



Edited by
Marianna Fotaki · Alison Pullen

Diversity, Affect and Embodiment in Organizing

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Preface

This collection emerged from a *European Group on Organization Studies* stream on Diversity, Embodiment and Affect, convened by us together with Marieke van den Brink in 2016. Most of the chapters presented here shaped the conversations that took place in hot, humid Naples - it was an embodied affair as we stuck together in a classroom of the university, trying to function academically. It was indeed a stream in which affective embodiment manifested in our conversations, in the relationship developed between diverse stream participants, and in the productive and negative experiences of being involved in conference activities. After the conference, we approached scholars who offered the collection more diversity in terms of their philosophical contributions and global outlook. Writing and editing this volume was a truly collaborative work and as such the editors' names follow alphabetical order. It was also a thoroughly enjoyable project and we both learned a lot from it. We are delighted with the collection and thank everyone involved in its production. As we go to print, and we look around the corners of the world that we live and travel in, the threats to diversity are abundant, populations are assaulted, and individual bodies are violated. And in our own profession the neoliberal university threatens the very work that we do. It is collections like these which house the political commitments of our authors, and the moral responsibility to challenge oppressive forces that give us a sense of purpose. Critical diversity is not only about gender,

race, sexuality, or disability although these are important issues in and of themselves. It is also about multiple and persistent inequalities that concern us all in many different ways. Our aim is to show how these are lived through bodies, and how the mobilized affect involved in sustaining them can be used to disrupt the unequal regimes in organizations and society. We hope this volume is a small contribution towards counteracting the oppression and threats that prevent people from leading liveable and meaningful lives.

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1

Introducing Affective Embodiment and Diversity

Marianna Fotaki and Alison Pullen

The Diverse Goals of Diversity in Organizations

The discourse of diversity has gained popularity in globalizing organizations. It is seen as a means to improving companies' performance by addressing the issue of talent shortages and by aligning the organization more closely with an increasingly heterogeneous customer base (Hunt et al., 2015). A related concept of inclusion is concerned with ensuring employee involvement and integration of diversity procedures in organizational structures (Roberson 2006). However, according to critical scholars, the pragmatic focus on 'the management of diversity' may diffuse the emancipatory imperative implicit in 'the discourse of equity'

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(Humphries and Grice 1995, p. 17). This is also borne out by the evidence. Despite women entering the professions and managerial positions in roughly the same proportions as men in the UK and other developed countries over the last decades, and despite women entrepreneurs flourishing in developing countries, overall, the pre-existing gender inequalities remain: in some cases, there is reversal to old patterns while new inequalities intersecting with class, age, race, ethnicity, and sexuality have also emerged. The progress in developed Western countries has been far too slow with gender pay gap still a reality for almost every single country and sector around the world and the under-representation of women in positions of influence in business, government, and academia. For instance, research by the *American Association of University Women* shows that women typically earn about 90 per cent of what men are paid until they are about 35 years old and after that median earnings for women are typically 75–80 per cent of what men are paid (AAUW 2016). At every level of academic achievement, women's median earnings are less than men's earnings, and in some cases, the gender pay gap is larger at higher levels of education in the USA. The evidence from across Europe shows that norms and customs often mean that skilled, female employees are not paid as much as their male counterparts within almost any occupation (Boll et al. 2016).

Simultaneously, there has been a powerful backlash against women's empowerment taking the form of anti-gender and postfeminist discourses (McRobbie 2009; Adamson 2017). Antigenderism is a coherent ideological construction consciously and effectively used by right-wing and religious fundamentalists worldwide (Korolczuk and Graff 2017) and is often promoted through the creation of anxieties related to gender relations, sexuality, and reproduction. In some parts of Europe (e.g. Hungary and Poland) and elsewhere, feminism and feminists, as well as gender theory and gender mainstreaming in institutions, are seen to be destroying the nation and undermining the concept of family (Dhaliwal and Yuval-Davis 2014; Kuhar and Paternotte 2017). Postfeminism, on the other hand, focuses on the issues of individual choice and discourses of female freedom as if equality (McRobbie 2009) has been achieved for all women and men, and as if disempowerment that different groups of people continue to experience is not an issue of established power

structures but a matter of individual preferences (Gill and Scharf 2011; Lewis et al. 2017; Rottenberg 2017).

These discourses go hand-in-hand with the establishing of neoliberalism as the dominant paradigm and the sole viable narrative that late capitalism deploys to justify the growth of inequality and dispossession via austerity in the developed countries (Daskalaki and Fotaki 2017) and by enclosures and driving away entire populations from their lands in the developing world (Sassen 2014). Tracing a trajectory from ‘liberal’ to ‘neoliberal’ feminism in development, Wilson (2015) argues that approaches to gender which are currently being promoted within neoliberal development frameworks, while often characterized as ‘instrumentalizing’ gender equality, in fact rely upon, extend, and deepen gendered inequalities in order to sustain and strengthen processes of global capital accumulation. This is, for instance, achieved by informalizing labour (Moghadam 2005) and privatizing care (Gideon 2006) that affects women disproportionately leading to their de facto disempowerment; however, the practice of neoliberalism draws upon, incorporates, and reinforces these existing patriarchal relationships of power and selectively re-emphasizes patriarchal social norms whenever it is needed by, for instance, cutting on the role of the state that feminists have attempted to build and by creating a fertile ground for exploiting insecurities that are so created (Cornwall et al. 2008). There is thus a symbiotic relationship between the resurgent neoconservatism and neoliberalism that the authors identify.

The dominant approaches to equal opportunities in the workplace representing the liberal, free market conception of employment fails to address the root causes of discrimination, while at the same time condemning women to competing on men’s terms at work. Feminist economists have demonstrated that gender inequality in the marketplace concerning pay differentials and career advancement could not be explained away in terms of individual choices by women without accounting for the ignorance and prejudice of employers (Kabeer 2012). As Kabeer (2012, p. 12) summarizes it: ‘while individuals and groups make choices and exercise agency they do so within the limits imposed by the structural distribution of rules, norms, assets and identities between different in their society’ and that ‘inequality is structured into market forces by discriminatory

practices inherited from the past as well as by the bargaining power exercised in the present by powerful market actors pursuing their own self-interest’.

Historical patterns reflecting men’s social power underlie the persistent undervaluation of women at work and why women do not get the same opportunities for career progression and pay as men do. Cultural assumptions stereotyping women as less willing or able to perform in high-powered positions are then used to justify and normalize this discrimination. This suggests that gender stereotypes are ideological and prescriptive, and their influence is unlikely to diminish simply with the passage of time or with accumulating evidence of women’s capabilities (Benschop and Brouns 2003; Charles 2008).

This also highlights the limitations of legislative measures that are necessary but not sufficient to bring about radical change. Power is not restricted to formal policy and assumptions of female and minoritized others’ inferiority are often unspoken. As Fotaki and Harding (2018, p. 35) argue: ‘women are associated with the traits that are seen as being ‘out of place’ in organizations, a version of sanitized masculinity continues to be the prevalent norm’. Focusing on institutional diversity policies in British higher education aiming to counteract this phenomenon Sara Ahmed (2012) indicated that the existence of such policies is institutionalized in a way that protects and preserves the status quo in organizations rather than adequately recognizing diversity, allowing the institution to ignore its entrenched problems. The management research also shows that even in organizations that adopt meritocratic policies, managers tend to favour a male over an equally qualified female employee and award him a larger monetary reward (Castilla and Bendar 2010) perhaps because they no longer see the necessity to address the exiting inequalities or for the fear of discriminating against men. Other researchers evaluating the effectiveness of diversity policies found that efforts to establish responsibility for diversity lead to the broadest increases in managerial diversity as opposed to moderating managerial bias through diversity training and diversity evaluations and addressing social isolation through mentoring and networking that showed modest effects by comparison (Kalev et al. 2006).

Why Embodiment and Affect Matters for Understanding Diversity?

There also exists critical research on the management of diversity in organizations. This work brings into focus the forms of discrimination that occur in relation to different types of sexed, shaped, racialized, sexualized, and abled bodies (Acker 2006; Holvino 2010). Hence, qualities attributed to bodies are not to be taken for granted given that they are socially organized, culturally dependent, and political. Despite this attention on the diversity of bodies in writings on diversity and embodiment, management, and organization studies, literature has generally neglected various forms of corporeal differentiation assuming that the worker is a disembodied subject with a few exceptions (e.g. Sinclair 2005; Fotaki 2013; Fotaki et al. 2014; Gatrell 2017; Johansson et al. 2017). Moreover, while assumedly a disembodied subject in organization theory, the idea of subjectivity comes in the form of an unspoken masculine norm and as such excludes and marginalizes those individuals who cannot achieve the qualities of this idealized worker (Acker 1990). Yet power operates on and through bodies and the meanings attached to bodies that are not only products of social relations but are organized, regulated, and normalized in ways that reinforce dominant social order.

To address these gaps, we propose that the lived experience of the body cannot be understood without taking account of affect and embodied passion (Pullen et al. 2017; Dale and Latham 2015; Grosz 1994), and that there are political implications of affect and desire (Kenny et al. 2011). Power is not merely exercised from above but rather resides in local and individual practices of institutional life in which bodies are necessarily implicated (Trethewey 1999). Without this awareness and understanding of embodied differences that are historically conditioned but also socially, politically, and culturally reproduced, we might perpetuate the existing inequalities (in organizations and society) and create new ones.

In this edited collection, we challenge unspoken norms and patterns of discrimination of organizational bodies by bringing together advancements from critical diversity studies and organization studies which problematize diversity and its management by focusing on the differentiations between racialized, aged, gendered, and sexed bodies. The book

advances research that specifically addresses the body as it relates to patterns of discrimination and privilege in organizations. Our aim is to bring in and enable debates about an emancipatory politics that resists the homogenizing and oppressive dimensions of organizational governance, structure, culture, and policies denying bodily difference. In other words, we argue for reading bodies as sites of affects and power relations. Such an approach offers the possibility of an active rather than responsive or docile approach to the management of diversity. This also represents a shift from the organizational management of diverse bodies to recognizing the diversity of embodied lives and experiences, which challenge organizational norms that violate, oppress, and discriminate against different groups of people within and outside of the organizations. This affective dimension of bodies is important, and in recent times has attracted increasing attention in social theory leading to claims of an 'affective turn' (Clough 2007). Such turn was presaged both by the focus on the body in feminist theory and the concern for emotions explored in queer theory. The turn to affect is a move to understand existence and humanity through the living, feeling, material, and sensate body (Pullen and Rhodes 2015; Pullen et al. 2017). It is because affect presents us with the promise of a state of becoming that can potentially destabilize and unsettle us into new states of being (Massumi 1996). As such it stands to generate exciting trajectories for the study of organization, promising new theoretical directions, methodological approaches, and radical potential for critical investigation (Fotaki et al. 2017).

The book brings together a range of theoretical and empirical contributions that critically question the exercise of power in organizations by focusing on bodies at work and relations between them in social and organizational contexts. In particular, we offer affective embodiment as a central practice and concept to problematize diversity discourse in organizations.

Summary and Questions Addressed

This edited collection uniquely combines empirical focus in diverse geographical locales (Australia, Brazil, Chile, Israel, USA, and various European countries including Austria, Denmark, Sweden, the UK, and

others) and settings (the army, public services, a variety of businesses ranging from finance, hospitality, placement agencies, and social media) with theoretical advancement drawing on feminist philosophers (Diprose), organizational scholars (Ashcraft), and the work of Foucault, Weber, and Bion to explore affect and embodiment in diverse contexts of dance, leadership, old age lesbian experiences amongst others.

In Part I, 'Theoretical developments: Affect, Bodies and Diversity', we bring together four chapters which explore theoretical developments that shape the fundamental relationship between affect, bodies, and diversity. The authors collectively address the issues surrounding the affective constitution of organizational bodies, in their diversity. In Chap. 2, Justine Grønþæk Pors' 'The political and ethical potential of affective resonance between bodies' investigates affective resonances between bodies directly focusing its theoretical and analytical attention to the political and ethical potential emerging from such resonances. The chapter draws on concepts of affect and feminist writing on vulnerability informed by Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2011, 2015) and corporeal generosity from Rosalyn Diprose (2002) to analyse a conversation at a seminar for educational managers in Denmark. Pors shows how an initial emotional outburst from one manager set in motion an embodied and affective sharing of concerns through which the managers came to oppose the political pressures they are enmeshed in. Pors highlights how affective relations between individuals manifest beyond the ideals of the rational individual who makes decision-making. In so doing, the chapter offers new possibilities for thinking about organizational ethics by attending to affective and trans-subjective ways of thinking and feeling in organizations and which emerges between individual bodies rather than between decision-making individuals.

The next chapter offers an analysis of discourses of parental leave as communicative practices of affective embodiment. Sine Nørholm Just and Robyn Remke specifically analyse how 'certain bodies became visible and valuable in work contexts whereas others are neglected/rejected'. Following the work of communications scholar Karen Ashcraft, they study 'the work-body relation as an indeterminate symbolic-material object constituted in communication' (Ashcraft 2011, p. 17). Through their analysis of three US cases, Marissa Mayer, Mark Zuckerberg, and

Mummy bloggers and Sweden's paid parental leave for fathers, Just and Remke offer an original conceptual framework for analysing communicative practices of affective embodiment 'as patterned utterances that endow specific relations between discourses and materialities with affective charges (intensity and valence)'. The authors suggest that communicative practices organize individual and collective identities and in so doing embody parental leave. Four embodied practices are identified to show how 'parenting and parental leave has become more visible and viable for some employees, but also continues to be a privilege not available to all'.

Chapter 4 is Laura Dobusch's 'Body-sensitive diversity research between enablement and disablement' offering a new way of thinking about embodiment in diversity research. In a challenging critique of the 'corporeal turn' evident in organization and diversity studies, Dobusch turns to the neglected aspects within diversity research. Drawing on her earlier work on dis-/ability, this chapter shows how 'body-sensitive diversity research' is not always emancipatory. Highlighting the inherent conflicts between dis-/ability and 'the body', Dobusch tackles the tensions between 'the embodiment of individual life experiences and the social processes of enablement and disablement'. In making this critique, the diversity of embodiment itself and embodied critique is problematized and thus diversified. The chapter closes with a plea for 'the development of an "etho-ontological" stance towards the supposedly flawed body' and a call for research on how ways of organizing co-shape bodies and embodiment at work.

Concluding this section is Peter Ghin's critique of post-heroic leadership and the athletic leader from his Australian research into the experience of illness in senior leadership. Rightly Ghin acknowledges leadership as an embodied practice and concept. In an important critique of the leadership and embodiment literature, Ghin raises an implicit assumption within such leadership of 'corporeal intactness', especially given the context that effective leadership are well leaders, and in popular and business discourse alike we witness the close identification of healthy bodies with leadership, especially male leaders we would add. Ghin critically analyses leadership bodies as unfailing healthy objects and argues that the "sick body" challenges individualistic,

masculine and heroic characterizations of leadership'. Body mastery for Ghin is essential for senior leadership discourse and practice, and this novel study proposing the 'sick-bodied leader' offers a provocative affective challenge to dominant leadership practices, both embodied and discursive, such as for Ghin the 'ordinariness of leaders' bodies' which in itself offers conceptual and empirical diversity to dominant studies of leaders as exceptional.

In Part II of the book, we offer 'Empirical studies of diversity and affective embodiment' This part starts with a chapter from Sine Nørholm Just, Line Kirkegaard, and Sara Louise Muhr who analyse the Danish military uniform as gendered material that is a central symbol to the construction of the soldier identity and their relationship of belonging to/in the military. The authors suggest that the military uniform 'affectively relates body possibilities of enacting profession with gendered identities'. This unique empirical study develops an important conceptualization of the affective-discursive body possibilities of men and women soldiers, recognizing the tensions between the discursive and material, agency and constraint, and masculine and feminine. Empirically four affective body possibilities are presented: Becoming-soldier, becoming-woman-not-soldier, becoming-soldier-not-woman, and becoming-soldier-woman. The uniform 'affectively charges' to enable and accommodate different bodies differently. This Danish study shows that whilst uniform ensures a cultural uniformity for the military, taking an affective perspective to bodies surfaces diversity. This timely chapter skilfully shows that the individuals' 'deviations' from the normal soldierly body cast them as minorities.

In Chap. 7, Emmanouela Mandalaki draws on her own experience of dance to develop the relations between dancers as inter-corporeality—the relations between bodies. Extending this concept of inter-corporeality in the context of dance, Mandalaki reveals how corporeal affects emerge in 'the space between negotiated ordered and freer dancing interactions' and how these affects often coexist in tension with each other. She draws on corporeal generosity by Rosalyn Diprose (1994, 2002) to propose an affective sociality which develops as a resolution of the tension between organized and emergent dance which constrains and frees dancers' bodies, whilst dance partners 'generously and openly dispose their bodies to

the touch of the other'. Through what Mandalaki refers to as 'open corporeal sharing' dance partners 'reinvent their body's ability to perform multiple gendered selves freed from dominating or emancipatory tendencies, thus breaking down traditionally conceived gender stereotypes'. She asks us to think about not the relationships between bodies but the ways in which bodies encompass diversity, fluidity, and generosity to others through dance. The gendered reading of dance offers potential for rethinking traditional gendered roles in dance and the ways in which such conceptualization can be taken forward for thinking about not only the ways in which we conceptualized embodied affects through diverse bodies, but also the ways in which corporeal research methodologies can be developed that embody self-other ethical relations.

In the subsequent Chap. 8, Bärbel Traunsteiner and Regine Bendl present their study of the current life conditions of homosexual women aged over 60 living in Austria in terms of their structural (dis)embodiment and the bounded complexity of their bodily realities. This study considers the importance of intersectional differences in understanding the diversity issues of a relatively marginalized group of women. Traunsteiner and Bendl consider homosexual women aged over the age of 60 through an intersectional perspective combining the categories of (old) age, gender, and sexual orientation framed through the concept of life conditions and investigated by using an analytical content method. The authors demonstrate how intersectionality enables the analysis of bodies and multiple identities. For the specific target group under-investigation here, namely, older lesbians, the intersection of age, sexual orientation, and gender is also 'bodily mediated' (Krell 2004, p. 19). Traunsteiner and Bendl follow Dale and Burrell's (2000) framework for 'analyzing the bounded complexity of bodily realities and (dis)embodiment in organizations and society' from three levels of body organization, namely, splitting the body into parts, the machine metaphor of the body that guides the relationship of the parts, and the interweaving of conceptual schemes with actual institutional arrangements. To this, the authors propose a fourth perspective, namely deconstructive and reconstructive imprints for the analysis of embodiment of older lesbians. Their data shows that lesbian embodiment is 'determined by heteronormative structures and processes within society as well as their own heteronormative bodies of knowledge'.

Interestingly, their data also shows how challenging the boundaries of phallogentrism and heteronormativity would involve exiting safe environments, and shows the tensions between living transgressive non-binary lives.

In Chap. 9, Shani Kuna and Ronit Nadiv's work investigates staffing agencies' impact on the workforce diversity of their client organizations (where jobseekers are placed to work). In an exploratory interview-based study with recruiters in staffing agencies that serve the Israeli business sector, Kuna and Nadiv analyse the embodiment of diverse jobseekers as, and importantly, constructed by the staffing agencies. The authors' research findings suggest that practices employed by a recruiting agency vis-à-vis their clients have the potential to promote workforce diversity, even though their research suggests that in practice staffing agencies and their clients often prevent diversity. It is argued that staffing agencies' intermediary function 'construct the 'otherness' of diverse jobseekers and exploit it in ways which might exacerbate their employment precariousness'. This chapter importantly shows the ways in which embodied discourses of otherness are contextual and deeply embedded in history and politics of Israel.

In the last chapter of part II, Mahan Poorhosseinzadeh, Glenda Strachan, and Kaye Broadbent present their critical, feminist-informed, interview-based study on the under-representation of women in senior management positions in an Australian hospitality organization. Through the foundational writing of Joan Acker on the disembodied worker, this chapter provides a gendered reading of how senior men (re)construct the ideal candidate for managerial positions and how their own experiences shape this construction. Poorhosseinzadeh et al. highlight how the persistent masculine image of the 'disembodied worker' prevails and this reinforces the masculine image of senior leadership roles which makes men seem more legitimate as leaders than women. The authors remind readers of the need to consider the complexities within diversity management in organizations and to appreciate the intersectionality of embodied experience. Addressing disembodiment through a critical, feminist approach, the authors focus on the ways diversity researchers need to engage with the affective experiences of discrimination to challenge dominant practices of managerial advancement within specific contexts.

In Part III of the edited collection, we turn to exploring critical political approaches on affective embodiment. First, Chap. 12 presents Gazi Islam's research at the Teat(r)o Oficina Uzyna Uzona (referred to by its commonly used name 'Teatro Oficina'), a contemporary theatre based in São Paulo, to analyse the ways in which the theatre organizes bodily performance in an affective, interactive, and politically charged style described as anthropophagic. Drawing on previous writing (Islam 2014), Islam discusses how the anthropophagic movement and manifesto, based on a 'concept of life as devo(r)ation' (Andrade 1954), was 'a reappropriation and resignification of the European colonial stereotype of Brazilian cannibalism'. This stereotype 'based on the negative image of Brazil as a land of sexual desire, uncultured nature, and irrational chaos', was appropriated by the anthropophagic movement as an embodied critique against European logocentrism. Islam suggests that thinking about organizing anthropophagically provides 'new ways of approaching bodies and affect, allowing us to understand subjectivity relationally, and situate self and other in an intimate yet ambivalent encounter. The organizational, social, and political implications of anthropophagic relationality are weaved through the embodied performances of the Teatro Oficina offering a performative politics 'marked by affective intensity and participative presence'.

Following on, in Chap. 11, Francisco Valenzuela brings the concepts of affect and diversity together to the public service to call for a radical politics of diversity. Valenzuela's feminist-oriented diversity proposal examined through the critical study of affect in the public service in Chile is welcomed: it offers an astute critique, challenging neoliberal diversity offered to public servants by focusing on the 'discursive underpinnings of Public Servant identity amidst market-driven, patriarchal 'governmentalities', particularly those which legitimize affective labour in the form of a 'diversified' responsiveness to citizens-customers'. Valenzuela follows post-Weberian and Foucauldian readings of public servant ethos to demonstrate the neglected aspects of affective diversity at the level of public service which as he proposes, is 'the effect of neoliberal regimes and their commodification of emotions'. Importantly, the chapter also discusses Clive Barnett's 'consolations of neoliberalism' which 'concerns

the ways in which critical academia has reduced 'neoliberalism' to a mere 'residual effect' of hegemonic projects and/or governmental programmes of rule, bringing reassurance to the researcher-critic about her deciphering of regimes and solidarity towards actors in resistance, but at the same time undertheorizing the way in which neoliberalism is embodied into a plurality of differences at the concrete, everyday level'. This chapter offers a passionate critique of consolation, which appreciates the limitations of disembodied calls for diversity.

The book closes with Darren Baker's chapter 'Reverie as Reflexivity' which draws on the psychoanalytical principles of *Reverie* by Wilfred Bion (1962) to develop an approach that is more attune to affect in reflective understanding of the research process. In an astute critique of diversity categories to surface during the relationships and power inequities in the research process, this approach challenges the homogenizing and risk constraining tendencies to understanding the other. The chapter employs accounts of their gender identity given by men and women in finance and accounting to analyse how affinities are established between the researcher and researched, how affects shape unconsciously an unfolding dialogue between two subjects, and how affect reminds researchers of the 'deeper dynamics' that are ever present in the encounter of the researcher and the research participants. The chapter makes a methodological contribution by tracing how the 'pragmatic imbrication of a specific aspect of psychoanalysis can enable scholars to move beyond the confines of diversity categories, as a way to begin *to know* their research participants better' (page).

Ways Forward

The chapters presented in this collection have added their diverse voices to the argument offered at the beginning of this introductory chapter that focuses on how individuals embody and inhabit institutions and organizations affectively helping us understand how people live and resist normative discourses in organizations. We proposed the notion of affective embodiment to explain the moderate successes and important failures of

diversity in organizations and society thus addressing the issue of discursive reductionism in management and organization studies (Fotaki et al. 2014).

Intersectional feminists show that embodied categories of race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability have a profound impact on people's position, career prospects, and experiences in the workplace that organizations have a duty to tackle (Crenshaw 1989; Holvino 2010). Postcolonial and transnational feminism specifically considers these effects on bodies in the nexus of power and domination constituting differential power regimes within, between, and beyond nation-states specifically in the context of globalization (Mohanty 1998, 2003; Fernandes 2013). Yet although intersectionality constitutes a major body of work in gender and cultural studies as well as feminism and sociology, there has been limited discussion in management and organizations (for a review, see Holvino 2010; Fotaki and Harding 2018). This as Fotaki and Harding argue is: 'surprising because an intersectionality perspective (Crenshaw 1991; Yuval-Davis 2006; Davis 2008) explores how such various categories of identity that subordinate people *intersect* in the bodies of many people in ways that may not be additive' (p. 113). Such perspective cannot only help us platforming difference but enables a means for re-politicizing diversity, and its management (Ahonen et al. 2014) in organizational contexts.

Diversity is political not just merely structural as it represents political choices, that organizations then implement but can also contest and question. Such challenge casts bodies and their affects as politicized (Pullen et al. 2017), and thus critiques normative uptakes of diversity and their compulsion to embody diversity in corporate accounting and auditing of organizational members. Transnationalism is another useful perspective which helps us understand how macro-political and economic forces shape micro-political levels of everyday existence that place bodies and identities at the centre stage of such migratory movements (Fotaki and Harding 2018). Transnationalism is also important as it questions and de-centres the preoccupations of management and organization studies with the 'Western' concerns, boundaries of knowledge, and epistemologies that inform global politics and economics (see also Metcalfe and Woodhams 2012). Thus, it can help us understand specific socially and historically situated experiences and how diversity is embodied in different geographical locales (e.g. see Pio and Essers 2014).

A focus on wider social and political discourses also means that psychosocial approaches bringing together individuals not as unencumbered, disembedded agents but as socially situated and relationally constituted subjects while positioning power at the centre of its considerations (Kenny and Fotaki 2014); it can thus serve as useful tool for making connections between body, affect, and social norms constituting diversity in organizations. Diversity in organizations involves political and ethical struggle, and as we have shown in this book starts with a serious consideration of the productive potential of affective embodiment (cf. Pullen et al. 2017) to challenge the commercial necessity of managing diversity as an issue of individual choice in the marketplace, which reduces individuals to products of their differences. This book goes some way to show how this may be enacted whilst at the same time offering an invitation to continue the effort required for a politics where bodies and their affects are central to the appreciation of transnational organizing for diversity.

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Part I

**Theoretical Developments: Affect,
Bodies and Diversity**



2

The Political and Ethical Potential of Affective Resonance Between Bodies

Justine Grønbæk Pors

Prologue

As part of a larger research project, I find myself in a meeting room in a somewhat remote conference hotel together with 12 managers of youth pedagogical organizations, their executive chief from the local government and an external consultant. I am present to observe the managers as they participate in a development programme aimed to strengthen their managerial capacity in times of severe political and organizational change. All of the managers are in charge of pedagogical organizations where children come after school to take part in different activities. They are trained as educators and belong to a particular pedagogical sub-profession, which has traditionally focused on the well-being and inclusion of vulnerable children and young people and on creating communities and possibilities of participation and democratic involvement. However, they are cur-

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rently facing a pressure to adapt their organizations to new policies emphasizing individual educational performance. Moreover, as part of current organizational changes as well as a policy focus on managerial performance, the managers are expected to develop their subjectivity away from an identity as pedagogues and towards behaving more managerial, aligning their leadership practice with the political and bureaucratic demands of the local government.

I have observed similar events before and do not expect this to be much different. Normally, such seminars consist of a process where an external consultant interviews the managers in turn and invites them to reflect upon their so-called defensive routines. This is a technique that asks individuals to investigate their inner psychological inclinations to resist change and make these objects of self-work in order to enhance their managerial capacity. However, at this particular meeting, something different occurs. At one point, one of the managers breaks down in tears and cannot seem to stop again. Instantaneously, everybody become quiet and attentive. The room is charged with an uncomfortable anxiety: How are the other managers relate to this awkward and inappropriate emotional and bodily outburst? The technique of identifying defensive routines invites the managers to treat the tears as an individual and psychological (rather than political) phenomenon. By use of this kind of thinking, the outburst can be captured as the revelation of a weakness in the individual manager and this revelation can in turn be instrumentalized as a first stage in a process of self-improvement. However, to my surprise, the other managers in the room relate to the tears in a very different manner. One by one, the other managers seem to be moved affectively by the outburst. Tears emerge in another set of eyes. Another voice trembles.

In spite of the concepts and techniques put in place to separate out individuals from each other, the affective outburst seemed to be transmitted between bodies. Moreover, although the outburst displayed the person offering her tears to the room as vulnerable, the other managers came to read this vulnerability as a collective strength in the sense of an important interpretation of how current policies threaten their pedagogical values.

The pulse that beats throughout this chapter originates here, in this particular moment of this particular management seminar. My wonder-

ing is this: What happened that transformed the room from one of individual, managerial self-improvement to a collective, affective and corporeal encounter with the political forces at work in a specific pedagogical field?

Introduction

With this chapter, I aim to explore affective resonances between bodies and direct theoretical and analytical attention to their political and ethical potential. Thereby, I seek to problematize the concept central in much management literature of a confined, rational individual as the centre of decision-making.

In her seminal work on *The transmission of affect*, Teresa Brennan has challenged what she calls the foundational fantasy of a solid boundary between the self and the environment and the role this fantasy plays in the founding of an individual that can feel certain of its own identity and superior in relation to other individuals. Brennan argues that psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis work with the assumption that a healthy person is self-contained and clearly bounded. A healthy person, according to this conception, knows where he ends and where other people begin (Blackman 2008, 26). Thus, in much psychological theory and practice what characterizes a normal and healthy individual and what should be the end point of a therapeutic process is separation and unified boundaries between an individual and her environment.

Alongside psychology, management studies could be said to be one of the disciplines that excels in producing and utilizing this epistemological construct of a confined, human being affectively isolated from his environment. Just think of all the scholarly and organizational hope, money and efforts invested in the idea of a strong, skilful and effective individual business leader. However, Brennan's critique of the foundational fantasy of a secure distinction between an individual and her environment may help to question the ways in which management studies produce ideas of an autonomous and capable individual. Also, Brennan's work may help us to consider how our thinking about ethics is shaped by this foundational fantasy and what possibilities of different ways of thinking that may emerge if we leave behind the idea of a confined and bounded

individual and instead take a point of departure in how people sometimes sense, think and feel in more connected and trans-subjective manners.

One example of how an epistemological construct of a confined and bounded subject does its work in management studies can be found in the literature on business ethics. As Pullen and Rhodes (2015) have shown, business ethics has mainly been thought as something, which can and should be achieved through individual leadership. Through an understanding of a confined, superior human being as the centre of decision-making, much theory and practice of business ethics are delimited to the question of how a manager can rationally pursue organizational ethics, to the creation of formal positions responsible for ethics and to implementing codes of ethics. Pullen and Rhodes (2015) suggest that the consequence is that business ethics discourses and procedures may ironically work to disconnect organizations from ethical questions in the sense that they establish that if only organizations follow the right processes, procedures and precepts, ethicality is ensured and responsibility achieved (see also Loacker and Muhr 2009). Moreover, what Pullen and Rhodes (2015, 160) phrase ‘the value of affective relations, care, compassion or any other forms of feeling that are experienced pre-reflexively through the body’ are excluded from the majority of work on business ethics. Also, as Kenny and Fotaki (2015) have argued, through its focus on a confined management subject, literature on business ethics fails to grasp the political and ethical potential of connectivity, inclusivity and embodied compassion.

Another example of how the construct of a confined individual does its work in management theory and practice is the concept of ‘defensive routines,’ which I encountered in the fieldwork mentioned above. ‘Defensive routines’ is an established conceptual framework available from different consultancies, online resources, professional literature and so on.¹ Here, defensive routines are often defined as psychological patterns used by organizational actors to project failures and problems to a trope outside their own agency and fail to do the self-work that could lead to change (e.g. Elgaard et al. 2011, 358ff). The concept forms part of a method designed to make organizational actors reflect upon their own psychological inclinations and make these objects of

self-transformation. Thus, as I shall return to below, the concept and its related practices and techniques work to capture the affects and anxieties that people might experience, for example, when their organizations are going through severe change and label them as individual psychological defence mechanisms. This capturing of affects then becomes a means to polish individual managerial subjectivity, making it more efficient in the pursuit of organizational goals. However, what happened at the particular management seminar I shall be studying was that, in spite of the vast arsenal of concepts and techniques put in place to separate out individuals from each other, anxieties and affective concerns seemed to be transmitted and travel between the bodies in the room. Rather than being captured as individual defensive mechanisms in need of self-work and as a means to enhance managerial agency, anxieties and affective concerns triggered a trans-subjective feeling and thinking about the political and ethical stakes of current political and organizational change.

By way of theoretical and empirical exploration of affective resonances between bodies, this chapter aims to explore and problematize the role that an epistemological construct of profound boundaries between individuals and their environments plays in our thinking about organizational politics and ethics. Inspired by the affective event at the management seminar, I have searched for theoretical sources apt to bring out and unfold the political potential of affective resonances between bodies. In the chapter, I draw on concepts of affect and feminist work on vulnerability (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2011, 2013; Gear 2007; Kenny and Fotaki 2015) as well as on corporeal generosity (Diprose 2002; Pullen and Rhodes 2014). These concepts are chosen in order to emphasize the living, feeling, material and sensate body as a primary site of ethical encounters. In the following, I begin by presenting these theoretical inputs. Second, I briefly present the background and the methodology of the study and provide some information about the setting and context of Danish education policy and practice. Fourth, I present and analyse the management seminar introduced above. Finally, I summarize my findings of the political and ethical potential of affective resonances between bodies.

Theorizing Affective Resonance Between Bodies

I begin with the concept of affect because it challenges the idea that individuals are affectively self-contained (Brennan 2004, 2; Fotaki et al. 2017) and allows us to think with more relational, distributed and trans-subjective ontologies of personhood (Blackman 2008). Brennan's book, *The Transmission of Affect* (2004), begins in the inconsistency constituted by the fact that although psychiatry and psychology work with the assumption that the healthy person is self-contained and clearly bounded, what marks the experiences of many therapists and health care professionals is not distance and deliberation, but rather a felt sense that affects are being passed from the client to the therapist or transmitted between clients. This leads Brennan to study and coin what she calls transmission of affect, meaning the process of affects being passed and transmitted between people and places, for instance, in the clinical setting of a hospital or the therapeutic situation of psychotherapy. Brennan (2004, 1) proposes that this is a process where:

the “atmosphere” or the environment literally gets into the individual. Physically and biologically, something is present that was not there before, but it did not originate *sui generis*: it was not generated solely or sometimes even in part by the individual organism or its genes.

The idea of transmission of affect highlights how affects may circulate and travel between people and places. As Fotaki et al. (2017, 4) have phrased it, affect ‘is a force that places people in a co-subjective circuit of feeling, thinking and sensation.’ Although the specific qualities of affects may change in unexpected manners as they travel between bodies and places, affect is something that moves between people, it challenges the boundedness of individuals and emphasizes our interdependencies on each other (Kenny and Fotaki 2015).

For my specific purposes in this chapter, the notion of transmission of affect opens up analytical inquiries into how bodies may sense, feel and be affected by the anxieties, desires or joys of other bodies. Also, it helps to challenge what I introduced earlier as the foundational fantasy of a

secure distinction between the self and the environment (Brennan 2004, 6). Thus, analytical attention can be drawn towards how such a fantasy may be used to certain purposes, for example, by certain management ideologies or organizational development programmes.

Political and Ethical Potential of Affective Resonance Between Bodies

In thinking about the political and ethical potential of affective resonances, one inspiration comes from Rosalyn Diprose's work on *corporeal generosity* (Diprose 2002; Pullen and Rhodes 2014). For Diprose corporeal generosity is not an individual virtue, but an embodied openness to otherness. Corporeal generosity has little to do with a confined individual that *is* generous, nor is it reducible to an economy of exchange between sovereign individuals. Thus, her work provides a possibility of thinking about ethical engagement in a manner that advances beyond the concept of an autonomous, detached subject. Instead, Diprose writes (2002, 4), corporeal generosity is

an openness to others that not only precedes and establishes communal relations but constitutes the self as open to others. Primordially, generosity is not the expenditure of one's possessions but the dispossession of oneself, the being-given to others that undercuts any self-contained ego, that undercuts self-possession.

Thus, corporeal generosity describes an ethics that originates from an emergent and affective experience with others that precedes and exceeds those rational schemes that seek to regulate it (Kenny and Fotaki 2015). Corporeal generosity is a loosening up of confined individuality and a giving oneself to the affective tensions of a moment. Diprose's concept of corporeal generosity adds to my thinking on the ethical potential of affective resonances between bodies that this is a process where the safe and self-contained identities of organizational actors are replaced by an experience of being dispossessed and of being open to others and otherness. It is a moment where organizational actors, in embodied registers, allow themselves to be affected by others, by other concerns and by other

impulses than the rational and transactional relations they are also embedded in.

Another impulse in my conceptualizing of the political potential of affective resonances is the concept of *vulnerability*. In her work on human rights, Anna Grear (2007) has argued that an embodied vulnerability provides the beginnings of a human rights universal (what she calls a ‘concrete’ universal) that moves away from the often-criticized abstract philosophical version of universalism. Human embodiment, according to Grear, provides the necessary combination of a condition that is common to all *and* of an incessant reflection of the irreducible uniqueness of every human being apt to constitute a potent critique of legal quasi-disembodiment and its associated ideological tilt towards the privileging of the white, western male (Grear 2007, 540; see also Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2015). Referring to Butler’s (2009) work on precariousness of human lives, Fotaki and Kenny (2015) have similarly emphasized how an ethical engagement is inescapably embodied. As they phrase it, ‘it is the acknowledgement of the ‘injurability’ of our finite human bodies, and hence our shared experience of ‘precarity’ (both neologisms coined by Butler) as embodied humans that enable us to be affected by the vulnerability of others’ (Kenny and Fotaki 2015, 192). Vulnerability is as an experience of opening up the self, or of ‘self-fragilization,’ in which the ‘boundaries of the subject (are opened) to transsubjective inspirations’ (Ettinger 2010, 6, cited from Kenny and Fotaki 2015, 189).

In his work on vulnerability, Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (e.g. 2013) has related vulnerability to the condition of finding oneself ‘in the middle.’ This is a condition of being ‘exposed in a space where skin does not separate, walls do not protect, seas do not isolate’ (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2015, 60). Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos describes vulnerability as a collapse of a distinction between observing and being part of. Vulnerability, for Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos is a moment of ‘loss of individual consciousness that consequently requires no distance between the position of observation and the world’ (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2013, 861). Vulnerability is the experience of a collapse of the illusion that a safe point exists from which an individual can observe the world, detached from and untouched by its speed, violence and unequal distribution of resources and possibilities. To be in the middle is

to be thrown-in and exposed to the draughts of the world without the availability of comforting distinctions between self and environment and between observing and being part of (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2013, 858). Finding yourself in the middle is both an event of feeling your own vulnerability and of sensing your own part in the production of vulnerability for others. A self-understanding as a neutral or critical observer from a safe distance collapses and it becomes evident that you are entangled to the forces that produce exclusion and marginalization. You begin to feel that through your work in organizations, through your consumerism, through the simple act of drinking a cup of coffee, you are part of the infrastructures, the forces of the world that make you vulnerable *and* produce vulnerability for others.

Thus, with inspiration from the concept of vulnerability, my conceptualization of the political potential of affective resonance between bodies focuses on how people in embodied registers come to feel themselves as being 'in the middle' of organizational and political forces rather than at a distance from which they can safely observe them without being affectively touched by them. These are moments where distinctions such as those between self and other and between observing and being part of that normally function to produce the illusion of a distance between bodies are no longer easily available. Thus, I explore the political potential of affective resonances as a moment of 'self-fragilization' (Ettinger 2010, 6, see also Kenny and Fotaki 2015, 189), where bodies feel their own vulnerability and experience a loss of individual detachment, which afford them an openness to feel organizational power relations and begin to wonder about how they are entangled to them.

Methodology

This chapter is an exploration of affective resonances between bodies and the political and ethical potential of such resonances where I let myself be informed by both theoretical concepts and empirical findings. I have allowed the theoretical resources to inspire considerations of different meanings of the empirical material and the empirical material to develop and reshape theoretical ideas (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2000, 249–250).

The empirical data that I present was part of an exploration of management practices in Danish youth pedagogical organizations with a point of departure in ethnographic fieldwork in three local governments. The research project was done in collaboration with a national association of youth pedagogics and it was initially designed to follow how youth pedagogical organizations were transformed by a comprehensive national reform. Through the use of methods such as interviews, non-participant observations, document studies and shadowing over a period of 12 months, my aim was to provide detailed accounts of various aspects of the management of Danish educational institutions (Ybema et al. 2009). The management seminar that I present in detail below could not be taped due to its sensitive character but is depicted by help of my notes taken in the situation.

Before I proceed to a presentation of the empirical context and setting, there is one theoretical clarification that deserves some attention in order to make it clear how I encounter and analyse affect in the empirical data. Brennan explains transmission of affect as a process that is 'social in origin but biological and physical in effect' (Brennan 2004, 3). We can read this as a reiteration of a theoretical distinction in the tradition of Brian Massumi, Patricia Clough and others between emotions and affects, where the latter is emphasized as pre-reflexive, pre-individual and pre-conscious. Also, the statement allows for a reading of the process of the transmission of affect as a kind of causal or linear process where something is (first) social in origin and then (second) has physical and material effects. However, I will allow myself to conduct a slightly different reading and instead emphasize how Brennan's work encourages us to carefully and critically think about distinctions between self and environment, social and material and affect and emotion. Although a distinction between affect and emotion has served studies of affect well, for example, as a means to establish and delimit a theoretical and analytical focus on affect as distinct from studies of emotions in organization and work studies (see Fotaki et al. 2017), for the specific purposes of this chapter, I am reluctant to adhere to it. I prefer to read the idea of transmission of affect as an encouragement to re-open strict theoretical distinctions between psychological and sociological accounts of personhood as well as between social and material accounts of affect. Vinciane Despret (2004) has

explored how psychologists have been forced to choose between psychological and sociological versions of selfhood, with critical social psychologists opting for the social as a constructive and determining force. Often, the distinction between essentialism and constructionism is one that separates the corporeal from the social, where the latter is often read as the discursive or the textual (see also Blackman 2008, 2001). Avoiding not only a possible causality between social origins and physical effects, but also a clear distinction between social and material, for all analytical purposes, I will conceive of affect as sensorial and symbolic, something that straddles the material and the immaterial, something which is socio-material through and through (see Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2015, 153). Affect is idea and matter, thought and body, involving connections between bodies as well as ideas of such connections (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2015, 154). Thus, when I explore affective resonances in the empirical analysis below, it is with the point of departure that although theoretically there might be some value in separating affect from emotion, in this particular empirical analysis, I do not distinguish pre-reflexive from conscious, social from physical. I will explore affective resonances without labelling them as either social or physical, as either emotion or affect. I will conceive of affective transmissions, not as something which is first social and then has material effects, but as socio-material processes through and through, involving flesh and statements, tears and words, shivering bodies and conscious opinions.

Setting

The managers of this study each manage an organization with 12–16 staff members and around 100–140 children coming there after school 3–4 days a week. As mentioned, their professional background is shaped by a particular pedagogical sub-profession, which has traditionally focused on the well-being and inclusion of vulnerable children and young people, and on creating communities and possibilities of participation and democratic involvement.

The managers work within a policy setting that is moving towards greater and greater emphasis on individual educational performance.

With human capital increasingly being observed as a decisive factor in global competition, education policy has become closer linked to labour market policies and economic policy (Blackmore 2004; Sellar and Lingard 2014). Blackmore and Sachs (2012, 2) put it that the last two decades have paved the way for radical changes of the socio-psychic and political economies of education, making educational work a site of tensions, paradoxes and dilemmas. On an everyday basis, the individual educational professional faces the dilemma of prioritizing performance in relation to curriculum goals or pursuing other and broader educational ambitions such as personal growth, physical education, ecological literacy and democratic competences (Wyn et al. 2014, 9). Further, today's education policies put a pressure on educators to see breaks, leisure time, sports activities, music lessons and so on as potential sites of pursuing curriculum goals and improving the educational performance of children and young people (Staunæs and Bjerg 2017; Pors 2011; Pors and Ratner 2017).

The policy setting of the studied managers is also characterized by the belief that more and better management will improve the quality and effectiveness of education. Policy makers understand the trope of education as having an inefficient culture of professional equality in which managers do not perform sufficiently as managers (the Danish Ministry of Education 2007, 83; OECD 2008). This means that the studied managers are all under pressure to transform themselves towards a greater emphasis on managerial subjectivity and performance. Moreover, in the particular local government in which the seminar took place, recent organizational changes mean that whereas before the studied managers were at the same level of the organizational hierarchy, two of them have recently been appointed district managers, so that, now, they are positioned above the others in the organizational echelon. Thus, the studied managers are in a period of severe organizational and professional transformations that seek to close political questions about the broader purposes of education, about how to collaborate as a collective of educational managers and about the future of pedagogy in a political landscape focused on educational performance rather than the well-being of children and young people.

Management Seminar: Defensive Routines

The seminar that I analyse was part of an ongoing leadership development programme. The particular purpose of this specific gathering was for the managers to present to each other how they were doing with their individual development and to be interviewed by the consultant in front of the group about their 'defensive routines.' Through this interviewing the managers were meant to investigate and reflect individually upon how certain defensive routines could pose an obstacle to development and change in their organizations.

At a certain point in the conversation, it is Karen's turn to be interviewed about her defensive routines. She is the manager of a youth organization called *The Swann*. She begins by recalling a situation in which she admits to have felt very defensive:

I had these local politicians and people from the central administration visiting me. And they said: Yes, we know that you and The Swan are well known for your social pedagogic work. But honestly, is it not about time that you become known for something else? Should you not do something different and new? Perhaps, it is time to make a new vision for the Swan.

All of a sudden, Karen breaks down in tears and cannot seem to stop again. As an observer, I feel an anxiety in the room and an uncertainty about how the conversation shall proceed from here. However, before anyone says anything, Karen manages to continue:

And I just stand there and look at the children around me. They are *real swan children*. [For Karen that means vulnerable children] What is to become of them, if we are to make a new vision and transform the organization into something more fashionable?

Karen continues by giving several apologies for her emotional outbreak and for her tears. At first, the room goes quiet. It seems as if no one really knows how to relate to Karen's tears. No one knows exactly how to relate to this interference from a crying body. However, after a little while, a manager sitting at the other end of the table breaks the silence and tells a

story of how Karen has helped him on numerous occasions. His body is clearly affectively touched by the moment. I see tears emerge in his eyes. He tells the other managers around the table how, when he was first hired and had a difficult time finding his place in the new managerial position, Karen called him every week to ask how he was doing. And once, after one of these conversations, she even drove up to visit him because the conversation had made her worry about his well-being. Another manager tells a similar story. His voice is trembling. He ends by saying:

Karen is our barometer, our thermometer. She feels it. In situations where you, Karen, feel something, we should all pay close attention.

Another manager says:

When I look at you now, you have this big red heart that lights up your bright white swan body. You are the swan mother with all of the swan children under your wings.

Again, Karen makes several apologies for her emotional outbreak and for her tears.

Then, yet another manager says:

The problem is that the local government does not want what we want. It is difficult to sustain one's dream when we are always so close to being shut down. I just got some new information about my organization during lunch. And it kind of destroyed my dream. I dream of a different kind of educational activities.

Yet, another manager says with a voice expressing both energy and a bit of anger:

Come on. In reality, we have a great deal of influence here. This is not a job where we were ever thanked for all of the extra hours or all of the sleepless nights. We have stamina. If not we would not be here. Hannah (executive chief in the local government) once said to me: You have to be loyal to me if I am going to be your chief executive. But you know what; I shall be loyal as soon as she shows me a good reason to be loyal.

Karen says:

Listen, it is only if we stand together that we can make a change. If they succeed with this new management hierarchy it is one organization against the other in a fierce battle.

A manager says:

If this new division is only invented in order to install a hierarchical difference between us, then it has no value.

Another manager adds:

What do they want with this new division between us? We have no business with it. We have even sat around this very table and had discussions about distribution of power in the new hierarchy. What is up with that?

A third manager says:

We might get in trouble, but that is no reason for us not to take decisions together. It is not up to them. We still have quite a big manoeuvring space.

Karen says:

It is so damn important for young people to have on place in their everyday life where they are not constantly slammed in the head: Performance, performance, performance. What do the young people want? Maybe they just want a place to be? The local government wants to hire more supervisors [to talk to the young people about choice of education, career paths, etc.] That is no solution. We can be the solution by simply being there for them. Giving them a place to be. Someone to look up to.

Analysis

This excerpt from the conversation begins with Karen telling a story of a visit to her organization from politicians and executive directors from the local government. The story is chosen by Karen as an example of a

situation in which she experienced herself as defensive and unable to adapt to new ideas and possibilities of development. However, in telling the story, Karen breaks down in tears and is unable to stop for a while. At first, the other managers do not know how to relate to this interruption of the conversation from a crying body. However, after a little while, another manager is touched by this affective impulse. With tears emerging in his eyes, he reacts to Karen's tears by remembering her insistent care for him. Although Karen repeatedly makes apologies for her bodily outbreak, no one relates to or speaks of Karen's tears as a sign of individual weakness or of a personal defensive attitude. One manager describes Karen as a kind of seismograph that can speak to the others about important and possibly threatening changes. The conversation continues with one manager resonating Karen's anxiety and fear in his own concerns and sadness evoked by the bad news about the future of his organization he received over lunch. He addresses the affects now shared in the room as the political tension between what politicians and bureaucrats want and the pedagogical values of the managers present. Another manager reacts to the intense atmosphere with an energetic and slightly angry encouragement to not give up, but go up against the decisions taken in the local government. Another manager resonating the energy and urge to resist political and bureaucratic decisions draws attention to how the collective of managers have allowed themselves to be divided by the introduction of a new hierarchy between them. Across comments and statements, a new reading of the political and organizational situation emerges: One that emphasizes the possibilities of pedagogical, organizational and political action of the managers.

Co-subjective Circuit of Affects

In spite of the individualizing technique of interviewing the managers individually about their personal defensive routines, in this conversation, Karen's tears resonate affectively across the bodies of the other managers in the room. Although there is also competition between the managers and a recently installed hierarchy separating them from each other organizationally, it seems, the other managers have little need to use Karen's

outbreak to feel certain about their own managerial identity and superiority in relation to each other. Rather than relating to Karen's tears with detachment and talking about it as emotions belonging to Karen only, the other managers react to it by connecting themselves affectively, allowing the anxieties and tensions in the room to resonate through their bodies. In the conversation that follows, Karen's tears are not read as an individual weakness related to her personal defensive routines. Rather, through the act of bodies allowing themselves to feel to same concerns and anxieties that Karen is feeling, Karen's tears come to be understood as part of a collective anxiety stemming from the power relations the managers are enmeshed in and the current political landscape. As affects resonate across the bodies in the room, a shared feeling of interdependency between the managers emerges and isolated managerial identities and ambitions withdraw and disappear.

Messy Entanglements of Psychological and Political Anxieties

The technique of interviewing managers individually about their personal defensive routines is a technique to clean up affective tensions by labelling them as an individual psychological defensive mechanism, thus, separating them out and isolating them from organizational and political tensions. However, in the affective co-circuit of thinking, feeling and sensing that emerges in the room, tears, political anxieties, organizational hierarchies, pedagogical values, an urge to resist, anger, trembling voices, hope and concern for children and young people are allowed to be messy and entangled. Moreover, the technique of interviewing people about their individual defensive routines is meant to contain and delimit an affective tension, so as to make it into an object of individual reflection and intervention, ultimately getting rid of it so as to pave the way for a certain development. As such, it is a technique meant to capture and contain affect as a particular psychological inclination belonging to a person, and, moreover, this capture is put in place with the specific purpose of achieving certain organizational goals, such as development of managerial subjectivity and organizational development towards the political

and administrative goals of the local government. However, rather than contributing to an isolation of Karen's tears as belonging to Karen only and positioning it as an object that she needs to self-manage and self-improve, the other bodies in the room are affectively touched. Through transmissions of affects across the bodies in the room, Karen's tears and affective outcry come to be understood as an important sign of political pressures and as a possibility for thinking differently about pedagogical, organizational and political actions and behaviours. Rather than isolating Karen's tears as an individual psychological weakness, psychological and political anxieties are allowed to be interlinked and entangled in a somewhat messy manner.

Transgression of Rational Schemes and Organizational Economies

The technique of interviewing individuals about their defensive routines works by installing affects in a certain organizational economy where the sharing and witnessing of personal emotions become a means for individuals to work on their managerial selves and develop their managerial subjectivity. However, what happens instead is closer to what Ettinger has described as a process where 'boundaries of the subject (are opened) to transsubjective inspirations' (Ettinger 2010, 6, cited from Kenny and Fotaki 2015, 189). The managers are not simply exchanging sharing and witnessing of individual reflections of their own management in an organizational economy meant to consolidate and develop managerial subjectivity. Instead, a corporeal, affective intersubjectivity seems to emerge (Diprose 2002, 14). Through what could be described as an act of corporeal generosity, the safe and self-contained identities of organizational actors are replaced by an experience of being dispossessed, of being open to the affective tensions of a moment and through those encounter other concerns, other anxieties than the rational and transactional relations they are also embedded in (Diprose 2002, 4). Diprose has described corporeal generosity as a being put-into-question that makes a person responsible for the other that moves her (Diprose 2002, 14). By allowing themselves to connect to and feel each other's concerns, the managers

begin to question the situation they are in and their own role in it. Rather than consolidating individual managerial subjectivity, the conversation moves towards the formation of a community among the managers and a feeling responsible for each other and for the children and young people they work with (Diprose 2002, 4, 13).

Vulnerability as Strength

Karen shows vulnerability through her act of allowing her body to feel the vulnerability of children and young people in the face of political and normative pressure. This resonates in some of the other managers that also allow themselves to feel vulnerable, for example, by remembering past difficulties. However, vulnerability and strength are closely inter-linked as the conversation continues. Some of the other managers directly connect Karen's vulnerability to her strength—always powerfully looking after and caring for colleagues and children and young people. They link her tears to her ability to sense when things are not as they should be because political and bureaucratic transformations threaten their organizations as well as their pedagogical values, ambitions and practices.

Rather than reacting to Karen by observing her from a safe distance, the other managers in the room connect themselves, their worries and their actions to the affective tension in the room. Also, rather than seeing themselves simply as neutral or critical observers of current political and organizational transformations unrelated to or unable to act against current transformations, the moment builds up a common understanding that these managers are right in the middle of current transformations and, although perhaps not powerful enough to erase political pressures, together they may counter it in certain, yet un-articulated manners. Thus, the moment seems to be one of 'self-fragilization' (Ettinger), where bodies feel their own vulnerability as the experience of loss of individual detachment and as an openness to feel the organizational power relations. The managers come to experience themselves as being in the middle of current transformations with agency and responsibility for the future well-being of children and young people.

Conclusion

With this chapter, I set out to challenge the epistemological construct of a strong individual business leader as the source of change and emphasize instead the political and ethical potential of affective resonance between bodies. I have taken inspiration from feminist thinking on affect, corporeal generosity and vulnerability and analysed a management seminar where a group of managers in embodied and affective registers came to share affective concerns about current political pressures on children and young people. It is my hope that the chapter may work to challenge organizational forces and techniques that work to capture affective anxieties, isolate them as individual psychological mechanisms and transform them into objects of self-work and means to organizational goals rather than allowing them to trigger transsubjective reflection and urges to act upon current political pressures.

In my analysis, I have shown how, in spite of the individualizing technique put in place with the consultancy concept of defensive routines, the emergence of an affective charging of the room placed the managers in a co-subjective circuit of experiencing, feeling and thinking. The political potential of this lies in how it works to counter the individualizing forces of certain organizational practices as well as the forces that aim to make affects part of an emotional economy with the purpose of aligning pedagogical practices with political and bureaucratic goals.

Also, through what we can term corporeal generosity, the safe and self-contained identities of the studied managers were replaced by an experience of being dispossessed, of being open to the affective tensions of a moment and through those encounter other concerns than the rational and transactional relations the managers are also embedded in. The affective resonances between bodies moved the managers towards a community of being together in the same political pressure and not letting hierarchical division or managerial competition separate them. This was a community of feeling responsible for each other and for children and young people as well as a community in which possible ways of countering current political pressure could be explored.

Finally, in spite of an organizational setting aiming to enhance managerial potency, the managers in the room allowed themselves to feel vul-

nerable. It was a moment in which distinctions such as those between self and other, between observing and being part of that may normally function to produce the illusion of a distance between bodies were not easily available. Rather than separating and sorting anxieties out, fixing them in manners convenient for the organization, psychological, social and political concerns was allowed to remain connected in messy entanglements. Thereby a thinking emerged where the political was not only conceived of as being out-there, outside what managers do and what they can affect. Likewise, the psychological was not only seen as something 'in-here' contained in a bounded individual and in need of self-work so as to be utilized to polish and improve managerial subjectivity. Out of this mess came an intimate connection between feeling vulnerable in the face of political forces *and* the discovery that through being exposed, through being in the middle, hope, strength and agency can emerge.

Although a burgeoning stream of diversity research does possibly beneficial work of bringing forward evidence of how certain forms of diversity management may enhance organizational performance, there is also in much of this work a tendency to consolidate rather than question the categories and forces that brought about inequality and harm to begin with (see Ahonen et al. 2014; Costea and Introna 2006; Christiansen and Just 2012). The belief in a confined, potent and rational individual as the centre of decision-making often remains entirely intact and the ethical potential of affect, embodiment and connectivity continues to be suppressed. Alongside current efforts in feminist organization studies (e.g. Pullen and Rhodes 2014, 2015; Fotaki et al. 2014; Kenny and Fotaki 2015), this chapter offers other possibilities for thinking about diversity and difference. Rather than capturing difference (as diversity that needs management, see Ahonen et al. 2014) and utilizing it as a means to organizational performance, I have drawn attention to the possibilities that emerge when such economies are transgressed. Thus, I have tried to provide a thinking about difference in organizations, which goes up against the epistemological construct of a confined, autonomous individual and puts in its place transsubjective ways of thinking, feeling and sensing.

Thus, in this chapter, by learning from both theoretical and empirical sources, I have tried to draw attention to a form of ethics that does not elevate skin to a severing screen that creates distance and boundaries

between bodies (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2015, 10), but takes a point of departure in how we are capable of being touched and moved by affects and atmospheres in our environment. This is an ethics emerging from how bodies allow themselves to feel vulnerable and exposed in the midst of chaotic and powerful forces without the possibility of a safe, separated out position with a neat view from which to enjoy the privilege of observing the world without already being part of it. It is an ethics related to the dispossession of selves, to a letting go of safe and bounded identity and to the emergence of a communal space of responsibility.

Note

1. See, for example, <https://thesystemsthinker.com/overcoming-defensive-routines-in-the-workplace/> or <http://integrallleadershipreview.com/5231-leadership-coaching-tip-organizational-challenges-in-leadership-defensive-routines/>

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3

Nurturing Bodies: Exploring Discourses of Parental Leave as Communicative Practices of Affective Embodiment

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Bodies matter, but so does how we talk about them. This chapter explores the materiality-discourse relationship from the side of discourse, focusing on articulations of the body in discourses on parental leave. Building on recent attempts to theorize difference (Ashcraft 2011; Mumby 2011), we situate such discourses—and discourses on diversity, more generally—as communicative practices of affective embodiment.

Inspired by Ashcraft and Mumby (2004), we do not focus on the organizational communication *about* parental leave or even the organizational discourses that constitute parental leave programs, but explore communicative practices as constitutive of the relationship between parenthood and employability per se. That is, we begin from a communicative perspective that

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treats the work-body relation as an indeterminate symbolic-material object constituted in communication. In other words, which bodies ‘logically’ or ‘naturally’ align with tasks is never self-evident; neither is it a matter of economic, institutional, or even cultural destiny. Instead the work-body relation is always up for grabs ... communication is the dynamic mechanism of that struggle; it is how individual and intuitional voices vie for the particular combination of materiality and symbolism in which they are invested (Ashcraft 2011, p. 17).

The assumption that “we co-create and re-create our identities as we interact with one another” (Allen 2011, p. 185) serves as our starting point for bringing ‘the materiality of the bodies’ (cf. Butler 1993, p. ix) back in, for exploring the relationship between discourse and materiality. Here, we posit that this relationship is affective in so far as it elicits “intense emotional reactions and attachments” which may help explain how individuals create “passionate attachments to groups, causes, identities and organizations” (Cederström and Spicer 2014, p. 179). Further, we argue that discursive formations and material realities co-constitute each other in and through the affective energies that flow between them (Ahmed 2004). Thus, we preliminarily define communicative practices as patterned utterances that endow specific relations between discourses and materialities with affective charges (intensity and valence), thereby constituting the individual and collective identities involved in these relations. Communication, in sum, is “...the ongoing, situated activity through which the representational realm and the material realm become entangled, transforming both realms and (re)producing lived realities in the process” (Ashcraft 2011, p. 16).

Responding to Ashcraft’s (2011) admonition that organizational communication scholars need to ask “how embodied formations of difference become relevant in specific work contexts” (p. 22), we will ask how discourses and materialities relate and are related *affectively*. More specifically, we will focus on discourses of parental leave and ask about the affective embodiments of such discourses. *Which subject positions, understood as the products of discursive-material relationships, arise from conspicuous communicative practices of this field? What bodies are nurtured?* Before turning to this issue, however, we ask the theoretical question of how to conceptualize parental leave as a communicative practice of affective

embodiment. This demands a number of steps: we begin with a communicative theory of difference, generally, and go on to consider the link between communicative practices and affective embodiment, more specifically. On this basis, we will establish our framework for studying communicative practices as constitutive of the affective relationship between discourse and materiality. Seeking to illustrate the explanatory potential of this framework, we then turn to discourses on parental leave and provide a sample of how different bodies become differently affected (charged *and* valued) in and through currently dominant communicative constitutions of the nurturing body at work. Finally, we conclude by considering not only how these bodies are differently affected, but how their affective intensity and valence vary, causing political and material differentiation and preference.

Identity/Difference

In order to understand how some bodies become recognizable as parents *and* employees, we begin with a theory of identification as differentiation. Identity, we posit, is always-already about difference—the recognition that one is not the same as the other. Here, difference “refers to dispersions among categories of distinctions among members of reference groups” (Putnam et al. 2011, p. 31). Notice, difference is a relational term; we are different compared to or in relation to each other. However, difference is also an ordering device; some individuals are positioned as *different from*, whereas others are perceived to be *the same as*. For this dynamic to work, there must be a benchmark or norm by which individuals or social groups are measured so as to determine who is actually different from whom within a given social context.

Because of the need to benchmark—and despite widespread consensus that “an appreciative stance can help us reap benefits of difference for society in general, for organizations where we interact with one another, and for our own personal growth and development” (Allen 2011, pp. 183–184)—the radical relationality of difference is usually curbed in organizational and other social settings. Most organizational approaches dilute difference under the guise of inclusion, focusing on recognizable

identities rather than radical alterities (Litvin 2002; Prasad et al. 2006). Thus, it becomes apparent that we lack a method of theorizing “difference in a sustained and coherent manner” that is useful in empirical and organizational settings (Mumby 2011, p. ix).

Communicative Practices of Affective Embodiment

We may begin to theorize identity-as-difference by looking at the communicative practices that facilitate and constrain its enactment and embodiment within organizations (Ashcraft 2011, p. 18). Difference, we suggest, is manifest in both the material realities of our workplaces and in the meanings, we attach to those material realities. And identity is always a communicative negotiation between a physical reality and how we make that reality meaningful. Hence, the differences of identity and the different identities that may be enacted within an organizational setting are communicatively organized. To explain this further, we turn to the idea of communication as practice.

Ashcraft et al. (2009) argue that “communication generates, not merely expresses, key organizational realities” (p. 2). Moving beyond communication within an organization or even communication that constitutes a specific organization, communication as practice expresses the organizing nature of communication. Communication functions as an affective force that organizes bodies within and beyond formal boundaries or structures. This affective element renders the tensions between subject and structure as more than *mere* discourse while not moving beyond communication (Ashcraft et al. 2009). Whatever constraints are imposed upon the subject and whatever pressures may destabilize structures result from the specific ways in which the two are related in and through the communicative practices of the organizational context in question.

The differences between groups and individuals do not exist independently of communication, but rather are established, confirmed, and/or overcome in and through communicative processes of affective embodiment. We cannot assume that various groups and individuals speak and behave in certain ways, but should rather be attentive to the opinions and

preferences that arise relationally; to the ways in which communicative practices establish the relationships between groups and individuals in a given setting.

The notion of difference as ‘difference-from’, however, alerts us to the fact that any differentiation is also an identification and that not all differences are equally viable in all contexts. Rather, as Butler (2004) points out, “... it is only through the experience of recognition that any of us becomes constituted as socially viable beings” (p. 2). Thus, communicative practices cannot freely enact any and all differences, but only those that are recognizable within the setting in question. That is, communicative practices rely on pre-existing discursive norms and rather than enacting something completely new, they establish relationships between material entities (e.g. human bodies) and discursive formations. It is in and through such relationships that specific subject positions become constituted in relation to each other and to the organizational or societal setting as such.

Further, these relationships are never value neutral, but carry a certain affective charge. The relation between discourse and materiality, then, is an affective one (Cederström and Spicer 2014); as communicative practices position various subjects in relation to organizational discourses, they also enact the affective embodiment of the subjects in question. Some embodiments are charged with positive affect and are nurtured within the social/organizational setting. In contrast, other embodiments are negatively charged and repressed or rejected (Brennan 2004).

Finally, some embodiments will be more intensely charged than others and those that are not subject to affective intensity (whether positively or negatively) may be neglected. Whether willfully or not, the specific needs and desires of such subjects may be forgotten or ignored as the communicative practices of a social or organizational context primarily enact the (positive or negative) affective relationship between the discursive norms and more prominent or demanding subjects.

In sum, communicative practices are enactments of affective relationships between discourse and materiality. Here, we are particularly interested in how such enactments play out in relation to human bodies and function as mechanisms of nurture and neglect, of including some subject positions and excluding others from specific organizational setting

and the domain of the workforce, generally. It should, however, be noted that non-human materialities are as susceptible to affective charging as are human ones. Thus, both human and non-human actors partake in the configuration and reconfiguration of a given context (e.g. an organization) and are equally important to the demarcation between recognizable and non-recognizable difference: visible and invisible bodies.

The Affective Embodiment of Discourses of Parental Leave

We illustrate our conceptual framework for studying communicative practices of affective embodiment through the case of parental leave because it allows us to discuss some of the most fundamental forms of ‘differentiation’ in professional organizations; those between, first, members and non-members and, second, men and women. Traditionally, the nurturing body was not included in professional settings. To the contrary, taking care of children was seen as a private matter, which relegated the caretaker to the sphere of the home. Further, child care was seen as the domain of women, thus stacking layers of exclusion between female bodies and professional settings. Although this has changed, the nurturing body remains a site of intense affectivity in many societal and organizational contexts. Thus, questions of parenting both highlight the constant negotiation of the boundaries of the workplace and the communicative practices of affective embodiments of parents within professional settings.

A certain tension between nurturing children and pursuing a professional career still seems to exist; one that may be definitive of the affective relationships that establish some bodies as belonging to and others as being outside of the labor market. Taking a theory of communicative practice as affective embodiment to this issue helps us understand why most current family leave programs (whether of public or private nature) fail to achieve their larger goals of helping both men and women become better workers *and* parents (see *inter alia* Buzzanell et al. 2005, 2011; Golden 2009; Tracy and Rivera 2010).

Seeking to provide a general starting point for specific investigations of the affective relations between discursive norms and particular bodies

within organizational settings, we turn to the examination of four types of embodiment that have recently been brought to public attention. We will first identify the affectivities of these newly visible nurturing bodies and then provide a few indications of the consequences of these embodiments; what other subjects can be identified with the embodiments presented here? And which bodies are neglected in the process?

For the sake of clarity, we have divided the affective embodiments to be considered into four groups, based on whether they concern male or female bodies and whether they primarily establish the bodies in question as belonging to the workplace setting or as being set apart from it (see Table 3.1). We have chosen to focus on the affective embodiments of individual representatives of the groups in question in the two first instances and on a small subset of voices and bodies in the two latter. Further, we have sought cases that have been subject to heavy circulation in what might be termed the global public sphere of the internet, but we acknowledge the US-centrism of this construct (Sparks 2001). Thus, our first three cases are very clearly from the USA—and our last case is just as clearly *not*. We acknowledge the limits involved in these choices, but still hope to be able to indicate how the communicative practices involved in the positioning of these individuals also affect broader subject positions—to the extent that the individuals in question are talked into being as representative of or set apart from larger groups.

As the table indicates, we perceive the possibilities of parenting within the workforce to be mainly associated with leadership positions, whereas ‘ordinary’ employees mostly become visible as parents if and when they opt out of work in order to dedicate themselves to parenting. This, obviously, does not mean that employees in non-management positions

Table 3.1 Affectively embodied subject positions

	Internal	External
Women	Leaning in Bringing children to work Case: Marissa Mayer	Opting out Staying at home (and making the most of it) Case mummy bloggers
Men	Leaning out Choosing to take leave Case: Mark Zuckerberg	Opting in Legislation incentivizing men to take leave Case: Swedish dads

cannot also be parents, but that their parenting is not visible within organizational contexts. As announced, we shall return to this point in the final section of the chapter. For now, let us turn to the analysis, beginning with the conspicuous case of Marissa Mayer.

Leaning In: The Working Mother

When in July 2012 Marissa Mayer became CEO of Yahoo she came with ‘extra baggage’; less than two months after taking up the position, she gave birth to her first child, had a nursery built at her office, and continued ‘business as usual’.¹ As the ‘most visible CEO mom’ in the USA (Miller 2012), Marissa Mayer’s practices of mothering and management—and the possible (mis)alliances of the two—have been thoroughly scrutinized. For instance, Mayer was accused of hypocrisy when banning telecommuting at Yahoo after having made use of this very option in the last stages of her own pregnancy (Gynn 2013). Subsequently, she changed Yahoo’s parental leave policy, providing mothers with 16 weeks of paid leave and fathers with 8 weeks (Carlson 2013).

More importantly, however, Mayer is subject to constant speculations as to whether or not she ‘can have it all’ (Miller 2012), not least after the birth of her twin daughters in 2015. Thus, Mayer embodies the classical ‘double-bind’: can you be a woman (and a mother to boot) and a manager at the same time? Mayer’s own professed strategy to solve this dilemma is that of ‘leaning in’—a term made popular by Sandberg (COO, Facebook) and Scovell’s 2013 book *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*.² Mayer articulates the position as follows:

Looking back to reflect on the question: Could I really take the helm of Yahoo when I was 28 weeks pregnant? Even now, it sounds absolutely crazy. [...] I’ve always believed you can never have everything that you want, but with work and dedication, you can have the things that really matter to you. If I took the opportunity, it was clear that I would have to find a way to have time with my baby without a long maternity leave. I also knew going forward that there wouldn’t be much time beyond my job and my family for anything else. Ultimately, I decided I was fine with that, because my family and my job are what really matter to me. (Mayer n.d.)

Mayer clearly denounces the idea that motherhood and management are irreconcilable identities, and aligns herself with liberal feminism when arguing that "...being a mother makes me a better executive" (ibid.). However, the affectivities produced around her embodiment of these two roles are less clear-cut. In particular, Mayer seems to embody two of the 'token positions' for women in management as identified by Kanter (1977): the mother and the seductress (cf. the 2013 cover picture for *Vogue* in which Mayer is reclining on a lounge chair holding a close-up of her own face—and not a baby in sight). Also, she is described as 'an unusually stylish geek', who is self-avowedly 'blind to gender' (in the interview accompanying the *Vogue* cover; Weisberg 2013).

Mayer, then, embodies a 'just do it' stance on the combinations of mothering and management, the affectivities of which are blatant and, it seems, intentional. Whether 'leaning in' or 'just doing it', Mayer perfectly reflects the central contradiction inherent in the neoliberal feminist subject:

Individuated in the extreme, the subject is feminist in the sense that she is distinctly aware of current inequality between men and women... she accepts full responsibility for her own well-being and self-care, which is increasingly predicated on crafting a felicitous work-family balance based on a cost-benefit calculus. (Rottenberg 2014, p. 420)

This stance is not without controversy: is Mayer a role model and trail blazer? Is she as blind to her own privilege as she professes to be of gender? We shall return to these issues in the final section of the analysis, but for now, let us look at Mayer's male counterpart, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook.

Leaning Out: The Caring Father

Whereas Mayer brought her newborn to the office in an effort to not let mothering interfere with her career, Zuckerberg has made a point of taking a two-month paternity leave after the birth of his first daughter, Max, in November 2015 and again after the birth of his second daughter, August, in 2017.³ Zuckerberg seems to be enacting a position of being an

active father and a top manager with no indications that these two roles are in tension. Instead, it seems his personal decisions and private life are used to promote his career: his taking time off paid work does not seem to call into question his professionalism and commitment to work; to the contrary, taking paternity leave has only enhanced his professional position and identity.

Zuckerberg, then, does not encounter a double-bind, but is, instead, perceived to be ‘leaning out’ to the benefit of not only himself and his family, but also the employees of Facebook whose right to paid parental leave was extended to four months just after their boss announced his own leave period (Tepper 2015). Further, Zuckerberg is not only praised for providing better conditions for Facebook employees; his personal decision is said to be good for society as a whole. Again, *Vogue* is on the case:

Now with his very public two-month leave, Mark Zuckerberg has become the latest to set an example within his company and with the more than 47 million people who currently follow him on Facebook. By sharing photos of himself changing diapers, Zuckerberg is doing his part to update the traditional image of working fathers. He’s also compelling his followers to change stereotypes, too. Earlier this week, a Facebook user wrote on the CEO’s page that she always told her granddaughters to date a nerd because, “he may turn out to be a Mark Zuckerberg.” To which he replied: “Even better would be to encourage them to *be* the nerd.” With Zuckerberg dressing his daughter in a Jedi costume and reading her books on quantum physics at bedtime, that process already seems to be underway. (Garcia 2016)

Zuckerberg’s paternity leave, in sum, is applauded as setting an example for future fathers and seen to be a step toward gender equality, more generally. Some do call attention to the fact that “for a guy who was supposedly not working, he got a lot of work in” (Hennessey 2016), but this fact is used as a means of raising broader issues rather than as a critique of Zuckerberg’s personal practices:

There are lessons here that go beyond simple family leave and the benefits of utilizing the privilege you have in spending time with your newborn. Like everyone who posts updates on social media, Zuckerberg only showed us the moments or feelings he wanted to share. The next step should be a

real discussion about how complex, how conflicted parenting can be when balanced with career and entrepreneurship. Having an honest conversation about that, without falling prey to touting your company's family-leave policy, could create better solutions for working families and build a true legacy for the working world Max Zuckerberg will enter. (ibid.)

The affective embodiment of Mark Zuckerberg as a caring father is overwhelmingly positive, but comments such as the above do raise questions as to what extent he is really leaning out and how that may affect gendered practices of work-life balance more generally. Are the 'C-suite Marks' making room for the 'exec-Marissas', as it were? Or is something else going on here? This will be another point of our discussion. Here, we turn the focus away from the extreme cases of top executives of huge corporations and toward more average professionals/parents.

Opting Out: (Not) Your Average Mom

The phenomenon of 'mommy blogs' has taken on a central role in what might be termed 'the baby business', which "...relies heavily on mom bloggers for product marketing and 'word of mouth' advertising" (Stevens 2014). Mommy blogs, however, do not only promote or decry diapers (see Birchall 2010), but have rendered the joys and sorrows of stay-at-home moms (SAHMs) visible to anyone with an internet connection and a propensity to google 'anything baby related' (ibid.). What is more, mommy blogs provide SAHMs with the opportunity to make a living from 'opting out'. As 'Not your average mom' (NYAM), who is in the top ten of the 'top mommy blogs directory', explains: "...I published my first post (it was terrible) to a tiny audience of less than 100 people. It was really only my relatives and close personal friends who read what I wrote in the beginning. But I always had the same goal. Eventually, this blog would support my family" (NYAM 2016).

NYAM is remarkably explicit about the commercial aims of her blog, but other SAHMs highlight that blogging is a way of connecting to family and friends and, importantly, a means of maintaining mental well-being and of challenging oneself (Stevens 2013). Mommy blogging, then, makes SAHMs visible to and influential on the general public. Also, the

blogs make ‘opting out’ of the workforce a more viable option in both pecuniary and psychological terms. Opting out is not for everyone, but as the following quote indicates, the dominant affective relationship between SAHMs and discursive norms is a positive one, which it takes courage to go against: “I know I might regret saying this... but I hated being a stay-at-home mom. Before you come after me with pitchforks, let me explain myself” (Lewis 2015).⁴ The prevailing idea, then, is that today’s SAHMs are talented, resourceful, well-educated individuals who choose to prioritize spending time with their family and find ways of making staying at home just as economically and mentally rewarding as a ‘normal’ job:

In my pre-kid life, I never imagined that someday I’d be a stay-at-home mom—hey, I didn’t go to grad school to spend my days changing diapers. But when I held my first baby, Mathilda, I had a complete change of heart. As soon as we locked eyes, all those career and financial worries faded. They didn’t disappear, but they certainly became secondary. (Latvala n.d.)

The ‘new’ SAHM may be “...a tattooed rock singer, the CEO of her own company or a green-living activist” (ibid.), but the one thing she’s not is average. Rather, SAHMs are affectively embodied as resourceful individuals who follow their “deep desire to be there for every moment of their babies’ lives” (ibid.) without themselves experiencing a dip in quality of life. In fact, SAHMs are consistently perceived to be opting out by choice so as to obtain a position that is more desirable than that of the ordinary member of the workforce. The operative word here is ‘choice’, SAHMs, generally, and mommy bloggers, more specifically, are affectively embodied as choosing to stay at home, thereby both covering up those subject positions who are either forced to do so or do not have the option of doing it. Before turning to the discussion of this issue as well, let us seek to broaden the perspective of this study by leaving the US-context behind and turning to the counter-case of Sweden.

Opting In: Swedish Dads

As we have seen, the issue of parental leave is still highly contentious in the USA. If and when leaves are even available, some choose not to take

them and others find that whatever policies are in place cannot provide them with sustainable work-life balances. And the option of a father taking more than a few days' leave is still so rare that making use of that option, when available, in itself seems like a powerful political statement. In any case, negotiating parental leave is viewed as an employee-employer relationship. Not so in Sweden; here, the welfare state has guaranteed publicly paid parental leave to men as well as women since 1974, and in 1995 a so-called daddy quota was introduced, meaning that 30 days of the combined parental leave period could only be used by the father. As of January 2016, 90 days of the total of 480 days (yes, that's almost a year and a half!) of paid parental leave available to new parents are earmarked the father, reducing mothers' maximum amount of leave to 390 days. Thus, Swedish dads have to opt in to the leave if the family is to take full advantage of the available public support (Rangecroft 2016).

From a US perspective, the Swedish situation may be so exotic as to be unimaginable; one can list the facts, but not visualize their embodiment. However, in 2015, Johan Bävman's photo series 'Swedish dads' went into global circulation, making the lives of the men who opt in to paternity leave much more tangible. Bävman's photos beautifully portray fathers and their children in a variety of ordinary and not-so-ordinary life situations; situations of care and play, joy, and concern. The photos, even when presenting lively situations, have an aura of calm and quiet, of entering a very personal space. In rendering the intimate connections between the portrayed fathers and their children tangible to the viewer, each photo enacts the affective embodiment of a unique individual as defined in and through his performance of fatherhood. As a whole, the series provides nuanced images of what it may mean to be a father. These images, and their public reception (see *inter alia* Billing 2015; Filipovic 2015; Finkelstein 2015), are overwhelmingly positive, establishing an affective relationship between the portrayed bodies and the discursive formation in which the possibility of viewing fathers as fully developed subjects, defined by their personal and deep involvement in their children's lives, emerges.

What is conspicuously absent from the pictures is anything work-related. Some of the portrayed fathers do include their children in the performance of tasks like cleaning and grocery shopping and others

involve their children in the physical exercise of their own bodies. However, in none of the pictures are the children brought into work situations. This does not mean that the fathers in question are seen as having foregone their careers. Each image is accompanied with the name and profession of the father as well as information on his chosen leave period and the name(s) of the child or children for whom he is taking the leave. The message: these men are opting into parental leave, rather than out of their careers, which, it is implied, they will resume smoothly once the leave is over.

The portrayed men, however, represent a small minority as Bävman is keenly aware. In the overall introduction to the photos, he makes clear that "...only a fraction of Sweden's fathers use all their sixty days of parental leave. Only fourteen per cent of parents choose to share the days equally" (Bävman 2016). On that basis, the photos do not only aim to portray individual life choices, but "...to inspire other fathers – in Sweden, and further afield – to consider the positive benefits of such a system [of paternity leave]" (ibid.).

The individual images are so quietly powerful and the general message so obviously noble that it may appear difficult to criticize the embodiment of the Swedish dads. One place to begin a critical reflection, however, would be to look at the photos' representation of the intersectionalities of gender, ethnicity, and/or class. Here, it becomes clear that the portrayed fathers are mostly white and decidedly middle class. However, ethnic minorities are presented and, well, this is Sweden, everyone is arguably middle class. The professions of the portrayed fathers are diverse, and the fact that being a student, a carpenter, or a salesman seemingly does not influence one's ability to provide for a child only adds more charm to the Swedish case. A prominent absence in the pictures is, obviously, another caretaker—it is always only the father and child or children, which makes sense given that this is the whole point of the series. Even so, the accompanying texts reveal the massive discursive presence of one particular significant other: the mother. In the stories of the portrayed fathers, there is always a partner who more often than not is explicitly gendered as female. Further, only one of the portrayed men has more than two children. For all their differences, then, the Swedish dads turn out to be, if not explicitly heteronormative, then affectively embodied as

part of a nuclear family in the traditional sense of a man and a woman and (ideally, but with a possible variation of $+/-1$) two children; single dads and gay men are conspicuous only by their absence. The implications of this omission will be a final point of the discussion to which we now turn.

Discussion—Or: What Is Left Out?

The affective embodiments of parenting in relation to work, as presented above, indicate that new subject positions are being nurtured in organizational contexts. Still, the analysis shows that the nurturing body continues to be a site of contestation within the discursive formation of work-life relationships. Thus, Marissa Mayer may have succeeded in ‘leaning in’ and not letting her parenting disrupt her career in any way, but her example also reproduces current problems and limitations of women in management (Rottenberg 2014). Mayer’s subject position is constrained by the classical double-bind, meaning that the affective relationships in which she is enmeshed are problematic to say the least. Whatever side of her identity is highlighted, mother *or* manager, she is criticized for not prioritizing the other. Not so for Mark Zuckerberg; his choice of taking paternity leave is generally applauded and is not perceived to affect his professional life negatively. Here, we may discuss whether Zuckerberg is really ‘leaning out’. Rather than making room for alternative subject positions, his acts seem to consolidate the privileges of the male manager. He not only obtains a more nuanced and attractive subject position through his active parenting but is also able to leverage this position in his corporate life.

Common for both of these top managers is that one can question how much of a difference the enactment of affective relationships between their particular bodies and general discursive patterns makes for anyone but themselves. What they are doing is only possible to them, personally and specifically, because they already embody positions of power. Even if Zuckerberg’s case, by virtue of being more ‘novel’ and ‘progressive’ than Mayer’s, is often endowed with an empowering affective force, it is not immediately clear how a more average employee might learn and/or

benefit from the example. Both Yahoo and Facebook now have better parental leave policies (and family bereavement policies), but the questions of how to actually make use of them and, especially, of balancing parenting and work after the leave period remain unresolved.

Mommy bloggers, and the larger group of stay-at-home moms they represent, provide one radical solution to these issues: leave the traditional labor market altogether. However, here we encounter a position of privilege once again. Mommy bloggers are resourceful individuals who can rely on the economic support of a partner and/or find ways of making a career out of parenting—most conspicuously in and through the very practice of blogging (and the neoliberal focus on consumerism that comes with it). Mommy bloggers, then, embody an ideology of care in which the love of one's children comes before everything else. This places individuals who either cannot or do not want to live by this ideology in a difficult position. In the mommy bloggers' communicative practices, the affective relationship between children and work always privileges children, and, correspondingly, prioritizing work is seen as the wrong choice. Thus, an absolute dichotomy is operative in this communicative practice; here, one can only prioritize either child or work; either priority necessarily harms the other. 'Opting out', then, is not only a privileged, but also an exclusionary position; it makes everyone who cannot or will not choose that option morally inferior.

The Swedish dads, finally, have the privilege of being supported legally and economically in their decision to 'opt in' to active parenting. This may, at least when viewed from the vantage point offered by the three previous cases, seem to be a utopian case in which everyone—men and women, top managers and average employees—can really and truly 'have it all'. However, what is embodied here is still an affective relationship that comes with its own limitations and blind spots. First, despite the generous economic conditions and allegedly wide social acceptance of this publicly paid leave, not all that many men actually use it. Something in the relationship between the discursive formation and specific embodiments of the majority of Swedish fathers, then, still bars them from taking full advantage of their leave options. The communicative practices of this case may be changing the specific embodiments of fathers one man at a time, but it is proving to be a slow and arduous process. Second, these

communicative practices continue to embody an ideology of the nuclear family; largely, rendering single parents, same-sex couples, and constellations involving more than two parents invisible. Of the four cases presented here, the Swedish one may be most open to the positive embodiment of different subjects, but it nevertheless continues to produce its own similarities and to exclude all the individual bodies that do not fit in any of the newly established subject positions.

Conclusion: Global Embodiments?

In closing, we will reflect on two issues of scope. First, the affective embodiments, we have presented here, both show the variations and the limitations of the communicative practices of such embodiments. We do not in any way suggest that these four embodiments are exhaustive, but they are illustrative. Illustrative of the dynamics of affectively charging issues of parenting and parental leave in relation to work. Whatever the specific embodiment, it will be subject to similar charging; it will be nurtured or neglected, praised or rejected, in and through the communicative practices of its articulation. Our cases, then, are not global in scope, but they illustrate a globally relevant theory of the production of differences and sameness.

This second issue of scope, the globality of communicative practices of affective embodiment, also needs to be challenged. We hope to have shown its relevance and value as a non-essentialist perspective on how subject positions are communicatively produced. As such, it may enable a critique that does not assume the value of any one subject position and does not privilege certain bodies of others. However, this may also mean that it is not sufficiently attentive to the matter of matter. Our exploration of the relationship between discourse and materiality has been firmly situated within, and hence limited to, the discursive realm. Asking how bodies matter in discourse may, we hope, lead to critical discussions of the material conditions of such bodies. For instance, we have sought to uncover and question the privileges of the subject positions involved in our study. However, we cannot help but wonder whether the focus on communicative practices risks reproducing an illusion of choice.

Yes, communicative practices can change, making room for new subjectivities, but this is not a feat that any one individual can accomplish. If and when we wish to nurture different bodies, we must find the material as well as the communicative means to do so.

Notes

1. This chapter only deals with issues directly related to Mayer's motherhood and, hence, does not touch upon the sale of Yahoo and Mayer's exit from the organization.
2. The best seller leading to the creation of Lean In Circles (leanin.org) designed to promote women's leadership and gender diversity in organizations.
3. Again, this chapter only deals with the direct interrelations of Zuckerberg's parenting and managing and does not consider how broader issues like Facebook's recent crisis might also play into this relationship.
4. The discussion, as well as the establishment of a predominantly positive affective relationship between female bodies and practices of 'opting out', goes back to at least 2003 when *The New York Times Magazine* featured a story on what was then termed 'the opt-out revolution' (Belkin 2003). Ten years later, however, the magazine ran a follow-up with the message that 'the op-out generation wants back in' (Warner 2013), suggesting that the predominant affective relationship may be shifting or is, at least, being contested more openly and vocally. In this context, however, the practice of mommy blogging operates to suggest that one can stay at home *and* have a career at the same time. Mommy blogging, then, comes to signify the best of both worlds; a personally *and* professionally rewarding life.

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4

Body-Sensitive Diversity Research Between Enablement and Disablement

Laura Dobusch

Introduction

This chapter aims to illustrate easily overlooked tensions within body-sensitive diversity research, which might not—and need not?—be resolvable. However, these tensions should be addressed in order to avoid unintentionally reproducing already existing asymmetries between desired and undesired bodies. In particular, by focusing on the category of dis-/ability and its conflictual relationship with the body, I will paint a fine-grained picture of both the opportunities and the limits of the ‘corporeal turn’ for diversity research. Furthermore, approaching dis-/ability in terms of a legitimate and relevant *diversity dimension* puts the ‘margins’ of the field of diversity research at its center. This is because dis-/ability is one of the most under-researched social categories within both diversity research and management and organization studies (Foster and Wass 2012; Jacques 2016). For one, this underestimates “how assumptions of

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non-disability (or ableism) infuse organizing processes and are maintained as an organizing norm” (Williams and Mavin 2012, p. 161). For another, it does not do justice to the analytical potential connected to a focus on dis-/ability: “[U]nderstanding how disability operates as an identity category and cultural concept will enhance how we understand what it is to be human, our relationships with one another, and the experience of embodiment” (Garland-Thomson 2002, p. 5). This is because taking both the experience of embodied impairments and connected exposures to disablement as the starting point for research endeavors is especially suited to a questioning of the widespread and persistent assumption of the “body as a neutral, compliant instrument of some transcendent will” (ibid., p. 6). Instead, ideas of *co-corporeality* (e.g., wearing a cardiac pacemaker) and *inter-corporeality* (e.g., infrastructure enabling and simultaneously predefining spatial movements) come to the fore (Dale and Latham 2015; Shildrick 2015). These suggest that an ‘intra-connectedness’ of human, non-human beings, and other materialities does not represent an exception but a fundamental precondition of life itself. Against this background, I plead for a particular *etho-ontological* stance that entails embracing “the supposedly flawed body of disability” (Garland-Thomson 2002, p. 28) and a “critique [of] the normalizing phallic fantasies of wholeness, unity, coherence, and completeness” (ibid.). Such a perspective not only offers alternative ways for theorizing about the body and embodiment but also adds an affirmative layer that brings an “affirmative model towards disability” (Swain and French 2000, p. 569) within the realm of (imaginable) possibility.

In order to substantiate the argument presented, in a first step I describe the ambivalent relationship between diversity research and ‘the body’ at the intersection with management and organization studies. Here, I argue why a focus on the impaired and disabled body is particularly enriching in this context. In a next step, I outline the establishment of disability studies as an academic discipline and its criticism of a medical, individualistic view of disability. Subsequently, I describe three alternative understandings of disability—the social, cultural, and relational model—and explain why all of them have a more or less conflictual relationship with the body. Following that, I specify why the combination of an embodiment perspective with a disability studies lens can be

particularly fruitful for body-sensitive diversity research. Finally, I outline possible future research directions considering an ‘*etho-ontological stance*’ that takes vulnerability and change as starting points and not as (undesired) exceptions.

Diversity Research, Organization Theory, and ‘the Body’: An Ambivalent Relationship

Similar to general trends and shifts in the social sciences, management and organization studies have developed an increasing interest in issues such as materiality, body/corporeality/embodiment, and affect since the end of the last millennium (Dale and Latham 2015; Sandberg and Tsoukas 2016; Thanem 2016). At first glance, from a diversity research perspective, this development evokes a certain satisfaction and can appear as a great opportunity. This is because the initial formation and establishment of management and organization studies and their underlying premises of rationalization, predictability, and controllability were to a great extent co-constituted by the simultaneous *dismissal* of human differences, as representing a threat to standardization efforts: “In the early conceptualizations of organizations (...) the notion of diversity is evident by its omission. The universalizing tendencies of these approaches ignored the idea of diverse group identities” (Nkomo and Stewart 2006, p. 521).

However, since the 1970s—also stimulated by the civil rights and women’s movements in the US and other western countries—several streams of research have emerged that questioned these universalizing tendencies within management and organization studies. Studies showed that organizations systematically (re-)produce inequalities along the lines of gender, race, and ethnicity and investigated why and how minority group members face multiple disadvantages in the context of allegedly neutral work organizations (Ragins and Gonzalez 2003; Zanoni et al. 2010). Key approaches toward reducing such unjustifiable disadvantages mainly included combating prejudice and implementing equal opportunity policies (Nkomo and Stewart 2006). Because of decreasing support

for affirmative action and equal opportunities issues in US politics during the 1980s (Dobbin 2009) and the publication of the *Workforce 2000* report (Johnston and Packer) in 1987, which predicted an irreversible trend toward diversification of the US workforce, the scholarly study of differences within organizations also shifted (Oswick and Noon 2014). For one, by the notion of ‘diversity’ differences among the workforce regarding social identities, working styles, and perspectives were also framed from that time on as a *potential* instead of a problem, as a competitive advantage in changing consumer markets and globalizing economies (Kelly and Dobbin 1998; Ragins and Gonzalez 2003). For another, this diversity perspective expanded the scope of differences considered relevant within organizations: although gender, race, and ethnicity were still the most addressed units of analysis, other categories such as age, dis-/ability, religion, or sexual orientation as well as professional and personal characteristics also received more attention (Zanoni et al. 2010).

Be it the early attempts of de- and reconstructing organizations as embedded in and shaped by social inequalities, be it research building on the assumption of a diverse workforce in terms of “strategic assets” (ibid., p. 12), the common denominator of these works is an anti-discriminatory agenda. This means that organizations were considered as more or less structurally and culturally biased in favor of an “homogeneous ideal” (Loden and Rosener 1991, p. 42), which needed to be counteracted by control and planning attempts (e.g., diversity-sensitive HR policies, diversity task forces, or mentoring programs). However, this also implied that these research approaches did not question the foundation of the “epistemological project of modern O[rganization] T[heory]” (Chia 2003, p. 118) and its reliance on key assumptions such as individual intentionality and homeostatic change (ibid.).

The situation presents itself differently in the case of the ‘corporeal turn’ (Witz 2000), which underlines the *material* grounding of human existence in general and individual *embodiment* as a precondition to and consequence of the “lived experience of the sensual or subjective body” (Turner 2001, p. 260) in particular. Approaching the body and embodiment in terms of a significant and ‘willful’ issue in the realm of management and organization studies explicitly contests the “*principle of separation*” (Dale and Burrell 2000, p. 20; emphasis by author). This

principle has been decisive for theory development within management and organization studies since their beginnings and is based on reality constructions such as: “The ‘mind’ controls the ‘body’ in the rise of large-scale capitalist organization, which uses workers’ bodies as though they were mindless and controls the body and the organization through the principle of rationality” (ibid., p. 20). Consequently, drawing attention to the inevitably embodied quality of organizing the “Cartesian separation of body from mind” (ibid., p. 22) is suspended and bodies, in all their shapes, experienced dis_abilities and struggles for recognition, become an important—if not necessary—research topic.

Against this background, it may well be assumed that challenging the reductionist and functionalist relationship between the mind and the body, a central pillar of organization theory, comes in handy for diversity research, which has consistently emphasized that human differences should be taken as a starting point and not as an exception to be avoided or assimilated. However, ‘bringing the body back in’ (Zola 1999) takes place in an already ‘biased’ research context, where studies explicitly concerned with ‘diversity issues’ are potentially marginalized within organization theory (see Gherardi 2003 for an in-depth analysis of the relationship between feminist and organization theory). Diversity-related theories and practices are continuously running the danger of being withheld in their relevance for ‘general’ theory development because they are assumed to only affect ‘diverse identity groups’ (see also Ely 1995). Consequently, research and practices marked as ‘diversity-relevant’ often entail the unintended side effect of reaffirming the congruence between dominant and/or majority group members and the prevalent—potentially exclusionary—norms and values in a particular context (Dobusch 2017). Therefore, when bringing diversity studies and the ‘corporeal turn’ together, diligence is needed in order to avoid unintentionally furthering a dichotomous division into ‘mainstream’ (disembodied) and ‘diverse’ (embodied) organizational members. Keeping this in mind, the relationship between diversity research and the ‘corporeal turn’ is likely to be more *ambivalent* than it appears at first sight.

In addition, emphasizing the embodiment of organizing and the significance of individual bodily agency therein should not be accompanied by the hasty assumption that ‘bringing the body back in’ necessarily

results in a leveling of power relations or emancipatory effects. For instance, the focus on the material constitution of human corporeality might revive ideas of “neo-essentialism” (Clever and Ruberg 2014), in which the nature-culture divide is reinforced and bodies are—once again—imagined as rather self-contained and clearly definable entities. Furthermore, the condition of ‘bodylessness’ may represent a liberating retreat in view of the continuing trend of ‘over-aestheticizing’ everyday life, the controlling and disciplining of ‘bodies at work,’ or in case of experiencing an ‘impaired corporeality’ such as limitations of physical, sensorial, cognitive, or psycho-social functions (Turner 2001; Hope 2011; see also Sørensen and Villadsen 2015). Consequently, body-sensitive diversity research needs to explicitly address its ontological premises and the place of the body therein as well as pay attention to the non-intended effects of participating in the ‘corporeal turn.’

Disability Studies and the Body: A Conflictual Relationship

When looking at the scholarly engagement with disability under emancipatory influences, it was—similar to the establishment of management and organization studies—initially linked to an act of *separation*. Hughes and Paterson (1997, p. 329) describe how a “mind/body dualism is reproduced by the distinction between disability and impairment” within “radical disability theory [that] proposes a disembodied subject.” This strategic dualism applied by early disability studies, which I will explain in detail in the following sections, can be understood as a response to the specific “system of exclusions” (Garland-Thomson 2005, p. 1557) that had developed since the ‘discovery’ of disability with the onset of industrialization in Europe. This is because the division of labor shifted from a collectively organized endeavor in agricultural societies to machine-aided, standardized and thereby individual-based forms of work (Oliver and Barnes 2012). As a consequence, people with functional limitations due to impairments or chronic illnesses, which might have been supported through their social networks and adjusted assign-

ments in community-based work settings, were now facing difficulties in finding work or permanent exclusion from paid work activities. Oliver and Barnes describe the formation of disability in terms of an intelligible social category as a “long process of constructing what was essentially a labour market issue into an individualized medical problem” (ibid., p. 16).

The Establishment of Disability Studies

This so-called medical model of disability is built around the assumption that disability is first and foremost the result of clearly detectable, individually embodied physical dysfunctions that mean an unmistakably personal tragedy for the respective persons (Barnes and Mercer 2005). Accordingly, the prevalent approach toward dealing with such a tragedy consists of treatment, rehabilitation, and compensation or, in the best case, the prevention of it in the first place (Oliver and Barnes 2012). All of these measures have in common that they are “geared toward bringing the individual as close to normalcy as possible” (Erevelles 2011, p. 19). Against this background, particularly since the Second World War, an extensive net of social benefits, separate services, and specialized institutions had developed in western societies, which provided some basic care for disabled people at the cost of imposed segregation (e.g., special schools, sheltered workshops) and lack of self-determination (e.g., residential homes) (Abberley 2002; Hurst 2003).

The inextricable link between disability-related welfare policies and a “narrative of abjection” (Garland-Thomson 2005, p. 1568), which insinuates that disability should be avoided “at all costs” (ibid.), is based on and reproduced by mostly implicit *ableist* norms and values. Ableism can be understood as a “network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability then is cast as a diminished state of being human” (Campbell 2001, p. 44). The framing of disability as the opposite of what is desirable or even acceptable in one’s life is deeply grounded in both naturalized (e.g., assumption of unambiguous, embodied deviance) and

morally unquestionable (e.g., assumption that re-/creation of body functions is thoroughly good) ‘everyday knowledge.’ Consequently, establishing forms of counter-knowledge that approach the topic of disability in terms of a “human variation rather than an inherent inferiority” (Garland-Thomson 2005, p. 1557) or a “non-tragic view (...) which encompasses positive social identities” (Swain and French 2000, p. 569) is the subject of much debate. One of the main discursive actors in this regard are disabled people themselves—by no means a homogeneous group—who have fought to make their voices heard for many decades now.

A central starting point for the self-advocacy of disabled people in contemporary western societies is that of the formation of disability movements emerging in the 1970s and 1980s. Inspired by the US-American civil rights movement as well as women’s movements in many western countries, disabled people started to organize themselves collectively as well, and demanded that disability-related policies should abandon their principles of “*patronage* and *charity*” (Goodley 2011, p. 3; emphasis in original). In the US, the notion of *independent living* gained momentum, which fundamentally questioned the almost automatic segregation of disabled people in parallel institutions such as specialized but isolated schools, sheltered workshops or residential homes. Instead, they propagated the need for “choice and control over their lives” (Hurst 2003, p. 572) and insisted that the infrastructure and social services of mainstream society must be made accessible and adjusted accordingly (Wacker 2012). The basic rationale was that it is not the occurrence of individual impairments as such that has a negative impact on the life of disabled people but rather their lack of autonomy: “[B]iology is not destiny. Impairment does not *necessarily* create dependency and a poor quality of life; rather it is the lack of control over the physical help needed which takes away people’s independence” (Morris 1996, p. 10; emphasis in original). In the British context it was the *Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation* (UPIAS) that developed the basic conceptual tools for deconstructing the idea of disability as an inescapable stroke of fate: “In our view, it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. (...) To understand this it is necessary to grasp the distinction between the

physical impairment and the social situation, called ‘disability’, of people with such impairment” (UPIAS 1975, p. 14).

These re-conceptualizations of disability—or more precisely: of disability and impairment—and their emphasis on societal conditions provided the foundation for the formation of disability studies as an academic discipline in the 1990s (Oliver and Barnes 2010; Shakespeare 1998). Broadly speaking, two streams of research have been particularly influential in the development of respective scientific knowledge (Shakespeare 2014; Thomas 2006): the social model of disability or materialist disability studies (e.g., Barnes et al. 2002; Oliver 1990) and, on the other hand, post-structuralist inspired research or cultural disability studies (e.g., Tremain 2005). Both research directions are linked to a certain understanding of the body, which in each case—though coming from different epistemological angles—leads to a neglect of the body as a relevant factor in itself. However, it is also important to acknowledge that the field of disability studies is currently undergoing a diversification process, which opens up space for theoretically unconventional eclecticism.

The Social Model of Disability and the Denied Body

With respect to the social model, the already mentioned separation between disability and impairment is decisive. Thereby, the body is simultaneously allocated a certain place, which can be largely understood as a ‘no-go area.’ Similar to the distinction between sex as the biological and gender as the socio-cultural and hence shapeable layer of the gender order, disability is conceptualized as being caused socially, while impairment is assigned a ‘matter-of-fact’ status based on biological and physical inevitabilities (see also Traustadóttir 2006). One effect of this dualistic approach is its potential for “politicization” (Foster and Fosh 2010, p. 562) because it is “no longer about individual medical conditions, which in some circumstances cannot be changed” (ibid.), but about how societal institutions and their ingrained ableist norms and values need to adjust: “On the whole, it is the organization of society, its material construction and the attitudes of individuals within it, that results in certain people being *dis-abled*” (Brisenden 1998, p. 23; emphasis by author).

Thus, the social model turns the common perspective on disability upside down: the impaired individual is no longer perceived as deficient; instead, society as a whole is seen as such because of its failure to deal with the different characteristics and needs of its members.

Another effect is, however, that the “shift to a social oppression model of disability consigns the bodily aspect of disability to a reactionary and oppressive discursive space” (Hughes and Paterson 1997, p. 328). This means that ‘bringing the body back in’ in terms of articulating its relevance for the well-being of disabled people becomes a highly sensitive topic—if not a taboo. The risk is perceived as too high that by (also) acknowledging body-related factors (e.g., functional limitations, pain, fatigue) a de-politicizing and individualizing of the primarily socially constructed disablement will be set in motion all over again (Shakespeare 1992). Furthermore, what makes an affirmative recourse to the significance of the body/embodiment particularly difficult is that the fight for disability rights is deeply coupled with the demands for “full autonomy and independence” (Shildrick 2015, p. 15) that allow disabled people “self-determination and control over one’s environment” (ibid.). Consequently, the social model of disability almost necessarily leads to a “re-enactment of a rationalist distinction that (everywhere) becomes a denial of the body and desire, (...) a body devoid of history, affect, meaning and agency” (Hughes and Paterson 1997, p. 329).

The Cultural Model of Disability and the Insignificant Body

In contrast, research in the realm of cultural disability studies fundamentally questions exactly this distinction between disability and impairment. The criticism is based on differing epistemological premises as well as on certain alternative strategic considerations. By relying on post-structuralist epistemologies that are suspicious toward any foundationalist assumptions based on ‘pre-social conditions,’ scholars emphasize the importance of discursively (re-)produced power relations for the stability of the prevalent ‘dis-/ability regime.’ Hughes and Paterson (1997, p. 333) summarize the basic idea of such an approach: “Impairment, in other words, is a product of discursive practices; like sex it is an effect, rather

than an origin, a performance rather than an essence. The re-iterative power of discourse perfects the performance so that the body not only becomes the materialisation of its diagnostic label, but also its own set of constraints and regulations. In this post-structuralist view, impairment is no longer a biological fact, but a discursive product.” Consequently, it is not the socio-material conditions of, for instance, inaccessible infrastructure and segregated or exclusionary employment settings that attract the most attention, but rather how dis-/ability and non-/impairment are represented in literature, pop culture, or historical artifacts (Goodley 2011). For Garland-Thomson (2002, p. 4), the “disabled figure” is used as a placeholder “for all forms that culture deems non-normative” (ibid.). This means the distinctions between disabled and non-disabled or impaired and non-impaired are not only governed by medical and socio-political interests but simultaneously overdetermined by their implicit function of stabilizing the boundaries between the normatively desired—often collapsing with normalcy—and the abnormal (see also Davis 2006).

Such a (de-)constructionist perspective on the relationship between dis-/ability and non-/impairment also bears consequences for strategies deemed feasible to enhance the life opportunities for people labeled as ‘disabled.’ In that sense, it is an anti-dualistic agenda that accompanies post-structuralist studies: “[A]ny Cartesian binary divide ‘normal’ versus ‘abnormal’ (...) can only come into being through explicit or implicit reference to its opposite. This turns the spotlight on the work that dualisms do in constituting and fixing the ‘impaired’ or ‘disabled’ as ‘other.’ The deconstruction, or transcendence, of modernist dualistic thinking has remained at the heart of post-structuralist projects in disability studies” (Thomas 2006, p. 180). As a consequence, the relational co-constitution of abilities and disabilities, impairments and non-impairments becomes relevant, which undermines the idea of disabled people ‘being or having a problem.’

The Relational Model of Disability and the Acknowledged Body

Although coming from such different epistemological angles, both streams of research have in common that they somehow neglect the body

and embodiment as units of analysis with a value in and of themselves. This denial of the individually impaired and socially disabled body being an interesting—and ethically necessary—research topic is connected to the assumption that engaging with the corporeal layer of enablement and disablement can hardly be compatible with emancipatory efforts. Against this background, establishing more body-sensitive diversity research might be judged as a regressive rather than progressive research endeavor. However, increasingly the cultural and social models of disability are not applied ‘in their pure form’ and additional approaches are gaining relevance, which pursue research reconciling disability studies with the lived experience of bodies perceived as different.

For instance, work associated with the so-called Nordic relational model of disability, which was established by mostly Scandinavian academics, conceptualizes disability as a mismatch between a person’s individual capabilities and the demands of the environment: “Disability is thus a relationship, and it is relative to the environment. It is also situational rather than an always present essence of the person: A blind person is not disabled when speaking on the telephone, and is exceptionally able when the lights have gone out” (Tøssebro 2004, p. 4). Other research cannot be assigned to a specific school of thought but is more or less relating to and emphasizing the importance of embodiment as (a core condition of) human existence, be it with or be it without experiencing impairment and disablement. In a next step, I will outline the concept of embodiment from a disability studies perspective and specify what we can learn from this perspective for body-sensitive diversity research in general.

Dis_ability and Embodiment: A Shimmering Relationship

The basis of embodiment as a concept builds on an ontology that fundamentally questions any assumptions of a pre-socially given, substantialist and atomized ‘world relationship’ in which connections between these entities are made only in retrospect. It rather assumes—consistent with

assumptions of radical relationism (Powell 2013)—that “phenomena are composed of relations and all action takes place through relations” (p. 190). Against this background, following Turner (2001), embodiment can be defined by three main components: First, embodiment is not a static condition but a social process, which takes place through an “ensemble of corporeal practices, which produce and give ‘a body’ its place in everyday life” (ibid., p. 260).

Second, embodiment is about the sensual and lived experience, which is enabled “in the context of everyday social relations” (ibid.) and at the same time shapes these very relations. Therefore, Turner argues that it would be false to assume that the focus on the lived, bodily experience is an individualistic endeavor. Instead, he underlines that embodiment is a “social project (...) within a social and historical world of interconnected social actors” (ibid.). In this context, I would even go one step further and relate to Barad’s (2003, p. 82) theory of posthumanist performativity in which she argues that “[a]ll bodies, not merely ‘human’ bodies, come to matter through the world’s iterative intra-activity.” Barad distinguishes the term *intra-action* from *interaction*, thereby emphasizing that life is not composed by independently preexisting entities or actors but rather by phenomena, which she describes as “dynamic topological reconfigurings/entanglements/relationalities/(re)articulations” (ibid., p. 818). Being so specific about the ontological conditions of embodiment is crucial, because whether substantial independences or relational entanglements are taken as a starting point for one’s ‘being in the world’ is often connected to a hierarchical classification of more or less valuable (human) forms of living, as Shildrick (2015, p. 24) argues plausibly: “Once it is acknowledged that a human body is not a discrete entity ending at the skin, and that material technologies constantly disorder our boundaries, either through prosthetic extensions or through the internalization of mechanical parts, it is difficult to maintain that those whose bodies fail to conform to normative standards are less whole or complete than others.”

The third element of Turner’s conceptualization of embodiment underlines the fact that the process of “making and becoming a body” (2001, p. 260) is simultaneously an ongoing enactment of “making a self” (ibid.). That is essential, since both the social and the cultural model of disability potentially neglect the complex, material-discursive nexus of

the *actual experience* of bodily impairment, context-depending in-/capabilities and forms of enablement/disablement, and how these experiences contribute to and continuously shape one's relation to self.

Scholarly work that combines an embodiment lens with a disability studies inspired perspective is confronted with the need to maneuver the tensions between emphasizing the commonness and ubiquity of disability in terms of lived experiences, while stressing the exceptionality of it in terms of its analytical potential and ethical significance. Approaches advocating to “demystify ‘the specialness of disability’” (Zola 2005, p. 19) refer to the vulnerability of the lived body and the inevitability of experiencing an impaired corporeality at some point in life as a matter of fact. For instance, Wendell (2010, p. 339) states that “[u]nless we die suddenly, we are all disabled eventually. Most of us will live part of our lives with bodies that hurt, that move with difficulty or not at all, that deprive us of activities we once took for granted or that others take for granted, bodies that make daily life a physical struggle.” For her, the omnipresence of the changing—and thereby potentially struggling—body needs to be accompanied by “[e]ncouraging everyone to acknowledge, accommodate and identify with a wide range of physical conditions” (ibid.). In a similar vein, but with a less fatalistic connotation, Lederer et al. (2014, p. 257) provide a dynamic understanding of disability in the work context, which ranges “from complete work ability to complete work disability or death with different degrees of work (dis)ability varying on the life course as a ‘normal’ part of life.” Against this background, using the term ‘dis_ability’ indicates such a dynamic and non-dualistic notion, allowing for disability to potentially becoming intelligible for (re-)constructions of the self without having to accept or reject the identity of ‘the disabled person.’

In contrast, scholarly work that underlines the exceptionality of the disabled body implicitly attributes to it a certain material-discursive condition, a particular quality that results from the ‘intrusiveness’ of the facticity of bodies and or/embodied behavior perceived as (too) different. For instance, Erevelles (2011) describes how disabled bodies have “proven to be *more recalcitrant*, reminding the medical and rehabilitation establishment of the limits of their authority in restoring the body its ‘normal’ state” (p. 2; emphasis by author). Similarly, Shildrick (2015, p. 16)

notes how when looking at the degrees of entanglement “the disabled body in its material specificities [can be understood] as a privileged exemplar of hybridity,” simultaneously stating that there is “nothing peculiar to the corporeality of disability” (ibid.). In this regard she refers to bodies that are connected to and transformed by organic or non-organic, internal or external, permanent or temporal, substituting or supplementary components that “point to the multiple possibilities of *co-corporeality*” (ibid.; emphasis by author). Furthermore, the disabled body is assumed to be a particularly suitable starting point for investigating the experience of pain and suffering, which is not left to the field of biology but rather perceived as “permeated with meaning” (Paterson and Hughes 1999, p. 602).

Summary and Outlook

Be it the emphasis on universality, be it attention to the particularity of disability, both streams of embodiment-related research agree that a non-dualistic approach, taking societal, material-discursive structures of disablement as well as embodied, actually lived experiences into account, can produce insights of a certain quality. On the one hand, this quality comprises a largely untapped epistemological potential, which results from looking at the margins of societies, organizations, or—in case of diversity research—one’s own field of study. It is, however, essential that the ‘obviously’ undesired, intentionally neglected, or fearfully denormalized is placed at the center of the research and understood as a rightful—if not necessary—gateway to deconstructing, questioning, and ‘re-centering’ the averagely desired, intentionally considered, and willingly normalized. This can also mean conceptualizing the bodies ‘out of order’ as possibly facilitating “transgressions” (Shildrick 2015, p. 24) bearing “the potential for productive change” (ibid.), which cannot be entirely foreseen in its un-/intended consequences for both disabled and non-disabled people alike. However, this is neither common sense nor a platitude, since even *within* academic discourse the topic of disability is still depicted as “the essentialist Other against which identities are demarcated as socially rather than corporally constituted” (Inckle 2014, p. 394).

For future research, this implies some degree of re-shifting or at least supplementing diversity research's predominant focus on social identity construction and bias-reducing HR policies. Instead, a research agenda is needed that builds on already existing studies on organizations and occupations and their role in de-/legitimizing and even co-shaping specific bodies at work (e.g., Acker 1990, 2006; Ashcraft 2013) and brings them together with the fundamental notion of the "entangled embodiment" (Dale and Latham 2015, p. 178) of *all* (human) beings. Thereby, an often—though usually unintended—perpetuation of dividing a workforce into 'mainstream' (simultaneously disembodied and enabled) and 'diverse' (embodied and potentially dis-abled) organizational members can be avoided.

On the other hand, the quality of such a non-dualistic approach suggests a particular *etho-ontological* stance that takes entanglement, dependence, and co-corporeality as the basis for any form of 'being in the world.' Similarly, Dale and Latham (2015, p. 170) state that it is the acknowledgment of human and non-human "inter-corporeality that allows the possibility for recognition of, response to and responsibility for the other." These ideas of co- and inter-corporeality are particularly important when approaching the topic of embodied impairment and connected experiences of disablement. This is because the notion of co-corporeality questions the norm of the insular, self-contained body concerning both disabled and non-disabled people alike. The notion of inter-corporeality emphasizes the idea of the 'intra-connectedness' underlying any form of 'being in the world' and thereby adding an affective layer to the *etho-ontological* stance. As Wendell (2010, p. 345) writes, disabled people are often approached as 'the other,' which is deeply connected to affective responses: "If you are 'other' to me, I see you primarily as symbolic of something else – usually, but not always, something I reject and fear and that I project onto you." Against this background, the ideas of co- and inter-corporeality cannot only be used for conceptual and analytical purposes, but also provide a basis for affective imaginations toward an affirmative recognition of dis_ability that takes corporeal vulnerability and change as a starting point and not as an (undesired) exception.

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5

The Sick Body: Conceptualizing the Experience of Illness in Senior Leadership

Peter P. Ghin

Introduction

Scholars are paying increasing attention to the importance of the body in leadership (Ladkin 2013; Ropo et al. 2013; Sinclair 2011; Johansson et al. 2017); however, a common feature of this research is the assumption of ‘corporeal intactness’, that is, leaders’ bodies tend to be considered as unfailingly healthy objects. Consequently, there has been limited exploration of the relationship between illness and leadership, instead the focus has been on the body of the ‘well’ (Gherardi et al. 2013). I suggest that conceptualizing the ‘sick body’ offers an important avenue for leadership research, particularly in a modern management context in which demonstrating mastery over one’s body has become an increasingly essential part of managerial identity (White 2012).

As the task of leading organizations becomes more competitive and complex and cultures of overwork are viewed as the new normal (Bunting

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2004), greater pressure is placed on senior leaders to meet performance expectations. As those in senior leadership positions look for ways to maintain energy and motivation for their work, the body has become fertile ground for leader development (cf. Quick et al. 2007; MacGregor and Semler 2012). This is most obviously apparent in western, liberal democracies where there has been an increasing preoccupation with personal health and well-being, defying biological limitations, and monitoring bodily performance (Kirkland 2014; Lupton 2012). Leaders are increasingly being moulded by expectations of ‘corporate athleticism’ (Meriläinen et al. 2013; Johansson et al. 2017; Kelly et al. 2007), which has made health and fitness integral to contemporary leadership discourse and practice.

I suggest there has been somewhat of a collective failure of imagination when it comes to conceptualizing the leaders’ body as an object that is vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the flesh. This may in part be because of the low visibility of the sick-bodied leader, a reality which itself speaks to the general intolerance for public displays of illness among those who occupy high status positions. A visibly unwell leader does not inspire shareholder confidence and there can be career repercussions for exhibiting an ailing body (Casserley and Megginson 2009). Moreover, illness manifests the emergence of a sick body which I argue, threatens to undermine idealized representations of leadership that have remained stubbornly wedded to notions of heroic individualism (Collinson and Tourish 2015).

In a time when ‘we are increasingly coming to relate to ourselves as “somatic” individuals’ (Rose 2007a), the corporeally intact body lends legitimacy to leaders by projecting images of strength, control, and self-discipline. By contrast, the sick body is unable to perform according to individual, organizational, or social expectations of leadership; and although senior leaders may have greater resources at their disposal to manage a sick body, they are not immune to experiencing the physical, mental, and psychosocial effects of sickness. I argue that conceptualizing the sick body offers up an opportunity to understand an overlooked dimension sickness in leadership, thereby challenging the mythology of the heroic body, and is instead grounding leadership in the messy realities of the body at work.

Defining the 'Sick Body' in Senior Leadership

The terms 'disease', 'illness', and 'sickness' are often used interchangeably but are commonly understood to respectively refer to the medical, personal, and social aspects of human ailment (Hofmann 2002). Sickness, therefore, is used here to explicitly denote 'the negative bodily occurrences as conceived of by the society and/or its institutions' (Hofmann 2002, p. 657). Sickness is a status that becomes visible and interpretable by the standards established by the social world and reflects 'a bargain struck between the person henceforward called "sick", and a society which is prepared to recognize and sustain him' (Marinker 1975, p. 83). Being sick then is not an experience that is determined entirely by the internal process of the organic body but is also 'shaped by the cultural meanings attached to health and illness and by the varied physical environments in which they occur' (Shilling 2008, p. 105). Whilst sickness may manifest in numerous ways, the sick body as it is theorized here, specifically, encompasses the emergence of serious illness, whether chronic or acute. This is because it is these more intrusive illness experiences that are likely to cause a deeper confrontation with the limitations of the body at work (Charmaz 2010), and therefore pose a more immediate threat to idealized constructions of leadership.

Therefore, the conceptualization of the sick body as it is presented here is located within a social context, which places the individual leader's experience of illness within a health environment that offers up endless body possibilities and expectations of body mastery (Sinclair 2005b). Moreover, the sick body is situated within an economic context that assumes the enduring productive capacities of senior leaders, who, as the figureheads of neoliberal ideology, should never tire (Cannon 2011), demonstrate vulnerability (Fletcher 1994), or become sick (Michel 2011).

Despite the fantasy of inhabiting illness-free bodies, however, sickness remains a central experience of the human condition and is 'intimately involved in shaping people's actions and identities' (Shilling 2008, p. 104). Having to deal with illness, even for the modern leader, is hardly an exceptional experience. In the developed western world, continual improvements in living standards and medical care have meant that

society is grappling with the effects of a chronically ill working population, which includes those found at the top of the organizational hierarchy. In Australia, 25 per cent of professionals and 22 per cent of managers are living with a chronic illness, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or musculoskeletal disorder (The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2009).

The idealization of leader corporeality exists as part of a broader discourse in which leadership itself continues to be a highly romanticized construct. Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich (1985, p. 96) have famously argued the persistence of romantic and heroic leadership myths is grounded in beliefs that leaders ‘have the ability to control and influence the fates of the organizations in their charge’. This oversimplification of leaders’ influence on organizational performance is evident in popular business literature which has a tendency to attribute ‘total agency to the intentions and actions of top CEOs’ (Tourish 2013, p. 11), without critically examining the relationship between the individual leader and *actual* firm performance. This is despite strong empirical evidence that suggests that the actions of CEOs may have only a marginal impact on organizational performance overall (Fitza 2014, 2017). In an attempt to explain the psychological mechanism behind the human impulse to romanticize leadership, Meindl and Becker (2004, p. 464) suggest that such a desire may be borne from a deeply ingrained need to relieve existential anxiety:

The romance of leadership involves a psychology that highlights the benefits of attributing outcomes to leadership. The faithful belief in leadership is itself beneficial in providing a sense of comfort and security, in reducing feelings of uncertainty, and in providing a sense of human agency and control.

I suggest that this ‘faithful belief in leadership’ is threatened by the visible expression of sickness; it can undermine perceptions of leader ‘agency and control’ and create organization panic amongst those who believe their success (and survival) to be intimately tied to that of their leaders (Freud 1922, p. 15). What is in reality a perfectly normal experience, affecting any individual with a body, becomes a signifier of weakness and incompetence in leadership (Bunker 1997; Frost 2003).

Kidel (1988, p. 5) argues that peoples' negative perception of illness in the workplace is a direct result of the competitive nature of work cultures: 'a world in which vulnerability, fallibility and weakness are perceived as undermining the roles and goals common to most workplaces'. For leaders to compete successfully and consistently in such environments, their bodies must always be at their productive best; the sick body, however, undermines the illusory images of strength, control, and self-discipline that have been firmly attached to the mythology of those in power. These are myths that have become further entrenched by the emergence of technologies that have tapped into the desire of human kind to demonstrate bodily mastery and overcome the 'weaknesses' of the flesh (Lupton 2013; Ehrenreich 2018).

The Corporate Athlete at Work

In an era of the somatic society (Rose 2007a), scholars have illustrated how visible physical attributes such as gender (Trethewey 1999), race (Ospina and Foldy 2009), height (Judge and Cable 2004), weight (Roehling et al. 2007), age (Riach and Cutcher 2014), disability (Roulstone and Williams 2014), and sexuality (Harding et al. 2011) can be viewed as straying from the normative standards that govern the identity of organizational leaders. What is being argued here is that the idealization of physical fitness has also become central to this discourse such that the body becomes a site 'through which to differentiate oneself as "a winner" – supremely focused, self-disciplined and beyond physical weakness or limitation' (Sinclair 2005a, p. 94). Where the management of one's health was once perceived as narcissistic self-absorption, it has now 'achieved unparalleled ethical salience' (Rose 2007b, p. 21), and there appears to be a growing expectation that all individuals should strive to be their best possible illness-free selves (Ehrenreich 2018). The fit body has become an object of idealization, paving the way for an increasing preoccupation with physical athleticism as a marker of modern leadership identity.

Being a member of the leadership elite may bring with it the trappings of wealth, power, and prestige; however, the margin for error in top man-

agement positions is increasingly narrow. Executive churn has become par for the course and corporate memory is short; leaders 'routinely get fired or laid off despite their contributions and past performance' (Pfeffer, in Leavy 2016, p. 8). The inherent characteristics of senior leadership also means that occupying these roles is highly stressful; the demands of long working hours, frequent travel, constant high-pressure decision-making, competitiveness, private and public accountability, and the dissipation of any work/life separation, can invariably take its toll on a leader's health (Little et al. 2007). One response to managing the demands of modern leadership has been to fortify the body through the construction of athletic ideals, a phenomenon which is commonly referred to in management literature as 'corporate athleticism' (Gavin et al. 2003; Meriläinen et al. 2013; Riach and Cutcher 2014).

In their acerbic critique of the wellness industry, Cederström and Spicer (2015, p. 40) suggest that the Protestant work ethic of tireless work and a frugal life has been replaced by 'corporate athletes who commit themselves to constant exercise and health monitoring'. These corporate athletes are easily identifiable in the world of the business elite, whose heroic efforts might include running marathons, engaging in extreme sports, embracing the latest dieting trends, adopting polyphasic sleep routines, using cognitive enhancing drugs, and obsessively collecting body metrics (Loehr and Schwartz 2001; Cederström 2016; Sahakian and Morein-Zamir 2007; Lupton 2013; Johansson et al. 2017). Embodying an athletic persona has also become central to the 'corporate brand' of many high-profile leaders, and displaying an active body through participation in elite sports is often used as a means of reinforcing prestige and the masculine ideals of leadership.

The discourse of athleticism is increasingly common in business literature where physical fitness is increasingly portrayed as *de rigueur* in elite leadership circles (The Economist 2015). As White (2012, p. 268) notes, 'the well shaped and maintained body is used to show to others that we discipline and control ourselves, and that we are worthy, indeed, superior members of society'. For business leaders then, the athletic body is something to be worked at and accomplished, and is an object that is made use of to project an idealized leadership imaginary. But corporate athleticism is about more than simply impression management; pragmatically,

cultivating good physical health is also perceived as a necessary way of *coping with* and *protecting against* the negative health effects of modern executive life. As cultures of ‘working extremely’ become normalized (Bloomfield and Dale 2015), optimal conditioning of the body is increasingly viewed as an effective way of ensuring sustained ‘energy management’ and reducing the occurrence of executive stress and burnout (Quick et al. 2007). Therefore, even those senior organizational leaders, who do not necessarily identify with the moniker of the ‘corporate athlete’, may still engage in like practices because they perceive them as necessary to the efficacious fulfilment of leadership roles.

Adopting the philosophy of corporate athleticism is also perceived to be of value beyond the individual executive, and has been posited as an important part of organizational success. Neck et al. (2000, p. 836) note the ‘tremendous significance’ of a leader’s physical fitness and deem it to be ‘a crucial factor in determining the success of the company’. This framing perpetuates a highly individualistic interpretation of leadership which closely entwines individual leader health with organizational success. Such a perspective allows little room for sickness because a company’s fate is believed to hang in the balance if its leader becomes unwell.

This can be evidenced in its extreme in the world of global politics when, during the US presidential race of 2016, Hillary Clinton appeared to collapse in full view of the cameras (Tiefenthäler 2016). The ensuing media hysteria was exploited by the Republican Party to call into question Clinton’s fitness for office and seek to undermine her campaign (Bordo 2017). This incident precipitated urgent calls for both candidates to release their medical records, in an apparent attempt to reassure the public that their new commander-in-chief inhabited a ‘fit for purpose’ body. In an irony that demonstrates the way an individual’s health status intersects with a leader’s professional identity management, it has since been revealed (by President Trump’s personal physician) that the now President of the United States dictated his own medical statement which proclaimed him to be the ‘healthiest individual ever elected to the presidency’ (McCarthy 2018).

Concerns regarding the potentially negative impact of the sick-bodied leader on an organization’s success are also evident in the argument for mandatory disclosure of illness at senior executive levels. Echoing the call

for the presidential disclosure of medical records, Perryman et al. (2010, p. 24) suggest that the health of a CEO should be treated as a 'material fact requiring disclosure' when they are 'unable to work for an extended period of time' or when they have an 'illness that has the possibility of shortening the lifespan of the CEO'. The fear being articulated here is that CEO illness has the potential to engender organizational panic, disrupt markets, and, therefore, damage company profitability.

The critique made here is not to diminish the importance of illness disclosure nor to suggest that the relationship between health and leadership needs to be a spurious one. It seems logical to presume, as some researchers have, that fit leaders 'are better able to handle the enormous demands and pressures that confront them' (Neck et al. 2000, pp. 835–836). Rather, the purpose here is to question how a model of leadership that so strongly aligns itself to athletic-like performance standards, which are themselves embedded in fantasies of heroic individualism, will receive the bodies of its sick leaders? Of specific interest here then, are not the practices or discourses of athleticism themselves, but rather how they contribute to reinforcing particular leader identities and disavowing others.

There is an emerging body of literature critiquing the corporate athlete phenomenon and of its contribution in shaping a new ethic of work (Kelly et al. 2007). The research that has been specifically focussed on leadership has questioned the normalizing effects of these new body standards, particularly with regard to recruitment (Meriläinen et al. 2013) and the reification of traditional, masculinized leader identities (Sinclair 2005a; Johansson et al. 2017). Whilst much of this work identifies ways in which discourses of athleticism promote idealized notions of leader embodiment, there has thus far been little attention paid to the manner in which they obscure the realities of sickness in leadership. Sinclair (2005b, pp. 389–390) suggests that leaders who are 'seen as physically weak or frail' can 'become suspect in leadership terms' but what is currently not well understood is the ways in which illness may violate the traditional myths of leadership and how this stigmatizes those leaders who may manifest a sick body.

As body management practices become more central to conveying professional credibility (Adamson and Johansson 2016), this invariably

places pressure on those bodies that do not conform to expectations. In a culture where personal well-being and bodily self-improvement is normalized, an impression is created that if people combine the right practices with the right technology, body mastery is imminently achievable as is the prevention of illness and disease (Lupton 2013). However, health and the absence of illness are determined by multiple factors (e.g. genes, environment, and injury), and control over one's body is not so easily guaranteed. In this context, it is uncertain how a senior leader, who may have internalized expectations of body mastery, comes to terms with sickness, and a potentially stigmatized workplace identity.

In Search of the Sick-Bodied Leader

Within organization studies, exploring the role of bodies has enabled a new way of conceptualizing leadership beyond dominant cognitive and functionalist paradigms; however, as Gherardi et al. (2013) note, the majority of the extant research has thus far been on the bodies of the 'well'. Additionally, non-critical research into 'embodied leadership' has exhibited a tendency to view the body as an object available for instrumental ends. The contention of this stream of literature is that a heightened somatic awareness benefits both leaders and the organizations they lead (Hamill 2011, 2013; Ladkin and Taylor 2010). Paying attention to the body is said to cultivate 'a more thoughtful, critical, self-awareness that ultimately leads to more inclusive leadership' (Hanold 2013, p. 91). Incorporating embodied perspectives is also purported to support leader identity work by making leaders 'more conscious of the multifaceted nature of their own identity, how that identity is performed, and what that identity represents to others in an organizational setting' (Holzmer 2013, p. 55).

I suggest that such claims tend to reinforce individualistic leadership tropes that privilege leaders' agency as primary causal factors in organizational success (Collinson and Tourish 2015). Moreover, much like the non-critical discourses of athleticism, these instrumental arguments have a propensity to lionize the body by overstating opportunities without acknowledging corporeal fragilities. The leaders' body is always

assumed to be in a state of corporeal constancy, and little attention is paid to the more challenging lived reality of senior leadership.

The sick-bodied leader is not entirely absent from the public imaginary, however. The illnesses of high-profile C-suite executives do occasionally make the headlines of the business press; Steve Jobs' denial, disclosure, and subsequent death from pancreatic cancer is probably the most widely reported example of this (Childs and Dolak 2011). However, the focus of such reporting is usually on a leader's ethical duty of disclosure or the potential negative impact of these events on markets (Perryman et al. 2010). Such narratives tend to shun rather than embrace the sick body, thereby marginalizing illness experiences and reinforcing dominant leadership discourses. Illness narratives are also found in the motivational texts of modern day leaders who have fought and won their 'battles' against their sick body (e.g. Hoque and Dishman 2015). Whilst no doubt inspiring to some, such literatures often have the effect of mythologizing leaders further, by locating them as the principal actors in heroic narratives that prove their moral fibre and their ability to overcome the weaknesses of the flesh.

There have also been numerous political pathographies that have dissected leaders' illness experiences, such as Churchill's depression, Franklin J. Roosevelt's polio affliction, or John F. Kennedy's chemical dependency (allegedly precipitated by severe back pain) (Post and Robins 1993; Park 1988; Ghaemi 2011). As historical interpretations of the struggles of 'great men' these works make for interesting reading; teasing out the complexities of illness disclosure for world leaders and the propensity for high status figures to disguise the sick body from public view. These are important issues no doubt; however, ultimately these stories appear to be painfully distant expositions of sickness that are far from up to the task of reimagining a less heroic or masculine leadership ideal.

With a couple of notable exceptions, qualitative accounts of the sick body are rare in leadership studies literature. One of these exceptions appears in the form of an article in the *Journal of Management Studies*; here, a senior academic candidly reflects upon her experience of returning to her role in academia after having had open-heart surgery (Prothero 2017). Upon re-entering the workplace the author notes how even seemingly prosaic events such her inability to open the 'very heavy doors' to

her office building, led her to question; 'If I couldn't even open the door how on earth would I be able to teach or carry out my research activities?' (Prothero 2017, p. 120). Prothero's physical impairment forced to her to re-evaluate her relationship with work because she was no longer able to 'working ridiculously long hours' (Prothero 2017, p. 122).

That Prothero's story appeared in a top-tier management journal is significant. It represents a rare first-person account of illness that describes the lived experience of inhabiting a sick body in academic life, particularly, how it can impact professional identity and an individual's relationship with work. Her sickness seemingly caused her to adjust habituated ways of being (Charmaz 1995) because it called to attention previous unchallenged limitations to her productive capacities. For Prothero, the realization that she was no longer able to 'work extremely' (Bloomfield and Dale 2015) catalysed a conflict with, in this instance, the expectations of senior academics looking to attain (and retain) coveted positions within academia. Her experiences appear to have sparked a rallying cry against the systemic nature of overwork, especially the 'impact the constant need to perform at exceptionally high levels has on health and wellbeing' (Prothero 2017, p. 122).

Beyond singular, first-person accounts of illness, it is Michel's (2011) nine-year ethnography of investment bankers which presents the most thorough qualitative investigation of professionals' experiences of illness in the workplace. Whilst framed as a study of knowledge workers rather than leaders per se, the longitudinal study design incorporates the bankers' transition from graduate to senior leadership positions, and documents how bodies resist, relent, and sometimes renew themselves in the face of workplace challenges. Over time, a proportion of Michel's participants had to contend with an embodied crisis, usually a health challenge of some kind, which the author attributes to investment banking's culture of overwork.

Michel's (2011) research is a cautionary and partially redemptive narrative that contrasts mechanisms of embodied organizational controls with the activation of individual agency in the aftermath of illness. The author argues that some individuals were able to 'transcend socialization' by engaging in a process of surrendering their taxing habitual modes of behaviour and finding more creative ways to undertake their work. These

leaders ‘were creative because they had to reconcile the banks’ and the body’s demands’ (Michel 2011, p. 350), which meant changing workplace behaviours by reducing working hours, increasing task delegation, and improving subordinate relationships.

Michel’s (2011) work provokes deeper questioning about the relationship between illness and leadership; it is particularly important in its visceral illustration of the lived reality of professional bodies in the workplace and how the sick body can positively reframe relationships with work. However, whilst it may be tempting to read the author’s research through a redemptive lens, it is worth noting that only a small proportion of Michel’s investment bankers responded to illness by positively adapting their workplace behaviours—a significant proportion did not. This is perhaps not surprising in competitive organizational climates where working hard long hours is worn as a badge of honour (Svetieva et al. 2017) and is seen as an intrinsic part of professional identity. Such work cultures invariably disadvantage those leaders’ bodies that are not able to keep up with the expectations of those in senior leadership positions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The lived reality of the sick-bodied leader conflicts sharply with leadership discourses which are still predominantly grounded in notions of heroic individualism. It is true that post-heroic leadership discourses such as authentic (Avolio and Gardner 2005) and servant (Greenleaf 2002) leadership have attempted to steer leader characterizations away from the mythological towards the more humane. However, Pfeffer’s (2015, 2016) observation that years of post-heroic leadership research has thus far failed to have any significant impact on the actual practice of leadership, perhaps demonstrates how profoundly and inextricably entwined expectations of leaders are with the economic drivers of performance, productivity, and efficiency.

Moreover, given the continued dominance of men in senior leadership roles, it should not be surprising that while there has been some change in macro discourses, ‘the everyday narrative about leadership and leadership practices...remains stuck in old images of heroic individualism’

(Fletcher 2004, p. 652). Feminist scholars have argued that part of the reason for the enduring relationship between leadership and the heroic body is that the attributes associated with a post-heroic identity—for example, vulnerability, collaboration, and interdependency—are considered to be aligned with displays of femininity and therefore conflict with the normative status of leadership as a masculine endeavour (Fletcher 2002, 2004). Though this may be the case, it is notable that even post-heroic discourses have thus far failed to articulate a humanity that incorporates the fragilities of the flesh, principally because modern ideologies of leadership remain mostly grandiose (Alvesson 2013).

The predominant image of leadership is still ‘of an individual ascending to, or occupying, a position of hierarchical power, competently adapting to his or her environment, and wielding his or her influence to achieve financial (or otherwise measurable) results’ (Petriglieri and Petriglieri 2015, p. 631). The linearity of this journey has not changed just because one can now identify as an ‘authentic’ or ‘servant’ leader; the assumptions of corporeal constancy remain intact, disappearing the possibility of the sick body as a validly lived reality of leadership.

In an era in which the fit, masculine, and malleable leader’s body is king, I suggest that we can add the sick body to the list of bodies that are viewed as falling short of leadership’s normative standards, including the ‘leaky’ and ‘sexy’ bodies of women, and the non-white, non-heterosexual, transgendered, fat, ageing, and disabled bodies. Leaders who inhabit a sick body are likely to experience themselves as having to negotiate the stigma associated with a spoiled identity (Goffman 1963/1991), or more accurately in this instance, a ‘spoiled leader identity’. Though stigma research has generally been applied to low-status individuals in the workplace (cf. McGonagle and Barnes-Farrell 2014), it is relevant here as a useful way of understanding how illness can ‘discredit’ the identity of high status individuals. There has been a tendency to assume that ‘status shields’ (Hochschild 2003) will insulate those in positions of organizational power from experiencing stigma, however, as research into overweight and obese leaders suggests, where one’s health is concerned, organizational seniority does not necessary protect leaders from becoming targets of stigmatization (King et al. 2016; Roehling et al. 2009).

It is unclear whether the stigmas associated with bodyweight and leadership shed any light on how leaders who experience serious illness may also become stigmatized in the workplace. There are undoubtedly many factors at play here, including the nature of an illness, its severity and visibility, individual temperament, organizational culture, and so on. What is difficult to argue against, however, is that status alone is unlikely to protect sick-bodied leaders from fears of being labelled ‘weak’ or ‘incompetent’ (Frost 2003; Bunker 1997). Further, expectations that those in senior leadership positions will keep a ‘stiff upper lip’ mean that a ‘person with higher status, such as a leader, who has greater social power relative to others is less likely to express suffering’ (Dutton et al. 2014, p. 289). The fear of possible career ramifications due to illness is also likely to affect a leader’s propensity to disclose illness or to engage in help-seeking behaviours (Veiga 2000). These are factors that contribute to the ongoing invisibility of the sick body in leadership.

I suggest that displays of sickness expose the fragility of leader corporeality; these are not ‘superhuman’ individuals after all, rather they are usually very ordinary beings who cannot exhort ultimate control over their bodies. Sickness disrupts a leader’s symbolic status as the embodiment of organizational power, and conflicts with the fantasies of leadership (Gabriel 2015; Meindl et al. 1985), particularly what have come to be recognized as the masculine attributes of strength, control, and self-discipline. Rather the experience of illness implies weakness, dependency, incompetence, and a failure of self-management that continues to be fundamentally dissonant with our idealization of leaders and leadership.

Stories of sickness in leadership continue to chiefly exist outside the scholarly domain, and a sick body that is not replete with moral tales or phoenix-like reinvention is yet to meaningfully penetrate leadership studies. The work of Prothero (2017) and Michel (2011) has begun this dialogue but it is important to contextualize the experience of the sick-bodied leader beyond viewing it simply as a response to the demands of modern work. It also needs to be understood as being *enabled by* and a *response to*, the heroic imagery of leadership which has been stubbornly resistant to change and further emboldened by contemporary health discourses and practices.

I suggest that giving greater visibility to the leaders' sick body is an important dimension of progressing the static discourses of leadership and challenging the images of corporeal constancy to which they are currently beholden. This is not only of relevance to workplaces but also to those educational and research institutions that continue to propagate leadership mythologies instead of the possibility that leaders 'share the same foibles, weaknesses, doubts, dilemmas, and worries as the rest of us' (Collinson and Tourish 2015, p. 591). By revealing the sick-bodied leader, it is hoped that a different leadership discourse may begin to emerge; one that brings illness away from the margins of leader experience and is grounded in the fleshy realities of leading organizations.

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Part II

Empirical Studies of Diversity and Affective Embodiment



6

Uniform Matters: Body Possibilities of the Gendered Soldier

Sine N. Just, Line Kirkegaard, and Sara Louise Muhr

Introduction

There is no doubt that the uniform matters. For military personnel, it is an important signal of one's position in terms of hierarchy (rank) and specialization (e.g. navy vs army). The uniform is a material and symbolic marker of identity and belonging, and it is key to creating and

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understanding the ‘*esprit de corps*’ for which the military is so famous (Carreiras 2006). However, the military uniform is also a historically gendered artefact, and it is heavily debated in relation to how gender is and can be embodied, expressed, and felt within the military (Höpfl 2003; Sasson-Levy 2011). On the one hand, the uniform is argued to minimize sexual harassment and other forms of gender discrimination as it erases bodily differences, making working bodies genderless. This, the argument goes, means the uniform engenders equality and inclusion, enabling all soldiers to identify with each other and with the military regardless of the differences that might characterize their civilian identities. On the other hand, however, the uniform may be perceived as an instrument of heteronormative male dominance, meaning that the uniform entails the assumption of a heterosexual male body and that any non-conforming bodies are marked as deviant from the norm and/or marginalized within the institutional context of the military. Even as women enter this context, the reasoning ends, they become subjected to male norms and standards; the uniform is a (not so subtle) means of reducing and controlling the bodies of soldiers (Carreiras 2006; Carreiras and Kümmel 2008; Muhr and Sløk-Andersen 2017).

These two positions may be pitted against each other, but they may also be perceived as less than dichotomous; instead, reflecting the dynamic and ongoing tensions of gender inclusion in the military. As more women do, indeed, become soldiers, they experience the pressure to conform, but also put pressure on the military to reform. The uniform, we believe, is a key site of such tension and contention. Thus, this chapter investigates the ways in which the military uniform affectively relates body possibilities of enacting profession with gendered identities. Theoretically, the investigation begins from the affective turn in organization studies, but seeks to show that turning to affect does not require us to turn away from discourse. Taking the intersection of affect and discourse as our point of departure, we conceptualize and study affective-discursive body possibilities as experienced and expressed by male and female soldiers. Empirically, this investigation is couched within a larger study of a change process in the Danish military, consisting of interviews and training sessions with—as well as observations of—employees in the main HR department. In the larger study, informants both had military and civilian

backgrounds, but for the present investigation we focus on the soldiers who have served/are serving actively, asking how their body possibilities are affectively figured in relation to the uniform. Inspired by the way in which Pullen et al. (2017) mobilize Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) notion of becoming-woman, we develop four affective figures of body possibilities from our empirical material: becoming-soldier, becoming-woman-not-soldier, becoming-soldier-not-woman, and becoming-soldier-woman. These four figures structure the analysis and provide the basis for the discussion that concludes the chapter.

Conceptual Framework: Affect Theory and Its Relevance for Studying Gendered Bodies in Organizations

While the study of affect is emerging as a vital approach for organization studies (see inter alia Fotaki et al. 2014a, 2017; Kenny et al. 2011; Kenny 2012; Linstead and Pullen 2006; Vachhani 2013), its specific characteristics and features remain disputed (Hemmings 2005; Wetherell 2012). Affect is not a thing or an entity, nor is it an identifiable process. It is a disturbance, a ripple, an indication of a movement, not an actual action; it is an unspecified intensity rather than a named feeling (Thrift 2008). Although it is difficult to define exactly what affect is, for most affect theorists, distinguishing affect from emotions constitutes a first step in delineating not only what affect is *not*, but also in saying what it is. Whereas emotions are individual feelings, affect has been theorized as shared sentiment (Wetherell 2012), the sociality of emotions (Ahmed 2014). Further, affect refers to the politics of emotions, to the moulding of feeling in relation to a dominant cultural imagery, which shapes subjectivities (Ahmed 2004). More specifically, affect is:

what hits us when we walk into a room and inexplicably sense an atmosphere, an ineffable aura, tone or spirit that elicits particular sensations. It is what is evoked by bodily experiences as they pass from person to person, in a way that is contagious but remains unspoken. (Fotaki et al. 2014a, p. 1)

Affect is a vital force, which moves and directs bodies, disrupting and organizing individual dispositions and social constitutions, without itself being fully visible or knowable (e.g. Thrift 2008; Massumi 2002).

Within gender and organization studies, one well-known example of how affect disrupts and organizes has to do with what happens when a woman enters an otherwise all-male group of professionals. The change in the room does not only happen at the level of individual and articulatable emotions; instead, something happens at a collective, affective level, which changes the atmosphere in the room and the mood of its occupants independently of any conscious and/or volitional feelings and desires of the involved individuals and/or the group as a whole. The reaction to the woman is contagious and may rearrange the dynamics of the group, not only in relation to the woman, but also in terms of the group's interactions as such. Here, the difference between affect and emotions is important: the emotions that the men (or the woman) might feel (irritation, distrust, anger, arousal, pride, and loss of self-confidence) should not be confused with affect, which is the movement and force that travels the room in response to the newly present body. Affect is what hits them; emotion is their explanation of this force and their justification of how they reacted to it. Brennan (2004) suggests that emotion is best thought of as affect organized with quality and significance in an individual—for instance, the annoyance or irritation a person displays when interrupted—while affect itself is something 'wilder', less controllable, but also less specified (Wetherell 2012, p. 2).

Affect, then, is a kind of collective force that circulates the room as a gust of wind bursting and discharging energy in ways that make people react by, for example, changing their body language or behaviour. Affect itself has no body, but it materializes in and as, often involuntary and/or unconscious, bodily reactions. As Massumi (1995, p. 86) aptly puts it: 'the skin is faster than the word'. This implies conceptualizing bodies less as entities and more as processes, urging us to understand bodies as what they can do (and thereby how they influence other people) rather than what they are (Blackman and Venn 2010). The focus is on the body's capacities to affect and be affected (Massumi 2002) and the aim is to understand how encounters between bodies afford affectivity—rather than what individuals feel (Wetherell 2015).

Affect, Body, Discourse

Understanding of affect as a shared force complicates the relationship between bodies and discourse, but also makes this relationship more interesting and relevant for the study of gender constructions in organizations. That is, if affect is unspecified and, perhaps, unspecifiable intensity, bodily experience is not readily available discursively. There are, however, different perceptions of whether affect obstructs or mediates the body-discourse relationship. For scholars such as Massumi, Clough, Thrift, and Brennan, affect is as a vital force or movement ‘belonging to a bodily sphere that is prior to and often disrupts or disturbs established cognitive/discursive patterns’ (Knudsen and Stage 2014, p. 5). Here, the ontology of affect precedes its discursive organization and, hence, its epistemology; what *is* affectively is prior to what is articulated discursively, thereby disrupting the Foucauldian pattern of power/knowledge. Affect is a bodily force (or a force working on the body) that pre-exists discursive processes and disrupts discursive regularities. These affect theorists, in sum, offer affect as an occasion to turn away from discourse.

However, Wetherell (2012, 2015) and other scholars such as Leys and Blackman propose another conceptualization of affect as arising alongside discourse rather than ontologically prior to it. For Leys (2011, p. 437), a definition of affect as ‘independent of (...) and prior to ideology – that is, prior to intentions, meanings, reasons, and beliefs’ (Leys 2011, p. 437) is theoretically problematic as it privileges ‘...the “body” and its affects over the “mind” in straightforwardly dualist terms’ (Leys 2011, p. 468). Such a reversal of the classic Cartesian dualism between body and mind impedes the conceptualization and study of affect, she argues (and we agree); if affect is a pre-discursive force (and nothing but a pre-discursive force) it quite simply is difficult to talk about, let alone theorize (Bollmer 2013; La Caze and Lloyd 2011). In terms of empirical study and practical experience, the problem is that it is not only difficult to identify, but also to analyse and report upon affect, if we consider it to be separate from and prior to discursive constructs.

Since our aim is to propose an affectively motivated turn to the materiality of the body, we take the pre- (or non-)discursive theorization of affect seriously. However, we also want to suggest that affective

experiences of bodily materiality can be narrated, accounted for discursively, meaning we side with those who seek to bring discourse ‘back in’. Not all affective force is immediately or necessarily articulatable, but neither is affected always and invariable beyond discourse. Our study focuses on the points at which these two dynamics intersect. That is, the empirical purpose of our project is to elaborate how body possibilities are affectively figured in relation to the uniform, and we seek to conceptualize this as an instance of affective entanglement with—and even motivation from—discourse. Without this conceptual base, we would not, as Leys (2011) insists, be able to investigate bodily affectivities at all.

To understand the details of how discourse and affect are related, a definition of discourse as well as of affect is necessary. Here, Knudsen and Stage (2015) provide a helpful distinction as they argue that if one uses a ‘narrow’ linguistic definition of discourse, then saying affect is pre-discursive is uncontroversial. This simply implies that we cannot name affect and that it arises before we are able to make linguistic sense of it. However, if we understand discourse in a broader Foucauldian sense as a system of knowledge internalized via bodily practices (Foucault 1995), then affect is not straightforwardly pre-discursive—it is implied in the regime of power/knowledge, not separate from it. Knudsen and Stage (2014, p. 12) explain:

would suggest that affect systematically precedes cultural norms and constraints and that the body so to speak moves between two different spheres: a sphere of immediacy where affect can be sensed and a sphere of cultural mediations that process and order affective experiences.

Such a position, clearly, is not tenable; the spheres are related and should be studied as such. That is, the relations between discourse and affect as productive of and produced by bodily experiences should be the focus of theoretical and empirical attention, taking into account how the discursive is involved in the minute and involuntary affective and perceptive systems of the body and how this involvement plays back into discourse—how the inarticulate and the articulated feed off each other. Here, discourses are not only that which is said and written, but also refer to larger societal (gendered) ideologies, which are both subtle and hidden,

but also govern and control the more explicit talk (about gender) and thus the constructions of norms, values, and stereotypes that form our reactions to and (gendered) expectations of each other. Affect is, therefore, both a response to—and a translation of—larger discourses as well as expressed through everyday talk. It is both discursive and non-discursive at the same time, but not strictly speaking pre-discursive.

Affect, then, cannot be reduced to discourse, but it cannot be separated from it either: 'Affective apprehensions of social life involve communicating experiences of existence, rather than representing and trapping such experiences within the confines of discourse' (Fotaki et al. 2017, p. 7). This conceptualization of the relationship between affect and discourse is helpful for our analysis for several reasons: first, it posits affect as an affordance of thought *and* action. Second, it does not lend ontological primacy to affect, meaning we can seek to articulate intensities *and* feelings. Such articulation is always contentious and must be done carefully, yet it is not an a priori distortion of the 'natural flow' of affect (see also Wetherell 2015). Third, it allows us to understand and study affect as empirically entangled with discourses. Affect both organizes *and* disrupts discourse. Any empirical study of how affect and discourse are entangled and form patterns of behaviour and interpretation must be understood as the study of a dynamic process that affords thought and action in relation to, for instance, gendered bodies.

The Affective Body and Body Possibilities

Some bodies, like the military body or the managerial body, are said to be inherently masculine and thus fit the male body better or more 'naturally' than the female body, rendering the female body 'other' and inferior to the masculine (Ashcraft 2013; Czarniawska and Höpfl 2002; Höpfl 2003). Female bodies, therefore, stand out and are noticed in such contexts; they become subject to the dominant male gaze (Fotaki and Harding 2018). Since we construct our bodies in relation to gendered norms and expectations (Butler 1990, 1993), women are conditioned to manage their bodies actively in such work environments in order to fit the masculine norm and accommodate the male gaze (Dale 2005; Kenny

and Bell 2011). Not fitting in, and constantly trying, creates ambiguity and contradictions around the female body, and female bodies, therefore, often casted as upsetting or distracting (Kenny and Bell 2011). Drawing on Irigaray, Fotaki et al. (2014b, p. 1244) argue that ‘women are the rejected body and the disavowed part of men themselves and they are for this reason unsymbolized, unarticulated and inarticulate’. Negotiating such rejection, delimitation, and distraction quite obviously is hard work for everyone involved; it is, we might say, affective labour (Hardt 1999; see also Dowling et al. 2007).

Here, affect effects how bodies are understood, perceived, and constructed, and being affected is a bodily experience in the sense that it is ‘contagious but remain[s] (...) unspoken’ (Fotaki et al. 2017, p. 4). In professional encounters, and beyond, the body is affective and affect is bodily, or as Seigworth and Gregg (2010, p. 1) put it:

Affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, *and* in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves... Affect is persistent proof of a body’s never less than on-going immersion in and among the world’s obstinacies and rhythms, its refusals as much as its invitations.

In a similar vein, Brott (2002, p. 8) draws on the work of Spinoza when arguing that the affective body is a body that

... is not mine, and it is neither constructed nor natural, instead, it is the sum total of its capacity to affect and to be affected by other bodies. The body is not separable from that which lies in a fictional outside of it, and that which belongs to a ‘me’, but the body is that which has things happen to it and that from and through which other things have things happen to them.

Thus, having a body—and particularly a (female) body that is noticed, othered, and casted—means one is bound to be affected and will have to learn to work with bodily affect (Despret 2004, p. 213). Affect is immanent to bodily matters—and matter generally (Clough 2008). This, however, does not imply a return to emotions, to a body that feels, but instead means a

...turn [to] affect as pre-individual bodily forces augmenting or diminishing a body's capacity to act and who critically engage those technologies that are making it possible to grasp and to manipulate the imperceptible dynamism of affect. (...) ...the turn to affect is a harbinger of and a discursive accompaniment to the forging of a new body. (Clough 2008, pp. 1–2)

Affective materiality, then, produces 'movement, emergence and potentiality in relationship to the body' (Clough 2008, p. 15). The body never just 'is'; it is always in the process of becoming, not in isolation, but relationally with its surroundings. This implies that the body is not only a site of constraints, but also of new possibilities (Sinclair 2005) and, indeed, of resistance to existing regimes (Ball 2005). 'Affect holds the promise of destabilizing and unsettling us, as organizational subjects, into new states of being' (Fotaki et al. 2017, p. 3). And, more specifically, 'bodily performances have the potential to subvert particular hegemonic norms which influence constructions of self and identity among women managers' (Kenny and Bell 2011, p. 174).

Noting this potential, however, should not blind us to how bodies may be hurt or impaired in and through affective encounters: 'Given that the body is the site of such connections [between different political concerns], it is through our bodies that we respond affectively and politically to the injustices of gendered organization' (Pullen et al. 2017, p. 108). We should, then, be equally attentive to the productive and reactive potentials of the body. Or, as Finn and Dell (1999) suggest, see the body as a productive performance of different body possibilities. In this view,

there is no I that passively receives a constructed body from the Other – society – at birth, nor is there a powerful I that constructs my body and makes me what I am. All there is is a multiplicity of affects (...) (things that bodies do to each other and get done to them), the sum total of everything my body does to its outside and everything that comes to pass on the body itself. (Brott 2002, p. 9)

Studying the entwinement of affect and discourse in relation to the body, we suggest, may be specified as a study of how body possibilities shift across different contexts (Muhr et al. 2015).

Letting these theoretical points guide our empirical investigation of the role of gender in constituting soldiers' identity and agency, we ask: what are the gendered/gendering body possibilities that emerge in and through affective-discursive relationships between the soldiers and the military?

Methodology: Narrating Body Possibilities

In order to answer this question, we draw on the conceptualization of affect and discourse as mutually implicated in the production of body possibilities. More particularly, we will identify such body possibilities as discursively articulated affective figures, as narratives of our informants' affective labour.

Data Collection

The informants are drawn from a larger study of a change process in the Danish military, consisting of 25 interviews with employees in the main HR department as well as observations of the department's daily work. This study resulted in training sessions for the HR staff and other leading personnel. Among the respondents, two-thirds were hired on military contracts, which means they perform office work but have a military background; that is, they are trained as soldiers. Most of these employees combine their HR positions with active military service, meaning they go on missions when relevant and necessary. The last third are on civilian contracts; they are usually academics and/or trained managers hired in from non-military organizations. The gender distribution of the respondents was approximately 50–50. For the present analysis, we singled out the interviews with trained soldiers.

These interviews lasted between 1.5 hours and 3 hours and were all open-ended and exploratory in style. Thus, we did not work from pre-established themes or prioritize any specific experiences, but simply asked the informants to tell their stories and let their thoughts on what was important steer the interviews. Subsequently, all interviews were

transcribed verbatim and coded inductively for recurrent topics and concerns. One such recurrent theme is that of the uniform and how it relates to the identity of the soldier. This was an issue of particular concern to the trained soldiers among our respondents, and it featured equally prominently, but in different ways, in the male and female soldiers' accounts.

Analytical Strategy

In the analysis, we condense accounts of the uniform so as to draw out the body possibilities of (un-)gendered soldiers; how does the uniform enable identification with and as a soldier? And how does this identification relate to male and female bodies? On the one hand, the soldiers' attitudes and emotions in relation to their experiences of the uniform are individual. Feelings of pride, embarrassment, frustration, vulnerability, and so on are dependent on personal dispositions and preferences in relation to particular events and distinct contexts. On the other hand, their narratives are common; there are stories about the significance of the uniform in relation to the collective understanding of what it means to be a soldier, the sense of belonging to the organization of the military. As such, they are articulations of and structured in relation to a kind of collective aura, a force that runs through the individual accounts and binds them together. Thus, the narratives have a dual function as unique and shared. The personal stories and emotions are individual, but the sociality of these emotions, evoked by bodily experiences of being a soldier and belonging to the military, are shared.

In identifying and condensing the body possibilities of the soldier as offered by the uniform, we actively co-construct the soldiers' accounts. We abstract these accounts from the individual interviews so as to articulate collective experiences and, hence, give voice to significant and distinct body possibilities; to the experiences of being a soldier that recur and vary across different soldierly bodies. This means that while we use direct quotes extensively, we do not provide the names of the quoted individuals (not even as pseudonyms) and only indicate their professional backgrounds and/or gender of the quoted individual when relevant for

the role of the quote in the overall account. This practice has helped us to become more attuned to the collective moods of the soldiers and to articulate more fully that which is not always voiced. In the accounts, then, we not only attend to what is actually said, but also to that which is hinted at or slips between the lines. Affect is not easily explained but more readily sensed or shown. Therefore, some form of poetic inquiry (Prendergast et al. 2009) may be truer to the respondents' moods than a more traditional or formal manner of analysing one's data and reporting the findings.

In establishing the collective narratives, we focused on the relationship between gender and profession, seeing the uniform as pivotal to the merger of the two; to the bodily constraints and possibilities of the gendered soldier. Zooming in on the soldiers' accounts of experiences and emotions that related directly to the uniform, four body possibilities, or affective figures, emerged. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) notion of becoming-woman, understood as a dynamic and potentially subversive process of constructing gender identity in relation to a specific context (Pullen et al. 2017), in this case that of the military, we label these four affective figures: becoming-soldier, becoming-woman-not-soldier, becoming-soldier-not-woman, and becoming-soldier-woman. In what follows, we first present these figures and then discuss their implications for affective inclusion and exclusion of different bodies in the military.

Analysis: Affective Figures of Body Possibilities

Becoming-Soldier

Becoming-soldier is the figure of establishing the dominant position within the military; of having the body possibilities for enacting the identity of the soldier. What emerged most clearly in our respondents' accounts is that the soldier's body is a disciplined body; a body trained to perform certain actions that sets it (and the identity it enables) apart from other bodies (most notably, that of the civilian). One of the female officers, now working in an HR function, explains the difference between herself and her civilian colleagues:

I'm not an academic graduate, I'm an officer. I graduated from the military academy. Fundamentally, I am trained to kill. I am trained to kill and to be a leader. Well, I kill the fewest possible. But that's what I'm trained to do. In return, I can operationalise what the academics say, because I've been in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I know what it means to be a soldier.

Further, the soldier's body is a uniformed body. The uniform, however, does not just signal 'soldier', it also signals one's branch (navy, army, or air force) and rank. In other words, wearing the uniform signals one's training and position—what the body that is wearing the uniform is able to do. The uniform, hence, becomes a marker of belonging and status. No matter what a particular body is currently doing—or what job function it is performing, the uniform it wears aligns it with a certain collective identity. And that matters. As the same officer told us:

Even though I now work with HR office work, I still feel like a soldier. I'm proud of my uniform. My uniform is important to me. It shows my background. My way of thinking and acting is like a soldier. That is important to understand. If anyone asks me what I am doing, I tell them, I am a soldier! It is important for me to show who I am. I could never work in an HR department without my uniform and my equipment. If I did that, I would not be able to get ready for war within 14 days. It would ruin my pride. When I take on my uniform, I feel like I am changing. I get closer to my military upbringing. When I wear my uniform, I also wear the military virtues, attitude, and aura.

Similarly, a male officer with a similar career trajectory reflected on how the feeling of being a soldier relates to the uniform:

I feel like a soldier. Also, if I am at a private dinner and people ask about my job, I say: I am a soldier. When people go on asking what I am doing, I say: Well, I am also a SAP consultant. Well do you wear uniform? Yes, I do when it suits me. Now we've got the freedom of choice [when it comes to the uniform¹]. But yes, I am still a soldier. There is no doubt about that. But I may be a little nervous now that we do not need to wear our uniform at work anymore. Do not underestimate how much of your identity you carry in that uniform. I am concerned about the decision [of making it a choice] because it eliminates some of our identity. And both identity and team spirit are very large parts of it all.

A lot of my way of thinking and acting is like a soldier. I think it is important to hold on to that. I still consider myself a soldier.

The soldiers can choose to wear a uniform or not when performing their office work, but most choose to wear it. It is important to them to be able to signal their belonging. It says something about who they are. Another male respondent connected the uniform with not only his sense of loyalty to the military, but also his sense of personal motivation and purpose:

One can wonder why I put on my uniform every day and drive to work. I have been offered several other jobs [outside of the military] and one was close to being my dream job. But my loyalty lies here. The sense of esprit de corps, the responsibility in respect to my colleagues. I still feel, I can contribute to making a difference. If I leave, I will get replaced by a civilian. My wife thinks I am crazy. 'You cannot save the whole Danish Military', she says. I know, but that is what I feel for.

Here, the uniform is a figure of affective attachment, of allegiance with the military institution and with one's fellow soldiers. As such, the soldier must know when to wear the uniform and how to wear it. If and when someone fails to wear the uniform in the proper (i.e. commonly accepted) manner, then that person jeopardizes his/her own possibility of embodying the identity of the soldier by not fulfilling the criteria of such embodiment. One female soldier explains:

We had a farewell reception for the general, and before the reception [...] I changed my clothes for my finest uniform. The equivalent to the shirt and tie, because I was going to the reception. I put my name tag on the way you should. For me it is completely obvious: When you say goodbye to a general, you are wearing a uniform. The general was also dressed in uniform, and most others too. But I watched and judged those of my military colleagues who apparently thought it was perfectly OK to be wearing a football shirt. I noticed it, and I judged them. Because we as military people should know when what clothing is appropriate. I know when to wear what, and for this occasion there was no doubt that I had to wear a uniform.

The uniform, then, is central for the soldiers' identification of themselves and others as soldiers. It sets them apart from civilians and provides them with a sense of purpose and belonging. The uniform, in this sense, signifies the body possibility of becoming-soldier for both men and women.

Yet, putting on a uniform is not enough. As our initial quote indicates, the training comes first. Having become soldier, wearing the uniform signals and maintains this identity, but the uniform does not stand alone and is not always necessary for the soldier's body to be recognized as such. The following anecdote, told by one of the female officers, illustrates this point:

One summer I was on holiday in Turkey. I went into a restaurant and ordered a beer, and the waiter asks me: 'Where have you served?' I was, of course, not wearing my uniform and was like: 'What! How do you know?' He answered: 'I sense that you are either military or police.' He himself had been in the military. We share something. I think it is our unity and that we never doubt the loyalty of our colleagues. Military is military. Regardless of country. You are going to war – everybody knows that it's hard, but it is also fun. I can try to explain it to you: You do not know what it is like to be in battle before you have been in battle. Once you have been in battle, you get a different perspective on many things. We soldiers have identical experiences. It is very complex. You need to have grown up from a young age in that world to understand. Quietly, you must grow up in the military world. It is hard for me to explain. Because what you experience when you are a soldier, ordinary people do not understand. To understand it requires having tried it on your own body.

Becoming-soldier is more than 'just' the uniform; it is the way a body possibility is performed or the way bodies learn to perform in uniform. Performatively, the identity of the soldier becomes internalized affectively in the body and over time becomes independent of the uniform. The body is then interpreted by those who are 'in the know' through its performance of this shared, but tacit knowledge; soldiers share an embodied sentiment of what it looks like and feels like to be a soldier. The uniform, then, is central to becoming-soldier but the soldier does not disappear from the body just because the uniform is not covering it. The soldierly body is already made possible.

Becoming-Woman-Not-Soldier

Bodies that have worn the same—or similar—uniforms may send and sense the mood of the soldier—even in plain clothes. And conversely, bodies may fail to enact the soldierly identity—even in uniform. To elaborate, whereas both male and female soldiers feel a belonging in the uniform and both may be recognized as soldiers, only women struggle with the opposite; that is, having to fight for recognition, for belonging in the uniform. What is central to the former figure of becoming-soldier is the eradication of gender. Becoming-soldier is an inherently ungendered body; gender does not figure in its making and telling. However, as will become clear in the following: becoming-soldier is by default becoming-man. The gender of the soldier's body is only seen and felt when it does not conform to the norm; that is, when it is not male. Even if the affective figure of becoming-soldier may be embodied by both men and women, gender is only brought up explicitly with reference to women—and to how the female gender puts becoming-soldier at risk. The male gender is never mentioned—neither as a risk or as better fitting. It just is the norm; the unmarked body that slips unnoticed into the soldier's identity. The female body, then, troubles the possibility of becoming-soldier. One male officer recalled:

I remember when we were in Mali, we had a female pilot. They were very proud about this, and she was interviewed and everything. I sympathize with how absolutely crazy they were about having a female Hercules pilot. But in the fighting units, it must remain mostly on the men's conditions, i.e. with the physical. Of course, it may be possible to cut women some slack, but they must be able to do the same as the men or it would not work.

Here, the female body not only draws attention, but also concern: will this body be able to do the work of the men? That is, embody and enact becoming-soldier?

One of our female respondents provides an example of a failed attempt at such embodiment and, hence, an instance of becoming-woman-not-soldier:

Maybe it will help you understanding if I tell you about when I was in Afghanistan? There was a female leader from Australia and she was a product

of quotas. She was chosen for the job because she was a woman. She was very bad at making decisions. She was unable to act. She was so unsure and she was scared. She was useless. When she cried or seemed a little sad or a little frustrated, the men usually made the decision for her and did her job. That is typical for quota women. If you have not struggled for your own progression, you will never get confidence. The only way to achieve confidence is through what you have done. I feel sorry for her. It was an unpleasant situation for her. I hope that we never will get quotas in the Danish military. The women must want it themselves and we must fight ourselves. Therefore, there must be equal terms for men and women. What matters to me is that you are willing to put your own life at stake. You must be able to take control over others. You must be able to take responsibility for others. You must be able to do that. You must be trusted in your work and you must have faith in your own decisions. You must be able to take responsibility and you must be able to give responsibility to your employees. You have to give the soldiers a higher purpose of life.

What is interesting in this quote is that the respondent—a woman herself—equals all so-called quota women with a lack of competent competencies. In this way she reproduces gender as a risk factor that obstructs the possibility of becoming-soldier. If and when gender is foregrounded, it can only be at the expense of the soldierly identity—and then only in relation to women.

The result is that although most female soldiers want to be evaluated along the same criteria and belong to the same uniform as their male colleagues, the uniform does not grant them the possibility of becoming-soldier as easily as their male colleagues:

I don't think my gender matters. But it does to others. I can tell you about an instance that happened in Afghanistan. Even though the base is fenced off and guarded and stuff, we are not supposed to walk on the base alone and should preferably always walk in pairs. This is of course always a little tricky if you're with someone not from your own barracks. So there was this day after dinner where one of my male colleagues offered to walk back to the barracks with me. We walked and chatted and that was nice enough, but then we reached where I stayed and it turned out that his barrack was in the other direction. And I asked him 'why did you then walk with me'. And his response was 'to not let you walk alone, I wanted to protect you'. And that really pissed me off. I am a soldier. Trained for combat! As if I was not able to take care of myself! And I snapped at him 'I'm carrying my gun, I think I'm capable of taking care of

myself just as much as you are. Would you have felt the same need for protecting a male colleague??. I know I might have overreacted a little, but I know he wouldn't have walked a male colleague home. He would have assumed that he could have taken care of himself, but me – even though we have had the exact same training – he assumes that I'm not capable of taking care of myself and that is the greatest insult to me – and to this uniform.

In this quote the respondent's gender interrupts and obstructs her becoming-soldier; instead, she becomes-woman-not-soldier—a body in need of protection rather than one willing and able to protect. Such positioning is affective; she feels insulted by the special treatment and the exclusion it performs. She does not want to be treated differently; she wants to be recognized as the soldier she feels she is.

Therefore, many women end up insisting that gender does not—or at least should not—matter and that their gender should be eradicated. The point, as articulated by one of our female informants, is that becoming-woman (or rather minority gender) cannot be prior to becoming-soldier:

I will not cut any corners. If I have to sit around the table with a Colonel, I want to know that I have been through exactly the same things as him. I want to be sure that I have had the same experiences. Otherwise, I would not feel I am his equal. I would feel unworthy. I know it's hard for outsiders to understand. But women in the military do not want affirmative action. We must be measured by the same criteria as men; we must be able to go to war.

If gender is first, the body possibility is that of becoming-woman-not-soldier, wherefore many female soldiers prefer the eradication of gender; the figure of becoming-soldier-not-woman.

Becoming-Soldier-Not-Woman

The uniform is central to the process of gender eradication and, hence, to the body possibility of becoming-soldier-not-woman. Our informants relate how this possibility is particularly prevalent in the US military:

Let's take the American women. They are not allowed to have their hair loose. And if they want to keep their curls they have to be cut to 2 cm. Or they would

have to straighten their hair. And they are only allowed to have their hair this long [points to shoulders] and if it was that long, it had to be cut in a straight line, it could not be curved. They were not allowed to have it shorter in the neck. [...] And they wore clothes that made them look like men. Everything was baggy, 'baggy clothes'. Their gym clothes, I mean if you saw them when they were working out, you had their heads and then these giant t-shirts and giant baggy shorts and then a little bit of leg. And they all looked like that – both the men and women. I mean completely similar, sometimes you literally couldn't see if it was men or women. Also, their uniforms were the same. Nothing called shapes, nothing about them looking nice. I mean it wasn't even androgynous or something. It was, it was just really uniform.

If (female) gender is the trouble, then one may work actively to make the signs of the female body disappear; to establish the body possibility of becoming-soldier-not-woman. This possibility may appear to be a variation of becoming-soldier, but it is differently affective as it actively excises the female gender from the body possibility of the soldier. According to the Danish soldiers, however, this actually makes the relationships between men and women more rather than less strained and difficult:

There were so many rules that you could barely interact. It was crazy. You could sit there as a Dane and be told over and over again about all the 'no-gos'. Men were barely allowed to look at women, it was all made so, so dangerous. It was crazy. I of course had many American colleagues who were officers. And if I in the beginning by accident bumped into them or happened to touch them, they were one big apology. They were really scared, until they had gotten to know me and learned that I'm just 'listen, we can easily talk, we can easily banter. It's ok if you tell me a dirty joke. Nothing happens, I'm not suing you'. But it took about two-three months until they found out that it was ok to talk to me. And then we began to have dinners together. And we had a really, really nice time where we kind of put all that fear behind us. But there was still this kind of distance, which is unnatural.

Because of the felt impossibility of eradicating gender, our informants, men as well as women, preferred what they identified as the Danish way in which bodily gender differences could be enacted without barring the possibility of embodying the soldier. One reason being that they had experienced the impossibility of women becoming-soldier. The female

gender is not historically included within military profession nor fitted to the military uniform. Thus, the female soldiers experienced that their attempt of 'just' becoming-soldier would result in becoming-soldier-not-woman, as above, or, even worse, becoming-woman-not-soldier. In the former case, the attempt to eradicate gender is perpetually unsuccessful as the affective charge of gender keeps disturbing its eradication, resulting in 'unnatural behaviour' or 'distance' as the respondent above describes it. In the latter (becoming-woman-not soldier), gender is constantly ascribed to female bodies and used to bar those bodies from the soldierly identity. In both cases, 'woman' is still there. It is not simply 'becoming-soldier', wherefore the possibility of becoming-soldier-woman seems preferably.

Becoming-Soldier-Woman

The introduction of women into the Danish military has incurred many changes. Thus, the female body has gone from being an object of the male soldiers' desire to being a variation of becoming-soldier; the body possibility of becoming-soldier-woman has emerged. With the introduction of becoming-soldier-woman, of women as being able to enact the identity of soldier on a par with men, the most blatant images of women as objects of desire have been removed from the soldiers' working environment. One of the female respondents explain:

It was decided that posters of naked women were no longer allowed in the offices. Because the Danish military wants diversity, we want women employed, and naked women on the walls were perceived as offensive. This was decided at a time when 90%, myself included, could not see the offensive in the pictures of naked women. I remember thinking, that I had chosen a male-dominated workplace, so if I could not handle that, I should have chosen a different workplace. But when the naked women disappeared, something nice happened [to the atmosphere].

Thus, a certain desexualization is called for, but, significantly, the example is about the representation of other women's bodies, not the female soldiers themselves. In contrast to the uniform of becoming-

soldier-not-women, becoming-soldier-woman enables (and implies) a certain feminine touch: jackets with curvy cuts, skirts, freedom to wear one's hair long and loose; even the Danish combat uniform exists in a male and a female version. Thus, the uniform figures as centrally in becoming-soldier-woman as it does in the affective figures that posit becoming-soldier and becoming-woman as mutually exclusive body possibilities.

Our respondents consistently posit becoming-soldier as dominant in relation to their gender, but they perceive the potential to enact becoming-soldier with certain variations so as to embody the possibility of becoming-soldier-woman. Thus, the women are, as we saw in the presentation of becoming-soldier, as fiercely proud of their identity as soldiers and as urgently aware of how the uniform enables and enhances their embodiment of this identity as their male colleagues. Perhaps even more so:

Well, I may be a little worried about the decision that we do not have to wear our uniform at work. You cannot underestimate how much of the soldier-identity we wear with this uniform. The uniform matters in relation to the esprit de corps and the soldier identity. I think the spirit is fragile, at least for soldiers it is. You must treat it carefully or else it will disappear quietly. We live by trust. We live by loyalty. This is what we are living for. It is our raison d'être. For all we do! Next Thursday we have an internal course in the military and I will be the only one representing the HR department. Do you think I will show up dressed in plain clothes? No, of course not. I will of course wear my uniform, so I can match all the others. I do not want to discuss whether I can show up wearing uniform. I am already a minority in so many other ways: I am blonde, I am left-handed, and I am a woman.

In part, this quote echoes concerns about diminishing the role of the uniform, but it adds affective intensity in terms of the urgency of these concerns. Wearing the uniform may not enable becoming-soldier-woman in and of itself, but it is a necessary criterion for this body possibility to emerge and be recognized. The women of the military, even more than the men, are affectively figured by their uniforms.

Concluding Discussion: Uniform Matters

The uniform, we have sought to illustrate, is central to the affective figuration of women as soldiers. When men put on a uniform, they fit the body possibility of becoming-soldier neatly; their particular bodies are transcended and their sex is neutralized. Women, to the contrary, remain bound to their bodies, which are marked with gender (Fotaki and Harding 2018). As Höpfl (2003) shows, female soldiers strive towards becoming-soldier; however, their bodies only make gendered figurations possible and, hence, they end up performing one (or several) of these. The uniform, therefore, offers the possibility of becoming-soldier to some bodies and restricts the access of others. The soldier is by default male, and female bodies have restricted means of becoming-soldier, of gaining access to this identity position. However, the soldier identity sometimes exceeds traditional socio-cultural categories through a shared esprit de corps. That is, once women have proven their worth and been accepted as soldiers, the uniform becomes a symbol of this achievement—worn with pride and recognized by others. Women can become soldier, but they are never purely becoming-soldier.

Further, for female soldiers wearing a uniform is never enough, and the strongest negative affect of our study is discharged in relation to the figure of becoming-woman-not-soldier; the discursive translation of this intensity is that if gender is put first, the body possibility of the soldier is foreclosed. Or rather, this exclusion does not hold for gender as such, but for women only, meaning that the trouble with gender only arises in relation to female bodies. Höpfl (2003) found that female soldiers perform a cancellation of the feminine to become incorporated into the military organization; in our study this is the figure of becoming-soldier-not-woman, which our informants, interestingly, do not embrace unquestioningly. They prefer it to the exclusionary figure of becoming-woman-not-soldier, but also point to the impossibility of fully eradicating gender. Instead, they negotiate gendered forms of becoming-soldier; ways of being both, which, eventually, may extend beyond female soldiers to involve the bodies of their male colleagues as well.

Presently, a male body is just a soldier; a female body is a female soldier. This positioning privileges male bodies as gender neutral and, hence, not affectively charged as they don't disturb the context, but it also restricts the possibilities of embodying and enacting male identities. Men in the military have more easy access to becoming-soldier, but they have no other immediate body possibilities, no place from which to start negotiations of, for instance, sexuality (becoming-gay-soldier), parenting (becoming-father-soldier), or illness/injury (becoming-sick-soldier and becoming-wounded-soldier). For male soldiers, then, the uniform only offers one body possibility: becoming-soldier. When female soldiers are introduced, however, other possibilities emerge: the exclusionary figure of becoming-woman-not-soldier, but also differently charged possibilities of inclusion: becoming-soldier-not-woman and becoming-soldier-woman. This may be one reason that the figure of becoming-soldier-woman emerges as the more affectively attractive; it contains a promise of more diverse and nuanced body possibilities—for everyone involved.

Conceptually, we argued that body possibilities emerge as material and symbolic figurations, as affectively charged and discursively articulable. The uniform, we have sought to illustrate, is one central site of such figuration of the gendered body possibilities of soldiers. Here, affective forces of diversity and inclusion pull in opposite directions, and the uniform is central to both. It may, on the one hand, erase bodily difference, offering the possibility—or, perhaps more accurately, the illusion—of full inclusion. On the other hand, the uniform may accommodate different bodies, thereby inviting diversity, but also positing the diverse body as a minority body, as a deviation from the norm. The uniform, in sum, is both material and symbolic, it is affective and discursive. As such, it enables certain body possibilities and constrains others in and through the establishment and enactment of differently charged affective figures. While such charging is always inhibiting, it is also enabling. Not least, it holds the promise of differently charged body possibilities: wearing the uniform matters, but it may matter less uniformly—opening up potentialities for fuller inclusion of differently gendered (male/female) bodies in the military.

Note

1. One result of the change process we followed was that the military personnel do not have to wear a uniform when they are not on missions. Thus, in the officers' daily work at the HR department, they can choose whether to wear a uniform or not.

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7

Dancers as Inter-Corporeality: Breaking Down the Reluctant Body

Emmanouela Mandalaki

Introduction

Un, deux, trois, quatre.... It had been a few months since I had started dancing. My tutor's words were dancing in my head while I was trying to decipher the meaning of some contrasting thoughts that I had in my mind: '*il faut se laisser guider par le garçon*' (you have to let yourself be guided by the man) on one side and '*changer des rôles pour voir ce qui se passe*' (change roles to see what happens) on the other. It was striking to me how embodying attitudes and behaviours, through my dancing experience with my dancing partners, guided the development of an affective corporeal connection positioned somewhere in between free bodily interactions as well as expressions of more ordered communication. I felt that I needed to understand this bodily tension between conformity and liberation. Thus, one day I decided to enter the dance school with different eyes, not only those of the dancer but also those of the researcher.

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In the current account, I focus on the body, not only as a symbol but also as a fleshly site giving rise to the construction of material possibilities going beyond objectively pre-established social categories (Foucault 1990). I use my inter-corporeal experience with my dancing partners and its interplay with the cognitive reflections it triggers, to propose conceptualizations of an affective inter-corporeality breaking through stereotypes. Recognizing the ability of the body to give rise to reflexive understandings of the self and its relations with the material world around it (Heidegger 1968), I discuss the vulnerable dancing body as a potent medium allowing individuals to develop relations of affective sharing while recognizing the possibilities emerging through their constraining corporeal boundaries.

As I write, I do so through the body, reviving this search for otherness that is enacted while embodying attitudes through the dance. In my account, I consider the body as a 'lived' entity (Grosz 1994), which is reflected in and openly shared with the world around it (Merleau-Ponty 1964), and I propose the body's ability to create new forms of affective sociality between dancing partners. My account bridges theorizing of embodiment as negotiated order (Strauss et al. 1963; Strauss 1978; Scott 2010) versus freedom and corporeal generosity (Diprose 1994, 2002; Hancock 2008; Kenny and Fotaki 2014) to propose the dance as a process of negotiating bodily boundaries versus one of generously giving oneself to the other.

I argue that through this process, dancers discover the unlimited possibilities of their bodily boundaries (Cancienne and Snowber 2003) in allowing them to develop affective relationships with each other. By illustrating the tensions experienced in the dance, I conceptualize the body as a site creating conditions for re-negotiating pre-established order as well as experiencing moments of freedom escaping that order, allowing thus a genderless affective corporeal connection to emerge as a resolution of the tension between order and freedom.

A Body's Experience

We don't even know what the body can do, said Spinoza (1677, 1994), implying that exploring the countless possibilities of the body allows us to make sense of how corporeal practice can shape affective human

behaviours and interactions. However, most research around processes of sense-making emphasizes the cognitive aspects of it, leaving its material and interactional elements somehow underexplored (Wieland 2010; Down and Reveley 2009). Organizational scholars argue that the process of organizing and interacting in the context of organizations is embodied in nature (Flores-Pereira et al. 2008; Küpers 2013; Fisher and Robbins 2015) acknowledging the body's capability to transcend organizational barriers (Thanem 2004; Islam 2015) and providing new understandings of organizational practices.

Through embodied practice, bodily experienced actions and affective states interweave to help individuals make sense of their surroundings (Di Paolo 2009). Cunliffe and Coupland (2012) call this *embodied narrative sense-making*, positing that 'whether we are aware of it or not, we make our lives and ourselves 'sensible' through embodied interpretations in our ongoing everyday interactions'. In this reading, the body is viewed as a site where social constructions are enacted through an interplay of emotions and cognition in an 'embodied meaning-making' process (Wetherell 2012, p. 4). Living through the body allows us to develop affective relationships with and knowledge about the world around us through feeling, learning, and becoming (Merleau-Ponty 1964; Grosz 1994).

A notable example of experiencing the process of embodiment is that of Merleau-Ponty, who notes that when he paints, he takes his body with him, since it is impossible to imagine how a mind alone would paint (Merleau-Ponty 1964, p. 162). Similarly, according to Eliot (1963), artists can produce art because they immerse in a state of embodiment through participating in their artistic discourses with their full senses and bodies. 'Embodiment "lends" our body to the world by allowing the world to enter into our experiences' (Ian Lennie, in Hassard et al. 2000, p. 137).

Embodiment is important for understanding our affective relationships to the self and the other because it allows us to recognize the sensational and experiential elements of our interactions with the world as well as acknowledge our limits and possibilities in our relations with our environment (Cancienne and Snowber 2003; Pullen and Rhodes 2015). Our bodies are carriers of our feelings and emotions and allow us to affectively

connect to others, influence them and be influenced by their own bodily manifested emotions (Young 1994; Cancienne and Snowber 2003).

Literature on embodied practice stresses on caring for the otherness of others (Rhodes and Wray-Bliss 2013), being open and accepting their differences (Rhodes 2012; Pullen and Rhodes 2010), while recognizing the affective nature of human interactions. This process of connecting and opening our bodies to the world and the others as well as redefining the embodied nature of our interactions with others as a generous corporeal sharing is known as 'inter-corporeal generosity' (Diprose 2002; Hancock 2008). The latter is based on the assumption that the other is prioritized over the self and that one has to be open to and responsible for the other, without questions of politics conditioning this relationship. Focusing on the role of gender in the workplace, Kenny and Fotaki (2014) discuss the ethics of inter-corporeality arguing that developing ethical relationships with the Other is possible. Thanem and Wallenberg (2015) rely on Spinozian ethics to argue that through inter-corporeal sharing, individuals are able to reach fundamentally human and joyful interactions with each other.

While connecting bodily with others is conceived of here as a mechanism of free corporeal sharing, embodiment can also work to reproduce social order. For instance, Strauss (1978) argues that through the body, individuals negotiate the norms of their environment and define expected roles reinforcing certain social orders (Scott 2010). In so doing, individuals develop a common understanding of the norms governing their social setting both to maintain their 'face' in the group and to ensure that expected levels of collective performance be attained. Scott (2010) proposes the concept of 'performative regulation' as a process whereby individuals act out in their flesh practices of self-discipline as well as the negotiated rules of their environment to normalize otherwise embarrassing expressions of the body and regulate their interactions with others.

In her auto-ethnographic work on swimmers' interactions, Scott (2010) argues that performing rituals in swimming practice moderates embarrassment and other unpleasant social feelings when swimmers expose their near-naked body to other swimmers or the crowd. In that process, the naked body is not anymore perceived as an object of sexualization but is accepted as a normal and natural medium (Bell and Holliday

2000), through which individuals embody and perform the social order of their environment. In this context, individuals have the freedom to continuously sculpt the frames of their interactions, thus constantly maintaining structure in their social relationships with others. Reflecting on embodied practice as negotiated order versus corporeal sharing and freedom, the question that arises is *what happens when vulnerable bodies develop and sense affective tensions arising in the verge between ordered and free inter-corporeal sharing*.

Such bodily manifestations of emotional contagion are particularly triggered in dancing, while dancers experience and share feelings and ideas nonverbally (Blacking 1985; Highwater 1992). Dance settings have been particularly suitable for exploring processes of embodiment because they provide a site where the body through movement gives access to countless undiscovered affective, cognitive, and relational possibilities (Albright 1997; Cancienne and Snowber 2003; Slutskaya 2006; Slutskaya and De Cock 2008). Given its nonverbal nature, the dance unveils the unspoken and oppressed elements of culture (Slutskaya 2006) and provides access to the affective component characterizing human interactions. While dancing, individuals develop a 'feel for the dance' that goes beyond the explicit rules and factual calculation of the steps that they have to follow (Bourdieu 1990; Slutskaya 2006) but rather allows them to engage in an ongoing affective dialogue with their body and the other and reinvent their gendered interactions.

In particular, throughout its development around different styles, salsa has provided women with the opportunity to reposition themselves socially (SalsaWhore 2000; Social Club New York 2004; Manuel 1998). Notably, over the last years there has been a growth of salsa classes offered uniquely to women as well as of efforts to challenge hegemonic standards of female beauty with more and more oversized salsa dancers taking the lead in the dance floor. Such initiatives are intended to enhance bonds among female identities and relax the macho culture of the dance while promoting female self-confidence and going against gendered stereotypes that women traditionally are expected to satisfy in salsa dancing. Similarly, female salsa dancers are now trained to take on male roles and often lead the couple. Thus, partner roles have started shifting from male versus female to leader versus follower (Manuel 1998), while homosexual

couples and gay/lesbian dancers are more and more observed in salsa dance floors.

In this context, traditional understandings of gender conditioning are often challenged and their new versions emerge as prominent guiding elements of salsa dancers' interactions, proposing new perspectives for conceptualizing inter-corporeal connections between genders (Diprose 1994). The dancing body is here thus conceived of as a site of physicality proposing novel reconfigurations of social, gender, and sexual stereotypes allowing dancers to creatively reinvent their identities (Albright 1997).

In the current account, I use my personal dancing experience to develop a new conceptualization of inter-corporeality as an affective space between order and freedom, where elements of affective sociality develop between dancing partners. Consistent with accounts seeing the dance as an embodied process of establishing and breaking spatial boundaries (Cancienne and Snowber 2003) as well as one through which individuals experience contrasting states of oppression and freedom through both sustaining and transcending structure (Slutskaya 2006), I propose dancers' affective inter-corporeal experience as a creative resolution between tension and freedom, whereby other-gendered bodies invent new ways of communicating affectively with each other. In particular, I propose that by connecting bodily, dancers make sense of the abstraction conveyed by the self and the other in space and time and re-conceptualize bodily boundaries as elements of possibilities, rather than constraints, giving rise to fundamentally human expressions of affective corporeal sharing.

Bodies in the Dance

The salsa school was full of wall paintings portraying the dancing bodies of Cuban men and women as well as Cuban instruments and salsa music transmitting a taste of Cuba in the room. The room was big, with mirrors all around making it easy to observe myself in my interactions with my dancing partners. I had been part of the salsa class for four months when I started observing it through the lenses of a researcher. My auto-ethnographic fieldwork lasted for six months, from the spring until the fall of 2015. During that period, I was observing the dancing context for

about five hours a week during my regular classes and the salsa events organized by the school.

My embodied experience interacting with my dancing partners triggered a critical sense-making process, whereby I used the body (more than any form of verbal communication) as a 'medium' to make sense of the world. In fact, my approach might be better reflected in what Anderson (2006) calls analytic auto-ethnography, where the researcher actively and affectively (Gannon 2006) participates in the social setting that he studies and draws on his/her experiential understanding of the context, to develop theory around broader phenomena answered in social and organizational life. I experienced this process as an iterative process of abduction, whereby I was moving constantly between the lived data and the theory to make sense of my embodied experience (Locke et al. 2008).

Unlike traditional ethnography, I had not chosen the field based on its meeting certain requirements. It felt more like the field had chosen me or we had mutually chosen each other at a glance or a heartbeat! The day that I decided to enter the dance room with different eyes and observe things 'from the outside' (while dancing however), I started sensing a psychological struggle associated with my decision. I was not just a researcher, nor was I just a dancer; I wanted to be both, but I thought that they had to be separate. I wanted to maintain my objectivity in an otherwise fully embodied process. And I felt so strange about the fact that I now wanted to record my interactions with my dancing partners to go and develop a publishable story about it. On the other side, I was fascinated that I could finally research something so naturally mine and that all this had emerged as an ontological need.

It was an unbearable psychological dichotomy. A feeling of fulfilment and a feeling of guilt, the latter like the one Prasad (2014) describes in his encounter with Palestinians in the 'no man's land' space of Qalandiya. However, I think mine was a bit different since I had not really consciously chosen my 'field'; I already knew my 'subjects' and had already developed some intimate relationships with them. Even worse then! And even more that I was one of them. I felt guilty to myself too but couldn't say it loud in the mirror. I was already an 'insider', belonging to my process with flesh and bones and vice versa, desperately trying to find some

points of detachment. We were inseparably one, at home, at work, even in my dreams. I remember those dreams that I was waking up from so revived and then all of those feelings and thoughts were haunting me again. And this had caused a big amount of psychological stress and frustration in me, while I was struggling between conflicting ideas of what my role in this context really was. It was the time to face the responsibility of my choice, one emerging so spontaneously though the body much like my need to turn my body into a research subject.

While I was struggling with those ideas, I was navigating through an unbearably painful but so valuable process of reflexive introspection not only with the mind but also the body, often wondering whether there is a real distinction between the two; using my few 'field notes' and repeating the steps back at home to try to understand it all more reflexively. This allowed me to be more conscious about the contingencies that I was exposing myself to while I was making my body a research subject (Conquergood 1991). And I had to decide whether I would go through what Medford (2006) calls a 'mindful slippage' between my lived truth and the truthfulness of my account, or whether I was ready to expose myself and others with all the collateral consequences of it. And even though there were no boundaries between us two (the field and myself), I was not ready to expose it all and I needed to respect this, in order to preserve the integrity of my auto-ethnographic experience (Prasad 2014).

It was a personal catharsis, an ontological and epistemological metamorphosis, as a person and a researcher. A process of in-depth critical introspection and reflection, whereby my bodily felt experience and the cognitive reflections it triggered blended to find redemption in an academic account. And I hadn't yet started writing; those were still just thoughts and senses bothering me everywhere as the 'portable' field inhabited by my body was keeping me hostage. But I learned a lot out of this process, which with all its psychological limitations on the personal level was finally of immense value. I was now feeling so much better and I had to find a way to share it with other auto-ethnographers who undoubtedly often experience this very process with their whole existence.

But how to write about it? I started jotting some poems, some associations of words capturing the lived experience and I put salsa music on to

tune my body to the rhythm while writing. Most of my 'data' lived (and still lives) in my body. I could hardly find key words and expressions to create 'field notes'. And this is why note-taking was a largely omitted step in the process. Directly transferring the embodied data in a narrative form served better my effort to not pass them through a cleaning filter of methodological 'rationality'. The latter evokes Helin's (2015) experiential account on how listening to her recorded data again allowed her to put herself in a 'listening writing' mode. And that was it: I opened the faucet and the water started flowing. I completely identified with Cancienne and Snowber's (2003) reflection that writing about dance can strengthen the connection between cognitive and affective bodily experiences. Writing elevated me to another level of reflexive sense-making, an embodied and experiential one, while my hands were dancing on the keyboard.

In this process, I experienced a fully corporeal writing, whereby words were slipping out of my fingers to give names to the 'data'. It was an embodied experiential writing, a 'listening' writing (Helin 2015), and a 'dancing' writing process. Like Sweeney (2015, p. 30) puts it 'Writing, like dancing, allows the body to articulate itself as a complex site of passionate objection'. It has been an iterative process of writing from the body, deleting, dancing, and all over again. It has been a journey of writing differently, directly from the body (Czarniawska-Joerges 1995; Pullen and Rhodes 2008).

Tales from the Dance Floor

Boundaries as Opportunities: Re-negotiating Order Through Questioning the Self and the Other

'Why are you guiding? I am supposed to lead', my dance partner said while frowning and touching my hand somehow strongly. In this moment, I felt that his role was challenged in the dance flow, pushing him to start a dialogue between our bodies as per the behaviours that each one of us was 'expected' to perform. I responded to my partner's call both with submission and reaction to communicate that my body was trying to find its

place in the context of being guided by his body. I felt that in this moment, our bodily reactions pushed us to unconsciously open a space for a non-verbal corporeal negotiation challenging the pre-established salsa principles, in order to develop a common understanding of the norms guiding our corporeal interaction.

A few days later, right after learning a new step, another partner said that I shouldn't anticipate the step just because in the frame of a certain exercise I knew what I was supposed to do next. Then, to 'test' me (as I felt from his hand moves and his eye contact) he tried to change the step and when he realized that I still tended to anticipate his moves, he blocked me with his hand and looked at me in a playful way while saying: *Tricheuse, Il faut pas anticiper les pas (cheater, you are not supposed to anticipate the steps)*. At this moment, it was clear to me that to his conception I was not expected to anticipate his moves, being a female follower. But I couldn't help it! I stopped the move and rather tried to drag my partner in another movement, which respectively made him stop and restart everything from the beginning.

Such blur moments are very common in the dance floor. Judging from my experience, they are pregnant with a weird confusion emerging from a dissonance between cognitively pre-established understandings of the 'gender-role' conditioning of the dance and unconscious reactions of the 'undisciplined' body struggling to surpass its boundaries and find redemption in genuine expressions of affective sharing. Interpreting and spontaneously reacting to our bodily calls, in the context of those pre-defined gender role expectations, gave rise to those moments of confusion leading us to start a bodily negotiation in order to creatively adjust the pre-established principles of the dance to match the dynamics of our relationship. Navigating through this dissonance opened a space for reconsideration of our bodily limits and a mutual understanding of the various possibilities arising from those limits triggering a re-configuration and a creative adaptation of the pre-established norms based on our mutual interaction.

In this bodily talk, the standard order of the dance was challenged. We experienced long moments of tension emerging out of our undisciplined bodily manifestations leading us to question the pre-existing rules. I felt that we projected on each other spontaneous affective responses mirroring

our challenged gendered identities, giving thus rise to bodily performed new understandings of ourselves as seen through the self and the other. I felt that we started caring more about each other and developing humanly possible forms of affective sharing through our body. My partner started becoming more submissive to my initiatives, leading me to be more open to his calls too, and vice versa. We reciprocally started integrating this bodily tension, which opened room for a different conception of our bodily boundaries; not as constraining elements forcing our bodies to perform standard steps but rather as spaces of immense possibilities setting the ground for humanly possible expressions of affective corporeal sharing.

Re-inventing Gendered Selves Through Transcending Bodily Boundaries

One day at the lesson, Luc, a dance partner I always enjoyed to dance with, touched my hand to indicate a next move. However, this was a move that I didn't want to perform because I was not feeling comfortable enough. To express this feeling, I bodily resisted to respond to his call and rather proposed another one through my body. Luc looked at me bewildered. He decided to stop the movement and start from the beginning. He didn't talk about it but at that moment I felt that we started a bodily talk, a negotiation of the norms that guided our common bodily exchange. I felt that his gender role was challenged in the context of our dance while he saw the hierarchical dynamics switching, with me claiming a 'leader' role in the couple and redefining him as the 'follower' for a few moments.

In this discourse, I felt that we both saw our gender roles being challenged and questioned, a moment of closure that I paradoxically experienced as opening up space for a creative adaptation of our gender conditioning. This process of making sense of our vulnerable bodies' gendered tolerance revealed to me the powerful nature of our corporeal bodily limits leading us to embody almost interchangeable gendered roles in an iterative bodily re-negotiation process.

In this process of creative adaptation of our gender roles, 'role-switching' was experienced as the guiding element of our bodily exchange,

not only as concrete moments of incarnation of the different gendered roles but also mainly as a continuous process of alteration between the self and the other. It was a search for otherness that tempted us to break up the established gender norms and rather create room for challenging the self and the other. It paved the ground for my partner and I to open up our bodies to confront and fully sense our 'other' gendered identities; to fully bodily sense the immense possibilities of our inevitably physically sexualized selves as males and females to perform out different genders of men and women. It started becoming clear to me that defining the male as a leader and the female as a follower is fully contingent to the dynamics of the dance, pushing partners to reinvent their roles in the context of their corporeal sharing as they discover genuinely affective ways of interacting without embarrassing each other.

A similar experience was felt when George, the professor of the salsa class, asked us to reverse roles in order to expose both male and female dancers to leader and follower roles. I think that even if this exercise estranged us for a while, since it challenged the pre-established gender-role conditioning as per the salsa principles, it opened up space for a creative reconsideration of our gender roles leading to the development of a genuine affective sharing in our bodily exchange. Also, given that this creative adaptation of roles was requested by the salsa professor made it look as a legitimate condition to be in and was thus accepted and performed by the partners without major objections.

During the exercise, we all seemed to find it a bit hard to perform each other's roles consciously since this was challenging the standardized behavioural patterns that we were expected to perform. Trying to consciously switch gender roles created a confusion and a tension, which paradoxically opened up space for us to set our bodies free to experience this very moment of openness and alteration of the self, reinvent and embrace our other gender identities. When, after the exercise we debriefed each other on how we felt, it was really striking to see the level of realization that this confrontation towards the self and the other had allowed us to reach.

The debriefing first took place in a couple level and then there was a group exchange among all of us. We all sat in a circle on the floor and discussed our reactions and our partners' reactions during the exercise.

We were surprised to realize the extent to which this exercise had helped us to make sense of this creative 'gender adaptation' process that we were unconsciously embodying and performing throughout the dance. On one side, accepting the existence of the pre-established gender-role conditioning in the dance (as per the 'rules of the game') while on the other side being open to creatively adapt it through 'adhering' to the undisciplined expressions of our bodies. It opened the way towards recognizing and accepting our transitive polyvalent nature as dancers, males and females, leaders or followers and experience a navigation in a space of constant redefinition of our gender conditioning. We made sense of this perceived dual genderization process, whereby our bodily housed flexible gendered identities are enacted and corporeally performed as spontaneous reactions to the Other's bodily touch in this corporeal sharing. In this process, I realized that the limits of our gendered bodies simultaneously offered multiple possibilities for the exploration of free and creative affective connections with each other.

Such gender-exchange experiences are also clearly illustrated in Rueda, a form of salsa danced in a circle of dancing couples, whereby the couples constantly exchange partners. In Rueda, the inter-corporeal interaction between the two partners is crucial because it doesn't only stay between the couple but also extends to the rest of the participants as dancers exchange partners steadily. Since in Rueda the number of males and females is not always even, males are often required to perform follower roles and females leader roles as the circle advances. The latter role interchange breaks the established norms and sets the basis for reconsideration of pre-established gender role understandings in the context of every new dancing couple. This triggers a creative process of gender adaptation whereby partners repetitively embody and reproduce interchangeable gendered identities. In this context, you many times see men laughing at their woman's role. However, superficial or funny it might sound, I found this attitude as a key reflection of this moment of confusion leading to bodily openness, whereby partners act out their gender alteration experience and engage in a creative process of gender sharing with each other. It is a search for otherness allowing for the emergence of new aspects of the self, making possible the development of genuine affective corporeal relationships between partners as

they make sense of the immense possibilities of the body to perform what the mind alone often cannot imagine.

Affective Bodily Fusion in a Space Between Freedom and Oppression

As already deduced by the above, in salsa dancing, partners' bodies perform a dancing ritual, which albeit reinforcing the negotiated order framing partners' interactions, it also creates space for challenging bodily boundaries and partners' roles. In this invisible space between the two, partners' bodily contact serves as the stage where the rituals reinforcing and escaping this negotiated order are enacted and performed. Even though beyond hand holding, the two bodies are not in full connection, they extend beyond the limits of the skin in a connected and embodied manner. One touches the Other and their hands merge to create an extended hybrid bodily state.

When I feel my partner's hand holding my hand, I feel that my hand functions as an extension of his arm, and vice versa, without which movement cannot be fully performed and embodied. It is the full illustration of the saying: *'it takes two to tango'*, but in this case it is about salsa, whereby the two become one to form a hybrid bodily form; a corporeal amalgamation that approximates transgenderial characteristics: male and female features in one body formed out of two fused bodies. This soon becomes a fully embodied shape, a fully embodied movement that bodies engage into. In those moments, freedom and submission interplay, as we communicate bodily in the dance, providing space for the discovery of countless possibilities emerging from our bodily boundaries.

Such states of inter-corporeal affective fusion are, for instance, intensely felt in Rueda, which had been a challenging task for most of us. One moment I was dancing with Luc and was striving to reach an understanding of our common interaction, while the next moment I found myself dancing with Matthieu. Matthieu had a different dancing style requiring an adjustment from both sides, in a process whereby we continuously moved through our challenged gendered selves to creatively norm our dancing interaction. This is a repetitive process of redefinition

of the behavioural norms emerging with every new partner, whereby our body naturally pushes us to re-negotiate our ordered interaction, while at the same time sets ourselves free to experience our genuine corporeal connection and fluid gender identities.

In the beginning of the interaction with any next partner, you feel a tension between order and freedom. On one side, dancing with a new partner creates a sense of newness and liberation naturally urging partners to generously open their bodies to each other. On the other side, it urges them to reinforce and apply the widely known salsa norms in order to maintain the flow of the dance; all played out in a context of bodily fusion characterized by highly submissive tendencies. In other words, re-negotiating ordered interactions involves setting bodies free to experience affective and free from order interactions, in turn urging partners to submit to each other as their genderless (and simultaneously multi-gender) bodies fuse together. Paradoxically enough, it is in those moments of free bodily fusion that I experienced a superordinate feeling of bodily oppression. While I was opening my body up to the call of each next partner and I was ready to engage in a free bodily felt gender adaptation process. I was feeling fully submitted to this very state of affective fusion, free from dominating or emancipatory tendencies between us.

Discussion

Making sense of my auto-ethnographic experience both as a salsa dancer and an observer of the salsa context, I propose the body as a medium giving rise to novel understandings of an affective sociality developing through dancers' inter-corporeal interactions. My account draws on embodiment literature (Strauss et al. 1963; Strauss 1978; Scot 2010; Diprose 2002; Cancienne and Snowber 2003; Hancock 2008; Kenny and Fotaki 2014; Pullen and Rhodes 2015) to discuss the process whereby escaping the order arising from the limits of dancers' vulnerable bodies allows for the emergence of new forms of corporeal affective interactions between each other. In my account, I don't see the body as a material medium conditioned by culture or other characteristics but rather as a lively experiential site where affective relational possibilities can develop

somewhere in between submission and liberation. I argue that while dancing, dancers engage in a bodily negotiation of the pre-established salsa norms leading them to recognize the possibilities emerging through their normative bodily boundaries and transcend those boundaries to experience moments of joyful affective sharing with each other. I propose this space as a resolution between ordered and free bodily expressions transcending conceptions of traditional gender conditioning or other forms of discrimination.

Through the examples that I use, I demonstrate that in the context of the dance's negotiated structure of well-defined gender roles, dancers experience instants of openness, whereby they generously dispose their bodies to each other to reach affective moments of connection as they reinvent their other-gendered selves. I describe how embodied practice in the context of the dance gives rise to a creative unforeseeable process of gender adaptation emerging in the interplay between corporeal expressions of freedom and suppression. While oscillating in a struggle between negotiated order and joyful inter-gender exchange through corporeal opening, individuals establish a way of living affectively with each other that transcends hegemonic understandings of gender.

My account contributes to and extends current debates on embodiment (e.g., Scott 2010; Fotaki et al. 2014; Kenny and Fotaki 2014; Pullen and Rhodes 2010; Thanem and Wallenberg 2015; Cancienne and Snowber 2003). First, I demonstrate how embodied practice can break down the reluctant body and its gendered stereotypes and lead individuals to view their corporeal limits as spaces of opportunities for the emergence of genuine affective relationships with each other. Particularly, my account contributes to current debates of embodied practice as negotiated order (Scott 2010; Strauss 1978) as opposed to joyful free corporeal opening (Diprose 1992; Hancock 2008; Thanem and Wallenberg 2015) to demonstrate that acknowledging and transcending bodily limits allows individuals to confront their other-gendered selves and experience new forms of living affectively with each other.

Second, building on recent scholarship on inter-corporeality (Pullen and Rhodes 2015; Kenny and Fotaki 2014; Thanem and Wallenberg 2015), I propose the possibility of an inter-corporeal affective sociality emerging as a resolution in the tension between free and ordered respon-

sive human bodily interactions. In particular, departing from traditional masculine perspectives favouring rational thinking versus feeling and touching as well as the existence of codified behaviours governing social interactions (Roberts 2003; O'Fallon and Butterfield 2005), I draw and build on Diprose's (2002) notion of *corporeal generosity* to propose the body as a carrier of a humanly possible affective sharing reflecting genuine care for the other, thus allowing for the emergence of a spontaneous unfiltered and genderless corporeal connection.

I draw inspiration from the work of Pullen and Rhodes (2015) calling for the need to rethink ethics as a corporeal practice developing in the space of interaction between feeling bodies and thinking minds. Even though my work doesn't directly discuss ethics as an embodied practice, it discusses forms of affective inter-corporeality, which can set the basis for the development of a humanly and unconditional ethics in organizations. In particular, I demonstrate the necessity of generously opening our bodies up to experience unfiltered and spontaneous corporeal responses to the bodily call of the other and through this process humanly confront our bodily and gendered boundaries, with their possibilities and impossibilities, in order to experience affective forms of corporeal connection with each other. Much like the steps of the dance that can hardly ever be reproduced in the same way with the same or another partner, through the body, we learn to interact affectively with the others in unique, spontaneous, and genuinely human ways. We naturally learn to balance the tensions between our thinking minds and feeling bodies and rather congratulate living affectively with each other by caring for, feeling responsible for, and being responsive to the corporeal touch of the other.

Through demonstrating the affective element arising while dancers sweep the dance floor and genuinely respond to the body of the other, I build on accounts discussing inter-corporeality as an awesome and fascinating experience as opposed to a dominating one, in the corporeal connection with the other (Kenny and Fotaki 2014). I see the affective sociality emerging through a fundamentally human inter-corporeal connection as one that transcends inequality and hegemonic dynamics between different genders, and rather renders genuine care for the otherness of the self and the other possible, regardless of the body's physicality. In this connection, bodies naturally experience and manifest the fluidity

inherent to traditionally fixed and polarizing understandings of gender roles and experience this as a paradox in the verge of which new possibilities develop for reconceptualizing gender dynamics in organizations.

This affective inter-corporeal experience is lived and embodied with the aid of an invisible genderless thread of connection, which can be humanly palpable as it is produced as a natural response to the other's bodily touch. In this sphere, bodies are not judged based on their material characteristics but as living beings able to mutually affect each other and as equally needed for experiencing joyful corporeal interactions. Through bodily affective touch, we depart from the 'binary fundamentalism' (Knights 2015) favouring the hostaging of the feminine by the masculine, and we are rather able to dissolve this dichotomy through giving space to the emergence of a form of 'trans-genderosity'; creatively fluid and dissoluble masculine and feminine selves cohabiting the genderless (or multi-gender) body.

It is in the view of our dissolvable and fluid selves that we are able to congratulate the death of traditionally reinforced fixed gendered identities and rather generously entrust our bodies to a genderless interweaving with the other that makes genuinely affective interactions possible. Consistent with Butler's (1988) differentiation between sex and gender, the dancing encounter makes it clear how little the materially sexed body can say for the possible corporeally performed gendered selves. Gender in that regard is produced from corporeal performance prior to which it doesn't exist, letting materially conditioned male and female bodies discover their man and woman selves in the flow of the dance, thus breaking down gender power relationships supported by traditional stereotyping perceptions of sexualized bodies.

Further, by illustrating the gendered dancing bodies' evolving struggle in the tension between freedom and submission and their ability to address their power gender relationships by recognizing the existence of their fluid identities, I build on a Spinoza-inspired approach to corporeality by Thanem and Wallenberg (2015). Consistent with this reading, I illustrate that in the context of the traditionally established authority of the dance, dancers reinvent their capacity to navigate their gender power relationships and meaningfully affect each other, through engaging in a corporeal affectivity allowing them to rediscover the

immense possibilities of their bodily boundaries as well as the limits of their freedom and the responsibility for the self and the other. Through understanding this iterative process of being affected by and affecting others' bodies affectively, in a space between order and freedom, individuals naturally experience joyful and humanly possible interactions transcending traditionally thought gender-driven dominating or emancipatory tendencies.

Recognizing the complexity and almost impossibility of genuinely connecting to others' bodies in our often miserably 'alone' organizational lives, my account points to the necessity of disposing ourselves to the experience of unfiltered, affective, and spontaneously inter-corporeal responsive interactions with different others, in order to understand our capacity to affectively affect and be affected by each other. Through opening our bodies up to be touched and respond to others' bodies, in a context pregnant with humanly natural liberating and submissive tendencies, we recognize our ability to creatively transcend our corporeal boundaries as well as the gender pre-conceptions inherently associated with those. In doing so, we grant ourselves the possibility to experience and sense reciprocal relationships of genuine care, joy, and affect transcending gender power dynamics often promoted in organizational environments; relationships of those that the mind alone cannot birth.

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8

Bounded Complexity of Bodily Realities: The (Dis)Embodiment of Elderly Lesbians

Bärbel S. Traunsteiner and Regine Bendl

Introduction

The body represents a material intersectional construct constituted of gender, age, sexual orientation, dis/abilities and many other diversity categories, which we conceptualize for this contribution as historically, socially and culturally produced and situated (see, e.g. Butler 1993; Acker 2006; Holvino 2010; Souza et al. 2016). Alongside the body's materiality (Barad 1998), organizational, cultural and societal processes and practices of normalization and othering at the crossroad of these various categories determine how bodies are enacted, which mental, intellectual and spiritual potential and physical energy they set free, and how bodies are made available for the body owner and others. Hence, even though bodies represent individual material properties, they are produced and reproduced according to contextual social, legal and political norms, as well as material conditions, which influence decisions on how to enact the body.

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In general, this means that bodies are (re)produced within the contextual constraints of normalization (Foucault 1991) and othering (Martin 1990). This structural normalization implies the construction of an idealized norm of social conduct which individuals are supposed and expected to follow. Deviation from the norm (Foucault 1991) or its devaluation (Martin 1990) is punished. Normalization and othering are rooted in duality and hierarchy, on the one hand, and heteronormativity, on the other (Warner 1991; Butler 1993). “The hegemonic orientation prevails not by overt domination or resigned acceptance, but by naturalization, by a general recognition that ‘this is the way things are, and they cannot be any other way’” (Cálas and Smircich 1987: 209 quoted after Martin 1990: 351). Bendl (2005) describes this ‘naturalized’ process in terms of sexed bodies as follows:

bodies are signified within a hierarchical phallic structure within logocentric knowledge (re)production: logocentrism’s binary oppositions of presence/absence are structured around phallocentrism’s binary oppositions of man/not-man, which is critically important in the construction of the meaning of ‘woman’ and for other binary oppositions [...], as well as for the (re)production of knowledge, truth, and (human) beings.

Insofar, heteronormativity—as another structural example of binary opposition—is defined as a norm based on the duality of biological sex (woman vs man), on societal gender (female vs male) as well as heterosexuality viewed as the ‘normal’ sexual desire of women for men (and vice versa). The consequences of such normative constraints for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons at the workplace have been widely explored (Hoel et al. 2017; Ozturk and Rumens 2015; Colgan and McKearney 2012; Wright et al. 2006). Research results show that while all LGBT persons are subject to this heteronormativity, differences can be perceived in its impact in view of the diversity of individuals captured by the umbrella term LGBT. For example, lesbians differ in their life conditions from gay men (see Hofmann and Cserer 2010; Köllen 2016).

Voices of devalued “others” are hardly heard within mainstream organizations (Martin 1990) as well as in the field of organization studies (see

Calás and Smircich 1996). In particular, recent studies (e.g. King 2016) have shown that researchers tend to ignore older LGB adults. Yet existing dominant hierarchies, structures and processes can be overturned and deferred only if we reveal the stories and narratives of “others” (Holvino 2010). Butler states that bodies are “the effect of a dynamic of power (...) indissociable from regulatory norms that govern their materialization” (Butler 1993: 2). Thus, patriarchal hegemonic social and organizational discourses, systems, norms and hierarchies influence the construction and reproduction of bodies in a heteronormative way (Goffman 1967). Such normative hierarchizing and othering organizational practices can be understood by conducting intersectional analyses of concrete bodies, their/his/her stories and complex intersectional positioning. Further, this enables us to envision practices for their disruption and transformation (Holvino 2010). Referring to Halberstam (2005), Souza et al. (2016) suggest adopting a queering perspective on the construction and re/deconstruction of “sexual subjectivities within and between embodiment, place, and practice” for such analysis (Halberstam 2005: 5).

The focus of the current text is on the construction and reproduction of the bodies of older lesbians based on an intersectional analysis of gender, sexual orientation and age. While US-American researchers have spent three decades investigating the intersection of older age, gender and sexual orientation (see Fredriksen-Goldsen and Muraco 2010), scholars in German-speaking Central Europe have so far conducted a few investigations on the conscious integration of older people with non-normative sexual orientations into society and organizations and on the reduction of discrimination towards them (Lottmann and Lautmann 2015; Pulver 2015; Traunsteiner 2014). Some German studies (Bochow 2005; Braukmann and Schmauch 2007; Plötz 2006; Sdun 2009), however, have revealed that older lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals are commonly viewed as either “the sexual others” or “the older others”. Furthermore, this research has indicated the necessity of conducting a more detailed analysis of the specific life circumstances, needs and challenges of older LGBT persons.

To remedy this knowledge gap, our aim here is to explore how the life conditions of older lesbians influence the construction and reproduction of their bodies. In other words, we will shed light on the dis-/embodi-

ment of older homosexual women in order to show how age — considered at the intersection of gender and sexual orientation — serves as a powerful principle of inclusion and exclusion for societal and organizational positioning (Richter 2012; Calasanti and Slevin 2006). This requires us to look closely at how the embodiment of older lesbians is affected by intersectional oppressions, power hierarchies and processes of normalization and othering.

The text is organized as follows: Following this introductory section, we present a conceptualization of the organized body based on Dale and Burrell's (2000) three level framework, here extended to include a fourth level, which we name 'deconstructive and reconstructive bodily imprints'. This provides a framework for the analysis of our qualitative data gathered through narrative life-story interviews with older homosexual women in Austria. After detailing the study approach (methodological basis and description of the sample), we present our research results. These results reveal how women's narratives of their bodies are silenced by multiple processes of denormalization and othering. The research results are discussed in terms of processes of embodiment and disembodiment. Finally, we provide some concluding remarks.

Organized Body

Collective identities should be understood as social positions rather than entities (Hall 1994). They are not based on essential differences but instead on political and social power struggles and, therefore, are constructed and (re)produced by practices and processes (Singer 2005). Such practices and processes are revealed in forms of individual as well as the collective power (or powerlessness) to name, to give value, to devalue as well as to determine perspectives, classifications and demarcations in historical and political ways. By considering identities in this fashion, we can uncover material and symbolic effects as well as embodying and disembodiment forces. Singer (*ibid.*) understands identity as both objectively and subjectively marked by attributions, classifications, enforcements to normalizations, self-identifications, affiliations and submissions. Together, these serve to construct a system of social inequality into which people

are placed and into which they actively place themselves. Individuals and their material bodies are culturally, socially and organizationally constructed by societies, their public codes and their history, as well as by material conditions. These constructions are permanently being re/produced. In this respect, bodies — including their materiality — are accorded value (to a lesser or higher degree) through political-economic and organizational discourse (Acker 1990) and are organized regarding their institutional versatility and potential achievement in terms of production, science, knowledge, education and health (Dale and Burrell 2000: 15f.).

Studies of organizational diversity reveal the discrimination of bodies in terms of sex, gender, sexual orientation and race as well as ability (Acker 2006; Connell 2010; Fotaki 2013; Holvino 2010; Muhr et al. 2016). The theory of intersectionality helps us to analyse the constructions and reproduction of bodies based on specific positions of multiple identities (Fotaki et al. 2014). For the specific target group under investigation here, namely, older lesbians, the intersection of age, sexual orientation and gender is also “bodily mediated” (Krell 2014: 19). Dale and Burrell (2000) offer a general framework for analysing the bounded complexity of bodily realities and (dis)embodiment in organizations and society. In order to reflect existing body-related social normative categorizations, views, boundaries and implications, they define three interrelated levels of body organization as follows:

1. Splitting the body into parts
2. The machine metaphor of the body that guides the relationship of the parts
3. Interweaving of conceptual schemes with actual institutional arrangements

To this we add a fourth perspective, namely, deconstructive and reconstructive imprints, and use this extended framework as the basis for our analysis of the embodiment of older lesbians.

First, by *splitting the body into parts*, Dale and Burrell refer to the traditional Western view of bodies as divided into a rational part, namely ‘the mind’, and a physical part, ‘the body’. This dichotomy reflects other binary concepts, such as objectivity versus subjectivity or gendered

allocations of masculinity versus femininity (Dale and Burrell 2000). While Dale and Burrell refer only to gender in their matrix, we add the diversity categories 'age' (young and old) and 'sexual orientation' (homosexual and heterosexual) in order to realize the intersectional perspective of our paper. In most contexts, these categories refer to the dichotomic, essential and hegemonic cultural conception of the 'norm' and the 'other'.

Second, regarding the *machine metaphor of the body that guides relationships of the parts*, Dale and Burrell (2000) highlight those relations which occur in a hierarchical way along constructed gender definitions and boundaries, such as the domination of man over nature, the body and women in social contexts. Along with other scholars (Cálas and Smircich 1996; Benschop and Doorewaard 1998; Pullen and Knights 2007; Bendl 2008), Kenny and Fotaki (2015, 192) refer to this construction as "the phallic model, where the feminine is seen as the other of masculinity but is not intended to replace it" (masculinity refers to term A, femininity to term not-A, and both of which are organized in a binary, more specifically in a dichotomic and hierarchical relationship, Bendl 2005). Age and sexual orientation are also based on this binary. Yet while either youthfulness or old age may be proclaimed as a socially accepted power position depending on the culture and context (van Dyk 2016), heterosexuality always reinforces itself as the norm by means of heteronormative structures, processes and (inter)actions, irrespective of cultural context (Butler 1993). This relational binary of powerfulness of heterosexuals or powerlessness of LGBTs still dominates society, resting on pre-reflexive structures considered to be natural and essential. Typical structural examples are the exclusion of gays and lesbians from marriage in various countries around the world — currently only 24 nations allow homosexual couples to marry (Ilga 2017a) — or the continued criminalization of homosexuality, the punishment for which in some places is the death penalty (Ilga 2017b).

Third, according to Dale and Burrell (2000), *institutional arrangements* are constructed and dominated by these hierarchical and 'naturalistic' binaries. Hence, organizations (along with their structures, functions and boundaries) are based on an ideological pool of biologically oriented dichotomous ideas of corporeality. This common foundation underpins organizations, the images they present as well as the perspective on employees, customers, and so on (Pullen et al. 2017). Regarding the

intersection of ageing, gender and sexuality in institutional settings, Riach et al. (2014) refer to Freeman's (2010: xxii) term 'chrononormativity', which is "the interlocking temporal schemes necessary for genealogies of descent and for the mundane workings of domestic life". They argue against "heteronormative trajectories" (Riach et al. 2014: 1678) and assumptions on "right" points in time for different life stages, whether private or occupational (ibid.). In terms of embodiment, body performativity and potential along the intersection of (older) age, gender and sexual orientation in organizational settings, social expectations are linked in such a chrononormative manner (ibid.: 1681), for example, the attributed history of reproduction, actual capabilities, habits or behaviours.

Our fourth level of body organization, namely, the de- and reconstruction of normalities and their ascribed effectiveness (Degele 2008: 52), takes us beyond Dale and Burrell's (2000) three levels of body (re)construction, which are structurally rooted in a theoretical position of difference (see Cavarero 1990). The theoretical and analytical conception of "doing" (West and Zimmerman 1987; West and Fenstermaker 1995) or "performing" (Butler 1999) and, therefore, the permanent de- and reconstruction of normalities and their powerful effects (Degele 2008), must be considered in order to overcome binary divisions (Grosz 1994: 19–24) and do justice to the construction and reproduction of older lesbian bodies beyond the duality of the norm and the other. Grosz (1994) also suggests a perspective on bodies as cultural products which are mutually constituted by different categories of in/equality, for example, class, race or religion and their inscriptions. Consequently, we have to locate the (dis)embodiments of older lesbians outside traditional dichotomous and normative categories, such as the stereotypical two-sex pattern in terms of gender or the strict definitions of sexual orientation in relation to specific genders as bases of hetero-, homo- or bisexuality. Accordingly, we add a fourth conceptual level to Dale and Burrell's (2000) existing analytical scheme in order to integrate this deconstructive perspective. We call this level *deconstructive and reconstructive bodily imprints*. With respect to gender, this means uncovering and highlighting constructions which go beyond the hierarchical and dual conceptions of sex and gender. As far as 'age' is concerned, on the one hand, such a deconstructive and reconstructive perspective demands that we leave behind traditional normative definitions of young

and old. On the other hand, it requires us to revisit the conception of age along divisions of biological, psychical and social age as they are commonly used (Kohli 2013) and which are often related to the calendar age of people (Schroeter and Künemund 2010). Age and ageing are not only about changes at physical and biological levels but also represent the results of “cultural (cognitive) processes” (Schroeter and Künemund 2010: 396) as well as the outcomes of social structures at normative and symbolic levels (Amann 2000). Due to the social hierarchical construction of heterogeneous age cohorts and, therefore, systemic stereotyping and structural discrimination, age also constitutes a structural component of social power relations. However, in comparison to other categories of in/equality, the dimension *age/ing* is not clearly dichotomous and thus less totalizing (Graefe 2010).

Regarding sexual orientation and homosexuality, Kooden (2000: 9) offers an additional age category termed “gay age”. This refers to the age or period of time in which a homosexual is feeling, living and/or practising his/her sexual orientation. The gay age is highly self-referential (ibid.) as the individual person chooses the starting point, that is, the gay birthday. Considering age as a cultural and social construction (Ginn and Arber 1995: 7), both age in general and gay age in particular are differently experienced and negotiated by various social groups and contexts (Heaphy 2007: 203).

The clear added value of using this adapted four-level concept of analysis of body organization is, on the one hand, that different perceptions and concepts of social constructions regarding gender, age and sexual orientation can be disclosed. On the other hand, the concept serves to uncover individual, organizational as well as social structural aspects and hierarchies beyond heteronormative structures and processes. Insofar, this differentiated analytical view enables a detailed and rigorous investigation of the dis/embodiment of older lesbians.

Based on Dale and Burrell’s (2000) extended conceptual framework, we aim to explore how the life conditions of Austrian homosexual women over 60 years inform their embodiment. The governing research question can be formulated as follows: Which forms of (dis)embodiment are (re) produced within this target group, or, in other words, how did and do homosexual women aged over 60 organize their bodies?

Study Details and Method

The study is based on interviews conducted in Austria in 2012 (see Traunsteiner 2014). Legislation to ensure the equal treatment of sexual minorities has been implemented only in Austria since the start of the new millennium, for example, with the abolition of the final special paragraph in relation to homosexual practices in the year 2002 (VFGH 2002) or the implementation of ‘registered partnerships’ for homosexual couples in January 2010 (Federal Chancellery 2017). The establishment of this legal partnership (in which the same-sex partners still do not have identical rights to those in a heterosexual marriage) was very late compared to other European countries: Denmark, for example, introduced such partnerships in 1989 (Bauer 2009).

The interview data, which we will present in the next section, was gathered for a research project which examined not only the current life conditions of homosexual women aged over 60 in Austria but also their subjectively constructed life realities and perspectives (see Traunsteiner 2015). A total of 13 narrative interviews were conducted, each lasting 30–90 minutes. With two exceptions, all interviews took place in the interviewees’ homes. Following the narrative approach, the interviews had an open-ended structure in which women were encouraged to speak freely about their lives and experiences (Schütze 1983). In line with ethical research practice, confidentiality was guaranteed by the researcher and written consent was obtained from all participants. This was particularly important for a research project investigating the aspects of heteronormativity (Klesse 2007). As in previous studies (cf. Krell 2014; Reimann and Lasch 2006; Allen 2005), it proved difficult to locate a sufficient number of non-heteronormative participants. Therefore, the snowball system (Schnell et al. 1999: 280) was employed to recruit a suitable pool of interviewees. The age range of the interviewees was 61–74 years. All of them lived in or near the city of Vienna and almost half had tertiary qualifications. Six of the interviewees had children (2.17 children on average). Almost two-thirds of the women had lived for extended periods of their lives within heterosexual marriages. At the time of the interviews, two participants lived in a registered same-sex partnership. In terms of

study limitations, no interview partner older than 74 years could be recruited. Considering the relatively small number of interviewees, we must point out that many women in this target group will have previously decided to keep their sexual orientation hidden at a time when being lesbian was a tremendous social taboo. While more liberal attitudes reign today, discrimination has not vanished completely, so that they may still feel uneasy about revealing their homosexuality.

Regarding the study methodology, the material gathered from the interviews was subject to a three-step content analysis. The first step was to perform microstructural analyses within interdisciplinary scientific teams. This was followed by an analysis of general thematic areas (Froschauer and Lueger 2003). On the basis of this inductively established dataset, the third step was to search for body-related aspects through content analysis guided by intersectional perspectives (Crenshaw 1989; Walgenbach 2012; Winker and Degele 2009). Here, we utilized the intersection of a deductive set of specific historically, socially and culturally produced and conceptualized social categories as an interweaving intersectional analysis grid. These categories, dictated by the research interest, were *gender*, *age*, *sexual orientation* and *body*. This multi-layered approach allowed us to gather data on the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of the bodies of older lesbians in their specific social intersectional position; at the same time, we could immerse deeply into the data set without being guided by presumptions, leading to the identification of a band of content categories, on the one hand, and a spectrum of social constructions, on the other hand.

Research Results on the Dis/Embodiment of Older Lesbians

In the following, we present the results of our content analysis on aspects of dis/embodiment as narrated by the interviewees. We have clustered the data according to the four-stage conceptual framework presented above. Based on this classification of the body in organizations, the data shows the following results.

Splitting of the Body into Parts

Referring to the splitting of the body into a rational and a physical part, alcoholism can be identified as a way to achieve such a disconnection between mind and body. In the group of interviewees, heavy drinking was found as one consequence of a lesbian sexual orientation. Gertraud, a reformed alcoholic and active member of Alcoholics Anonymous, sees her long-standing alcohol abuse as correlated with her sexual orientation:

E: *“I started drinking at the age of 24. I was already an adult by that time [...] This is a component of not being able to manage my own life. I just couldn't bear it. I just couldn't take it and it was just way too much for me.”*

I: *“That was when you started working as a waitress, wasn't it?”*

E: *“No, that had nothing to do with me being a waitress. Not at all. It rather had to do with something else. With, yes,... my inferiority complexes. Because I didn't feel good and I just couldn't deal with my homosexuality. It's as easy as that. I knew it as a child already. But I couldn't name it at that time. It was as easy as that. I just couldn't label it. And well, as I mentioned, I didn't feel well in my... Because I couldn't talk to anyone at all, and I just didn't know what to do. What should I do...? And that hiding all the time, and living in a closet [...].”* (Gertraud, lines 492–502)

The main reasons behind Gertraud's descent into alcoholism were her loneliness in combination with the fact that she desired women and felt the need to hide her sexual orientation. As a result, she felt the pressure of not being able to speak to others about what she calls the 'problem' (referring to her homosexuality), her related inferiority complexes and also because of a lack of vocabulary to talk about her desire. In her period of alcoholism, which was more than a third of her life, drinking seemed a 'useful' solution that enabled her to disassociate her mind (together with her problems) from her body.

Alongside depression and drug abuse, alcoholism is a major health risk for older lesbians (Jones 2001: 14). It is caused, or certainly promoted, by

their specific minority stress and their quadruple marginalization (Rowan and Butler 2014: 177) in the sense of being gay, female, older and an alcoholic. However, some scholars offer alternative explanations for the higher rates of alcohol abuse found among lesbians (Addis et al. 2009): Excessive alcohol consumption could simply be a sampling error due to the recruitment of lesbians from gay bars or it could be attributed to a specific belief system within lesbian communities (Welch et al. 1998). Based on our qualitative data, this aspect of dis/embodiment seems to result from the position of older lesbians along the intersection of (older) age, gender and sexual orientation. Gertraud, a reformed alcoholic and member of this quadruple marginalized target group, links her former alcohol abuse to her specific intersectional social position. In fact, however, this alcohol abuse represents a disconnect between body and mind.

Another example of the splitting of mind and body refers to disparities in the chronological, physical and mental age as understood by the participants. Although all interviewees had already passed their 60th birthday, their self-perceptions were somewhat younger. The following statements of Eva and Angelika reveal this phenomenon with reference to mental age:

Well, in my first two relationships, my female partners were older than me. After those, they were the same age as me and from that time on they were always younger than me, about 10 to 15 years. And this is – I think – the same as my own attitude towards life. (Eva, line 177)

Well, one difference is also that your inner and outer perspectives of yourself, they evolve separately. When you look outside and what you feel inside aren't congruent. Sometimes I pass by a shop window or I look into a mirror and I think: "Oh my god!" You have so many wrinkles or something like that. But well, I don't feel wrinkled inside. (Angelika, line 47)

Age studies have confirmed this "rejuvenation" in the self-conception of older people (Backes and Clemens 1998: 23). There are specific intersectional reasons which could strengthen this self-impression of older lesbians. First, non-existing social interactions and, hence, no partnerships with even older lesbians: Studies on older lesbians show that they barely

have contact or even know other lesbians of a higher age (Plötz 2006: 225f.). Insofar, it is unsurprising that the female partners of our interviewees are (with one exception) all significantly younger. Second, the relative ‘youth’ of older lesbians considered in terms of their “gay age” (Kooden 2000: 9): All of our participants only started seeing other women when they were well into their adult years. Third, the lower (perceived) heteronormative pressure was felt by interviewees to maintain physical attractiveness. This finding from our investigation will be presented in the following section as the second stage of the applied model.

Machine Metaphor of the Body That Guides the Relationship of the Parts

One example of the machine metaphor of the body guiding the relationship of the parts is the interviewees’ perceived relaxation of requirements regarding physical attractiveness in the ageing process. For example, Veronika claims a clear benefit in getting older as a homosexual compared to a heterosexual woman:

I even think you’ve got an advantage as a lesbian woman. Because the things which are perceived as especially unpleasant by heterosexual women when they become older do not, I think, play such a role for lesbians. Wrinkles or grey hair, for example. I don’t think this is as important in a relationship between two women. Of course, everyone wants to be pretty and good-looking, but the external appearance doesn’t have the same significance, and youthfulness isn’t that important. I think that you are better off because of that. (Veronika, lines 069–073)

Veronika assumes that physical attraction in terms of youthful traits such as the absence of grey hair or wrinkles is less important within lesbian relationships than in heterosexual relationships. In fact, the interviewee recognizes an additional value in the ageing process related to her intersectional position along the dimensions of (older) age, gender and sexual orientation. Various studies come to the same conclusion. In a national study of lesbians aged over 60 in the USA, Kehoe (1989) found that ageing is not a critical barrier. Similarly, Heaphy (2007) determined

that there is less pressure in homosexual communities related to the ageing process, although he highlighted a disparity between lesbians and gay men: The latter are more oriented towards youthfulness and more likely to suffer from ageist prejudice. Although normative ideals of youthfulness and beauty are also gaining in importance in lesbian communities, older women are still more recognized and respected in homosexual contexts than in heterosexual-dominated ones (see Krell 2014).

Our data and the mentioned studies demonstrate the inherently dichotomous concepts found at several points in the process of intersectional weaving: First, in terms of gender and sexual orientation, the dichotomous and hierarchical notions of beauty that we can distinguish between homosexual and heterosexual women; second, through the linking of gender, sexual orientation and age, the concept of *youth = beauty* versus *older people = less beauty*. Furthermore, the special intersectional position of older lesbians seems to create privilege in comparison to older heterosexual women and indeed older homosexual men. This suggested privileged position arises through the resistance of feminist lesbians to dominant social norms of beauty (Friend 1987: 326; Neuberg 2002: 95; Krell 2014: 267).

Another example of the guided relationship of the parts is the restriction of physical contact and interaction between older homosexual women in public areas. Both Waltraud and Barbara were clear about the lack of physical interaction with their life partners or other lesbians in public:

Although we never hold hands or cuddle with each other or anything like that. We rather keep our distance and act accordingly. (Waltraud, line 049)

I don't like to go around and talk about my relationship in the way going around and telling. It is also not that I go on the street and start cuddling with a woman demonstratively. (Barbara, line 056)

Eva talked about her fear of being outed against her wishes, a fear which seems to increase with age:

I think my biggest fear is then being alone, cut off from my social network, and that is certainly bad. I think getting older and losing one's social environment is

the worst thing. Or not losing it, but running the risk of losing it. (Eva, lines 247–249)

Other studies have shown (Krell 2014: 207) that information is frequently managed by the simple act of avoiding physical contact. Such behaviour can be directly linked to the naturalization and hierarchization of heterosexuality in social contexts. This clearly undermines the dis/embodiment of older lesbians, who tend to reject intimate physical interaction in public. The hierarchical construction of sexual orientation thereby empowers heterosexuals at a normative level while disempowering lesbian women who suffer from the absence of an autonomous and self-determined sexuality (Schäffer-Ziegler 2000: 170), which they can live in public. Of course, at the same time, we must acknowledge a wider social taboo around sexual interaction between older individuals, a taboo that also applies to heterosexual women (Krell 2014: 354f.).

In relation to embodied intersectional effects, we present Helga's words to underline the need for more research on the consequences of the dis-embodiment of older lesbians:

I have always asked myself: What does it do to women? What does it do to lesbians? When someone like me – 62 years old and already a lesbian for 30 years – always has to consider how to declare my relationship and what I tell to whom. That does something to a human being. I'm actually a sociable person, but I've recognized during my lifetime how I'm more likely retreat in social interactions, because I don't know how to deal with it. (Helga, lines 239–255)

One final example of dichotomous hierarchization affecting embodiment is the strict distinction made between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Some interviewees (e.g. Eva, Veronika and Helga) conceive of homo- and heterosexuality as two completely different forms of sexual orientation. Furthermore, all of our interviewees confirm explicitly and implicitly their current and future sexual orientation towards women. None of the lesbians considers a heterosexual relationship as an option for their future love- or sex lives, even though some of the interviewees have lived for lengthy periods in heterosexual relationships or in heterosexual marriages:

And then I've always fallen in love with women; I've been living with women since I was 18, and I'm really satisfied with it. (Eva, line 019)

This means I actually decided at a very young age that I'm quite clearly a lesbian. (Veronika, line 055)

And at some point I fell in love with a woman and then it was clear. Probably forever. And that was unquestionable. I never questioned it again. I never thought again about the question of me being with men or women. I just was ready for it. (Helga, lines 079–087)

According to the heterosexual matrix (Butler 1999), existing heteronormative structures determine the social normative possibilities of sexual orientations in a dual and hierarchical structure of heterosexuality, on the one hand, and a deviant form of sexuality, namely, homosexuality, on the other. Our data shows how the interviewees reproduce this socially constructed binary perspective by expressing no sexual orientations apart from heterosexuality and homosexuality, or indeed any more fluid conception of sexual orientation such as bisexuality or pansexuality. Furthermore, their imagined future partnerships are only with women.

Interweaving of Conceptual Schemes with Actual Institutional Arrangements

Regarding the interweaving of conceptual schemes with actual institutional arrangements, several aspects of embodiment were revealed by our findings. For instance, some interviewees, who still actively participate in the labour market, mention organizational challenges for the ageing worker based on increasing bodily effects/burdens. Barbara speaks clearly about age-related lower physical and mental energy, necessitating a change in her working conditions from a field service employee with a wide action radius to an employee working in close proximity to the organization:

I really was on the road for a whole month. And I just knew that I couldn't do that again. Driving all these kilometres and all that. I was groggy. I

haven't been for a whole month... thereby I harmed my sciatic nerve. And by that time I said no. And that's the reason I'm working in one place now.
(Barbara, line 176)

Furthermore, the interviewees state several age-related consequences for the workplace, for example, reduced working hours, attempts to introduce flexible working conditions and the need for increased self-determination related to working times, other structures and types of participation (e.g. part-time employment or self-employment).

At the same time, almost half of the participants have to keep on part-time working due to the intersectional position along the dimensions of gender, (older) age and sexual orientation. For some of the interviewees, this can be attributed to the gender segregation of the Austrian labour market, which results in lower salaries for women. This financial disadvantage is perpetuated in the Austrian pension system, resulting in the relative poverty of older women (Traunsteiner 2015: 224). Compounded by the lack of legal recognition of homosexual relationships by the Austrian government until 2010 (Federal Chancellery 2017), the special intersectional position of older lesbians is characterized by a lack of financial security, for example, women are not entitled to widows' pensions in the case of a deceased female partner. Hence, the intersectional effects of age, gender and sexual orientation conspire to produce a structurally precarious position in the labour market as well as in the pension system.

The fact that the interviewees made no statements on being out as a lesbian in their work environments reveals another effect of labour institutional settings, namely, that being openly homosexual at the workplace is no option at all. Barbara states this fact directly:

For instance, I was condemned because nobody at work knows I'm a lesbian. I would never tell. I don't carry a sign on me saying 'I'm a lesbian'. I say it like it is: I'm not in favour of that. (Barbara, line 056)

Further, the example of Ingrid shows how the fear of negative institutional consequences and discrimination can discourage lesbians from realizing their wish to get officially registered as a couple:

I: *“Are you civil partners or planning to become ones?”*

E: *“No. That’s impossible. Otherwise it would become known. Then she would have to mention it, and so on. That’s impossible.”* (Ingrid, lines 044–049)

Hence, for some of the interviewees a fear of institutional setback triggered by their intersectional position (in particular their older age) is stronger than their desire to secure their partner both structurally and institutionally.

The data presents another fear of older lesbians regarding institutions, as revealed by Helga’s statement:

How are we going to live? The retirement home where my mother lives is really nice, she has her own apartment with her own furniture – it’s a really normal one where I, as a lesbian, would be a bit lonely, I think. I wish that this could be different. (Helga, lines 133–137)

Life as an elderly lesbian brings fears of loneliness caused by the anticipated reduction of autonomy in living conditions, that is, fewer possibilities to choose situational contexts, homes to live in and people to be around (Traunsteiner 2014). Based on the current experiences of the interviewees (e.g. Helga), these fears are exacerbated by institutional settings which do not address older homosexual women. Due to the naturalized norm of heterosexuality in organizations, the following embodied institution-related arrangements can be identified from the gathered material: a lack of physical space, rooms or areas specially designated for, or appealing to, older homosexual women, where they can meet and come into contact with one another. In fact, gay areas largely target younger LGBT persons. Barbara states this very clearly:

But there is just nothing for older women. (Barbara, line 064)

The gender aspect in combination with an economically weaker position in a patriarchal social system (and thus the perceived structural preference and privilege of gay men by the interviewees) may be one

explanation why older lesbians enjoy few institutionally provided leisure activities. Veronika and Marianne offer the following diagnoses:

There just doesn't exist a lot. [...] Vienna is a poor city concerning that. Well, I know that from visits elsewhere as well, because my girlfriend and I are always looking around if there are bars for women, and actually there's not much anywhere. If you find something, it's mostly for gay men. (Veronika, lines 131–137)

Talking about bars and restaurants, there has never been enough. And the quite understandable reason for that is that a lot of lesbian women had and spent very little money in comparison to men, who were in a better situation. The bars and clubs for gay men were always fancy and well financed, and that's just something women didn't have. And that's something which didn't really improve over the years. (Marianne, lines 344–352)

The structural embodied effect is evident if we consider the structural dearth of public institutionalized areas for older lesbians in combination with the previously mentioned reluctance to engage in physical interaction. As Marianne states, the lack of public areas and places for women encourages the withdrawal of older lesbians into private areas:

I: "Where would you say you could meet up with women?"

E: "Me? Well, it's usually privately organized. In random bars and restaurants. I need some kind of nice surrounding, good food and so on. I don't want to drink beer out of a bottle, eat an insipid sandwich, sitting in the cold on cheap chairs. That's not what I want." (Marianne, lines 361–367)

These structural boundaries prevent and profoundly restrict the embodied interaction of older lesbians. Outside of private areas, it is almost impossible for such women to engage in any form of physical contact due to embodied institutional arrangements, the inhibitions felt by lesbians in heteronormative public areas as well as non-existent public rooms and meeting points, especially for older lesbians. These barriers constitute a considerable burden, especially for the "late-bloomers" (Bochow 2005: 54), that is, women who come out as gay at a relatively late age.

Deconstructive and Reconstructive Imprints

Related to the fourth level of analysis, namely, de- and reconstruction, our gathered material shows a gender unambiguity. The interview transcripts present only dichotomic constructions of sex and gender at an individual level and in regard to institutional arrangements. This fact seems to be linked to the fact that the interviewees underwent socialization at times when deconstructive perspectives and knowledge of performativity were not yet established. Thus, deconstructive perspectives are lacking in the social constructions of this cohort as well as in their institutional arrangements.

Deconstructions of the heterosexual matrix (Butler 1999) would generate some alternative or deviant examples of proclaimed or discursive gender performances at the intersection of gender, sexual orientation and (older) age. However, our data reveals only heteronormative perspectives. Here is a statement by Barbara in relation to the perceived physical non-normative gender performances by lesbians:

Well, I have a bit of a problem: Lesbians differ as well. There are – let's name them 'hardcore lesbians'. [...] And I can't go along with those 'hard lesbians'. Those who really stand up for themselves, and I very often ask myself why do they dress like men. Because I love women. Why are they like this? They are guys inside and out! It's horrible! (Barbara, lines 230–232)

Other interviewees use words such as 'clenched' and 'aggressive' (Helga) to describe the performance of non-normative lesbians. Our data shows a lack or deprecation of alternative gender performances by lesbians in relation to bodies.

To summarize, the data shows two outcomes regarding the deconstruction of the gender dichotomic (heteronormative) sexual orientation and the division between heterosexuality as the norm and homosexuality as the deviant: First, none of the interviewees contemplates any future relationship with a man. Second, the interviewees do not conceptualize alternative forms of sexual orientation such as bisexuality or fluid perceptions of sexual orientation such as pansexuality. Such a one-dimensional focus on women as love- and life partners seems rooted in the heteronormative

socialization of our interview partners in the second half of the twentieth century. Under these time-dependent contextual constraints and boundaries, the fact of recognizing their attraction to women and taking steps towards realizing their social and sexual desires (both openly and closed) was a remarkable and fundamental step for the women, both individually and structurally. For some, it took years to walk this path while living (partly in frustration) in unhappy heterosexual marriages; until today, some others have never had the experience of living in a publicly acknowledged and mutually supportive relationship with another woman. As such, the interviewees' constructions of sexuality remain based on the normative two-sex/gender patterns, on the one hand, and the duality of heterosexuality and homosexuality, on the other.

However, regarding de- and reconstruction, the data points to structural irritations on the part of the interviewees based on their intersectional positioning: One such irritation refers to the concept of "gay age" (Kooden 2000), which is an alternative to calendar age, defined by each person individually based on their current non-heteronormative life- and love concept. Luise, for example, talks about the irritations which appear at an individual level, especially in contact with other people:

Nowadays with our people (refers to homosexuals, authors) – of course not! But if someone else would know! It's just because I actually started quite late at 38 years! It's a bit awkward. (Luise, line 179)

Of course, I have complexes because I'm the oldest everywhere, aren't I? (Luise, line 139)

In the first quote, Luise refers to her lack of experience as a young lesbian due to her coming out (gay birthday) at the age of 38 years — which she considers as late. In the second citation, she refers to homosexual cultures and scenes where she considers herself old in comparison to other women and men whom she met and meets there. In this context, her 'gay age' interferes at an institutional level with her calendar age insofar as she considers herself old in comparison with persons who are in, and addressed by, subcultural areas and who are chronologically younger than her but who may at the same time be older in terms of 'gay years'.

In this respect, the intersection of (older) age, gender and sexual orientation causes irritation at an individual level, reinforced by a lack of public places for older lesbians as previously mentioned in regard to institutional settings. It should be noted, however, that Luise herself is aware of the intersectional position regarding her different ages in terms of chrononormativity, gay age and the age arrangements determined in part by heterosexual contexts as well as homosexual subcultures. Thereby, she attempts to reconstruct her complex position and is well aware of the challenges which she faces at an individual level.

Another example of irritation caused by the special intersectional position of older lesbians refers to ‘chrononormativity’ (Freeman 2010), which is correlated with heteronormative assumptions of ‘right’ points in time for different life stages (Riach et al. 2014). The example of Barbara — a homosexual woman aged over 60 who still works part-time — shows the institutional irritation which she, as a non-normative intersectional representative, causes:

And I'm the oldest speaker. There has never been a speaker of my age. On stage you have to leave at an average age of 45, 55 – here it comes: as a woman! As a man you can stay until the age of 60. As a woman you are not attractive enough anymore. But I never played the attraction card and instead went on stage from the beginning with my doc martens, leading the female director to tell me to take off my shoes, with me returning for her to notice that having no shoes on isn't any better. Well, that means that I have been like this all the time. I even wear jeans on stage nowadays. (Barbara, lines 146–148)

The legal pensionable age for women in Austria is 60 years. Hence, from a normative perspective, none of the women in this cohort should be employed in the labour market. Barbara causes irritation at different levels by appearing in her non-standard business outfit and by exhibiting anachronic behaviour that does not meet chrononormative expectations for the normative picture of a heterosexual ‘grandmother’. She irritates in terms of her clothing and the refusal to obey conventional heteronormative standards of beauty as well as by occupying public space reserved for younger people and by resisting the authority of a superior. By keeping her job, Barbara seems to be succeeding at an institutional level despite

her antinormative attitude and performance, but at the same time she is highly aware of her irritating position and her position as a pioneer within the organization.

Concluding this section on deconstructive and reconstructive imprints, our data does not reveal deconstructive tendencies in the interviewees at large when we focus on performativities at the intersection of gender, age, sexual orientation and body. Conversely, the data shows how the interviewees become sources of irritation if the body performance serves to question heteronormativity and chrononormativity.

Discussion

Based on Dale and Burrell's (2000) adopted and adapted general framework for investigating the bounded complexity of bodily realities in organizations and societies, we analysed data with respect to four different levels of embodiment and disembodiment. While levels one to three supported us in identifying processes of embodiment and disembodiment within heteronormative norms, level four gave the opportunity to uncover norms beyond heteronormativity that also determine the lives of older lesbians.

Our data shows that older lesbians are subject to simultaneous processes of embodiment and disembodiment at the intersection of gender, sexual orientation and age. In this context, heteronormativity serves as a *general* motive for exclusion, while the factor of age *compounds* this exclusion. Although the negative aspects outnumber the positive aspects of embodiment, the data reveals a sense of well-being or contented acceptance of one's body due to the liberation from heteronormative conceptions, demands and challenges, as well as embodied heterosexual dislocations (dyed hair, high heels, etc.) of beauty. In terms of disembodiment, the data reveals the following aspects:

- Unwilling to contravene heterosexual norms, older lesbians are inclined to hide their homosexuality. This can lead them to harm the body through excessive alcohol consumption.

- There is a lack of provision for care homes and home help specifically targeted at elderly lesbians, who are in fact not yet recognized as a target group. Their physical care is also impacted by a fear of bodily touch and a reluctance to engage in physical contact, which may simultaneously prevent or impact embodiment in view of a lack of caressing and signs of tenderness.
- Heterosexual norms prevent or discourage lesbians from enacting their physical desires in public (e.g. caressing, embracing, kissing). This is in part specific to the socialization of today's older lesbians, who have been influenced by legal discrimination over a long period of their lifetimes, serving to inhibit bodily contact in public.
- In general, older lesbians tend to embody heterosexual behaviours (e.g. flirting with men) and to act according to heteronormative patterns of embodiment. In so doing, their aim is to control and limit the flow of information regarding their non-normative existence (Goffman 1967).
- Regarding their mental states, the interviewees express a fear of coming out as well as suffering from loneliness, solitude and reclusion, which seem to become more intense at an older age.

All in all, the data shows that the embodiment of the lesbian interviewees is determined by heteronormative structures and processes within society as well as their own heteronormative bodies of knowledge. However, the data for this age group also indicates that any challenge or disruption to the boundaries of phallocentrism and heteronormativity would entail leaving this restricting, controlling, harming and devaluing yet ultimately *safe* environment for unknown, insecure and uncertain terrain. For the individual women, this process would involve abandoning the given bounded nature of lesbian life for a transgressive non-binary existence in order to be able to set up new relationships and create a more inclusive life. However, such a step requires new organizational settings to allow fresh opportunities for the individual to explore novel forms of self-expression and which serve to displace feelings of alienation. On the one hand, as regards the workplace, this requires a new tolerance of diversity: Older lesbians in the current cohort face body-related challenges from their need to participate as productive members in the labour force

longer than their heterosexual age group due to a lack of social security through marriage (which did not exist for gay men and lesbians until 2010). On the other hand, in terms of care for the elderly, dominant concepts have to be revisited in order to allow for the emergence of inclusive and equality-oriented organizations. Such organizations could help older lesbians adopt this non-discriminative perspective and lead a life based on the unity of body and mind, enabling them to embark on new forms of relationships. This would reduce the mental effort needed to conform to heteronormativity and to assimilate to the majority in the hope of avoiding physical assault.

The results of this intersectional analysis clearly show how *age* as a category of diversity as well as the temporal context can strongly determine the life circumstance of the interviewees, not only in terms of chrononormativity, gay age and working conditions but also with regard to applied bodies of knowledge. Being brought up and reaching maturity during a period of the twentieth century in which sex and gender were constructed as essentialist, dichotomic, hierarchical and non-performative, heteronormativity remains the guiding intellectual framework for the decision-making of this group of women as well as their assumptions on relationship and gender performance. Clearly, a range of new strategies is required to support this target group in leaving behind their individual and structural processes of disembodiment based on heteronormativity.

Conclusion

Our analysis has demonstrated a range of positive and negative aspects of embodiment and disembodiment for older lesbians in a society based on patriarchy and heteronormativity. For instance, they suffer from a lack of sufficient structural locations to ensure balanced living in terms of bodily well-being. Clearly, more political attention and activity is required to ensure that older lesbians are treated as an equal group in society.

In general, the study data shows that an intersectional analysis of various dimensions of identity and their related social/institutional processes and practices provides a basis for a more elaborate organizational strategy

and policy potential to change regimes of inequality (see also Holvino 2010). The diverse embodied structural arrangements and limitations concerning our specific target group reveal the bounded complexity of bodily realities which confront older lesbians. There is no doubt that further research is needed on the embodiment and disembodiment of this disadvantaged group — also taking into consideration diversity categories such as ethnicity, (dis)ability and class — in order to stimulate relevant policy and decision-making processes. In further investigations, special emphasis should be placed on the tolerance of diversity by those dominant groups, decision-makers and policy-makers who will shape the future discourse on older lesbians.

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9

The Embodiment of Otherness: Deconstructing Power Relations Between Staffing Agencies, Diverse Jobseekers, and Organizations in the Israeli Business Sector

Shani Kuna and Ronit Nadiv

Introduction

The scholarly management literature is replete with suggestions as regards enhancing diversity in the workforce, given its association with various economic benefits (Kochan et al. 2003; Konrad et al. 2016). Consequently, in the past few years, a growing number of business organizations in Israel have begun to publicly declare their commitment to attracting and retaining “diverse employees”—a relatively new fashionable term in the business rhetoric, which refers to social and cultural minorities typically marginalized in the labor market as well as in other domains of power. This inclusive rhetoric is at times also expressed in these business organizations’ codes of ethics or in their corporate social responsibility

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statements. The scope and character of the implementation of this rhetoric, however, have only recently begun to be assessed.

Workforce diversity is a fascinating phenomenon, especially in light of the nonstandard employment relations typical of contemporary labor markets (Cappelli and Keller 2013; Kalleberg 2000). Staffing agencies (SAs) are major labor market intermediaries given their significant role in various job-matching processes (Bonet et al. 2013; Findlay et al. 2013). Prior research has not examined SAs' impact on the workforce diversity of their client organizations, where jobseekers are placed to work. Our exploratory qualitative study addresses this gap in the literature from a critical stance toward the mainstream concepts of diversity and diversity management (Ahmed 2007a, b, 2009; Janssens and Zanoni 2005; Zanoni and Janssens 2004, 2007; Zanoni et al. 2010). Our inquiry also aims to critically examine the embodiment of diverse jobseekers as constructed by SAs. Our three main research questions are:

1. What practices do SAs utilize regarding diverse jobseekers?
2. Consequently, how do SAs construct discourses of workforce diversity and diverse jobseekers vis-à-vis their client organizations?
3. Finally, how do SAs construct the embodiment of diverse jobseekers?

We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with recruiters in SAs that serve the Israeli business sector. Based on our findings, we illustrate the dual potential effect of SAs on the workforce diversity of their client organizations and critically analyze their function as intermediaries that construct the "otherness" of diverse jobseekers and exploit it in ways which might exacerbate their employment precariousness. In addition, we discuss the discriminatory rhetoric and practices regarding workforce diversity attributed to the business organizations by the SAs who serve them.

This chapter is organized as follows. We start by elaborating on the problem—the role of the staffing industry in the contemporary labor market and the precariousness associated with the work it arranges for jobseekers. This is followed by a review of the critical literature regarding diversity management as well as the interrelation between diversity and embodiment. Next, we outline our methodology, and then present our findings. The chapter concludes with a discussion offering theoretical considerations and practical implications.

The Staffing Industry's Central Position in the Labor Market

The scholarly literature highlights the prominence of SAs in the labor market in the contemporary economy (Peck et al. 2005; Peck and Theodore 2006; Smith and Neuwirth 2008). In large, the increased use of their services is typically attributed to cost-benefit considerations (Houseman 2001). Given the dynamic changes in markets, economic crises and demographic shifts such as large waves of immigration, employers find it cheaper and more flexible to find and hire personnel through external parties such as SAs. At the same time, the growing staffing industry has actively promoted its own position as a vital labor market intermediary (Coe et al. 2010, Peck and Theodore 2002a, b).

The staffing industry has expanded to such a degree that it has become manifold in terms of the services and work arrangements it engages in. For example, some agencies may specialize in placing blue-collar day workers (Purser 2006, 2012), while others focus on high-skilled professionals. There are multiple definitions and types of work arrangements, and the differences between and within actors in the staffing industry are dependent on numerous factors. A significant factor is the different legislation across countries (Davidov 2004; Locke et al. 2013; Mitlacher 2007), which defines and regulates working relations and the occupational status of employees hired via SAs. Given the wide range of work arrangements nowadays, distinctions between SAs have become blurred and dynamic (Cappelli and Keller 2013). What remains clear is their prominence as matchmakers between client firms and jobseekers.

Agency Workers and Precarious Work

What is the function of SAs for jobseekers? The established role of the staffing industry nowadays implies that its significance as a mediator is acknowledged not only by employers but also by the numerous jobseekers who apply for work via SAs. Smith and Neuwirth (2008) found that SAs can aid jobseekers in overcoming barriers of social discrimination and their lack of social capital, developing needed skills, contending with

job histories characterized by unemployment periods, and getting job placements with the potential of becoming permanent.

Despite such possible positive consequences of using SAs as employment matchmakers, a growing number of studies have stressed their problematic effects on jobseekers. These include negative implications in terms of workers' health and well-being (Benach et al. 2014; Bosmans et al. 2017). In addition, evidence suggests that contingent workers are less satisfied than their permanent colleagues (Hall 2006; Wilkin 2013). In particular, studies critique the precariousness associated with the employment provided by SAs, which create and sustain a contingency that will eventually strengthen the need for their services (Kalleberg 2009; Vosko 2000). For example, the employment of blue-collar temporary agency workers in many industries has become a long-term staffing strategy aimed at avoiding permanent employment (Håkansson et al. 2013; McKay and Markova 2010).

The literature has critiqued in particular the relation between precarious labor and working women (Fotaki and Harding 2017; Vosko 2000; Walby 2009). Systematic evidence has stressed the poor quality of service jobs offered to women, particularly jobs characterized by nonstandard employment relations such as part time and hourly as well as jobs enabling little skill development (Benjamin 2016). Gender segregation and gendered assumptions have been the basis of the restructuring of services by flexibilization strategies (Benjamin 2016). The latter are linked with nonstandard employment relations that are mediated by the staffing industry.

Consequently, while being employed through an agency provides workers with work in the short term, it negatively impacts their retention in the long term (King et al. 2017). Moreover, SAs succeed in generating new labor markets by eroding workers' rights and permitting new modalities of worker exploitation (Andrijasevic and Sacchetto 2017). Based on her field research in a temporary staffing agency, Elcioglu (2010, p. 119) suggested: "Despite the opportunities it may provide to workers in a restrictive labor market, the agency cultivates precariousness among both core and peripheral workers in the pursuit of profit." She concluded: "Precariousness is *systematically* cultivated in the contemporary economy" (Elcioglu 2010, p. 119).

Workforce Diversity

The scholarly diversity management literature, a domain which emerged in the 1990s, is replete with suggestions as regards enhancing diversity in the workforce, given its association with economic benefits such as improved performance, better decision-making, and innovation (Knippenberg and Schippers 2007; Kochan et al. 2003; Konrad et al. 2016). In addition, the legislation in many countries mandates the employment of diverse employees in various ways.

Consequently, the discourses of diversity and practices of diversity management have become prominent in academia as well as in contemporary labor markets. Diversity initiatives, however, are diverse themselves in terms of their underlying premises and rationales. Ely and Thomas (2001) have suggested a distinction between three motivations underlying diversity initiatives. From the first perspective, labeled integration and learning, diversity is seen as a valuable source of organizational learning and innovation. From the second perspective, termed access and legitimacy, the aim is to establish organizational access to and legitimacy within diverse market shares by employing their representatives. From the third perspective of discrimination and fairness, diversity is implemented to ensure fair treatment of all community members, including equal employment opportunities and elimination of discrimination.

Conceptualizations, such as Ely and Thomas's (2001), as well as more recent ones (van der Zee and Otten 2015), imply that diversity management discourses and practices are not a "neutral" organizational endeavor aiming at improving performance or simply obeying the law. While some organizations may strive for workforce diversity as an end in itself, as an expression and a manifestation of the organization as part of a just community, others pursue it for calculated neoliberal reasons (Duchêne and Heller 2012; Park 2013). There is a vast difference between inviting a Black worker to join the organization because she deserves to be there just like anybody else, or because her difference within a dominant group of White men may contribute innovation to their thinking processes.

Consequently, while organizations may declare their desire for workforce diversity and engage in various initiatives to achieve it, their chosen rhetoric and actions manifest existing power relations: The practices they choose to enhance diversity, the groups they aim to employ (or not), the advantages they attribute to diversity and to diverse employees—all of these position organizations as powerful players who choose who they invite to join their game as well as the rules of that game. This manifests existing power relations not only in the labor market but also in society at large.

The critical diversity management scholarship aspires to decipher and deconstruct the power relations underlying the mainstream concepts and rhetoric of diversity management. The latter tend to purposely overlook or even ignore the asymmetry and inequalities at the heart of the diversity discourse. The critical diversity management scholarship is itself very diverse and relies upon various theoretical lenses, including poststructuralism (Bendl et al. 2008), feminist studies (Ahmed 2007a, b, c, 2009) and cultural studies (Prasad and Mills 1997). These share the critique toward the essentialist and positivistic premises of mainstream diversity discourses, according to which people from groups labeled as diverse are conceptualized merely as representatives of distinct objective categories such as gender, age, and ethnicity. These demographics are conceived of as deterministic attributes and not as socially constructed. Consequently, people from minority groups labeled as diverse are not credited with having agency and subjective identities (Zanoni and Janssens 2007).

In addition, the critical diversity management literature claims that diversity management discourses, while supposedly empowering differences between people and groups, might actually obscure unequal power relations in multiple contexts and serve as a control mechanism (Zanoni and Janssens 2004). Critical scholars assert that “diversity is a discourse, socially constructed through language and embedded in power relations” (Zanoni and Janssens 2004, p. 57). Thus, the mainstream diversity management discourse, in its function as a persuasive hegemonic tool, might also serve to deflect resistance to or forestall change in existing unequal power relations (Zanoni et al. 2010).

Diversity and the Embodiment of Otherness

Discourses of workforce diversity are closely linked with the embodiment of “otherness,” especially when the latter is (politically) constructed in bodily aspects such as color and gender (e.g., Ahmed 2007a, b). A growing corpus of organization studies has explored the embodied character of organizational life (e.g., Hope 2011; Styhre 2004). Bodies have been examined as the subject of control mechanisms (Michel 2011), occupations, and occupational cultures (Hall et al. 2007; Pullen and Simpson 2009) and bodies also matter in executive search (Meriläinen et al. 2015). The embodiment scholarship stresses that not only are organization members subjected to various bodily norms, but that the body functions as a basis for organizational inclusion and exclusion.

In particular, the embodiment of gender in organizations has received ample scholarly attention. Different body norms apply for male and female managers (Trethewey 1999), financial annual reports reinforce the traditional gendered division of labor (Benschop and Meihuizen 2002) and design and spatial work reproduce gender and class hierarchies (Wasserman and Frenkel 2015). In addition, evidence portrays the embodiment of female executives (Gatrell et al. 2017; Kenny and Bell 2011). In sum, women in organizations are expected to conduct their bodies in limited ways that accommodate the dominant male perspective.

The intersection between embodiment and diversity management is of essence for the current study. For example, discourses of gender equality shape meanings and practices of diversity management (Meriläinen et al. 2009). Ahmed’s (2007a) study of diversity practitioners revealed their efforts to re-attach to diversity discourse histories of struggles for equality. Furthermore, Swan and Fox (2010), in their focus on diversity workers of whom many were women in management, illustrated diversity work as a specific form of management, which involved complex micropolitical strategies of resistance. Such evidence stresses that not only does diversity management take place within political contexts and discourses but that it is also shaped by these forces in manners which reflect power relations.

SAs' Potential Effect on Workforce Diversity in Client Organizations

Given that SAs function as mediators between job applicants and client organizations (Bonet et al. 2013) they affect the composition of the personnel in these organizations. Consequently, SAs are in a position to influence, even unintentionally, the workforce diversity of their clients. Prior research, however, has not yet examined SAs' impact on the workforce diversity of their client organizations. This is surprising not only given the centrality of the staffing industry in the contemporary economy, but also given that employee recruitment is a preliminary and fundamental stage in most organizational diversity initiatives (Dobbin et al. 2015). That is, organizations aiming for a more diverse workforce intentionally recruit employees accordingly. In the same vein, the workforce diversity of organizations that are not necessarily aiming for increased diversity is also affected by utilizing the recruitment services of SAs. Regardless of client firms' intentions, then, we delve into the practices and discourses of SAs by asking which practices SAs utilize regarding diverse jobseekers and which constructions of their embodiment follow. We explore this issue in the Israeli labor market, a context described next.

The Research Context: The Israeli Labor Market

Holy to the three great monotheistic religions, a young democratic state at the heart of the Middle East, a receptive shelter for Jewish immigrants from the Diaspora, and the subject of continuous security threats since its establishment in 1948—Israel is indeed unique. Israeli society provides a fascinating ground for exploring conceptualizations and practices of diversity, given its exceedingly heterogeneous and conflictual character in so many regards (Chetrit 2010; Khazzoom 2003; Mizrachi and Herzog 2012; Shohat 1999), including nationality, religion and degree of

religiosity, Jewish ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, and (dis)abilities.

Ample scholarly studies have addressed the challenges of specific Israeli groups and subgroups, including the Arab-Israeli sector, the Ultraorthodox Jewish sector, immigrants from the former USSR, from Ethiopia and from South America, older jobseekers, working mothers, and people with disabilities, to name but a few. The complexity of the turbulent Israeli society is exacerbated given the multiple intersections between these dimensions (Holvino 2010; McCall 2005). The findings consistently stress the low status and lack of resources, which characterize particularly vulnerable subgroups, including Sephardic (Hispanic) Jewish women (Nagar-Ron 2014) and Ethiopian immigrants (King et al. 2012). The few studies that have so far explored workforce diversity in Israel have recognized significant barriers to achieving diversity and inclusion in organizations (Sliter and King 2014).

Achieving workforce diversity and inclusion is difficult also given the growing neoliberalization in the Israeli labor market (Mundlak 2017). In particular, the gender outcomes of policy changes that have occurred from the 1980s onwards have been documented (Benjamin and Goclaw 2005; Benjamin 2011; Nisim and Benjamin 2010). The contract state through its prioritization of low-cost bids has promoted women's deskilling in public services and consequent income reduction (Benjamin 2011). Outsourcing women's labor by the state has played a significant role in this shift (Benjamin 2016), which stresses the impact of Israeli labor market intermediaries such as SAs.

The staffing industry in Israel has been growing rapidly from the start of the twenty-first century (Nadiv 2005). In total, there are currently more than 250 SAs in Israel,¹ some of which operate as intermediates between jobseekers and organizations, while others serve both as intermediates and as temporary employers (Nadiv 2005). SAs employ about 5% of the Israeli labor force, yet according to a recent Israeli recruitment benchmark survey (AKT & HRD Survey 2016), SAs are responsible for 25% of job placements in the business sector, second only to the primary source of placement—"a friend brings a friend," which accounts for 35% of all job placements.

Method

Sample

The participants in this study were 25 (80% female²) employee recruiters in 10 SAs that serve the Israeli business sector. Participants' ages ranged from 23 to 31, with an average age of 25. The sample was a snowball sample assembled as follows: the authors contacted by email several SA recruiters who had participated in other studies performed by the authors and requested their participation in a study about "SA working practices." Each interview was conducted individually with each participant. Each interviewee was asked at the end of the session to refer relevant colleagues to the authors. This procedure yielded additional interviewees. In total, a third of the interviewees were recruited by our preliminary email, and the rest via the snowball method.

Data Collection and Analysis

After reviewing the literature with regard to SAs and precarious work as well as the critical diversity management literature, we developed questions around our main three research questions:

1. What practices do SAs utilize regarding diverse jobseekers?
2. Consequently, how do SAs construct discourses of workforce diversity and diverse jobseekers vis-à-vis their client organizations?
3. Finally, how do SAs construct the embodiment of diverse jobseekers?

We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with employee recruiters in SAs that serve the Israeli business sector. Several predetermined questions were presented to each participant: (1) Describe the typical process of job placements you do in this SA. (2) What are your client organizations' instructions regarding job placements? (3) Does this SA have in its pool of applicants people from groups considered by this SA to be culturally diverse? (4) In what ways does this process change when placing applicants from culturally diverse groups? Give me an example of such a placing process in which you were involved lately.

Additional topics raised by our participants, such as their views on the Israeli labor market, prompted further inquiry. The interviews lasted about 90 minutes on average. All interviewees gave their informed consent to participating in the study and were assured confidentiality. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Our thematic content analysis was guided by Creswell and Poth (2017). Each of the two authors analyzed each interview separately. In the first phase of text analysis, we identified relevant salient categories supported by the text, such as recurring practices of SAs and the attributes that recruiters associate with diverse jobseekers. We assigned codes within each interview transcript to units of text, comprised of several sentences or entire paragraphs. Within each category, we identified subcategories that represent different perspectives about the category. For example, within the category titled “practices of SAs” we identified a subcategory which includes client-aimed practices and another subcategory that includes pool of applicants’ practices. Each interview yielded coded categories, subcategories, and illustrative quotations, which were then analyzed to discover major recurring and systematic content themes. The two authors then compared their independent interpretations of the thematic analysis. During this circular process, additional categories, subcategories, and codes which emerged as significant were added to the analysis. The next phase consisted of identifying the interrelations between the categories and subcategories. As this process progressed, our analysis narrowed down the categories into a small set of major themes, which encompass the phenomena under study. For each emerging theme, representative quotations were selected as illustrations. This systematic process continued until data saturation was reached.

Findings

SAs’ Dual Construction of Workforce Diversity via Their Pool of Applicants

Our findings illustrate SAs’ dual construction of diversity. This is achieved via two parallel sets of practices—those utilized regarding the SAs’ pool of applicants and SAs’ practices regarding their client organizations, the

Table 9.1 SAs' dual sets of practices regarding diverse jobseekers

	Promote diversity	Impede diversity
Pool of applicants	SAs cultivate large and diverse pools of job applicants. They encourage various groups to use their services	SAs are perceived by certain diverse jobseekers as an integral part of the discriminative labor market
Client organizations	SAs may engage in active persuasion of their clients to place diverse applicants	SAs' main concern is their clients' satisfaction with their services. SAs' attempts to place diverse candidates demand extra resources from both individual recruiters and SAs

prospective employers of jobseekers. In each of these parallel sets of practices, SAs may promote diversity on the one hand and might impede it on the other hand. For a brief summary, see Table 9.1.

SA Pool of Applicants Practices Which May Promote Workforce Diversity Most SAs typically have a diverse pool of job positions, and they continuously invest in enlarging it regardless of the actual scope of available job openings at any given time. SAs advertise extensively in the media and appeal to many audiences, telling all jobseekers that they are welcome to use their services. The participants in this study reported that for some of the diverse applicants, this welcoming stance is not something taken for granted, given their past negative experience in the job market, typically in their unfruitful attempts to contact HR managers directly.

We are one of the biggest staffing agencies in Israel, so we deal with varied occupations, job applicants and client organizations. I recruit mainly for low-skilled jobs. The job applicants for those jobs are usually based on groups of lower social status, such as minorities. It's much easier for these people to reach me than an unknown senior HR manager in a big and desired firm. (Rebecca, an SA recruiter)

Our interviewees added, however, that some diverse jobseekers perceive SAs as an integral part of the discriminative labor market. The

opportunity to enroll their resumes in SAs is not experienced by them as valuable, yet they typically utilize this opportunity on the premise that compared to independent job searching which had not yielded much, they have little to lose by approaching SAs. In addition, SAs typically advertise job positions without indicating the name of their client organizations. This encourages diverse applicants to pursue openings in firms that they wouldn't have approached otherwise, for fear of being rejected by them. So, on the whole, diverse jobseekers use SAs as a window of opportunity to enter the labor force, even if they have become disillusioned with them.

Furthermore, SAs' position as an important intermediary in the Israeli labor market enables them to push forward certain diverse job applicants. Individual recruiters in SAs have reported that at times they make efforts to place diverse jobseekers in business organizations. The following quote is an example of voluntary guidance given by an SA recruiter who intentionally aims to promote diversity via the placement process she conducts for a diverse jobseeker she wanted to advance. She stresses that this practice is the result of her own attitude and choice and is not part of her SA policy or work procedures:

When I meet a job applicant who also happens to be a from a minority group, I treat him better. I prepare him well for his job interview and selection procedures. I think it's very important that we do that, but this is *my own*³ belief. Not everybody in this SA thinks like me, and we have no formal policy regarding helping minorities in job placement processes. (Jenny, an SA recruiter)

SA Pool of Applicants Practices Which Might Inhibit Workforce Diversity At the same time, SA recruiters also utilize avoidance practices in regard to their pool of applicants, which might impede diversity by assigning lower priorities to or even totally ignoring applications of diverse jobseekers in the SA pool. The following quotation denotes how some SA recruiters' practices are negatively biased toward diverse jobseekers.⁴ The latter are unknowingly the subject of SA prejudice and discrimination, which happens behind closed doors, long before they may have a chance to meet their prospective employers:

I read her resume, but by her name I couldn't tell her origin. When she came in for her first interview I was surprised to see that she was Ethiopian.⁵ I didn't tell her a thing, but later I stopped handling her application. I knew it would be very difficult to place her in a client organization. After all, I'm paid by final successful job placements. (Jacob, an SA recruiter)

SAs' Dual Impact on Workforce Diversity via Practices Aimed at Their Client Organizations

Regarding their client organizations, SAs also construct diversity in dual ways, by utilizing practices which may promote diversity as well as practices which might inhibit it.

SAs' Client-Aimed Practices Which May Promote Workforce Diversity Our findings show that SA recruiters may promote diversity by actively convincing their clients to agree to hire diverse applicants. Many business organizations, especially large firms in certain domains (e.g., low-tech industry, supply chains, etc.), perceive SAs as professionally responsible for all aspects of the recruitment process, including the aspect of diversity management. Consequently, they tend to rely on the opinion and recommendations of SAs, especially ones with whom they have been working for long periods of time, which have afforded client employers the chance to assess the quality of their SAs' placements.

SA employees use various practices aimed at reducing negative bias toward and discrimination against diverse applicants in client organizations. This is apparent in the following two quotations:

I went to visit the customer's site. They needed 20 cashiers immediately. I saw that all the cashiers already working there were Ethiopians. So I understood they don't mind hiring them. The moment I got back to the office I pulled out all the Ethiopian applicants I had and sent their resumes to the client. It was a big success and most of the applicants I'd sent them started to work there soon afterward. (Sarah, an SA recruiter)

I called the manager to introduce the job applicant. I said he was from the Arab sector and had all the qualifications needed for the job. I really had to

work hard to persuade that manager to take the Arab applicant... *I personally guaranteed his suitability for their organizational needs.* Finally, they recruited him, and today he's one of the best drivers in that transportation company. (Liza, an SA recruiter)

While Sarah promoted diverse applicants after apprehending that her client "does not mind them," as she put it, Liza actively risked her own professional reputation to convince her client to agree to hire diverse candidates. These different attitudes manifest different motivations regarding diversity: while SAs may at times invest efforts in promoting diversity per se, at other times they may exploit the diversity attributes of job applicants mainly for the sake of improving their chances of successful job placements, for which they are paid and rewarded. Clearly, being a cashier does not require a certain origin or color (e.g., being of Ethiopian descent), yet Sarah chose to cunningly take advantage of this external attribute to signal to her client a resemblance between her applicants and the employees already working at the client's organization. While this tactic may at times be financially successful for SAs in terms of successful job placements, it strengthens the embodiment of "otherness" as the main or only asset that diverse applicants can offer the job market. This stance is even more boldly expressed in SA practices which might inhibit diversity, to which we now turn.

SAs' Client-Aimed Practices Which Might Inhibit Workforce Diversity Our findings highlight the intricate and mostly unspoken diversity management role which SAs play de facto for their client organizations. From the narratives of our interviewees, SA recruiters, it appears that their client organizations "outsource" to SAs the task of contending with diversity management via recruitment. On the one hand, the participants in this study reported that most client organizations do not provide SAs with clear and formal guidelines regarding diverse job-seekers. On the other hand, client organizations informally convey to SA recruiters their preferences for non-diverse applicants. For example, clients use telephone conversations with SA recruiters to express their discontent with the functioning of diverse employees who were sent to them by SAs. The next quotation illustrates this practice of the client organization, which also becomes a practice of SAs that accept such dubious

working interfaces with their clients as well as the discrimination they manifest:

The client organization didn't hire the Ethiopian candidate I referred to them. They told me that they didn't want to deal with the disciplinary problems of Ethiopian workers. [Interviewer: Is that what your client wrote you?!] No! The client would never put this in writing. They don't want any documentation of their [illegal] stance. Their HR manager phoned me and asked me never to send him Ethiopians again. (Alex, an SA recruiter)

Even though the reason for clients' discontent is most likely unrelated to the workers' diverse background, it appears to be easier for the clients to blame it for the unsatisfactory functioning of workers sent by the SA. SA recruiters wishing to please their clients align with their opinions, thus sustaining and perhaps even exacerbating their clients' discriminative attitudes, which are tolerated and served. In addition, a finding we find disturbing is that many SA recruiters, even when they disapprove of their clients' negative attitudes toward diverse applicants, tend to simply accept them as if they were the whimsical act of children and not the bold discriminating stance of large business organizations who dominate the labor market. The following quotation from an SA recruiter, which refers to the age of applicants, is also indicative that SAs' main concern is their clients' satisfaction with their services:

Well, I know from experience that this client organization prefers young workers. I'll try not to send them older workers... I have to comply with my clients' requests. (Anna, an SA recruiter)

As SAs perceive their clients' ambivalence toward diverse candidates (in cases where clients are evasive rather than clearly prejudiced), the placement of diverse applicants depends mainly on the personal willingness of recruiters to negotiate it with their doubtful clients using witty persuasion tactics like the ones illustrated above. SA employees quickly learn, however, that placement processes of diverse candidates are riskier in terms of their financial success as well as in terms of clients' contentment. Given that it costs SAs more in terms of time and money to attempt

to place diverse jobseekers, recruiters realize that dealing with them is less rewarding both individually (in terms of reaching personal placement quotas) and organizationally.

Consequently, SAs tend to conceptualize and treat diverse jobseekers in two complementary ways. First, SAs might regard diverse candidates as non-hirable and thus invest little or no effort in their placement processes. For example, when we asked an SA recruiter whether she had any prior experience with placing people with disabilities at client organizations, she replied without hesitation or doubt: “Well, I don’t. I can’t do that [place people with disabilities in client organizations]. It is like sending a client a *defective product*.”⁶

Second, SAs conceptualize diverse candidates as readymade simplistic categories of “others”—in terms such as nationality, religion, ethnicity, gender, and ability—whose “otherness” may become relevant for business organizations if and when *their difference* can be exploited by these organizations. An example is the following persuasion tactic used by an SA recruiter to convince his client: “You should really hire this beautiful Arab woman! It would make a good impression on your customers when they see her photo on your company’s website.” The “Arab woman” is constructed as a product that may become an acceptable employee not because of the qualities she possesses, but mainly because her ethnic femininity—which is also nicely packaged, quite conveniently for the SA and for the client—can signal the desired image of the client as a liberal employer of a diverse workforce, which includes Arabs and women, indeed a sign of progressiveness in the discourse of SAs and their clients.

Discussion

Our main research questions in this exploratory qualitative study were: What practices do SAs utilize regarding diverse jobseekers, how do SAs construct discourses of workforce diversity and diverse jobseekers vis-à-vis their client organizations and how do SAs construct the embodiment of diverse jobseekers. Our findings shed light on practices utilized by SAs regarding their pool of applicants and vis-à-vis their client organizations. In both avenues, SAs’ practices may promote workforce diversity, while at

the same time they might also inhibit it. This duality reflects the ambivalence toward workforce diversity within the labor market. In addition, our research findings point to existing power relations in the Israeli labor market by deciphering unspoken norms and practices of discrimination maintained and even encouraged by both SAs and the business organizations that choose to use their services.

We offer several contributions to the literature. To begin with, SAs construct diversity; it is an organizational product (Janssens and Zanoni 2005). Consistent with the HR managers in Zanoni and Janssens' (2004) study, SA recruiters speak of diverse candidates as representatives of their group—as opposed to individuals—and tend to define the group's difference mainly as a *deficiency* in comparison to the ideal worker (who is not diverse). SA recruiters commonly use statements such as: They (e.g., Ethiopian immigrants) “have discipline issues”; they (e.g., Israeli Arabs) “would not be approved by the client”; they (e.g., single mothers/ Ultraorthodox Jews) “are not truly committed to work.” Even though some of this prejudice stems from SAs' client organizations, which often hint at or state their preference for avoiding specific diverse groups, SAs develop their own diversity discourse. Thus, SAs' practices regarding diverse jobseekers are not only shaped by their business clients, but also *produce* distinct diversity discourses and practices (Zanoni and Janssens 2004). As our findings illustrate, this internal SA discourse often results in SA recruiters' decisions not to process applications from diverse jobseekers whose constructed “deficiency” is deemed too problematic or risky for the SA. Thus, even though SAs cultivate large and diverse pools of applicants, which at first glance may seem like a window of opportunity for the latter, they also use practices which discriminate against diverse jobseekers, most of which are covert practices. This is in congruence with previous findings indicating that SAs systematically construct within their pool of applicants separate groups of core workers and peripheral ones who are hardly ever hired (Elcioglu 2010). This study demonstrates that the discourse of diversity is another reason for this internal division between “worthy” and “unworthy” applicants, who become, in fact, transparent unless their otherness can be constructed as useful in some manner.

SAs construct the embodiment of diverse jobseekers as “others.” When SAs attempt to place certain diverse jobseekers, they present their diversity to clients not as a deficiency but as an “otherness” that might add a certain flavor to the customer’s site, for example, in terms of improving client impression management by employing diverse candidates. This is made easier when this otherness also happens to please the eye or is accompanied by other virtues such as skills (e.g., knowledge of a foreign language). The diversity discourse constructed by the SA, despite its positive and supposedly empowering image, actually stresses the “otherness” of diverse employees; it merely utilizes their difference if and when it is suitable to the client.

Furthermore, according to SAs’ construction of diversity, it would seem that almost every group in Israeli society, other than White (of an Ashkenzi, i.e., central or eastern European descent), educated, secular young Jewish men,⁷ can be embodied as diverse. Even though the latter group constitutes only a small portion of the current labor force numerically, it has become accepted as the definition of the “typical” (non-diverse) worker, as opposed to “minorities”: women, immigrants, older people, and disabled people. We find this rhetoric especially stinging in Israeli society which, despite its relatively small size, is composed of multiple ethnicities. As Ahmed (2009, p. 41) put it accurately: “Whiteness: the world as it coheres around certain bodies.”

Several explanations can account for the importance of whiteness in Israel. Given the in the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Abu-Nimer and Sharoni 2013), Jewish whiteness in a Middle Eastern Jewish state has become a major signifier of higher social status vis-à-vis Palestinians and Israeli Arabs. Thus, the placement of a beautiful Israeli Arab female jobseeker by “selling” the client her ethnic femininity echoes not only traditional and patriarchal stereotypes of Arab women but also the superiority of Jewish whiteness. SAs’ success in such placements reaffirms that their clients, formidable Jewish employers in the business sector, embody Arab non-whiteness, especially that of women, with an oriental mystique of the Levant. Such jobseekers can be embodied by SAs as a source of (visual) pleasure when they compose no more than a minority that cannot threaten the dominant white Jewish workplace: “Bodies

stand out when they are out of place. Such standing re-confirms the whiteness of the space” (Ahmed 2007b, p. 159).

Israeli Jewish whiteness has become a major signifier of higher social status not only vis-à-vis Palestinians and Arabs. It is all the more important vis-à-vis various Israeli Jewish ethnicities, such as Sephardic (Hispanic) Jews and the Yemenite communities, conceived of as “black” Jews supposedly on the basis of their somewhat darker phenotype (Chetrit 2010). “Black” Jews have been the victim of persistent Intra-Jewish racism, which has historic origins in Israeli society even before the establishment of Israel. The European Zionist movement, comprised mainly of Ashkenazi Jews, was a precursor to the formation of the modern State of Israel. Consequently, Ashkenazi Jews had established their status as the official representative for the Jewish race. This marginalized the existing Sephardic and the Yemenite Jewish communities already settled in Palestine (Chetrit 2010). The tense interrelations between white and non-white Jews have prevailed over the years and are still manifested in contemporary Israeli society. Over the years, following several absorption waves of immigrant Jews, Israeli society has expanded to fill more groups conceived of as “black” Jews, such as Ethiopian Jews. These tense interrelations are also evident in the Israeli labor market where vulnerable “black” ethnicities are systematically marginalized (e.g., King et al. 2012; Nagar-Ron 2014).

The diversity discourse constructed by SAs preserves existing power relations in the Israeli job market as well as in Israeli society at large: By speaking of diverse jobseekers mainly in terms of their difference from (non-diverse) employees already working in large business organizations, SAs establish and reaffirm their own position as hegemonic players in the labor market. As such, SAs use and abuse diversity as a specific kind of “goods” that they provide to client organizations, which set the rules of the hiring game. Diverse jobseekers remain at the bottom of the pyramid. Even when SAs place diverse employees, their usage of the “diversity ticket” to do so most likely enhances the long-term precariousness of these diverse workers. Such SA practices denote diverse jobseekers as marginal and insignificant personnel both for SAs and within client organizations. Being covert, these practices prevent diverse job applicants, whose difference is being exploited unbeknown to them, from challenging existing power relations (Janssens and Zanoni 2005).

In addition, our findings imply that some Israeli business organizations might manifest—through the recruitment services of SAs they hire for a quarter of their necessary placements (AKT & HRD survey 2016)—an ambivalent and at times a boldly discriminative stance toward diverse jobseekers. Despite their inclusive rhetoric, which grants them public legitimacy and access to increased market shares (Ely and Thomas 2001), by outsourcing their responsibility for a diverse workforce to external SAs, business organizations distance themselves from threats to their hegemony and manage to maintain their ethical façade as liberal and progressive without bearing the consequences for SAs' moderate success in the recruitment of diverse applicants. Furthermore, the ambiguity, silence, and self-censorship, which at times characterize SAs' work interfaces with their clients, make them especially resistant to exposure and thus to change. Despite the fact that such gaps between rhetoric and practice have been documented (Windscheid et al. 2016) we assume that their occurrence is more widespread than is known.

Thus, instead of functioning as an emancipator alternative (Zanoni and Janssens 2007) which moderates power relations in the job market, SAs mostly serve the invisible hand of capital, thereby preserving the status quo in which employers already have the upper hand vis-à-vis employees (Hatton 2014). This study highlights the unspoken alliance between two powerful players—business organizations and the SAs which serve them—which functions as a driver of employment precariousness among diverse jobseekers. This echoes Elcioglu's (2010) assertion that precariousness is systematically cultivated in the contemporary economy. As such, SAs are active agents of inequality regimes (Acker 2006).

Finally, another "sore point" as regards contending with diversity (Ahmed 2009) emerges from our findings. As mentioned above, many of the SA recruiters in Israel are young women at the start of their careers in the HR domain. A troubling implication relates to the messages systematically conveyed to them from the early stages of their professional development by both their employers and their clients. These young women are taught that structural prejudice and discrimination are not only "a (sad) fact of life" in the business world, but also must be concealed in various ways (to protect their employers from lawsuits); that some people are by definition non-hirable, simply because of one of their demographic

characteristics; that not only are diverse placements not necessarily rewarded, but that they are more likely to fail, which means they should not be pursued, and that pursuing them might even be personally costly.

Unless these young women are educated otherwise, these are the bold lessons, which will shape their occupational identity also in later stages of their careers, either as middle managers in SAs or as HR personnel in those very same firms which ask SAs to avoid diverse applicants. Yet these harsh lessons are not limited to the professional arena. They shape these young women's lives: their identities, their feelings of self-worth, and their understanding of the durable power relations in Israeli society as well as in the capitalist regime at large. Given the wide scope of the staffing industry, this is a high price that is paid by not only these women but all of us within societies contending with socioeconomic challenges (Standing 2016), including the global financial crisis. The latter has been discussed as a possible motivating force for alternative feminist modes of thought and action that counteract neoliberalism (Daskalaki and Fotaki 2017).

Practical Implications

The tendency of Israeli jobseekers to attribute their difficulties to flaws in the hiring system has been documented (Sharone 2013a, b). This study validates some of their negative experiences, given the discriminatory attitudes and practices of SAs and those attributed by them to client organizations in the business sector. Thus, our findings have valuable implications for practice, provided that organizations are willing to change how they use "the language of diversity" (Ahmed 2007a), that is, to profoundly change how they conceive of others and otherness. This is vital given the significant diversity embedded in Israeli society since its inception. It is also necessary in light of the emerging demographic landscape in which women and people of color are becoming the majority of the working class in many countries (Block and Noumair 2017).

Therefore, SAs as an industry should renegotiate their work procedures with client organizations. This should be done at the SA management level, in order to convey to both client organizations and their own recruiters that client discriminatory attitudes will not be tolerated. SA

recruiters contending with clients that are reluctant to hire diverse job-seekers should be given backing within their SAs. Accordingly, SAs should invest systematically in training their employees not only regarding regulations and antidiscrimination labor legislation, but also to adjust their work procedures so they manifest genuine inclusion of diverse job-seekers. In that vein, it is crucial that SAs refrain from turning diversity into a subject of bureaucratic procedures and documentation (Ahmed 2007c) that may conceal or even mute its essence.

In addition, client organizations and SAs should develop formal joint strategies and work practices in order to enhance diversity within client organizations that declare this as their goal and commit to it *de facto*. This may sound utopian, yet if major SAs jointly sign a social treaty to promote workforce diversity change may evolve in light of their centrality as intermediaries in the job market.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Our exploratory qualitative study is not without limitations. First, it was based on a relatively small-sized sample. Second, we relied on one-sided narratives of SA employees without obtaining the narratives of their clients within employer organizations. Third, our study has not incorporated quantitative data, which could have provided complementary perspectives. Fourth, our findings illustrate practices in the Israeli labor market, which has its unique characteristics. Thus, generalization from our findings is somewhat limited. Future research may overcome these limitations and broaden our understanding of the role of SAs in the labor market. We hope that our findings encourage others to join this fascinating domain of study, which carries significant social implications.

Notes

1. Given the population of the State of Israel (about 8 million people, less than that of New York City), the size of its staffing industry is considered to be very large.

2. The SA industry in Israel is mostly feminine at most levels of the hierarchy. In this respect, it resembles the Israeli human resources domain, which is also mostly feminine (Nadiv et al. 2017).
3. The italics in the citations denote emphasis in the original, unless stated otherwise.
4. While the biases against certain Israeli social groups conveyed by some of the participants in this study may originally be their own opinions, the fact that they affect their daily working practices indicates that such biases are not monitored, prevented, or punished by the SA as their employer. As such, these discriminative attitudes and practices are part and parcel of the SA repertoire.
5. An immigrant Jew of Ethiopian descent.
6. The italics in this quotation denote our emphasis.
7. This group is conceived of similarly to WASPs in North America.

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10

Disembodied Senior Managers: The Perspective of Male Senior Managers in an Australian Hospitality Organisation

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and Kaye Broadbent

Introduction

The research presented in this chapter focuses on the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. Although much research has been dedicated to this issue, organisations have implemented a variety of strategies to overcome and change the subtle forms of organisational structure that

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undermines women's progressions to senior roles. It is still rare to see women occupying senior-level positions and the problem remains a global issue. This chapter explores the nature of senior management positions and seeks information about the opportunities and challenges in gaining a senior position. It is based on an examination of the experiences of nine male senior managers in one hospitality organisation (called Hospitality) in Australia and uses a critical social constructivist philosophy and feminist lens. The chapter addresses the following questions: How do men in senior positions (re)construct the ideal worker and how do their own experiences shape this construction?

The study is theoretically informed by Joan Acker's concept of the "Disembodied Worker", also known as the "Ideal Worker", which she defines as an unencumbered worker who is totally dedicated to work and who has no responsibilities for family care (Acker 1990, 2006a, b, 2009, 2012). The characteristics of the "Disembodied Worker" are abstract and neutral in the organisational text; however, some authors have suggested that it resembles male rather than female workers (Acker 1990; Van den Brink and Stobbe 2014; Smith 1987). In organisational logic both jobs and hierarchies are abstract categories that do not have an occupant, human bodies, or gender (Acker 1990). However, while organisations are defined as sex-neutral, the authority structure is dominated by the masculine image of the manager (Broadbridge and Hearn 2008; Collinson and Hearn 1996; Kanter 1976; Knights and Tullberg 2012; Lewis and Simpson 2012). The image of the "disembodied worker" reproduces and reinforces the masculine image of senior roles that makes men seem more legitimate as leaders than women. This common sense view has created norms in the organisation that disregard the qualities and attributes of women and reinforce the maintenance and reproduction of gendered organisations (Acker 1990). These norms have been formed socially and culturally and are responsible for gendering leadership, with female managers viewed as less competent than male managers (Ridgeway 2011).

Gendered Organisations and the "Disembodied Worker"

Theorising about gender and organisations began in the late 1960s and early 1970s when feminist scholars criticised traditional organisational research as ignoring the significance of gender in working life (Acker

2012; Acker and Houten 1974; Kanter 1977). As Acker stated, “gender is difficult to see when males dominate the central institutions” (Acker 1992, p. 576). Today there is a large body of literature on gender and organisations which seeks to unravel and understand women’s experiences in organisations (see Acker 1990; Kanter 1976). A major contribution of this literature sees gender differences as the result of organisational structure and culture, not the nature of women (Acker 2012; Kanter 1976; Lewis and Simpson 2012). Organisational practices and processes based on gender contribute to the production and reproduction of pervasive and persistent gender inequality. Acker (1990, 2012) argues that these gendering processes are supported by the gendered substructure and the gender subtext of organisations.

The term “gendered organisations” is derived from the social, economic, and symbolical differences between women and men that has developed and changed over time (Acker 1994). Gender assumptions stem from the policies and rules in large bureaucratic organisations, and the implementation of these procedures creates the gendered differences and inequalities (Acker 2006a). Gender discrimination is rooted in the collective, organisational, and historical processes that differentiate women and men (Connell 1987). These invisible practices in organisations are called gendering processes by a number of researchers including Acker (1990, 1992, 1994, 2006a, 2009, 2012; Benschop 2009; Benschop and Doorewaard 1998a, b, 2012; Benschop et al. 2012). Gendering processes are more obvious in the informal aspects of the organisation where actions are determined by cultural norms and interactions between women and men, women and women, men and men in organisations, and these processes create gender identity (Pringle 2008).

Gendering processes are supported by the gendered substructure (Acker 1990, 2012) and the gender subtext of organisations (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998a, 2012). The gendered substructure is the covert process where inequality is perpetuated and reproduced (Acker 2012). The concepts of gender substructure and gender subtext are used in a similar way; however, Acker uses “gender subtext” as a part of gender substructure, where gender subtext refers to text, implicit and explicit, or just common practice, that shapes the gendered processes and structures (Acker 2012). In addition to gender subtext, the gendered substructure

of the organisation includes concepts such as “organisational logic” and the “disembodied worker” which reinforce the maintenance and reproduction of gendered organisations (Acker 2012). Therefore, Acker believes that organisations are gendered (not gender neutral) and this stems from “advantages and disadvantages, action and emotion, exploitation and control, meaning and identity, which are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine” (Acker 1990, p. 146).

Acker believes that the concept of the job is completely and implicitly gendered but organisational logic presents it as gender neutral. Organisational logic has material forms in written work rules, labour contracts, managerial directives, and other documentary tools for running large organisations, including systems of job evaluation. Job evaluation is accomplished through the use and interpretation of documents that describe jobs and how they are evaluated which reveals the organisational logic (Acker 1990). A job as a set of tasks and responsibilities represents a position in an organisation which is separate from its incumbents, and job evaluation should evaluate the job not the people who may diverge in skills, commitment, and productiveness (Acker 1990). Yet the gendered concept of a job (which is seen as suitable for one gender) is still common in countries like Australia where the labour market has been framed by the long-lasting tradition of men as breadwinners, unencumbered workers who have no responsibility other than a full-time job and who have a wife who cares for the family (Acker 1990; Strachan et al. 2009b). Organisational practices and processes based on gender reproduce the pervasive and persistent structuring that creates gender inequality in organisations (Acker 1990).

In organisations, gendering processes develop a hierarchical pattern of social interaction through which men exert more power and exercise more leadership (Carli and Eagly 2001; Ridgeway 2011). As a consequence of this stereotypic view women are seen as less competent and less suited to leadership than men (Carli and Eagly 2001; Heilman 2001). However, the pattern of gender processes is not always the same and its disparity is a result of history and local customs (Acker 2006b; Connell 1987). Although there is great variation in the patterns of gender in organisations, the highest positions of power are usually taken by

men (Acker 1990). For instance, Acker revealed (2006) in her study of Swedish banks that while banking is a female-dominated industry, positions of power and control were male-dominated (Acker 1994, 2006a). Therefore, banks are gendered organisations and hierarchal positions are distributed unequally between female and male employees (Acker 1994, 2006a).

The gendering of leadership occurs because of the common sense (stereotypic) view that female managers are less competent than male managers, which makes men more legitimate leaders than women (Ridgeway 2011). These beliefs develop a hierarchical pattern of social interaction through which men exert more influence and exercise more leadership (Carli and Eagly 2001; Ridgeway 2011). As a consequence of this stereotypic view, women are seen as less competent and suited to leadership than men (Carli and Eagly 2001; Heilman 2001). For instance, people devalue the success of female managers and refuse to attribute women's success to their capabilities, instead considering it as a result of other external factors (Carli and Eagly 2001; Heilman 1983, 2001).

The relationship between senior positions and men is highly gendered and this has derived from the belief in the masculine nature of managerial functions (Collinson and Hearn 1996). Social expectations have identified the masculine identities associated with the characteristics of senior positions (Knights and Tullberg 2012). This has affected the reproduction of masculinity and privileges men over women in senior positions. Competitive pressure also makes organisations employ those workers who they can take advantage of, whether because of their gender, ethnicity, age, or other factors (Billing 2011). As Billing stated, an "attractive candidate for a managerial jobs is constructed as an individual who is willing to accept the rules of the game" (2011). For example, those candidates who are willing to travel a lot, to be available all the time and to work more than normal hours are considered ideal candidates for managerial positions.

Employers create standards for employees as "ideal workers" that rely on the stereotypically masculine traits. Women need to demonstrate that they have the characteristics of the "ideal worker" or "disembodied worker", an individual who is unencumbered by a life outside of work (Acker 1990), as these attributes are highly valued and regarded as "natu-

ral” for managers. The qualities of this “disembodied worker” generate challenges for women who desire senior positions (Charles 2014; Knights and Tullberg 2012). The gendered character of the disembodied worker is supported by two factors influencing the gendering of the jobs: the gender connotation of care responsibilities and of competence (Billing 2011). These hidden connotations produce and reinforce unequal opportunities for women and men to attain highly qualified or management jobs (Billing 2011).

Benschop and Doorewaard (1998a, 2012) believe that the perception of gender equality and gender inequality stems from a “gender subtext”, which includes the concept of “the mommy track” which describes a situation faced by some women, especially those in senior positions. The scenario is that women in senior positions after having a baby request part-time work, and since senior positions are not available part-time they take on lower level roles. Therefore, mothers seeking part-time or more flexible working hours can “be shunted off the main track into a side-track” (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998a, 2012). A gender subtext indicates that part-time jobs are only for women and they are only available in low qualified and dead-end-jobs which do not offer career opportunities (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998a, 2012).

These types of organisational behaviours reinforce a gendered labour market (Ridgeway 2011). Talented women are usually overlooked due to the overrepresentation of men on decision-making boards. Women are usually considered as “others” and less suitable for senior positions, and this leads to an underestimation of the number of women suitable for senior positions (Van den Brink and Benschop 2012). Women are not seen as qualified for the demands of senior positions, that is, they are not seen as this “ideal manager”. Having care responsibilities, or potentially having care responsibilities, does not meet the requirement of a “disembodied worker” and therefore rules out many women from senior management positions. Women with family responsibilities have to satisfy a board that work is their priority over family, while men in a similar situation are rarely asked about their family responsibilities or future personal plans. Male board members can feel that they are protecting women by not appointing them to jobs with high demands and heavy responsibilities. Martin (2006) described this stereotype that women will have trou-

ble managing demanding jobs as “paternalistic masculinity”. Van den Brink and Benschop (2012) claimed that sometimes the physical appearance of the candidate influences the board’s decision-making and their assessment of candidates for leadership positions and once again women may not meet the image of this ideal candidate. Although organisations are defined as gender neutral (Acker 1990), the authority structure of management positions is dominated by the image of the manager as masculine or the patriarchal nature of management (Broadbridge and Hearn 2008).

All of the practices discussed show that gendering processes are ambiguous, and that gender distinctions are not simply positive or negative but illustrate a duality. Evidence from previous research shows that the duality of gendering stems from the structural arrangement of jobs and task design, and is reinforced by organisational culture, sustained by interaction patterns, and is deeply rooted in the identities of organisation members (Acker 1990, 2006b, 2009, 2012; Benschop and Doorewaard 1998a, 2012). The duality of gendering can be explained by hegemonic power processes (Benschop and Doorewaard 2012). Kanter (1976) indicated that the structure of power in the organisation clarifies why women appear to be less preferred as leaders. Benschop and Doorewaard (1998a, p. 790) explain hegemonic power processes as

- (a) consisting of concealed processes of meaning formation, (b) uttered in (non)verbal expressions of common sense, identification, consensus and legitimizing rationalities. These processes (re)produce (c) consent or compliance with the dominant organizational discourse and the acceptance of day-to-day practices, in spite of the possible disadvantages of these practices for some persons involved.

For example, female managers need to have the masculine characteristics of disembodied workers. Women who want to have paid work together with care responsibilities may consider the mommy track and are given low-level positions. However, in the organisation gender equality and neutrality are proclaimed.

Gender is not a set of role expectations; instead it has to be played and performed in working life as an important arena of doing gender and, in particular, doing masculinity (Butler 1990; West and Zimmerman 1987 cited in Knights and Clarke 2014). Doing gender and masculinity is not

in the control of individuals as it is constructed socially and culturally (Butler 1997 cited in Knights and Clarke 2014). Acquiring managerial status depends on the performance of producing and sustaining masculinity in organisations (Knights and Clarke 2014). Senior levels of management have been shaped by the homosocial networks that have a strong interest in constantly confirming their masculinity, so this phenomenon reinforces and reproduces the masculine norms and values in society and organisations (Collinson and Hearn 1996). Within the senior ranks women are a minority and they have to comply with the norm of masculinity if they are to maintain their senior positions (Pullen and Knights 2007; Wajcman 1999).

Methodology

This chapter analyses nine semi-structured interviews with male senior managers in a hospitality organisation in Australia called Hospitality. It uses a feminist lens and an emic approach dedicated to capturing the uniqueness of an event and allowing exploration of the socially constructed nature of reality (Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Lincoln and Denzin 2003). Hospitality is an Australian Stock Exchange 100 listed company with 8000 employees and three branches in two states in Australia. It is one of the largest hospitality companies in Australia and characterised by the 24 hours a day, 365 days a year nature of its operations.

This chapter focuses on male senior manager's perspectives as the constructive paradigm always suggests that it is absolutely necessary to analyse social actions from the actor's standpoint (Tracy 2013). Hearn (2004, p. 332) argues that "to change women's position in organisations and the gendered cultures of organisations requires changing men and men's position in organisations and their cultures". Therefore, it is essential to analyse the experiences and views of male senior managers expressed in interviews which provide an insight into their interactions, practices, and communications which construct their reality. Interviews were conducted with men in the three highest level of organisation (Tiers 1, 2, and 3). Table 10.1 illustrates the demographics of the participants.

Table 10.1 Details of interview participants

No.	Participants	Gender	Age	Children	Marital status	Period in the current position (years)	Period in the current organisation (years)	Employment status	Position	Level (tier)	Education
1	Kevin	M	35	2	Partnered	4	4.1	Full-time	GM	2	CA
2	Daniel	M	47	2	Partnered	0.8	0.9	Full-time	GM	2	Bachelor's
3	Ross	M	41	2	Partnered	0.7	3	Full-time	GM	2	Master's
4	Matthew	M	54	2	Partnered	1.1	8	Full-time	GM	2	Master's
5	Bradley	M	58	1	Partnered	1.1	2.1	Full-time	GM	2	Not known
6	William	M	41	0	Single	1.7	1.7	Full-time	Senior Manager	3	Not known
7	Edward	M	38	2	Partnered	9.8	1	Full-time	Executive	1	Bachelor's and CA
8	Toby	M	47	2	Partnered	1.6	1.6	Full-time	Executive	1	Bachelor's and CA
9	Jasper	M	30	0	Partnered	1.8	1.9	Full-time	Senior Manager	3	Master's

All names are pseudonyms

Findings

The interviews produced rich data and numerous themes. However, this chapter contributes to the discussion of dominant norms and patterns of discrimination in senior positions by focussing on the concept of “disembodied worker”. The characteristics of the ideal manager in Hospitality have the features of the “disembodied worker” such as a long-hours culture, necessity of geographical mobility and inevitability of making trade-offs between career and family in order to advance, thus verifying the existence of the “disembodied worker”. Depending on their role, most men stated that they work approximately 60 hours or more per week and they had someone at home who took care of their family while they were busy with their managerial responsibilities.

The male managers exhibited the stereotypic view of women as less qualified for the high-level positions because of their social role in child bearing and child caring, thus reinforcing the concept of the “disembodied worker” as the “disembodied senior manager”. Most of the male senior managers believed that when women progress to a senior position the outcome of what they called “traditional female traits” would carry some disadvantages for their business. They said that they support women whenever they can, but not at the expense of the business. Findings show that male executives prefer to appoint other men to senior positions as women are characterised as different. The issue of “who you know” or “who you connect with” is crucial in obtaining senior roles and, as one of the male senior managers noted, the “hospitality industry is very guilty of such a thing” (Bradley, General Manager). The discussion of the findings focuses on four topics: the long-hours culture, geographic mobility, support and sponsorship, and the idea of “traditional female traits”.

Long-Hours Culture

Senior managers have the reputation of working long hours. Two-thirds of the managers interviewed talked about the long-hours nature of their business and almost all of them mentioned that they work around

55–70 hours per week. Their organisation offers flexible work arrangements (FWA) but what was evident in the interviews was the acceptance of working long hours and not using FWA when holding a senior role. All interviewees mentioned that, in reality, these arrangements do not fit with the demands of senior positions. William talked about the culture of too many meetings and 24/7 public relations with guests on the property especially at weekends.

I don't have a work-life balance. I don't practice what I preach. I make sure all the team gets out and do what they've got to do, and I'll be here from early in the morning 'til 8 o'clock at night, and I'll be here anywhere between 10 or 12 hours a day, and I do that 6 days a week.

Other managers discussed this long-hours culture. Tony (Chief Financial Officer) works around 70 hours each week. He explained:

For me to actually be able to do the role that I'm doing, and spending the hours that I do at work, you know, I've got a great partner that...looks after the kids..., herself. [She] has said, 'No, I'm happy to not push my career and I'm happy to spend a period of time looking after the family and making the family'. And to me, that is the core role: if not more important than what I do.

Kevin (General Manager) explained that in a managerial position they do not have an "off switch". Kevin works an average of 45–60 hours each week,

But you know having said that – the 45 to 60 hours, sometimes your mind never switches off, so you're always working. I'll have ideas while I'm doing something on the weekend, or while I'm driving to work and you quickly get in the office and you do this idea, and you turn it into a project, so I don't think you can really say you ever switch off, even when you're on holiday. There's a lot of thinking time that goes in a managerial position, and that's not always captured. But in terms of attending meetings, attending presentations, just getting your work done, preparing board papers, working through those, you know, so now it's a ten, eleven hour day, is not abnormal.

Working long hours is the norm for male managers in Hospitality and they have accepted the difficulties associated with this norm. Most of them also mention that they have a partner who supports them in what they do. For example, Daniel (General Manager) said:

We've got pressure everywhere but I'm not going down a ditch about having to work a couple of hours extra a week or something, it's not here or there. I think If my family didn't support me to do that, then that would be the point where I would say, no I can't do this. If something was off the rails at home I wouldn't be doing it. I wouldn't be in the job that I am in now. I would be quite as happy to and I said this to my wife. I said when I am sixty, one thing I would like to do more of with work-life balances, I would like to do more exercise, I would like to get more time to do more exercise. I do get up on Saturday and Sundays and do that but I would like some more time to do it. But I'd be quite happy to be a postman when I am 60 if they're still around.

Edward (Chief Operating Officer) works 60–80 hours a week:

I don't believe there is work-life balance. Um, I am happy with my work life style. I think work life balance is a personal thing, I don't sign up to review that work life balance is 40 to 50 hours plus, you know. Home time, it's whatever that person feels comfortable with, um, I, I get heaps of quality time with my two boys. They're aged seven and eight, so, um, you know, I get lots of football time and rugby time and I drop them off at school every morning, um, but you know, the hours put into work is, is consuming sometimes, you, it's that part of deciding to be a senior executive.

Geographical Mobility

The transition of male managers into senior positions consisted of movement between different properties of Hospitality or different organisations. Most senior managers believe that continuous learning through moving between organisations is a critical part of self-development. Continuous learning includes both university education and learning through experience in different organisations. So, mobility is considered

one of the most important parts of self-development and moving between organisations increases knowledge. Seven out of nine senior managers in this study believed that being geographically mobile had a positive impact on their career progression into senior positions. As Kevin elaborated,

If you stay in one organisation too long, you're not gonna learn. So therefore, you have to be prepared, for your own learning, to move around properties and start to learn and progress that way, which is exactly what I've done. So half of my learning has been through education in classrooms. The other half has actually been in the environment as I've moved from property to property [involving moves interstate] and sort of taken on different roles based on, if you like, my onsite technical learning experiences everywhere else.

Bradley (General Manager) explained how moving to different countries and interstate helped his career progression:

I started in London, and then started to move into junior management positions. By the time I left London in 1985, to join...[Hospitality] in West Australia, which was a Floor Manager role in...[Hospitality]. So I had already done my time in supervising, now I was in management in Australia. I was then asked to look after the international section, and become one of the senior managers for international business. And then I was in that role until I became the assistant manager, and then left...[Hospitality], in '94, to move across to...[another organisation in hospitality] in another state in Australia, where the CEO asked me to help, assist in setting up a new property and then later to...[take on]the role of VIP business so I ended up VIP Manager. Then I was promoted to a higher position in another state, then became a General Manager ... From that point I then went overseas, and I ended up becoming the Vice President, and then I moved from VP to the President, and managed the operations across four properties, 10,300 people working for me. In between all that I went over, I did a little shift over in America. And some shifts in China.... Then I came back to Australia into a general management position in this organisation.

William is the only interviewee who is not a white Anglo-Saxon manager. Despite having two degrees and moving around the globe for career

progression, he is still in the third (lowest) tier of management. He has worked in the Middle East Singapore, America, and then Australia.

Support and Sponsorship

Most of the men declared that although the career path has not always been clear for them, they have actively chosen career progression and were intentionally always looking for a new opportunity. Male managers explained how their managers' support at the time helped their transition into senior roles. Edward said: "The higher I move, it's important that, you know, I have the right relationships, and I've built my relationships in a more strategic way, that benefits myself, my team, and what I'm trying to achieve." In the past, the right relationships were very important, as Gary (General Manager) explained: "Some of the steps that we have here traditionally, is staff used to be promoted from inside so if you wanted to be a senior supervisor or assistant manager, it was all tap on the shoulder."

The senior managers believe that when you break into the senior level your transition into top roles happens very quickly. However, it is really hard to break into that level without the support of your superiors. As Matthew (General Manager) stated, "I've been down that path where it's very difficult to break that mould. Once you break into it, it becomes a lot easier, but breaking into that is really hard." It usually happened when an employee is given an opportunity such as an acting role.

Most of them were given some opportunities by their managers such as acting role that assisted them to progress to senior roles. For example, Toby detailed his experience:

I was offered an opportunity to be the strategy and commercial development manager for... [Hospitality], and that was quite a quick transition. I never managed... [Hospitality] before, but the one thing that I did know is that I had the senior's complete support. It worked out quite well, and they offered me the role. So, I went from having limited senior management executive exposure, to basically, meeting with vice presidents and CEOs and managing directors of companies so from that, they gave me quick exposure to executives. That was the first time I had a large team, so I went

from my biggest team of about 8 people to 120 people which is a significant jump in the number of people to manage. Quickly after that, I went to a team of about 280 people.

This approach was not without its issues. Lachlan (General Manager) believed that one of the big challenges of getting into senior positions from a male middle manager's point of view in this organisation is nepotism. Lachlan had this experience in different organisations in the same industry:

The biggest challenge getting into senior positions is nepotism. You know, when you've got friends that sit in different areas that only bring in their friends, and this company here is very guilty of such a thing. It's something I'm very conscious of here.

The Idea of Traditional Female Traits

Interviewees claimed that having women in senior roles is essential; however, they believed that having women in senior roles has some disadvantages for their business. They say that it is challenging to have a 24/7 business and keep the female/male ratio balanced. The discussion of "women are the main caregivers and men are the main breadwinners" came up again and again. Daniel's comments were typical: "It's perceived that women are the caretakers and men are the breadwinners".

Bradley elaborated:

We have supported many women to get into senior positions but what we ended up with was a lot more of what people call "the traditional female traits" that cause damage to a business when they go there. I know one of my female managers would dearly love to go part-time, because she's a single parent now. The reality is, I cannot afford for her not to be running the business 5 days a week minimum, because the damage it does to communication when you've got thousands people relying on that one person for communication.

Thus, women were marked as caregivers and had to behave as the "disembodied senior manager" to gain and retain a senior position.

William said that he is able to do the current job because he does not have a caregiver role:

I don't have any family responsibilities. I am single. My parents are not alive, and I've got my brothers and sisters overseas. Well, I work 14 hours a day, 6 days a week, I only get one day off. Unfortunately or fortunately, the industry here, hospitality industry requires a lot of your time. I don't have that commitment outside of work. I can understand how difficult it can be for some of the leaders when they have the family commitment. Have to be very understanding family and partners and the rest for that matter in order to be successful.

Summing up the situation of the lack of women in senior management, Bradley concluded that “the senior level for management here are probably still holding the old school view of ‘it’s a male dominated business’. Most businesses are still down that path”.

Discussion

The findings show that the covert power-based processes of the organisations in which men are considered as the ideal candidate for senior roles, the “disembodied senior manager”, is still the norm and a hindrance for women’s advancement to senior positions. The concept of the “disembodied worker” reinforces the maintenance and reproduction of gendered organisations. Senior levels of management have been shaped by white Anglo-Saxon men who have a strong interest to constantly confirm their masculinity, so this phenomenon has reinforced and reproduced the masculine norms and values in organisations (Collinson and Hearn 1996). Therefore, acquiring managerial status depends on the performance of producing and sustaining masculinity in organisations (Knights and Clarke 2014).

White male senior managers in this study play an important role in reconstructing and reinforcing the image of disembodied worker for senior positions. The organisational logic and the features of senior positions identified by these senior managers verify the existence of the

“disembodied worker”. The characteristic of the “disembodied worker” is most likely to be a man who has a full-time and lifelong job, while there is a woman in his life who takes care of his personal needs and his children. However, the reality of life as a “disembodied worker” can be difficult even for male senior managers.

The interviews reveal that organisational logic demands the features of disembodied worker such as long working hours, geographic mobility, and a focus on choosing career advancement while not using flexible working conditions (Acker 1990, 2006b, 2009). Long hours, mobility, and focus on career advancement were seen as essential components of a senior management job and therefore any candidate for these positions would need to exhibit these traits otherwise they will be considered as less competent for senior roles. This reinforces Billing’s (2011, p. 301) view that the “ideal candidate for managerial jobs is one who is willing to travel a lot, to be available and to work longer than normal hours”. Therefore, having the features of a disembodied worker and not having work-life balance is essential to climb up the career ladder.

The male senior managers interviewed had a view that women exhibited what one manager labelled as “traditional female traits” which encompassed ideas of women’s primary role as child bearers and carers. When this is seen as a primary role, the consequences are that women are not seen as able to devote enough time or energy to the role of a senior manager, which is seen as the primary role of men. Male executives can feel that they are protecting women by not appointing them to jobs with high demands and heavy responsibilities. Notions about gender underlie the documents and contracts used to construct organisations and to provide the common sense ground for theorising them. This common sense understanding illustrates the image of the “disembodied worker” who has no other responsibilities except for paid work. Having care responsibilities does not meet the requirement of a “disembodied worker” and therefore rules out many women from senior management positions. This image privileges men, marginalises women, and maintains gender segregations in senior positions. Gender neutral, disembodied organisational structure, and work relations are a part of power strategy in industrial societies (Acker 1990, 2012). The stereotypic view is that “traditional women’s traits” are usually a disadvantage for women as most of the time

they are considered poor applicants for management positions by decision makers (Paludi 2013).

In summary, the features of senior positions in Hospitality include reliance on managers working long hours and privileging career over family, and a career in senior management is likely to require geographic mobility. The managers interviewed felt that the dominant economic and political interests have sought to take control and keep the hierarchies gendered. Those people who commit more to the job and who desire more responsibility and authority achieve senior positions, yet women are judged as not having these attributes as their primary role is family based.

The conception of women as the main caregiver of the family was prevalent among the interviewees. As the male managers explained, having a supportive spouse who shoulders the domestic duties while he gives priority to his career assisted their transition into senior positions. Male senior managers took women's slow progression as lack of desire for senior positions and "natural", because of their role in child bearing and social role in child caring. Men acknowledged that women with caring responsibilities face many challenges and have a limited career. What they called "traditional women's traits" is different from the image of "disembodied worker" and makes assumptions that women are less suited for senior positions than men and thus hinders their career progression to senior roles. Women need to neutralise the stereotypical image of the disembodied worker with the traditional attitude towards gender identity in order to gain a senior role (Van den Brink and Benschop 2012).

This study disclosed that despite 30 years of equity legislation in Australia, the gendered concept of jobs is still common in the context of Australian organisations, which has framed by the long-lasting tradition of men as breadwinners (Strachan et al. 2009a). Consequently, organisational practices and processes based on gendered concepts reproduce the pervasive and persistent structuring that creates gender inequality in senior positions (Acker 1990). The concept of the "disembodied worker" is prevalent, and ideal candidates for senior management need to exhibit the characteristics of a "disembodied senior manager".

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Part III

Critical Political Approaches on Affective Embodiment



11

Embodying the Social: Desire and Devo(r)ation at the Teatro Oficina

Gazi Islam

Recent critical perspectives on embodiment have noted the social and political force of bodily presence (Butler 2015; Casanova and Jafar 2016), instantiated in a myriad of political movements, from Occupy, to street manifestations, to political theatrical performances (Toraldo and Islam 2017; Haug 2013; Taussig 2012; Graeber 2007). Indeed, bodily presence, especially in its collective and dramaturgical forms, performatively functions to demonstrate the immediacy, the vulnerability, and the affective intensity of subjective experience (Butler 2015; Butler and Anthanasiou 2013). The affective power of such performances lies in their unashamed demonstration of the embodied essence of human existence and the need for mutual recognition as embodied, affective beings. Departing from universalistic conceptions of abstract rights, such movements have taken advantage of the fact that the most basic forms of solidarity lie in the common fact of living in a body that desires, suffers, and needs others. Organizing such bodies so as to express this unescapable situation can provide organizations with deep social and political resonance.

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The idea of social action as embodied, affectively-laden organizing draws extensively from performance studies (e.g. Schechner 2014; Dolan and Wolf 2014), where the political power of theater and performance has been adapted by feminist, LGBT, environmentalist, and subaltern studies scholars and practitioners to constitute a performative politics of social movements. Organizational scholars have begun to acknowledge the critical philosophical undercurrents of such movements, but few works explore their organizational practices (e.g. Beyes 2015), particularly those that have used performance self-consciously as an organizational strategy (e.g. Simpson et al. 2015; Beyes and Steyaert 2006; Schreyogg and Höpfl 2004). Performance studies has moved beyond the theater stage into the street, the factory, and the internet. Yet theater groups themselves have also moved into these spaces, bringing performative perspectives into civil society (Beyes 2015). The current chapter uses the case of a socially engaged, avant-garde theater group to illustrate how principles of embodiment and affect can be used creatively to establish an organizational politics of the body, in its dimensions of affective intensity and participative presence.

Specifically, I discuss the Teat(r)o Oficina Uzyna Uzona (here referred to by its commonly used name “Teatro Oficina”), a contemporary theater based in São Paulo. Teatro Oficina has attracted critical acclaim since its founding in 1958, including being rated by *The Guardian* in 2015 as number 1 of the “10 best theaters” worldwide.¹ Teatro Oficina is known for its “anthropophagic” style, an ironic, visceral, and aggressive re-adaptation and hybridization of classic and modern sources to allegorize contemporary Brazilian society and politics (Islam 2012). Using tropes and rituals adapted from Brazilian Amerindian contexts, mixed with modernist critical theater, including influences from Brecht, Stanislavski and Grotowski (Sousa 2013), Teatro Oficina engages in direct social action through its theater, including political manifestos, street actions, and parodies (Patriota 2003). Teatro Oficina is iconic of the potential of the affective body to organize across social groups through celebrating libidinal connection and participative presence.

Our exposition, drawn from a wider qualitative study of Teatro Oficina, addresses three themes related to how the organization uses embodiment and affect to create the possibilities of social and political

voice. First, I explore Teatro Oficina's "anthropophagic" focus on desire of the other, how desire is performed both through spectacle and through the invocation of different cultural traditions in its productions. Second, I describe the staging and performance strategies of Teatro Oficina, emphasizing presence over representation, using the visceral in a ritualistic way to create a sense of collective immediacy that grounds solidarity. Third, I discuss how Teatro Oficina's approach overflows the stage into the street and the city, engaging in a performative urban politics that challenges land-speculative developments in the surrounding neighborhoods, offering a cultural alternative to the neoliberal politics of the contemporary megapolis.

Organizing, Embodiment, and Affect

Recent organizational literature is marked by a resurgence of interest in affective, aesthetic, and embodied aspects of organizing (Pullen and Rhodes 2015; Vachhani 2014; Küpers 2013; Thanem 2004), particularly in its relation to processes of social mobilization and resistance (e.g. Thanem 2012). Combining the aesthetic and affective aspects of organizational collectives with their collective mobilization possibilities, such approaches are able to emphasize embodiment in both its experiential and political dimensions (Beyes 2015). Such a combination makes the personal political, and resonates with social movements emphasizing the politics of embodiment and desire.

A key problematic in the politics of embodiment and affect involves the relationship between bodies and materialities, on the one hand, and the organizations of meanings and discourses, on the other (Oliveira et al. 2017). Conceived of in terms of building common meanings and beliefs, organizing involves discursive spheres where individuals communicate and align their worldviews. Discursive views see organizing as a process of building common *representations*, and discourse is a means to achieve such representations. Organizational concepts such as organizational culture, sensemaking, and identity have often used alignment of meanings, categories, and symbols as the building blocks of organization through common representations (e.g. Ashforth et al. 2011).

Embodiment perspectives, while not denying the importance of discourse and symbols, move beyond representation to examine the visceral and experiential aspects of organizing (Pullen and Rhodes 2015; Küpers 2013). Organizing around the body holds specific challenges and opportunities for organizational scholars, who have recently begun to consider how bodies are presented (Warhurst and Nickson 2007), surveyed (Ball 2006), and cared for (Gherardi and Rodeschini 2016) as aspects of organizing. How bodies are conceptualized (e.g. as material, symbolic, lived) varies across this literature, and much theoretical work remains to be done as to how to best include bodily and embodied experiences into organizational theorizing.

Politically, the movement from discourse to affect and embodiment has become important in a world where taken-for-granted common meanings are no longer available (cf. Fraser 2014). Visions of a public sphere of common intersubjective meanings, often linked to the democratic nation-state (e.g. Ramos-Zayas 2011), have given way to a world of interconnected identities, bodies, and forms of life. In a cosmopolitan world, it is necessary to imagine co-habitation among actors who are unlikely to share common representations, and where homogeneous worldviews are neither likely nor desirable. In such a world, recognition and respect for difference, rather than common ground, become conditions for politics (Hekman 1992). Both in terms of identity-based politics spanning across gender, culture, and ethnic identities, and in terms of relation to non-human entities which whom humans share natural ecosystems, a “cosmopolitics” based on bodily presence rather than discursive alignment is an increasingly pressing need in social and political theory (Watson 2011; Paulson 2006; Latour 2004).

Consequently, recent organizational perspectives on embodiment have focused on such issues as heterogeneity (Vachhani 2014; Thanem 2006) of bodies, particularly in the relationships between bodies and the ethics of the other (Pullen and Rhodes 2015; Islam 2015). For instance, Vachhani (2014) discusses how the maternal body, in its very physicality, poses a challenge for “normal” conceptions of organizational actors (see also Fotaki 2011; Gatrell 2011). Kenny and Fotaki (2015) argue that focusing on the body, rather than leading to an individual solipsism, can promote a relational view of inter-corporeality whereby the bodily depen-

dence of humans on each other becomes a basis for ethics. The intercorporeal aspect of bodily politics is particularly salient in embodied theorizing in the Latin American context (Viveiros de Castro 2009; Nunes 2008; Vilaça 2002), where complex relationships involving sexuality, nature, and colonial domination, on the one hand, and the lack of a historically institutionalized democratic discursive public sphere (e.g. Borón 1999), on the other hand, create an institutional environment well-suited for embodied approaches to cultural politics. Although such perspectives are varied in their historical forms (e.g. Rosa 2015), the current chapter focuses on a Brazilian tradition referred to as “anthropophagic” (e.g. Azevedo 2016; Rolnick 1998; Andrade 1990) in thinking about corporality, desire, and cosmopolitan politics. The anthropophagic approach to organizing, which has appeared in recent organizational literature, is rarely explicitly adopted as a theme by organizations, but has been used by scholars to describe Brazilian approaches to organizing (Prado and Sapsed 2016; Islam 2012, 2015; Wood and Caldas 1998). In the current case of the Teatro Oficina, however, the organization explicitly refers to itself as “anthropophagic”, drawing reflexively on writings around this tradition, and thus providing an ideal case for examining anthropophagic approaches to organizational embodiment.

In short, bodies and affects provide particular possibilities for thinking about organizing that are distinct from those emphasizing meanings and representations, and scholarship is proliferating in order to understand the range of these possibilities. Anthropophagic organizing is one approach particularly centered around bodies, relations, and desires, and is worth exploring theoretically and empirically. Below, I elaborate on this perspective in order to better understand its application in the Teatro Oficina.

United by Anthropophagy: Organizing Between Bodies

The anthropophagic moment in Brazilian modernism is an ironic, viscerally oriented artistic movement with multiple layers of meaning (Islam 2014), founded by Oswald de Andrade with the founding document

Manifesto Antropófago along with the magazine *Revista de Antropofagia* in 1928. Based on a “concept of life as devo(ration)” (Andrade 1954), the concept of anthropophagy was a reappropriation and resignification of the European colonial stereotype of Brazilian cannibalism. Drawing from the idea that this stereotype was based on the negative image of Brazil as a land of sexual desire, uncultured nature, and irrational chaos, the anthropophagic movement reappropriated these elements as a critique of the hyperrationalism of “Cartesian” Europe. Thus, the anthropophagic movement was from the beginning a movement against European logocentrism and a celebration of embodiment and desire (Campos and Wolff 1985).

This focus on embodiment is evident from the irreverent and celebratory tone of the “manifesto”, with overtones of both artistic and political activism. For instance, Andrade writes “what knocked over the truth was clothing, the impermeable between the interior and the exterior world”. Celebrating sexuality against “external inquisitions”, the manifesto uses an inverted psychoanalytic imagery with surrealist overtones to respond to European avant-garde movements with a voice from the South:

The struggle between what would be uncreated and the Creature – illustrated by the permanent contradiction of man and his Taboo. Everyday love and the capitalist modus vivendi. Anthropophagy. Absorption of the sacred enemy. To transform him into a totem.

Instead of the image of the cannibalistic savage as inferior to the civilized European, the cannibal is seen as the origin:

We want the Caraiba revolution. Greater than the French Revolution. The unification of all effective revolts in the direction of man. Without us, Europe would not even have its poor declaration of the rights of man.

What is interesting in these inversions is the simultaneous appropriation and subversion of European civilization, usually with a visceral metaphor, that at once harkens and inverts European heritage while “digesting” it with a Brazilian articulation: “Tupi or not Tupi – that is the question”. This visceral sense of both unity and inversion viewed the

body as both desiring and in flux, and identity as relational and embodied (Conklin 2001). It was drawn, indirectly, from an indigenous mythology in which physical species and their bodies were subject to transformations in identity based on subject position, a view described by anthropologists as “Amerindian Perspectivism” (e.g. Viveiros de Castro 1998, 2009).

It is not the purpose here to expand on this tradition (cf. Islam 2012); however, some conceptual keys to the movement can be outlined. First, the use of the body as a source of vitality and rebellion, as well as a longing for unification through bodily contact, that is, the body not only as difference but also as contact. Second, the ironic and often humorous use of bodily metaphors of devouring to invert power positions between the colonized indigenous subject and the colonizer, and the irreverent appropriation of dominant (often religious) symbols for subversive ends. Third, the ambivalence of identity at the level of language and body (Tupi or not Tupi?), where self and other interpenetrate but are not the same.

The anthropophagic movement, although earlier historically, was a key source of cultural inspiration for the later counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s in Brazil (Veloso 2004), and was fundamental for setting its tone both in terms of visceral explicitness, of sexual liberation, and of the ambivalent relation to the foreign and to popular culture (Dunn 2001, 2016). These themes would become organizationally central to the Teatro Oficina, in structuring its organizational identity, relation to its theatrical production, and political posture vis-à-vis the rapidly gentrifying São Paulo megapolis within which it would become an important cultural actor.

Illustrative Case Study: Teat(r)o Oficina Uzyna Uzona

The Teatro Oficina provides a historically important and self-reflexive example of how anthropophagic thinking can be organizationally embodied. To illustrate how anthropophagy allows new ways of thinking about embodiment, desire, and relational ethics that have organizational

implications, a brief introduction to the theater organization and the different facets of its anthropophagic approach is useful.

The Teat(r)o Oficina Uzyna Uzona was founded in 1958, and created a strong reputation in the 1960s and 1970s for its countercultural productions. One of several politically charged theaters of the period (the most famous perhaps being Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed), associated with the Arena Theater in São Paulo, Teatro Oficina formed part of an emerging Brazilian artistic avant-garde that was increasingly discontent with dictatorial turn in Brazilian politics and the moralistic conservatism of the dominant culture. Drawing on theatrical influences from Europe, from Brecht to Artaud to Stanislavski (Sousa 2013), Teatro Oficina also "devoured" these in their attempt to theorize in a Brazilian style that reflected the chaotic reality of São Paulo in the period (Della and Carvalho 2013).

The company's leader, José Celso Martinez Correa (known as Zé Celso), spent time in exile during the most brutal years of the military regime, a time during which many of the group's members were tortured and imprisoned. The reconstruction of the group over the late 1970s and 1980s culminated in a new, spectacularly innovative theater space by architect Lina Bo Bardi, inaugurated with shamanic rituals and sanctifications of the new ground. This site was to become the center of a decades-long battle over the future of the land as a cultural (and sacred) center of ritual and theater versus ongoing projects for gentrification and real estate development by the business mogul Silvio Santos (Campbell 2011). This political battle would itself be devoured and reappear as foundational to Teatro Oficina's artistic productions, as the struggle for its own existence was enacted in myriad ways on its stage and in its rituals, with figures of Santos depicted with a historical parade of brutal figures from the colonial period onwards.

The connection to the anthropophagic movement, although common throughout the Brazilian counterculture of the period, was particularly explicit in the Teatro Oficina, and the world of Oswald de Andrade was central to the theater (Della and Carvalho 2013). For instance, Andrade's play *Rei da Vela*, written in 1933, was left unproduced on stage until its first staging by Teatro Oficina in 1967, a production which became the landmark moment in the theater's history and also a

historic event in the history of Brazil's artistic reaction to the military dictatorship and a founding moment in the counterculture. As Della and Carvalho (1933) argue, the position taken in this gesture amounts to both a critique of violence, and a tacit critique of local resistance in the period, by means of an anthropophagic move, which critiques both external imperialism and internal collusion by confounding the identities of interior and exterior.

While a complete history of Teatro Oficina and its place in the anthropophagic movement is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is useful as an illustration of anthropophagic organizing in terms of its embodied and affective elements. These involve the notion of desire of the other, a fundamental aspect of anthropophagic thinking as laid out in historical anthropology, modernist interpretations, and tropicalist counterculture (Islam 2012). Second, Teatro Oficina's approach to embodiment highlights the notion of bodily presence in its "vibration" and "contamination" (Rolnick 1998); it is a theater emphasizing presence over representation, and participation over spectatorship and the intercorporeal interaction between actors and audience also reflect an element of anthropophagic thinking. Finally, Teatro Oficina's treatment of its own theater space and land, in its ongoing struggle with land developers, speculation, and gentrifications, gives a clue as to the social and political possibilities of anthropophagic thinking, both in terms of possible new organizational approaches and in terms of possible dangers of this approach and its potential for appropriation and/or political capture.

Anthropophagic Desire: From Taboo to Totem

The performances of Teatro Oficina, as well their everyday practices of producing theater, focus centrally on desire, aggression, intimacy, and other powerful emotions related to the complex intertwining of self and other. The anthropophagic aspect of this desire lies in its juxtaposition of bodies, collective identities, and emotional intensity, often directed as recounting current or past historical traumas. Campbell (2012, p. 289) describes this aspect as the "vibrant, carnavalesque re-appropriation of Brazil's troubled and often brutal past". By aggressively enacting social

life in ways that bring out its libidinal core, Oficina's productions lay bare the raw nerve of cultural passions, conflicts, and desires.

The use of scenes of bodily intensity and desire allow productions to recast complex historical moments in Brazilian history in terms of a history of mutual desire and aggression, in line with the anthropophagic ambivalence of bodies described above. This may be illustrated with a scene from a production of *Os Sertões*, a remake of a classical Brazilian text of the same name by Euclides da Cunha (cf. Campbell 2011). In a section entitled "Genesis of the Brazilian people", the figure of Princess Isabel is shown in an orgiastic scene of marital infidelity with an entourage of African slaves. Princess Isabel, known in Brazilian history for the abolition of slavery, is here depicted in a complex mixture of desire, power, and bodily entanglement, both betraying her husband and the patriarchy but also reinforcing the subaltern status of the slaves, who remain in shackles during the orgy (Campbell 2011).

This example illustrates a persistent tendency in Teatro Oficina to allow, and even provocatively exploit, contradictory ideas. This principle extended to the tolerance, and even embracing, of antagonistic figures in the theater itself, during shows, and to allow these contradictions to inform the performance. Lima (2002) recounts an example where, during an open rehearsal for *Os Sertões*, an unknown figure joined the collective celebration, and began to drunkenly and aggressively interrupt the harmonious ethos of the group. As some began to question the figure's presence, and started to ask him to leave, Zé Celso held them back, saying "Let him, let him, it's the Exu of the moment" (Lima 2002, p. 136). Exu, an Afro-Brazilian deity sometimes compared to the devil, sometimes to the Greek Dionysus, is a trickster figure representing desire, sexuality, and exchange; his frequent appearance at Teatro Oficina is a marker of the ambivalence of desire and corporality in the theater, as well as the intermixing of European and African traditions in its philosophy.

Similarly, the transformation of self and other through desire, fundamental to the anthropophagic movement, is seen in specifically cultural and political terms by Zé Celso. Writing in his blog about the performance of the piece "Anthropophagic Macumba", Celso writes:

Oswald [de Andrade] counsels us to go directly to the TABOOS to transform them into TOTEMS. Around what is prohibited, to invert it and transform it into a Fountain of Freedom and New discoveries about Human Biodiversity. Macumba is the source of much prejudice, but it transports us to a different human relation, away from the bureaucracy of relationships that are hypocritical, tedious, mommy-daddy, cerebral!⁹

He had been asked about the reason he chose the name “Macumba”, a term derived from an Afro-Brazilian tradition of magical spell casting. Combining this tradition with the anthropophagic ritual, and using this hybrid to make a commentary around contemporary human relations, imagines new forms of collectivity by identifying with the clandestine, unconscious collective force of taboo Brazilian society (turning “taboo” into “totem”).

Stages of Occupation: From Representation to Presence

While the emphasis on desire as a way of performing the interrelation of identities is emblematic of the anthropophagic movement, a second foundation of Teatro Oficina’s approach is its orientation to presence. Eschewing classical theatrical representation, the theater’s rehearsals and productions work to create a sense of “being there”. Both material and symbolic, these productions are heavily ritualized, where ritual works to imbue artifacts and actors with meaning while acknowledging and venerating their materiality. Actors described rehearsals as involving many hours “ritualizing” objects, to take them out of their “objectified” status as props or instruments and to re-enchant them for use during performances. For instance, plants to be used in performances would be ritualistically replanted; mud to be used in a play would be collectively rolled-around in to prepare actors to engage with it. These objects were described not as tools of representation, but as living entities that exerted power of presence during the collective works.

Also aimed at avoiding the objectification of representation and promoting direct presence, actors would hail audience members directly into

the action of the scene, and constantly break theatrical conventions of representation. Teatro Oficina is famous for “breaking the fourth wall”, bringing spectators on the stage, mingling with, touching, and even erotically engaging with spectators in an attempt to create a collective energy and overcome the passivity of spectacle (cf. Islam et al. 2008).

In terms of spatial layout, the Teatro Oficina is built in a unique style emphasizing movement and flow over stasis and representation. Designed by architect Lina Bo Bardi, the extremely thin “stage” area is virtually indistinguishable from the audience seating, which climbs up the side wall and gives easy access between actors and audience. The heavily horizontal shape implies a corridor, or a runway, leading from the street outside to the empty lot opposite the theater, a design described as a “Carnaval-Sambadrome” (Stevens 2015). This structure makes moving from street, to theater, to nature, very easy, and has become the bases for many performances which spill out of the theater into the surrounding neighborhood, or alternatively, into outside rituals in the open lot area.

Writing in his blog, Zé Celso explains how the spatial layout creates an embodied relation with the public, “We don’t spend that time ‘in front of the public’...but *with* the public, that surrounds us in the seating, from which it can come, act, and macumba together with us”.³ This inclusion is increased when the actors and public physically leave the theater together, as in “*Macumba Antropófaga*”, where collective marches in the street entangle the actors with the audience. Such techniques also have an “occupy” dimension, where at times it is difficult to distinguish between theater performance and a political rally, particularly in the many cases in which the performances take political allegories that directly relate to ongoing current events.

Campbell (2012) describes how the focus on embodied presence, as opposed to representation, changes the way that historical phenomena can be experience, particularly regarding moments of violence or trauma. Contrasting Oficina to Hirsch’s “aesthetics of postmemory”, Campbell notes that representations of historical violence often focus on mourning and re-building lost pasts that have become dispersed in diasporic movement across time and space. By contrast, Teatro Oficina spectacularizes Brazil’s traumatic past through a reincarnation of memory that is affec-

tively charged and erases the division between present and past. As Campbell (2012, p. 289) explains of *Os Sertões*, it is a:

participatory, sensorially potent and libidinally charged poetics, which fetishizes the corporeality of both actors and spectators alike. This emphasis on the immediate jouissance of bodily presence, on the mercurial transformative nature of the live event, already characteristic of theatre as a medium, contrasts directly with the play of indexicality and absence, of “irreplaceable loss and interminable mourning”.

In short, by acting on the place of presence over representation, boundaries between inner and outer, past and present, are blurred, and the separation implied in mourning is replaced by the reincarnation of anthropophagy. While the roots of Brazilian indigenous anthropophagy as a funerary ritual are beyond our scope (see Conklin 2001), its use as a theatrical modality signals a radically embodied way of narrating a past of political struggle and brutality, and a participatory mode of living history through collective enactment.

In the Corridor of the Big Snake: Embodied Spaces and Urban Occupations

As noted above, the architectural design of the Teatro Oficina embodied an anthropophagic approach to collective action; beyond the design, however, the site of the theater itself has been an ongoing locus of political organizing over the past decades (e.g. Stevens 2015; Lima 2001). Since the early days of the theater, Teatro Oficina's location in the central and underdeveloped neighborhood of Bixiga has created controversy over land use and gentrification in one of the densest urban landscapes in Latin America (Stevens 2015).

Since the 1980s, Silvio Santos, one of the largest media executives in Brazil (Caldeira 2000), has aimed to use the surrounding area for land development, including residential blocks and a shopping mall. His group, Grupo Silvio Santos, is a conglomerate of with the business Sisan, is the real estate arm, and is one of the most powerful business groups in

the country. During the reconstruction of the theater beginning in 1979, Santos' group began clearing the surrounding neighborhood for development, but was unable to demolish the theater, because of its status as a heritage site; the subsequent political battle over this appellation has been ongoing, with different administrations reinstating and removing this legal protection. Its blockage of the land development proposed by Sisan has given Oficina a status as a counter-power and a force against neoliberal urbanization, and has protected one of the few open spaces in this region (Stevens 2015). In parallel, in 2002, Teatro Oficina initiated the Movimento Bixigão, its own urban project which included local children in theater education, circuses, and educational projects. In parallel, it initiated counter-imaginings of the downtown area, drawing on Oswald de Andrade's thought. For instance, an "Anthropophagic University" was created, with the goal of spreading an alternative "knowledge-power" complex based on countercultural ideas (Troi and Colling 2017). Zé Celso described plans to create a cultural corridor running from the Theater downtown, which would be called the "Big Snake", echoing an indigenous mythology figure, as well as a green patch that would serve as an "urban jungle" (Stevens 2015). Although the completion of such a large project in the center of a dense megapolis was largely unrealistic in practical terms, its existence as a counter-hegemonic imaginary had important value in challenging dominant view of politics in the city.

In parallel, the fight to protect the site of Teatro Oficina began to take different embodied dimensions. For instance, the slogan "demarcate Tekoha" was used to describe the land, another indigenous reference. Where "demarcation" refers to the federal land entitlements given to indigenous groups to self-govern autonomously, "Tekoha" is a Guarani term that at once signifies a Guarani village, and the kind of place in which it is possible (and outside of which it is impossible) to be Guarani. This untranslatable term equated the ontic status of the collective with its connection to a certain land, a notion alien to the commodified use of land as real estate.

Finally, during this period, Silvio Santos became a key figure in the imaginaries of the company, and also was portrayed throughout the productions in ironic and critical ways. At the same time, as the directors of Teatro Oficina explained, he was a "theater-man", a television star that

was also in the business of spectacle. As such, the struggle between the Grupo Silvio Santos and Teatro Oficina was allegorized as a struggle between two visions of spectacle, the first, the commodified and televised spectacle that dominated Brazilian mass media, and the second which drew its identity anthropophagically by devouring, challenging, and contesting this power from the margins. In this way, the opposition to Santos was not a simple binary between “good” and “evil”—rather it was a struggle between modes of being where predation was symbolically reappropriated by the company and represented through artistic creation, public demonstration, and architectural constructions.

To sum up, the anthropophagic approach of Teatro Oficina is evident at multiple levels. At the level of self-other relations, visceral, affective bonds are constitutive of a relationality marked both by intimacy and by struggle. At the level of immediate locality, a focus on representation is replaced by a focus on presence, embodied in the local architecture and its practices of participation and breaking down of boundaries between actor and audience. At the level of the wider political context, an ethic of continuous struggle, linked to the land and the simultaneous embracing and devouring of enemies, gives a twist to contemporary perspectives on urban politics. Each of these levels is anthropophagic in its viscosity, its simultaneous intimacy and aggression, and its muddling of identity boundaries.

Discussion

The Teatro Oficina presents a form of collective organizing in which embodiment, affect, and desire become deployed at different levels in order to support the anthropophagic vision of a countercultural artistic organization. While situated within a theater organization in the Brazilian context, the case holds insights that could be applied more generally to understandings of bodies and affective experiences in organizing. As a concluding discussion, it is worth elaborating and extending some of these insights, and speculating on how they could be brought to bear on future organizational research.

Embodiment and Desire for the Other

An ongoing danger for conceptions of embodiment is that they become reduced to considering individual bodies in their difference, leading to a biological solipsism and also opening the possibility for individualized bodily control (Foucault 1998). Much more interesting conceptually, as well as ethically, are conceptions of embodiment that see the body as fundamentally open, relational, and interactional in character (e.g. Kenny and Fotaki 2015; Diprose 2002). Rather than an ontology of commonality via language and individual separation via bodies, such approaches would consider the body in its ability to cohabit with other bodies and to exhibit forms of “corporal generosity” (Diprose 2002), that is, affective and pre-reflective ways of co-habiting that allow identities to be constituted relationally. How do anthropophagic conceptions of the body fit into such conceptions?

First, the relational aspect is built into anthropophagic conceptions, so that bodily exchange is fundamental. The aggressiveness implied in the cannibalistic metaphor, however, belies a simple conception of generosity as self-giving or sacrifice. Rather, bodily interaction is struggle, but an intimate struggle, though which identities are co-constituted; sameness and difference are then part of an inter-corporeal dialogue rather than divergent possibilities, and the one implies the other. The concept of “desire” and “vibration”, replete throughout the anthropophagic literature, is emblematic of this tension. Bodies are lacking, and this lack seeks exchange with other bodies, yet what is sought is not union or mimesis of these bodies; as Veloso (2004) describes, “We, Brazilians, should not imitate, but devour new information”. What anthropophagy thus contributes to relational notions of embodiment is a sense of struggle and danger. Intuitively, this contribution should not be taken as unproblematic.

What is positive about such visions is that they avoid romanticizing the body, nature, or affect, a chronic difficulty in discussions over the body (cf. Washburn 2003). This is particularly the case in contexts where imaginaries of natural bodies are juxtaposed with indigenous people living within a reified concept of “Nature”, such is the case with Brazil (e.g.

Nunes 2008), and where Nature is culturally projected into a distant and pre-modern past (cf. Appadurai 1990). The resulting turn to the body may be a nostalgic gesture reflecting an absence in the present, to paraphrase Jameson's (1989) characterization of late capitalist culture. Rather than laying a foundation for a more inclusive and holistic humanism, such "new age" perspectives may reify an impossible sense of harmony, and thus drive the very sense of lack and desire that yearns for a "simpler life". By tinting this nostalgic past with an ironic admission of appropriation, making desire itself part of the past (and not a present yearning for the past), anthropophagy may avoid some of the pitfalls of romanticism that seem to follow the revaluing of the body.

On the other hand, what would be the terms of an ethical cannibalism? Accepting that bodies are fundamentally interrelated, that they are not romantically unified but drawn in lines of struggle with and for each other, how could such struggle be organized so as to promote mutual self-creation, as opposed to domination? The cannibal metaphor may be ironic, but it risks opening up a problem of brutality that it does not know how to resolve. On the theatrical stage, the enactment of social brutality is one thing; even when the "fourth wall" is broken and the audience participates in the banquet, the show does not go on forever. But can anthropophagic organizing, once spilled over into wider cultural enactments, sustain the inter-corporeal struggle without degrading into a struggle for domination? The ethics of anthropophagy require nuanced development so that the nature and uses of this metaphor, and its possibility to be realized materially, are carefully considered.

Organizing Presence Versus Organizing Representation

A second set of principles around the Teatro Oficina case involves the role of representation in its relation to immediate presence. The issue of representation is clearly central to any theater organization, but how organizations represent reality through symbols and language is important more broadly. Yet Teatro Oficina engages in practices turned toward creating an immediate sense of presence among actors and audience members. Their

focus on ritual is also a focus on immediate experience, a sense of “being there” during the happening of a pivotal event. Their shows are often seen just as much as monumental events as they are as dramaturgical representations, and often these boundaries are muddled as the show spills into the surrounding streets or occupies public spaces. Where they use symbols, these are thoroughly “ritualized”; plants are replanted; mud is rolled in and felt during rehearsals; objects take on quasi-magical qualities that are more about transubstantiation than about representation.

Embodied organizing emphasizing presence over representation could similarly focus on ritual, lived experience, and participation. Although the “practice turn” in organizational theorizing (e.g. Rennstam and Ashcraft 2013) moves in the direction of embodiment, organizational scholars still know little about how interaction in its “immediate” enactment differs from interaction in its representational function, that is, how the experience and enactment of organizational life unfold differently than its discursive focus on organizational values, meanings or objectives. Similarly, a focus on “ritual” in organizations (e.g. Dacin et al. 2010; Di Domenico and Phillips 2009) has tended to focus on what ritual means, rather than how it is phenomenally lived by actors in its performative creation of events having a social reality in themselves. Moving practice and ritual perspectives more toward embodiment would mean seeing such perspectives less from an interpretive lens and more in terms of their reality-constituting function.

Finally, in terms of methodology, the nature of interaction and participation in organizations from an anthropophagic perspective can position practice over representation. Methodologically, it can do this by focusing less on the thematic interpretation of organizationally produced texts and more on the objects, artifacts, and embodied interactions within organizations. This would imply less interview-based and archival methods and more ethnographic engagement, participation, and reflexive experiential methods within organizations. The anthropophagic approach is literally a way of “going native”, while maintaining irony, a reflexive ability to subvert meanings, and an openness to “devour” and remix cultural elements. Methodologically, anthropophagic ethnography would hybridize spectator and actor, without reducing one to the other.

Political Potentials and Pitfalls of Embodied Organizing

In terms of its emancipatory potential and a social and political mobilization approach, the anthropophagic movement is ambivalent in a way that may be informative for many movements of the “new” or “cultural” left. Historically, Teatro Oficina was both countercultural, being oppositional to the military dictatorship, and reticent to engage in the more radical struggles of other groups such as those associated with Boal’s Theater of the Oppressed (Mostaço 1982). Putting aesthetics over politics allowed the company to continue in the face of political pressure, although ultimately the repression of dictatorship came down on it as well. Further, the position of the Oficina as regards its social composition is mixed and complex. Enacting and valorizing Amerindian myths and rituals, the organization yet maintains little direct dialogue with indigenous groups. Supporting and including socio-economically disadvantaged populations in its surrounding neighborhood, and presenting class and racial politics in progressive ways in its productions, yet Teatro Oficina is largely frequented by a university-educated cultural elite and draws on philosophical and international cultural sources out of reach for popular audiences. Further, while it struggles against the real estate development in the area, and is outspoken in its opposition to land speculation and the corporate domination of the center of São Paulo, as an internationally famous theater company, it constitutes a key attraction of the neighborhood and an agent of cultural gentrification in promoting a bohemian and artistic core in the region.

These ambivalences parallel the ambiguous identity of the anthropophagic approach—the cannibal, as both colonized victim and aggressive predator, is positioned ambivalently in a politics of domination. Neither resister nor colonizer, the anthropophage draws on the identities of both and is thus politically ambidextrous. What this means for critical organizational scholars looking to the movement for inspiration is uncannily familiar. Is anthropophagy “decaf” resistance (Contu 2008), that is, performing a critical gesture while ultimately being complicit in hegemony? Does it reflect a “new spirit” of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello

2005), countercultural in posture but ultimately compatible with the capitalist world of production around it? An important area for future exploration, therefore, would be to examine what kinds of social processes support or undermine the critical and social-transformative possibilities of organizations such as Teatro Oficina, and how the nuance of their approach can be successfully articulated together with an activism that is able to promote social transformation.

Conclusion

To conclude, embodiment, affect, and interaction provide possibilities for rethinking organizations that recognize the limits of logocentrism, representation, and discourse. At the same time, the former concepts are themselves heterogeneous and nuanced, presenting ambivalences for organizing that require sustained scholarly attention. By illustrating how Teatro Oficina has self-consciously adopted a particular formation of these concepts, in the notion of anthropophagy, the current chapter seeks to contribute to an ongoing discussion of when, where, and in what forms the body and its lived experience become the principle foundations of organization. As the Teatro Oficina shows, rather than simply resolving previous organizational tensions, these terms bring in new sets of tensions that need to be addressed in scholarship and in practice. As an artistic organization whose business is performance and enactment, these are questions deeply penetrating the daily activities of organizational members. Their insights, as well as the limitations of this approach, are worth following as scholars attempt to explore of the same questions in their scholarly work.

Notes

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/dec/11/the-10-best-theatres-architecture-epidaurus-radio-city-music-hall>
2. <https://blogdozelso.wordpress.com/2012/08/24/entrevista-ao-sesc-sobre-a-turde-macumba-antropofaga-pelo-interior/>
3. Ibid.

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12

Affect, Diversity, and the Problem of Consolation in the Critique of Public Servant Identity

Francisco Valenzuela

Introduction

As any young researcher or practitioner of Public Sector organizations knows from experience, living through Public Service has become about navigating across, and indeed resisting, the hectic rhythm of State administration under the strains of post-bureaucratic, entrepreneurial, ‘customer-oriented’ neoliberal governance (Hoedemaekers 2010; Hoedemaekers and Keegan 2010; McSwite 2001). This is about dealing with neoliberal ‘regimes of truth’, which grant coherent discursive shape to subjectivity and its mastery of identity work, while subjugating Public Servants through excessive commands for individualization, competition, and self-improvement (Horton 2006; Thomas and Davies 2005).

It is crucial to note, however, that the effort of interpreting Public Servant identity should not only focus on Public Servants’ capacity to make sense and position themselves critically in relation to a variety of

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‘post-bureaucratic’ narratives. Attention should also be paid to the concrete reality of Public Service labour, and the affective, gendered attachments that Public Servants cannot help but to establish while carrying it out (Hoedemaekers 2010). If neoliberal champions are demanding the ‘new’ subjects of Public Service to master “new governance modes of affectivity ... [entailing] new affective power relations between public employees and citizen-customers”, as Penz et al. (2017) have contended, then it is crucial to understand how the Public-Servant-subject is engaged in propelling the neoliberal everyday organization of State bureaucracy, as part of the quest to find himself/herself as a professional individual. This implies assuming that Public Service runs not just through the devising of central narratives and subject positions, but at the same time through the engendering of diverse passions, and thus, of diverse bodies. Accordingly, it implies appreciating the ways in which such differences of embodiment are weaved into—and not excluded from—discursive networks, and thus, how they play a fundamental role in the constitution of organizational power at both micro- and macro-levels.

Indeed, no account of the affective underpinnings of identity work can be complete without acknowledging the fundamental and complex role that the notion of diversity plays in the study of the Public Service experience. On the one hand, the exploration of the affects underpinning the neoliberal (re-)organization of State bureaucracy requires moving away from discursivist approaches, as their focus on identity as an effect of rhetorical, cognitive, and/or practical rationalities serves to endorse the idea of a sexless, deracialized, ‘disembodied’ subject, tacitly reaffirming a hegemonic masculine (and colonialist) order (Acker 1990, 2006; Fotaki 2013). For it is only through facing real differences between bodies that an accurate interpretation of affectivity under neoliberalism can emerge. On the other hand, the interpretation of the discourses that guide neoliberal reform requires revising the critique of the ‘new’ post-bureaucratic *ethos* and its advocacy of a constant and intense State of affection in Public Service experience, precisely as a response to the perceived diversity in the demands of citizen-customers (du Gay 2008; Penz et al. 2017). Diversity, in this sense, emerges as a problematic ambiguity, inherent to the efforts to criticize neoliberalism ‘from within’. Analyses of neoliberal

management oscillate between ‘visible’ or ‘invisible’ renditions of diversity—depending on the political and economic value they read into ‘bodies at work’—yet they seem to coincide in leaving the masculine discourses behind neoliberal power unquestioned. Accordingly, it is imperative to find ways to invoke, theorize, and materialize diversity into practice, but in a way that avoids unintentionally feeding the neoliberal discourse of individual ‘empowerment’ in the face of social urges (Rottenberg 2018; Cremin 2012).

This chapter seeks to contribute to the project of constructing a more radical diversity through the critical study of affect in Public Service identity work, beyond and against the neoliberal diversity offered to Public Servants as the ‘normal’ guide to organizing contemporary State administration. It aligns with a feminist-oriented interpretive stance to signal and characterize the links between affect and discourse that underpin identity work within the neoliberal logic of Public Service. Moreover, the chapter elaborates what Barnett has called the ‘consolations of neoliberalism’ which concerns the ways in which critical academia has reduced ‘neoliberalism’ to a mere ‘residual effect’ of hegemonic projects and/or governmental programmes of rule, bringing reassurance to the researcher-critic about his solidarity to actors in resistance, but at the same time under-theorizing the way in which neoliberalism is embodied into a plurality of differences at the concrete, everyday level (Barnett 2005). Here, this not only helps appreciating the limitations of certain ‘disembodied’ calls for the study of diversity, often coming from the liberal left and critical management scholarship. It also serves to illuminate the decisive role that the desire of the researcher-critic plays in breaking away from ‘consolatory’ positions of critique and committing to a more radical experience of diversity, by fuelling a confrontation with her own embodied attachments.

In what follows, the abovementioned theoretical and ethical issues will be elaborated, emphasizing the divergent modalities in which affect is weaved, discursively, into Public Servant identity work. Overall, the chapter will aim at foregrounding the conditions for moving from a ‘consolatory’ approach towards an ‘inconsolable’ critique of affective diversity in Public Service.

The Affective Governmentality of Public Service as 'Diverse' Ground for Identity Work

Examining the process of Public Servant identification from the perspective of embodiment requires moving away from scientific-psychological and rhetorical-narrative approaches and embracing instead a bottom-up conception of Public Servant experience as an everyday 'craft'. According to Heyman's anthropological view, at stake here is the enabling of a fundamental curiosity about the "workings of actual bureaucracies, the lives and thoughts of bureaucrats, and their public counterparts" (Heyman 2012: 1269). Such curiosity becomes crucial insofar as it allows visualizing the link between "elements of the unrevealed, non-formal processes of bureaucratic activity" and "wider social questions", in ways that "genuinely add understandings that cannot otherwise be obtained, and in fact might be mystified by the official self-presentation of bureaucracies and other actors" (Heyman 2012: 1270). As several scholars have pointed out in recent years, these 'wider social questions' revolve around the new political economy(ies) of Public Sector management, marked by calls for entrepreneurial labour and the promotion of neoliberal guidelines and values (Hoedemaekers 2010; Tie 2004; du Gay 2008; Ball 2003; Parker 2014). Taking them into consideration, we come to realize that there is something very important to be gained by focusing on the body's 'life and thoughts'. Paying attention to the body helps cutting through the 'mystifications' inherent to the purely narrative plain where Public Servants re-construct their own image. This way, a space is opened for the critique of identity as an equation between organizational unity and social normality, and conversely, for a more radical discussion of difference and diversity within State administration(s).

As several scholars have proposed in recent years (e.g. Archer 2008; Hoedemaekers 2010; Driver 2017; McSwite 2001), analysing embodied identity work as part of larger structures of neoliberal power requires placing the focus on subjectivity as a discursively mediated process. The focus on discourse has the advantage of revealing how the policies, values, mindsets, and everyday narratives of neoliberalism are only realized by the concrete, sustained effort of subjects to speak their 'own terms', within

the political economy they inhabit. Hence, it serves to go beyond the mapping of organizational rationalities and chronicles, enabling a deeper critique of affective diversity as the condition of possibility of neoliberalism; following Parker, the study of how organizational narratives are structured “has to be located in an account of the ways discourses reproduce and transform the material world” (in Howarth 2000: 3). From this standpoint, the vectoring effect of the body over the subject’s speech can be interpreted as reproducing and transforming pre-existing networks of symbols/representations and practices, particularly those that have sought to incorporate neoliberal logics into contemporary forms of State administration (Penz et al. 2017). This, in turn, allows discovering how the subject’s desire to persist in such attachments is sustained (Kenny 2012; Fotaki and Kenny 2014; Fotaki et al. 2017), and further, how her own constitution, the process of subjectivation itself, emerges concretely in relation to neoliberal power (Kenny et al. 2011; Tie 2004; Butler 1997; Foucault 1991, 2008).

Accordingly, based on Kenny et al. (2011: 238), what is really at stake in accounting for the organization of affective diversity is what Butler has called the ‘psychic life of power’: that is, the reciprocal, inextricable relationship between normative frameworks and “our inescapable, emotive dependence upon others” (see also Tie 2004). Following Butler’s take on Foucault (Butler 1997), the Public-Servant-subject can be seen as finding herself only through her innermost passion towards the governmental rationalities that allow her to acquire an identity, and thus, a knowledge about her-self that is both meaningful and effective. Yet this kind of love for the ‘authenticity’ of experienced social reality, emerging out of existential dependency, also ‘mystifies’ and blinds the subject from the truth of her own political manufacturing. Hence, its analysis serves to reveal the contradictions in Public Servant embodiment, marked not just by control and obedience, but also by the earnestness of desire and the precarity of its reliance on social recognition at the workplace and further (McSwite 2001). A key example of the analytic stance signalled by Butler can be found in the recent work by Penz et al., on the service-oriented ‘modernization’ of old European State bureaucracies. Drawing on Foucault, these authors elaborate on

the notion of ‘affective governmentality’ to understand the workings of “neoliberal forms of governance, [that is,] governance modulated and constituted by affects” (Penz et al. 2017).

Schematically defined, governmentality represents the new neoliberal logic of ‘diffused governance’ *vis-à-vis* the waning of State authority (Binkley 2011). It seeks to capture the ground-level workings of neoliberalism as a political/policy project, which aims at applying the logic of free-market economics (e.g. competition) to all areas of social life (Munro 2012). Governmentality implies the contradictory revolution of the Public Sector, as the State becomes de-centred, diffused in its agency and revamped in terms of the values of enterprise (i.e. effectiveness, efficiency), all the while retaining its power as a guarantor of the implementation of neoliberal policies and as the organizer of the “life of people, societies and human relations” (Jessop 2007; Penz et al. 2017). However, governmentality goes beyond an analysis of operational management; more broadly, it accounts for the complex socio-economic devising of distributed governing, through the reconfiguring of subjectivity as an individualized, economically rationalized ‘mentality of government’. In this sense, for Penz et al., Foucault’s reading of the State as “nothing more than the mobile effect of a regime of multiple [liberal] governmentalities” (2008: 77) also works as an interpretation of how the bodies of Public Servants are set to identify with a desire to re-organize State bureaucracy, so that it can eventually accomplish the citizens’ self-governance and the governance of their own managerial selves. This is what they capture with the idea of an ‘affective governmentality’ in the organization and delivery of Public Service: the “embodiment of organisational rules... the transmutation of organisational technologies into technologies of the self” (Penz et al. 2017).

These authors tackle the affective side of Public Servant experience in two important ways. On the one hand, their work provides an in-depth empirical account of affective labour in bureaucratic administration, *vis-à-vis* the demands of the new ‘service economy’, as part of larger neoliberalization processes (Penz et al. 2017). On the other hand, it advances conceptual work around the ‘new subjects’ that are set to play protagonist roles in these affective labour exchanges by assimilating rationales for neoliberal socio-economic governance to rationales for subjectivation.

In doing so, these authors are able to contribute a rich account of the ‘psychic life of neoliberal power’. It is one that explores the affective investments that sustain power, assuming the latter to be framed by a network of discourses—ranging from economic policy rules to local bureaucratic rules—set to prescribe the practice of responsive and persuasive Public Service. Further, this practice extends such exploration of affect(s) by examining a specific function in the neoliberal governmentality device: the constitution of the subject. As Penz et al. insist (2017), under non-disciplinary regimes of governmentality the process of subjective constitution changes decisively in its unfolding. It moves from a straightforward imposition of norms over a controllable subject, to an endless ‘work of subjectivation’, where the Public Servant becomes ‘torn’ between the bureaucratic standards she inhabits and the citizen-customer orientation she is now supposed to embody and genuinely feel.

Penz et al.’s (2017) important work helps us realize how subjectivity fulfils a fundamental role in the reproduction of ‘affective governmentality’ as the new political economy of public administration. Particularly, it shows how ‘identity work’ generates the symbolic and material ‘organism’ that makes the ‘psychic life of neoliberal power’ viable. Their study reveals that identity is not just the solid currency for the effective sense-making of organizational norms and practices, but also the basic feedback that guides the relentless affective process through which the Public-Servant-subject tries to make herself anew under the symbolic order of neoliberalism. This inquiry reveals how the body of identification achieves its true neoliberal status through enduring a constant ‘tearing’. In their view, affects are not merely biological, neutral, extra-discursive placeholders for identity, bearing witness to the objectivity and universal validity of self-narratives. Instead, they body is revealed as always-already put to work by neoliberal discourse(s) in a non-disciplinary way, at the level of the subject’s own affectivity and narrative reflexivity. This is the level where the subject as speaking being captures herself as a legitimate professional individual, master of her emotions, and as an entrepreneur of her affective micro-management (Tie 2004). Moreover, and crucially, Penz et al.’s interpretation (2017) grasps how the diversity of affective involvements is precisely what renders identity work truthful and managerially effective. These authors propose in their analysis of the experience of public managers that it is all about the

affective ‘tearing’ of the Public-Servant-subject becoming a constant ‘breaking, mending and refashioning’:

good counselling demands a balance between social closeness and affective involvement on the one hand, and detachment, affective neutralisation, and ‘dis-affection’ – as we call it – on the other hand. Employment agents shall listen to their own feelings to understand the feelings of their ‘customers’. (Penz et al. 2017)

There is a twofold lesson to be learned from this Foucauldian-inspired reading of Public Servant identification and the material, affective conditions that make it possible. First, such an approach allows us to appreciate how neoliberal organization comes to be perceived as the ‘nature of things’. Second, it reveals how the wielding of political power is rendered invisible by addressing the existentially dependant body, and making it move much faster and more effectively than the subject’s rational intelligibility of self. Consequently, we realize that the body works under neoliberal governmentality by strangely ‘diversifying’ itself in a way that foregrounds the tragic side of the ‘passionate attachment’ Butler has located in contemporary social links. According to Binkley, this is about the body mobilizing a process of ‘de-subjectivation’ at the heart of neoliberal subjectivation, entailing the “repudiation of some historically antecedent formation of selfhood, one that must be negated, suppressed, or removed through a concerted act of self-work” (Binkley 2011: 87; see also Street 2012; Gammon 2013). Identity work never rests, as Kenny et al. contend (2011), because the Butlerian ‘passion’ in our organizational engagements is always ambivalent and problematic; our freedom to attach depends too heavily on our desire for recognition in/by a particular discursive device, neoliberalism, which commands valuable success in individual performance. Hence, Public Servants can be seen as emerging out of pure affective (or ‘disaffective’) difference: they can only be where they are not, as they are set to work out the multiplicity of feelings of citizen-customer-others as their own.

Sadly, as Tie has proposed from a psychoanalytic perspective (2004: 172), the uncanniness or ‘familiar-strangeness’ of de-subjectification logics can only be “enhanced by the sense of reality which envelops and then

assuages the ambiguity that pervades the liberal notion of freedom". This means the affective diversity that pervades Public Servant experience is not one that fosters a critical reflection on the queer variety of connections our bodies cannot help but to establish with neoliberal values and practices (Gago 2017; Pullen et al. 2016). Quite the contrary, it is one that results in a massive blindness towards the history of political agendas behind the entrepreneurial, customer-oriented reform of Public Service. What to do, then, about diversity (or lack thereof) in relation to Public Servant identification and the 'affective governmentality' that frames and propels it? How to sustain a critique of neoliberal normativity and an ethics of difference when the power and authority of the neoliberal State operates, as Penz et al. (2017) have revealed, via 'an affective mode that touches the body and mind of State agents and citizen-customers alike'?

These important questions will be addressed in the following section, where the critique of the particular 'diversity' enacted by neoliberal regimes of 'affective governmentality' will itself be criticized.

The Problem of Consolation in the Critique of Neoliberal Diversity

First Step: On the Call for "A Public Servant Without Affection"

In recent years, several critical voices in the social sciences have been raised, alarming us about the exploitative nature of affective labour in the neoliberalized Public Sector, and the gender inequality generated by its hidden patriarchal assumptions about affective responsiveness to customer-citizens' demands (e.g. Ball 2003; Eagan 2008; Lahn 2018). Among them, the views by seasoned critical 'post-bureaucracy' scholar Paul du Gay on Public Servant identity have proved influential (2005, 2008). According to du Gay, drawing from Foucault's post-structuralist insights, understanding affect critically in the context of Public Service is about denouncing the narratives and practices that have normalized the 'affective governmentality' that has come to mobilize it.

In particular, du Gay contends, the challenge is about distinguishing between various kinds of diversity, and then choosing the right one as the object of a bureaucratic *ethos*.

The ‘emotional injunctions’ demanding identification with a sense of responsiveness towards ‘citizens-customers’, and more broadly with the efficient accomplishment of the policies prescribing such ‘politics of care’, have led to the mis-construal of diversity. For du Gay (2008) the latter has come to be perceived as an object of ethical consumption by the general public, rather than a central value of Public Sector office (du Gay 2008: 336; see also Repo 2016). Values of diversity, inclusion or equality have become central *motifs* for the neoliberal overhauling of bureaucracy, and are being invoked as the guiding principle for the emotional ‘self-work’ of Public Servants. ‘Diversity’ has come to be appreciated in reductionist fashion only as a ‘diversity of affective dispositions’; thus, it has ended up being commodified as (yet another) discourse at the service of affective governmentality (Wilkins 2012). According to du Gay, it is such ‘disposing’ of Public Servant affect that has been targeted most emphatically. ‘Diversity’ has been positioned as the central concern for managers seeking to ‘govern’ Human Resources more effectively, within the new enterprise logic of Public Service. Public Servants are selected, trained, and evaluated based on their capacity to recognize and adapt creatively to ‘differences’ in their citizen-customer base. They are to be disposed in a way that not only conceives but also celebrates ‘diversity’ as their own performance of attuning emotionally to the desires and demands of those whom they serve. Hence, they are to sustain an intense affective attachment to the discourse and practices of ‘diversity’ as a key HR management tool, one that orientates them on how to deliver top-quality modern responsive services, and how to navigate the new neoliberal Public Sector landscape (Wilkins 2012).

du Gay’s critique, like Penz et al.’s (2017), aims at denouncing the astute way in which Public Servants are encouraged—by others and especially by themselves—to champion social justice and to be “basically partisan on behalf of the marginalized”, as part of an attempt to “re-humanize or re-enchant official life in the name of the values of compassion or enthusiasm” (du Gay 2008: 340). Essentially, he advocates for a suspicious attitude towards diversity as an ‘empty’ kind of morality,

which forces the Public Servant into a frenzy of affective labour and ends up reproducing the normativity of neoliberal values. It is the same suspicion that Stivers (1991) suggests, from a feminist perspective, about the masculinized moral values of neoliberal Public Service. Following her insights, the procurement of ‘customer-citizen satisfaction’ can be seen not only as a ‘responsive’ and ‘enthusiastic’ motivation for ‘caring work’, but also as the indication of a masculine prominence, based on managerial prowess:

The framers of the Constitution believed that only a minority of men [sic] – the “better sort” – were qualified to lead the nation ... It appears that many of the modern images of the public administrator, such as the entrepreneur, the advocate, the decision-maker, derive their legitimacy and their appeal from their potential for individual visibility – for glory. Yet it may be that glory is possible for only a few and less widely attractive that might be thought. The need to re-win the public’s trust may call for more broadly interactive images. (Stivers 1991: 58)

This committed critique of what du Gay calls ‘affection’ in Public Servant experience does not necessarily represent a neglect of affect or a denial of the importance of diversity. Rather, it seeks to defend a traditional bureaucratic *ethos* against advocates of entrepreneurial governance, because of the capacity of the former to contribute to the generation of a ‘true diversity’, facilitated by the right type of emotional ‘spirit’.

As argued above, this diversity is not equated to customer-oriented affective responses by Public Servants—the glorified ‘visibility’ Stivers denounces—, as such an understanding would only serve a normative managerial masculinity. Instead, the diversity advocated by these critical voices refers to the variety of social, economic, racial, and gender statuses across members of society, which professional bureaucrats are called to respect impartially and fairly as part of their fulfilment of Public Service. In this sense, diversity is construed as fundamentally moral, and thus bound to a particular ‘ethics of responsibility’ in Public Servant experience, which du Gay associates to the cultivation of a ‘fragile indifference’. This is about adopting a ‘dis-affected’ formalistic rational position, from which “to take cognisance of the incompatibility between a plurality of

enthusiastically held convictions about rival moral and spiritual ends and hence the possibly disastrous consequences of pursuing one of them at the expense of the others” (du Gay 2008: 351). Indifference is seen as the crucial gesture that can put affective diversity in its place. Public Servants are called to remain imperturbable and unflappable in the face of a plurality of demands, precisely so that they can defend the citizens’ status as equals before the eyes of the law (of the State). They are to acknowledge and celebrate diversity, while refraining from acting directly upon it.

It can be appreciated at this point how the critique put forward by du Gay and others tackles the normativity of neoliberal administration head on. Their views aim at promoting an interruption of the values driving the narratives and practices of affective governmentality, a gesture which can then lead to a moral re-assessment of heterogeneity in society at large. Crucially, such stance is associated by du Gay (2008: 349) with the idea of embodying a sense of ‘loss’ and acceptance:

The bureaucratic ethos is a conservative one. The bureaucratic comportment of the person embodies an acceptance, which no moral zealot really can abide, of the irreconcilable diversity of human goods, and an awareness of the possible costs, moral and otherwise, of pursuing one end to the detriment of another. In this way, the bureaucrat tends to see in every controversial change to existing social arrangements the possibility of important losses as well as the opportunity for certain gains.

These insights resonate with a Butlerian understanding of the ‘psychic life of power’ in State administration, and the ‘precarious lives’ Public Servants are called to respond to (Eagan 2008). Despite his emphasis on bureaucratic rationality, Du Gay coincides broadly with Butler in his contention that the desire to identify with an ethics of integrity, which is the key to unlock alternative normative frameworks to neoliberal power, can only be realized through the work of the body. For du Gay Public Servant experience is conceived as an embodied labour of acceptance, and indeed grief, for the ‘costs’ and ‘losses’ of serving indifferently, and thus impartially, a diversity of others. Rather than an active effort of entrepreneurial self-improvement in responding to and even propelling the diversification of customer-citizen demands, Public Service is seen by

du Gay as a passive persistence on the values of fairness, and indeed diversity, as abstract ideals.

Yet far from being detached from such abstractions, the body is here materially engaged, as such passivity can only be accomplished through ‘dis-affectation’ or the inhibition of Public Servant affect. In this sense, the realization of diversity in Public Service is conceived as taking place precisely at the level of bureaucratic embodiment. Through their impartial unresponsiveness, Public Servants are called to embody the abstract ‘loss’ of the individual opportunity demanded by citizens-consumers, and thus to embody heterogeneity as an ethical discourse implemented and enforced by the State. There is a form of affective stoicism at stake here, insofar as the cautious, prudent body of the Public Servant is said to be the decisive means through which to ensure the endurance of diversity as a driving (abstract) value in society (du Gay 2005, 2008). In Stivers’ words (1994: 368), it is about the Public Servant as a body that ‘listens’ in attentive yet restrained fashion, so that in turn a space is opened for a diversity of citizens to “listen to one another and solve disputes”. Following Butler’s psychoanalytic insights (McIvor 2012), this could perhaps be understood more deeply in terms of an identification with ‘mourning’, a process where affect is not immediately mastered by the ‘engine’ of entrepreneurial de-subjectivation but rather invested in psychically elaborating the moment of loss itself, and into organizational failure or other forms of ‘death’.

From this standpoint, du Gay’s idea of a ‘Public Servant without affection’ could be appreciated as a form of partial sacrifice, and as the embodiment that is necessary for a sense of bureaucratic responsibility to be elevated as an ethics. Even though such ‘dis-affected’ approach would appear to run against Butler’s fundamental convictions about the deep relational bonds underlying Public Servant subjectivity and Public Policy, and thus about the need for compassion as the driving force behind an ‘affective politics’ in Public Service (see Butler 1997; Fotaki et al. 2017), du Gay’s proposal demonstrates an affinity with Butler’s insights on the normative constitution of the body. This does not downplay the divergence between these two scholars, particularly in terms of the former’s endorsement of Weberian formalistic rationality. Rather, it emphasizes a shared Foucauldian reading of the way in which embodied practice can

both reproduce and resist or ‘undo’ the normative frameworks that hold power contingently in place. This is expressed by du Gay’s implicit call to reconquer the body through ‘dis-affection’, so that the neoliberal norm that favours the market privileges of the ‘consumer’, instead of embracing and enforcing the ‘diversities of the social Other’, can be disrupted.

Following du Gay (2008), it is the ‘death’ of masculinized managerial knowledge, hegemonically positioned and taken for granted as the naturalized norm of everyday Public Service, that can open a space for re-assessing and re-constructing the neoliberal discourses that frame and propel Public Servant subjectivity in our time. This is what ‘indifference’ means: a psyche devoid of knowledge on inter-subjective effectiveness, emptied of normatively constructed perceptions of ‘consumer emotion’. Conversely, we conclude, this implies a trust in the desire of Public Servants to construct an organizational ‘know-how’, based on an identification with relative ignorance, that can respond to concrete difference. As feminist administration scholars McGinn and Patterson point out, ignorance—the ‘death’ of always-already patriarchal knowledge under neoliberalism—would be the starting point for a truly critical analysis of affective labour in Public Service:

How can we claim to serve the public interest, when we know so little about the gendered processes that organize and constitute the public itself? By basing our claims upon bodies of knowledge that leave out women, let alone sophisticated appreciations of gender, how can we say that this knowledge is anything other than grossly inaccurate? (McGinn and Patterson 2005: 941; see also Fotaki and Harding 2013)

Second Step: On ‘Consolatory’ Critiques and the ‘Affected Researcher’

There is a distinct risk, however, in pursuing this line of inquiry over the affects underpinning hegemonic modes of neoliberal governance. It is related to the premise, shared by many post-Structuralist Foucauldian scholars, that there are strong symbolic guarantees for the ‘truthfulness’ of

discourse analysis and its products. This is about having solid trust in the fact that social reality is effectively re-constructed by discursive analysis itself, as an immediate consequence of its operation (Vighi and Feldner 2007). We assume here that this form of trust stems out of the 'critical' desire of the discourse analyst who identifies with alternative discourses and modes of subjectivation/de-subjectivation which differ from the discursivities originally interpreted.

To begin with, following Springer (2012), Foucauldian-inspired readings tend to rely too strongly on what is construed as a sure-fire genealogy of western liberalism. The strict focus on governmentality, for instance, downplays the relation between the local 'micro-physics' of power, which can be accurately and comprehensively mapped out as Penz et al.'s (2017) study shows, and the macro-political dimension of the global economy, which can serve to indicate vastly different modes of living and doing critical research across territories. For Springer (2012: 135), any 'monolithic' conception of neoliberalism fails "to recognize the protean and processual character of space and time" and "neglect internal constitution, local variability, and the role that 'the social' and individual agency play in (re)producing, facilitating, and circulating neoliberalism". Furthermore, and crucially, Foucauldian-inspired readings of neoliberal governance assume too hastily (and too wholeheartedly) that the social is a field in which identities are 'semiotic products', constructible and reconstructible through intricate discursive interplay, at symbolic and practical-technological levels. This of course also involves the analysis of how gender identities are produced, and thus, the understanding of subjectivity as a 're-programmable' discursive position, rather than a material process of embodiment where sexual orientations are worked out in relation to social norms (Foucault 1991).

According to Barnett (2005), such constructionist understanding can be said to present serious shortcomings, even in its previously discussed 'affective' versions, which foreground the insidious everyday embodiment of Public Service (Penz et al. 2017; Street 2012). In this author's view, semiotacist readings mistakenly "assume that subject-formation works through a circular process of recognition and subjection" and treat the social as "a residual effect of hegemonic projects and/or governmental rationalities" (Barnett 2005: 10; see also Barnett et al. 2008). Moreover,

and related to the previously discussed political limitations, Barnett warns us about the way in which these approaches cannot help but to invoke a ubiquitous and universally de-constructible kind of 'neoliberalism', which ends up leading critical scholars into the dead end of what he considers a consolatory effect. The use of the term 'consolation' is highly relevant in this context, because it signals a fundamental ambiguity at the heart of the critique of affective diversity. On the one hand, 'consolation' refers to the sacrificial gesture advocated by du Gay and other critics of 'neoliberal diversity'; the fact that assuage is needed after acknowledging the 'death' of an 'affected' Public Service, in the name of fairness. On the other hand, 'consolation' according to Barnett (2005) refers to the comfort of knowing much too well how to bring about the demise of the 'affective know-how' of neoliberalism through discursive means.

Consequently, the notion of 'consolation' serves to problematize the desire and the ethics of the critical researcher, and thus, to insist more radically on the problem of embodiment in the analysis of affect and identity work. It foregrounds the fact that it is impossible to carry out a critique of affects from a non-affective position like the one adopted by semioticist discourse analysis. This is revealed particularly when critique relies on a praise of bureaucratic 'disaffection', as such position conflates the experience of the Public Servant with that of the critical researcher, ultimately depoliticizing the latter. If 'disaffection' is assumed as an ethical horizon made possible through instituting the discourse of formalistic rationality, against the 'psychic life of neoliberal power', how then can we truly account for affective diversity? How can the affects of Public Servant identity work be 'unearthed' if our analysis over-identifies with the singular affect of 'consolation'?

In line with other scholars such as Žižek (2013) and Vighi and Feldner (2007), Barnett proposes that the difficulty lies in the disembodied premises of Foucauldian discourse analysis itself as it offers us "plentiful opportunities for unveiling the real workings of hegemonic ideologies in a characteristic gesture of revelation". This, Barnett shrewdly argues, inevitably leads to a problematic ethical and intellectual consequence, namely, the alignment of "our own professional roles with the activities of various actors 'out there', who are always framed as engaging in resistance or contestation" (Barnett 2005: 10). 'Consolation', understood in these

terms, can be located, for example, in du Gay's conviction that the apparently 'soulless, uncaring pen-pusher, un-entrepreneurial, document automata' attitude is actually an indication of a robust ethical commitment towards democracy and equality. For du Gay, this can be found on an everyday basis at the bureaucratic workplace, in Public Servants' 'admirable antipathy' towards the 'enthusiasm' instilled by policy-makers (du Gay 2008: 349). Another example can be found in Fardella's critical study of educational services in Chile (2013: 90), a context where the 'truth' of neoliberal policies for teacher self-improvement practices is said to be realized through resistance by a 'silent majority' of teachers who heroically seek to 'everyday re-invent the school' by operating 'behind structures, regulations and reforms'.

Following Binkley (2011: 85) it can be argued that these examples, among many others, illustrate how 'critical' research can often make the mistake of bridging too hastily the gap between the 'macro' analysis of policy regimes and the 'micro' analysis where 'the thoughts of subjects on the government of themselves' are voiced. Yet the consequences are not merely analytical, concerning the 'truth' of neoliberal power, the but also ethical, concerning the body—particularly, the relation between research and embodiment. What is at stake here is the forceful confirmation of the researcher's deciphering potency and moral disposition to re-construct reality—in one word, the 'consolation' of interpretive anxieties about her own 'critical' power—in detriment of gaining some further insight into the enmeshment of bodies, technologies, practices, discourses, identities, and economies in the context of bureaucratic work (see McSwite 2001). Hence, the central matter is the *machismo* at the heart of critical research on organizing and organizations, hidden in the very gesture of liberating the discourse of diversity from its symbolic and affective ties with neoliberal subjectivity (Wilkins 2012). Ultimately, this reflects a case of theoretical conservatism—in this case, of a Foucauldian brand—where validity is found only before the masculine gaze of (social) science (King 2004). Such a gaze is problematic as it seeks to annul political difference and desire as a bodily affect that constitutes but also exceeds any given reality (Wozniak 2010); as Vighi and Feldner (2007: 163) point out:

What [Foucault] “overlooked” was the gap between the discursive space and the positive content that fills it out ... Foucault’s failure to distinguish between the positivity of a given discursive formation and the negativity of its generative principle which cannot appear among the elements of that formation, renders social reality ‘realtight’, as Joan Copjec aptly puts it; it removes the crucial question of desire, thereby making paradigm change fundamentally inexplicable.

Vighi and Feldner’s remarks help us realize in a nutshell the dire consequences of adopting a ‘consolatory’ stance in the efforts to criticize affective governmentality under neoliberalism. The dilemma is the ‘gap’; the distance between ‘macro’ and ‘micro’, which is also the tension between discursive frameworks and the bodies who speak them in their ‘own terms’. As Aleman (2016) puts it, it is about the difference between subjectivation/de-subjectivation and the experience of being ‘subject’. This entails a real danger, of an ethical kind. It concerns the assumption of a ‘realtight’ social plane, where diversity (or lack thereof) is not seen as emerging painfully out of political or existential difference but rather as a consensus over symbolic and practical frontiers (that are always deemed re-institutable).

As Žižek denounces, such gesture reduces the critique of affective diversity to the ‘strange ahistorical flavour ... [of the] endless performative games of an eternal present’ (Žižek 2013: 31). Legitimacy is gained but a radical edge is lost, and resistance to the not-so-hidden hegemonic masculine assumptions behind the entrepreneurial values of neoliberal Public Service proves to be ultimately feeble. The cause seems to be the critical researchers’ rejection of their own affectivity, or as Copjec would perhaps put it in Lacanian psychoanalytic terms, of the ‘real’ beyond their ‘realtight’ aspirations (see also Wozniak 2010). Their anxious need to find ‘phallic’ interpretive guarantees in a ‘masculine Other’ as the ‘master of discourse’ blinds them from the distinction between the emotional workings of neoliberal narratives and the affects in ‘neoliberalized bodies’, among which their own cannot be excluded. These bodies carry the libidinal marks of particular experiences of being sexed in uniquely and diverse ways within neoliberal organization(s) locally (Fotaki and Harding 2013). Thus, they animate but at the same time resist discursivity as a universal

social reality; simply put, in Lacan's terms, they are more 'real' than reality itself. As it has been argued above, an understanding of this 'real' is lost if affective experience is associated exclusively with 'heroic resisters', which are said to incarnate 'sacrificial' values of indifference. The 'consolation' they bring serves to detach us from the untameable 'real' of affect and the feminist subversiveness it supports (Fotaki 2013; Fotaki and Harding 2013).

The lesson is that we cannot assume embodied Public Servant experience "as the source of any super ordinarily real or objective referent for practical or moral truth" (McSwite 2001). Certainly, as Amigot and Pujal (2009) argue, this does not mean that the significant contributions to power and gender studies by Foucault and others should be disregarded; it only means that their inner 'consolatory affectations' should be made visible and worked out committedly. In this sense, interpreting what affective diversity requires precisely to take serious responsibility for one's own embodiment of affective diversity. This begins by acknowledging the divergence between the body of the interpreter and the bodies s/he desires to interpret.

The final section that follows will discuss the challenge of moving towards what could be called an 'inconsolable' approach to affective diversity in Public Service, emphasizing, from a Lacanian standpoint, the fundamental role that the desire of the critical researcher plays in the interpretation of Public Servant identity work.

Towards an 'Inconsolable' Approach to Affective Diversity

How to move towards an 'inconsolable' understanding of affective diversity in the context of neoliberal Public Service organization, and beyond? How to adopt, at least partially and temporarily, a position from which the relentless 'affective governmentality' can not only be read 'truthfully' and 'accurately' as the 'emotional engine' that powers entrepreneurial practices but also interpreted more radically as the effect of 'desiring to know' how neoliberalism works?

This chapter has sought to indicate that this ‘desire to know’ is not just a discursive habitus that has been ‘subjectified’ into Public Servant experience, but that it is also the driving force behind attempts at doing critical research on Public Service (such as this chapter you are now reading). As contemporary studies on academic management propose, both these subjects—Public Servants and critical researchers—inhabit the same neoliberal ‘affective governmentality’, and they both unable to the desire to find a secure place within its discursive workings, from which to understand how to operate it. Therefore, it is imperative for the critical researcher to disentangle herself from any ‘consoled affectations’ during this process of knowing, and to strive not only to map out the discursive framework of neoliberal diversity but also to enact, with her own body, and in reflexive fashion, affects that diverge from neoliberal affects. This implies renouncing the male authoritative gaze of scientific validity studies and instead to risk a queering of theory-making and research practice in organization studies, especially those interested in affect, embodiment and diversity (Pullen et al. 2016; Parker 2001, 2016; Rumens et al. 2018). Yet how exactly to move towards the ‘inconsolable’?

First, it is important to consider—or indeed stumble upon—the irresolvable tensions of subjectivity, culture, and economy within neoliberalism. Essentially, this implies assuming, in a profound way, the fact that neoliberalism has expanded globally and at the same time insidiously into everyday life and local culture, to the point of becoming the generalized horizon of subjectivity, as Aleman has proposed (2016). Consequently, it is crucial to acknowledge how ‘biopolitical’ interpretations of discourses on the body and its affects cannot be freed from the ‘body of discourse’, that is, the material gravity and the lingering effects of its own lived articulation *within* neoliberalized life (Gago 2017).

In this regard, Lacanian scholar O.C. McSwite does an excellent job of reminding us about a basic issue of perspective we must deal with when studying State administration. We need to take “the body seriously as a dimension of – even a foundation for – discourse”, McSwite argues (2001: 243), but we must do this in a way that assumes the body is “already being taken serious, indeed too seriously ... as a reified thing”,

ultimately serving “as an objective boundary for thought itself”. Both Aleman and McSwite coincide in conceptualizing such reification of discourse as an instance of what Lacan called the ‘discourse of the university’, meaning the ‘scientific-bureaucratic’ hegemonization of social bonds (see Lacan 2007). In this case, the decisive move is to accept that in our times both the bureaucracy of State administration and science as ‘academic knowledge-making’ have been completely colonized by neoliberal logics, resulting in the total and irrevocable amalgamation between neoliberalism and discursivity itself (Aleman 2016). This leads to a truly ‘inconsolable’ realization: namely, that discourse and particularly the action of deciphering it has turned into a kind of quicksand. If all discourse is now neoliberal discourse then the more we persist on stirring it to escape from it, the more we bury ourselves in its structures.

Perhaps these insights become most evident, and unsettling, when one considers that embodied affect has been often equated to the psychological idea of ‘emotion’ in organization studies and how neoliberalism as an organizational project has become a matter of ‘emotion management’ (Binkley 2011; Fotaki and Kenny 2014). A focus on the ‘emotional’ processes underpinning neoliberal State administration can lead us to believe that Public Servants can become agents of radical change from within, if they learn to recognize the specific emotions their served citizens and themselves have been set to feel. The ability to take emotional experiences seriously through its careful analysis could lead Public Servants to think and feel ‘outside’ the psychodynamics and ‘affective governmentalities’ of neoliberalism, so that the latter could eventually be surpassed. Yet, as McSwite warns (2001), neoliberal discourse has already taken the body ‘too seriously’: social scientists have already translated criticism into self-improvement, life coaching, and emotional intelligence tools for Public Servants to use, so that they take the failures and excesses of neoliberalism into their own hands (Binkley 2011).

While the focus on ‘emotions’ make neoliberalism analysable, it also renders it ‘too analysable’, reducing the concept of affect and its complex and diversified embodiment to a reified piece of discourse. This is what Lacan foresaw early on, in the face of protests seeking to overthrow the scientific-administrative order of the public university: ‘you think because

you look beyond the university you are “outside”? When you leave here you continue to speak, consequently you continue to be inside’ (Lacan 2007). The challenge is to insist, quite inconsolably, in the body as the partially unanalysable, negative foundation of discourse; to persist in intrusively incorporating our own affect to the analysis of discourse, rather than reducing affect to a catalogue of emotions, or any other map of discursive formations. Rather than delving into the depths of the ‘discourse of the body’ in our neoliberal times, we need to carry the weight of the ‘body of discourse’, which of course, is none other than the weight of our own neoliberal body (see Gago 2017).

Second, in response to the above, it is important to find ways to actively disrupt our connection with discourse while still engaging with its analysis for the purposes of interpreting neoliberal affects. In concrete terms, as argued previously, we find here a challenge in terms of enacting diversity in the embodiment of critical research: we need to ‘make do’ differently with the research data, accounting for both the neoliberal colonization of our interpretive frameworks and the unbridgeable, often overwhelming difference between our desire and the desire of the subjects we interpret, during the act of interpretation itself (Lapping 2013). The ‘real’ of affect is at stake here, in its excessive dimension, which haunts our certainties about the affects we perceive and conceptualize in the world ‘out there’. As Lapping points out (2013), this concerns above all the generation of “moments of disruption to disciplinary or methodological identities” that can pierce the wall of ‘countertransference’, in post-Freudian terms: we need to rebuke the assumption that the researcher-analyst’s reflexivity can help her locate and characterize the emotions of interpreted subjects more accurately and truthfully. In Lapping’s view, this requires bringing the most elemental aspect of interpretation to the fore, the fact that interpretation is not a solid outcome, but rather an action, and that this action, like all other actions, is sustained by powerful unconscious, affective attachments. These ‘active attachments’ are to be embraced and wielded as tools by the researcher-analyst in the field, in a way that affirms affective diversity while dissolving fixed identities. In Lapping’s words (2013: 384):

what is at stake in research is the attempt to keep my own desire in flow, to avoid the sedimentation of desire into a claim to know. To do this it may sometimes be necessary to stop the continual undoing, to pause and let the words of the other be.

This resonates with Parker's (1994) idea of a 'discursive complex' (1994) in relation to knowledges about the psychic realm. Following Parker, subjectivity under western neoliberalism is made up of narratives and signifiers designating psychological processes and 'affective intensities', configuring a hegemonic cultural status for the psy-disciplines. The body is thus assumed as always-already 'excessively discursive', and thus, as prone to inquire into discursivity from a subject position that has been brought up to believe in (and enjoy) the reality of 'psychic and affective depths'. These insights prove decisive for critical researchers, as they allow appreciating discourse not only as a tool to analyse the social but also as the problem of the social itself, particularly, the social bonds that make research efforts possible. They help us realize that in order to become 'critical', researchers must constantly engage in disciplinary reflexivity, accounting for the (usually patriarchal) symbolic guarantees that render their data interpretable. There are several resonances between this task and the craft of ethnography, as seen from feminist and decolonial standpoints. In ethnographic work, the affectivity of the researcher is left 'in the wild', to its own devices, and embraced in its subversive and creative power (Lahn 2018; Radcliffe and Webb 2015; Kenny and Gilmore 2014). The point is to be willing to forego our own consolatory enjoyment of discursive mastery, particularly in terms of our 'counter-transferential' sensitivity to the 'psychic lives of power', while trusting in our embodied difference with others as a productive instance on the field (Kenny and Gilmore 2014).

Third and finally, rather than striving to incarnate a solid ethical position regarding affective diversity in organizations, we must, instead, strive to diversify our affective investments among objects of knowledge, up to the point of re-organizing the subjectivity of the researcher into a pure demand to know (Lapping 2013). In other words, we must learn to know how not to know what diversity is, relying on the differences between others and ourselves to serve as indications of how our experience is

composed of a confusing multitude of affectations. This is important because it allows appreciating the ethics of diversity and gender no longer in its epistemological status, in terms of ‘knowing diversity well’, but instead, in its ontological status, in terms of keeping the desire to know unsatisfied and different, so that it can emerge anew every day. Here, it is the very identity of the researcher and the research project which gets deconstructed, in line with feminist and queer approaches to the study of organization, which advocate for a social reading of affect, beyond individuality (Fotaki et al. 2017). From this standpoint, affect is conceptualized specifically as a political tension between researcher and researched subjects, and concretely as a clash between bodies, where one animates and organizes the other, in search for answers (Pullen and Rhodes 2015).

These repeated processes lead to incomplete truths and represent what Fotaki and Harding have called a ‘hysterical academy’, meaning an intellectual endeavour marked by the refusal to know how to know. As these authors propose, ‘hysterical’ researchers express a commitment to “forego certainty, abjure closure, and rather live and work with a mosaic of contradictory, complementary, clashing or incomplete conclusions” (Fotaki and Harding 2013: 167). And as Wozniak points out (2010), they also strive to conjure the gaze of the Other of discourse in a contradictory, provocative fashion, recognizing its symbolic efficacy at the organizational level, but at the same time rejecting and surpassing it. In this sense, as Street realized while working ethnographically (2012), the real question is not to figure out to what extent the State’s authoritative gaze can be directed differently to guide re-organization efforts. It is rather about whether those who lend their bodies to make sense of the constant organization of State administration can find different ways to make themselves seen diversely by others.

Ultimately, the task is knowing how to dethrone the Other of academic research, which, as we know, coincides with the Other of organized Public Service (see Stavrakakis 2008). It is about denying its ability to see where and how diversity is formed, as such capacity is set to bring ‘consolation’ to our anxieties about the position we occupy; it allows us to ‘know’ where we are supposed to be seen standing as ‘critical researchers’. Thus, conversely, it is about learning to enjoy the ‘inconsolable’ body of

Public Service knowledge; a body blinded by the ‘lights’ of neoliberalism, which simply cannot be cured of its healthy affectation.

By the time of writing, several student, civil and worker movements across the globe have begun mobilizing against patriarchal, abusive regimes in the contexts of State administration, higher education, and domestic life more generally (Berengere 2017; McGowan 2018). Hundreds of thousands of protesters—most of them of non-male gender—have taken over the streets of capital cities, invoking signifiers of ‘feminism’, ‘equality’, and of course ‘diversity’, to demonstrate their discontent and signal towards alternatives. In the case of Chile, where the author of this chapter lives and works, protesting young women have actively articulated their demands for inclusion and social justice with a variety of existing social struggles against the segregation, violence, and individualism brought about by the total neoliberal overhauling of Public Services over the past 40 years. Having been attuned to the subtleties of neoliberal ‘affective governmentality’ from an early age, these bodies have begun assembling to express their disagreement with the discourses and practices that seek to reduce them to uniformed, masculine-shaped consumption vessels *vis-à-vis* the neoliberal State. It is precisely before their demand that both Public Servants and critical researchers must risk adopting an ‘inconsolable’ stance, as their/our response will play a decisive role in re-shaping of normative frameworks in the aftermath of the protests. Instead of endorsing the consoling yet problematic image of demonstrators in search of conquering a ‘non-neoliberal reality’ they/we should perhaps invest in rehearsing a more ‘hysterical’ and solidary enunciation towards our neighbours at the bureaucratic/academic workplace:

*I can see clearly how this place has made you different
and how this difference has been forced on you, rather violently
yet I can't really tell where feminist affect begins or ends
or to what extent my body has lend itself
to serve the discourse of service...
As long as we never fully know
(but still want to know)
we will be free to grieve and imagine together.
While we inhabit the same words,
our bodies can travel different worlds...*

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13

Reverie as Reflexivity

Darren T. Baker

Introduction

Although diversity categories, such as race, gender, and sexuality, are important to understand relationships and power inequities in the research process, they simultaneously run the risk of constraining our understanding of others. Psychosocial scholars, for instance, have criticised categories for their broadness and, thus, tendency to detract researchers from the complex ways in which subjectivities are accomplished over space and time (Gill 1998; Hollway 2008a). In my research project on men and women in banking and finance, I attempted to draw on aspects of the psychoanalytical principles of *Reverie* by Wilfred Bion (1962) to develop an approach more attune to affect in the provision of reflexivity. Rather than confining my analysis of the relationship between

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the researcher and participant to broad categories, I was interested in using reverie as a way to move beyond them. In other words, I wanted to use affect to explore how one could use their own subjectivity as an instrument to begin to 'know' the research participant.

Reverie is a dream-like or thoughtful state in which the researcher recognises their own emotions from the past and present, whilst remaining thoughtful of how they reflect unfolding relational forms of unconscious dialogue between themselves and the participant. Reverie offers hope for scholars who wish to move beyond categories to understand, for instance: how affinities are accomplished between oneself and others; how affects shape and direct unconsciously a dialogue; and, finally, how it can alert researchers to the potential presence of deeper dynamics and patterns in the accounts given by participants. This includes recognition of the positionality of the researcher and researched, according to categories, such as gender, race, class, and sexuality. However, it also accepts how, even when there appears to be little commonality, affinities, understanding, and empathy can be accomplished in the research process between two very different subjects. This was important in my case as a young, gay man from a working-class background, who was interviewing men and women in privileged and powerful positions within multi-national accounting and banking firms, as part of his doctoral research.

The chapter will, firstly, explore some of the criticisms raised by psychosocial scholars with regard to how reflectivity has broadly been carried out by researchers. The chapter then explores the ideas behind reverie and the potential it presents in generating deeper affective material during an interview encounter. Secondly, the chapter traces some example reveries to bring to life how it may be employed as a tool during a dialogue, and how this may help scholars to begin 'to know' a research participant. This chapter is by no means exhaustive but reflects, instead, one's pragmatic explorations into a psychoanalytically inspired research method, which begins to redress *some* of the key challenges faced by qualitative researchers, particularly around generating richer and more meaningful interview data beyond the confines of diversity categories.

Introducing *Reverie*

Feminist scholars have a long tradition of challenging power and demanding that the unseen and silenced are rendered 'visible' and 'heard' (Ryan-Flood and Gill 2010). They have, in particular, criticised the positivist paradigm and use of quantitative methods in research, as they view the social world as static and accessible only to researchers, providing they remain detached, neutral, and objective during the collection and interpretation of interview data (Code 1993; Johnston 2010; Oakley 1981; Reinharz 1979). Feminist scholars instead take something of a diametrically opposed, constructivist position, which views the social world as multiple, dynamic, and discursively constructed (Maynard 1995). One important tool offered by feminist scholars to challenge power inequities in the research process is *reflexivity*. This recognises how the positionality of the researcher based on, for instance, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or class can have implications on the collection and interpretation of data (Letherby 2003; Parr 1998; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). Reflexivity aims, therefore, to establish asymmetric power relationships between the researcher and participant during an interview encounter, and in the representation of the participant in their writings (Grenz 2005; Harding and Norberg 2005; Wolf 1996).

Psychosocial scholars have been, however, critical of the ways in which reflexivity has broadly been carried out by other researchers. They argue, for instance, that whilst scholars ritually incant broad categories such as 'gender' or 'ethnicity' in attempting reflexivity, they often fall short of contemplating the complexity and significance of these categories, and their positions as researchers (Gill 1998). Scholars often fall back on homogenising explanations when attempting to practice reflexivity during different stages of the research process, which evade the fragmentary nature of subjecthood as theorised by psychosocial scholars (Hollway and Jefferson 2000a). Categories ought to be disrupted, as Butler argues, "if one 'is' a woman, that is surely not all one is" (Butler 1990, p. 3); one's identity also intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities that are discursively constituted and reconstituted over time and space (ibid.). Thus, Butler is here disrupting the notion of 'gender',

for instance, as a common signifier that one can fully assume and perform. Psychosocial scholars take the view that identity is not static but changeable as a result of the relations, structures, and discourses that impress upon us, which are, in turn, unconsciously *internalised* and *externalised* by the individual. Categories alone, therefore, only go so far in helping us to understand others and our relationship to them. In her empirical study of domestic lesbian spaces, for instance, Johnston (2010) also problematises the use of categories and argues that, despite being acknowledged as ‘an insider’, as a ‘lesbian’ by her research participants, she had very different understandings of what it meant to be a ‘lesbian’ in comparison to her participants with regard to apparel, education, background, and age.

Psychosocial scholars argue that in order to conduct reflexivity in a more meaningful way, one must pay close attention to the *actual* establishment of relationships. Scholars ought to focus on how, for instance, relationships register psychically and whether this can be used as an instrument of ‘knowing’ the other. This contrasts to more proscriptive, ‘question-and-answer’ interview forms typically carried out by qualitative researchers, which are criticised by psychosocial scholars for setting the tone of who is in charge, and what can or cannot be said in an interview; this works overall to suppress the voice of the participant. Moreover, such approaches to interviewing also assume that the questions and words of the interviewer can be understood in exactly the same way by each of the participants (Hollway and Jefferson 2000b, 2008). Psychosocial scholars are, instead, more concerned with conducting interviews that provide maximum scope for participants to raise pertinent issues and challenges, which they argue enables them to identify contradictions and defensive positions in talk, and how these are affectively bound (Walkerline 2007). Psychosocial scholars, therefore, advocate the application of aspects of psychoanalysis as it can have radical ontological and epistemological implications to our understanding of how subjectivities are constructed (Hollway 2008b).

In my research project on men and women in banking and finance, I drew on principles from psychoanalytical epistemology to develop an approach more attune to affect in the provision of reflexivity. In particular, I was interested in exploring the idea that one could use their own

subjectivity as an instrument to begin ‘to know’ the research participants. In order to do this, I drew on aspects of the theory of *Reverie* by Wilfred Bion to frame and practice reflexivity during all stages of the project. Reverie is a dream, thought, or fanciful musing. Bion (1962), extending the ideas of the relational psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, explains that when a baby feels overwhelmed, perhaps from hunger or fear, they may project this ‘material’, or anxiety, onto the parent and this impacts their thoughts and feelings. Reverie refers to the capacity of the parent ‘to sense’ and ‘make sense’ of the experiences of their baby, and provide the required comfort. When the parent is able to ‘contain’ the projection, the baby learns how experiences can be thought about and tolerated. However, if the parent fails to become the ‘container’ for their baby, perhaps as a result of their own anxiety, they may project these sensations back out again, as countertransferences.

Although Bion uses reverie to refer specifically to early childhood development, the idea has been transferred and applied with adults, most notably by Ogden (1997a, b) within the clinical setting. Ogden (1997b, p. 107) usefully conceptualises reverie as the spaces “between the [musical] notes of the spoken words constituting the analytic dialogue”. An ‘analytic third’ or third subjectivity is asymmetrically constructed and experienced consciously and unconsciously between the analyst and analysand. In order to feel these moments, the analyst must lose oneself in a dream-like state in which memory and desire are abandoned. The analyst must pay attention to the total situation as a way to move beyond words, expressions, and micro-movements, and engage with feeling states including, for instance, ruminations, fantasies, bodily sensations, perceptions, tunes, and phrases that run through their mind. Following the analytical encounter, Ogden describes the most ‘alive’ moments as a way of holding onto the reverie before it is claimed back into the unconscious. In sum, whilst the analyst is in a state of reverie, they are receptive to the emotional communication of a dialogue by being in touch with their inner self, for instance, their own emotions, experiences, phantasies, and other unconscious material, which align with those of the patient (Grotstein 2007, p. 307).

However, the application of psychoanalysis outside of the clinical setting has often been met with criticism (Frosh 2010; Frosh and Baraitser

2008). One of the central criticisms raised concerns the idea that psychoanalysis has a tendency to individualise and pathologise individuals, potentially positioning researchers as the ‘top-down’ expert in relation to participants (Frosh and Baraitser 2008; Kvale 2003). However, the approach I employed reflected more of a psychoanalytical ‘sensibility’ in which I sought to appropriate methodological and epistemological aspects of psychoanalysis, as a way to begin to interpret and understand the participant holistically within their context rather than attempting to ‘diagnose’ or provide therapy. In other words, I was interested in understanding empathically how one is shaped, reshaped, and directed sensually, psychically, and discursively within an organisation. With regard to reverie, therefore, although its application by Ogden occurred in the clinical setting, this does not mean that aspects of the theory could not be used to build a richer picture of the lives of participants, without positioning the researcher as omnipotent (Hollway 2011b, 2012, 2016). The application of reverie by scholars raises a number of important questions, for instance: How is one able to access their own ‘sense of self’ as a way of understanding reverie? How can this be used as a way to mediate one’s understanding of the participant? What is the significance of these experiences to the psychic and biographical life of the researcher? Do reveries have any significance or are they just ‘subjective’ understandings of the research encounter?

I sought to address these questions in three ways. Firstly, I engaged with a multi-dimensional understanding of reverie, allowing it, as Hollway (2012) suggests, to acquire a penumbra of meanings as a way to avoid specifically defining it. Hollway (2010, 2011a, 2012) attempted ‘to fill up’ the meaning of reverie through engaging with a number of approaches, such as psychoanalytical observations, supervision with a psychoanalyst, and group-interpretations of data. One approach presented by Hollway (2012) involved addressing reflexive questions at the end of interviews, for instance, asking oneself ‘what one’s hopes and fears were for the participant?’ This prompted me to the importance of reflexive field notes made during and subsequent to an interview, as a way to reflect on the affective material generated during an encounter. When I did not take field notes, due to a lack of time, I would instead listen back to the audio recording of the interview as a way to reconstruct the affective

encounter established with the participant, in a similar way to Hollway (2012). This approach was an important way for me to keep the meaning of the affective data ‘alive’ (Hollway and Jefferson 2000b).

Secondly, during the course of the interview, I attempted to access reveries by relaxing and allowing, as Ogden recommends, for the words of the participant to wash over me. In this ‘meditative’ state, I was able to pay attention to the whole interview rather than just what the participant said. This does not contradict active listening on behalf of the researcher but, instead, extends or goes beyond it by attempting to keep as much as possible in frame during an encounter. I consider this to have two main features. Firstly, relaxing rather than anxiously waiting on the edge of one’s seat, worryingly hanging onto every syllable uttered by the participant. This is likely to prompt the researcher into a defensive position, making perhaps conversations shorter and affectively shallow. For instance, if one is nervous, there is a real risk of rushing through the interview guide, missing opportunities to ask important probing questions, or evading emotional or harsher moments emerging during the course of an encounter. This was particularly important in my case as I was interviewing quite senior men and women, with very little time, who were often anxious themselves due, for instance, to work time-constraints. Secondly, whilst remaining attentive to what is uttered by the participant, reverie widens the scope of reflexivity as a way to become cognizant of intersubjective dynamics. This means drawing on other important but regularly sidelined aspects of interaction, such as bodily movements, the psychic register of the researcher, pain, silences, and humour. My position is that during an encounter, sense making is evoked not just from what is verbally relayed on by the participant but also from multiple disavowed cues. Therefore, over-focusing on the individual ‘words’ of the participant risks losing sense of what is *actually* being communicated by the participant. Bion (1962) describes reverie as the analyst casting “a beam of intense darkness”; Grotstein (2007) explains, by drawing on the analogy of night time vision, that during reverie the analyst or researcher is forced to view an object by looking to their dimly lit edges in order to understand what one is gazing at. In this sense, understanding the other involves taking note of the intricate but often ignored aspects of an encounter, as a way of bringing the full object into ‘light’.

Immediately following an interview, I found the recommendations by Holmes (2012) particularly fruitful in helping to formulate questions to pose myself based on my experience of reverie: Was there any 'harshness' to the response of the participant? Did the participant seem troubled by the question(s)? Did they attempt to deflect or even dismiss the question posed? What were the bodily states of the participant? How did bodily adjustments made by the participant mirror what they said, for instance, how did they move when giving an account? What were the perceptions, feeling states and bodily responses of the researcher at particular moments of the interview? How did the nature of the researcher's words reflect this? I was also interested in the idea of the 'container-contained' by Bion to understand whether I was able to *contain* the projections of the participant and respond in a meaningful way (Hollway and Jefferson 2000a) rather than, for instance, reassuring the participant or diverting the dialogue. Figuratively speaking, this involved stepping outside of oneself, as if one were 'ghostly' observing both oneself and the participant.

Thirdly, I was concerned with how the encounter resonated with my own biography and, in turn, the affective states that were evoked. I wanted to use how I experienced these affects as a way to pinpoint or create affinities with the experiences of the participant (Grotstein 2007). I often found this to be a considerable and emotionally draining task, as it required me to put myself at the service of the interpretation, as a way to understand the interaction (Cartwright 2004). Ogden suggests that these everyday details of the life of the researcher do not indicate inattentiveness or narcissism, but represent symbolic forms given to the inarticulate, and form part of the not yet felt experience of the participant. I approached this by addressing some of the following questions: 'Could that have been me [in that situation]?' 'What feeling states would I arrive at [in that situation]?' 'What memories do these feeling states evoke?' 'What did I feel [in that particular situation]?' 'What connections can, therefore, be made between the participant and I?'

Rather than drawing on broad categories exclusively as a way to approach reflexivity, psychosocial scholars advocate drawing on reverie to develop an approach more attune to affect which works across categories, such as gender, sexuality and class. Moreover, they consider how one can use their own subjectivity as an instrument of knowing one's research

participant. In the next section, I attempt to trace some indicative reveries and how these can give access to a deeper understanding of an encounter between a researcher and participant.

Tracing Example *Reveries*

In the second section, I draw on a number of example reveries from my interviews with 66 executive and non-executive men and women in finance and accounting. I explain how the use of reverie can help researchers, for instance, build affinities between oneself and their participants, understand how affects unconsciously shape the direction of a dialogue, and alert researchers to the potential presence of deeper dynamics and patterns in the accounts given by participants. Overall, I was often surprised by many of my encounters with the relatively privileged executive and non-executive men and women who participated in the study, and who gave accounts of challenging or emotionally imbued past events and relationships. As I often registered these encounters psychically during and after the interviews, reverie as reflexivity became an important tool during all stages of data production, analysis and writing, as a way for me to remain thoughtful and self-aware within this complexity.

I use an extract from an interview with Sharon, a white, married executive in her 50s and mother of two at a global mid-tier accounting firm to highlight how reverie helped build affinities between two different individuals:

- Darren:** Can you describe what success looked like to you when you first entered the profession?
- Sharon (Executive):** When I entered the profession, I did it in the late 70's because getting a job in accounting was quite easy and it seemed like a good qualification to have. Because I just wanted to be an accountant. Success was getting the qualification and then using it to springboard to do something else. I don't think I ever took advantage of that. If I were advising the younger me now I would say, 'okay,

you have got your qualification, what else do you want to do, explore possibilities, go out look around'. But I played it very safe by staying here; I could have done an awful lot better, rather than really thinking, 'well, what else can I do to add value and drive things, which is where I am now and have been for the last quite a few years'. I would advise the 'younger me' to be more strategic, to really think what is out there and really believe that I can go for it, rather than lots of things that I did go and look at but I don't think I did it in the right way. Having a mentor, somebody who is going to help me with that, rather than having to do it all myself.

It was in the last part of the extract where I felt the frustration of Sharon intensify: she was staring downwards at the floor, rotating her left hand whilst giving an account of herself. By the line, "having a mentor, somebody who is going to help me with that, rather than having to do it all myself", Sharon's voice hit a crescendo and she jolted forward, placing her arm abruptly to her side with a deadening silence. It was at this moment that a sense of disbelief suddenly fell upon me: the idea that Sharon had had 'to do everything herself' resonated with a previously unarticulated element of my own psych-biography. I had grown up in a working-class family on a council estate in Liverpool in the UK, and had attended a challenging Catholic secondary school for many years until I joined a state funded grammar ('academically selective') school at 16, after which I fortunately won a place at the University of Oxford. The knowledge and experience of transcending such significant socio-economic boundaries remain etched in my subjectivity, including recollections of: inadequacy, never feeling 'good enough', not being taken seriously in the bourgeois circles that I came to inhabit, likely the result of my 'alien' dialect and accent, and, finally, the economic insecurity and sense that without real support structures, particularly familial ones, I really only had one chance 'to get things right'. Overall, the reverie with Sharon had evoked sadness in me; it had dawned upon me the solitude

and anxiety that I must have endured, drawing on my own psychic capacities as the *only* means by which I could fulfil my desires as a young, disadvantaged man.

The reverie between Sharon and I had two implications. Firstly, it prompted me to consider whether the experience of Sharon could have been me. The contexts and psych-biographies of both subjects are, however, very different. Sharon is a southern English, middle-class ('posh'), privately educated, heterosexual woman in her 50s, and a senior executive in a multi-national corporation ('rich'), who has had legitimate challenges ascending an organisation dominated by men, who are similarly white, southern, heterosexual, and middle class. I am, on the other hand, a gay man, from a working-class family, with a 'Scouse' dialect (a heavily Welsh-Irish inflected dialect), with little financial, material wealth or familial support, who was, at least at that time, somewhat 'desperately' seeking secure academic employment into which I could transition following the completion of my doctoral degree. What I am suggesting here is that the interview had touched upon aspects of my own psych-biography in dialogue with Sharon, and constructed a sense of affinity between two very different subjects, regarding (1) utilising one's own psychic capacities as the only means to fulfil one's desires, rather than drawing on support from family or colleagues (which had apparently impacted the progression of Sharon most) and (2) the anxiety and even loneliness that 'doing things on one's own' can indirectly evoke.

Secondly, I used the reveries shared with Sharon, and indeed with other research participants, to attempt to uncover from their accounts what their central preoccupations could have been. I developed an overarching, 'eclectic' (Baker and Kelan 2018, p. 8) psychosocial approach, which sought to bring together the study of individual unconscious dynamics, and how they resonated with broader social, political, and economic discursive frames. An important part of this involved 'tapering in' to consider the shape of individual cases. To do this, I drew on some of the principles of *Gesalt*, which means 'shape' or 'figure' in German, as a way to conceptualise what were the preoccupations underpinning an individual account. I used Pen Portraits (Hollway and Jefferson 2000c), which are a one page detailed description and analysis of an interview

with each participant, to help me identify the different discursive and emotional investments within an account. For instance, when analysing the interview transcripts, I would raise questions concerning *why* an account trailed off or diverged at particular points, or in response to certain questions, the emotional tenor of accounts, what patterns and contradictions emerged across an entire dialogue, and what this might have indicated about the central preoccupations of an individual. I was often alerted to this through my experiences of reverie with participants. Aspects of reverie indicated, for instance, dynamics such as blame or projection and senses such as melancholia and solitude in many of the accounts given, particularly by women. Drawing on reveries in conjunction with theories, such as Gestalt, thus, alerted me later on in the analysis of accounts to the potential presence of patterns and unconscious dynamics.

The following extract is taken from a transcript with Paul, a non-executive, white gay man in his mid-30s who works in an investment bank in London. The extract shows how empathy can be expressed through containment. I also show, however, how I appear not to hold onto and digest fully the emotional exchange with Paul, as I refrain from sharing a similar story with him. In this stretch of the dialogue, Paul had been talking about his experiences of inequality as a gay man in investment banking. However, the account shifts direction as Paul associates this with a personal challenge concerning how his partner is treated by his parents:

Paul (Non-Executive): I think it's petty but he really takes it personally. My dad will take pictures, because my sister's here at the moment from America, she's over my nephew, and he tags all of the family in these photos apart from my boyfriend

Darren: Right [laughs nervously].

Paul (Non-Executive): There isn't apparently space at my parents so my boyfriend and I are having to stay at a hotel when we go and visit my sister, whereas I feel that, if it was the other way around, they would have made room if it was my sister and her boy-

friend visiting without my nephew, which they did do, a couple of years ago at Christmas. It's just little things like that but my parents just see it as 'oh, it would be more comfortable for you to be at the hotel' and I'm like 'I don't wanna stay at a hotel'.

Darren: I'd rather not spend the money [laughs].

Paul (Non-Executive): 'So I was like, so the fact that there's no space at the house for us to stay, are you gonna pay for the hotel?' No [laughs].

Darren: [laughs].

Paul (Non-Executive): I found that a bit cheeky but that's about it really, but otherwise they're very fair people.

Darren: It's always hard when you realise your parents aren't quite [pause] the people you thought they were.

It is important to note here that Paul was something an acquaintance of mine, who I had met on a few occasions at events for LGBT professional bankers in London. I had not realised that I would be talking to him before he entered the interview room; I had, in other words, forgotten him, as we had not seen one another for a number of years. Despite the fact that he was an acquaintance, I was surprised that he was open with me concerning a perceived homophobic issue with his parents. This is not to say that other participants had not been candid about their own, often difficult, experiences working within the banking sector. However, it was quite rare that participants opened up about personal relationships outside of the workplace.

In the container-contained theory by Bion, when one is able to digest and contain painful recollections then this may help reassure the other person that their emotions are understandable. In the extract, I appear to contain Paul's hurt as I recognise in my final response how it must be 'hard' for him to contend with a situation where his parents treat him and his partner differently compared to his straight sister and partner. However, it is arguable whether I was able to hold onto the emotion in a way that would have allowed me to offer 'meaningful' comfort to Paul

(Hollway and Jefferson 2000a); I had recalled in this moment of the interview my own challenging experiences of being treated differently by my parents, as of my sexuality. I was simultaneously refraining from sharing a personal story with him that I felt would have reflected a greater form of empathy for his experience. However, I remember feeling that if I had opened up, I would have become emotional and this may not have been 'appropriate' for an interview context, particularly one in a corporate environment. It is, therefore, possible that I was, in part, defending myself from the discomfort of a similar situation by refraining from telling this story to Paul in the interview context. This shaped the dialogue between Paul and I as, rather than empathically recounting this story, I move onto the next question in the interview agenda.

Another example of a reverie that I experienced emerged in dialogue with Judy, a white, executive in her 50s, in an international investment bank:

Darren: Do you think it matters how you present yourself as a man or a woman in the workplace?

Judy: Not quite sure I understand the question.

Darren: Do you think it matters how you present yourself as a man or a woman in the workplace?

Judy: Do you mean generally, as a person, does it matter how you present yourself?

Darren: I'm asking here about men and women—so do you think it matters how you present yourself as a man or a woman in the workplace? It's not a trick question.

Judy: No, I'm not trying to be tricky, I'm actually trying to work out what you're actually asking; are you saying does your personal presentation matter whether you're a man or a woman? Is one question. So I'm not quite sure what you're asking.

Darren: There are a number of ways that people have answered this question, so there's no right way... you obviously mentioned one aspect there, so I think there's no one way to answer the question—it's whether you think who would address that question...

Judy: I think it matters how you present yourself full stop...

I have chosen this extract as I felt impacted by the interaction with Judy relative to the other interviews I had conducted. However, in line with psychoanalytical ideas, I wanted to use the affects I felt as a tool for understanding the dynamics between Judy and I, rather than letting them go through repression. I felt uncomfortable during this stretch of the dialogue as I recall, in particular, a feeling of *shame*, as if my intelligence was under attack by Judy. I noted this sense of 'shame' and contemplated afterwards why I had felt this way. One association I made concerned my experience of working in highly individualistic and aggressive corporate environments prior to entering the academe. I associated this, in particular, with a woman manager with whom I had worked as a new, graduate hire, whose constant questioning over a two-week period at the start of a new project had significantly impacted my confidence to the extent that I 'traumatically' resigned from the project in floods of tears.

Could my reverie with Judy indicate a countertransference from the researcher to the participant? The theory of containment by Bion is founded on the idea of unconscious inter-subjectivity in which affects are exchanged between two people. If something is painful, one defends against it through projection and attempting to put the feeling into someone else. The other person then experiences the pain through empathy but, if this is too much to bear, they may repudiate or project out the emotions. I understood the researcher and researched, therefore, as anxious, defended subjects, who exchange unconscious material through dynamics which are, in turn, mediated through internal fantasies, shaped by one's psych-biography. One possible explanation for my incapacity to contain the questioning by Judy may have been the result of my own anxiety as an interviewer. It is possible that I was unconsciously, in part, reliving the affective memories of shame, during the dialogue, that were once evoked in me during the aforementioned project; if I had been able to contain the questioning by Judy, it is likely that I would have managed the interview quite differently. For instance, containment could have included calmly moving onto the next question, if I had sensed that Judy was uncomfortable or finding it challenging to respond to my questions. However, in this extract, it is possible that the dialogue is potentially chiming with my own psych-biography, and dis-

abling me from containing the questioning by Judy. In other words, I may have been, in part, imagining Judy in accordance to previous 'bad-memories'.

There could also be other possible explanations for this anxious exchange. Firstly, I was, for instance, relatively inexperienced with conducting academic interviews and had arguably entered the interview context with significant expectations and pressures to generate 'good' interview data in order to complete successfully my doctorate. Secondly, it may have also been the result of my gender as a man interviewing a woman. Feminist scholars have explored the importance of establishing equal power relations in the interview process (Gill 2009; McDowell 2001; Scharff 2010; Standing 1998). It could be argued that a woman would have been better placed to interview Judy due to the nature of the subject matter on gender discrimination. Perhaps a woman interviewer could have reduced the defensiveness of Judy, which may have enabled her to associate more freely regarding stories about her experiences of inequality in the workplace. However, reverie explains how power relationships between researcher and researched, or indeed during any relational engagement, are more complex than those of just, for instance, gender, race, class, or sexuality. Indeed, I often felt that many of the woman participants spoke candidly about their challenging experiences with me as an external, independent person despite my gender. Finally, it is worth noting that perhaps the question itself, indirectly regarding gender discrimination, and the way in which I respond to Judy, could indicate the mobilisation of anxieties from her psych-biography.

My reverie with Deborah, an executive in her mid-40s in a multinational investment bank, provided further insight into the ideas of containment by Bion, and how this can shape a dialogue. I had had some initial email exchanges with Deborah that had felt quite short and impersonal. This had culminated in her cancelling last minute our first interview. I had reservations, therefore, ahead of our rescheduled second meeting. When I arrived, I was shown into a large, dimly lit corporate suite. I sat at the heavily varnished oak eight-seater table, and nervously arranged my recorder, note pad, information, and consent forms before Deborah arrived. When Deborah entered the room, I caught her North

American accent, and in the context of our email exchanges, imagined her as a fiercely corporate executive and felt quite nervous. The tone of our initial interaction, the environment, and her presence raised questions for me at the start of the interview regarding to what extent I could perform the professionalism implicitly demanded of me as a white, gay man who continues to embody aspects of working-class comportment, for instance, how my dialect jars with idealisations of the middle-class, bourgeois banker or professional.

However, as the dialogue unfolded, I was surprised to find that Deborah was in fact very warm, open and welcoming, and I began to relax. Later in the interview, Deborah shared with me, for example, how her ‘boss shouts and bullies her’, and appeared to be on the verge of crying:

Deborah (Executive): So this is ... what’s held me back? I have a boss who yells and bullies; and I’m a woman in my mid-forties and I still break out in a sweat when I need to call my boss. And he yells and bullies at me still to this day. And so, on the one hand you want to, you know, it’s on me for some reason that I irritate him, and I don’t irritate many people, I irritate myself and him probably the most, and my husband sometimes, but it’s something I’ve never been able to fix...

Darren: No, it’s not uncommon. I had a senior woman talk about something very similar actually in her role, so yeah, it’s quite ... it’s more common than you think, really, that is.

Deborah (Executive): Yeah, it is a shame and it makes you realise how you should, it’s always saying how you should handle yourself when you’re managing people and managing problems, because his behaviour does create similar, everybody else, and you kind of adapt to that kind of behaviour as well and it kind of, you know, spoils the pool a little bit.

The dialogue immediately evoked in me a feeling of despair for Deborah and I was surprised to find myself holding back tears in response to her admission. However, why did I feel the need to stop myself from crying? Psychosocial researchers, such as Wendy Hollway (2012), suggest that it is better to reflect the reality of an emotional experience of a participant rather than, for instance, attempting to reassure them. Through reverie, I had felt aspects of the sadness and despair of Deborah whilst feeling paranoid about exploring this with her. At the time, I was unaware why I felt nervous, even fearful, as if we were ‘doing something wrong’ and could be found out at any moment, exploring such an evocative situation from her life. One association I made related to the highly corporate space, the hard furniture, and dimly lit room, which had evoked senses of depersonalisation and emotional suffocation within me. I had associated this with the silences and secrecies (Gill and Scharff 2011) that I had to contain myself working in highly corporate organisations, and the paranoia that is evoked when expressing them within such prohibited spaces: ‘What if someone over hears?’ ‘What will they think?’ ‘How will this affect other relationships and, indeed, one’s career and job security?’ I recalled overall always fearing who I spoke or opened up to in the workplace. My attempt, thus, to reassure Deborah that ‘such misogynistic workplace relations were unfortunately common’ may reflect my incapacity to contain such emotional material based on my own previous feelings of paranoia opening up in such constrained, highly corporate environments. Instead, it would have been better if I had responded by shedding a tear, which reflects how I actually felt in that moment, or with words to the effect, ‘that is terrible, you must feel awful or trapped to be in that situation’. This would have demonstrated a greater sense of emotional containment than my attempt to generalise and, perhaps, indirectly reduce the experience.

The following extract is taken from a transcript of an interview with Anthony, a non-executive, white man in his mid-40s in a global investment bank:

Darren: Do you think it matters how you present yourself as a man or a woman in the workplace?

Anthony: Yeah, 100%, particularly in sales, completely. You assess people on what they look like, how smart they are, what shoes they're wearing, right down to little details like, you've got single cuffs and I've got double cuffs, what do they wear, and things like that, it's an expensive watch, that's good. It's kind of similar to the sort of class system I guess, which is sometimes like a big blingy watch and you think, 'here we go', you know, sort of thing. It's because until you receive a lot of evidence to the contrary, that's what you're judging someone on. I consciously dress to match who I'm going to see. If I'm going to a sort of West End hedge fund type, I will put a very different tie on to if I'm going to chat to a building society. One of my colleagues is a sales guy, you know and he often has stubble, and I can't believe he sells without shaving.

Darren: It's alright, I'm not sales, don't worry [laughter]!

Anthony: Yeah, yeah, exactly. I do tailor the way that I present myself. I mean, I don't have any client meetings today, so I'm a bit scruffy and I need a haircut, but, yeah, I really do. Genuinely, I don't think I could go to a client meeting without being clean shaven, and I don't know why that is. I just wouldn't have the confidence I've got, and he often doesn't have matching socks. And that just horrifies me, you know, it genuinely horrifies me. I I had non-matching socks, I wouldn't be – this sounds so stupid [laughter] – I don't think I'd be as confident if I realised 30 seconds before going into a client meeting, 'crap, I've got a black sock and a blue sock, and when I say non-matching, that's the extent of it, it's not like red and blue, you know, he will have just got dressed in the dark or whatever goes on sort of thing'.

I noticed as Anthony gave his account that he was simultaneously scanning me up and down for what he considered to be the markers of good corporate apparel. He noticed, for instance, that I was wearing single cuffs whilst he is wearing double cuffs. The implication of this is that double cuffs are generally perceived of as more elegant and professional than single cuffs within men's fashion. I was a doctoral student during

this time with little money. I wore what was then an old suite, tie, and shirt that I had worn many years before when working as a management consultant in London, which, although relatively smart, was clearly faded, a bit drab and arguably dog-eared, for instance, around the edges. I was aware of this before entering the interview with Anthony to the extent that, when he scanned me up and down during his explanation, I became quite nervous. I was hoping that he would not point out anything about my attire that was inadequate. I had and still have a medium length beard and my anxiety is revealed in the extract when Anthony began describing his 'stubbly colleague' to which I exclaimed, 'It's alright, I'm not sales, don't worry!'. After this, I nervously laughed. Anthony agrees, 'exactly', and then associates an unshaven look to the 'horrifying' thought of wearing non-matching socks in the workplace.

It is worth noting at this point that I overall enjoyed the interview with Anthony, despite his obvious assessment of my body. However, this part of our dialogue remained with me. Why did I feel the need to explain myself? Was I attempting to reassure Anthony or even myself that I should not be judged as harshly for my sartorial errors in comparison to 'rich', 'slick' bankers (McDowell 1997) as a comparatively 'poor' doctoral researcher? One association I made after the interview concerned a banking project I had once worked on prior to entering the academe, as a junior consultant. As Anthony aptly describes, banking is a highly aesthetic profession and there are significant demands to present oneself in certain ways, for instance, wearing the right watch, double cuffs, quality socks, and shoes. One morning, I had been the first to arrive at the office from the team at around 8 am, when the manager walked in, sat down, turned to his right, and the first thing he said to me that morning rather sternly was 'Darren, do you not have any other ties?' I laughed nervously, similar to how I had reacted to Anthony in the extract. However, the manager continued to stare at me coldly to the extent that I felt nervous and unsure of whether to take his comments seriously. I recall that I was sitting down and wanted to curl away in order to occlude myself from his and presumably others' critical observations (I presumed his comments reflected wider conversations with others on the team rather than reflecting a spontaneous observation). At the time, I thought all one had to do was simply wear a tie rather than wear a different tie each day, which is

what my manager was demanding of me passive aggressively. This was in part a financial factor: I simply did not have the capital living in London (one of the world's most expensive cities) as a junior professional to invest much in my corporate attire. Secondly, I was rather blissfully unaware of what 'high-end', professional attire consisted of, having come from a working-class family whose father was a blue-collar technician. If we accept for a moment the reality that the banking environment is highly aesthetic, surely it would have made more sense for a senior figure to have supported a junior consultant, perhaps by giving them advice or even taking them out to shop and buy some essential corporate attire?

What could my experience of anxiety during this dialogue tell us about Anthony? Although Anthony later on spoke sensitively about the additional pressures that women face navigating organisational norms regarding corporate attire, the associations with 'nightmarish' imagery concerning, for instance, uncoordinated socks and stubble, and his automatic assessment of how professional and well dressed I was, allude to a preoccupation to dress in specific ways as a man in the workplace, as well as holding others to account for how they present themselves.

Conclusion

The chapter has outlined some of the key criticisms raised by psychosocial scholars concerning how reflexivity is currently practised in research (Letherby 2003; Parr 1998; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002; Hollway 2012, 2016; Holmes 2012; Midgley 2006). Psychosocial scholars have, for instance, raised concerns on how researchers often draw on homogenising categories, such as, 'gender' and 'sexuality', to understand their positionality in relation to their participants. However, the use of broad categories can constrain the extent to which we can begin to understand the research participant (Gill 1998; Hollway and Jefferson 2000a).

As a tentative attempt to redress some of these concerns, I drew on the radical psychoanalytical theory of reverie (Bion 1962; Hollway 2012). Although there has been little engagement with the theory beyond the clinical setting (Hollway 2012; Holmes 2012; Ogden 1997a, b), its prag-

matic imbrication into qualitative research methods promises to help researchers begin 'to know' their participants better. My reveries enabled me to begin to build affinities with men and women who were often, on the face of it, rather different in terms of their gender, economic status or sexuality in comparison to the researcher. Reveries also indicated how affects shape dialogues between the researcher and researched, perhaps what is being defended as part of this and, thus, alerting me to the potential presence of deeper dynamics and patterns in the accounts given by both the researched and researcher. Reverie recognises the importance of diversity categories whilst seeking, simultaneously, to move across them without reducing the distinct patterns and inequalities that particular categories share. I hope the reveries that I have traced shed some light onto how qualitative researchers can begin to reconceptualise the practice of reflexivity, as a way to generate more insight into the relationship established during a dialogue.

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