



Emplaced and embodied mobility in organizations

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abstract

Following insights of phenomenology, this paper aims to contribute to a critical understanding of being emplaced and embodied in relation to mobility in organizations. From a relational perspective, being mobile is interpreted as a way of being bodily mediated thus relationally and performatively placed. Recognizing mobility as a dynamic, de-centred event in relation to embodiment, leads to the development of the concept and practice of ‘inter-place’ in organizations. Following from this, moving bodies at work and tele-presence in organizations are discussed as being situated between moving places and inter-placed movement. Finally, theoretical, methodological and political implications and some limitations are outlined. The conclusion offers some perspectives on alternative, more responsible and sustainable practices of embodied and emplaced mobility in organizational life-worlds.

Introduction

As constitutive milieu and lived realities places and embodiment influence or inflect how organizational members engage, understand and move in their world. Likewise, mobilities are shaping how spacing and emplacement as well as bodily experiences are perceived, created and unfold in and through organizational life-worlds. How organizations and their members are situated in and move through spaces and places impacts all their embodied orienting, feeling, thinking, communicating, acting and relating in the material and social ecology of work (Gorawara-Bhat, 2000). Thus, interplaying places and (im-)mobilities – while becoming together and being inherently political (Bærenholdt and Granås, 2008; Pellegrino, 2011) – are dynamic formations of materio-social

relations (Massey, 1998: 154; 2005). As such they are interacting through bodily and net-worked mediation at particular locations within a globalized world. By linking a phenomenology of place, the body and embodiment to approaches and studies of mobility, this paper aims to contribute to a critical understanding of experiential dimensions of mobility and to reflect implications of what it means to be situated and to move in and beyond organizational life-worlds.

Based on a phenomenological approach of embodied mobility, a processual understanding of the inter-relationality of spaces, places and mobility is developed and the concepts of 'inter-place' and 'inter-placing' are presented. Such comprehension allows interpreting multiple embodied local-cultural realities of places and mobilities in organizations as relationally mediated, emerging events. To illustrate the arguments, moving bodies at work and telepresence in organizations are discussed as being situated between moving places and as inter-placed movement. The final part discusses some theoretical, methodological and political implications. The conclusion offers some perspectives on alternative, more responsible and sustainable embodied and emplaced practices of mobilities.

Moving in and beyond organizational life-worlds

Increasingly, life-worlds of organizations, economies and societies are characterised by complex, actual and imagined, movements of subjects, objects, capital, knowledge and power (Elliott and Urry, 2010; Urry, 2007; Jensen, 2011). People, who are moving to and from the office, across cities, projects, technologies, networks, organizations, industries, and countries, are thus living in a world of amplified mobilities and networked connectivities. This implies expanded and intensified possibilities for accessing and inhabiting multiple realities. For example, the proliferation of mobile technologies corresponds to a qualitative and quantitative increase in virtual, imaginary and corporeal mobilities (Büscher and Urry, 2009). Mobile technologies and networked connectivity affords a life in motion, making people to be constantly on the move in a global emplacement; they situate them simultaneously 'now here' and 'nowhere' (Friedland and Boden, 1994). These moves are part of 'lifestyle mobilities' that are characterised by an increasing fluidity between travel, leisure and migration (Cohen et al., 2015). New modes of moving and dwelling in various diverse yet intersecting mobilities emerge from this condition (Urry, 2001: 157).

These modes and movements are explored in an emerging turn to mobility in social science (Sheller and Urry, 2006). As a consequence of this turn, we need

to broaden the metaphorical repertoire and deepen a critical and political understanding of mobility. This includes contradictory and ambivalent ways in which mobilities are conceived, regulated and experienced in social and organizational life.

Economic regimes of mobility are prescriptively aiming to make embodied human beings more governable. This is done by organizing their responses (Foucault, 1979) and shaping their conducts in a desirable and predictable way (Jensen, 2011; Rose, 1999). For increasing the governability of the subjects in neo-liberal order (Read, 2009), conditioning regimes function as strategic programming of their mobility behaviour (Foucault, 1979). In these governing arrangements, humans are seen and treated as utility-driven animal. As auto-regulated or auto-correcting selves they are resources to be exploited or 'fostered, used, and optimized' (Dean, 1999: 20) while their moving bodies are 'normalised' and 'objectified'.

Accordingly, the meaning and usage of mobility in organizational life is always underpinned and directed by different *episteme*, i.e. an underlying system of rules for forming knowledge to achieve coherence and plausibility in the first place (O'Leary and Chia, 2007). How signs are noticed and extracted from lived experience of being mobile and how these cues are formed into a more coherent interpretation is always 'governed by the established rules of formation for a particular episteme' (*ibid.*: 395). Societies and organizations are increasingly governed by procedures of 'controlled circulation' (Weiskopf and Munro, 2012), thus a 'govern-mobility' (Bærenholdt, 2013), is structuring the possible field of mobile actions.

Governed mobile subjects are ascribed specific needs, wants and desires, they are assigned to particular social positions and are presumed to act in particular ways. Such imaginaries and production of imagined subjects with their bodies and affects foster categories of (im)mobile subjects as well as of (im)mobilities, in order to be controllable and manageable.

A more comprehensive understanding of mobilities needs to consider the role of non-discursive, corporeal and emotional dimensions in order to reflect how 'governed' mobile subjects experience or imagine mobilities and spatiality. The experience of being mobile and the relations to spaces are processed via the senses and co-model practices based on 'seduction and constraint through cultural and symbolic strategies' (Degen, 2008: 34). As Degen (2008) demonstrated, audio-scapes, smell-scapes, touch-scapes and so forth become sites for cultural tensions, for example serving as markers for interwoven significant cultural practices.

A recent study by Gustafson (2014) on experiences and consequences of frequent business travellers on their professional and personal lives shows that being mobile may be both stressful and stimulating. In an ambivalent way, experienced mobilities may be associated with physical and psychological strain, increased workloads and difficulties in balancing work and private life. But a mobile life may also provide enriching experiences, social and professional status, promoting a career and contributing to a cosmopolitan identity.

Facing the increased impact of mobilities calls for interrogating critically who and what is demobilized and remobilized across many different scales, and in what situations mobility or immobility might be desired options, coerced, or paradoxically interconnected (Adey, 2010). Fluxes of mobilities involve tensions, struggles and conflicts (Urry, 2007: 25), including dislocation and emptiness.

As Creswell (2010) notes in his study on the politics of mobility, mobility is not just a smooth movement, but also a process that is accompanied by friction, turbulence and power asymmetries. At the same time, being on-the-move can affect both the ability and inability to relate and connect to place. Movements among highly mobile elite workers in hasting mobile cycles for example can be experienced as 'stickiness' (Costas, 2013). Paradoxically, this entails a 'fixed instability' or 'rushing standstill' of disruptive moves in and between ephemeral non-places like airports. In such 'non-places' (Augé, 1995), mobility is experienced as impersonally flattened. Being entrapped in a compulsory logic of moving on and on may lead to the experience of alienation and loneliness in working life. Other negative impacts and 'costs' of mobilities may emerge due to pervasive, mobile and promiscuous commodification and energy production and consumption in a mobile high-carbon society (Elliott and Urry, 2010: 140). To further elaborate the experiential dimensions of embodied mobility, the following section presents a phenomenological approach.

Phenomenological approaches to embodied mobility

Phenomenological approaches provide insights into what Elliott and Urry call the 'experiential texture' (2010: 67) of the lives of moving globals in relation to problems with and contradictions in their mobilities, confronting uncertainty, and disruptions that affect them bodily, while being emplaced. If 'humans are sensuous, corporeal, technologically extended and mobile beings' (Urry, 2007: 51), we need to consider the status of their body and the way they are placed. This allows developing a differentiated understanding of mobility that reveals how being mobile is bodily mediated as well as relationally and performatively placed (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 143).

Furthermore, recognizing mobility as a dynamic, de-centred event in relation to embodiment helps to understand the role of ‘inter-place’ with regard to increasingly mobile organizations and its mobilised members. This ‘inter-place’ or rather ‘embodied inter-placing’ refers to an action and condition in which the being or presence of places and of mobile subjects is extended and simultaneously connected to multiple places in real time. Accordingly, the next section outlines basic ideas of a phenomenology of space and embodied place and mobility. A phenomenological approach facilitates rehabilitating the often forgotten primordial and opening realm of directly felt and lived experiences and realities involved in being mobile in embodied places and performances.

Phenomenology of embodied space, place and performative mobilities

Far from being merely a homogenous container that locates things, both space and place are constitutive media for things, processes and experiences to take place in depth (Stroeker, 1987) as well as for any mobility and a moving existence in and towards the world. Phenomenologically, members of organizations are situated and move through their placed everyday life-world that is imbued with meaning (Sandberg and Dall’Alba, 2009: 1357). It enables performing of activities and to make sense of the same.

In the placed hori-zones of organizational life-worlds, practices of its members and their place-based identification (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996) are made up of an array of concerns, tasks, tools, and milieus to dwell, move and inter-act. If ‘place is integral to the very structure and possibility of experience’ (Malpas, 1999: 32), then likewise, placed movements co-create experiential processes, including shared affects, emotions, cognitions, actions and identities. In a mobile age identities are increasingly hybridized and multiple, while seemingly less bound by the notion of a stable, unitary place, homeland or ‘true’ self (Sheller and Urry, 2003; Urry, 2003). However, these fragile mobility-identities – characterised as ‘to-and-froing’ between cultural, technological, and existential spaces and places (D’Mello and Sahay, 2007: 184) – are constructed within an embodied and emplaced nexus. This nexus refers to meaning-providing socio-historical, relational and temporal contexts and moorings that exist along a global-local continuum. Being infused with meaning (Frello, 2008; Greenblatt, 2009), emplaced mobility ‘means different things, to different people, in differing social circumstances’ (Adey, 2006: 83; Adey, 2013).

The following shows how phenomenology can help to understand the dynamics between unfixed space and situated place in relation to these ‘to-and-froing’

mobilities. It explores them at multiple levels and reveals the tensions between a place-less logic and place-dependencies in organizations.

For developing this phenomenological understanding a contrast to functionalist and utilitarian orientations is enlightening. According to these orientations, organizational spaces have been seen as entities that are divided, controlled, imposed and which have hierarchical, productive, personalised, symbolic and social dimensions (Chanlat, 2006). Consequently, in managerial and organizational contexts space is treated mostly as environmental factor or resource, utilised for finding appropriate structures and fits for organizations or groups. Managers appear then as engineers, who are involved in the spacing and timing of structures and activities into a centripetal amalgam. For example, managers use language of boundaries or mapping to organise space and these inscriptions create specific spacing(s) and timings by clarifying and delimiting zones of action (Jones et al., 2004). With its centre-oriented dynamics, this kind of spacing and timing mediate a particular ordering that is supposed to be required or desired in organizing. This spatio-temporal organised order is invented to ensure handling everyday coordinative demands, planning and implementing strategies, undertaking projects etc. for running the business in a relatively friction-free manner. In other words, space-management aims for and functions as coordinating the proliferation and sharing of spacing(s) and timings to keep and optimize things and people going, both structurally and processually (Hoskin, 2004: 750).

For instance, so called 'integrated workplace design', like Cisco Systems® (2014), assess spatial effects in terms of measuring effectiveness as the increase in productivity and participant satisfaction, respectively efficiency by key metrics, such as space utilization or cost and portfolio optimization. Space and spacing as well as em- or displacements materialise power relations and are used as mechanism of control (Carr and Hancock, 2006; Jensen, 2011). They can also be instrumentalised for contesting strategies to resist regimes of domination and to reconstruct spaces (Taylor and Spicer, 2007) as part of social change in organizations (Hancock, 2006), thus mobility.

From a phenomenological perspective, spaces and places are not (only) socially and culturally constructed, but also and primarily experienced and consumed through embodied beings at the point of visitation as well as before and afterwards. It is the lived body, which institutes a primordial, pre-reflective access to the enviroing things as well as a never fully determinable orientational hold onto the world. The lived body is also a medium for moving in and through the world. The physical space that underlies embodied, subjective, that is 'lived-space' is not a geometrical space, nor is it a mere construction of subjects

(Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 253-54). Living spaces are means by which positions of subjects, things and tasks in organization become possible. As bodies of organizational members are organs of possible actions, they are a 'virtual' embodiment, whose phenomenal place is defined by its tasks and by its situation that wherever they have something to do (*ibid.*: 260).

While action-moving bodies gear into the world of organizing tasks, the lived spaces of organizations are orientating positions and movements of their members. This concerns for example movements towards left and right, up and down, near and far or moving and being at rest, while being environed at work in meaningful relations (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 270). Thus, bodies of organizational members and their world form a dynamic spatio-temporal connection that is always already oriented by the primacy of the embodied place in organizations. Giving the central role of locality as it arises through embodiment, Merleau-Ponty shows that places are themselves 'relationally' embodied. This is the case because embodiment refers to our lived being-in-the-world that is an active and reversible process, indicating the negotiation of everyday life in relation to the material and social world (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 215) and its mobilities.

As an emplaced being, the moving, knowing body is an agent, vehicle, articulation, and witness of being in place (Casey, 1993: 48).¹ Living bodies mediate and navigate people by a co-orientation within place and facilitating the co-creation of 'place-scapes' (*ibid.*: 25).² These placed 'scapes' can be interpreted as embodied 'move-scapes', respectively other interrelated fluid, flowing and amorphous 'scapes' (Appadurai, 1990), including 'techno-scapes' in the global cultural economy.

¹ As Casey (1993: 313) summarizes succinctly: 'Places are not so much the direct objects of sight or thought or recollection as what we feel *with* and *round*, *under* and *above*, *before* and *behind* our lived bodies. They are the ad-verbial and pre-positional contents of our usually tacit corporeal awareness, at work as the pre-position of our bodily lives, underlying every determinate bodily action or position, every static posture of our corpus, every coagulation of living experience in thought or word, sensation or memory, image or gesture... To be a sentient bodily being at all is to be place-bound, bound to be in a place, bonded and bound therein.'

² In 'place-scapes' bodies and environments form 'congruent counterparts' (Casey 1993: 25, 103). The coupled body-world forms a dynamic spatio-temporal connection that is always perceived, mediated and oriented through an emplaced body. Emplacement refers to an immediate and concrete placement in which the interplay between a living body and place is situated (*ibid.*: 3-23). As Casey notes, 'bodies belong to places just as places belong to bodies...place is where the body is' (*ibid.*: 102-3). Emplaced being thus entails sensing, feeling, moving, orienting, thinking and acting through a mobile body which is co-constituted by the places and spaces within which it is practically engaged.

Importantly, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the lived 'body-subject' of place is more than and different from an 'object', but it is also less than a fully-fledged 'subject'. Rather, it refers to a 'third term' between the two, acting and being acted upon always is part of the fabric of social becoming (Crossley, 1996: 101) of embodied material realities, including those of mobilities. With this post-dualistic approach also a social body (Crossley, 2001) and a reflexive embodiment (Crossley, 2006) of places and movements within and through them becomes accessible (Malpas, 1999: 163).

Inter-relationality of spaces, places and mobility

For developing a deeper understanding of the embodied intertwinement, both places and mobility need to be interpreted not merely as a reified positions or movements between two or more poles, but as ongoing emergencies of inter-relational processes. Already Lefebvre (1991) showed that space in its multiplicity is a social product, or a complex social construction that is based on values, the social production of meanings which affects perceptions and spatial practices of mobility activities. For him practices of per- and conceived space enact a spatial order in action, while discursive spaces of representation frame our understanding of what is possible and how senses and bodies are embedded in space. Spaces are not only socially (re-)produced, they are also made (un-)productive in social movements and practices.

For example, being confined to certain work settings, like furnishing or office designs, affects 'artifact-in-use', task-performances or interpersonal relations and movements of employees (Davis, 1984). Placed architectural arrangements, like group-offices are used to set the supposed proper equipped stage for the drama of everyday life (Brissett and Edgley, 1990). For instance, walls that determine divisions and subdivisions among parts of an organizational office, arranged as cubicles or shared work-spaces, define the construed social structure of and movements within the organization (Davis, 1984). Ambivalently, emplacing artifacts both stabilize and destabilize organizational action as they may ensure coordination, communication, and control, or also create disturbance and conflict that are impacting organizational knowing and learning (Svabo, 2009) and mobility. Accordingly, exploring the contradictory, conflictual, and ultimately political character of processes of production of space and phenomenal places can help to understand more critically possibilities and impossibilities of mobilities in organizations.

As embodied spaces and places are intermediating milieus for movements – where the material and cultural as well as individual, and collective worlds meet

and inter-play – they influence how multiple interwoven relations of mobility in organizations develop and unfold. It is in this ‘in-between’ of placed movements where ‘differences unfold: differences in-between inside-outside, formal-informal, old-new etc.’ (Clegg and Kornberger, 2006: 154), thus allowing for creative organizing (*ibid.*: 155). Moreover, as emerging events that make mobility (im-)possible, re-produced spaces and places themselves are dispersed and inherently indeterminate process, thus continually reconfiguring. Thus embodied places are not simple or static locations, but like mobilities, a multi-layered relational processuality (Casey, 1993: 65; Küpers, 2010, 2014).

Relational intelligibility shifts our attention from an understanding of space and place as a vessel and mobility as movement between points, to a dynamic becoming that transpires *between* situated people and their placed artefacts-in-use, environments and emerging mobilities. For example, a completely wireless environment and surveying software produces a specific relation between employees and technology that enables, but also controls their mobility at work. Depending on how employees relate to their work-place or other places in the organization, like walkways, floors they respond movingly differently. For instance, the distance between workplace and welfare-facilities, amenities or meeting rooms impacts movements in everyday-lives. Moreover, depending on ergonomic conditions and whether employees can choose the area most conducive to their work influences their moving. Furthermore, working alone, independently or from home makes employees to move differently, compared to working together among others in a large working environment.

Out of interconnections between placing and moving, emplacement and mobilities, embodied perceptions, feelings, cognitions, actions, socialities and meanings as well as artefacts, structures and functions of being mobile are created, performed, questioned, re-created, and re-negotiated. It is the inter-relationality of placing and moving as ongoing processes of becoming that serves as the source for embodied, emotional, social and aesthetic experiences, thus for creativity, innovation and added value. By recognizing the primacy of relational processes, they become ‘form-in-media’, in which places and mobilities are continuously formed and transformed. In contrast to essentialist or mechanistic approaches, the view of relationality encourages us to see and describe the ‘inter-connections’ and processes through which the world of placing and mobility are experienced in an ongoing state of (body-)becoming (Küpers, 2014) in rhythmic ‘relation-scapes’ (Manning, 2009).

This mesh of ‘inter-placing’ moves and moving places is distributed in dynamic sets of forms and relations within powerful historical, embodied, emotional, social and structural, but also political and aesthetic dimensions. All of these

forms, formations and transformations of place respectively moves interrelate and co-create each other within an 'inter-world' or 'inter-mundane space' (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 248). The inclusion of embodied placing and moving through this inter-worldly immanence provides renewed possibilities for developing richer, more textured understandings of how we are part of a lived involvement within what Merleau-Ponty (1995) calls 'flesh' of the world³.

Accordingly, the way organizational members are situated and move along with their phenomena is mediated in enfleshed perceptual, orientational and actional relationships as well as individual and collective intentionalities⁴. Within these enfleshed dimensions and its multiple local-historical and cultural realities that is between what is 'already in place' and what can 'take place', mobilities of organizational practices, practitioners and leadership emerge.

The relational modes of enacting capabilities and possibilities create 'in-between spaces' (Bradbury and Lichtenstein, 2000) of inter-practicing that includes various interwoven, emerging processes and feedback-loops (Calori, 2002). Such mediated, embodied 'inter-practice' helps to reveal and interpret the relationship

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- 3 Merleau-Ponty's indirect and post-dualistic ontology of flesh refers to a chiasmic, incorporated intertwining and reversibility of pre-personal, personal, inter- and transpersonal dimensions. Importantly for Merleau-Ponty flesh, is neither matter or some substance nor mind, nor only a representational construct. Flesh is designated as an 'element' of being, in the sense of a general thing or incarnated principle, situated in the midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, functioning as the formative medium of the object and the subject (Merleau-Ponty, 1995). With the later Merleau-Ponty's indirect ontology of in-between and intertwining within this chiasmic flesh we can see that place and placing, particularly of human beings and their embedment, is only possible by being open to the flux of the open, ambiguous processes of which embodied, emotional and aesthetic spheres are an interplaying constituent. Within this rhythmic, sometimes chaotic endless flow of continuous becoming with others, place and implacing the fragile transitory and unpredictable human beings and their organizations are always on the brink of being lost in larger cycles and turbulences with no secure metaphysical foundations.
 - 4 Following, a Merleau-Pontyian understanding, individual and collective beings in organizations not only conceive their existence, but live in and move through the same and enact it with their 'operative intentionalities'. This kind of embodied operative intending refers to a bodily, pre-reflexive, and concrete spatial motility and spontaneous organization of experience that precedes cognitive reasoning, but brings the world forth as perceptual, projection and actional fields. This corporeally constituted intentionality mediates the perceived things, shades, forms, and the futures we can grasp with our limbs and an e-motional feeling of being attuned of being are attuned to experiences or activities. It is this soma-significative motility that establishes pre-predicative interconnections with the world and the moving and moved lives (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: xxxii) in organizations, structuring its space and effectuating its agencies, via the embodied modality of responsiveness (Küpers, 2015b).

between being, feeling, knowing, doing, structuring and effectuating, while moving in and through actions in organization that can be exemplified by moving bodies at work.

Moving bodies at work

Serving both, as actors and media, moving bodies at work in organizational practices (Wolkowitz, 2006: 183) are the 'conditio sine quo non' for all kinds of habitual actions, interactions and relational practices in organizing. These include bodily mediated mobilising sensual, psycho-physical and social capacities, presences and forms of processing knowledge or communication. 'Bodies-at-work' involve working bodies or bodily work that is movingly done and effected on or through other bodies and embodied contexts. Various forms of somatic or sensory work as well as affective, emotional and aesthetic labour and embodied performances are part of work-practices and its affective dramas that are staged and performed in everyday-life of organizing (Küpers, 2015b: 161).

In embodied and placed forms organizations and its members 'body-forth' moving working body-selves and performative processes. Ambivalently, both are perceptive, operative-intentional as well as responsive and indeterminate or emergent, but also ruled, controlled and constrained. For example, Longhurst (2001) showed how specific regulative body-regimes in organizations produce norms of impenetrability of bodily boundaries at work. Various forms of representation and moulding subjectification try to rationally tame and discipline the moving bodies-at-work, attempting to (re-)produce docile and adjustable bodies through post-disciplinary regimes of work (Weiskopf and Locker, 2006).

Furthermore, aesthetic and presentational labour is a an embodied practice that entails supplying, mobilising, developing and commodifying corporeal dispositions, capacities and attributes transformed into competencies. These are then aesthetically geared towards producing a 'style' in service encounters (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007: 107) that appeals to the senses of customers, visually or aurally.

Aesthetic or presentational workers can also use 'moving' micro-political strategies of embodiment that serve as resistance or co-optations. As Swan and Fox (2010) have shown, for enacting resisting moves occupational resources are used that involve forms of symbolism of gendered and racialized bodies and body-work as part of temporal, dynamic, intermingled processes in diversity-work in the public sector. In their description of the politics and ambivalence of diversity-work they show how micro-practices and its moves employ both

embodied and discursive resources as well as management technologies. These undermining practices imply that the embedding normative orders in embodied work are negotiable structures that are open for modification. As such they are varying or morphing with changes in worldly situations and its structuration within specific, altering margins and horizons. Accordingly, embodied working life – and moves within the same – are governed by somantic-aiesthetic dispositions, intentions and social norms. Importantly, these are dynamically related to moving-making desired states of bodily senses and feelings (Vannini et al., 2010: 337).

The power of material, embodied presence of actors in inter-practicing is shown in a case study on a meeting in a strategy context by Hodgkinson and Wright (2002). They show how much the physical presencing of positions and movement of key-actors in a meeting-room can influence the development of practices of strategizing. For example, they demonstrate how a leader skilfully manages not only her discourse at the workshop, but also how the lay-out of the chairs and her own bodily positioning *vis-à-vis* the whiteboard is used in order to ensure her episodic, arranged and performing moves. As the moving presencing flow of such practices is full of surprises, the supposed control may be an illusion. Corresponding to the flows of materially arranged places, possible performative movements of resistance to such practices, like ignoring, non-listening or distractive activities, may emerge. Likewise, such practicing can activate alternative mobile imaginaries and shapings of mobile sense-scapes ‘from below’ (Jensen, 2011: 268). In addition to placed and moving bodies at work, another illustration of how places and movement are connected can be seen in relation to tele-presence in organization.

Tele-presence – between moving places and inter-placed movement

The following exemplifies the relation between place, body and movement with regard to tele-presences in organizations. New forms of distributed or dispersed work in relation to spaces and places, like remote working, e-Work, tele-work or telecommuting and varieties of cyber-space work (Felstead et al., 2005) challenge old spatial orders and surveying control. Compared to embodied face-to-face interaction tele-presences in technology-mediated cyberspaces render distinct qualities due to its distant, non-localised, displaced relationship. Nevertheless, while being situated in tele-presence, a sense of embodiment is predicated upon the sensorial body, which has a malleability of its experiential boundaries and thus affect and extent bodily corporeality transporting into the real-virtual environments.

The body mediates tele-presence and experiences in cyper-space, as embodied beings bring their everyday, real-world understandings and social experiences into virtual encounters. However, in tele-presences part of the sensorial architecture of the body remains in the physical world, while another is projected into the virtual one. Thus, cyberspace is not a disembodied reality; but rather it is a medium through which we experience a different kind of embodiment and transfigurations of body-boundaries to an extent that the virtual becomes an aspect of embodiment (Richardson and Harper, 2002). Body-centered interaction even may augment the experience of presence in a virtual reality environment (Slater and Usoh, 1994). As speed and intensity of technologically mediated modes have accelerated in recent years, technology not only transforms our ways of doing things, but also profoundly conditions our placed experiences and movements of ourselves and others in the world.

The impact of a new spatial-temporal conditions and new modes and forms of human interaction can be illustrated by investigating the status of place and movement in tele-communication and the role of perceived proximity. Mobile phone communication affects, besides the use of time, the role of place; as it distributes presence in simultaneous interactions. When people are on the phone, there is a sense in which they are in two places at one time (Rettie, 2005).

As Backhaus (1997) has shown the temporally immediate transcendence of space through the use of the telephone creates a bi-localized space of interaction, which causes specific changes in social praxis. Telephone connections do not only constitute a degrounding of place, disconnecting from lived body environment. Not sharing a primary environment with each other means also that the space-within-potential-reach will have qualitatively different meanings for those involved. The realm of telephoning and other tele-present spaces involve a modified we-relationship through which meaning-intentions are intersubjectively synthesized, yet from bi-local environmental standpoints. The intersubjective achievements concerning projects grounded within the immediacy of telephonic or tele-present 'place' creates an embodiment 'in there' (Geser, 2004), being in a temporal simultaneity, i.e. community of time, creating a third realm. In such realms we are able to engage in instantaneous synchronised contact with distant others being our 'consociate contemporaries' (Zhao, 2004) within an 'electronic proximity' (Dertouszos, 1998). It is the increasingly important 'perceived proximity' (Wilson et al., 2008) that explains also the paradox of 'far-but-close' in virtual work that is the state of 'being far' physically, while co-existing with a 'feeling close' (Küpers, 2010).

Placed in diverse countries, time zones and socio-cultural environments, organizational members who are involved in long distance working

relationships, will increasingly move not only in tele-phone-spaces, but also use conference calls, video-conferencing, blogging, intranet and further media to communicate. However, these distanced dis-placed relations in virtual settings, are also impeding their practice. This concerns for example their relation of mutual trust (Collinson, 2005) or sharing of implicit knowledge (Crampton, 2001; Zhao, 2007) losses of sensory and expressive communication and reduction in intimacy, like bonds, emotional involvement etc. (Mann et al., 2000). Furthermore, mobility gives rise to new forms of translocal selves and emotional relations 'via physical encounter and somatic internalization, in response to the power of images and narratives, and through the operation of memory and desire' (Conradson and McKay, 2007: 167).

Emotions interweave with perceived mobile sense-scapes and the experience of mobile spaces (Thrift, 2004), thereby producing a disposition towards certain mobile practices and mobile technologies (Sheller, 2004). This disposition relates to bodily kinaesthetic experience of movement as well as technologies and materialities of the world by and through which movement is made. Likewise, displacement through mobility may contribute to feelings of dis-ease and discomfort, disorientation and disconnection or loss through interrupting familiarity and continuity that spatial context and physical presence can supply (Fullilove, 1996). These experiences may render a yearning to return to former states or lead to an inability to form new attachments as they may not 'trust' emotional affiliations with new places. In turn, organization may mitigate to return to embodied and placed proximity and 'achieve relational proximity through translation, travel, shared routines, talk, common passions' (Amin and Cohendet, 2004: 99).

Implications and limitations

The following sections outline first some theoretical and methodological implications. Subsequently some limitations, political implications and perspectives of a phenomenological approach to the study of mobility are discussed.

Theoretical and methodological implications and future research

What are possibilities of re-placing and re-locating organizational and management research and its conventional focus and epistemological locations in relation to space and mobility? If a discipline organises an analytical space (Foucault, 1977: 143), a more multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary and meta-paradigmatic journey will be important for opening this space for alternative lines of investigation. In pursuing such a cross-disciplinary journey research can

break the largely univocal narrative and its approaches as well as open up to multiple and innovative knowledge and methodological ‘places’ and moves. This also implies approaching spaces, relational places and movements or mobilities from the perspective of the first-, second- and third-person. Developmental action-inquiry (Torbert et al., 2004) considers and meta-triangulates these perspectives in its singular and plural modes. These include the inquirer’s own changing practices, ways of thinking, and quality of attention (subjective first-person research on ‘my’-self) as well the interactions, norms, governance, and mission of the specific persons and groups with whom one is working or playing (inter-subjective second-person research on ‘our’ commun[ication]al process) and finally third-person dimensions, outside of the inquirer (objective third-person objects and practices). The goal of such an approach is to inquire into and transform personal and social experiences as well as structures related to place and mobility in a timely and transformative way. Thus, it covers and integrates the domains of subjective, aesthetic disciplines, intersubjective ethical and political interactions as well as objective, instrumental functions and results (Torbert and Taylor, 2008).

Methodologically, investigating spaces, inter-places and movements there requires a shifting from a way of knowing by ‘looking at’ to a way of knowing by being placed that is ‘in contact, or in touch with...the adoption of an involved rather than an external uninvolved standpoint’ (Shotter, 1993: 20). This also implies focussing on the relationally placed social environment and what it ‘allows’ or ‘permits’. Furthermore, instead of taking isolated observational approaches on given realities, future research may focus more on negotiated procedures and local embeddedness in everyday-life and locally constituted situations or circumstances (*ibid.*). Moving from one workplace to another as ‘workplace vagabonds’ (Garsten, 2008), employees are placed through temporary staffing agencies while struggle to identify themselves through what they do and where they do it.

In terms of contents, future research needs to investigate more adequately the dynamic embodied placing of these post-industrial mobile workers, who are situated and moving between closeness and distance, immediacy and tele-presences. In particular, research that explores moving practices that require employees to be able to oscillate between locating and dislocating, placement and displacement while shifting boundaries of meanings is called for. In addition to physical movement of objects involved in embodied mobility of people, also imaginative, virtual and communicative forms (Urry, 2007) are to be considered that are enabling or coercing them to live more ‘mobile lives’ (Elliott and Urry, 2010).

Additionally, it might be meaningful to investigate how ‘inter-placed’ movements give rise to affects, materialities, forces, and atmospheres (Merriman, 2012). Specifically, analysing the relationship between mobile experiences and affect as a field of pre-personal felt intensities that are processed in sensing bodies and find their socio-cultural expression in emotions (McCormack, 2008: 414) is promising.

A final suggestion for research concerns investigations on how inter-placed mobilities work as intermediaries and hybrid ‘inter-embodiments’. Especially promising are post-ANT researches (Gad and Bruun, 2009) on sociotechnical assemblages or human/material hybrids, supporting specific mobility regimes (Dodge and Kitchin, 2011). Here effects of intersecting mobilities on professional relations, commitments, attachments and (dis-)identifications, for example of service provider and consumers or other stakeholders may be studied empirically.

In terms of language, the affective dimension of alternative mobility patterns also calls for different forms of expression. Developing a political and poetically sensitive approach on bounded mobility requires going beyond both sedentary-petrifying and nomadic-liquidizing metaphors and metaphysics of fixity and flow (Creswell, 2006: 25). Accordingly, concepts and findings related to affective, bodily and emotional phenomena of mobility might better be expressed in poetic-narrative forms as embodied apprehensions of storied places (Brewer and Dourish, 2008) that are telling about events of mobile ‘inter-placing’. Moving through embodied inter-places recognizes that wayfaring, as storied travelling is lived along open(ing) lines that are part of an unfolding meshwork (Ingold, 2011: 69-70).

Political implications for a critical approach to mobility

A political economy of mobility reflects critically the relation between local and global ‘power-geometries’ (Massey, 1993) as well as on issues of in- and exclusions, inequalities and power asymmetries accompanying societal mobility in its multiplicity (Jensen, 2011). Accordingly, a critical approach to mobility inquires into how mobility has been formed, regulated, and distributed around different regions and areas. With this it investigates also how the formation, regulation, and distribution of mobility are shaped and patterned by existing social, political, and economic structures of the contemporary world. Correspondingly, a critical mobility research explores what understandings of practice and values underpin regulatory knowledge, and different ‘fictions’ that exist within new mobilities regimes (Witzgall et al., 2013). With regard to the role of normative arrangements that regulate or prescribe mobilities and differentially

distribute the possibilities and limitations of mobilities, attempts to control and restrict movement (Shamir, 2005; Turner, 2007) are to be considered. This includes how various forms of movement are made meaningful, and how the resulting ideologies of mobility circulate across the globe and become implicated in the production of mobile practices. This further implies also investigations on how the very processes that produce movement and global linkages also promote immobility, exclusion, and disconnection (Tsing, 2005).

As mobility is a resource to which not everyone has an equal relationship (Skeggs, 2004: 49), exploring power relations and dynamics of practices of mobility is vital. Of particular relevance are investigations of their roles in creating effects of both movement and stasis, and uneven distribution of 'network capital' (Elliott and Urry, 2010) or different capacities for socio-spatial motility (Kaufmann et al., 2004: 750). It would be intriguing to explore how networks, forged in particular places and at great distances, may play a complementary functions in broad-based social movements, and their place-based and relational dynamics (Nicholls, 2009) as well as how they are linked to ethical askesis (Munro, 2014) serving to enact other forms of being placed and mobile.

Accordingly, what is called for is the development of novel forms and innovative practices that are positively disruptive to the dominant techno-economic base of institutions and cultures that generate hyper-mobility and simultaneously enact more emancipatory and sustainable institutions and forms of governance. It will be important to consider mobility patterns as a result of cultural practices and social norms, implicating people, technology, knowledge and emotions (Sheller and Urry, 2006). For example, the institutionalization of mobility through airline frequent flyer programs that reward high levels of aero-mobility (Gössling and Nilsson, 2010) with access to privilege and luxury (e.g., gold-card lounges) clearly serves industry interests in tourism as a marker of exclusivity and identity. In this way, institutional and social structures enculturate travellers into regimes of hyper-aeromobility, rewarding the consumption of distance and generating patterns of mobility, which become entrenched as path dependencies (Schwanen et al., 2011).

Countering these hyper-mobilising settings requires forms of powering-down practices associated with unsustainable transport behaviour (Randles and Mander, 2009). To get beyond a mere 'nudging' (Hall, 2013) these forms need to include sustained and structural change at various societal and organizational levels that engender more sustainable transport behaviour. Complementing psychological and social approaches also necessitates institutional and systemic approaches that are expanding governance for sustainable mobility (Higham et

al., 2013) and more environmentally and socially sustainable ways of placing, pacing and moving (Guthey et al., 2014).

However, considering that social norms permeating public discourses of 'mainstream' travel behaviour do not centre on rationality and responsibility, but rather the opposite, underpinning affective components, emotional attachment and symbolic values need to be explored more. As the potential to be mobile is a form of cultural capital (Williams, 2013), 'mobility capital' is arguably one of the strongest affective markers of power in contemporary societies and kinetic elites' (Cresswell, 2012: 651), while being at odds with aspirations towards decarbonising societies. For developing a 'politics of mobility' (*ibid.*), forms of mobilities can be investigated critically as embodied movements defined by its routes, velocities, rhythms and spatial scales, and as social constructs constituted by experiences, meanings, and competencies.

For identifying and analysing the extent and effects of different physical, symbolic and virtual mobilities are 'processed', material and immaterial networks need to be explored as they spread within and across national borders. Likewise, what is required is a political analysis of internal changes that organizations, institutions, the state and the society assume in order to regulate mobilities and their consequences.

Limitations and the need for a processual and relational approach

From a broader perspective, the very nature of global, technologically mediated capitalism and the increasing level of displacements and networked hypermobility will probably generate a greater need for specific embodied meeting places, and personal contacts (Thrift, 1996). In other words, the expectable rising production of and preoccupation with spaces and involvements in cyberspaces is likely to bring about longings for emplacement and slowing down. However, there are possible dangers involved in re-idealising embodied place and pace. One problem of re-embodied place and movement is falling into a kind of retro-romantic holism. Such orientation is longing for an idyllic pre-personal places and ways of life or pre-modern forms of moving. Narrowly restricted in scope or outlook, provincial, retrogressive, and nostalgic re-enchancements, revived pastoral myths and provincial attitudes revert into pre-modern parochial places and moves. Being subject to historical regression, the yearning for a simplified tribal life in closer proximity to and regressive moves cannot be an adequate response to the complexities in modern and postmodern worlds or generate critical options for other ways of organizing and living. Therefore, it will be important not to substantialise or essentialise space, place and the body or movement, respectively mobility as this would lead to an

abstraction of subtleties and dynamics involved. Instead of looking for metaphysical centres or positions as unified entities of embodied places and movements, a more suitable orientation would be to focus on processual relationalities involved (Küpers, 2014).

Conclusion

This paper has tried to open up and move through an analytical space, taking a conceptual place and movements for exploring a different, more processual understanding of mobility. On our journey, we learned about a phenomenology of embodied dimensions and qualities of spacing, placing and moving in organizations. Following a relational understanding, place and mobility were interpreted as inter-place and relational movements, exemplified by moving bodies at work and tele-work in organization. Finally, some theoretical, methodological and political implications and limitations were discussed.

If places and mobilities are the very contexts for embodied participation with the phenomenal, ecological, social and cultural world, then what we know and do is also shaped by the kinds of places and moves which we are experiencing or are mediated by. Therefore, the quality of a reawakened attention given to embodied places and a mindful reengagement with them by a sensuous and body-conscious orientation and like-wise a focus on more mindful movements becomes possible and vital.

Considering the previously discussed politics of mobility and political life of embodied sensation (Panagia, 2009), reconfigurations of the share of the sensible (Rancière, 2004, 2010) will be important. As these constellations define the emplacement and mobilities reconfiguring them contest hierarchical and exclusionary distributions, while allowing imagining other forms of arrangements of movement and performative practices (Spicer et al., 2009: 545-554). This may include forms of de-touring in the spirit of an 'engaged *Gelassenheit*' and cultivating more place-responsive (Cameron et al., 2004) and responsible approaches towards embodied and sustainable mobility practices (Küpers, 2015a). Such orientation towards practices opens up for moments of interruption, musing, dwelling, pauses and stillness. Accordingly, embodied and emplaced patterns or temporalities of slowness (Karssiens et al., 2014), or slow motion in spacing organizations (Beyes and Steyaert, 2012) or waiting and 'active non-doing' can be seen as elements of a wider sensuous 'geo-bio-socio-graphy' of movement and dwelling with its flows of meaning (Jensen, 2012). This approach invites moving towards more musing and poetic relationships that mediate careful ways of more sustainable practices (Dumreicher and Kolb, 2008).

Consequently such practices discourage mindless organizing of mobility, easy consumption or exploitive orientations in hypermobile moves, while they encourage more embodied and mindful forms of relating (Jordan et al., 2009) in various organizational environments (Dane and Bradley, 2014) and beyond within communal, societal, and planetary spheres.

Like nomadic trajectories and a-centred rhizomatic orientations (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 380), and wayfaring through territorial organization (Maréchal et al., 2013: 203), such alternative forms of mobility invite and distribute those involved into differently qualified movements of figures through their local configurations. These alternative moves are gesturing towards open inter-places that are co-creating heterogeneous assemblages composed of flows, intensities and becomings, rather than as structures or stable states.

Integrating socio-ethico-political dimensions and relations (Beasley and Bacchi, 2007) and a heedful attention to them prevents not only impoverishing human and non-human life and its 'materio-socio-cultural' and ecological realities. Rather, this kind of mindful orientation helps to overcome the concealing of the correspondence between ideology and politics in relation to body, place and mobility, and potentially that may lead to biological and cultural extinctions (Gruenewald, 2003).

Reconsidering places, bodies and movement respectively performative mobility as well as the in-between of them allows possibilities for different practices in organizations and management as well as in relation to stake-holders to emerge. Correspondingly, it is hoped that the ideas and discussions offered here have inspired some affective and discerning moves for further exploring emplaced and embodied mobilities in inter-places of organizational and other forms of life-worlds.

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