EURYTHMIA AND ARRYTHMIA: UNDERSTANDING GENDERED PERFORMANCES THROUGH RHYTHM IN THE CITY OF LONDON

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is concerned with the relationship between gender performativity and rhythm, taking the City of London (often known by its metonym the Square Mile) as the focus for the empirical research and extending a Lefebvrian understanding of urban space and time via the practice of rhythmanalysis. It is concerned with how the City of London is imagined, constructed and experienced in and through gender performativity which can be expressed rhythmically (Reid-Musson, 2018). The research is based on fieldwork including photographic and interview data, as well as an embodied, immersive methodology used to analyse rhythms, showing how this can help to both sense and make sense of organisational place, particularly in terms of how such places can compel feelings of belonging or non-belonging. The chapter looks beyond the spatial configuration of a single organisation to encompass the wider geographical location of multiple organisations, in this case the City.

The findings show that the relationship between the socio-cultural and material aspects of the City can be understood through the rhythms of place. Using a methodological approach based on Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis *(2004), the chapter foregrounds a subjective, embodied and experiential way of researching the places and spaces of organising, and shows how gendered inclusion and exclusion can be expressed spatially and rhythmically.*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with gendered performativity within organisational settings, taking as its analytical focus the relationship between places of organisation and their situated rhythms. It uses Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) as a theoretical and methodological lens through which we can empirically research, apprehend and analyse sites of organising. The study is based on research in the City of London, the financial heart of the wider metropolis which surrounds this district. Whilst there have been empirical studies focussing on the City (Allen & Pryke, 1994; McDowell, 1997; Thrift, 1996, all discussed below), there is little in the literature that discusses what it is like to work in such a distinct and distilled work setting, one which is associated with all that is culturally valued as masculine (McDowell, 1997, p. 34). In *Rhythmanalysis* (2004), Lefebvre highlights subjective, embodied and experiential ways of sense-making which can help researchers respond to calls for the use of immersive methods in research into the sensory aspects of working practices (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2009).

The City employs approximately half a million people, accounting for 1.7% of the total workforce of the United Kingdom (citywomen.co.uk). Financial, professional and business services are the largest employers. In 2019, the gender balance of the City's workforce was 64% male and 36% female, yet women account for just 23% of board members and just 14% of executive committee members across UK-regulated financial services companies (citywomen.co.uk, 2020); it can, therefore, be described as 'top heavy' in terms of its masculine orientation (Nash, 2020). It is particularly well known for its long association with financial services and the gendered cultural traditions which have been established, particularly its dominant masculine orientation (McDowell, 1997; Thrift, 1996), and this study provides an empirical update to studies proposed by Allen and Pryke (1994) and McDowell (1997), who discuss the highly stylised culture of the City.

Having worked in the City for several years before studying for a research degree in Organisation Studies, I became interested in the experience of people working in such a highly stylised, masculine place and how they make sense of their workplace. It is through an analysis of rhythm that Lefebvre illustrates the interrelation of space and time in the comprehension of everyday life, and I wished to apply this to an exploration of everyday *working* life and its situated and gendered performances.

I, therefore, began to consider what the distinct rhythms of the City can tell us about the experience of working within it. Given the particular socio-cultural character of the City, I wished to explore what the connection might be between work, rhythm, industry sector and gender performances. Using rhythmanalysis as a method, this chapter foregrounds a subjective, embodied and experiential way of researching the places and spaces of organising, and argues that it is an orientation to rhythm that affords us an opportunity to capture the multiple and

co-constitutive relationships between place, sector, performance and gender. In this way, the aim of the chapter is to advance methodological and substantive understanding of place and its spatio-temporal rhythms.

The chapter is structured as follows. It begins by considering the nature of the City as a workplace, focussing particularly on its long association with financial services and the gendered cultural traditions which have been established, and drawing upon literature discussing performative places. I then explain the methodological approach, before discussing the various ways in which gender performativity is materialised, and how rhythm can help us to make sense of these findings, both conceptually and methodologically.

THE CITY OF LONDON OR 'SQUARE MILE'

Over recent years, women have been entering management posts in the United Kingdom in growing numbers, yet the most lucrative positions in banks' board-rooms and stock market trading departments are still widely seen as male pre-serves (McDowell, 1997). Organisational restructuring within this sector often involves gendered practices through which men's careers and employment con-ditions are promoted and prioritised over women's (Özbilgin & Woodward, 2004).

Knights and Kerfoot (2004) discuss the dominance of masculinity in organ-isational life and its association with hierarchy. Pullen and Thanem (2010) explore the intersection of research interests in sexuality with spatiality and the way in which the sexuality of space affects organisations. Reading the City as a historically and a contemporary masculine professional space means paying attention to the performances of masculinity within it and how these are sensed and experienced by both genders. With regard to the financial services sector, Knights and Tullberg (2012) problematize concepts of organisational masculinity with regard to the 2008 global financial crisis. They argue that in contemporary working life, remuneration and hierarchy are important visible yet also symbolic elements of the social construction of masculinity. They identify a number of performative elements which produce, reproduce and sustain masculinity in organisations. The criteria associated with being a successful senior manager in the City include conquest, competition and control; all performative elements of masculinity (Kerfoot & Knights, 1993), although, as Knights and Tullberg point out, 'the spoils of conquest can readily be lost in a highly competitive environ-ment' (2012, p. 390), meaning that masculine and managerial identities can be extremely fragile.

The multiple ways in which masculinities and femininities are constructed in the City are explored by McDowell (1997), who argues that they lead to a tradition of inclusion and exclusion based primarily on gender. She discusses several types of male workers in the City, for example, the 'old school' patriarchs in the boardrooms of investment banks, and the younger, macho traders on the dealing room floors. They are clearly different in their 'uniforms', their behav-iours and their embodied actions. They do, however, share similar performative

attributes which constitute their masculine identities and which include control and high levels of competitive behaviour.

THE SITUATED PERFORMANCES OF PLACE

In order to explore the relationship between place and performativity, I turn to the theories of Henri Lefebvre as a conceptual lens through which to view the social and organisational production of urban space. In order to examine space/place as a social product, it cannot be understood or imagined as an independent material reality. Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith (1991) understands space as fundamentally bound up with social reality and our lived experience of the world. Within the Lefebvrian triadic spatial model, that is, the distinctions between perceived, conceived space and lived space (1991, pp. 33, 38–39) which he proposes as an analytical tool for understanding space as the site of ongoing interactions of social relations, he pays attention to the dominance of conceived, abstract space in society. This is the space of planners and architects, designed to be lived space, but divorced from its actual daily usage. In the case of the City, this conceived urban space was planned, designed and built by and for (white middle class) men but is now used by a more diverse population, which I wished to observe and analyse. Although not specifically concerned with organisations, Lefebvre focuses on the importance of the subjective experience of place, and it is this focus on subjectivity which will be explored in this chapter in relation to how to research organisational place; the analysis spans subjective accounts to offer insights into how place is constructed and experienced. In order to develop this focus on both subjectivity and sensory, embodied methodologies for empirical research, Lefebvre's work provides a foundation to this study, through his interest in the urban and through his commitment to embodied experience as a form of epistemic knowledge. Lefebvre emphasises sensory engagement as a precursor to observation, and in this study, the analysis is developed from the body itself. Few studies, however, have connected Lefebvre's theorisation with gendered space. Wasserman and Frenkel (2015) is an exception; applying Lefebvre's spatial theory to an analysis of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they argue that gender and class largely define the emotional reactions that employees develop towards organisational space.

There is a well-established body of literature on spatial performativity in the workplace (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Dale, 2005; Halford & Leonard, 2006), particularly in relation to gender (Gregson & Rose, 2000; Hancock & Tyler, 2007; Tyler & Cohen, 2010). Gregson and Rose (2000, p. 441) use a performance metaphor to help illustrate the relational understanding between the spatial and the temporal:

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

Tyler and Cohen (2010) apply a critical analysis of the production of space to the performance of gender within work, concluding that organisations'

workspaces matter to the myriad ways in which people perform, practise and negotiate gender at work. They describe the relative neglect within organisation studies of the ways in which space is gendered as a theoretical lacuna and argue that gender materialisation constitutes an important theoretical lens through which to understand the gendering of organisational space.

Whilst Lefebvre's theories of space as socially produced (1991) have made major contributions to organisation studies (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Dale, 2005; Dale & Burrell, 2008; Taylor & Spicer, 2007; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015; Watkins, 2005), the application of his work on the rhythms of urban space to the development of research methods has had less impact (notable exceptions are discussed below). Yet as this chapter demonstrates, rhythmanalysis can offer an orientation towards sensory and embodied research into the performances of place, and the chapter highlights how rhythm and gendered performances of place can be co-constitutive.

THE RHYTHMS OF PLACES

In *Rhythmanalysis* (2004, first published in France in 1992), Lefebvre pays particular attention to urban rhythms, arguing that by listening and analysing the rhythms of place, we can better understand their particular character and the effects they create. Lefebvre also writes about degrees of rhythmic consistency, tempo and intensity. It is the ways in which rhythms collide that produce various rhythmic states in the body, which he describes using musical terminology. Polyrhythmia is the experience of multiple, related rhythms; eurythmia is where the rhythmic state is characterised by regular repetition, working together in harmony, the optimum state for healthy bodily rhythms; and arrhythmia is the state of disordered rhythms, characterised by anxiety and pathology. In the section below, I will apply, develop and critically evaluate rhythmanalysis in relation to the experience of City workers.

Geographers have studied the spatio-temporal rhythms of place (DeLyser & Sui, 2013; Edensor, 2010, 2012 inter alia), and some have related this directly to performance on the streets (Simpson, 2012), but rhythmanalysis has been less used in organisation studies. Lyon (2016) is an exception; in one of the few studies using rhythmanalysis as a methodological tool to investigate organisational place, she analyses the rhythms of Billingsgate Fish Market in London. Arguing that it is rhythms that constitute a particular and situated space-time which shape the peculiarities of place and the work carried out within it, she notes that it is not just temporal patterns which structure a place but the activity and movement of people within it. Lyon depicts a place that is perpetually forming and re-forming as a result of its situated rhythms. Borch, Hansen, and Lange (2015) bring rhythm into a focus on industry sector, in this case finance, by exploring the relationship between bodily rhythms and the rhythms of capital, adapting Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis to the financial markets in an attempt to analyse 'how capital's own everyday is organized' (2015, p. 4).

Defining the rhythm(s) of everyday life is not straightforward. Thinking of rhythm as a repeated pattern is not enough; it is the incursion of the new, of the unforeseen, into repeated patterns which creates a difference and makes rhythm noticeable and memorable. Lyon (2018, p. 4) not only describes the difficulties of 'grasping' rhythm but also explains how the analysis of rhythm can provide a more multifaceted approach than temporal or spatial analyses:

> It suggests a nuanced understanding of the articulation of tempo, movement, flow, stasis and repetition. And it advances a mode of analysis which recognises different spatio-temporal relations and what they do in the world.

Ybema, Yanow, Wels, and Kamsteeg (2009) draw attention to the paradox of participant observation which is inherent in the simultaneous engagement with participation and observation as a requirement of fieldwork; there is a tension between engagement and detachment whilst trying to both experience and observe the lived reality of the observed. This tension is at the heart of rhythmanalysis, yet Lefebvre suggests that the more the rhythms are internalised, the better chance the rhythmanalyst will have of noting and reflecting on them; in other words, that sensory engagement is essential as a precursor to observation. Lefebvre does highlight a methodological concern, however; 'in order to analyse a rhythm, one must get outside it' (2004, p. 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' Ybema, Yanow, Wels, and Kamsteeg (2009). 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 both inside and outside, participant and researcher. We, therefore, need 'critical distance' (2004, p. 113) as well as immersion in order to carry out rhythmanalysis.

Building on these insights, I illustrate that one way to research organisational place is to walk through it, with the aim of better understanding one's own perceptions of place and setting, as well as those of others. I argue that in this particular setting it also replicates the experience of City workers, most of whom arrive at transport termini but then traverse this small bounded place on foot during the working day. The City of London is inextricably connected to the wider city around it, by infrastructure and flow of people, and beyond wider London to the other financial centres around the globe; it could be said to pulsate with global, national, regional and local connections (and rhythms). Capital has a 24-hour continuous cycle as funds flow around the world, following working (daylight) hours, which contrasts with the ebb and flow of workers in the sector in cities around the world. Financial centres are, therefore, both constructed in and through global connectivity, but also through their particular geographical location, and rhythmanalysis is one way of apprehending their construction.

DOING RHYTHMANALYSIS IN THE CITY: MOBILE METHODS AND ENCOUNTERS ON THE STREET

Q4

Scholars and authors have drawn upon various forms and practices of walking in order to understand or critique city life (Edensor, 2010, 2012; Elkin, 2017; Wunderlich, 2008). Zundel (2013) suggests walking as a method for management reflection, drawing on Ingold (2011), and arguing that walking represents a way of rethinking our relationship with space as it emerges from everyday engagement with our surroundings, and through it distinctions of inside and out, as well as self and environment, intermingle.

Q5

Traditions of urban walking include the urban consciousness developed in Paris in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the 'flâneurs' (strollers, wanderers). Benjamin (2002) draws upon the tradition of the flâneur in his nostalgic Arcades Project, as did the situationists as they developed the purposeful drifting of the *dérive* in the middle part of the twentieth century. Lefebvre moves beyond the somewhat detached observations of the flâneur, in that he relates walking in the City to the sensation of immersion in music and dance. Rhythmanalysis is, therefore, connected to aesthetic and embodied ways of

Q6

knowing (Linstead & Höpfl, 2000; Strati, 1992).

My interpretation of rhythmanalysis meant immersing myself within the research setting, sensing the rhythms of both my body and the wider setting. Composing field notes involved several different stages: immediate notes and jottings, more reflexive writing during coffee breaks, and writing up retrospectively whilst immersing myself once again in the setting, with the rhythms of the City all around me. 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 materiality: the architecture and the placing of objects which impacted the flows and rhythms of the space and the behaviour of human actors. I took photographs whilst walking, taking many hundreds in the field. 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 reasons: as illustrations, to recreate the walks and the experience as I thought about them, wrote about them and analysed them retrospectively, and to record examples of the materiality of the setting, 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.

I conducted my rhythmanalysis of the City by walking, at the same pace as the majority of people around me, for an hour or so, occasionally stopping to

take photographs, then pausing for a coffee break and a chance to observe the waves of rhythms around me and write up notes. I then continued the walk, repeating a pattern of pausing every hour. Whilst I covered much ground, I also dipped in and out of the City rhythms as I stopped to rest, get coffee and to write up notes. These experiences of embodied rhythmic activity, and the feelings of eurythmia and arrhythmia which they produced, became my method of analysis and brought subjectivity to the foreground of my observations. The focus throughout was on apprehending the rhythms – perceiving, discerning and living them.

I spent 10 days walking in the City between January and July 2015. The walks lasted anywhere between three hours and six hours. Most walks took place between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., but I spent two early morning (between 7 and 9 a.m.) and two evenings (between 7 and 9 p.m.) in the City. The routes were 'semi-structured' in that I planned to visit a particular area each time, and I 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. I walked at the same pace as the City workers around me; I actively 'disengaged' from the fast pace when I stopped to take photographs, or stopped for coffee and observed from a stopping point.

In addition to walking the streets of the City, I interviewed 18 participants, anonymised by the use of pseudonyms, in order to better understand the lived experience of those who regularly work in the setting. Through the use of interviews, I was able to bring the strands of data already gathered – the field notes and photographs from the immersive fieldwork – and merge them with the dialogue that emerged during the interviews. I interviewed 10 men and 8 women, from a range of backgrounds and ages and covering a variety of City occupations. Eleven worked in finance, including asset management, actuarial services and investment banking; two worked for professional services firms; four worked in technology and one was a self-employed consultant. Whilst I no longer had extensive contacts in the City from my previous working life, I used a snowball sample from one initial contact, with whom I was put in touch via a former colleague, to recruit research participants.

Once all the data were collected, I carried out an analysis of each data set, allowing a thematic narrative to emerge. Following the patterns which emerged was made easier by re-visiting the setting to write up the analysis and attune myself to mood and atmosphere and the embodied and sensory states of eurythmia and arrhythmia which once again took hold as I immersed myself in the data. Rhythmanalysis actively centres the importance of sensory and embodied data, so that the researcher's own body becomes a source of epistemological data (Nash, 2020). The findings are inductively derived from the body via the process of participating in the rhythms, as well as via observation. Walking abreast with groups of people on the streets formed part of the embodied experience of the research, and whilst the knowledge generated is necessarily personal and partial, it did help to develop close connections with the experience of the observed.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: EURYTHMIA AND ARRHYTHMIA IN THE CITY

It is the fast pace of City working life, perhaps unsurprisingly, which was immediately noticeable. With reference to how this is expressed rhythmically, the most common participant reply was that it is through speed, focus and purpose, and a reluctance – or fear – to ever pause during the working day. Feelings of eurythmia and arrhythmia that were experienced during the walks, and which the participants described, help us understand how the City is experienced rhythmically and spatially. They are also useful concepts for analysing shared embodied rhythmic experiences, in that they allowed me to compare my own reactions with those of research participants; for example, the sense I experienced of the City as a vortex, pulling me into its heart, was shared by some participants, who expressed a feeling of 'missing out' when they were not physically in the heart of the City, and expressed a sense of the materiality as oppressive and draining.

I was conscious of the way that I walked speedily, my head down, conscious of getting in the way if I paused or stopped. The weather and the seasons make little difference to the daily routine. 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 rhythms observed and experienced are staccato, with a fast tempo and an accent on every beat, precise and unchanging rather than fluid and variable. They build towards a crescendo at certain times of day, most noticeably in the early morning and early evening, but between these times the streets often empty of people. Occasionally, outside of these linear rhythms, flurries of activity on the streets, particularly as people move between offices, create frenetic scenes of activity, with the start-stop of the traffic and construction work as a perpetual background.

When discussing how rhythms are sensed on the streets, participants mentioned the need to understand not only the need to keep up with the pace but also the 'shorthand' of the City's geography, and to be able to speedily navigate the streets, demonstrating a spatial confidence. One of the most immediately striking things about walking the City streets is the amount of men who use them as office corridors – greeting one another in the middle of the street, shaking hands, calling out to one another. They moved between offices with files and laptops under their arms, often in groups, walking four or five abreast across the pavement. I observed no women using the space in this way; the women I saw were all walking alone or in pairs. The pace on the streets is fast, and the interruptions and pauses come from these informal meetings and greetings; almost like a dance with its collective movements, bringing to mind the sensory potentialities of the City brought to life through site-specific dance, where dancer and audience may become attuned to different apprehensions that go beyond the circumscribed performances of every day (Edensor & Bowdler, 2015) (Fig. 1).

Q7

Fig. 1.   Men Expressing Spatial and Rhythmic Confidence in the Streets.
Source: Author's Own Photograph.

Whilst walking in the City and consciously thinking about and recording 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. Being situated at street level – literally 'on the ground' in terms of fieldwork – meant that I was immersed in the rhythms, yet my subject position as a researcher, i.e. fleetingly 'in' and 'of' the City, but in a transient way, meant that I could be both inside and outside the rhythms.

Lefebvre famously analysed rhythms from the vantage point of a window (2004) and recommends a balcony or terrace for this simultaneous immersion and detachment. Lacking a 'base' from which to observe the City, being on the ground was for me a valuable research practice as I absorbed its sights, sounds and rhythms. The stop and start of construction noise, especially road drills, is the dominant aural rhythm, blocking out any human voices, although it is accompanied by the regular swish of traffic, interspersed with the disruptive roar of motorcycle couriers travelling from office to office. Lefebvre 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 lunchtimes contrast with the slower rhythms of mid-afternoon, when only a few people rush up and down the streets, and the quiet and empty weekends, when it felt that the City was a stage set that was waiting in preparation for Monday morning. The daily pace of urban life varies within and between cities, with their hectic rush hours, quiet afternoons and busy early evenings, but this is intensified in the City so that the distinction between work and leisure is perceived as absent – although there are shops, bars, restaurants and so on, the rhythms are so fast paced and oriented around the linear rhythms

of the working day that the experience of people on the streets is that these places of leisure become less visible. As one of the interview participants, Claire, says:

> It's just all about work, there is nothing else going on here … whether this is true or not I don't think it matters, to me there are no schools, no hospitals, there are no parks, no theatres, no cinemas. You can't stop for them you see.

Claire was aware, of course, that there are many busy bars, restaurants and shops in the City, yet her experiences of the fast rhythms meant that she stopped perceiving them and did not consider them as part of her everyday City reality, which was focused on speed and minimal pauses.

At times, when looking for places of respite away from the fast-paced rhythms, I felt a distinct sense of bodily unease. I noticed that my posture was often hunched when I walked through the heart of the City. When I wasn't in the setting, these symptoms disappeared. I experienced mounting anxiety at times; what Lefebvre (2004) refers to as arrhythmia, or a negative disturbance of bodily rhythms, which are only brought to our attention when there is a state of pathology or arrhythmic disturbance. For Lefebvre (2004), these are linear rhythms of industrialism, with its repetitions and mechanisations, which seek to control, inhibit and accommodate the body and its rhythms.

During the interviews, participants expressed the stress of walking around this dense and compact space. Ian emphasised the need to be able to find your way around to understand the 'shorthand' by which insiders refer to particular streets or areas, as he 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. Dave also connected navigational confidence with a sense of belonging. In this way, an embodied spatial confidence and an ability to keep pace with the rhythms instils a sense of eurythmia (Lefebvre, 2004) or bodily harmony. Jennifer and Claire, both of whom have now left the City, associated walking in the space directly 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 and that 'elbows out' ability.

When I met Claire in the City to carry out the interview, she immediately expressed how uncomfortable she was being in the space; she did not feel that she belonged and found the City exclusionary as a woman and as someone who was not attuned to the fast pace of life. For her, a sense of arrhythmia took hold as soon as she was back in the physical setting of the streets and was attempting to 'keep up' once again.

GENDERED RHYTHMS

Men and women use the City 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. In contrast, men spread out over the space.

Fig. 2.   Men Drinking at Lunchtime – Where Are the Women?
Source: Author's Own Photograph.

Whilst men and women maintained, in general, the same rhythm when walking, the rhythmic pattern was visually different (Fig. 2).

   The rhythms of the streets were experienced differently by men and women. Overall, the men seemed more comfortable, more 'eurythmic' in the City. This sense of the invisibility of women on the streets was referenced during interviews. Matt, a software developer in his early twenties, remarks of social life in the City:

> When you walk home you walk past pubs and you see a lot of people outside 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.

   He finds it odd because cognitively he is aware that there are almost as many men in the City, and he hadn't consciously thought about the environment as being predominantly male. When thinking about the issue during the interview, however, he admitted what when he thought of a typical person associated with the Square Mile, he immediately thought of a man. His colleague Tim, who works for the same technology company, initially claimed that he'd never noticed that gender was an issue here, yet when asked about the visibility of women on the streets, he admitted:

> I mean, you look out the window and there are just males in suits. There are not many women seen around here. Now I think about it … it definitely feels… it's just very masculine.

   Phillip, an actuary, who views himself as a City insider, having spent his whole career there, gives a perspective on what it takes to belong as a man in the City. For him, masculine status is always fragile 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 (an insurance broker) and Ian (a financial consultant) 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, about seeing people out and about, and being seen' 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 whom'.

It is the relentless focus on performance in the City which creates, as Philip puts it, a place which is 'aggressive in its expectations', and many of the male participants spoke about the need to 'keep up', to maintain performance levels and to be fit for purpose. In terms of maintaining the spatio-temporal rhythms and appearing comfortable with them, men were particularly 'eurythmic', and this sociability and 'clubbability' was expressed on the streets. The rhythms of sociability and masculinity seemed to revolve around intense focus and speed, punctuated by loud and spatially expansive moments, for example, when men hailed one another across the streets, or stopped to converse in the middle of the pavements, or spilled out from the pubs at lunchtimes and evenings.

ARRHYTHMIA AND CITY WOMEN

As seen above, Philip emphasises the need for men to be 'clubbable' in the City if they want to succeed. Yet for Sasha, a young woman working as a business development consultant in the City, it is precisely this 'clubbability' that means that she feels excluded. She describes her feeling that 'there is a club of City men that women are just not part of. It's like you're always racing to catch up'. Claire feels that that the architecture itself is exclusionary, saying that she could never work out how to access certain buildings or find her way around: 'Everything is the same, it's masculine and exclusive, I don't feel like I belong'. This was echoed by Anna, who describes the City as being 'like a boy's public school and you have the feeling that we (women) shouldn't really be here'.

It is the almost panicky sense of needing to keep up, expressed by many City women that expresses itself rhythmically on the streets; more women walking alone, looking uncomfortable and hurried, not as outwardly 'eurythmic', or at ease, with the spatio-temporal rhythms.

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. 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 the other. 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 eurythmia here include demonstrating that you are physically, mentally and emotionally familiar with the 'shorthand' of the City, as Dave put it. For women, expressing their sense that the rhythm of the City was exclusionary, it was arrhythmia which often characterised their experience of working life here.

CONCLUSION

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 as something special, set apart and distinct, and it reinforces itself again and again through repeating rhythms. It is the rhythmic performances which bring the City into being, reinforcing Gregson and Rose's argument (2000) that spatial 'stages' do not pre-exist their performances.

Demonstrating that you are familiar with the 'shorthand' of the City is, I argue, expressed rhythmically and in a gendered way. Eurythmia in the City is characterised by navigational confidence and an ability to 'keep up' with the spatio-temporal rhythms and to belong; arrhythmia is characterised by feelings of anxiety, fatigue and a sense of displaced and exclusion.

The research described here, therefore, foregrounds rhythmanalysis as a conceptual and methodological lens through which we can understand the experience and effect of organisational place. Eurythmia and arrhythmia emerge as analytical tools to aid understanding of how feelings of gendered inclusion and exclusion can be expressed spatially and temporally. Through a focus on the relationship between rhythm, place and work, the study brought 'the space outside' into sharper focus within studies of working life.

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