No respite allowed, Camomile Street

This love/hate relationship with the City that I experienced as a walker/researcher chimes with my history of working in the space. At times during my working life there I loved the energy of the City, the opportunities and the busyness. At other times I hated it, loathing the relentless focus on money, and often feeling excluded as a woman and mother, forced to hide the personal aspects of my life, and longing to escape. During my walks, I sometimes really enjoyed being in the space and absorbing the energy; at other times I disliked it, saw it as a

sham, and felt excluded, both through my own position as an outsider, and through the lack of access on the streets. At times I also found the materiality to be crushing and oppressive:

Lunch on East Cheap and a chance to write coherent notes from my jottings— a huge building looms over the street and you feel really quite crushed by the size and weight of it:



Figure Forty: 20 Fenchurch Street dominating the skyline, and adding to the oppressive feel at street level

The sense of wanting to sometimes escape this geographically restricted and bounded space is present during the walks as well. The river in particular, glimpsed so often down side streets as you walk, seems to be a particularly seductive boundary, offering wide vistas and access to the ‘fun’ parts of London, the South Bank, theatres and shops. During one walk, in an attempt to leave the confusing maze of streets behind and get a view, I climb the

Monument (constructed during the late 1600s to commemorate the Great Fire of London, on the site where it started) to enjoy the panorama of the City:

The river signifies a definite transition between the different rhythms of London, and knowing that the South Bank and the Globe are just a short walk away makes me long to escape. But I turn back to the Monument and in a burst of energy climb it (311 steps ...). The views are spectacular, and although at first I'm annoyed with myself for not realising that the protective wire that encases you on the viewing balcony would spoil the photos, when I actually look at them they feel very symbolic – me caged in with the river and the rest of London spreading out beyond me:



Figure Forty One: Caged in at the top of the Monument, looking away from the City over the Thames

This sense of the City being a rarefied, intense, performative space, which excludes as much as it compels you inwards, made me feel both attracted and repelled by it. This relates to the experience of the ‘displaced’ in the City; this theme will be further explored in both this

chapter, the following chapter which will focus on the data gathered from City workers, and in the discussion chapter. Emotionally, there was often a dream like quality to my wanderings; an uncanny sense of being lost in a location I knew well, an almost dystopian feel to the ‘out of hours’ City, and a sense of being both seduced by, and resentful of, a place which seemed to say ‘no entry’ as often as it said ‘no escape’.

Paying attention to the rhythms of the City

Whilst Lefebvre gives no clear guidance on how to actually carry out a rhythmanalysis of an urban space, he does insist on using the body as both metronome and site of analysis. He gives no specific details of his own experience as a rhythmanalyst in the Mediterranean cities which he explores (2004), but it is clear that he walks, and, by walking, pays attention to his own bodily rhythms in order to understand the effect that the rhythms of place have on humans within it. This is a significant departure from *flânerie*, where the emphasis is on visual observation, and psycho-geography, where the focus is on recording emotional and imaginative responses; it represents a move away from the eye and the mind to the body. I had to often stop and remind myself to consciously record how my body was feeling as I walked. Often I was so caught up in documenting and recording, and thinking about my emotions, that I lost sight of my body, as so often happens when we are absorbed and busy. I sometimes felt guilty when I sat down and took conscious notice of my aching feet, as though Lefebvre were walking alongside me and chastising me for forgetting; after all, since I have been using an embodied methodological approach, as he points out (2004: 77) ‘the living body has always been present: a constant reference’. Once I started to consciously think about and record my bodily responses, I started to notice rhythms everywhere; the way the traffic moved, the way that people moved in and out of buildings, the pace of walking on different streets. Lefebvre links rhythms to repetition (2004: 18) but makes the point that repetition in itself does not produce a rhythm – it is the insertion of *difference* which does

that. So the noticeably fast rhythms of the morning and evening rush hours, and lunch times when the buildings disgorge hundreds of workers onto the streets, are created by also witnessing the slower rhythms of mid-afternoon, when only a few people rush up and down the streets, and the strangely tense and silent Sundays, when it seems as if the setting is holding its breath, like an orchestra waiting for the conductor to bring down his baton on a Monday morning (interestingly I noted this observation, then later read that Lefebvre recommends listening to a city the way that you would listen to a symphony played by an orchestra).

Perhaps the most immediate, and obvious, observation of rhythms, is this fast pace of movement throughout the City. People move quickly and purposefully through this space (evidenced, as in figure 8 above, by many men wearing trainers with their suits). There is little opportunity to loiter, to look around, to stand back and really take notice of the architecture; as mentioned previously, you quickly get in the way and become an impediment in such a fast flowing setting. On weekdays, I was conscious of the way that I walked speedily in this space, my heart often beating fast, my head down. This is magnified at stations, particularly at Liverpool Street, which was my arrival and departure point. On weekdays, especially at rush hour but at other times as well, it is a sea of bodies moving towards the exits. There is little chatter or noise such as you might expect at an airport or other rail destination. The most audible sound is train announcements and the tapping of shoes on the concourse. On a Sunday, however, the scene is both visually and rhythmically transformed, as these photographs illustrate:



Figure Forty Two: Liverpool Street concourse, weekday



Figure Forty Three: The same view on a Sunday; colour and suitcases

Outside on the streets on a Sunday the rhythms continued to be different. Tourists stood waiting for buses to take them out of the City, as a contrast to weekday mornings when very few people are waiting for buses but some straight out of the rail terminus and walk to their

City destination. People were waiting around, not rushing, heads down, as is the norm on weekdays:



Figure Forty Four: Bishopsgate on a Sunday afternoon, people standing, waiting, not rushing

During the week, I noticed that my posture was often hunched when I walked through the busy heart of the City. Partly this was in response to needing to walk fast (even the still-common habit of wearing trainers in the streets just helps you to walk even faster), but I noticed at times when I stopped for coffee that my shoulders and neck were aching in the way that they used to when I worked here; perhaps responding to the anxiety and tension which this place seems to produce – a sense of urgency, at least. When I wasn't in the setting, these symptoms disappeared.

The rhythms here are all based on man-made rhythms, or linear rhythms, as Lefebvre terms them (2004:18). The weather and the seasons – Lefebvre's cyclical repetition - make little difference to the daily routine, although I did notice a very slight slowing down on hot

summer days. The collective herd mentality was still present, however, in that the buildings absorb and disgorge workers at the same times each day (morning, noon and evening), and all head for the same cafes (in bad weather) and any scraps of grass or outside seating (summer). The City is not a place where individuality can be expressed. Again, the rhythms are slightly different – calmer, slower – away from the main thoroughfares:

The idea recurs to me that the main thoroughfares of the City are like the main arteries of the body; you feel the blood flowing, sense the energy and the impatience, the activity. The quieter side roads are like the smaller veins, still carrying the blood, but quieter, calmer, and emptier, with a slower rhythm. The rhythms of the City are temporal and attuned to commerce, and more specifically finance – the busy early mornings, the days punctuated by flows of people at lunchtime and in the early evening, the rest of the time more or less empty streets, with workers treating them like internal corridors. Seasonality plays no part, except that there is a sense on sunny and warm days that people move more freely outside. But even on a sunny evening in May the parks and gardens are empty, and sometimes inaccessible; they seem to be created to be looked at, not to use.

They are also noticeably slower and less frantic in the enclosed spaces in which the City abounds – the pretty gardens, the squares, the Churchyards – people seek these out, to smoke, sit and think, or to make private calls – but all too often these places are locked, inaccessible. It is as if the City discourages attempts to slow down, and let your body rest. At times this reminded me of the City state of Sparta in ancient Greece; the relentless focus on strength, work and prowess. Interestingly the most common non-corporate businesses I saw, apart from cafes, bars and shops, were gyms.

Whilst the sounds of the City are connected to the endlessly repeating traffic noise, construction work and the sound of footsteps, and inside and outside the pubs the harmonies are those of a male voice choir, with no corresponding female voices heard, away from the main ‘arteries’, the rhythms only slower but quieter, in that there is less man made noise. The height of the buildings creates eerie noises, however:

I walk down to Leadenhall market, with the wind howling around the buildings; on a day like this the combination of narrow streets and tall buildings create wind tunnels with astonishingly strong winds. The absence of noise (other than some distant construction noise) makes the moaning of the wind even more apparent and adds to the generally eerie atmosphere.

Lefebvre talks about the ‘screaming monumentality’ (ibid: 103) of stone stairways in Mediterranean towns, which impose upon the body and on consciousness the requirement of passing from one rhythm to another. The City abounds with screaming monumentality, and, interestingly, the most imposing examples do seem to signify transitions between one area – with its own rhythms – to another, for example, the transition from the phallic steel and black glass towers of the area around Fenchurch Street and the solidly imperial neo-classical architecture around the Bank of England is announced by the beautiful and relatively peaceful arcade of Leadenhall Market. St Paul’s interrupts the busy flow of Cheapside and marks the entrance to Fleet Street and the inner temples, where the pull of the non-financial world exerts an influence and walking becomes fractionally more leisurely. The river bridges are obvious border crossings; it was at the foot of London Bridge, on the City side, that I saw my first and only homeless man in this space. The border streets in the City are busy, shabbier, with the rhythms feeling slightly out of control, the traffic more chaotic. The borders are sudden, abrupt:

These particular buildings – at the junction of Brushfield Street and Commercial Street – are almost like boundary markers. I am once again taken aback at how distinct the border edges are; reminiscent of a castle or fortress, or perhaps a medieval town with walls and gates, as opposed to a modern sprawl. One minute you're in the City, the next you are very definitely not. Here the other boundary markers take the form of posters proclaiming 'where Shoreditch and the City meet' and graffiti. It is almost as if there is an invisible line down the middle of the road – on one side are the imposing glass tower blocks, on the other graffiti'd walls and torn posters.



Figure Forty Five: The border of the City and Shoreditch, Norton Folgate¹⁴

¹⁴ Norton Folgate was historically a 'liberty' (similar to an independent civil parish) within the metropolitan area of London. Following boundary changes in the 1990s its former area is now divided between the City of London and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets; this part of the road is within the City boundaries.



*Figure Forty Six: Two sides of the same street, where the City gives way to Shoreditch:
Brushfield Street*

The sense is that one side of the street you are looking inwards towards this intense, performative place; on the other you are looking out, to where the landscape changes to urban sprawl and the repressed are once again visible, bringing to mind medieval crowds clustering outside the fortress walls.

I walked right round the boundaries of the City, and when doing so it occurred to me that I was following the ancient British custom of ‘beating the bounds’, which seems to be a type of rhythmanalysis:

(My walk) reminds me of the custom of 'beating the bounds', the ancient way of recognising the parish/village boundaries, and which still happens, in a much diluted form, in the village where I live, by way of a midsummer boundary walk, and about which I've read a lot. Although closely associated with the medieval period since this is from when most records referring to the custom date, the origins are much earlier and pre-Christian, with some suggesting that it is Roman in origin and derived from Terminalia, from Terminus, the God of boundaries and limits. Traditionally the boundary markers, usually stones, gateposts, or trees, would be ritually beaten with sticks – and often the children of the parish would be ritually beaten at these precise sites as well. This was considered necessary to ensure the imprinting of the exact location of the parish boundary on successive generations. It's interesting that the memory, presumably in pre-literate days, needed to be imprinted in a bodily form, and not just by the mental recollection of landmarks and natural features. It again occurs to me that this is a type of rhythmanalysis - imprinting the sensation of the rhythms of place onto your body.

This imprinting from the City remains; even whilst writing about, and remembering, my walks, I am conscious of my heart rate speeding up, my typing getting faster, and my senses alert; this sense of heightened alertness, of borderline anxiety, was always required in order to navigate this place. If, as Lefebvre insists, you need to have been grasped by a rhythm in order to be grasped by it (ibid: 37), this means letting go, surrendering yourself, abandoning oneself to the duration. In the City, this means a rhythm of adrenaline surges punctuated by an underlying weariness, of waves of energy interspersed with a need for respite which is rarely granted, a sense of eternal readiness and preparation, of endless performance.

Conclusion

To summarise, the main findings of this phase, across all three methods, have illustrated that geography *does* matter to how a place is experienced and sensed. The City is experienced as distinct; it does have a ‘distinctive patina’ (Thrift, 1996: 238), and this is shaped by a performative masculinity which is embedded in the materiality and the culture, and which excludes as much as it includes. Having experienced what is deemed to be acceptable – and otherwise – in this place, its performative demands both compel and repel particular behaviours. An analysis of the wearisome rhythms of place emphasises its restless and often out of control performativity, which is at odds with the narratives of stability which are presented throughout the City and symbolised by the imperial architecture. The significance of these findings is that they help illuminate what the conditions of membership might be here, and what the price of belonging in the City might entail.

My walks in the City were an attempt at understanding a sense of space and place by means of an embodied methodology, which brought in elements from the traditions of *flânerie*, psycho-geography and rhythmanalysis, in order to observe, feel, and analyse the interaction of culture and materiality in this organisational setting. From my visual observations and recordings, my experience as *flâneuse* was focused around gender; the performative masculinity of the architecture and the human actors, the dominant narrative of rationality, coherence and order and the exclusion of the feminine. This narrative is directly materialized in the City through the contrasting architectural styles, and through the performative elements of the various geographical districts; and in turn, the materiality constructs the narrative. As a psycho-geographer, my emotional response to my wanderings was based around a sense of exclusion from a place which needs you to conform to its performative demands, and which both compels and repels. It also felt confusing and uncanny at times, a chaotic space, which has constant reminders of turmoil and crisis on the streets, as it simultaneously presents

narratives of stability. And as a rhythm analyst, this sense of endless performance and the restless rhythms induces a bodily anxiety, a kind of muscle memory of a place which is rarefied, intense and turbulent – and often oppressive:

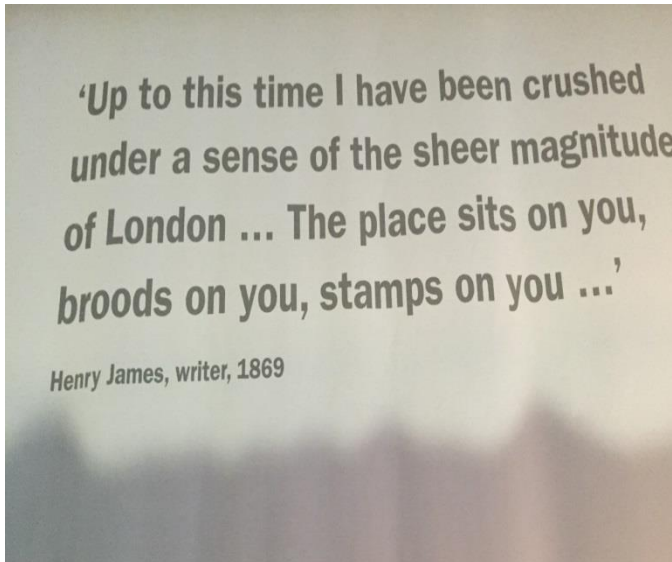


Figure Forty Seven: Quote from a display about the Victorian city in the Museum of London, London Wall

Exactly how the ‘weight’ of the City, its performativity and intensity and its relationship to gender is experienced by those who work there, is the focus of the following chapter, which analyses interview data from a range of City workers.

Chapter Six

The City speaks: Interview findings

Introduction

The process of analysing the interview transcripts and starting to identify thematic findings involved detailed reading, which led to an almost immediate recognition that many common themes were emerging. These themes will be dealt with separately below, but can broadly be grouped into three main headings. Firstly, how the City is perceived, i.e. what it is, what it does, the participant's own sense of belonging, or otherwise in the City, and what makes it special, or, often, unique, in their view. Secondly, a theme emerged concerning performativity in the City, particularly in relation to gender, and how this manifests itself in both the social and material aspects of the City, and, thirdly, the theme of precarity, specifically relating to people's insecure and uncertain positions in the City, and how this is perceived as a fundamental seam running through the layers of meaning which the participants ascribe to their City lives. All of these themes have deep interconnections with the rhythms and the materiality of the City, which will be detailed here and explored in the subsequent chapter where they will be analysed in conjunction with the findings from Chapter Five. Looking at how both the social and the material interact and how this is narrated by participants also pays attention to the unique rhythms, since it is when describing the rhythms of place that the most evocative descriptions of City life emerged.

Perhaps one of the most surprising things to quickly emerge during the interviews was a sense of the City as a distinct and bounded place. I had had some initial worries that I would need to tease this out of interviews, and that participants would be likely to want to discuss their working lives with reference to their particular job or company, and that I would be continually steering the conversation, in, perhaps, a somewhat heavy handed way, in order to be able to discuss the setting. In fact this never happened, and on the contrary, all participants

were very eager to talk about the place, and all spontaneously awarded it a sense of independent agency which exerted varying degrees of influence over their lives, as will be evidenced throughout the chapter.

Related to this, but equally surprising from my point of view as a researcher, was the strong sense of identification with the City expressed by fifteen of the participants. This happened whether or not the participants felt that they currently were 'in place' in the City; the idea was subject to a number of different interpretations as people felt that they moved in and out of place at various times in their working lives. Yet with three exceptions (all young men who work at a technology start-up which has only recently relocated to the City, and who did not currently feel any sense of identification with the place), all participants expressed a sense of pride at working there or having worked there, a sense of it being 'different' to working anywhere else, and all expressed some degree of defensiveness when discussing perceptions of the City from the general public. The overall picture that was built up during the interviews was of a 'fortress City', often under attack but equally often misunderstood because of the unique nature of the work undertaken there; many participants explained that only insiders are able fully understand the esoteric nature of the work and the place.

This sense of an 'exclusive' City that can only be understood by 'insiders' led to questions about who and what are deemed to belong, and if gender is important in this process. A break in the flow of conversations occurred in all of the interviews once the issue of gender was raised (except three – all women who were eager to relate specific examples of gender exclusion). As soon as it was mentioned, all participants conflated gender with women, and fifteen expressed some degree of discomfort in discussing this; as Dave said, when it was raised, 'well that's a thorny question'. How this was expressed will be explored in more detail later in the chapter. Six of the eight women interviewed also spontaneously raised the issue of families and raising children in the context of City lives; this wasn't a specific

interview question, yet they raised it, and none of the men mentioned it at all. Concerns as to what is perceived as the strict performativity of place and the implications, or indeed the disconnect, between it and the opportunities for family life were a source of anxiety for most of the women interviewed; how this was expressed in relation to their status in the City and their daily performances of their working lives will be detailed below.

Above all, what concerned many participants was their position in the City as a work place; what was accepted and acceptable, and what behaviours, life stages or performances made them feel either in or out of place, and how navigating and negotiating the physical space reinforced this sense of belonging or otherwise.

To summarise, thematic findings encompassed the participants' perceptions of working in a rarefied place, one which had certain shared meanings for all of them. These shared meanings range from the way that the City presents itself as unique and special, the qualities and skills which are needed in order to succeed here, and the ways in which gender is performed and rewarded (or otherwise). All of these are important in order to understand how individuals perceive themselves as moving in and out of place in the City.

The City as a work place: 'It's a bit of a monster ...'

Whilst all participants were eager to talk about the City, and had no hesitation in discussing it as a geographically bounded place, (one or two did ask for clarification as to my geographical understanding of the space and whether I would be including Canary Wharf – when I explained I was using the ancient boundary markers of the Square Mile there was instant comprehension, since all were familiar with the geographical history of the place), a range of metaphors were used to describe it. These included: a cauldron, a pressure cooker (two people), a powerhouse (two people), a hub (four people), an engine, a driver, a bubble (two people), a big black hole, and the heart of 'everything' (two people). These are mainly active

nouns which describe the sense of importance that respondents attach to the place, and although metaphors such as a cauldron, a black hole and a bubble were used in a negative sense, the black hole image is powerful and active, albeit it in a destructive sense, and a bubble describes the sense of difference and isolation that the City was seen by all to encapsulate, somewhere rather aloof and unconcerned with the world beyond its borders. When asked to describe the City, only three people talked about the type of business that is carried out on a day to day basis; two men, who both work in Insurance, and a woman who is a partner in a professional services firm. All three gave quite technical descriptions initially, but did later go on to spontaneously describe the effect of the place, particularly its rhythms, on their lives. The others all used emotional and richly descriptive terms to describe the feel of the place, for example: 'Cramped, relentless, dark, wealthy, energetic, tireless' (Neil), 'a bit of a monster, not a long term place unless you're prepared to put the rest of your life on hold' (Anna), 'hellish, uncomfortable, and hot' (Claire), 'affluent, aggressive ... and lonely' (Rob). The immediate recourse to emotionally laden adjectives suggests a deep personal response to the setting, which continued to emerge as the interviews progressed, and this sense that the identity of participants was strongly associated with this particular place.

All participants were asked how they might describe the City as a colour. This was another way of teasing out and adding to their perceptions and emotional responses. My expectations were that most would say grey, (given the preponderance of grey in building materials, the association of finance with something dry and dusty, and my own view of the City as often rather drab), although only three did so, and one of these made the point that this was not a 'negative' grey but was the colour that best expressed the beauty of the stonework. One woman said orange, as for her it was a vibrant and powerful colour, three mentioned silver, all in a very positive way, stressing, as Jo explains, 'a sort of silvery sheen, with the river and everything', and two noting the colour's association with affluence and money. Only one

respondent, a woman identifying strongly with what she perceives as the excitement and vibrancy of place, said multi-coloured. The colours chosen by most respondents, totalling four for each, were black and red. Two men said black, with one, Dave, who views the City in a very positive light, stressing ‘a sort of shiny black, modern, not a dull black’, and two women, one of whom, Anna, used black in a negative sense, with the buildings being described as ‘monstrous’ and the overall effect as that of a ‘black hole.’ Red was chosen by four women, with three using this as a positive description, associating the colour with vibrancy, urgency and power, but one, Claire, who has very negative perceptions of the City, using it with reference to hell, heat and discomfort. Overall, the colours elicited a more positive response than the more general descriptions, with most, interestingly, casting their minds back and using the colour to describe their first impressions of the place, which were generally good, or, at least, hopeful.

The sense of the unique nature of the City was expressed by all participants. For many, it is the sense of history which sets it apart from other global financial centres, makes it distinctly British, and anchors the weightlessness of modern technology-driven financial services to the solidity and stability of empire and imperial richness, as expressed by the historic architecture. This ‘sets it apart’, as Philip says, and yet beyond the aesthetics, the City’s history has relevance to today’s organizational practices there; as Nigel says:

‘People were arguing and sorting out their problems in coffeehouses back in the sixteenth and seventeenth century ...everyone came to London for their trading disputes to be sorted out. So there is this amazing heritage, and you have to respect the centuries of tradition and knowledge that have been passed on, and which make it special.’

This sense of respect for tradition, and the fact that they are working somewhere ‘different’, was expressed by all participants, with most of the respect being articulated by men. Women were less respectful, but still aware of the weight of the history; as Anna expressed it, both the historic and the modern architecture made it feel ‘a bit like a boy’s (public) school’.

This ‘special’ nature of the City means that most participants expressed a sense of pride at working there, or were able to remember a time when they had felt proud to be one of the ‘chosen’. As Jennifer explains, ‘I really felt like I’d made it because I got headhunted to the City’, or as Anna puts it, ‘It felt like I’d arrived when I first worked here’. This ‘sense of entitlement’, as Claire put it, that was felt on taking up a position in the City, often faded or disappeared as participants became more cynical about their careers, or, as will be detailed below, felt that the place itself had rejected them and that they were no longer ‘fit for purpose’. Initially, however, the lure of the City, exemplified by higher salaries and a sense of importance at working in this ‘hub’, was felt by most. Whether perceptions were currently positive or negative, however, made little difference to the participants sense of the rarefied nature of City work; all expressed it as something arcane, that not everyone could understand:

I think it’s a mystery to most people who don’t really understand what goes on ... I honestly think most people would be in awe of the City ... if questioned, I don’t think most people would be able to explain exactly what happened or even why they feel the way they do. I don’t think they really understand it. (Jo, with reference to the most recent financial crisis).

Elizabeth also felt that ‘most people didn’t really understand the intricacies of what went on.’

Anna, who dislikes many aspects of working in the City, still feels that ‘no one really gets it,’ and this is linked for many with the serious, ‘grown up’ nature, as they perceive it, of

financial services. For Dave, who loves the energy of the place and the opportunities it affords him, this focus makes it, and, by implication, him, special:

I think I'd find it sort of frivolous now, if I worked somewhere else, to be honest. Or at least, I suppose what I mean is a bit distracting.

All interviewees viewed the City as a place of 'becoming', in that the opportunities were there to make something of yourself. This was an eagerly grasped, but a not always successful strategy; many resented the fact that those anticipatory opportunities were out of reach to them now, but all felt it was essentially an egalitarian and meritocratic place at first glance, as summed up by Dave, who says 'I think anyone and everyone can work here these days'. The reasons why some now feel like they no longer belong will be explored below, with specific reference to gender and materiality in the City. What was interesting, however, was that most participants expressed a defensive reaction when asked about how they felt the City was perceived by those not working there. Whether their perceptions were positive or negative, fifteen of the eighteen respondents articulated a sense that 'outsiders can't understand' when asked about the most recent financial crisis; this was a specific interview question, although some raised it spontaneously before I did, conflating the place with a sense of urgency and repeated cycles of crisis. As Nigel says:

We were all tarred with the same brushand that is down to sheer ignorance ... I think most people were the same, why should we care what people think when they don't understand what we do?

Maria expressed a sense of annoyance that City workers were blamed for something which, according to her, had shared culpability:

You know, the idea that somehow this population is to blame for all the worries of the UK - everyone else is as much to blame as us, they were happy to take all the cheap debt and credit, right I am loyal to the City.

This sense that many participants expressed of moving between states, i.e. of loyalty to the City and the defensive stance of a fortress mentality, contrasted with periods of outsider status and a sense of exclusion from the place, will be further explored below. For most, when talking about the culture and the materiality of the place, one word was used over and over: performance.

Performativity: ‘In the City it’s like everyone is parading’

All participants expressed a shared understanding of the City as being ‘different’ to other working environments. Whether their perceptions of this difference were positive or negative, they all enthusiastically provided rich descriptions of the City environment. This is a place perceived as being all about work, and hard work, at that; as Phillip says, it is a place ‘to further your career. I wouldn’t necessarily choose it from a beauty or an aesthetic point of view. But it is where to go if you want to get on’. Adjectives used to describe the atmosphere in the City include concentrated, serious, focused, aggressive, competitive, demanding, intense and purposeful. The impression given is of a place that demands ferocious focus, yet offers rewards to those that can stick with it. What was interesting when analysing the interview data was that this sense of a rarefied and performative place was raised by all interviewees, yet many did not work in finance and some were ‘back office’ staff or support staff rather than traders or investment bankers, so the pressures of performance are not necessarily linked to one industry sector or type of job; as Claire put it, ‘there is just something in the air here.’ What is that something, and what does it mean for those who experience it?

Firstly, the City is viewed as a Monday to Friday place, a place which, despite the preponderance of bars and restaurants that have emerged over recent years, only comes into life during the working week, and does not have the same atmosphere late at night or on weekends. As Neil says:

If I come in early or work late, on the other hand, it can feel weird and empty, like you're in a sci-fi film and everyone has been removed all at once ... It's all about showing off and performing during the week.

This sense of the City as dystopian, or somehow uncanny, 'after hours,' is attributed to the intense performativity that is expressed during the working week. For Claire, it is brutally exclusive: 'It's a place where you come if you've got a purpose and that's for work - otherwise you don't fit in, you shouldn't be here.' Philip has a respectful view of it as somewhere where you have to earn your place:

It is a place which is very demanding of staff. In that respect it is a hard place in which to work, it's not a place in which you can last if you don't come up to scratch ... you can't afford to slack off, ever, because your career will be over. There is always someone else coming through the ranks who can do your job and work even harder. So no errors, no room for slippage ...

This threat of 'slippage', of not lasting in the City and of not being good enough, was raised time and again, particularly by men, and will be further explored later in the chapter.

Given the participants strong emotional reactions when discussing the demands of the place, and the fear of being found wanting, and the perceptions that the City was well known for its demands, the issue was raised during interviews of what type of people are attracted by and to the City, in other words, who suits this place, and who is accepted here? For Ian, the

answer is clear; people who are: ‘young, energetic, ambitious, prepared above all to work really *really* hard.’ Again, whilst he may have been thinking of a certain City ‘type’; for example, men working in Investment Banking, Law or Professional Services, drive, ambition and the capacity for working hard were universally cited as ‘City attributes’ for all roles in the Square Mile. In terms of those who go to work there, Ian claims that ‘the whole buzz of the City is that it attracts some and deters others.’ In that case, questions arise as to who is admitted, and who is deterred, and on what basis? What is the fate of those who are attracted to, but deterred by the City? What is the place’s capacity to compel or constrain belonging? And what is its capacity for agency, in this respect?

According to Phillip, the demands are endless: ‘There are no soft options in the City. No padding. You can’t just sit there filling your days, you’d be exposed. So much is demanded of you’. This idea that to earn – and keep – your place is linked to how you are seen to be filling your days was raised by many, ‘presenteeism’ being viewed as a key characteristic of City life. As Pete says: ‘You know, it goes down well if you’ve got in early and gone late, and... that certainly gets noticed. Not so much what goes on in between,’ and for Neil, it is associated with being a game that you have to play:

In the City it’s like everyone is parading, saying look at me, I’m so important, I have to be in early, work late and so on... in reality outside of traders I don’t think people need to be at their desks as often as the prevailing culture seems to demand they should be. There’s a lot of posturing.

For Anna too it is the place, not her job per se, which demands so much of her:

I feel like you’re always on show here ...you have to rush in and be seen to be rushing out ... you’re not allowed to even sit and have a coffee somewhere, at least you are but you’d better be seen to be checking emails and have your phone out while you do.

Although there was a sense of resistance, or at least ambivalence, towards this culture of presenteeism, it was also accepted that this is the price of belonging; ‘it (the City) rewards those that work harder’ (Ian). There is an almost seductive element to it, as Claire, who dislikes the city intensely, explains:

I can’t say it’s appealing and I’m not sure why people put up with it actually, it’s probably just because of the rewards, because of the gains to be made, because why else would you do it? But it becomes like an addiction.

Elizabeth describes it as ‘infinitely rewarding,’ and even Anna, who in general has very negative perceptions of the place, admits that: ‘I like the fact that I still get paid more here than I would anywhere else.’ Jennifer, too, admits that starting work in the City appealed to her ego, although the dream eventually went sour for her once she was no longer deemed fit for purpose: ‘But I really felt I’d made it because I got headhunted to the City. And, yes, I mean, I liked the kudos, I liked the status, I liked the money’. Yet the rewards clearly don’t always compensate for the relentless performativity that is expected. As Jennifer goes on to explain, working in the City ‘bubble’ can be lonely because of the pressures:

I think the fact that you could never switch off ... my work, my social life, my gym, my everything was all City based ... there was no off switch ... you don’t have time for an outside interest or outside life ... you’re isolated from other people.

For Jennifer, the isolating effects of such a rarefied and performative existence bring another type of performance into play, one that several interviewees mentioned (with some nervousness) as the interviews progressed, although I did not specifically ask about it. This relates to what Neil called ‘the dark side’ of the City. As Jennifer explains (having been asked how she might describe the City to a Martian, for example):

What I'd say to the Martians is, it's not what it looks like on the surface. There's a lot of, you know, unhappiness, and certainly where I worked there was a lot of drug abuse. I'd go into the toilet if I was there late, because sometimes we'd be doing big deals and you'd have these ridiculous 20-hour meetings with people coming and going, and you'd go into the loo about half 11 at night and there'd be somebody there just openly taking cocaine. Oh, okay.

Rob, too, is aware of the demands which can cause behaviour for which the City is well known (and this perhaps explains the nervousness that interviewees expressed when talking about this; they all felt tainted or judged in some way for the excesses of the City, and were keen to explain that they weren't 'like that'. Yet many acknowledged the extent to which that culture does still exist):

Because it is a pressured environment, they like to let off steam. But they let off steam in such a way that they don't know how to come down. You know, they just come strutting into work and they're wide eyed, and you think, oh, you've been up all night...it's accepted, rewarded even.

Neil views this as part of the 'internal', private nature of the City, behaviour that is for 'members only': 'Lots of people go wild in the evenings, but it's all internal, behind closed doors, not out in the streets,' giving the impression of a closed, contained space, where those with money and power can only relax 'behind closed doors' as the place is so performative and the pressure so intense. Jennifer disagrees, however, and sees this different type of performance being played out on the streets:

You go home at night and you see people kind of fallen over in the gutter and, you know, just completely... and you know that they'll scrape themselves up, go and buy a new suit, shirt, tie and be back again the next day bright and early.

This excessive behaviour seems to be at odds with the serious, focused, hard-working ethic of the City that was cited by so many as being its key characteristic. Yet this sense of it being a pressure cooker which needs to explode from time to time, and which forces, and even rewards, this type of performance, was also accepted. This is strongly associated, for all interviewees, with a certain kind of masculinised performance, which will be discussed in more detail below.

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!

For Jennifer, the dominant skyscrapers are linked to a certain type of performance:

This is really stereotypical but men are very task based, task focused, so they see a building as, is the building going to do the task, in other words, is it going to give us high status? Yes, good, tick.

The materiality of the City reflects the pressure to sustain performance. 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 – wide rather than tall, very grand, lots of columns and pillars, that sort of thing. That screamed power to people then, these tall buildings scream it now.

In this way, the material City and the socio-cultural City are perceived to be entwined and symbiotic; they both reflect and sustain the ever present performativity.

This relentless focus on status was resented by both men and women when they felt that they could no longer meet the expectations of the place. For men, this was often related to age and a certain weariness that they could no longer compete. For Rob, working in the City was a long-held dream, and the lure was connected to its materiality:

I didn't want to go to the West End; I didn't want to go to Holborn; I didn't want to go south of the river. I wanted to work in the Square Mile in the City. I don't know why, it was just the lure of it, what it looked like, all those buildings and opportunities.

Yet now, the lustre has worn off and the dream is somewhat tarnished, as he feels his age prevents him from sustaining the type of performances that are expected, describing himself as effectively 'past it':

Certainly you've got to prove yourself... you've got to be, certainly where I am, aggressive. Aggression sells in my place... I'm not like that, I'm very passive... I'm not like that at all... I'm past all that now, to be honest ... I used to worry when I was younger, yes, I've got to be seen doing this out there and all that, dressing the right way...now... to be honest I don't care... I'm past that now.

For Dave, however, the materiality represents excitement and ambition:

I mean people laugh at some of the buildings, don't they, there are rude names for the Gherkin! But I think it's just reflective of the sort of energy and ambition ... I do like the energy of it ...

Yet for Claire, who left the City to work in the Arts, there was no buzz or excitement associated with the place; having always felt that she didn't belong, her perceptions of the materiality are that it serves to exclude her:

The Broadgate circle was absolutely an example of that (exclusion), where it was very difficult to get into... and then once you were in it was quite difficult to find your way. And trying to get out again was impossible. They used to put on concerts in the circle during lunchtimes and then have an ice rink there, so in that sense it was enticing but difficult to penetrate and being very enclosed there was that sense of exclusion.

Yet for Tim, in contrast, a Software Engineer in his twenties working in a Technology start up, the Broadgate Circle is both enticing and accessible:

They've got an ice skating rink there. And during the summer they put huge screen TVs up and they show tennis and the World Cup when it's on. And it gets absolutely rammed ... there's a bar and stuff, so that's kind of fun... it is nice. There's a vibe.

Tim has no sense of identification with the City, and no desire to 'belong' to the space. He does not want to be part of what he views as the corporate side of the City, and feels a sense of alternative identification with smaller entrepreneurial start-ups.

All participants, whether or not they identified or otherwise with what is perceived to be the prevailing culture of the City, vividly described the rhythms of the City. Adjectives used included busy, stressful, noisy and urgent, but by far the most common was purposeful. This sense of rhythms that are, in Dave's words 'not sort of chaos busy, like the West End' yet intense, fast and focused, underlies Claire's point that you have no place here unless you are here to work, and to be seen to be working, 'performing' work. 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 need 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, and

the uncanny effects of this (see Chapter Five). Interestingly, both Jennifer and Claire, both of whom have now left the City, associated walking in the space directly with both the pressures of performance and with embodied memory; as Jennifer says:

What is interesting is when I left the City, I went back and I'd completely lost my City walk. Because when you work there, you have your head down and you're focused and you're dodging, especially now that everyone is looking at their phones, and I'd completely lost that 'elbows out' ability. I was sort of bashing into people.

When I met Claire in the City to carry out the interview, she immediately expressed how uncomfortable she was being back in the space; she felt that she was dressed too casually, that she looked like an 'outsider', and the noise and the purpose of the people around her brought back vivid memories of how much she had disliked working here. There were coffee shops close to where we had met right by Liverpool Street station, but she asked if we could start the interview by walking the route that she had used to take every day from tube to office, as she said it would 'bring it all back'. For her, the rhythms of the City were not like any other place, because of their focused intensity of purpose, and because they were so acute at certain times of day, and so different – absent, in a sense – when the City is at rest; there is no sense of twenty four hour nightlife or weekend downtime here. For those who feel excluded by the relentless performativity, the rhythms become exhausting; as Rob says: 'It is very tiring; certainly by the end of the week, I'm zonked ...I've just had enough of the place. I don't want to be tired of London, but I am.'

It appears that the place itself is both the source and the site of this performativity, and it is expressed through the materiality and the rhythms as well as through the prevailing culture. What was noticeable was that many expressed a feeling that this performativity not only made the place special, or even unique, but that it could also contribute towards a sense of

eeriness. This was mostly expressed by the conformity of the place; as Nigel says ‘it can seem odd, it’s such a conformist place, you know, in terms of dress, architecture and so on’. For Lorraine, it is about behaviour that is expressed through uniform and architecture: ‘Everyone looks the same, same suits, same phones, same walk! You know you’re in the City ... and all the buildings are the same too.’ For Claire, the exclusivity of the place can have an uncanny effect; as seen above, she felt that the materiality could exclude her and this made it eerie, instilling a sense of panic that she could not navigate her way in or out; that navigational confidence is only bestowed on those who are deemed to belong (again raising memories of my own shifting insider/outsider status as I tried to navigate the City streets; see Chapter Five). But above all, it is the sense of all other life being excluded by this focused performativity that makes it odd for her:

It’s just all about work, there is nothing else going on here, there are no stores, I know there are some shops but whether this is true or not I don’t think it matters, but to me there’s no schools, no hospitals, there’s no parks, no theatres, no cinemas, it’s just about work and about a very, very narrow sort of work.

For Jennifer, too, there is a sense that anything not directly connected to work is out of place here, and treated as abject:

When I had a baby I had to spend £900 putting down deposits for nurseries everywhere (there were so few available I had to spread my bets) and the only one I got a place in was in Old Street in the basement of an office block – a really depressing hidden away place for children that required you to dodge obstacles with the pram on an uneven pavement – all this for a mere £1500 a month. The point being that there is virtually no provision for babies or children in the City, and where there are nurseries they are hidden away in otherwise unlettable spaces.

What is acceptable in the City, and how this is related to gender – particularly to the repression of anything maternal or feminine - is the focus of the next section.

The City as a performative setting: ‘You just feel that the whole place was created by men, for men’

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, all participants conflated ‘gender’ with ‘women’ and their status in the City. Although all had enthusiastically and eagerly talked about the place, its focus on performance, and their own status in relation to it, this enthusiasm waned in most cases when I introduced the subject. Three women were the exception to this rule – Anna and Jennifer both wanted to talk about their difficult and complex experiences of combining motherhood with working in the City, and Sasha, a young woman in her twenties without children, but who was very preoccupied with the opportunities, or lack of them, afforded to women with children in the City in an effort to make the best choices available to her in the future.

The first thing to note was the assumption by most participants that the opportunities of the City were available to anyone, regardless of class, gender or ethnicity, (although gender was the main topic discussed, both by myself, as the other issues are somewhat beyond the scope of the thesis, and by the participants themselves, who seemed even less enthusiastic about discussing these issues). Most felt that gender issues in the City – interpreted in the main as being about the number of women visible there – was a matter that had been overcome; as Neil said, when the issue of gender was first raised in the interview, ‘there are loads of women in top jobs here.’ Even Maria, who claimed that the issue was ‘what are all the women in the City actually doing?’ recognising that many were in low paid support roles, said ‘look, when I go out to the coffee shop, there seems to be an equal number of men and women in the queue. So women are still very visible.’ Yet Matt felt differently; although he

felt that there probably were as many women as men working in the City, when he thought about it, he did notice a difference in terms of their visibility on the streets:

When you walk home you walk past pubs and you see a lot of people outside smoking or whatever, having a drink... and, guess what ...they're all men. They're always, always men. Women ... it's weird, yes, but you definitely don't see them as much ... if I was to think of a typical sort of person that I associate with the Square Mile, I think of a man. That's just what I see.

Tim had also not really thought of gender as an issue, and his immediate reaction was that there was 'no issue.' When pressed, however, on how he viewed the City, and what he saw all around him, he started to change his mind:

I mean, you look out the window and there are just males in suits. There are not many women seen around here. I think... it definitely feels... it's very... especially just in terms of the décor and kind of buildings, it's very masculine, I think. It's not something I would have picked up on, to be honest, but when you ask, well, yes.

Jo, however, whilst acknowledging that she didn't tend to see as many women walking around the City as she did men, felt that 'there just isn't the same gender divide as there used to be', and her perception is that the opportunities are there for the taking in the City, for either gender. Conceding that there still seems to be fewer women than men at the helm of City organisations, however, she associates this with personal choice:

I know lots of women who do sort of fall by the wayside but it's their choice, they want something different in their life and I don't blame them, and it becomes so hard to juggle everything, so they don't, they opt out ... but I do think that it's a choice.

Others, too, felt that success in the Square Mile was a matter of personal choice; you either want it badly enough, or you don't, and gender, for them, is not an issue. Neil feels that it is fundamentally about what you're prepared to put in:

It comes down to personal choice ... I'm not saying absolutely everyone can make it – the place definitely chews people up and spits them out – but you can have a go. It depends how much you're willing to sacrifice.

Neil's identification is with the City, not with any particular type of work; he feels that it is 'the place' that exerts agency here, not the individual organisations. The sense came through again and again during the interviews that the City itself is what is perceived as the workspace, not the participants' individual office building.

Most felt that the City had kept pace with societal changes, and that no organisation would risk its reputation by not adhering to diversity regulations. Ian links this widening of opportunities to performativity, in that the first is no use if you don't come up to scratch:

It has changed in that women are so much more visible. And firms have had to ensure they have more family friendly policies, that sort of thing, to make sure they keep them and there aren't barriers to promotion, so you have things like childcare being paid for out of your benefits package if you want, that sort of thing. But it's still the same old City in most ways, in that you really have to do well, there's a lot expected of you, and that doesn't change whether you're a man or a woman.

Nigel also associated gender issues with childcare; whilst overall he also felt 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 or whether or not you’ve had a baby.’

Both Anna and Jennifer had children whilst working in the City, and both felt that that their position in the place had changed as a direct result of this (see following section for more detail on this). Both 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 was 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. In contrast to most participant’s views that gender was no barrier to progress, the only explicitly feminine roles that people quickly associated with women in the Square Mile were the nurturing, caring roles provided by support staff roles, historically always fulfilled by women; as Jennifer says, this habit is still ingrained:

They (men in the City) all need looking after. I think that’s part of it, part of why they all still have these support functions... they (women) are still the natural ‘supporters’.

Although the best ever secretary I had was a man. He was a trainee journalist. He was brilliant because he didn’t have any hang-ups and he knew that it wasn’t his forever life, he was doing it for a short term reason.

This concept that men are ‘playing’ at these support roles but which are really women’s jobs, was reinforced by Anna, who sees the women in her firm ‘rushing out to get the men sandwiches, you know, always looking after them’. Phillip was adamant that times had

changed in the City for women, yet wondered why ‘they still aren’t really driving the place yet’. Maria, too, felt that gender wasn’t an issue, and was proud that her company ‘was actually in the press this week for having one of the highest male to female ratios, for investment, with 28% female.’ Perhaps the best example of the essentializing of women into support and caring functions came from Pete, who remembered that:

‘A male colleague had mentioned, in relation to more women being present in the office, that they have ‘a taming effect’, and that they ‘temper the place down.’

If performances of femininity in the City are still broadly confined, then, to supporting functions, what kinds of masculine performance are perceived and rewarded here? The quote above hints at masculinity in the City as being excessive, in need of being ‘tamed’ or calmed down. Certainly a view of masculinity as being at times out of control in the City was prevalent amongst participants. Many talked about the most recent financial crisis, and were uncomfortably aware of the public perception of the City as being about ‘loads of City boys doing dodgy deals and wrecking everything ... they were out of control weren’t they?’ (Anna). Although most felt that post-crisis regulation had controlled some of this excess, as Rob says:

Scratch the surface, it’s still there, you know, it’s still there. The out of control drinking culture is still there in the City. People saying, you know, we haven’t got the money but people still do go out I mean, it’s not as bad as it was, but, you know, it’s still there.

Lorraine agrees that the public rejection of the excesses of the City has merely pushed this behaviour into the background: ‘It might have changed a little, but I think under the surface it’s still there. They probably feel that they can’t be too in your face yet, but it will go back to that, I bet.’

For Claire, it has always been this type of masculinity – loud, excessive, all about money, competition and status – which defines the City: ‘The predominant masculinity was always the hands-dirty traders who were grudgingly respected by the graduates’ as she says. Most saw this version of masculinity expressed by the materiality of the City as well; all concede that the buildings are very often phallic, and for Nigel, the dominant tall buildings symbolise aggression, although, as he puts it:

Not necessarily in a bad way. The place is aggressive in its expectations. It’s about getting things done and making sure you do them better than anyone elsein fact I’d say a better word than testosterone- fuelled aggression is drive. It’s a place that is driven to make profit.

This relentless focus on profit was associated with the brokers and traders, the ‘new’ City which is seen to dominate what used to be the perceived as the gentlemanly, public-school educated norms of behaviour. Participants seemed to view them as slightly feral, liable to create mayhem at any opportunity, but held in check, at the present time, by a relative lack of money and tightened regulation; as Phillip says:

Oh yes the brokers! Very macho ... they are different, they work as teams, and go out as teams too. The times I’ve heard people say ‘He’s the kind of bloke who would kick a door down’ about brokers – it’s a compliment! They work hard, and play hard, and it is expected.

Sasha points out that this culture still routinely operates in a way that excluded women; speaking of a male friend who is a trader for an Investment bank, she notes:

When his clients come he will take them to a place called The Box, which is a very prestigious club in London. It costs like £1000 to get a table there. But the show is a

show of naked women, and it's like a freak show going on there, where... like, it's obvious that you go over there with your men.

Jennifer had always enjoyed her status as an honorary man in the City, relishing her role as the only female in the team and taking the view that accepting and adopting the masculinised culture was necessary to do her job well:

I was quite comfortable with the pub culture and even strip clubs and that sort of thing, because you either went or you missed out on all the kind of important news that was going on.

Rob agrees that it is this behaviour which is not only accepted but rewarded here, and that it can never disappear entirely:

You know, if the company recognises it, they reward you, you know. And sometimes I think, are they rewarding them for the wrong attitude because that's what got the City in the problems in the first place, let's face it. But there is so much pressure to keep being like that.

Another type of dominant masculine behaviour was also perceived to be present in the City, however, and not entirely superseded by the trader/broker culture; this is the City of the cerebral thinkers, of sober suited respectable men and women who generate trust. In fact, this type of masculinity was viewed as being currently in the ascendant, due to the negative perception of excessive masculine behaviour during the last crisis – but most agreed it would soon, inevitably, be taken over again, when 'things return to normal' (Rob). Phillip, who had worked as an Actuary, certainly saw this as being dominant in his field:

Where I worked, there was such a variety of backgrounds. In my office there was a guy who had a degree in Flemish Art. Another in Religious Studies. They were all

really different in terms of backgrounds and interests – but in work they all had to apply very methodical, precise skills. And in that way they all conformed to type and were sort of clones, if you like. The City does mould people.

Claire agrees that ‘there is also room for people who aren’t like that, people like actuaries and accountants for example, who are employed for their brain power, they wouldn’t necessarily have to be like that, they can be more cerebral.’

Elizabeth, who works as an Accountant, feels that there is not enough public acknowledgment of those who work hard to engender trust in the City, and that the reckless behaviour of the ‘new’ City is being held in check by them:

Generating or being associated with controversy is not of great interest. The ability to be trusted, and to engender trust within commercial relationships, is of great value. And that was eroded, which is difficult ...Trust is such a key issue for organisations and good governance is a cornerstone of being trusted. So the consequences of non-compliance are greater than ever, which is putting a strain on all organisations, but simply must be done, in order to avoid any future problems.

What these competing types of masculinity, and the essentializing of women’s roles along with the repression of anything overtly feminine, mean for the way that participants felt they belonged or otherwise in the City is explored below.

Positioning in the City: ‘You can feel very anonymous and unimportant, and like you shouldn’t really be here.’

The first thing that emerged when participants discussed their own sense of belonging in the City was that this was not fixed, but processual, in a state of constant flux. For women participants, their sense of belonging and their status in the City was strongly linked to

experiences of motherhood – or in Sasha’s case, an expectation that she wanted to combine a City career with motherhood and could see no positive role models of how this could be achieved. As noted above, both Jennifer and Anna felt that it was their status as mothers (and in Jennifer’s case, her status as a pregnant woman) which meant they could no longer belong to a place where they had once felt like members of an elite club; as Jennifer puts it: ‘until I got pregnant, I guess, actually was the first time when it suddenly did feel quite hostile and then when I had a baby, yes, totally hostile’. Jennifer’s perception is that it was the place itself which exerted agency here; the inappropriate incursion of the feminine in this environment, represented by her pregnant body, was a defining moment for what she viewed as her sudden exclusion from the place: ‘I hadn’t consciously thought of it as particularly uncomfortable until I definitely couldn’t pretend I was a chap anymore, I suppose.’ In this sense, her pregnant body ‘let her down’, and she could no longer live as a male homologue. Perhaps the most poignant example of how the place itself serves to exclude anything which does not adhere to its masculine performative culture was expressed by Jennifer, when she tells an anecdote about how the place itself could not help her because she was suddenly no longer a part of it:

So I was in a meeting one day and one of the directors was in it with me and then he sort of gestured to me to step outside the room, and I looked down and I’d started leaking milk from my boobs. And I went outside and he had three kids and he was actually really nice about it and he said, right, you need to go and get these, like, you get pads, because I didn’t know. And I said, right, yes, okay, where do you get them from? He said go to Boots, and of course I went into about five Boots and not a breast pad in sight because I was in the City and they didn’t sell them.

Her lactating body became both unacceptable, un-catered for, and yet at the same time public property, exposed and ‘revealed’. This reflected her earlier experiences of working in the

City whilst pregnant, recalled during our interview, when Jennifer describes how as soon as she announced her pregnancy, her male colleagues started a sweepstake. As she puts it, ‘bets were placed on when my belly would get bigger than my boobs which, you know, it was all very good fun but I wasn’t really laughing.’ Returning to work as a mother, her body was still seen as comical and no longer fit for purpose in a professional role. She describes:

... coming back and the boys all daring each other to drink some breastmilk in their tea. So all those kind of things that I hadn’t even thought about, because I guess I thought I was one of the boys and just kind of blended in, and suddenly I couldn’t be one of the boys because I’d been pregnant and I had a baby.

Anna, too, felt her status had changed when she returned after maternity leave, and was suddenly perceived as a mother rather than as a professional woman. She relates this to a sense that you always have to work harder to prove your commitment, and that the place itself, not just her immediate colleagues, is sitting in judgement:

I was always apologising, feeling bad, hoping nobody would notice if I sneaked away to pick up the children ...you know ...but this is the last place on earth you can do that. It’s like there’s a bloody alarm goes off outside or something if you dare to look towards the door... And you just know that everyone is raising their eyes and thinking ‘Mum, off out the door’ – while they roll their sleeves up and keep working and someone else picks up all their domestic responsibilities.

Anna felt strongly that she had become a ‘non –person’ in the City by choosing to display her feminine status by becoming pregnant – ‘I felt like I’d done something socially unacceptable.’

For men, their positions fluctuated according to how they felt their material status was perceived in the City. In particular, age and ‘City uniform’ emerged as strong signifiers of status. For Rob and Pete, getting to an age where they felt they no longer had the desire to adhere to the relentless performativity and excessively masculine culture meant that they no longer felt that it was a place where they could belong; Rob feels that at forty eight ‘I’m past all that ...when I was younger I had to be seen to be dressing the right way But I’m past all that’. Pete feels that the conformity of the people in the City means that ‘everyone is down the gym at lunchtimes ... then they go out at night and put all the calories straight back in’, and now sees this as ridiculous behaviour which is no longer ‘for him.’ Neil, working in an industry that is about supporting financial services firms rather than being, as he calls it, one of the money men, feels that his casual dress marks him out as unimportant:

As a man you can certainly feel anonymous and invisible, particularly if you’re dressed differently to all the ‘suits’ and doing a different kind of job. To be noticed or to be a big fish here you have to have all the trappings – top job, that confidence that money brings, right clothes, smart suit, that kind of thing.

His status is transient and precarious, rather than fixed and stable, linked to narrow conditions of belonging:

No-one in the workplace takes much notice of you if you’re dressed more casually...they make the assumption that you’re in a ‘lesser’ role and so you quickly become invisible...You can feel very anonymous and unimportant, and like you shouldn’t really be here.

Phillip, who views himself as a City insider, having spent his whole career there, gives a different perspective on what it takes to belong as a man in the City. For him, masculine status is always fragile, precarious and insecure, because the pressures of performativity are

such that success can quickly come and go. He defines the behavioural norm for men in the City as about being – and, importantly, being seen to be – sociable and, as he says, ‘clubbable’:

If you ask me about norms of behaviour I’d say it’s not for quiet, non-drinking, non-sociable men. You don’t have to always be aggressive, in fact that won’t win you many friends, but you have to be, how can I put it, clubbable. It isn’t a place for loners.

Nigel and Ian both agree that it is ‘the ability to engender trust and develop ‘good personal relationships,’ (Ian), which are the key to male success here. Nigel loves that it is ‘fundamentally all about personal relationships’ and that it is the ability of the City to engender face to face meetings (due to its tight spatial construct) which sets it apart, and means that ‘we (men) all sort of know each other, we know who is working for who’. Phillip links this need to be sociable, to be a good networker (which those who discussed it seemed to consider only applied to men), directly with the fragility of male status in the City:

You have to fit in ... to survive you have to bond together ... Men to tend to be mob-handed in the City. It’s that keeping in a pack mentality. You’re safer if you keep people close to you!

Yet for Sasha, as a young woman 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 VP of sales, 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. .. there's another girl in our team, she's very good. She's doing all the right things. But she's not getting rewarded for it, not verbally at least. Whereas another man, he just says something, and the VP of sales pats him on the back and says, well done. And then they go out together.

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's always, always about changing our behaviour and fitting in, never the other way around! But, I really think it boils down to the fact that there is a, kind of, a back door discussion that's going on that we're not part of.'

This indicates that feelings of fragility and precarity affect both genders, and that the City compels a highly performative, masculinised culture based on social networks and the trappings of high status such as financial reward, and rejects the feminine, particularly when this is represented by the maternal. As Anna says, belonging comes at a price: 'It just can't be a long term place unless you're prepared to put the rest of your 'normal' life on hold.' For many, however, it is the intrusion of 'normal life' that can signal a change of status in the City.

Conclusion

Participants from such a wide range of ages, backgrounds and jobs gave accounts where remarkably similar themes emerged, giving a sense of the City as a place of shared meanings, as well as shared understanding in terms of its spatial geography. In fact, the two coincide in that the tightly bounded spatial nature of the City marks it as individual and instantly recognisable place, and allows for the face to face networking that was cited by many of the (male) participants as being important for maintaining the social and 'clubbable' aspects of

City lives that are an essential element of the way that the dominant masculinity is performed there.

The underpinning theme that emerged, with a strength and frequency which surprised me, was that the City is a place that exerts agency. As detailed above, all participants expressed a sense that it is the demands of place that force a strict performativity, which rewards periods of excessive behaviour, as long as profit is achieved and maintained, and which forces behavioural norms based upon dominant versions of masculinity. Women's status is more nuanced and uncertain than that of men, since even when they conform to the dominant masculine behaviour, their bodies and/or their life choices are prone to letting them down, resulting in exclusion or alienation from the City. For men, too, whilst they were generally more respectful of the traditions and hierarchies of the place, position is precarious in that it can quickly be lost if you do not conform to the strict demands of place; the desperate striving for rewards results in casualties and the fear of 'slippage', or being found wanting, persists as a dark undercurrent in these narratives.

From the participant accounts, we see that the City is a place given over to performing work, and to performing it in a gendered, very stylized, highly visible way. You earn your place here, and there is always a high risk of losing it; as Claire reminds us, you come to the City 'if you've got a purpose and that's for work - otherwise you don't fit in, you shouldn't be here.' There are clear penalties for not fitting in, as seen in the example of Jennifer's failure to acquire breast pads in the City.

At the end of his interview, Dave said 'I think the City still means something, doesn't it?' There was a sense of security in his question – of course it does, he was saying, that's why we come here – and perhaps also a sense that he was looking for affirmation. This encapsulates both the confidence expressed by many participants - who were all well-

educated, well rewarded professionals – and the sense of precarity that was articulated with regard to their own positions within the place. Above all, Dave’s quote focuses on the City as a phenomenal place, in other words, a space laden with meaning, a setting which is made to mean something by those who inhabit it, by the buildings that materialize it, and by the way in which the culture and the materiality interact to produce what the City does, and how it enacts this. These themes, and the connections between them, will be analysed and discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven

Discussion: The City as a performative place

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from each data set ('streetwalking', the photographic data, and participant interviews), and their analysis, in the light of the theoretical ideas considered thus far.

The fieldwork sought to examine what, if anything, makes the City distinct; who (or which behaviours), can be said to be 'in place' here; and what the conditions of membership might be. The findings show that geography does matter to how the City is perceived and experienced; this is perceived as a rarefied place, with a particular socio-cultural heritage which is sustained and reinforced by its particular and distinct materiality. Furthermore, a socio-material analysis has brought to the fore issues around belonging in this space, by revealing how the relationship between the social and the material creates a place perceived as performative and requiring that conditions of membership be met. The thesis, in this respect, has sought to deconstruct these notions of membership, in an effort to identify who can belong here, what role gender plays in deciding this, and what the expectations of this place are.

The theoretical premise, derived from Levebvre's (1991) theorisation of space as socially produced, was initially developed in response to questions about how organisational place can be experienced as a distinct and distilled form of space. More particularly, the aim was to explore and understand the experience of working in such an organisational setting as the City of London at this time, and what this can tell us about how it is perceived as an organization in itself. As a particular place, that is, named, perceived and experienced as

such, and employing close to half a million people,¹⁵ this global marketplace espouses opportunity and meritocracy, concepts often confirmed by interview participants, yet a socio-material analysis reveals it to be perceived and experienced as gendered - essentially masculine and bound by strict rules as to who can succeed. Exploring what this means for the people who work there, how they perceive themselves and others to be in or out of place here, and what the performativities of the place reveal about the experience of working here, was the basis of the empirical research.

Lefebvre tells us that there are three different modes relating to the production of space; in other words, a trialectic between everyday practice and the perception of space, representations of space (or the conceived), and the spatial imaginary of the particular time (the lived). A Lefebvrian reading of space, along with his later work (1994) theorising that specific spaces have their own distinct rhythms which can be both read and analysed, and, importantly for Lefebvre, *felt* with the body, helps towards an understanding of the City as an organisational setting that is perceived as more than a neutral backdrop where people work; in other words, an exploration of space that is socially produced can tell us not only about how and why it coheres as an organizational place, but what makes it more than a random geographical setting within which things take place. Firstly, a socio material analysis of place based upon Lefebvrian theories has attempted to connect perception, performativity and place in a way that ultimately leads to an understanding of what the conditions of membership might be here. Lefebvre helps us to understand how the City can be ‘placed’, and, therefore, who, or what, can be understood as ‘in place’ here, and who, or what, is ‘out of place.’ Secondly, a Lefebvrian theoretical approach, as I will explore below, is based upon both perceptual and bodily connections between the self and the space. Thirdly, the empirical work, taking into account both my own embodied perceptions based on a rhythmanalysis and

¹⁵ As of 2013 (the most recent statistic available at the time of writing); cityoflondon.gov.uk, accessed 2 July 2016

the experiences of others in this place, has shown that notions of belonging here are based around repetitive performances, leading to questions about how difference is perceived, how hierarchies of difference are embedded in the place, and the relation to the rhythms of place.

The data summarised below enables us to make sense of my own and the participants' experiences in the light of the theoretical premises. Interwoven into the analysis are the theoretical ideas which run throughout the thesis; this means, in practice, that various nuances of the same theme may arise in a discussion of several different data sources. The chapter is arranged thematically; since the initial analysis elicited many emergent themes, the evolution of the analysis meant that they became grouped under three broad headings; firstly, the City as a rarefied place, secondly, the City as a performative place, with particular relation to gender performativity, and, thirdly, the City a precarious place.

The City as a Rarefied Place

As explored in Chapter One, agreement around the concept of place (as opposed to space) coalesces around notions of shared meaning and the imposition of certain conditions (Tuan, 1977, Gieryn, 2000). Lefebvre, who underplays an explicit focus on place, as opposed to space, nevertheless declares: 'In the beginning was the topos.' (1991: 174). What makes *this* topos, the City of London, worthy of comment? How is it perceived by those who work within it? What shared meanings have accumulated, and how is this perceived? From the interview data, it is clear that participants shared an understanding of what the City is. As seen in Chapter Six, metaphors used to describe it ascribe importance to it; it is a 'big black hole', a 'cauldron', a 'pressure cooker', a 'powerhouse', a 'hub.' This is not simply a geographical location in which they turn up to work. The most popular colours chosen to describe it were red and black, urgent, impactful colours which corroborate the descriptions of the City as aggressive, often monstrous or hellish. Whether or not they were generally

critical or defensive of it, participants described it in reverent terms; this is a ‘place set apart’, with ‘an amazing heritage’, a ‘special’ place. Soja (1996) reminds us that places are not only named, but are narrated, perceived and felt. Using the name ‘The City’ to refer to a distinct place was instantly recognised by all participants who were all aware of the ancient geographical boundaries of the space; their perceptions and feelings about it as a unique place were also remarkably similar. All remembered and recounted a sense of the optimism and excitement that they had experienced on first coming to work there, and how they saw the opportunity to work there as a promotion, or as in some way marking them out as special, as illustrated by Anna saying ‘It felt like I’d arrived when I first worked here.’

I was also aware of the special nature of the place; the sense of purpose and focus is apparent as soon as I arrived in the place and I describe both the atmosphere and the rhythms as ‘directional,’ ‘intense’ and ‘purposeful’ in my field notes discussed in Chapter Five. The tight spatial construction of the City is important here; it is very apparent when you are in the City, due to the buildings, the signage, the sanitisation and the distinctive borders. I noticed how the borders end abruptly; you are plunged from the outskirts into the City, often whilst on the same street. Figure 45 (in Chapter Five) illustrates this almost shocking visual sense; on the eastern border of the City, contrasting the rather shabby un-renovated Georgian buildings on one side, and the shiny, modern office buildings with the manicured patch of lawn outside. You might expect them to be in completely different parts of London, rather than two sides of the same street.

The ‘City proper’, as illustrated in the photographic data and the field notes, is a sanitised space. Office buildings, old or new, are clean and well kept, imposing in their strength and solidity (the older style) and their height (the newer style). Grassy spaces and gardens are manicured and well-tended. Signage and maps are omnipresent. I was particularly conscious of this, as the field notes demonstrate, in the heart of the City, around the Bank of England:

I have the odd sensation of being on a film set – it just doesn't feel real. Everything feels so staged and orchestrated in this part of the City, the statuary and classical imagery is overwhelming; it definitely has a feel of 'protesting too much.'

Both Baudrillard (1994) and Soja (2000) tell us that spatial simulacra serve to stage the social and to intensify social performativity. I argue that this is apparent in the City, which relies on a version of itself as stable, enduring and omnipotent, which will be further discussed below.

As with the architecture and the sanitised streets, the rhythms identified in the City were different and distinct. I noticed how the main 'arteries' of the body of the City were fast flowing, urgent and purposive, with the side roads functioning as 'veins' (reminding us of how O'Doherty (2013) connects the materiality of cities with human corporeality). I noticed how these narrower and quieter veins are used as office corridors by the men of the City. I noticed how the rhythms sped up in the heart of the City, and I remarked on the sense of the City as being like a vortex that sucks you into the heart. A sense of bodily discomfort accompanies this sense of urgent purposefulness; my field notes talk about the bodily aches and pains which resurface in this place. Both Jennifer and Claire talk about walking in the City; Jennifer refers to the need to maintain your 'City walk' in order to successfully navigate the space, Claire talks about how walking in the City as an outsider (not dressed 'correctly', not walking fast enough) emphasises her sense of rejection from the space. Likewise, my notes discuss how awkward I felt without a sense of purpose in the City, and how I felt in the way, and not important, when I was dressed in what I perceived as inappropriate clothes. Neil, too makes the association between being dressed correctly and feeling included and not anonymous as a man in the City, otherwise you can't be seen as being able 'to march into the boardrooms.'

Thrift (1996: 240), discussing the City's ability to constantly reproduce itself, connects this to the City's small spatial extent, meaning that its tight orbit forces the need for face to face communications; it is both practical and manageable, since the space is readily traversed, and this becomes expected and a mark of its special status for those who belong, in that they are expected to be physically visible, in the same way that men sat in coffee houses to sort out disputes in the seventeenth century. Men do use the streets to signify their presence and their ownership of the space, as noticed in the field notes. Phillip connects this to the 'clubbability' that men must demonstrate here, and for Dave being visible in the streets and knowing your way around is used as a 'shorthand' by insiders. Nigel also remarks on the importance of being seen, of everyone knowing each other. As Thrift (ibid) points out, the advent of electronic communication could have meant that City workers were no longer required to be so visible, yet the opposite is in fact true; his view is that digital communications helps the City to cohere by facilitating, not replacing, face to face meetings amongst a wider pool of people. Again, the increase in mobility of a global workforce has not undermined the importance of the City, but reinforced it, by confirming it as the international '*place*' to do business; a place where it is important to be physically present and seen. Certainly, both Nigel and Dave felt that the City would remain the City precisely because of its tight spatial formation and its shared meaning: 'The City still *means* something' as Dave puts it.

Tuan (1977) presents us with a definition of place which is based around how humans have ascribed meaning to a particular space. Yet he sees place as essentially fixed and stable, as a pause in a flow of movement (ibid: 6). As a definition, that did not suffice for me to be able to capture the processual nature of the rhythms of this place (these processual rhythms will be returned to throughout the Chapter), or the way in which individual positions are constantly subject to movement and becoming (to be discussed below). In the City, a particular type of rhythm takes hold, becomes dominant and this helps to form our sense of place. The rhythms

become particular, local and situated; close to the definition provided by Merrifield (1993: 522): 'place is where everyday life is *situated*.' The rhythms themselves are not stable but constantly changing, different according to the time of day, the day of the week and whether one is inside the City proper or towards the borders. Whilst many respondents talked about the tiring, fast, urgent rhythms, some felt that their physical proximity at the border with Shoreditch, as well as the socio-cultural associations of their organisation (a technology start up rather than a financial firm) meant that they perceived the City rhythms to be slower, to have more of a 'laid back vibe', different from what they called 'the City proper.' My notes describe my perceptions of the crushing materiality of some of the City buildings which dominate the streets in the core; Figures 40 and 41 (in Chapter Five) illustrate the sense of oppression and captivity that this small and intense place bestowed on me, both by the crushing weight of the architecture, by the male dominated sonic rhythms, and by the sense of captivity that I felt in such a confined and crowded space.

Dale (2005), in her description of the socio-materiality of place, explains that humans not only construct our material environment but live within and through it. As seen in Chapter One, she uses a riparian metaphor to describe the co-constitutive properties of the social and the material. In the City, I posit that to extend Dale's metaphor means paying attention to the rhythms of the City, and, rather than water, it is air which is the crucial element here. My sense of the City as a giant vortex sucking one in, and my notes regarding the way that the wind screams in an unsettling way around and through the buildings, is reinforced by the participants' descriptions of the 'rush and roar' (Bronte, 1984: 109, as mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis) of the City. The wind tunnels of the City are created by the materiality of the buildings, but sustained and reinforced by the streams of people sweeping along the streets, leaving currents of air in their wake.

These urgent rhythms, however, are only present during working hours and working days. They are noticeably absent at the weekends and in the evenings, when my notes describe a palpable sense of anticipation, which I liken to a theatrical stage set awaiting actors and an audience.

From my observations, I noticed that the people present were visibly different ‘out of hours;’ the place was still populated mainly by men, but they were construction workers, security guards and street cleaners, again giving the sense of a set being constructed in readiness for the ‘real’ work to start. During our interview, Neil expresses this sense of a dystopian space when it is not geared around the working day, it feels: ‘weird and empty, like you’re in a sci-fi film and everyone has been removed all at once.’ This echoes Allen and Pryke (1994: 459):

The City is finance, and the traces of other uses and routine practices which give meaning to particular spaces within the buildings of the Square Mile have historically been side-lined or pushed out of the frame, so to speak.

My observations would suggest that these re-emerge when the City is out of hours, not ‘performing’; this will be explored more fully in the following section. As well as a change in the visibility of human actors, the spatial rhythms are very different in the ‘out of hours’ City. There is no rush and roar; it is possible to walk freely and to loiter. Lefebvre (1991) tells us that it is difference, not merely repetition, which creates rhythms. As discussed in Chapter One, it is only by the insertion of difference, and the collision of time, space, and energy, that a rhythm can be identified and *felt*. I argue that the different combinations of time, space and energy within the City ‘in hours’ and the City ‘out of hours’ creates purposeful and directional rhythms, their slowing down and almost aimless effect out of hours only intensifies their effects at other times. This is because the place itself has such an intense focus. As Allen and Pryke (1994) remind us, the City *is* finance. This is exemplified by

participants' comments; as Claire expresses: 'It's just all about work ... and about a very, very narrow sort of work'. This rarefied intensity means the place can be perceived as isolating; Jennifer describes the City as a 'bubble', removed from the 'real' world, and notices that: 'there is no off switch ... you don't have time for an outside interest or outside life ... you're isolated from other people.'

For those who feel that they no longer fit in, it is the place itself that actively rejects them, not their individual companies; the City is perceived as having agentic capacity. This means that it is often reified and perceived as acting or intervening as a place; it is not an abstract geographical concept, but a setting which does something to people. As Jennifer explains, 'until I got pregnant, I guess, actually was the first time when the City suddenly did feel quite hostile and then when I had a baby, yes, totally hostile'. Anna describes her sense of being 'socially unacceptable' in this space when she became visibly pregnant. Jennifer's anecdote about her inability to buy breast pads in the City, and how her lactating body was un-catered for and out of place, reinforces her perception of the place working against her at this time. For Neil, a man who does not conform to the suit wearing, money making dominant masculine image of the 'City man', he cannot belong: 'you feel very anonymous and unimportant, and like you shouldn't really be here'. Anna describes it as a place that 'chews up and spits out' and for Rob, exhausted by the demands of trying to fit in for years, it is essentially 'lonely – yes it can be a very lonely place' – confirming Phillip's observation that in order to succeed in the City as a man, you need to be part of a pack, to be 'clubbable'. This is at odds with comments from all of the respondents, including those mentioned above, of the City as being a place of opportunity, a place that is essentially meritocratic, where anyone can make it if they work hard enough. Working in this intense, rarefied atmosphere means that the place is perceived as both *being* something (different, unique, set apart, isolating, purposeful) and *doing* something (chewing up and spitting out, both giving and taking away

opportunities, rewarding you, forcing you to behave in a certain way, repelling or attracting you, and in relation to Anna's point about an invisible alarm going off if you dare to leave early, watching you). In this way, the City itself is both the setting for organizations, and the site of organizing; it is perceived as operating as a bounded, geographically and architecturally distinct organization, with conditions of membership attached to it. Tyler (2011) concludes that certain places are constitutive of work experiences, asking how it is that association with particular types of work shapes the place. I argue that a socio material analysis shows us that the place itself can shape the particular type of work; the materiality of the City is perceived as special and distinct, with its own particular rhythms, and this in turn shapes the performances that are deemed to be in place, as will be explored further in the following section.

Gieryn (2000: 465), echoing Dale's riparian metaphor, reminds us that 'places are built, or in some way physically carved out.' The material environment of the City is built to be a 'visible heart of London's financial landscape' (McDowell, 1997: 53), and can be read as a series of overlapping texts in order to reveal spaces of power. Interestingly, she refers to the Broadgate centre as a material illustration of Debord's (1990) notion of the spectacular society (cited in McDowell, 1997: 62), where urban development increasingly emphasises surface appearance and the distinctive look of buildings and their environs. She describes what has been created at Broadgate as 'a segregated and protected interior space with few and concealed entrances.' (ibid: 63). This resonates with Claire's description of it as an exclusionary space, one which she could not easily navigate and which she perceived as only for those who are deemed to truly belong, who have navigational confidence bestowed on them, as she saw it, by means of their gender, or their occupational status.

The Broadgate Centre is an example of conceived space. As discussed in Chapter Two, Lefebvre (1991: 49) describes abstract space (a form of conceived space) as the dominant form of space, in that it is socially constructed in the centres of wealth and power, and:

Endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there.

For Claire, it has been conceived to exclude those who lack the resources to navigate the City, both physically and emotionally, and to offer membership status for those who succeed in penetrating it.

As evidenced in both the fieldwork and the interviews, the imperial centre of the City is perceived as different to the peripheries, where diversity creeps in; yet the City ‘proper’ is constantly encroaching, by means of the crushing materiality, with new towers being endlessly constructed and the border areas becoming more sanitised. Abstract space can make the relationship between repetition and difference antagonistic (ibid: 396), since it relies on the repetitive, and on creating and sustaining homogeneity.. Allen and Pryke (1994: 459) describe the City as abstract space, noting that:

Thus, in the case of finance, the abstract space of the City of London has secured its dominance over time through its ability continually to mould the space around it in its own image ... Indeed, this is even more striking if one looks at the City's latest built form—which at first sight presents a formidable representation of the homogeneity of global finance.

In this way, they posit, the spatial practices of the City - their rhythms, their repetition and differences - signify what may and may not take place in and around the various institutions that make up the City and who is ‘out of place.’ Forming part of abstract space is what

Lefebvre describes as monumental space (1991); a space exemplified by monumental architecture and thresholds. Monumental space can be said to offer an image of membership, where chains of meanings are organised into a monumental whole. Allen and Pryke (1994: 460) describe how:

For Lefebvre, the defining characteristic of monumental space is not the chain of signs and symbols which may be read from the appearance of certain buildings or sites, important as they are, but rather the ability to prescribe a certain use for a space, and the manner and style in which it is used.

Lefebvre talks about the ‘screaming monumentality’ (2004:103) of urban spaces, which can be perceived and felt with the body and signifies the passing from one rhythm to another. The City abounds with screaming monumentality, and my field notes describe how the most imposing examples do seem to signify transitions between one area to another; I also describe how the ‘border crossings’, such as the river, signify changes in rhythm:

The river signifies a definite transition between the different rhythms of London, and knowing that the South Bank and the Globe are just a short walk away makes me long to escape.

Perhaps the most obvious illustrations of large monumental buildings are both the dominant imperial buildings of the core, and the soaring glass and steel towers which dominate the skyline. Merrifield (1993) reminds us that conceived, abstract space is a quintessentially masculine and priapic space, where Logos, the principle of order and reason, indicating the dominance of the mind, prevails over Eros, romantic or erotic love, connected to the heart. (It is worth noting here the presence of the statue of Eros in Piccadilly Circus in the heart of London’s West End, a place associated globally with pleasure, leisure and consumption). Lefebvre emphasises how abstract space (particularly monumental urban spaces) is a

repressive male space which finds its representation in the phallic aspect of towers; in the same way that the feminine is only represented in symbolic form in the City, likewise the monumental architecture serves to represent the hyper masculine:

Phallic erectility bestows a special status on the perpendicular, proclaiming *phallocracy as the orientation of space* (1991: 287, emphasis added)

In other words, the phallic soaring towers in the City are more than merely a way of saving space by building upwards; they proclaim the dominant orientation of the City (Parker, 2007, 2015, De Cock et al, 2009). Although there are of course economic imperatives at play here in terms of the built environment (saving space by building upwards, for example), I argue that they cannot be separated from the cultural imperatives in the City. In Allen and Pryke's exploration of the City's space, they look to the 'invisible' in order to see where difference lies. In my empirical work, I look to the visible, to what is present, in order to see the repetitions and feel the rhythms, and therefore to also identify what is seemingly invisible, or at least deemed not to be 'fit' for the City, and which does not repeat. Working in an environment perceived as 'special' and 'different' means that the place is perceived as having agentic capacity in terms of what it will and will not accept, and is therefore far more than a neutral backdrop (Tyler, 2011).

The findings discussed in Chapters Five and Six suggest that in the City, meanings are shaped by the built landscape and the landscape continually recreates and re-inscribes the process (in this case, a rarefied place). The built environment here is more than a container for interaction – it affects the sense of self and belonging experienced by the men and women who work within it. What working in this monumental, intense and rarefied place means for the performances of work and subjectivity will be the focus of the following section.

The City as a Performative Place

Taking the City as a place of phallocratic orientation (Lefebvre, 1991: 287), as examined above, questions are raised as to how this affects the way that people treat the space and carry out their work within it; to what extent this dominant phallocracy is perceived, and what this means for the performativity in the City; in other words, how are organisational performances constrained and compelled both by and within this space?

Firstly, the City is felt by all participants to be the site of a particular performativity which is characterised by the need to demonstrate ferocious focus and, importantly, be seen to be displaying it. The fear of ‘slippage’, of not being good enough to make your mark or to last in such a hothouse was a recurring theme in the interviews. As noted in Chapter Six, this shared understanding of the City as a pressured and demanding place is not associated with one particular type of business or type of job, but is perceived as endemic to the place; as expressed by Claire’s comment that ‘there is just something in the air here.’ In terms of who is attracted to the City, it is those ‘prepared to work really *really* hard’ (Ian); time and again participants expressed the view that it is a place for the young, the energetic, the ambitious. Membership of the City, then, is granted to those who ‘come up to scratch’, as Philip put it, and who can respond and thrive in a competitive environment. As the photographic and Streetwalking data emphasise, it is men who walk briskly and purposefully in the space, talk loudly in the streets, shake hands and arrange impromptu meetings on the pavements. As well as adhering to the City’s dress code, which is still formal business attire, (although ties are not quite so de rigueur now and trainers, as worn by some in the photographs as a symbol of busy lives, are clearly acceptable), these men display a sense of navigational confidence around the space. The cafes and coffee shops were noisy and busy throughout the days; they were performative sites in themselves, where the demand was to be seen working; male voices dominated again, with many men talking loudly on a phone whilst eating or drinking.

They were not places of respite but places for ‘fuelling’ whilst the rhythms barely pause. Whilst I was frustrated by the lack of access to many of the gardens and quiet spaces in the City, when I did see them being used, it was usually by solitary women, or, occasionally, solitary men, which is not a common sight in the City (both Matt and Tim noted the absence of women on the streets, as did I in my field notes, and most of my observations and photographs note groups of men as the norm). The exception to this is the photographic data of the men outside the pubs, in large groups, where there were next to no women. This would appear to be an ‘acceptable’ way for men to visibly relax and network. During the interviews, Ian stressed the need to be able to find your way around the City, to understand the ‘shorthand’ by which insiders refer to particular streets or areas, and Dave also felt that navigational confidence bestows a sense of belonging. Claire, conversely, used an example of feeling excluded from a particular place (the Broadgate Centre) to symbolise her sense of exclusion from what she perceives to be a ‘little citadel ... distinct and hermetically sealed’.

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. As is well documented in the literature (De Cock et al, 2009, McDowell, 2011, Thrift, 1996, inter alia), ‘phallic verticality’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 36) is represented in the data by photographs of and notes on the soaring glass and steel towers which dominate the skyline and sightlines on each corner. The photograph of 30 St Mary Axe, popularly known as the Gherkin (Figure 11, Chapter Five), and informally by a number of more ribald colloquialisms, is an example of this. In certain areas of the City, this type of architecture dominates. These include the district around Liverpool Street, Leadenhall Street and Aldgate. Moving westward through the City, however, the architectural style changes, although the towers still make an appearance; the area around Bank and up towards Ludgate Hill and St Paul’s (see Appendix E, Chapter Four) is characterised by the neo classical architectural style

of the late Georgian and Victorian periods. As Jacobs (1996: 40) explains, the history of empire is an ‘active memory’ in the City, and this monumental architecture can be seen to represent constructs of privilege and power, functioning as potent reminders of imperial dominance. During the course of my walks around the City, as outlined in Chapter Five, I recorded feelings of containment and control, almost a masochistic sense of surrender to the dominant monumental architecture in the heart of the City. This was largely a quiet space; although traffic noise is a constant in central London, my field notes recall wider streets, with people more spread out, and less human noise. In the areas dominated by phallic towers, however, my perceptions changed and I was aware of a noisy, hurried, purposeful atmosphere which was characterised by noise – both traffic noise and the noise of people talking loudly. In these areas, I was conscious of being in the way, an obstacle on the streets, and in both areas my lack of formal business attire marked me out as an outsider.

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. As introduced in Chapter Three, 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; walking within this space felt frantic, hurried, noisy and intensely competitive in its gendered culture.

The buildings which represent the ‘hypo masculine’, that is, the classical style imperial era buildings, being more squat and square, combine with the vertical, phallic architecture to form a visual symbolic impression of what could be termed testicular theatricality, appearing as they do directly behind the soaring towers (see Figure Fifteen, Chapter Five), and providing a material basis and historical context for the latter’s potency.

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 (the Financial Services Act of 1986, ushering in a new era of deregulation, is often viewed as the transition point). 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 socio-material shift from a hypo to a hyper masculine dominance was taking place. McDowell claims that this dualistic narrative has become dominant since the 1980s, ‘relying on the notion of metamorphosis from a stuffy old City, parodied in images of bowler hats and umbrellas, to the world of fast money and smooth operators’ (ibid: 44), but I show how these exist side by side, not shifting from one to the other but performing as materially and culturally (as well as economically and politically) symbiotic.

For participants, there was a certain nostalgia expressed for the traditions of the hypo masculine, assumed to be on the wane culturally, but as I have demonstrated, ever present in its socio-materiality; many mentioned their respect for the traditions of the City, materialised by the historic rituals and uniforms of the Lloyds Insurance market and the practices at the Royal Exchange; several mentioned nostalgia for the days of gentlemen in bowler hats. ‘Trust’ and ‘governance’ were cited as the most important intangibles of the City for several

respondents. The hyper masculine, however chastened by the excesses so exposed during the last financial crisis, was not only represented by the huge buildings, but by a culture that was seen to be licking its wounds, post 2008 crash, but still present: ‘Scratch the surface, it’s still there, you know, it’s still there’ (Rob). Jennifer agrees that ‘it’s (the City) not what it looks like on the surface’; for her, the hyper masculine excesses which spill out onto the streets at night are symbols of an unhappy place.

For some female participants, the hyper masculine is equated with monstrosity. Anna describes the huge buildings as ‘big black monsters’ and the City itself as ‘a big black hole, like in space, which sucks everything in’. When Claire is asked to describe the City, she says:

I think it’s aggressive which I mean negatively, I think it’s hellish, I think it’s uncomfortable, I think it’s hot ...hellish as in it’s noisy, it’s difficult to navigate, both literally and metaphorically.

McDowell (1997) reminds us that the built environment is more than a container for social interaction, and that in the City, for the majority of its temporal existence, it has been the ebb and flow of men who have given meaning to the space. For some participants, the materiality of the City reinforces this dominant masculinity¹⁶: Anna describes how the entire space feels like she is ‘only here on sufferance’, and the hypo masculine buildings make her feel as if she is in a boys’ public school; in this regard, women can be viewed as ‘space invaders’ (Puwar, 2004). Jennifer believes that it is men who attach symbolic status to buildings in the City; women, according to her, are more concerned with whether the buildings will function well enough to keep employees happy, but men see them purely as reflections of high status. As Kerfoot and Knights (1993) explain, high status managerial occupations are characterised by

¹⁶ Although a detailed exploration is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth considering what a ‘feminine’ architecture may be perceived as. The architect Zaha Hadid is often referred to as the ‘Queen of the Curve’ (The Guardian, 2013) and this fluid architectural style is often perceived as feminine – although care should be taken not to essentialize the feminine and instead to reveal the multiplicities of built forms that this might take.

a performative masculinity which includes control, conquest and competition, shared by both hyper and hypo masculinity in the City, and reflected here in Jennifer's perceptions of the symbolism of the buildings.

For all participants, any discussion of gendered performativity was immediately equated with masculinity (whereas mention of 'gender' on its own elicited responses about the number of women working in the City). Women viewed excessive 'hyper' masculine behaviour as 'out of control boys' (Anna), but men talked mainly about the fear of 'slippage' as the dominant factor influencing performances of masculinity in the City. The analysis here is focused upon the interplay between the two identified versions of masculinity, since the performances of femininity were neither discussed by participants nor immediately visible during the observational fieldwork. The relentless focus on performance creates, as Philip puts it, a place which is 'aggressive in its expectations' and many of the male participants spoke about the need to maintain performance levels, to be fit for purpose, and to not be left behind as 'there is always someone else coming through the ranks' (Philip). Philip makes a direct connection between masculine status and fragility and insecurity. For him, the status of men in the City is constantly precarious, because the pressures of performance are such that success can quickly come and go. He defines the behavioural norm for men in the City as about being sociable and, as he says, 'clubbable'. He expressed no surprise when shown photographs of the streetwalking data showing men walking in groups, but explained it as the need to 'keep in a pack' which meant that men were 'mob handed' in the City. My own perceptions of the groups of men on the streets were that they were hunting in packs, that the large groups spreading out over the pavements reflected an aggressive dominance. Philip's interpretation, however, suggests a fragile status. This fragility is reinforced by the need to conform to a certain idealised version of masculinity; McDowell illustrates the fragility of the hetero-normative masculine identity in the City, citing one of her respondents who said 'men

who are, well, perhaps artistic or sensitive are *out of place here*' (1997: 179, emphasis added).

To be in place, then, in the City, is perceived by participants to be able to conform to either one of the dominant masculinities; either the cerebral, professional, patriarchal hypo masculine, which is portrayed architecturally by the dominance of the imperial buildings of the centre of the City, especially around the Bank of England, or the priapic, excessive, out of control hyper masculine, portrayed architecturally by soaring towers and the noisy, frantic street-level crowds, especially around Liverpool Street and Leadenhall Street (see Appendix E, Chapter Five). Both share in common the need for men to be 'mob-handed', and for groups of them to physically dominate the environment. Even 'relaxation' in the City is dominated by the masculine, and perhaps especially by the expectations of the hyper masculine. 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 Tim and Matt who conceded that you simply don't see women in the way you do men. In Paternoster Square on a sunny summer day, table tennis was set up, but only men were playing, with other groups of men watching and commenting (see Figure 30, Chapter Five). Warren (2005) describes a mini-industry of prescribed fun at work, which she claims adds a 'particular dimension of control and morality to the kinds of fun or mirth that employees *ought* to experience' (Warren and Fineman, 2007: 92). They go on to argue that structured fun represents an attempt to 'colonise the 'affective zone' of work and workplace, so as to neutralise the impulse for dissent' (ibid). I argue that this can be extended to the wider work setting, in other words, to work place on a larger scale than merely offices, and that in the City, structured fun is used as a means of embedding the hyper masculine characteristics of testosterone fuelled competition and the need for men to congregate in groups within the overall organisational landscape,

reflecting social and cultural conventions about what, and who, is deemed acceptable in this place.

The performances of femininity, by contrast, are not only not visible, but deemed to be out of place in the City, other than to temper the excesses of hyper masculinity. Pete gave an illustration of this when quoting his colleague who claimed that women ‘have a taming effect’, and ‘temper the place down.’ Prügl (2012) claims that the most recent financial crisis resulted in the myth of the financially prudent, cautious woman ‘housekeeper’ becoming dominant, functioning in opposition to the male recklessness that was widely believed to have caused the crisis. If femininity can be said to have an acceptable role in the City it is in this form, with women being allowed either play a supporting role (in the interview data, Lorraine points out how most women in the City are, or are assumed to be, in supporting administrative roles rather than fee earners), or else to calm the excesses of such a masculine place.

The way in which these gender performativities are present in the City reminds us that ‘space too needs to be thought of as brought into being through performances and as a performative articulation of power’ (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 434). The ways in which the relentless performativity of the City, particularly in relation to gender, help us conceptualise it as a performative accomplishment, will be returned to in more detail in the theoretical summary below.

Wasserman and Frenkel (2015), applying Lefebvre’s spatial theory to an analysis of Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, argue that class and gender largely define the emotional reactions that employees develop towards organisational space. They also conclude, however, that:

Whilst men are able to identify with the 'masculine' design, and thus so not experience it as contradicting their self-or professional identity, women clearly sense a conflict between their gender identity and the masculine/professional space (ibid: 1502).

My findings suggest that some, although not all, women in the City also sense this conflict between the materiality of the space and their gender identity, with mothers experiencing this conflict most deeply; in Jennifer's words (above), the place itself turned against her and became 'hostile' when she became pregnant, and her female body could no longer be masked.

As well as this gender divide, men who do not conform to either the hypo or hyper masculine identities are also excluded from, or at least uncomfortable with, the dominant culture, as Rob, who doesn't want to be tired of London, but feels he cannot cope with the demands of the City any more, remarks: 'It's all a game ...but there is so much pressure to keep it being like that'. This is a place that is designed around notions of masculinities, and that is geographically tightly bounded, making it an apparently coherent space, which confirms and reinforces the identity of both itself and those who are 'in place'.

The relentless focus in the City on gendered performativity is reinforced and sustained not only by the materiality of the place but by its rhythms. Lefebvre (2004) reminds us that rhythms are sustained by repetition, but that repetition in itself cannot produce a rhythm; it is the insertion of difference that creates this. The performativity of the City is frantic, intense and urgent, but it is also interspersed with periods of silence and calm, when the City 'stops' at weekends and late at night. Likewise, the performances of the dominant masculinities in the City are characterised by incessant repetition, both of human actors and architectural styles, as the photographic data and my field notes, as well as the interview data, confirms.

Claire tells us that this focused performativity excludes 'normal life', defined by her as schools, children, pushchairs, hospitals, theatres, shops. How these performative rhythms characterise and create a place which is also experienced as precarious is explored below.

The City as a site of precarity

The first thing that emerged when participants discussed how they felt about the City was that it was perceived as a strange place, isolated, and removed from everyday life, when outside the Monday to Friday nine to five rhythm, and governed by strict rules about what the acceptable performativities are. Examples of what is acceptable (the hypo and/or hyper masculine) are endlessly repeated. Because of this peculiar and rarefied atmosphere with its strict rules and endlessly repeating symbolism, their sense of belonging in the City was not fixed, or ever really secure, but processual, in a state of constant flux. This was articulated strongly by mothers working in the City, but also by men; for Philip, masculine status in the City is always fragile, precarious and insecure, because the threat of 'slippage' is ever present in such a performance driven place. These narratives provide compelling evidence of the precarity and fragility of subject positions within the City. Precarity, here, is not being used in the way defined by Standing (2011: 8) as having 'truncated status', since in social and professional terms high status is a reward of most City occupations, and the participants in this study were all well remunerated and possessed solid professional backgrounds, but because they are characterised by instability. For women, or those not conforming to the dominant hypo or hyper masculine identities, there was a constant sense of only being 'allowed' in the City on sufferance and of not being catered for, either when pregnant (in Jennifer's case), or when needing to work shorter hours (in Anna's case), or, in Claire's case, wishing to be defined by something other than a very narrow set of performance driven criteria. For men who do not conform, they feel eschewed by the place, 'tired' (Rob) and

unable to avail themselves of the rewards which are offered to those who demonstrate the conditions of membership, as summed up by Ian 'young, energetic, ambitious, and prepared to work really *really* hard'. For those who don't conform to these conditions of membership, his suggestion is blunt: 'jog on'.

Yet Phillip tells us that even for those who ostensibly belong, status is never fixed, but forever in danger of slipping. Jennifer, for example, had felt she had 'member' status, strongly identifying with the dominant masculine managerial identity of the City, until her pregnant body was deemed unfit for purpose. Lee (2017) describes how the leaky, lactating bodies of mothers emphasize their sexual difference from the male norm within organizations, and Brewis and Warren (2004: 232) discuss the 'uncontrollability' of female bodies in their study of the experiences of pregnancy in the workplace. Jennifer's experience demonstrates how her bodily functions removed her from being 'in' to 'out' of place.

Knights and Tullberg's observation that high risk masculinity is associated with fragility, 'since the spoils of conquest can readily be lost in a highly competitive environment' (2012: 390) is directly relevant to the performances of masculinity in the City. They argue that one of the characteristics of masculine (and managerial) identities in the workplace is a high level of insecurity; since success is dependent on a social recognition within a competitive environment, the need to be seen to have some capacity to control events and establish order confers respect and status. Yet because this is almost impossible to sustain, masculine and managerial identities are extremely fragile and precarious. This is evidenced by the empirical work to be the case in the City, where if the chosen ones wish to survive, they 'have to bond together' as Phillip tells us, 'safer if you keep people close around you.' In this way the City, in its presentations of masculine dominance, stability and endurance, rather like the Lady in Hamlet, protests too much.

To conclude, the findings from the research present the City as a rarefied, performative and precarious place. A summary of the theoretical analysis is below.

The City as a ‘performative accomplishment’: a theoretical summary

In the first chapter of this thesis, I introduced the argument that the importance of setting to the lived experience of organisational space was a gap that needed to be addressed. Lefebvre’s theory of space as socially constructed, and his later work theorising that spaces have their own rhythms which can be read, analysed and felt with the body, have been central to developing an understanding of how meaning and materiality inter-relate in the City and shape the experience of those working there. And as introduced in Chapter Three, and reinforced by participant accounts and the streetwalking methodology, in such a masculine hierarchical setting, the ways of ‘doing gender’ in organisations not only reinforce the cultural norms but also position competing gender performances as Other. Höpfl (2010:40) reminds us that full membership of organisational life is often denied to women: ‘Membership is determined by male notions of what constitutes *the club*, by what determines the pecking order, and by who is able to exercise power’. As we have seen from participant accounts, being clubbable, demonstrating your credentials to belong to the club which is the City, is viewed as important, and is connected, in Philip’s account, with being male. The conditions of membership of this club, it would appear, include an understanding having the confidence to network, to know people, and to know your way around; to demonstrate that you are familiar with the ‘shorthand’ of the City, as Dave put it. If you cannot do this, you cannot ‘belong.’ Yet at the same time, Phillip tells us that being ‘clubbable’ means that for men, clubbing together offers some protection in what is fundamentally an unstable environment; earning your place is critical, as many participants explained, but keeping it is even harder. As was explored in Chapter Three, and reinforced by Phillip’s comments, the

dominant masculinities in the City are often concerned with the management of crises, yet their own managerial positions are inherently precarious.

To summarise the theoretical direction of this discussion, a Lefebvrian reading of the City shows how space which is conceived as monumental is perceived by those working within it. A Lefebvrian reading of the rhythms of the City is also helpful to understand it as a specific, and rarefied, place, which is given meaning by the way that the socio-cultural norms of behaviour and the material reinforce one another. As seen in participant accounts, the place itself is perceived by participants both to be something and to do something, and is reified, as evidenced by Anna's feeling of being watched by the place, and judged, if she leaves work early. The City is, therefore, perceived as something special, set apart, and distinct, and it reinforces itself again and again through repeating rhythms. Lefebvre tells us that:

There is a tendency towards the globalising domination of centres (capital cities, dominant cultures and countries, empires) which attacks the multidimensionality of the peripheries (2004: 105).

The rarefied heart of the City is perceived to be vastly different from its borders, where other rhythms, and other identities (as Matt and Tom tell us) become more dominant. Architecturally, much of the City has been conceived as abstract space, that is to say, cerebral, secure and patriarchal, and, as Lefebvre puts it, 'formal and quantitative, it erases distinctions' (1991: 49). Such space excludes the sensual and the sexual (ibid), equating, therefore, with what I am terming the 'hypo-masculine' in the City of London. Yet there is also the existence in the City of 'phallic verticality' (ibid: 36), or the 'hyper-masculine', and both have a symbiotic relationship here, the one at times dominant, but the other never entirely repressed. In the City both forms function as monumental space (ibid: 224) since, as seen above, both forms of space are 'determined by what may take place there, and

consequently by what might not take place there'. Monumental space, therefore, as well as 'imposing on the body and on consciousness the requirement of passing from one rhythm to another' (2004: 103), as was evidenced in the streetwalking data, imposes conditions of membership. Analysing what forms this dominant masculinity takes, what the conditions of membership are, and how 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 this thesis is to add to their research both by applying a Lefebvrian reading to wider organisational settings, (extending the scale, therefore, from individual workspaces), and by applying his theory to the performances of gender in wider organisational space and setting.

As explored above, the City is perceived as a place where particular performances are enacted. These performances are reinforced and sustained not only by the materiality but by *repetitive* performances which enable social actors to be 'in place' in the setting. Lefebvre gives us insights as to how this space is socially produced, through a coming together of socio-cultural expectations and the materiality of conceived, abstract, monumental space (1991: 224). His work on rhythms, (2004), helps illuminate how this space is perceived and made special and distinct as a particular *place*. The methodological approach of streetwalking adopted in this thesis is particularly useful here, not only to supplement the findings from the participant interviews. The observational method of Flânerie and the embodied method of Rhythmanalysis, both important observational methods, are not sufficient to enable a full understanding of the *emotional* effects of place. This is where the more emotionally attuned psycho-geographical approach was particularly useful, especially when combined with Flânerie and Rhythmanalysis to form a holistic methodology, streetwalking, as outlined in

Chapter Four. By combining the three walking methods, a deep and rich account of how the space can be both felt and read by the body, and the emotional effects of the rhythms, can be better understood and analysed. When combined with data from participant interviews, a picture emerges of a distinct place defined by performative rhythms, and with conditions of membership defined by particular gendered performances.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Butler emphasizes that it is the continually and repeatedly performed acts of repetition with regard to gender that constitute both gender and gendered subjects simultaneously – ‘gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be’ (Butler 1990: 24). In the City, these performances are spatially present - not only ‘staged’ whilst performing work, but are played out on the streets of the City, ‘Queering’ the City, in the sense of disrupting the binary assumptions of gender, can be considered as a way of understanding the multiplicities of gendered performances here; for example, not only the presence of two competing versions of dominant masculinity (the hypo and hyper), but the way in which femininities, generally perceived and experienced as deficient in this setting, also take multiple forms and have multiple symbolic purposes, for example introducing both disorder (chaos, weakness) and order (financial housekeeping and regulation, or ‘tempering the place down’ as Rob tells us). Whilst this study is not primarily concerned with a queer theorisation of the City, revealing it as a site of particularly gendered spatial performances opens up the potential for more research in this area in order to interrogate the diversity of meanings attached to gender here, and applying an anti-binary epistemology helps us to understand the City as a performative place.

The streetwalking data, the photographic data and the interview data all elicited findings about the sense of claustrophobic repetition, both of the materiality and of the human actors, and the corresponding repression of difference. Conceived, abstract, monumental space,

Lefebvre tells us, is defined by what may and what may not take place there (1991: 224) and is designed to exclude difference (ibid: 49).

There is a contrast between this definition of conceived space and the reality of City life. The abstract, rational, hypo-masculine, still so much in evidence in the City, both materially and culturally, is at odds with the disorder which characterises much of City life, exemplified by the precarity of global finance. As referred to in Chapter Two, and alluded to throughout the participant interviews, the management of the City presents a coherent narrative of order and of being 'in charge.' Elizabeth tells us that 'for many City firms ... generating controversy is not of great interest.' Stability, trust and governance, for her, are the order of the day. This may be true, yet at the same time controversy and crisis are ever present in the City. Given the need to manage perpetual crisis and controversy, the need to present 'business as usual' is paramount. In order to accomplish this, then continuity (including hierarchies and privilege) need to be maintained, in order to present the City as forever in charge, forever in control, forever able to manage crises, and forever presenting a history such as that of the Bank of England, which produces a historical narrative based on how 'financial shocks' have been managed and contained, in order to 'improve the lives of the people of Great Britain.' The City of London Corporation, responsible for day to day governance of the City, claims equality and inclusion as a key strategic aim in its corporate plan and its commitment to benefitting the UK economy.

The theoretical contribution, therefore, of this thesis, is that an analysis of rhythms can reveal place as performative. The City can be read as a performative accomplishment; it is designed to elicit a particular performative response. It is both a physical and an intellectual fortress, as evidenced by the participants who ascribe meaning to the place through its physical boundaries and small spatial extent, and also through the sense, as Nigel says, that 'no-one really understand what we do.'

The City achieves this performativity by the way that it is staged, not only via its distinctive materiality, but through its culture (for example, the wearing of bespoke, expensive suits with trainers, signifying both wealth and a particularly busy and pressured occupational status, see figure 8, page 138). There is a performance demand here; many participants expressed the need to be seen to be performing work, and mentioned the lack of respite afforded to them by the place. A Lefebvrian reading of the rhythms, alongside a socio material analysis of place, reveal that the rhythms here play a performative role, and that, although the performativity is shaped by a number of competing factors, of which gender is one, it is a distinctly gendered performativity which is sensed and experienced and which is the focus of this study.

To conclude this chapter, the themes to have emerged from this study of the City suggest that it is experienced as a rarefied, performative, precarious place, characterized not by the stability which it narrates, but by insecurity and fragility. The repetitive performances convey the conditions of organizational membership to this particular place of work, stipulating the terms of who does and does not belong, and who is valued within the City, and on what basis. As a performative place, the City's socio-materiality therefore compels particular ways of being manifest through a repetition of that which is the same and a corresponding repression of difference. In practice, this means that deviations from a hyper- or hypo-masculine norm are positioned as Other, present in a conditional, relatively peripheral physical sense, but absent or marginalized symbolically, so that the City as a work place is dominated by a built environment and forms of social-spatial interaction that serve to exclude women and the feminine. In this sense, the City constitutes a precarious organizational setting for those who cannot conform, or who are forever concerned about not keeping up with the performative demands.

Lefebvre's theorisations of the production of space and its rhythms have therefore formed the basis of an approach to researching the City as a rarefied and performative place, where the socio-cultural meanings and the materiality co-constitute a place of 'phallocratic orientation' (1991: 287). Extending his theorisation of space to explore gendered performativity in the City has uncovered two dominant versions of masculinity, the hypo (the patriarchal and cerebral) and the hyper (the excessive, priapic and macho), which constitute the 'club' of the City. Researching how such a performative place is experienced and sensed as essentially fragile and precarious, despite the 'screaming monumentality' (Lefebvre, 2004: 183) which declares it to be a stable and fixed space, gives us a richer understanding of a place which is not only of global economic importance, and is not merely a backdrop to financial crises; as seen in Chapter Two, it is where so many crises take place, and, in the UK at least, was the organizational setting for the most recent financial crisis. The precarity and fragility which this research has revealed is borne by the people who work there, who are constantly striving to be, and to remain, 'fit for purpose, and 'in place', whilst most acknowledge, as Neil ruefully tells us, that: 'It's like a deadly serious game here; once you're out, you're history.'

It is by looking at what is not 'in place' in the City that the sense of precarity and fragility is exposed. It is not merely the homogeneity of the setting, but the desire to present a particular face, the insistence on 'business as usual' and control and order, that makes it precarious as a workplace, because despite the announcements about inclusion, equality and meritocracy, there are conditions of membership here, and when they are not espoused, there are no second chances.

Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to answer questions relating to the City of London as an organizational setting, namely, what is it that makes the City so distinct; does geography matter to how it is perceived, and if so, how and why? What can we understand about how it is perceived, and by whom, and who, and what, therefore, can be said to be ‘in place’ here? And, finally, what are the conditions of membership? In response to these questions, Chapter One has oriented the argument towards the relative lack of scholarship on setting within the literature on organizational space and place, building upon this body of work by showing how a Lefebvrian reading of the production of space, combined with a socio-material analysis of a specific place, can help to integrate meaning and materiality in order to better understand the lived experience of working in this place. Chapter Two moved us from the general to the specific, critiquing the literature on the City of London and uncovering the particular narratives of this place, from the historical and the mythological to the contemporary, in order to uncover the dominant meanings that have accumulated; what makes this place, in effect, distinct. What this might mean for those excluded from the spaces and from the dominant meanings was examined in Chapter Three; leading on from the uncovering of dominant masculinities in the City, the literature which discusses how gender is enacted in organizations, how gendered performances shape how the City can be perceived, and how this shapes experiences of events which unfold within it was explored. Chapter Four introduced the methodological approach used for the empirical research and placed the methodology firmly in the streets of the setting, introducing the streetwalking method, relating this to the theoretical approach, and explaining how this subjective, embodied method combines with participant interviews to give a rich and deep exploration of the lived experience of the City as a workplace. In Chapters Five and Six, the findings lead us to consider the ‘weight’ of the City, how its performativity and intensity and its relationship to

gender is experienced by those who work there, and uncovers the City as a place laden with meaning, a setting which is made to mean something by those who inhabit it, by the buildings that materialize it, and by the way in which the culture and the materiality interact to produce what the City does and is. Chapter Seven discusses the connections between the themes, , and positions the City as a performative accomplishment, a place with strict conditions of membership, which is essential for it to construct and perform its narratives of order and control. The price of belonging in the City is high; unless you are young, ambitious and able and willing to accept the performativity and cope with the relentless rhythms of the place, your only option is to ‘jog on.’ This matters because it shows us that the City is, despite protestations to the contrary, still a place which is ruled by conditions of membership, just as the coffee houses and the private members’ clubs were in previous centuries. It may be a global melting pot in terms of the nationalities of the people working there, but diversity and equality are far from entrenched.

During the participant interviews, Nigel confirms his belief that the City will endure: ‘The City will always stay the City, I think.’ This belief that the City is a place which means something, in a geographical, architectural and social sense, permeates the perceptions of the City that this thesis has uncovered. Like the narratives that the City tells about itself, the materiality of the City, whether stone or steel, symbolise dominance and presence. The participants all expressed a belief in the meritocratic City, the place of opportunity where fortunes can be made if you can just work hard enough, where the streets just might be paved with gold – if, as Ian puts it, you are ‘young, energetic, ambitious’. For those who are not, or are no longer fit for purpose, here, the research has shown that it is the place which they feel rejects them, which does something to them, or excludes them in some way; it is the place which is ‘where they work’. As Jennifer showed us, breast pads, when they can be located in the City, come with a heavy price tag. For all participants, the materiality of the City

reinforces their feelings of it being a club, one where their membership is obtainable, yet precarious. For Anna, the buildings remind her of a boy's school. Others cite the lure of the architecture which for them represents the importance attached to the place, which they describe in reverent terms as a powerhouse, an engine, a driver.

A socio-material analysis using an embodied, immersive methodology has allowed us to understand the place as both rarefied and intensely performative, both culturally and materially dominated by two distinct but competing forms of masculinity. Adherence to these, and to the fast, performative rhythms, dictate the conditions of belonging here. This adds to our understanding of the City as being far from a meritocratic place of equality, a narrative espoused by its governing bodies and largest institutions; it also adds to our understanding of place as more than a backdrop to people's working lives, but as an agency in itself, so widening our understanding of what can be researched under the heading of 'organization'. Rather than thinking of organization in terms of the 'container' metaphor (Hirst and Humphreys, 2013) I have argued that what takes place *outside* the boundaries of the material organization, what is perceived and sensed here, and how it shapes feelings of belonging or not-belonging, is relevant to the lived experience of work.

Research contributions

The empirical work has shown that the 'distinctive patina' (Thrift, 1996: 238) of the City is shaped by a relentless performativity, which is defined by interrelating gender performances, shifting subject positions, and materiality. Both hyper and hypo masculinities have been uncovered, both in relation to the architecture and the culture of the City, and their effects analysed. The mythology of the place is that anyone can succeed here, but this thesis has demonstrated the illusion of this belief; position and performance here are processual, and depend upon staying fit for purpose, so that the City is able to continue with its narrative of

business as usual, with the hierarchies of power still in place and able to continue despite the endless precarity and instability that continually threatens it.

In more detail, I have contributed empirically to studies on the lived experience of work by evidencing that those who earn their living in this place of global importance identify with the place itself, and feel that they belong to something; to a geographical setting, to a historical place, and to a culture. All participants were defensive, to varying degrees, about the City, feeling that outsiders couldn't understand its rarefied culture, and all referenced the initial lure of the place, symbolised through its distinctive materiality. Its agentic capacity, that is, its ability to shape the conditions of membership and to be perceived as a force in its own right (a place where an alarm might sound if you tried to leave early, or which would not provide support for a lactating body) was a strong theme throughout the interviews, telling us that it is the place itself to which people feel they belong, or conversely which makes them feel out of place. The meanings that have accumulated here make it more than the site of a collection of organizations; it is perceived as an organization in itself. The City has been revealed to be a gendered place, where questions about gender were initially dismissed as not being relevant here, yet participants admitted that women were not visible (confirmed during the streetwalking fieldwork), the female participants often felt out of place, and competing versions of masculinity dominate the culture and the materiality. In such a performative place, which the research has revealed is perceived as a stage set 'out of hours', gender becomes staged and performed via the materiality as well as via the socio cultural practices.

Secondly, the contribution has been conceptual, in that the focus on the importance of geographical location for organisations has extended our understanding of what constitutes an organization as such. What we consider to be a traditional organization changes when we study how and where it is placed; in the City, I have argued, the inside/outside dimensions of individual organizations become meaningless as the spaces around them are analysed. The

streetwalking method has enhanced our understanding of organizations by taking their analysis outside the tradition limits of what we consider them to be, and has shown that a sensory, embodied methodology can help make sense of the ‘space outside.’

Thirdly, I have made a methodological contribution to the literature on organizational space and place by developing a methodology which applies Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis to the streets of the City, and adds to it by means of other sensory and embodied observational walking methods. This has allowed me to develop a sensory method of navigating and understanding the research setting, which has extended Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis method and spatial trialectic. Through the application of this methodology I have been able to observe how the place is sensed and experienced, and how patterns of inclusion and exclusion are present, in a way that it would not have been possible to uncover merely through interviewing City workers, who are aware of the frenzied rhythms but do not, in general, have the time to step outside them. The interviews added to this sensory methodology by helping me to understand how City workers ‘make sense’ of the place cognitively. Together, this methodological approach based on a sensory application of Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis has enabled an understanding of the City as more than performative and gendered, but also precarious, which in turn reveals its underlying fragility and instability; where narratives and protestations of order and stability are concerned, the City really does protest too much.

Lastly, the theoretical contribution has added to Lefebvre’s theories of the social production of space to include spatial performativity. By taking his approach to perceived and conceived space as socially produced, applying it to place and setting rather than to unnamed space, and extending his work on rhythms to include other observational and emotionally attuned methods, I have moved towards a sensory and aesthetic understanding of this place, this

‘topos’, as performative and precarious, rather than as fixed and stable, as it presents itself through its materiality and its social culture. **Limitations and evaluation of the study**

Although the study involved researching how men and women at different stages of their lives and careers experience the City, interpret it, and come to see it as a welcoming or excluding space, all of the participants were professionals in various stages of middle to senior management careers. All were white, and almost all university educated. A further study might explore participants from a range of ethnicities, educational backgrounds, and career paths; focusing perhaps on the less visible and less high profile City workers, and those not directly involved in financial services – including the wide range of support workers (retail staff, bar workers, cleaners, for example) – whose voices were not heard.

In terms of some methodological limitations, as noted in Chapter Four, changes in temporal rhythms 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 the rhythmic patterns on the streets. (It should be noted, however, that when visiting the City at 7 am, which was the earliest walk carried out, men in suits walking with purpose were once again the dominant sight on the streets). The experience of the City on a Sunday, with a different rhythmic pattern and an anticipatory atmosphere, with construction workers so dominant on the otherwise deserted streets, suggests that the late night and the very early morning City would be the site of the ‘backstage’ workers, who are preparing the place for its performances.

Further research could also explore the experience of no movement (or limited movement) in the City, for example, the experience of watching the rhythms unfold whilst sitting in a fixed point. This was partially explored by the experience of taking breaks from walking, mainly in coffee shops but sometimes in garden squares, with the resulting experience being that sites

of apparent respite in the City are in fact performative sites in themselves. As detailed in Chapter Five, the garden squares were often locked or otherwise inaccessible, and the coffee shops were loud and busy with food and drink mostly being consumed ‘on the go’; when people stopped and sat in these places, they were invariably working or talking loudly on phones. Although the coffee shops were inevitably busiest during the lunchtime periods, there was no other discernible temporal deviation to the rhythms. Additional research, however, could examine the ‘still’ or ‘stopping’ points of the City and their relationship to the overall rhythms in more detail.

The research has focused heavily on what is visible, i.e. what was easily observed during the walking phase of the methodology, and what the participants felt about the material place in which they work. Although the invisible, or the ‘obscene’ intrudes, and was noted, it was not the focus of the research, and more work needs to be done to uncover, for example, the multiplicities of femininity which are present in the City. In particular, further research in this area may help uncover why women are so much less visible on the streets, particularly during lunchtimes and after work, when the pubs and bars are full of men; do the pressures of presenteeism in this performative place, as Anna suggest, mean that women are less likely to leave their desks? Equally, although the importance of being ‘fit for purpose’ in the City was a strong theme throughout the study, and the preponderance of gyms, for example, was noted, little attention was paid to the ageing body in the City and how this is implicated in being in or out of place.

Methodological reflections and directions

Returning to the methods used, it is worth reflecting on how these could be further explored within the setting in order to extend understanding of how the place is shaped through rhythms. Whilst the participant interviews generated rich accounts of the experience of

working life in the City, only one interview (with Claire) was conducted as we walked together through the streets. The rhythms of the City were emphasized during our interview with an emotional intensity that was stronger during this interview than any other. 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. The data in their study showed that walking interviewees liked talking about specific buildings and environmental features, whereas the sedentary interviewees tended to produce narratives that, whilst prompted by places, focused on people (ibid: 856). My experience with Claire suggests that walking with an interview participant allows the narrative to evolve spatially rather than temporally, and produced more spontaneous and emotional data as the surrounding environment prompted discussions of place, for example her recollections of the Broadgate Circle as an exclusionary space, and her bodily discomfort as she became immersed once again in the rhythms of place.

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 or somewhere nearby so that they could limit the time away from their desks. For future research, I would suggest walking with participants to and from their offices to transport termini, for instance, so that there is minimal disruption to their day.

Other considerations include paying attention to the weather; walking and interviewing whilst battling with heavy wind and rain, for example, might prove problematic, as would

background noise, particularly traffic noise, and the technical and practical challenges of walking, talking and recording simultaneously. In addition, Carpiano (2009) raises the issue of informal conversation about landscape features and material structures arising quite naturally whilst walking, but this can pose problems when transcribing and attempting to remember exactly what was being discussed; without detailing more precise location information, such informal language can problematize analysis, making coding and comparison difficult. Finally, such a mobile method is only appropriate for the able bodied and may preclude participation for some.

In summary, walking based interviews have the potential to unlock the material and social dimensions of place and space for individuals, and can help the study of people's perceptions and navigation of their environment and the rhythms of place. There are, however, additional ways of creatively representing the rhythms of place and which have the potential to complement and extend the methods used in this thesis, and to which I now turn.

As discussed in Chapter One, Lyons (2016) shows how a rhythm analysis can uncover the distinctive space-time of a place and interrogates the patterns of everyday life in Billingsgate fish market in London. A short film was created as part of the study, based on time lapse photography, and shows physical activity, movement, interactions, patterns, rhythms and flows which cannot be perceived in real time (Pettinger and Lyon, 2012:

<http://www.nowaytomakealiving.org/page/2>). This approach could be replicated for organizational settings such as the City, using one vantage point, or example one of the main transport termini such as Liverpool Street, as a way of visually representing the rhythms.

Simpson (2012) also suggests time lapse photography as a way of documenting and facilitating reflections on the complex unfolding of events in polyrhythmic places, in this case observing the space-times of street performances in an urban setting. This could also offer the advantage of representing a wider sample of people than I was able to access using the

methods outlined in this thesis; video footage could be more inclusive in terms of ethnicities , ages and occupations which are present in the City but not represented using my methods and sample.

Pink (2007) takes a different and more embodied approach to filmmaking as a tool for representing experiences of place, She suggests that ‘walking with video’ (filming and recording participants whilst walking alongside them) is a research method that can produce empathetic, sensory, embodied and emplaced understandings of another’s experiences, and thus is able to ‘produce audiovisual texts that define and represent place at particular moments in time’ (ibid: 250). The method can help represent experiences and rhythms, ‘sensorially making place and making sense of place’ (ibid: 243). She does, however, point to challenges of trying to film, walk and talk at the same time, which can result in footage which is unsteady and disorienting.

Moving the focus from the visual to the aural, some researchers have focused on the practice of ‘soundwalking’ (Paquette and McCartney, 2012, Hall, Lashua and Coffey, 2008) or moving through a soundscape, as a way of remaining intimately connected to place. By producing acoustic impressions of particular places through recording sounds, walking thus acquires an additional creative power of narrative representation. A public soundwalk is usually a guided walk where the participants are silent, although alternative variations of this have evolved, for instance commented walks (Thibault, 2013) where the researcher walks with a single participant, who is encouraged to describe what they perceive and experience throughout the walk. Both the sound environment and the comments are recorded for further analysis. These methods of representing the aural rhythms of place would be interesting to develop in relation to the gender performativity of the City; for example, would make voices dominate? Would voice be a noticeable aural theme, or would construction and traffic noise override all else? Would footsteps be audible and if so, how fast paced would they be?

Moving from the visual and the aural to the written word, Edensor (2010), in his discussion of how the practice of walking produces time space and elicits the experience of place, draws on the textworks of walking artist Richard Long. Long's work highlights the rhythmic dimensions of walking by using strings of words and phrases, superimposed onto a photograph of the landscape that has been walked, creating condensed narratives of place that are poetic in their intensity and rhythmicity.

In a similar vein, the tradition of found poetry in qualitative research, where the researcher uses only the words of the participant(s) to create a poetic rendition of a story or phenomenon (Butler-Kisber, 2002), helps recreate lived experience and provoke emotional responses. As Butler-Kisber (2004: 95) suggests, found poetry 'is more evocative than the typical linear kinds of research writing because of the embodied and melodic nature of the text'. The use of poetic rhythm and repetition, in particular, could be a valuable method for representing the rhythms of place that the participants themselves describe, especially in relation to the performances that the place demands. The range of metaphors used to describe the City, and the colours and impressions of the place were rich and striking, and could be used as a basis for found poetry of the City. These rich descriptions also offer up the possibility of collaborating with artists, as well as representing the words through poetry, in order to creatively represent and reflect the rhythms of the City as they are sensed and experienced.

Avenues for future research

Since the aim of this thesis was to uncover the dominant meanings of the City via a socio-material analysis based on understanding the rhythms and sensory perceptions of place, the focus has been on understanding how the dominant masculinities identified shape the 'club' of the City and its conditions of membership. Whilst attention has been paid to the less visible, in other words to that which is 'obscene', in Lefebvrian terminology, but which

recurs, this has not been explored with the same level of analysis. Future research into the multiple variations of femininity present in the City would ensure that femininity is not accepted as homogenous in this space, as would further research into other less visible aspects of City life, focusing for example of the intersections of gender, class, race and ethnicity here, building upon Allen and Pryke's (1994) work on those who 'disappear' within the financial spaces of the City.

Since the research is concerned with the importance of organizational setting and place *as organization* to our understanding of the embodied, lived experiences of organizational life, the empirical approach could be extended to other work settings; to comparative studies of global financial centres, or to other settings dominated by one particular organizational sector. In addition, the relationship of the 'City proper', that is, the Square Mile, to the burgeoning financial centres of Canary Wharf and Mayfair might offer the opportunity for a comparative analysis focusing on shared meanings, gendered perceptions and experiences, and the conditions of membership. As this thesis has a specific focus on what the conditions of membership in the City might be, the situated terms of inclusion and exclusion in organizational settings underpins this study, but is also an area ripe for further research.

To conclude, researching the City of London has been akin to uncovering a palimpsest, where the earlier writing can still be discerned, meaning that the whole can be deciphered and read, yet there is always room for new text, and new interpretations; for as Lefebvre (1991) tells us 'space indeed 'speaks' – but it does not tell all' (ibid: 142). The City of London 'speaks' in a multiplicity of voices, including the hypo and hyper masculine, the repressed feminine, the winners and the losers; but its official narratives present it as eternally enduring, fixed in both a material and a social sense. Listening to narratives of the City, and sensing the rhythms of place, help us to understand a little more about working in this place, at this time, but also how other settings might be explored and analysed, in order to widen our understanding of

the lived experience of organizational life and how we are, literally, placed in relation to our work.

A navigation across borders and boundaries has been a key principle of this research. Walking through the City was a process of constantly moving across boundaries and navigating thresholds. The interview participants were repeatedly crossing borders, moving between offices and buildings and transport termini. They were all also crossing symbolic borders of belonging and rejection. In a seemingly homogenized world, even in such a global setting as the City of London it is the particularities of place, its borders and thresholds, its mythologies and practices, and its patterns of inclusion and exclusion which have been uncovered by a sensory methodology; these peculiarities are always atmospheric and sometimes even esoteric, but at the same time grounded and everyday. It is by understanding both aspects, and how they are experienced, that we extend our analysis of how work settings influence organizational life, and vice versa, by literally putting organization in its place.

Appendices

Appendix A

The City of London: Background and Demographics

Governing bodies

The City of London operates through its Lord Mayor, Aldermen and other members of the Court of Common Council (equivalent to councillors and known as 'Common Councilmen').

The three main aims of the City of London Corporation are:

- to support and promote London as the world's leading international financial and business centre and attract new business to the capital and the whole UK,
- to work in partnership with local communities to increase skills, employment and opportunities for all Londoners, including through the City Bridge Trust,
- to enhance the capital as a hub of culture, history and green spaces for Londoners – residents, workers, and visitors.

The City Corporation is older than Parliament and tradition underpins the modern role as the provider of key services. Elected Members, headed by the Lord Mayor, operate on a non-party political basis.

Statistics

- There were 14,385 enterprises located in the City of London in 2013.
- The vast majority (98.5%) of City firms are SMEs, accounting for 48% of City employment (191,000).
- High Growth SME Firms make up almost 10% of the SME business population in the City.

- Well-represented sectors are professional services, financial and insurance services, business services and information and communication.
 - There are only 9,000 residents living within the Square Mile. The City of London is unique amongst comparable UK urban locations in that its daytime population far outweighs its residential population. After the Isles of Scilly, the City has the second smallest residential population of any English Local Authority – National Statistics 2005 mid-year estimates put the number of residents at 9,185. Amongst these people, the City has a lower proportion of older and younger people, and a higher proportion of people of a working age than the England and Wales averages.

Gender breakdown of number of jobs in Great Britain		
Area	Male	Female
City of London	229,000	143,000
Greater London	2,005,000	1,785,000
Great Britain	12,622,000	12,388,000

City of London resident population analysis

There are only 9,000 residents living within the Square Mile but the residential community is an important and established part of the overall make-up of the City. After a period of decline

in the latter half of the twentieth century the residential population has grown over the last 10 years.

The City of London is unique amongst comparable UK urban locations in that its daytime population far outweighs its residential population. After the Isles of Scilly, the City has the second smallest residential population of any English Local Authority – National Statistics 2005 mid-year estimates put the number of residents at 9,185. Amongst these people, the City has a lower proportion of older and younger people, and a higher proportion of people of a working age than the England and Wales averages.

The City has three distinct areas of population, which vary widely in terms of prosperity and social class:

- The area including the Barbican is one of the 15% least deprived areas of England.
- The City has a large proportion of single people, and a large proportion of second homes compared with figures for England.
- The population of the City is growing at four times the rate for England. The 40-49 age group shows the highest growth.
- Average income in the City is higher than London and England.
- There are a relatively high proportion of workless parents compared with both London and England.
- Serious crime rates are low when looking at absolute figures, where the City is meeting or bettering nearly all of its targets.

The Greater London Assembly and the Office of National Statistics estimate the 2012 mid-year population to be 9,185, made up of 4,924 males and 4,261 females. The City population is predominantly white with relatively large populations of non-British whites and Bangladeshis. Figure 2.10 shows the large number of Bangladeshis living in Portsoken (bordering Tower Hamlets) and the large proportion of non-British whites living in the rest of the City.

Source: <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/>

Accessed 3 July 2016

Appendix B: Observational framework for fieldwork

The framework is structured around the following:

External environment

- **Physical setting:** noting the characteristics of the place and the human use of the space,
- **Environment:** time of day, season, weather and their relation to the setting,
- **Materiality:** the architecture, and the placing of objects which impact the flows of the space and the behaviour of actions of human actors,
- **Noise and language:** background noise, traffic, speech, language(s) used, tones of voice,
- **The order in which events unfold:** sequential patterns of behaviour, the moment when activities take place and any significance,
- **Physical characteristics of actors:** gender, age, clothing etc. of people being observed.

Internal responses

- Sensory perceptions: temperature, bodily (dis)comfort,
- Feelings and emotions,
- Reflections and interpretations,
- My role – on the continuum between participant and observer.

A focus on presence and absence

Whilst observing what is present, e.g. the material and the social actors, and how they interrelate, I also recorded what was notable by its absence, for example homeless people, children, the elderly. I also noted and recorded where these ‘invisible’ elements leak into the City and become visible, in an attempt to define that which is homotopic in this setting and that which is repressed but recurs.

Field notes

Detailed field notes (with accompanying photographs) were made throughout and following the days spent in the research setting not only for use as an aide memoire, but in order to keep the setting ‘alive’ in my mind when writing the thesis, and to help develop and shape the written narrative.

My field notes were divided into two sections as I was writing: one to record what I am noticing and the immediate sensory perceptions, the other to record corresponding thoughts, impressions and emotions.

Observational Schedule

The schedule followed a broad ‘time sampling’ format.

Example schedule:

Day one:

Date

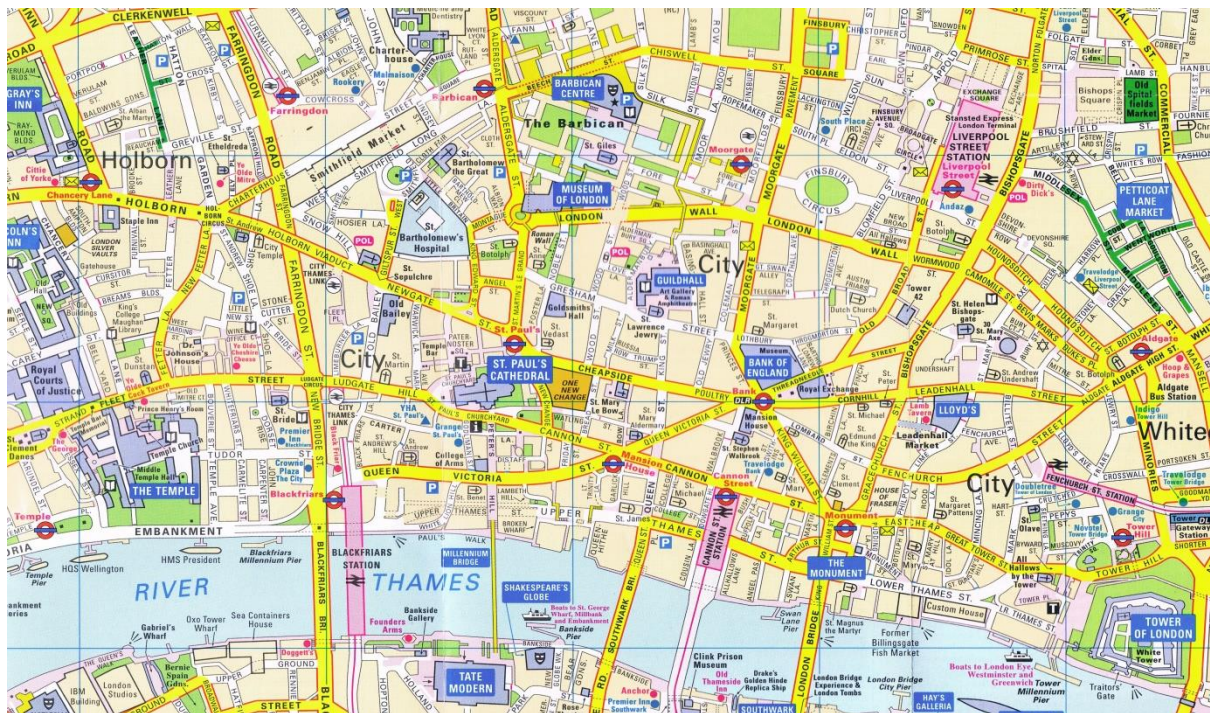
Time

Weather

Route

Appendix C: Master Map of the City (reproduced from the London A-Z guide, and showing famous sites and buildings as well as tube stations and rail termini)

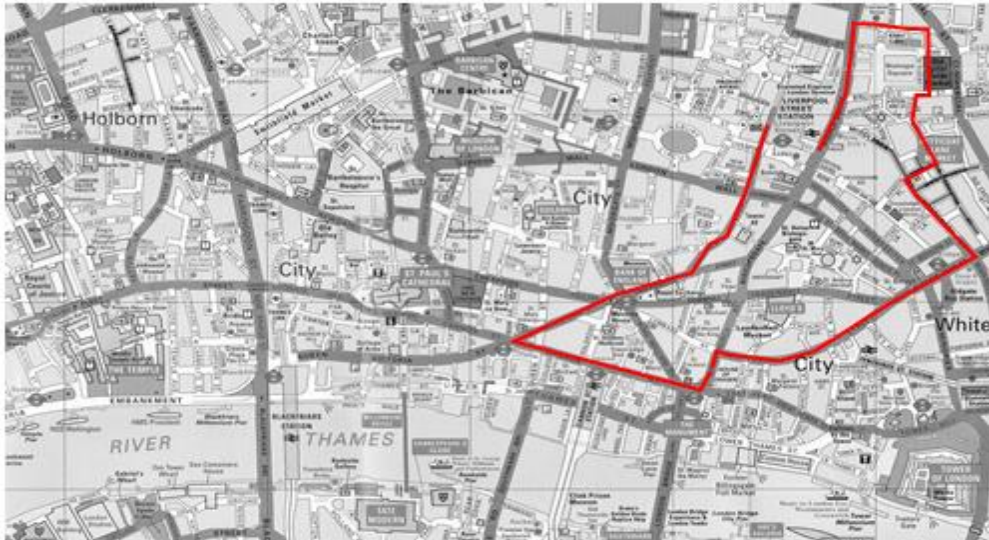
The limits of the setting for this research were the Royal Courts of Justice and Greys Inn to the west, Smithfield Market, The Barbican and Finsbury Square to the north, Commercial Road to the east, and the River Thames to the south.



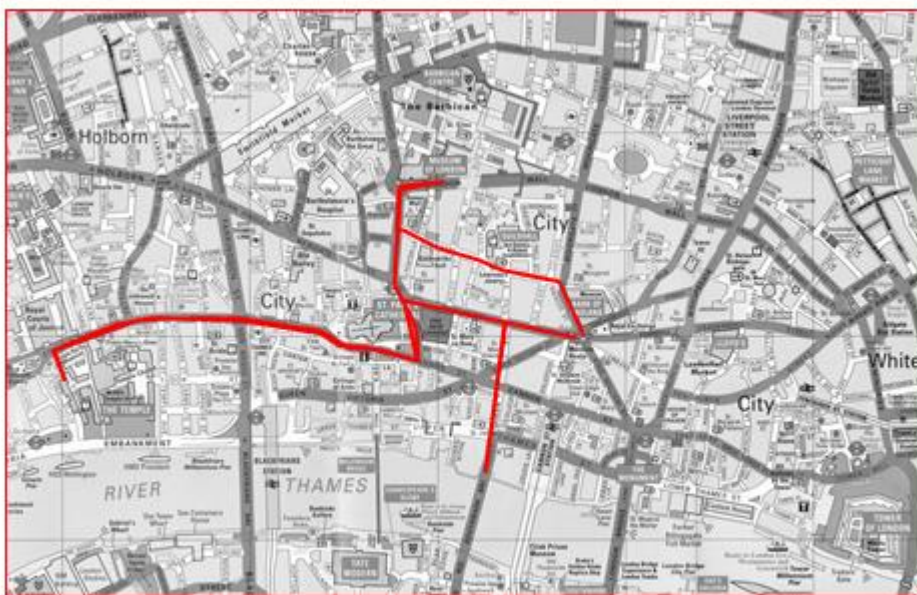
Appendix D

Maps of Walks

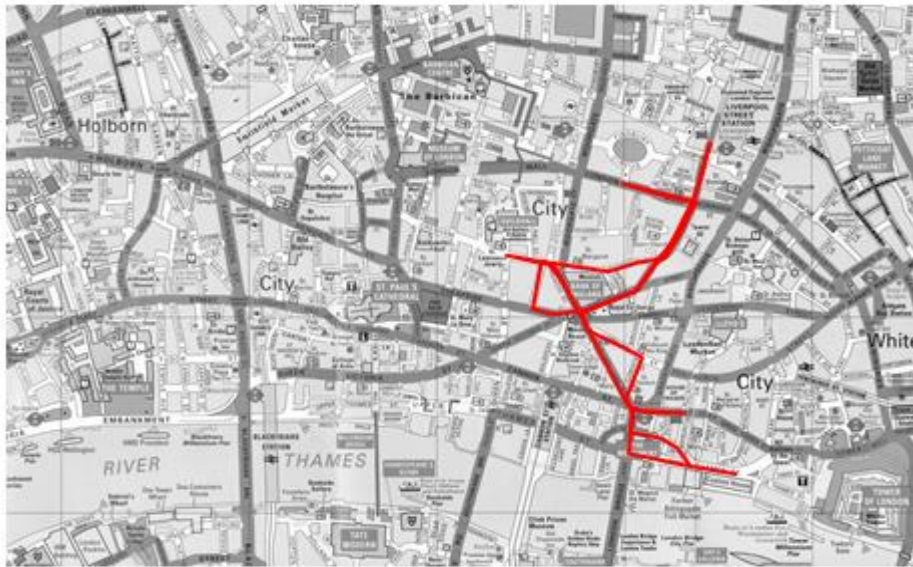
Walk 1



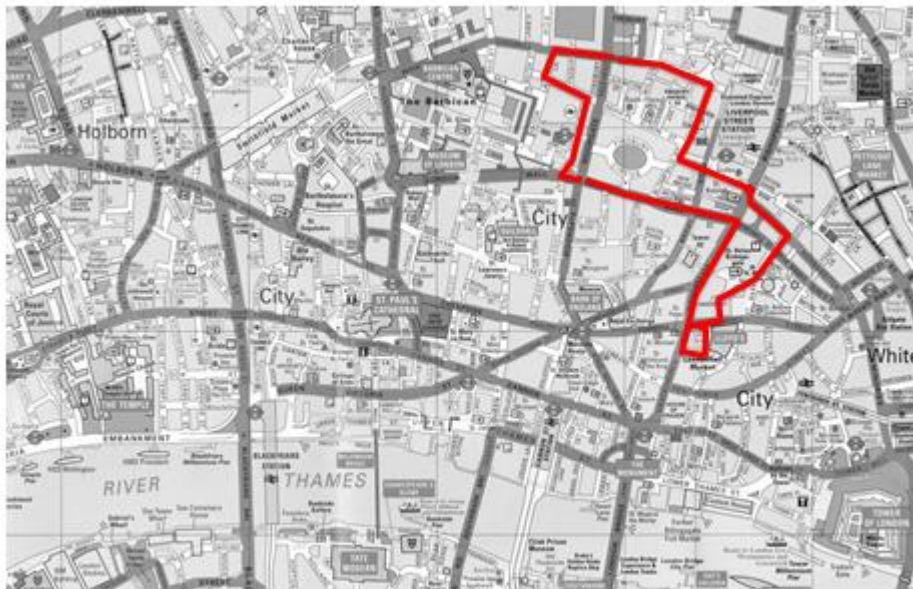
Walk 2



Walk 3



Walk 4



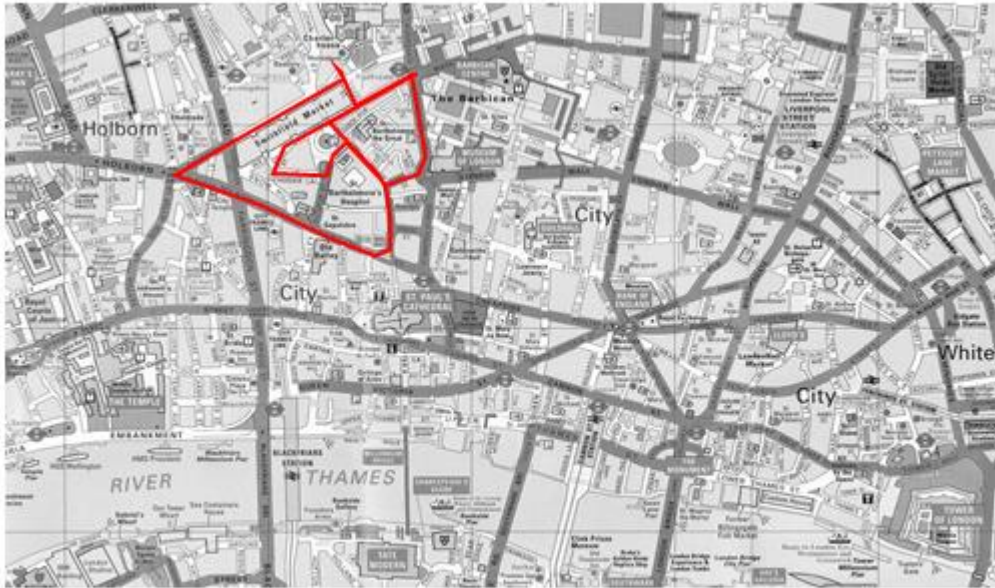
Walk 5



Walk 6



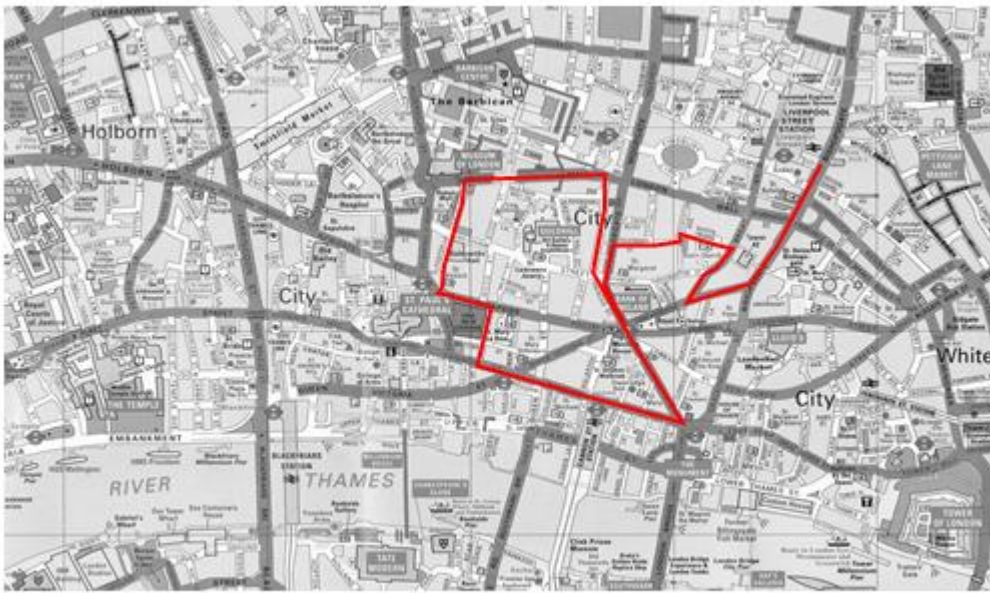
Walk 7



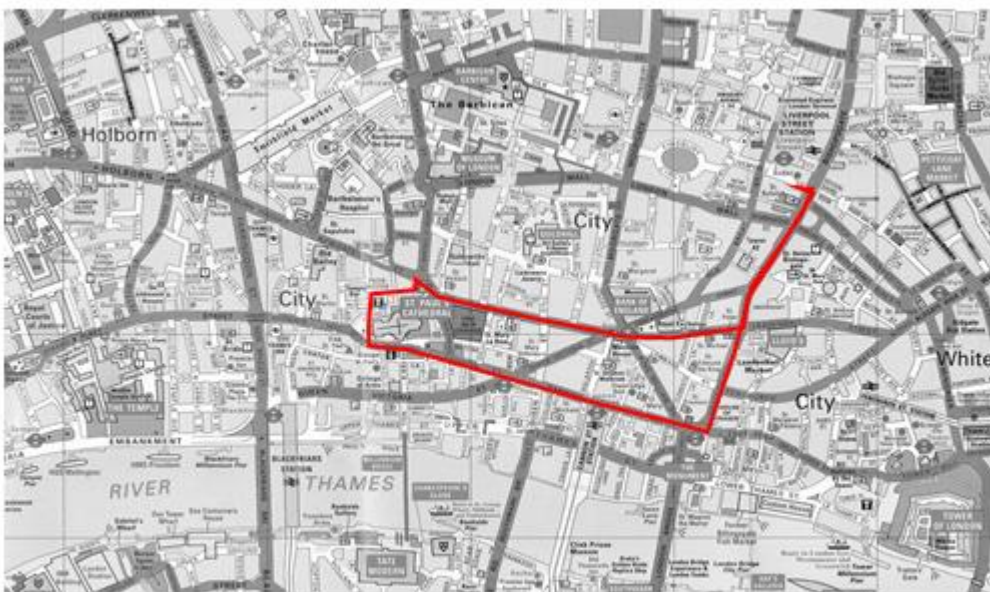
Walk 8



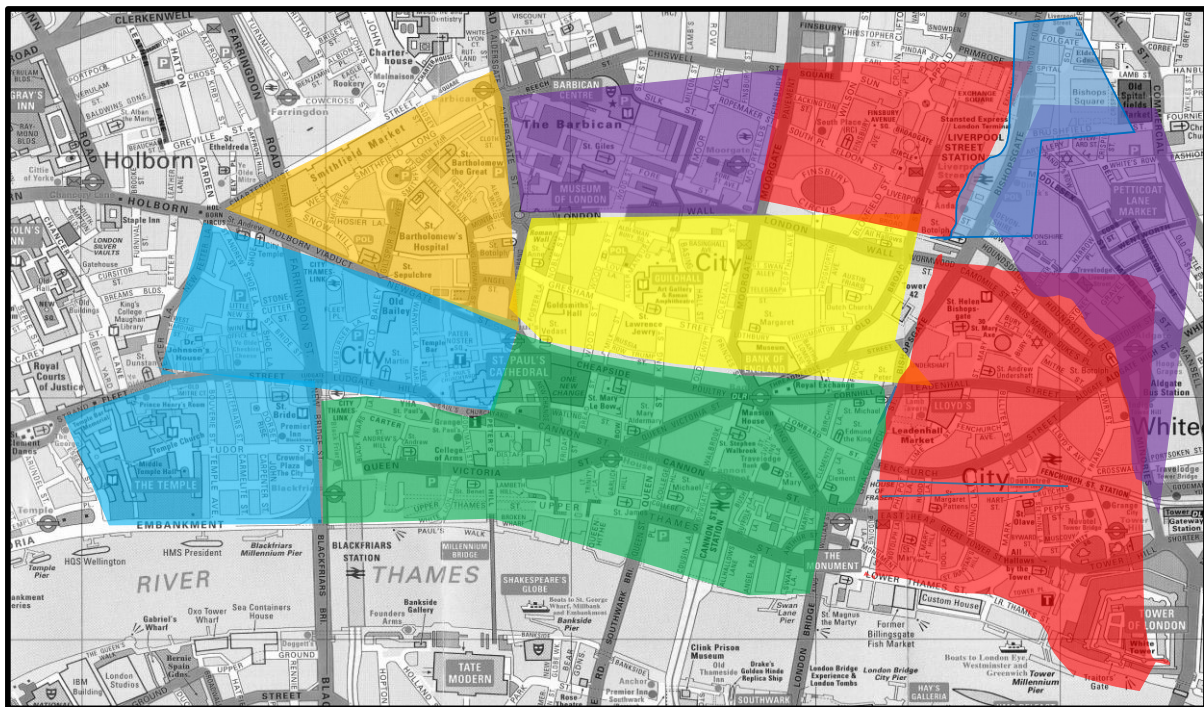
Walk 9



Walk 10



Appendix E: A rhythm analysis map of the City



Yellow: Contained heart of the City; a sense of protection and containment, focused intensity of rhythms, hypo masculine architecture

Purple: Fast rhythms, interspersed with lots of stopping and starting, but noticeably quieter and less frenetic at the start and end of each day, unlike the heart of the City. Lots of cafes and smaller shops, some visible graffiti

Red: Frenetic rhythms, thrusting hyper masculine architecture

Blue: Calmer, historic imperial style (hypo) architecture, professional/legal district, more tourists

Gold: Quieter rhythms, less focus on finance, more strolling observed, some residential streets

Green: Busy, frenetic, noisy, lots of wind tunnels, and a sense of being pulled in towards the heart of the City.

Appendix F: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Louise Nash, University of Essex: Research Interviews

Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet

I am a PhD student in Business Management at Essex Business School at the University of Essex. I am studying the City of London as an organisational setting, in particular how the people working in the City experience the place in which they work, and how that experience is shaped by the architecture and culture of the City.

You have been asked to participate in this research due to your experience of working in the City. This interview has been designed to be approximately 45 minutes in length, however please feel free to expand on any topic or discuss related ideas. If there are any questions that you do not feel confident about or comfortable answering, please let me know and I will move onto the next question.

All the information you provide will be confidential and will be used for the sole purpose of my research project. Individuals will only be referred to using pseudonyms. Where extracts or quotations from interviews are used, participants' identity will be protected. The interview will be recorded using an audio recorder which will be stored in a locked cabinet until transcribed. All recorded material will be stored on a password protected private computer.

Participant's agreement

I am aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary. If for any reason at any time I wish to stop the interview, I may do so without the need for an explanation. I understand the intent and purpose of this research. I am aware that the data will be used for a PhD project. I have the right to review, comment on, add to or withdraw information prior to the project's submission.

Participant Name:

Participant Signature:

Date:

Appendix G: Interview Schedule

Interview plan for semi-structured interview

General research area: The lived experience of working in the City.

Interview topics the importance of place for organisation studies, the encoding of gender and mythology in material settings, subjective experience of working here, symbols, how people treat, use and move within space, City rhythms and how they are experienced (temporal and spatial).

Interview questions (Agree a pseudonym first)

Briefly tell me about yourself and your current or most recent job

Can you tell me how long you've worked in the City and whereabouts you've worked?

What are your impressions of it as a (general) setting in which to work?

How would you describe the City to someone who had never heard of it?

If you were asked to describe the City as a colour, what would you say?

What are your impressions of the buildings in the City?

Can you tell me how you feel as a woman/man working in the City?

Does the architecture around you affect how you perceive the City as a woman/man?

Is there anything that frustrates or annoys you about the City?

Is there anything you really like about it?

How would you describe the rhythms of the City, and how do they affect you?

Do you relax during the day in this setting?

Can you tell me of your awareness of or interest in the history of the City?

How do you feel that the City is perceived in the public imagination?

How do you think that the most recent financial crisis has affected this?

How did it feel to be working in the City during the crisis?

Would you like to raise any other issues or ask any questions?

Appendix H: Demographic table of research participants

Participants (listed in order of interviews)

Neil: Mid-forties, self-employed IT/AV consultant, works mainly in the City, and has done for over twenty years.

Maria: Late thirties, Head of HR for a global investment firm, a full time City worker for her entire twenty year career.

Jennifer: Late forties, Chartered Surveyor, was City based for several years and now has a portfolio career, including lecturing in business and management.

Jo: Early fifties, works as a freelance Account Director for a large Outsourcing organisation, all her clients are City based so ninety percent of her working time is spent in the City, supplemented by time working at home or at Head Office in Holborn. She has worked in the City throughout the last thirty years.

Pete: Forties, Partner in an Insurance Firm, has worked there for twenty six years. He has always worked in the City apart from a short spell working locally (Kent) at the start of his career.

Robert: Late forties, Technical Services Manager for an Insurance firm, has worked there for twenty three years, and for thirty years in the Insurance sector in the City.

Anna: Late thirties, part time Press and Communications Manager for an Investment Bank, has worked in her present company for ten years.

Dave: Thirties, Business Development Director for an Asset Management Company, has worked in the City for four years.

Phillip: Sixties, semi-retired former Actuary, worked in the City for forty years, now runs a consulting business dealing mainly with Actuarial firms.

Ian: Forties, Independent Financial Advisor, City based with City based clients. Apart from spells working abroad for the same firm he has been City based throughout his working life.

Nigel: Fifty, Operations Director for a Lloyds's Insurance Agent, has worked in the City for twenty four years.

Claire: Forties, worked in Investment Banking in the City for a number of years before moving to fundraising in the Arts.

Tim: Early twenties, Software Developer in a Technology start-up which has recently located to the City.

Matt: Mid-twenties, Software Developer for a Technology start-up, as above.

Nathan: Late twenties, Projects Director for a Technology start-up, as above.

Sasha: Early twenties, Business Development Manager for a Technology start-up, as above.

Elizabeth: Late forties, Partner in a global Professional Services firm, she has worked in the City for twenty five years.

Lorraine: Mid-twenties, works as a PA for an Investment company, and has worked in the City for five years

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