

Management of the Meantime

The Senses, Attachments, and Time in the Aesthetic City

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MANAGEMENT OF THE MEANTIME

CBS PhD School
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PhD Series 28.2024

CHRISTINA JUHLIN

MANAGEMENT OF THE MEANTIME

*The senses, attachments, and time in the
aesthetic city*

PhD Series 28-2024



Management of the Meantime

The senses, attachments, and
time in the aesthetic city

Christina Juhlin

Department of Business Humanities and Law

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CBS PhD School
Copenhagen Business School

Christina Juhlin
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- the senses, attachments, and time in the aesthetic city

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In memory of my dad.

You should have been here to see me finish this. I take comfort in knowing you taught me how to be proud of myself.

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I am grateful to the association on Refshaleøen and all the other locals who allowed me to walk, listen to the place and keep an eye out for change with them.

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A final thanks to Kristine Samson who sparked the idea of doing a PhD in the first place.

Abstract

In this dissertation, I study the aestheticization of the city through the temporary use of space and culture, a strategy known as temporary urbanism. The study takes place in Refshaleøen, a post-industrial site in Copenhagen that has been on hold for 28 years since the bankruptcy of a shipyard in 1996. Often, these post-industrial spaces are experienced as an alternative to the planned, regulated, and neoliberal city. They look and feel like spatial and temporal exceptions; meantime spaces that make room for different ways of shaping and inhabiting the city. With this study, I explore affects such as loss and nostalgia but also hope, which surround the gradual incorporation of these spatial and temporal exceptions into the 'city as we know it'. The city as we know it here refers to a city influenced by an aesthetic economy that propels Refshaleøen's transition from a post-industrial, dormant, self-organized place to a cultural, aestheticized, and curated neighbourhood.

The case study took place at a particularly significant point in this long, but now accelerating, meantime: the point at which nothing had really changed, but everything started to *feel* different. It is in this feeling that I locate and study aestheticization. This point in the development of Refshaleøen therefore sets the scene for my exploration of the sensory conditions of everyday life in the city: how change is felt before it is seen, and how sensory reorganizations take place in the aestheticization of the city. The research question driving the study is:

How does aestheticization work through people's sense of time and their attachments?

Pursuing this research question, I develop conceptual and empirical insights on temporality and attachments as aspects of the sensory ordering of spatial and other forms of change. I argue that temporality and attachments, as aspects of the conditions of everyday life in the city, are important to how people participate in, or withdraw from, the environments in which they live or work. I develop an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that combines organization studies, urban cultural theory, and sociology. Across these fields, I form a novel approach to urban transformation in the aesthetic economy. First, by drawing on and advancing theories on place attachment, I shed light on how attachments become implicated in spatial politics. And second, by drawing on and contributing to theories on future-making, I shed light on how urban transformation takes place not just through material and sensory reorganizations, but also through temporal orders.

This novel approach to urban transformation is developed across four research papers. The first paper lays the methodological basis for the dissertation by developing an 'analytical sensorisation' as a starting point for the study of sensory orders as social phenomena. The second paper elaborates this methodological basis of the dissertation through French pragmatic sociology. Through this sociology, the paper develops an ethnographic sensitivity towards the study of, among other things, actors' engagement in their close material environments and their shaping and shifting of personal attachments. The third paper presents a conceptual understanding of place attachments and their relation to spatial politics in organization studies and human

geography. Intervening in these debates, the paper advances a feminist concept of attachment to shed new light on a well-established critique of place attachments. Moving beyond this critique, the paper explores how place attachments work affectively. Finally, the fourth empirical paper studies actors' daily navigation in temporary urbanism through an analysis of how the future is felt under temporary conditions.

The dissertation's concluding discussion unfolds the implications for the conceptualisation of the senses, time, and attachment. It also extends insights from the study to phenomena that are related to, and can learn from, the study of temporary urbanism and aestheticization, such as: affective labour in the aesthetic economy, temporary forms of organizing, organizational atmospheres, and the making and negotiation of community in co-working spaces and other commons. These implications are, in brief, captured by the notion of the 'management of the meantime'. The dissertation proposes the management of the meantime as a way to understand how aestheticization works through people's sense of time and their attachments. Attachments are here understood as the feeling of what matters and what is possible. The management of the meantime is the process by which people's attachments are balanced, and their sense of time is recalibrated to a temporal order that sustains the temporary as an open promise of an alternative.

Abstract (Danish)

I denne afhandling undersøger jeg æstetiseringen af byen gennem midlertidig brug af byrum og kultur, en strategi også kendt som midlertidig byudvikling. Studiet foregår på Refshaleøen, et post-industrielt område i København som har været på hold i 28 år siden et skibsværft gik konkurs i 1996. Ofte bliver post-industrielle rum som dette oplevet som et alternativ til den planlagte, regulerede og neoliberale by. De føles og ser ud som rumlige og tidslige undtagelser, mellemtid og mellemrum der giver plads til andre måder at forme og bebo byen. Med studiet undersøger jeg affekter såsom tab og nostalgi, men også det håb der opstår omkring den gradvise inkorporering af disse rumlige og tidslige undtagelser i 'byen som vi kender den'. Byen som vi kender den refererer her til en by præget af en æstetisk økonomi, der accelererer Refshaleøens overgang fra et post-industrielt, ikke-udviklet, selvorganiseret rum til et kulturelt, æstetiseret og kurateret bykvarter.

Casestudiet fandt sted på et særligt betydningsfuldt tidspunkt i denne lange, og nu accelererende, mellemtid: Et tidspunkt, hvor ingenting rigtig havde forandret sig endnu, men hvor alting begyndte at *føles* anderledes. Det er i denne følelse, at jeg lokaliserer og studerer æstetisering. Dette tidspunkt i udviklingen af Refshaleøen udgør derfor scenen for min undersøgelse af de sanselige betingelser for hverdagslivet i byen: Hvordan forandring føles før den kan ses, og hvordan sanselig omorganisering finder sted i æstetiseringen af byen. Forskningsspørgsmålet, der driver denne undersøgelse, er:

Hvordan virker æstetisering gennem folks tidsfornemmelse og deres tilknytninger?

For at forfølge dette forskningsspørgsmål, udvikler jeg begrebslige og empiriske indsigter i tidslighed og tilknytninger som aspekter af den sanselige strukturering af rumlig og andre former for forandring. Jeg argumenterer for at tidslighed og tilknytninger – som aspekter af de sanselige betingelser for hverdagslivet i byen – er vigtige for hvordan folk deltager i eller trækker sig fra de nære omgivelser, de bor eller arbejder i. Jeg udvikler et interdisciplinært, teoretisk rammeværk der kombinerer organisationsstudier, bykulturel teori og sociologi. På tværs af disse felter skaber jeg en ny tilgang til bytransformation i den æstetiske økonomi. Det gør jeg ved først at trække på og avancere teorier om stedstilknytning for at belyse, hvordan tilknytning bliver en del af rumlig politik. Og dernæst ved at trække på og bidrage til teorier om hvordan fremtiden formes socialt, hvorved jeg belyser hvordan bytransformation finder sted ikke bare som en materiel og sanselig omorganisering, men også en tidslig.

Denne nye tilgang til bytransformation udvikles på tværs af fire forskningsartikler. Den første artikel lægger det metodologiske fundament for afhandlingen ved at udvikle en 'analytisk sanseliggørelse' som udgangspunkt for undersøgelsen af sanser som sociale betingelser. Den anden artikel udvikler afhandlingens metodologiske fundament gennem fransk pragmatisk sociologi. Gennem denne sociologiske tilgang udvikler artiklen en etnografisk sensitivitet overfor undersøgelsen af, blandt andet, aktørers engagement i deres nære omgivelser og den måde, de

former og forandrer deres tilknytninger. Den tredje artikel præsenterer en teoretisk forståelse af stedstilknytning og begrebets relation til rumlig politik i organisationsstudier og humangeografi. Som en intervention i disse debatter avancerer artiklen et feministisk begreb om tilknytning, der kaster nyt lys på en velkendt kritik af stedstilknytning. For at overskride den kritik, udforsker artiklen hvordan tilknytninger virker affektivt. Endelig er den fjerde artikel et empirisk studie af hvordan aktører navigerer i midlertidig byudvikling i deres hverdagsliv. Her præsenteres en analyse af hvordan fremtiden føles under midlertidige forhold.

Afhandlingens konkluderende diskussion udfolder implikationerne for begrebsliggørelsen af sanser, tid og tilknytninger. Den perspektiverer også afhandlingens indsigter til andre fænomener der minder om, og kan lære fra, mit studie af midlertidig byudvikling og æstetisering, såsom: affektiv arbejdskraft i den æstetiske økonomi; midlertidige former for organisering; organisatoriske atmosfærer; og skabelsen og forhandlingen af fællesskab i delte rum. Disse implikationer samles under én betegnelse: Ledelse af mellemtiden. Afhandlingen foreslår ledelse af mellemtiden som en måde at forstå hvordan æstetisering virker gennem folks tidsfornemmelse og deres tilknytninger. Tilknytninger forstås her som følelsen af hvad der betyder noget, og hvad der er muligt. Ledelse af mellemtiden er den proces med hvilken folks tilknytninger bliver balanceret, og deres tidsfornemmelse kalibreret, til en tidslig orden der vedligeholder det midlertidige som et åbent løfte om et alternativ.

Management of the Meantime

The senses, attachments, and
time in the aesthetic city

Christina Juhlin

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Map 1. Copenhagen Municipal Plan 2019 (in force until 2031).
The red stars (placed on Nordhavn, Refshaleøen and Jernbanebyen)
indicate areas with potential for creative industries.

Introduction

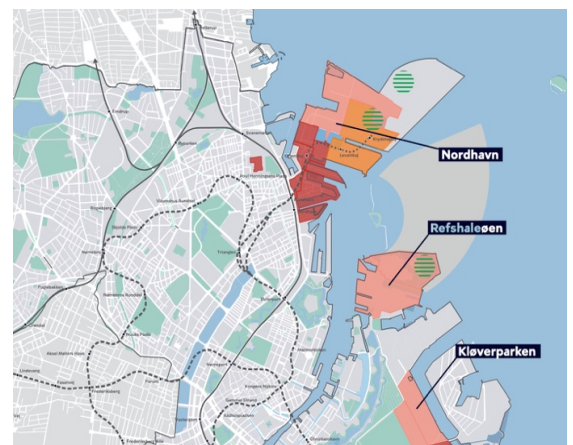
The aim of this thesis is to investigate the sensory ordering of the social through attachments and time in the context of the aestheticization of urban space. This is realized through a case study which brings to the fore the empirical phenomenon of temporary urbanism. The thesis argues that in both organization theory and planning policy there is a compelling need to understand how urban transformation takes place through the management of people's attachments to places and their time sensibilities. This is what the thesis names and studies as 'the management of the meantime'.

The ‘last places’ in the aestheticizing city

The gaps are disappearing, there is no doubt about it; I also used to jump in the water from the cranes in the Copenhagen harbour. I believe there *is* a way to develop without tabula rasa (...) nevertheless, some people are bound to get disappointed; we are all deeply conservative, the sentimentality of the smell in the ice cream shop. Can we guarantee the same experiences as I had out here in 1998? No! But we can respect the place and invite more people to the party. Communications Director, Refshaleøens Ejendomsselskab¹

In most Northern European and Western inner cities, the last post-industrial places are now in the process of transformation. We all know places like this; places that seem to have been exempted from the dominant logic and aesthetics of neoliberal urban development, that look and feel unregulated, free to take the form to which their immediate uses and users are putting it. These places feel like they both *condense* and *escape* the city at the same time. Many of these places have been ‘on hold’: industrial activities have moved out and nothing definite or definitive has moved in. Gradually, the temporary has seeded itself, a use which is increasingly characterized by culture but not exclusively so. To begin with, some of these spaces were occupied and developed organically through subcultures. Later, in many cases, city governments took over, making the temporary uses and the culture they spawned the subject of strategies in which ‘a meantime’ was created, a value-creating intercession sometimes referred to as temporary urbanism. Today, the last gaps seem to be closing.

The map delineates some of these ‘last places’ in Copenhagen, referred to in the Municipal Plan 2019 as perspective areas. Following the decline of industry in the inner-city harbour fronts since the 1990s, Northern European cities have undergone a shift from functional cities towards culturalized cities. This thesis is grounded in a case study of one of these ‘last places’: a privately owned, post-industrial site called Refshaleøen, situated in the harbour of Copenhagen.² The fieldwork of the case study traces what is publicly perceived to be the end-phase of temporary use before ‘real’ urban transformation.



Map 2. Overview of the order of some of the future transformations (after 2031). From the Municipal Plan 2019.

¹ Interview with communications director, 15.10.2021.

² The site will be described in more detail in Chapter 1.

The case study follows the intensification of a long period of temporary use that reaches back to 1996, when a shipyard went bankrupt and the land – an artificially created island – was given to the creditors, four Danish pension funds. Based on ethnographic research on Refshaleøen over a period of four years (2020-2023), the thesis studies this intensification of temporary use from two perspectives: 1) a group of local, temporary renters who started an association in early 2020 when they sensed urban transformation was approaching and felt an urgent need to participate in, rather than become side-lined by, this development, and 2) the private development company which increasingly, during the study period, came to see itself as a curator of the cultural and temporary life of the site, playing an active role in the shaping of connections, events, and atmospheres; in short, becoming a manager of the meantime.

While the gaps may be closing, it is not as if these post-industrial places and their temporary use have disappeared entirely. As the communications director of the development company told me in an interview (see the opening quote), there are other ways to transform the city than through *tabula rasa*, the clean slate of modernist urbanism. Such other ways – the party, as it were – are also described in the literature as the culturalization of cities that involves ‘consciously increasing, intensifying and concentrating signs and atmospheres’ (Reckwitz, 2017b, p. 180) and the aesthetic incorporation of the industrial past (Edensor, 2005; Göbel, 2014). The temporary use of space in the case study can be seen as part of a general aestheticization that describes how urban transformation, rather than taking place through the built environment, takes place atmospherically and by making the senses an integral part of urban transformation (Reckwitz, 2017b). Part of an aesthetic economy, this strategy is aimed at producing insatiable desires (Böhme, 2003). Although the aesthetic economy evidently does not describe all places, it has global repercussions because it depends on other places to satisfy more functional needs in order for it to focus on desires (Massey, 1995, 2005; Sassen, 2000). In the case of Refshaleøen, these tendencies are starting to show in the gradual replacement of industrial functions with leisure: the aestheticized city is not one in which your car is repaired, your water is cleaned, or your food is stored.

Research question and focus

Why undertake such a study in this place, and why now? The phenomenon of temporary urbanism is well known and researched (see e.g., Ferreri, 2021). So is the gentrification that usually follows in its wake (see e.g., Kern, 2022). Both can briefly be described as the strategic use of time and culture to increase the value of a place through subcultures that eventually pave the way for the middle class to move in (Sassen, 2000). Studies have shown that temporary use also brings with it opportunities for subcultural groups, individuals, and economies to temporarily flourish and tactically carve out a space for themselves in the neoliberal city (see e.g., Stevens & Dovey, 2022). However, by and large, both are associated with the eventual material, aesthetic, and socio-economic homogenization of the city, and are consequently often associated with place-based struggles over rights to the city and the privatization of urban public space (Harvey, 1989, 2012). However, such struggles over, and suspicions towards, the use of temporary culture weren’t

evident in my case study. Rather, they gave rise to a cautious hope in the possibility of inhabiting and transforming cities differently, and simultaneously to a sense of loss and nostalgia that existed alongside an acceptance of change. I interpreted this as a form of capitalist realism (Fischer, 2009) that seemed to say: Who can expect a place like this to stay the same?

Clearly, my case was not a ‘classic’ case of the privatization and gentrification of urban space through culture. Place attachments did not clash with change, and the politics of urban transformation seemed to work through hope and nostalgia rather than through displacements, protests, and bulldozers. How was I to understand these phenomena if not through observing place-based resistance towards change and the uprooting of place attachments? In *The Management of the Meantime*, I argue that existing studies of the aestheticization of the city, of which temporary urbanism is but one part, too often focus on the obvious (visible, discursive) politics of neoliberalism and its resistance. Consequently, we overlook the ways in which aestheticizing cities are changing the affective relations between people and places with profound implications for how people engage in their immediate environments. Whilst acknowledging the real effects of privatization and gentrification in the aesthetic economy, I therefore focus on two smaller and often-overlooked aspects of these in the aestheticizing city: the reworking of place attachments and time sensibilities. It was by acknowledging and concentrating on such phenomena observed in the case study that the research question ordering this thesis emerged:

How does aestheticization work through people’s sense of time and their attachments?

In addition to critical studies of the privatization and gentrification of the aestheticizing city, it has also been studied from the point of view of the senses in conjuncture with the atmospheres through which sensory life plays out (Degen, 2008; Pink & Sumartojo, 2019). Material aesthetic transformation of places always involves sensual-perceptive transformations (Reckwitz, 2017a, p. 64). Think of the difference had I studied Refshaleøen in its heyday when it was a shipyard with 8,000 workers and was a seat for the growing self-consciousness of the worker – what sensorium would I have encountered? What role would the place have played in the unionized and civic struggle? What senses of belonging and alienation did it give rise to? From Simmel (2002 [1907]) onwards the study of modernity has been synonymous with the fluxing transformations of sensibility and the senses so often located in the city. *The Management of the Meantime* takes up this stream of work as a starting point to expand research on the aestheticization of urban transformation as a sensory ordering through place attachments and time sensibilities. The findings reach beyond urban spaces and are discussed in relation to the conjunction between the management of time and attachments in contemporary work and organizational atmospheres.

Findings and conceptual debates

By way of introduction, I briefly outline some of the study's main findings, centred on place attachments and time, and relate them to existing literatures with and against which the findings have been theorized. I draw on literature from both organization studies and human geography.

Place attachments in urban transformation

The study found that the transformation of Refshaleøen is bound up with local, temporary renters' place attachments in complex ways. Instead of being merely private emotions running from 'the inside' of subjects towards 'the outside' of their environments, place attachments seemed to circulate collectively as hope and nostalgia, giving shape and value to the space as much as they described individual ways of relating. First, place attachments were expressed as hope: they allowed locals to invest in the place, to build a new theatre stage or plan the next exhibition with the hope of having their contracts extended for yet another year and to have the future of permanent transformation postponed. They allowed locals to participate in the continuous production of a shared atmosphere of a place that everyone agreed was different from the 'normal' city. Second, place attachments were expressed as nostalgia, sometimes by the same locals who were also hopeful, and sometimes by those who did not quite see themselves as capable of investing in the future. Nostalgia reverberated in the sentence 'this place is the last one of its kind', by which so many people I met seemed to indicate that it was just a matter of time before the 'normal' would catch up with the place. Place attachments were expressed as a longing for what the place used to be – perhaps the sensory sentimentality (the smell of the ice cream shop referred to in the opening quote) – but also as a deep appreciation for what it still was, albeit in light of the anticipation of its end.

In addition to this affective presence of place attachments, I realised place attachments were also present as a management concern in the private development company. Too little of it, and temporary renters would not invest in the shared spaces and atmospheres that together created and sustained the buzz of the temporary, that affective and atmospheric 'more' that Böhme (2003, p. 72) calls the aesthetic economy's staging value. Too much of it, however, and locals would start to form too-fixed ideas of how the place 'really' was or should become. After all, as the director of the development company said during several meetings, places change all the time, right? By shortening renters' contracts and by systematically not making any promises and keeping the future open, the private development company kept place attachments light, ready to move on.

Theoretical perceptions of place attachments

The concept of place attachment is often tied to the place-based struggles of communities which try to preserve an identity, history, or materiality of a place when faced with drastic changes. Consequently, place attachments are either associated with safe, familiar relations to a local place (Cresswell, 2009; Tuan, 1977) that can be mobilized by a place-based politics (Courpasson et al., 2017; Shortt, 2015; Taylor & Spicer, 2007) or with the problematic fixing of identity and space that leads to essentialism. The latter view is expressed in the work of Marxist and feminist human

geographers (see e.g., Massey, 1991, 2005) as well as in the processual study of space in organization studies, where the problematic sides of place attachments are exposed. They argue that the safe and stable concept of place and place attachments relies on a representational view of space that fixes space and deprives it of politics by excluding the possibility of change (Beyes & Holt, 2020; Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Ratner, 2020).

From this brief look into conceptual debates in both human geography and organization studies, we see that place attachments conjure up contentious conceptual distinctions between stability and change, fixity and movement, conservatism and progressiveness. These debates freeze our understanding of place attachments in the kind of place-based struggles that my case did not display. Research on contemporary work arrangements in the context of the aesthetic economy show a different sensitivity to attachments that do not ‘put up a fight’. In studies of co-working, attachment to a shared space can be essential for creating a sense of organizational endurance (Cnossen & Bencherki, 2019), circulating and maintaining passion (Resch et al., 2021) and creating an atmosphere that can hold a collective and its illusive products together (Dey et al., 2016; Waters-Lynch & Duff, 2021). Similarly, there are studies of how attachments create ambivalent affective structures with which we hold on to something even if it might be harmful to us (Ashcraft, 2017; Otto & Strauß, 2019). Here, attachments point us in the direction of the ‘stickiness’ of affect (Ahmed, 2014) that holds spaces (whether material, institutional, or ideological) together. Especially the work of Lauren Berlant has contributed to the thesis’ conceptualization of attachments as complicated relations in ways that exceed the dualisms in the conceptual debates sketched out in the above.

I draw on and critically assess studies of place attachments in human geography and the spatial turn in organization studies. I also depart from them in order to understand and analyse the place attachments observed in my case study, and how they relate to the aestheticization of urban space in the aesthetic economy. In doing so, I explore the potential of recent feminist work on affect and attachments to account for the complicated dependencies in and to space that cannot be grasped through traditional notions of (place-based) identity and resistance.

Temporal orders and a sense of change in urban transformation

The study also found that temporary urbanism reworks people’s time sensibilities. Temporary urbanism established a dominant temporal order that far exceeded an understanding of the temporary as a stretch of time with a clear beginning and an end. I highlight two findings that relate to this point: how change was sensed, and how the temporary gave value to some practices and materialities over others. First, the study showed how the temporal order of the temporary influenced locals’ sense of change. At various points during the fieldwork, locals would sense the ‘end’ of temporary urbanism to be either near or far away. The end was a moving target that kept demanding a hypervigilance of locals to ‘read’ the temporal situation and adjust their decisions accordingly. Locals also kept referring to urban transformation and change as ‘not yet here’, as

something still in the future. As the temporary created a state of exception, ‘real’ urban development was located somewhere outside the present. One of the consequences of this was that gradual changes to the place were not perceived as changes as such, but just an ever-evolving state of temporariness. As an employee of the development company suggested in an interview, maybe it would be more precise to think of the temporary as simultaneity, suggesting a smooth transition rather than a hard deadline. While he of course meant to take some of the pressure and drama off anticipating ‘the end’, one of the problems of this, as the thesis will show, is that it postpones the future and thereby makes it incontestable, an open promise that has yet to deliver and therefore cannot be criticized.

Second, the temporal order of the temporary also worked by giving value to some temporary practices and materialities over others. For instance, the well-known aesthetics of the temporary – the movable container, the urban garden that can be uprooted again, the temporary experimental structures of architecture students – was favoured over improvements to basic infrastructure. Locals suspected the development company did not want to give an impression of permanence by repairing the holes in the ground or putting up streetlights. These material investments and disinvestments became part of how people sensed what kind of temporality was valued in the place. When it came to temporary practices, the temporal order was one of constant renewal. This demanded a constant flexibility of the local renters, and a willingness to move on while paradoxically, as just described, the temporary postponed a knowable and therefore contestable future. This imperative of flexibility towards uncertainty – an entrepreneurial skill that not everyone possessed – showed how the temporal order valued certain temporal practices over others. It also pointed to how temporality and materiality worked together to maintain a temporal order.

Theoretical perceptions of time and temporary urbanism

Existing research has pointed to how temporary spaces become hubs of an aestheticized city animated by an aesthetic economy that shifts capitalism’s orientation from innovation on a cognitive level to innovation on the level of the senses through constant efforts at aesthetic renewal (Reckwitz, 2017b, p. 89ff). While temporary use can happen bottom-up, research shows that it is increasingly also being used as a state-endorsed policy to promote cities and stimulate economic growth. In the light of such research, temporary urbanism is part of the logic of the projective city (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005), a city made up by the endless succession of temporary projects. Organizational literature on temporary forms of organizing in the project economy has studied what the temporary does to efficiency, decision making, and permanent institutional contexts (Bakker et al., 2016; Burke & Morley, 2016; Kenis et al., 2009; Lundin & Soderholm, 1995). Few of these studies, however, take an interest in what the temporary does to people’s time sensibilities.

Exceptions are studies of the affective pressures of the temporary; for instance, in Garsten’s research on temporary workers who find themselves forced to constantly uproot themselves, with detrimental consequences for their sense of self and continuous place in a community (1999, 2008). Costas (2013) also problematizes the societal valorisation of liquidity, flow, and fluidity alive in the

idea of the global mobile elite. These studies resonate with what Sharma (2014) has called a power-chronography, one that traces the uneven distribution and valuation of time across different places and social groups.

While far more critical of the phenomenon of temporary projects, most urban studies of temporary urbanism are centred on critical empirical explorations of its many material manifestations (pop-up shops, food markets, containers, festivals, co-working spaces) and provide succinct analysis of its socio-spatial consequences (Andres & Kraftl, 2021; Ferreri, 2021). Surprisingly few studies, however, conceptualize time (although see Madanipour, 2017) to understand how the temporary changes urban space, including people's sense of change or time sensibility. Again, I look to studies of precariousness in the context of aesthetic labour (Gregg, 2015; Hitchen, 2021) as bound up with the politics of hope (Alacovska, 2019; Ringel, 2021) and nostalgia (Bonnett, 2015) to find inspiration for a more 'power-chronographic' understanding of how the temporary works affectively and materially. Elaborating on the role of time sensibilities – the ways in which people sense and are affected by change – in the aesthetic transformation of urban space, I place my study in conversation with such critical work on time and affect.

Contributions

To answer the research question, the thesis offers a conceptual and methodological framework with which to understand how place attachments and time sensibilities are reworked in the transformation of urban spaces (Chapters 1-3). It also presents a series of academic papers (Chapters 4-7) with each their contributions related to these issues, summarized below. In addition to these contributions and their journal-specific contexts, the discussion (Chapter 8) details overarching contributions related to the study of aestheticization in urban transformation and the management of the meantime.

Paper 1

An analytical sensorisation of MOS sensory methodologies

The first paper of the thesis, 'The Sensory Imperative' (published in *Management Learning* and co-authored with Robin Holt), contributes to the recent interest in sensory and non-representational methodologies in management and organization studies. Its main contribution is to propose an *analytical sensorisation* of sensory and non-representational methodologies – one that is less about the researchers' own senses and affect, and more about the sensory orders of those whom we intend to study.

While enthusiastic about the admittance of the senses into social and organizational research, the paper describes and problematizes a tendency to use the senses as a shortcut to criticize and escape representation. This tendency (which we call the sensory imperative) is found first in the elevation of *closeness* (as opposed to cognition and abstraction) into a methodological ideal and second, relatedly, in the positioning of the senses on the *margins* of both research and knowledge. We argue that sensory methodologies, when understood as giving immediate access to the emancipatory

politics of everyday life, overlook a myriad of ways in which the senses are ordered and order everyday life; ways in which the senses are not marginalized, but central to the sensory and affective structuring of society. Beyes & Jørgensen (2023, p. 10f) are alive to this when drawing our attention to the situated histories of attunement, the seduction of atmospheres, and, most importantly for the present study of attachments, the *terms of the relations between different bodies*. In the spirit of this ‘dark side of atmospheric enrapture’, the paper (and thereby the methodology of the thesis) contributes to less optimistic and more analytically-attuned studies of affective atmospheres.

Paper 2

A pragmatic sociology perspective on ethnography

The second paper of the thesis, ‘Engaging with Engagement – ethnographic sensitivity in the sociology of regimes of engagement’ (co-authored with Marie Leth Meilvang, Magnus Paulsen Hansen and Mathilde Hjerrild-Carlsen) is currently in revision at the *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*. The paper continues the methodological interest in non-representational methodologies and their relation to representation raised in the first paper but does so from the specific analytical framework of French pragmatic sociology. We contribute to research using the sociology of regimes of engagement by unfolding the hitherto implicit ethnographic requirements necessary to get the most out of this rich analytical framework. The paper also contributes to more general ethnographic debates, with particular emphasis on a kinship with non-representational methodologies.

The paper explores similarities and differences between the ethnographic sensitivity of the sociology of regimes of engagement and current interests in non-representational, affective, and sensory methodologies. We show that they share a concern for the unspoken, affective, and embodied practices but with very different intentions. Non-representational methodologies are motivated by the idea of getting closer to immediate experience to remedy some of the shortcomings of a detached, linguistic approach to knowledge. The sociology of regimes of engagement, on the other hand, is interested in the transformation of the unspoken, affective, and embodied into common formats. We argue this requires ethnographic methods that are as sensitive to the non-representational layers of experience as suggested in recent, ‘post-qualitative’ methods. However, we show through three focal points – plurality, investment, and versatility – how the sociology of regimes of engagement provides insights into the relation between the non-representational and existing communicative and political formats.

Paper 3

A twist to organization studies’ swirling spatial turn

The third paper of the thesis, ‘How Space Holds’ (recently presented at *Organization Theory*’s winter workshop 2024 and intended for submission to this journal after the defence), contributes to the spatial turn in organization studies and furthers the disciplinary dialogue between human geography and spatio-organizational analysis. The paper contributes with a reworked concept of

place attachments that can shed light on how place attachments work ‘beyond belonging’ in contemporary spatial politics. The paper also continues the topographical imagination of organization studies’ spatial turn (Beyes & Holt, 2020) by exploring the limits of relational spatial thinking through attachments.

The paper starts from the concept of place attachment and politics of place and traces the implications of the gradually more processual and relational turn towards space or *spacing*. The paper shows how attachment as both concept and lived experience is taken hostage in the critique of essentialist, representational notions of place. Human geographers such as Doreen Massey – proponent of the relational turn on which organization studies’ spatial turn draw – have long sought to expand the concept of place attachment to reconcile with the desire it expresses, despite its sometimes-problematic political mobilization. I argue that recent feminist and cultural affect theory offers a much more nuanced understanding of how attachments work, how they are formed and maintained, than do the dualisms of place/space discussions that currently shape the use and critique of the concept of place attachment.

Paper 4

Adding a plurality of agencies to future-making

The third paper of the thesis, ‘Feeling the Future’ (intended for submission to *Organization Studies* after the defence), contributes to organizational studies of future-making and in particular to the recent call to pluralize our understanding of performative, sensory, and everyday forms of future-making. It contributes with a study of how the future feels in temporary urbanism and proposes that in addition to the ongoing pluralization of tools and skills, we also need to understand how future-making involves different agencies. The aim of the paper is to sensitize the emerging research field on future-making towards the politics that influences the way we feel, imagine and practice the future.

Studies of future-making start from a disenchantment with the idea of a fixed future waiting ahead. Consequently, the concept of future-making embraces uncertainty and the radical openness of the future. This paper shows that while promising, open-ended futures can also become subject to the politics of time such as in the strategic use of temporariness in urban planning. Through an analysis of how actors perceive the future and their agency in the context of temporary urbanism, the paper advances a more political perspective on future-making. The paper argues that despite an interest in pluralizing practices of future-making, studies hold on to a strong sense of agency with which actors imagine, project, and otherwise perform the future. This means that other, less agentic ways of relating to the future are overlooked. Far more consequential, however, is that they overlook the ways in which the experience of the future as open and negotiable, or closed and destructive, are an expression of the politics of time that gives value to specific future-making practices.

Overview of the papers

	Paper 1 Chapter 4	Paper 2 Chapter 5
Title and publication status	<p>‘The Sensory Imperative’ <i>Co-authored with Robin Holt</i></p> <p>Published in <i>Management Learning</i></p>	<p>‘Engaging with engagement: Methodological sensitivity in the sociology of regimes of engagement’ <i>Co-authored with Marie Leth Meilvang, Magnus Paulsen Hansen and Mathilde Hjerrild-Carlsen</i></p> <p>Re-submitted to <i>The European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology</i> after first round of revision</p>
Research question	Should the senses be objects or means of study in sensory methodologies?	What does a methodological sensitivity entail in the sociology of regimes of engagement, and how is it related to sensory, affective, and embodied ethnographies?
Theoretical debates	The recent sensory turn in MOS, representation, politics of methods	Non-representational methodologies, French pragmatic sociology, engaged research
Main findings and contribution	<p>The paper identifies a sensory imperative - an uncritical embrace of the idea that the senses offer a unique methodological and political position.</p> <p>It proposes an ‘analytical sensorisation’ to sensory methodologies in MOS: increased awareness of the mediation of the senses and affect in social analysis.</p>	<p>The paper identifies a gap in knowledge about the methodological implications of French pragmatic sociology for ethnography.</p> <p>It situates the sociology of regimes of engagement in recent, post-qualitative methodologies, and points to important differences between the two regarding representation, the cognitive, and morality.</p>
<p>Role in answering the research question: How does aestheticization work through people’s sense of time and their attachments?</p>		
Function in the thesis	Provides methodological reflections on how to study the senses and affects as aspects of sensory orders, in this case the aesthetic organization of the city.	Provides methodological reflections on how to study the politics of familiar attachments and the importance of attending to people’s ordinary representations to understand how they are affected.

Overview of the papers

	Paper 3 Chapter 6	Paper 4 Chapter 7
Title and publication status	<p>‘How Space Holds – a reworked concept of place attachments’ <i>Single authored</i></p> <p>Recently presented at <i>Organization Theory’s</i> workshop (February 2024) and intended for submission to this journal</p>	<p>‘Feeling the future – a case study of temporary urbanism’ <i>Single authored</i></p> <p>Intended for submission to <i>Organization Studies</i></p>
Research question	How can we understand place attachments as contentious sites for exploring the affective relations between people and places?	If the future is no longer a neutral temporal space but a field of projectivity, how do we account for varying experiences of and capacities to take part in this projection?
Theoretical debates	The spatial turn in org. studies, human geography, affect theories of attachment	Future-making, practice theory, affect and time, temporary organizing
Main findings and contribution	<p>The concept of place attachment is found at odds with a processual view of space due to inherent place/space dualisms.</p> <p>The paper proposes a reworked concept of place attachment by combining spatial thinking with feminist theories on attachment.</p>	<p>Future-making acknowledges the everyday making of the future through actors’ projective capacity to imagine and realize desired possibilities.</p> <p>The paper shows that future-making also comes in weaker, less productive, forms. It also shows that future-making is defined in relation to dominant temporal orders – here, the temporary as upheld by temporary urbanism.</p>
<p>Role in answering the research question: How does aestheticization work through people’s sense of time and their attachments?</p>		
Function in the thesis	Reconceptualises place attachments as a collective, dynamic, and temporal phenomenon. Helps to understand the relation between subjectivity and space.	Points to the temporal aspect of navigating change in the aesthetic economy with the case of temporary urbanism.

Structure of the dissertation

The thesis consists of two main parts following this introduction: A framing (Chapters 1-3) and four papers (Chapters 4-7). It ends with a concluding discussion that draws lines between the framing and the papers, suggests future research and reflects on some of the practical implications of the study (Chapter 8).

Chapter 1. The introduction to the empirical site unfolds as a process narrative of my ethnography. Here, I introduce the case study and the emergence of the empirical phenomenon of temporary urbanism and aestheticization of cities using both empirical material and theoretical sources.

Chapter 2. The theoretical background chapter gives a brief overview of the literature with which I study and understand the case: the senses, attachments, and time. They should be seen as an addition to the more specific conceptual framings in each of the papers, and as such they provide a roadmap with which to read the papers. Taken together, these three conceptual circuits (the senses, attachments, and time) constitute my framework for studying urban transformation in the aesthetic economy.

Chapter 3. The methodology consists of two steps. First, I explain how an abductive analytical strategy helped me to case my empirical material and how I used concepts in the process of analysis. Second, I outline my methodological considerations for doing a spatial ethnography, including detailing my key methods and providing an overview of my empirical material.

Chapter 4-7. After the framing chapter, I present the four papers summarized above. The first paper is a methodological paper that sets the scene for the study of urban transformation as a sensory-perceptive rather than physical transformation process. It does so by discussing how research can become attuned to the study of how social orders work through the senses. The second paper elaborates on the problem of closeness, also raised in the first paper, by exploring the methodological and political question of how to study what is close to people. The paper sheds light on the ethnographic implications of using the sociology of regimes of engagement and compares these to non-representational methodologies to explore differences and similarities in ambitions and methods. Taken together, these two papers can be seen as the methodological foundation for the subsequent conceptual and empirical exploration of attachments and time.

The third paper is a conceptual contribution to the interdisciplinary field between human geography and the spatial turn in organization studies. Here, I unfold the concept and lived experience of place attachments. The paper queries the relation between space, place, attachments, and politics, and argues that the concept of place attachment can be reworked through recent theories of attachment. While not an empirical analysis, this paper is deeply informed by my case study of how attachments work in the aesthetic economy of temporary urbanism.

The fourth paper is an empirical analysis of the role of time and projective (future-oriented) agency in temporary urbanism. It analyses how urban transformation produces differentiated experiences of time as feelings of open and closed futures, and contributes with a political understanding of future-making. It takes up the sociology of regimes of engagement, also the analytical framework of the second paper, to focus on how the future is imagined differently in the familiar and the explorative regime of engagement.

Chapter 8. Concluding discussion. Following the papers, I draw and discuss lines between the theoretical framework and insights from the papers and the empirical study as a whole to suggest future research on, and implications of, the management of the meantime.

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Links

Map 1 https://kp19.kk.dk/sites/default/files/2020-12/retningslinjer_kreative_zoner_1.pdf

Map 2 <https://kp19.kk.dk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Kommuneplan%2019%20Engelsk%2003.pdf>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE EMPIRICAL PLACE

This is an introduction to the ‘ethnographic place’ of Refshaleøen. The ethnographic place is a term I borrow from Pink (2009, p. 42) to distinguish between the place in which I have done my fieldwork, and the place I have constructed through my ‘combining, connecting, and interweaving of theory, experience, reflection, discourse, memory and imagination’. It is a collection of stories-so-far (Massey, 2005, p. 95) rather than an attempt to give the reader an accurate or complete picture of what this place is. The introduction does, however, aim to give a thick description of the site as I have constructed it through field notes, recordings of talk and meetings, images, and interviews. This is particularly important given that much of this material is not directly included in the papers of the thesis. Nevertheless, it informs the theoretical framing of the thesis and its conceptualisation of the management of the meantime.

Field trips

‘This view over the city, it has changed so much!’ S. took me back to the first time he jumped the fence with his brother to explore the area, back then closed off by fences and with a guard controlling the main gate, a relic from its not-that-distant industrial past. The brothers stumbled upon the remaining parts of the shipyard’s canteen building, where they found coffee cups and saucers with the imprint of the name of the shipyard, Burmeister & Wein (B&W), still on the tables as if the workers had just got up and left after a break. This was in the late 90s but, as S said, ‘t’s gone now, like all of the rest’.¹ An employee of the private development company recalled in an interview² how he found the very same coffee cups and saucers at a flea market far away from Refshaleøen and brought them back to the island where they now live a strange afterlife in the stylishly renovated headquarters of the private development company. On the land where the canteen used to be, an urban farm and community garden is growing organic vegetables after having replaced two metres of polluted soil, which carried the traces of shipyard industry, with new, clean soil. Next to the garden, containers are used to grow mushrooms on waste materials; they are sold to fancy restaurants around the city. It is not just the view over the city that is changing, as S. remarked. As these examples show, industry is being replaced with functions that are more geared towards an aesthetic city made up of, and made for, experiences.

On my first trips to this place, Refshaleøen, I didn’t have to jump any fences or sneak past a guard. I could bike here, following the new bicycle and pedestrian bridges built over the past years to redirect the flows of the city and turn former urban fringes, such as this place, into emerging centres. I took photographs of constellations of mailboxes mounted on improvised steel structures and fences (the date on the photographs is October 2019).³ The mailboxes, with their names of local actors who rent spaces, map a changing community. While some have been around for 20 years, others just recently put their name on a mailbox.



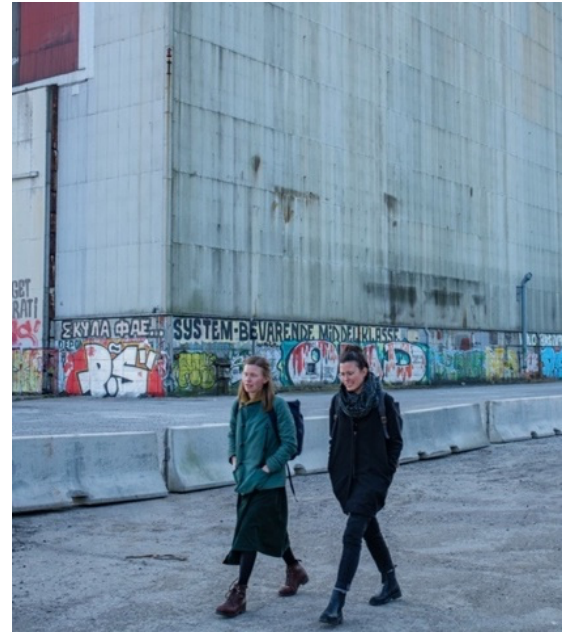
The names indicate a variety of users, from auto mechanic to distillery. Around that time, fascinated by the clash between the material traces of the industrial past and the neighbourhood this place was in the process of becoming, I also took many photographs of holes in fences, broken streets, and furniture randomly left, looking like theatre props in the middle of the vast emptiness. Perhaps my photographs could be accused of aestheticizing the decay, but there was something very liberating about being in a space that seemed so unregulated, so free to take different forms according to its users.

¹ Interview with local S, 4.5.2022.

² Interview with former employee of the development company, 10.11.2020.

³ The images in this chapter are all from my fieldwork.

Talking to people during these walks, and later as part of my participant observations in a local association and more formal walking interviews with locals, I heard many variations of the sentence ‘this place is the last one of its kind ...’. This collective feeling of appreciation for the place was ambivalently expressed through the implied anticipation of its end. With reference to other places in the city that had gone through urban transformation and consequently been ‘destroyed’, people had a sense of what might happen here, too. Yet, as the photographs clearly documented, ‘it’ had not happened here yet. There was a *feeling* among locals that the place was changing, but this felt change was strangely absent from the physical space that looked as random and unregulated as ever. Was this just a case of collective sentimentality? After all, as the director of the development company said during several public meetings in the years to come, places change all the time.



Of course, the question of change – in this case, urban transformation – assumes the stability of something that came before and raises the impossible question of what a place is before it is transformed, and what it becomes through transformation. In the following, I introduce the site of my case study along with an introduction to the empirical phenomena and policy contexts of temporary urbanism and aestheticization of the city in Copenhagen. The introduction also presents empirical material (policy documents, interviews, field notes, and workshops) that tells the story of how the site has changed in the period from 1996 – the year when it went from being a shipyard to a temporary wasteland – until today, and how that change is lived and experienced by locals.

A brief history of the site

From 1878 until 1996, Refshaleøen was home to Denmark’s largest shipyard, Burmeister & Wein. In its heyday it had 8,000 workers and northern Europe’s strongest workers union. The shipyard was built on an artificial island that gradually expanded as the shipyard grew towards its current 115 hectares. Officially, the site called Refshaleøen (named after its shape, the tail of a fox) has now been on hold for 27 years. The beginning of the long period of temporary use, of which some would say we are now approaching the end, began with the bankruptcy of the shipyard B&W in 1996, following the general decline of industry in the harbour fronts of northern European big cities. The site was given to the creditors, four Danish pension funds, which founded the holding company Refshaleøens Ejendomsselskab that now manages the site as both landlord and developer. Following the bankruptcy, the owners decided to rent out the decaying industrial buildings cheaply while the land was left to generate value with the sheer passing of time. Before

the bankruptcy could have been foreseen, a municipal plan from 1992⁴ had ‘locked’ the place in its function as a shipyard industry, which meant that new functions could only be implemented through dispensations. Moving forward randomly through dispensations rather than a plan, a long period of unregulated, temporary use followed from the bankruptcy.



Other large sites in the city were similarly traded in a complex plan to save the city from economic stagnation: neighbourhoods were built up, the trajectory of the future metro used to eventually populate them, and the fabric of the city changed and privatized over the years (Bisgaard, 2010). Refshaleøen was parked in the municipal plans as a ‘perspective area’, a planning technical term used about areas that are waiting in line while other large development projects are realized. In the meantime, the place attracted renters who saw a potential in either the scale of the buildings, the ruinous atmosphere, the cheap rent, or the isolation of the site. While only four kilometres from the city centre, the site was cut off from it by poor infrastructure and, once you got to the island, there was a gate controlling all entry. Many of the first temporary renters were creatives, but because of the low rent and the

vast spaces it also became home to space-consuming enterprises such as car wreckers and storage of everything from rice to props from the Royal Theatre.

An employee of the development company⁵ told me that in 2006 they decided there were so many holes in the fences they might as well open the gate permanently. Many locals refer to this as a turning point in the history of the site, when access was no longer regulated by industrial control mechanisms such as ID cards and gates’ opening times. The director of the development company referred to this point as a change in mindset, the point from which the development company deliberately tried to ‘create something’.⁶ Still, the opening of the gates was just a spatial opening that had yet to be followed up by the strategic opening of the site and for the years to come, it remained a distant place where taxis refused to go because they perceived it as dangerous. Only later, in an appendix to the municipal plan from 2011, under the prosaic subtitle ‘Building wishes’, was it stated that the owners of the site wanted to use temporariness as a strategy for the long-term development of their property by opening the area to the rest of the city and by adding new life and identity to it.⁷ Temporary use is, in accordance with literature analysing the phenomenon of temporary urbanism (Madanipour, 2016; Ferreri, 2021), described in the document as ‘regulated through temporary leases, and all projects are initiated on the premise of temporariness, flexibility

⁴ See references for link to the municipal plan of 1992.

⁵ Interview with former employee of the development company, 10.11.2020.

⁶ Director of the development company at public citizen workshop, 4.3.2023.

⁷ See references for link to appendix to the municipal plan.

and rentability’.⁸ Although the model was the same as in the past – renting out spaces while waiting for permission to develop – the strategic as opposed to unregulated use of the temporary slowly started changing the place towards its current form.

Temporary urbanism

Temporary urbanism is by now a well-established policy tool in urban transformation that describes the strategic use of temporary activities, renters, and spaces to fill the ‘meantime’ of sites that, for different reasons, are on hold as they await development (see e.g. Andres, 2013; Madanipour, 2018). Temporary urbanism comes in many forms, and ranges from this strategic, state-endorsed use to more tactical, bottom-up appropriations of spaces – often former industrial spaces in the urban fringes – that have yet to be incorporated by neoliberal planning regimes (Mould, 2014; Stevens & Dovey, 2022). In the case of Refshaleøen, temporary urbanism has gone through different



phases (see timeline at the end of this chapter), as the above history of the site begins to indicate. In its current form, temporary urbanism can be seen as an open promise. The promise of the temporary city is that it *may* provide an (ironically, permanent) antidote to the closure associated with formally planned, homogenous urban spaces. Capturing the dynamics of this promise of the temporary, one local, P, told me: ‘If we want it [any kind of promise] in writing, we won’t get it. But if we can wait [laughs] then we *might* just get it’.⁹ Another local, T, described the place as timeless and a ‘pause for things to happen’.¹⁰ This feeling of a ‘gap’ in time and space mirrors literature on temporary urbanism that describes how temporary use is often defined in opposition to the ‘permanent’ city both temporally and spatially. Potentially, it provides opportunities for activities and users that otherwise have a hard time finding a place in the neoliberal city with its tightly programmed, monofunctional spaces. Yet for all its promises, people know it will end, and thus the temporary is experienced against a deadline, quite literally, of ‘the permanent’.

Recently, however, the meaning of the temporary seems to be changing. The development company is aware of the insecurities generated by the end that ‘temporary’ implies and has told the association on several occasions that it is working hard to minimize insecurities for the renters. In an interview,¹¹ an employee of the development company also reflected on this, and suggested locals should think of it as simultaneity instead of temporariness. The developers are not interested

⁸ See references for link to ‘*Lokalplan 209 Refshaleøen med tillæg nr. 1*’, p. 15.

⁹ Interview with local P, 9.3.2022.

¹⁰ Interview with local T, 16.12.2020.

¹¹ Interview with employee of the private development company, 15.10.2021.

in replacing the temporary present with a permanent future (the image of the bulldozers which, to some locals, represents the end of the temporary), but rather they want to *fuse* the two. In other words, as recent research on temporary urbanism has noted (Ferrerri, 2021), the temporary is becoming permanent. During a meeting between the development company and the renters, the director asked rhetorically: ‘How do we keep what is going on here alive? There is a nerve in the history of this place, but there is also a nerve in what is going on *today*’.¹² The development company’s task is to find ways to manage the meantime by drawing on the industrial history, but even more importantly by signalling that the temporary present will stay ‘alive’.

Creating cultural and community life before building is now a well-established practice in urban transformation projects, an approach that has taken its lesson from what is commonly perceived as other development projects’ failures. Failure may be either to build up a social and cultural infrastructure prior to building, or to create the conditions for a sustained temporary life rather than a complete replacement of the temporary with the permanent. In Copenhagen it is not only



Refshaleøen, but also other emerging transformation projects such as Jernbanebyen and Nordhavn (marked on the map presented on the first page of the introduction), that are explicit about how they will avoid these failures of the past. Thus, we are seeing the contours of a major management task in urban transformation processes, which is to argue for how the temporary becomes permanent without losing the vibe and values the public associates with the temporary. This is exactly what the development company on Refshaleøen intuits when it tried to ‘rebrand’ the temporary as simultaneity.

And who can disagree with the idea of finding ways to maintain the temporary? The seductiveness of the temporary is that it sustains a sense of the unplanned and open. P, the local theatre director, described this sense of temporal openness as a quality of Refshaleøen, not just an element of a strategy: ‘Refshaleøen is a process and not a finished result – how many other places can you describe like that? The rest of the city is finished. We are moving, and we want it to keep moving, to not be finished’.¹³ The spatial and temporal openness of temporary urbanism is of course a central part of its seductiveness as it resists the programming of space, the fixing into plans, and gives culture and creativity a significant role in the making of space. However, it also postpones

¹² Director of the development company in field notes from renters’ meeting, 26.10.21.

¹³ P in field notes from board meeting in the local association, 1.7.21.

the debates on which futures, and for whom, this openness generates. The danger is that simultaneity is used to create a smooth alignment between the present and the future that conceals how temporary use already changes place by favouring certain actors and activities, as the following section shows. It also slides over the precariousness of living under temporary conditions.

Aestheticization of cities

The temporary use of culture is part of a wider political agenda that has nurtured the ground for the aesthetic economy to flourish. As the local renter C intuits, a political shift made it possible to use Refshaleøen in the way it is being used today: ‘[Y]ou cannot build here, the regulations say so; but hey [he gestures casually and ironically], we can probably change that.’ Ten years ago, he says, everyone who wanted permission to make something out here was given a clear ‘no’ with reference to the polluted underground and zoning restrictions. Now, he notes dryly, residents have an urban farm on top of toxics from a shipyard, and people are swimming in the harbour in the very same place where ships, when he first got here twenty years ago, ran aground because the water was so shallow from garbage. The result of this political shift in favour of recreational and temporary use, especially if this use signals something ‘green’, he adds, is that rules are bent: ‘You are not allowed to dig down into the earth, but you can always find a way to build something on top of it; take the student housing over there [containers stacked on top of each other], this would never have been possible previously, something really happened, and this led to Reffen [a street food market also made up of containers], the big music venues, festivals, people running around on polluted ground’.¹⁴



The aestheticization of cities, the effects of which C registers as a shift in the urban political agenda, refers to the emphasis on culture, creativity and aesthetic experiences in spatial transformation (see e.g., Göbel, 2014; Reckwitz, 2017). It also refers to a form of urban transformation that takes place ‘prior to’ physical development. In the urban economy, aestheticization involves the rebranding of former industrial centres into attractive sites for leisure and tourism, transforming cities into ‘symbolic and aesthetic centres of culture’ (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 173). In *The Invention of Creativity*, Reckwitz sheds light on how the aestheticization of cities has become a significant aspect of what he calls the creativity dispositif. The creativity dispositif describes how creativity comes to

¹⁴ Interview with local C, 3.2.2022.

permeate all social spheres, not just those directly concerned with culture and arts. The importance of the city to modern society means that its aestheticization is central for the ways in which the creativity dispositif asserts its power (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 177). Reckwitz acknowledges that cities have of course always been cultural but distinguishes between this general understanding of culture and a reflexive use of culture which is ‘geared to consciously increasing, intensifying and concentrating signs and atmospheres in the city’ (2017, p. 180). It also involves the reappropriation of buildings from previous, industrial epochs that, devoid of their former function, are turned into ‘bearers of a postmodern industrial aesthetic’ (2017, p. 175).

C, a long-time local, notices how the area has ‘exploded’ in the past 5-10 years: ‘The whole strategy for the area is different, before it was just businesses, now it’s an open public place. There was a guard by the gate, you needed to show an ID card. Of course, more and more people came, but in our end, it was just me, the steel company and then small businesses who came and went (...) over there [he points to the place where today there is a food market] there was a large car wrecker (...)’.¹⁵ The gradual replacement of activities – from car wrecker to food market, from canteen to urban farm – and the shift from managing the space as a private site with renters like auto mechanic and steel company to a public, recreational neighbourhood, both mirror and locally play out a symbolic and material recoding necessary for the rise of the aesthetic economy.

In the process of aestheticizing urban life to appeal to a mainstream audience, industry is slowly being replaced by creative businesses and another way of using the place. C experiences this first-hand as his business is now surrounded by people who, it seems to him, have nothing to do but to eat, drink, and enjoy life all day. ‘We know we are not the ones they [the development company] want to invest in (...) The time isn’t ripe for it, we are the kind of business that is not supposed to be here, we are supposed to be somewhere else’.¹⁶



Reflecting C’s observations, the development company sees it as its job to nurture ‘the crooked, the creative, the entrepreneurial’.¹⁷ It does this by, among other things, fostering connections between different renters, supporting events and spurring ideas.¹⁸ The development company has an employee, a cultural manager, devoted to this curatorial aspect of managing the meantime. Throughout the period of my fieldwork, I notice a shift in the way the development company increasingly claimed a stake – perhaps rightfully so – in the making of the atmosphere and identity of the site. This curatorial effort resonates with what Boltanski and Chiapello (2005, p. 109ff)

¹⁵ Interview with local C, 3.2.2022.

¹⁶ Interview with local C, 3.2.2022.

¹⁷ Field notes from renters’ meeting, 26.10.21.

¹⁸ Interview with cultural manager of the development company, 25.2.22.

observe as the projective (as opposed to the industrial) city's reliance on activity and the making of connections. The development company has succeeded in attracting cultural entrepreneurs – e.g., the international art centre Copenhagen Contemporary and the street food market Reffen – which in turn attract a large and largely affluent customer base. These actors have, because of their mainstream appeal, contributed to the recoding of Refshaleøen from what appeared to many as a 'non-neighbourhood' into a place worth visiting.

The recoding also involves working on the materiality of the site. The development company invited renters to a 'wayfinding workshop', another step in the strategic and material opening of the site. The workshop displayed the challenges involved in keeping an atmosphere of 'the crooked' and alternative while also wanting to facilitate the experiences of a rapidly growing audience that needs to find its way without too much effort.¹⁹ The workshop also showed how the development company works with sense perceptions and moods before actual, architectural changes in order to make 'old quarters appear *new*, (...) something to be *discovered*' (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 189 emphasis in original). For every vacant space, the development company says it can now choose between fifty potential renters. This gives it the opportunity to curate the site through the careful selection of renters, and to gradually replace 'dead things with urban life'²⁰: storage and car wreckers with audience-oriented renters such as an urban farm, paddle board tennis courts, and event spaces. J, a local carpenter, recently supplemented his wood workshop – a closed production space – with a 'winter garden' consisting of outdoor hot tubs and saunas, to appeal to this logic and thereby increase his chances of staying in the future.

The value of culture

Although the temporary use of the site for culture and art started out as a necessary condition – renting out derelict post-industrial buildings while waiting for the municipality's permission to build – today it is perceived as a successful strategy that might have lasting effects on the place. At a meeting between the local association and the developer, an employee explains – and he repeats this point in an interview later – that the owners (the pension funds) are increasingly becoming aware of the value that culture brings to the place. The local actors are aware of this too. P, a theater director, says: 'We have gone from being a necessary evil to being of value [pause] – or at least, the energy here has gained value'.²¹ His hesitation and then distinction between the cultural actors as valuable *themselves* and *the energy they create* as valuable is succinct. As cultural actors they are in a strange and fragile position of power in the aesthetic economy. On the one hand, they provide the very experiential infrastructure which has created the success of the neighbourhood in the first place, and as such the private developers depend on them to turn the neighbourhood into a lively, cultural space. On the other hand, the aestheticization process makes them superfluous: it is the energy, in P's words, that is of value to the developers, while the actors themselves are replaceable.

¹⁹ Field notes from way finding workshop, 6.12.2021.

²⁰ Development company interview, 25.2.22.

²¹ Interview with local P, 9.3.2022.

The process of aestheticization is thus not contradicted by, but supported by, its ability to promote culture and economic value simultaneously (Reckwitz, 2017). The success of the temporary use – measured in the shift from an isolated place to two million visitors a year – means that the development company and its owners publicly recognize the value of the life and atmosphere that has been generated through temporary use over the years.²² This cultural and temporary use is no longer at odds with urban transformation but integral to its logic: temporary use has helped create the social and cultural infrastructure for future development, as the director of the development company expressed it at a recent public meeting.²³ Approaching the point at which it will be permitted to start building, the development company now turns to the task of maintaining the value and atmosphere of the temporary while developing a neighbourhood with 15,000 new housing units and 15,000 new jobs. In local meetings, it recently presented its goal for the development that indicates this ambition to make the temporary part of the future: ‘Refshaleøen wants to become the urban transformation project that succeeds with creating the good transition from the temporary to the permanent city’.²⁴ Turning the temporary into a strategy for permanent development marks a new phase of the temporary (see timeline at the end of this chapter). At this point, temporariness no longer designates a limited period of time but a logic of transformation in which the temporary is what keeps the place constantly open to possibilities and change.

Sensing change

How does this aestheticization influence local actors? In other words, if I were to describe the site through local responses to these developments described in the above, what would it look like? Strangely, locals describe urban transformation as something that has not happened yet. S. says: ‘In the here and now, it’s still a wasteland, there is a tractor, and a vacuum cleaner, and an old boat – it still has this character, and there are still some ambitions not to make this a city as we know it, or at least I hope so, for a while still’.²⁵ Aestheticization works with what is already there. It does not change cities drastically the way a modernist planning approach of ‘tabula rasa’, for instance, did. Aestheticization of the city depends on already existing culture (the ‘wasteland’) that it can rework using signs, history, and atmospheres to generate experiences. As such, the gaps are not disappearing as much as they are reappearing as something else. This, as I discovered, influences the way people sense change.

This form of change, which works with what is already there, complicates sensory experiences of change and stability, and temporal experiences of past and present. I started noticing a local sense of change, almost like a temporal counterpart to a sense of place. While a sense of place, as the second paper will show, is often associated with developing a familiar relation to a place and gets equated with place attachment, a sense of change is oriented towards learning to live in a space

²² Interview with employee of the development company, 15.10.2021.

²³ Field notes from public citizen workshop, 4.3.2023.

²⁴ Field notes from presentation of vision for the future development, 24.8.2023.

²⁵ Interview with local S, 4.12.2020.

that is constantly changing. Like in the common-sense use of ‘a sense of place’ (knowing one’s way around), a sense of change denotes a form of navigation, but an uneasy one that does not settle into a sense of mastering. The sensitivity in this ‘sense of change’ is double. On one hand, it’s the sensitivity involved in a hypervigilance towards ongoing changes. On the other hand, it is also meant to capture a more affective dimension of being sensitive *to* what is going on, a sensitivity which produces affective responses such as feelings of loss, nostalgia, or hope. Locals’ sense of change emerged during fieldwork in their efforts to read ‘the signs’ coming from the private development company; which actors or events do it favour, which buildings get renovated, and whose contracts are extended? In the absence of knowledge (there are no official plans for the site, and a lot of secrecy about future plans) locals read these decisions as signs of the direction that change is taking, and try to adjust, such as in the case of the carpenter who extended his business to an experience-oriented activity.

Interestingly, Cartel et al. (2022, p. 355) note that ‘[t]here is little research on how a future-oriented approach to place affects our sense of place’. The role of time and uncertainty is indicated, though: our sense of place, they speculate, is changed when we know we have to leave soon, just as the ability to imagine the future depends on institutional stability. In its absence, they contend, people have to make up local futures. This thesis is concerned with thinking about how such temporal dimensions of our sense of place turn into a far less stable sense of change. More specifically, the ‘future-oriented approach’ presses itself upon navigation in the context of temporary urbanism that, as Paper 3 on future-making shows, creates a temporal order that values flexibility and constant change. The paper shows how a dominant temporality influences the ways in which people find themselves to be in or out of place.

I also registered this sense of change in expressions of capitalist realism, a term Fischer (2009) used to capture the sense that there is no alternative to capitalism. As a concept, capitalist realism exemplifies how economic discourse shapes emotional life by circumscribing the ability to imagine alternatives. While many locals experience the (anticipated) urban transformation of Refshaleøen as a loss, there is a widespread sense that there is no other way. ‘One knows it cannot stay like this forever,’ C says, “there is a certain plan for the area, and as an owner one also wants to create a revenue”. Here, C places himself in the shoes of the developer (‘as an owner’) to make sense of what is going on and accept things ‘as they are’. In fact, there seems to be a general understanding and recognition of the economic rationale behind the temporary use of culture. One houseboat owner tells me excitedly about the economic value of culture and how a better cultural life means that more affluent people will be interested in moving in.²⁶

While deeply affected by the changes that have brought large crowds of people to picnic and party right outside her boat, another houseboat inhabitant expresses a similar view: ‘Of course this place is somebody’s business, I can understand that. And their selection of cultural renters is spot on.’ She goes on to explain a word she has invented: ‘place-readiness’. It signifies being prepared to

²⁶ Interview with local houseboat owner 2, 14.1.2022.

accept an area as it is, including as it is changing.²⁷ This acceptance or ‘place-readiness’ is a recurrent theme among the houseboat owners who all feel like development is a larger and more important goal than their own interests in keeping the place ‘as it is’. Accepting development is a premise for living and working here: ‘We all went into this with our eyes open’ the theatre director, P, explains to me.²⁸ Others comment self-critically on their own nostalgic tendencies to romanticize the past: ‘Even though I have a super romantic relationship to places like this, old industry and people building stuff, old ships, I understand that someone makes a decision about doing something else, building nice houses, attracting people who can pay some tax money’,²⁹ S. tells me.

‘After’ the temporary?

The ‘perspective area’ was originally set to end in 2021, but has since been moved several times, adjusting to the rhythms of politics, economy, and the trajectory of other development sites. Most recently, the decision to build another artificial island, Lynetteholmen, three times the size of Refshaleøen in the sea next to it, has influenced the timeline and shifted political priorities. As one employee of the development company expressed it, the new development site ‘reaches over’ Refshaleøen and influences decisions about timelines and infrastructure. Currently, development is set to begin in 2031 but there are indications that, because of this new adjacent development site, permission to start building earlier is likely to be given³⁰ What is certain is that, with a series of public workshops and meetings with the renters in early 2023, the development company began to talk publicly about the future. This marked a clear difference compared to when I started fieldwork in 2019, where the future only existed as rumours.

Not only are future plans now talked about explicitly, including open competitions for the development of visions, but the director of the development company also stresses that it they wants to add to what is already there rather than starting from scratch.³¹ By ‘what is already there’ he means both the industrial (and more distant) past as well as the more recent past and the present of temporary use. While the historical past can easily be integrated through symbolic and material reference to the shipyard industry such as the ‘steel line’ that runs through the site, displaying the journey of assembling ships, the more recent or ‘living’ past might prove more difficult to integrate. The director of the development company stresses that although they want to keep as many activities and renters as possible, they cannot make any promises because they must remain ‘flexible to allow for the best development possible’.³² Despite the absence of concrete plans, the transformation is increasingly described as a continuation of, rather than as an end of, the temporary.

²⁷ Interview with local houseboat owner 3, 14.1.2022.

²⁸ Interview with local P, 9.3.2022.

²⁹ Interview with local S, 4.5.2022.

³⁰ Field notes from meeting at the mayor’s office with the board, 19.9.2022.

³¹ Field notes from renters meeting 20.6.22 and competition program.

³² The director of the development company in field notes from renters meeting, 20.6.22.

Timeline

1996 The bankruptcy of the shipyard	2009 Opening of the gates	2011 Perspective area	2023 First end of perspective area status	2031 Current end of perspective area status – building permission
Phase 1 Unregulated temporariness		Phase 2 Temporariness is introduced as a development strategy	Phase 3 Temporariness is used actively to change the social fabric	Phase 4 Temporariness is seen as part of permanent development

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Links

Footnote 4.

<https://www.kk.dk/sites/default/files/agenda/4998159b-80b6-4872-ad73-235059fd3257/1ea4ab9e-e3b1-43de-9653-ea93f31d5a50-bilag-2.pdf>

Footnote 7.

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Footnote 8.

<https://www.kk.dk/sites/default/files/agenda/cd9b7222-ffe4-4090-b8dc-b2182207525a/1214c6a3-7da4-4d38-9e8f-35e683ed9dcc-bilag-1.pdf>

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMING

The theoretical framing reflects the interdisciplinary embeddedness of the thesis. It cuts across organization studies, urban cultural theory, and sociology to create a theoretical framing of the case study of temporary urbanism and the concepts through which it is understood in the thesis' four papers: the senses, attachments, and time. The framing is constructed through three circuits. Each circuit builds on and expands the previous one with the aim of building a cohesive framework for understanding the senses, attachments, and time in the context of the aestheticization of urban space. While the concepts I discuss are also thoroughly engaged with in each of the subsequent papers, I take the theoretical framing as an occasion to place the concepts in the more general context of the aesthetic economy and urban transformation, and to tease out their connections. This will allow me to discuss, in the concluding section of the thesis, how the senses, attachments, and time are all aspects of the management of the meantime.

First circuit: The sensory and aesthetic ordering of the social

The purpose of the first circuit of the theoretical framing is to situate the thesis' conceptual focus on the senses alongside research that similarly conceptualizes the senses as social phenomena that allow us to track social changes. In the case of this thesis, the social phenomena studied through the senses is urban transformation in the aesthetic economy. I present and discuss literature that relates to broad questions about the management of the senses in urban space and in organizational life in the context of the aesthetic economy. This provides a background for the methodological discussion of the senses as an object of research in Paper 1 and Paper 2.

Aestheticization – from uniformity to the harnessing of creative atmospheres

Recent research has shown how urban transformation changes the sensory qualities of places (Degen, 2017a; Göbel, 2014). Here, I would like to turn the question around slightly. Instead of presupposing the role of the built environment in reorganizing the sensory-spatial landscape, I want to use this framing as a prelude to the study of how urban transformation is realized *as* a series of changes to the sensory qualities of places. Temporary urbanism in general, and the case study of this thesis in particular, shows how urban transformation not only takes place as a physical transformation followed by sensory changes, but is predicated upon such changes. Reckwitz (2017a, p. 56) comes close to this view of urban transformation when writing that '[c]oncealed behind the façade of gentrification, sensory perceptions (visual, auditory and kinetic) and the feeling of the urban are being reorganized'. What is often studied as a set of socioeconomic and material changes (gentrification, privatization) is also, and perhaps primarily, a sensory reorganization of how we feel about a place (Vannini, 2023). Materiality cannot, of course, be separated from this process of reorganizing change and perception, but here I wish to develop the idea that, increasingly, urban transformation is realized through sensory-perceptive transformations prior to, or as a way of, intensifying physical transformation, necessitating studies of how the sensorium organizes life in cities (Beyes et al., 2022; Kalekin-Fishman & Low, 2018).

Studies of urban transformation often emphasize the role of the built environment in reorganizing the sensory-spatial landscape to change formerly derelict and marginalized places into new urban centres. These studies have shown how physical transformation of urban space is tied up with, and is a central way to realize, a cultural, symbolic and social 'recoding' of urban space following the shift from the industrial to the entrepreneurial city (Hall & Hubbard, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Zukin, 1998, 2010). The result is new experiential landscapes (Degen, 2017b, p. 144) that, paradoxically, aim to create a particular identity while at the same time being characterized by a global urban aesthetic (Degen, 2008; Reckwitz, 2017b). In the context of this shift towards the entrepreneurial city, David Harvey (1989) observes how, in the late 1980s, urban planning increasingly turned into urban design, resonating with other critiques of how aestheticization led to the visual uniformity of spaces (see e.g., Featherstone, 1991; Zukin, 1995). In these critical studies, urban transformation through aestheticization is linked to a sensory homogenization which turned cities into visual spaces (Degen, 2008, p. 37) dominated by repelling glass surfaces (Sennett, 1990, p. 110), robbed of their sensory and affective ambiguity (Edensor & Sumartojo, 2015, p. 254). Studies

such as Marcuse's (1964) of the one-dimensional man foregrounded this diagnosis of aestheticization as a sensory alienation and impoverishment of aesthetic practices.

A different understanding and critique of aestheticization, however, highlights how it intensifies sensory life rather than reduces it to visual one-dimensionality. Most obviously opposed to visual one-dimensionality is the concept of atmospheres. Böhme (1993) famously declared atmosphere as the fundamental concept of a new aesthetics, one which is concerned with 'the relation between environmental qualities and human states' (1993, p. 114). As such, it is a 'theory of perception in the full sense of the term, in which perception is understood as the experience of the presence of persons, objects and environments' (1993, p. 116). Far from one-dimensional, atmospheres are spatially extended qualities of feeling (Böhme, 1993, p. 18). In later work, Böhme (2003; 2017) relates the concept of atmosphere to the production of the 'more' that goes beyond materiality and practicality, the production of which is at the heart of the aesthetic economy and aesthetic labour. Shifting the fronts of critique, Böhme shows how the aesthetic economy dissolves the difference between being and appearance. From this point of view, aestheticization cannot be criticized as a 'reduction of reality' but must rather be seen as its enhancement. The concept of staging value (2003, p. 72), through which Böhme explains a new type of use value in the aesthetic economy, illustrates this point: while seemingly a visual concern with appearance, staging value is about more than visual display, and aestheticization far exceeds the physical transformation or 'beautification' of cities. While physical and visual transformation is an important means for recoding urban space, atmospheres also play a crucial role in this recoding as organizers of 'the connections between humans and the built environment in the urban sphere' (Göbel, 2014, p. 4; see also Jørgensen & Holt, 2019). Staging value is atmospherically *felt*, and thus dissolves the distinction between the aestheticization of the real (how something feels) and of its appearance (how it looks).

In an influential account of the transformation of urban space in the aesthetic economy, Reckwitz (2017b) also approaches the aestheticization of urban space – or, in his words, culturalization – as an intensification of aesthetic life. Here, cities are becoming 'sites for the permanent production of novel signs and atmospheres' (Reckwitz, 2017b, p. 174). Reckwitz begins from a visually-oriented exposure of how culturalization developed from the aesthetics of loft-living, the interior lay-out of which he pays detailed attention to as a blueprint of how counter-culture came to provide a cultural ideal for creative urban development. As in Böhme's case, Reckwitz does not distinguish between the *appearance* of a postmodern industrial aesthetic and the ways in which it *suffuses* society through a general shift from the functional city (a 'spatial equivalent' to Fordist organized modernity (2017b, p. 178)) to the cultural. The culturalization of cities is seen as an intensification of aesthetic-sensory life because it relies on 'the systematic heightening and concentration of sensuous, affective urban atmospheres with the aim of providing users with sensuous and emotional satisfaction independent of the city's practical functions' (Reckwitz, 2017b, p. 180). The point they make is that aestheticization, or in Reckwitz's term culturalization, is not about the beautification of cities or their visual homogenization as in earlier critiques, but rather the amplification of sensory stimulation and an emphasis on constant aesthetic renewal.

Sensory orders as social orders

While the sensory organization of cities is not a new phenomenon (both gated communities and ghettos have always been used to separate the sensory impressions left on space by different social groups), its role in urban transformation is amplified by the conscious engineering of affect and atmospheres (Thrift, 2004) characteristic of the aesthetic economy, as Böhme and Reckwitz show. The renewed focus on the senses can be seen as necessitated by the urge to understand how the aesthetic economy has managed to turn the senses into social, and therefore socially modifiable, phenomena. This has ironically helped push an integration of the senses into social theories, where they used to be seen as phenomena both too psychological and too emotional to be considered part of the social (Beyes et al., 2022; Reckwitz, 2012). Studies of the city through the senses have consequently focused on the overlooked role of particular senses, such as smell (Low, 2009), sound (T. Butler, 2006), touch, and – as sources of sensory stimuli – colour (Falls, 2021), and walking (Degen & Rose, 2012). Often, these studies set out to remedy the hegemony of vision (P. A. Atkinson et al., 2007, p. 179) – and with it, a tendency to perceive the city through abstraction and distance – that arguably prevented other ways of sensing the city from emerging. The senses are seen as a way to get closer to the emotional life of places, to the feeling of cities (Kaufmann, 2016).

Despite this promise of getting to the overlooked ‘feel’ of cities through the senses, they can also be used to maintain social orders, vulnerable as they are to normativity (Davidson & Brash, 2021, p. 1071). As the above quoted studies all show, the phenomenological encounter with the city is not a neutral one; sense perception follows and produces patterns of perceptibility and imperceptibility, or what Rancière (2004) calls the distribution of the sensible. As Howes (2004, p. 4) points out, ‘social ideologies [are] conveyed through sensory values and practices’, and some ways of sensing (in) the city are valued over others, creating ‘sensory hierarchies’ (Howes, 2006, p. 166) that help draw the contours of social orders. Reckwitz (2017a) similarly contends that social orders are always also sensory orders. This idea is often traced to Simmel’s sociology of the senses. Summing up Simmel’s influence on what has later become known as sensuous geographies (see Rodaway, 1994), Degen distils four insights:

... that sensory perceptions are shaped by social values and underpin social hierarchies and distinctions; that each sense establishes a particular relationship with our surroundings; that senses supplement each other, in other words we sense holistically; and finally, that sensory paradigms transform over time. (Degen, 2017a, p. 93f)

In the context of management and organization studies, Waters-Lynch & Duff (2021) and Endrissat et al. (2021) exemplify how this works. Atmospheres, as created and maintained through affect and the senses, become a management concern that can be leveraged for value production in affective labour. Co-working spaces give rise to ‘tensions between the social production of affective atmospheres and their commodification and private capture’ (Waters-Lynch & Duff, 2021, p. 391). Co-working spaces, in their analysis, depend on sensory investments such as ‘welcoming gestures, smiles and verbal greetings, laughter, expressions and nonverbal

performances of curiosity, encouragement, support and other emotions’ (Waters-Lynch & Duff, 2021, p. 393) that create, along with the material space, an atmosphere. The atmosphere must be recharged constantly, putting pressure on affective labourers to invest themselves. As the authors note, while all spaces arguably have an atmosphere, ‘only the presence of a community with an interest in the quality of the atmosphere as a shared resource’ (2021, p. 391) makes it possible to ‘secure’ affective commons.

Endrissat & Islam (2021) also describe the mechanisms of aesthetic value production through affective relations. In their case, online networks are driven by participants’ desire for social connection and community’ (Endrissat & Islam, 2021, p. 3), a desire which constitutes an affective relation vulnerable to ‘harnessing’. They describe these affective relations and their value production as a ‘binding mechanism that enables organizationality and new modes of value extraction in and through technology’ (Endrissat & Islam, 2021, p. 3). In both cases, it becomes evident how atmospheres (and affect, in the vocabularies of these papers) are part of a new form of performance management that manipulates collective moods (Beyes & De Cock, 2017, p. 66). Both studies show how the tension between personal investment in an ‘affective commons’ and commercial valorisation is at work in processes involving affective labour and the management of its elusive ‘products’ (see Gregg, 2018). To Waters-Lynch & Duff (2021, p. 397f), the answer lies in good management (‘a delicate, curatorial approach’) of affect and atmospheres to secure the ongoing personal investments that will keep the ‘vibe’ or ‘scene’ of the atmosphere going. As such, affect – and by extension, atmospheres – are ‘an intrinsic variable of the late capitalist system’ (Massumi, 2002, p. 45).

Prelude to the first and second paper

The first paper of the thesis, ‘The Sensory Imperative’, details and reiterates this growing field of research with and into the senses and their social structures, although from a methodological point of departure. The paper grapples with the methodological implications of this double admittance of the senses. On the one hand, considering the senses as part of the social brings us closer to the empirical world of lived experience, beyond the hegemony of vision and language, an escape of sorts. On the other hand, considering the senses as part of the social is also an occasion to theorize all the ways in which the senses cannot be separated from cognition and discourse. As such, in addition to a methodological contribution elaborated in the methodology section of the framing, the paper contributes to the theoretical discussions presented in the above on the social ordering of the senses and affect.

In the context of the thesis as a whole, the paper provides a starting point for making attachments an object of study. Attachments belong to the realm of phenomena historically treated as outside the social sphere, an inner possession of individuals at odds with rationality and normative order. The turn to the senses, which is the context for the special issue in which Paper 1 is published, has moved far past a body/mind dualism, making it possible to see attachments (here taken as encompassed by affect and sensual perception) as social phenomena worthy of analysis. But where the turn to the senses is often accompanied by a methodological favouring of the non-representational body over the mind, the paper and the thesis as a whole is interested in teasing

out the intimacy between the senses and representation. Paper 2, ‘Engaging with Engagement’, continues this ambition through the analytical and methodological framework of the sociology of regimes of engagement. Here, we compare the interest in the non-representational, sensory, and affective, to some of the methodological implications of studying social regimes of engagement. We find interesting ways in which giving up on the ambition to represent the embodied and unspoken has both methodological and political consequences. The thesis draws on these insights to further explore how to study attachments, but also to understand their social function.

Second circuit: Forms of attachment

Building on the first circuit, the purpose of the second circuit of the theoretical framing is to understand what kind of sense, if any, is an attachment. What role do attachments play in the aesthetic economy? While the above emphasized the role of atmospheres to illustrate how aestheticization works sensorially, the main concern of this circuit is not with atmospheres but with attachments. I use this circuit to argue for attachments as a central, but overlooked, management concern in urban transformation in the aesthetic economy. In doing so, I contextualize the conceptual interest in place attachments in the third paper of the thesis.

How are attachments sensory?

Sensory impressions engender ‘feelings of like and dislike’ (Simmel, 2002, p. 111). Anderson (2022, p. 9) similarly argues that attachments are relations that give some objects¹ importance over others. We can think of the relation between the senses and attachments along these lines: through sensory impressions that, as the above showed are by no means neutral but mediated through a variety of objects or discourses, some objects come to stand out. Attachments sort sensory impressions into preferences, as Simmel notes, but in ways that dissolve any clear distinction between determined and determining things. Take Merleau-Ponty’s wonderful example of *being honeyed*. The way in which we assess the quality of a sensuous object, he argues, is closely interlinked with the bodily reactions it provokes. Not only will honey, as soon as it is grasped, start to creep away and return to where it came from, but it also ‘reverses the roles’: ‘The living, exploring, hand which thought it could master this thing instead discovers that it is embroiled in a sticky external object’ (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 61). Attachments, sticky as they are, can be seen as sensorially-made distinctions that we simultaneously make and that makes us in return (Hennion, 2017, p. 113).

My suggestion in this section is that attachments offer a finetuning of the idea of the social order of the senses because they allow us to see how some objects are given importance over others in processes where this attribution of importance or quality, of like or dislike, is by no means straightforward. This adds nuance to the idea that sensory impressions engender feelings of like and dislike. Attachments also differentiate, but as Hennion (2017, p. 12) points out, they ‘cannot

¹ An object of attachment can be ‘an abstraction, a feeling, another person, an object, an event, a place, etc.’ (Anderson, 2022, p. 16).

be registered in terms of causes or intentions, structure or determinations'. The first thing to take note of to unfold this idea is that rather than just a word for a relation, attachments are 'differences that matter' (Anderson, 2022, p. 3; Hennion, 2017, p. 117). Making something matter over something else involves some kind of intentional action (more so, at least, than in the case of being honeyed) but it is not exactly an action either (Hennion, 2017, p. 116). Rather, Hennion (2017, p. 117) calls it an *activity-sensibility* that is far from free choice, but closer to the work of the senses. Hennion (2017, p. 117) uses a luring quote from Adorno to exemplify this quasi-action of sensory distinction: 'To love music, one must already love music'.

The politics of attachments

Other conceptualizations of attachment further, and politicize, this dissolution between determined and determining things brought about by the stickiness of attachments. In addition to its origins in psychology and later phenomenology, as Paper 3 describes in a conceptual history of the concept, it has most recently been taken up by queer and feminist theory (see e.g., Berlant, 2011; Brown, 1993; J. Butler, 1997). Here, attachment is often used to describe a form of affective or insidious power that works through our attachment to, for instance, neoliberal norms of the good life in regard to family structure, ownership forms, and productivity ideals. Attachments here add to Foucauldian studies of subjectification to power that, some argue, have tended to overlook the role that affect and emotion play in the reproduction of discursive norms (Jameson, 1984, p. 64; Reckwitz, 2012, p. 243). Butler, for instance, emphasizes how 'desire-driven affective attachments to others [are] the bearers of this power' (2004, p. 235). At the core of Butler's concept of passionate attachment is a form of stabilizing, adaptive work on the level of affect that creates dependency, which is itself an expression of power while also a form of belonging (2004).

Through the act of whistleblowing, Kenny et al.'s (2020) analysis of whistleblower subjectivity shows how this works. Whereas dominant understandings of whistleblowing set subjects apart from the organization by conceiving them as morally outstanding heroes and risk-takers – in a sense, detached – Kenny et al. (2020) find that attachments to the organization are at the core of the formation of whistleblower identities. In their study, whistleblowing is motivated by 'reproductive' values such as trust, duty, and loyalty rather than transformative values such as risk-taking or 'parrhesia'. As such, following Butler, they show how attachments become political because they play into the reproduction of discursive norms. Passionate attachments are formed around organizational ideals and professional norms; in other words, 'affective identifications with the very organizations and professions that have excluded the discloser' (Kenny et al., 2020, p. 324). Breaking down the image of the whistleblower as a free and autonomous individual, passionate attachments instead point to the complicated dependencies between actors and the 'insidious forms of authority' (2020, p. 339) that are part of the politics of attachment.

In the work of Lauren Berlant, the politics of attachments also appears centrally. In *Cruel Optimism* (2011), Berlant describes attachments as structures of feeling that can apply to any object, scene, or fantasy such as career aspirations or any other conventional idea of the good life that 'ignites a sense of possibility' (2011, p. 2). Attachments are political because they are about the

precariousness of maintaining a hold on the present through optimism, and because they connect this sense of possibility or promise to established norms. Picking up on the future-oriented drive of attachments, Anderson (2022) suggests that Berlant's concept of attachments is central to the emergence of a cultural geography of promises. This geography of promises emphasizes Anderson's own intellectual project of understanding the socio-spatial formation of affects (see also Anderson, 2006, 2016). Elaborating on the politics of attachments he asks: '[H]ow are specific objects made available to attach to so that they become organized as part of distinctive ways of life?' And further, approaching a spatio-organizational take on Berlant's concept, '[h]ow do attachments cluster?' Anderson defines a 'form of attachment' as 'an interlinked set of promissory objects which together offer a fantasy of the good life and are made available as a resource for subjects to organise living through' (2022, p. 11).

The idea that attachments pick up density through discursive and affective reproduction is also found in Dey et al.'s (2016) study of social entrepreneurship. Much in line with Anderson's interest in attachments as forms, their study sheds light on 'how relations with promissory objects are (de/re)composed, and how attachments are (dis)organized into forms' (Anderson, 2022, p. 3). It shows how intermediary organizations help to build the cluster of promises with which social entrepreneurship is associated. Through an affective understanding of the process of hegemonization, their study points to how the construction of something as promising, 'an object towards which desire can flow' (Dey et al., 2016, p. 1452) always happens at the expense of other objects that are temporarily excluded as objects of desire. Attachments depend on detachments, reiterating the understanding of attachments as an activity-sensibility that creates differentiations.

What makes attachments political, then, is that clusters of promises gather around certain objects (Anderson, 2022, p. 9). Looking at these promises helps one to see how an object becomes established as desirable, as worthy of attachment. Dey et al. show how this process of hegemonization – the making of clusters of promises – does not just happen on the level of meaning and discourse, but also on the level of affect (Dey et al., 2016, p. 1545; Laclau, 2004, p. 326; Lash, 2007). Referring to Lacanian studies of power, they, like Kenny et al., show how affect and discourse are linked, as affect is the mechanism that confers its force on a given discourse by rendering it an object with which individuals can identify. Affect is not located in the extra-discursive sphere, but immanent to language' (Dey et al., 2016, p. 1454). In their study, as in other studies of 'doing good' through entrepreneurship (see e.g. Cockayne, 2016), fantasy is used as another word for the promise that cultivates attachment.

Attachments in the aesthetic economy

In and beyond these studies, contemporary workplaces appear as important scenes for the study of how attachments are political. We begin to see how attachments can provide a lens through which to study how the aesthetic economy works in urban transformation. For instance, in a study that preceded Anderson's engagement with the concept of attachment, he analysed how hope became an infrastructure for urban transformation in the wake of Liverpool's announcement as European Capital of Culture in 2008. Here, hope appears as a collective and unspecified good

mobilized to create ‘an affective imperative containing a normalizing and normative force’ (Anderson & Holden, 2008, p. 151). Anderson and Holden show how hope was used hegemonically to promote the rebranding of Liverpool by creating an affectively (and temporally, as the third section elaborates) ambiguous promise of a better future. They also show how such affective modulation is never complete; besides ‘official’ hope and promise, a plurality of other hopes for what this event could spur also appeared.

Understood through the notion of forms of attachment, the strategic use of hope in urban transformation is an example of the ordering that enables and constrains the optimism at the heart of the attachment (Anderson, 2022, p. 11). Anderson (2022, p. 12) further explains that ‘forms of’ refer to a recognizable arrangement and a variation across patterns that cross any specific interaction or event – that ‘repeat across multiple spheres of life, being at once economic, political and cultural’. In that sense, temporary urbanism (linked to the aestheticization described in the previous section) appears as a form of attachment that spreads across interactions and social fields with its promise of aesthetic and temporal openness. Temporary urbanism, when seen as a form of attachment, is both recognizable as a form of living (a ‘global urban aesthetic’; think of the reused container, or the aesthetics of food markets) and carefully constructs some objects as promising over others: the present and future over the past, the flexible over the stable, and experiences over production.

In the context of work and organizing, Resch et al.’s (2021) study of *jouissance* – the Lacanian notion for the interrelated experience of pleasure and pain – in collaborative work ideals displays a similar sensitivity towards how normalizing and normative forces work through attachments. Their research shows how subconscious fantasies of purpose, growth, and belonging bind subjects to hegemonic discourses. Attachments, when seen through this Lacanian framework, are therefore always distributed between excessive pleasure released by the pursuit, and pain released by the impossibility of achieving the goal. While they use *jouissance* rather than attachment, their approach is similar to Butler’s psychoanalytic notion of attachment. To Butler, the passionate attachment that comes from self-subjectifying to the norms of the social world from which one feels alienated merely gives an ‘illusory sense of stable identity’ (Kenny et al., 2020, p. 326). Similarly, the Lacanian strive for wholeness is founded on fantasies, and ‘any discursive promise [of unity] must fall flat’ (Resch et al., 2021, p. 790).

Such readings of attachments vividly show how insidious forms of power work. Anderson and Berlant’s approach to attachments is alive to this but slightly different; rather than psychoanalytic, it opens analysis to the politics of space (hence Anderson’s suggestion to develop a geography of promises). The emphasis on *forms* and *clusters* supports such a spatial reading of how attachments take part in the social production of space. This points to aestheticization as a ‘full sense of perception’ in Böhme’s sense (1993, p. 116), encompassing also ‘expectations, daydreams, encounters, and habits of relating, (...) strategies and their failures, (...) forms of persuasion, contagion, and compulsion, (...) modes of attention, attachment, and agency’ (Stewart, 2007, p. 2). A focus on attachments can shed light on the promises made by aestheticized spaces – what ways of organizing living do they promise, and what forms of subject formation, community, and

spaces? How do these promises gain force? In other words, what keeps us attached? Going beyond a reading of attachments as insidious forms of power, Anderson (2022, p. 14f) suggests they *organize* how something comes to feel meaningful. This offers a fruitful approach to the process of socio-spatial aestheticization as everyday acts of sensing and constructing promises.

Prelude to the third paper

The third paper of the thesis, ‘A Reworked Concept of Place Attachment’ , is a conceptual paper about the politics of place attachments. With it, I have been interested in understanding how place attachments relate to the politics of space. Whereas the above sketched out the concept of attachment in relation to sensory orders, the paper provides a detailed conceptual discussion of why place attachments are often associated with an essentialist notion of place at work in nationalism and other forms of spatially enacted exclusions and productions of difference. The paper grapples with this critique and explores a disassociation of the concept from its problematic political reputation. This, the paper speculates, might pave the way for a better understanding of the politically and affectively ambivalent dimensions of feeling attached to places as these attachments become part of spatial politics in new ways. I find a home for this conceptual discussion in organization studies’ spatial turn, and in particular in the processual and relational view of space, where there has been a rich critique of the problem of attachment and the dualisms produced by place-space discussions.

The above framing adds to the conceptual paper by proposing how ‘forms of attachment’ and the construction of ‘clusters of promises’ can be used to empirically and spatially study new forms of aestheticized place attachments. A precondition for such empirical analysis of place attachments, however, is that we considerably challenge our current understanding of place attachments as (spatially, politically, and affectively) stabilizing and safe. To bring out some of the aspects of attachments that I have also previewed in the above, I discuss different ways to rework the phenomenological concept of place attachment in the third paper. This, I argue, is particularly relevant considering the ways in which we can understand the aesthetic economy through the attachments it produces and maintains.

Third circuit: Temporal orders

The purpose of the third circuit of the theoretical framing is to connect the thesis’ conceptual focus on time to the above questions of the senses in aestheticization and attachments. It also aims to situate the thesis in research that connects questions of time with urban transformation and the politics of time. It therefore presents and discusses literature that relates to broad questions of the ordering of time in urban space and in organizational life in the context of the aesthetic economy. It also contextualizes the fourth paper of the thesis: an empirical analysis of how the future is felt and imagined under temporary conditions, and what that means to attachments in, and to, the past and present.

The temporality of attachments

While the above explored the ways in which attachments can be seen as sensorially-made distinctions (an activity-sensibility) I now turn to the role of time in this activity-sensibility. To Hennion, the attachment is ‘an obligation from the past that is brought to bear on the present’ (2017, p. 112). Attachment is here linked to a way of being temporally situated and conditioned, but this should not be confused with roots, as Felski reminds us. Attachments are ‘made and unmade over time, intensify or fade away, are oriented to the future as well as the past’ (Felski, 2020, p. ix). An enticing aspect of the temporality of attachments is exactly that they balance the contingent and the enduring. On the one hand, as both Anderson (2022) and Felski (2020) observe, this makes attachments part of a relational turn with its emphasis on fleeting events and encounters. On the other hand, by centring ‘the problem of what is continued or what is maintained through contingency’ (Anderson, 2022, p. 5), attachments raise questions not only of relations but also of felt continuity and discontinuity between the past, present, and future (see also Berlant, 2011, p. 14).

Elaborating on the temporality of Anderson’s geography of promises, Coleman (2023, p. 4) suggests attachments are not only the promise of a better future towards which one can move (a linear temporality). The attachment also makes that future present *in* the present and so comes to organize it by envisioning an alternative future that is not just a continuation of the past; a non-linear temporality. As the case of this thesis shows, attachments do not have to be future-oriented; they can also express a longing for the past, such as in nostalgia, or a hope for a continued present which, as Ringel (2021) observes, in some situations can be as radical as hoping for change. In fact, Berlant continually stresses the need to live a life ‘that does not have to keep being reinvented’ (2011, p. 170), where agency is an activity of maintenance rather than making. Independently of temporal direction, though, the attachment makes it possible to go on in the present. In that sense, the temporality of attachments is not one that fixes the present but enables some form of practical anticipation: ‘[a] sense of the likely and unlikely, possible and impossible, written into present experiences’ (W. Atkinson, 2019, p. 4). I take these reflections on the temporality of attachments as a starting point for thinking about what the temporary in ‘temporary urbanism’ does to feelings of continuity and discontinuity and more generally, how time is used politically in urban transformation.

The politics of time in urban transformation and temporary organizing

That time plays a crucial role in urban transformation is not, of course, a new idea. The financialization of the built environment, for instance, imposes the time of business cycles onto the urban fabric, some argue with the result of unsustainable development and lack of time to engage with the context into which buildings are rapidly placed (Aalbers & Christophers, 2014; Halbert & Attuyer, 2016). Slowness and the provisional, on the other hand, are seen to enhance democracy by securing time for deliberation and therefore more sustainable, agonistic forms of urban development and politics (Pløger, 2021). Recent studies of temporary urbanism have, on the other hand, problematized the damaging effects of the open-ended and provisional on local

communities and individuals' sense of belonging and temporal agency (Ferreri, 2021; Raco et al., 2018). In each of these cases, it becomes obvious how processes of urban transformation, regardless of technologies of control (speed or slowness, permanence or temporariness), are fraught with political contestations that are related to temporal orders and the simultaneity of different experiences of time (Abram, 2014; see also Moore-Cherry & Bonnin, 2020).

Sharma (2014) describes temporal orders as dominant ways of socially structuring time. One such temporal order could be speed. Speed is at the centre of Virilio's (2006[1977]) influential concept of chronopolitics as a temporal counterpart to geopolitics that focuses on the synchronization of postmodernity – arguably a temporal counterpart to the view presented in the first circuit on aestheticization as a homogenization of the city. Against temporal diagnoses of globalization through synchronization, however, others, such as Sharma (but see also Doreen Massey in the third paper of this thesis), argue that globalization (like any other time) is upheld by a multiplicity of coexisting temporalities or spacetimes. In addition to the one-way story of speed (Crang, 2001, p. 4), Sharma shows how globalized spaces are made up of different temporalities that are unequally valued. Thus, while there may be dominant temporal orders such as the speeding up of life, these orders always depend on other (people's) times. In Sharma's examples, the frequent business traveller's time is valorised over, but dependent on, the under-valorised time of the taxi driver, and the desk worker's productivity is dependent on an industry promoting mindfulness to slow down.

In the following, I take the example of the temporary as a temporal order that has gained considerable dominance in urban transformation as well as in organization studies. In organization studies, the temporary indicates a shift away from the static entity of the organization towards the processual – and therefore, some argue, more efficient, creative, flexible, and less hierarchical – *organizing* (Bakker et al., 2016). The organizational literature defines the temporary as a predetermined duration of an organizational process, one that is fixed either by a point in time or a predefined state or condition – what Lundin and Söderholm (1995, p. 445) have called 'institutionalized termination' (Burke & Morley, 2016; Kenis et al., 2009). While similar to adhocratic organizational forms, Burke & Morley (2016, p. 1237) find that the emphasis on 'intentional temporal limitation, finiteness or temporariness' sets them apart from other transient forms of organization. Temporary organizations are seen to partly overlap with the projectification of the permanent organization, although increasingly, Burke & Morley (2016, p. 1237) argue, temporary organizations are no longer defined in opposition to a permanent organization but constitute the very organization, recalling Boltanski and Chiapello's (2005) notion of the projective city as a city made up of the endless succession of temporary projects.

While this is barely a sketch of the literature on temporary organizing, Bakker et al. (2016, p. 1707) contend that while time is obviously centre stage in research on temporary organizing, research in the field has not fully considered or captured issues of temporality. I suggest, building on Sharma, that this is because they have not studied the temporary as a temporal order that comes with particular ways of valorising temporal practices such as, for instance, renewal, flexibility, and precariousness. A power-chronography perspective on temporary organizing could elucidate how

the temporary is not just a predetermined duration of a process, an objective stretch of time and a natural reflection of the move towards a more fluid society (Sydow & Windeler, 2020). The dominant definition of temporary organizing as a limited and predefined stretch of time does not capture the temporary as a societally valued temporal form; how temporariness is constructed as a cluster of promises (of creativity, efficiency, flexibility etc.); how it conditions possible future imaginaries; and how it creates disconnections from organizational pasts. This involves a critical consideration of time that discerns how temporal normalization elevates ‘certain practices and relationships to time while devaluing others’ (Sharma, 2014, p. 15).

Temporary urbanism shows how such temporal politics play out. Urban studies of short-term events and the temporary construction and use of space are more attentive to how the discourse of the temporary emerges as a luring proposition to make use of vacant spaces (itself a cultural construct made from negative imaginaries of abandonment) (Ferrerri, 2021, p. 31). Unlike the predetermined duration to which the temporary in temporary organizing refers, the temporary in temporary urbanism is often deliberately open-ended. While the temporary is set against the permanent, it is not so much a *concrete* temporariness or a *concrete* permanence as it is the construction of what Ferreri (2021, p. 14) calls a ‘trope of alterity’. The temporary here holds a promise of an ‘opportunity for change and (...) a critique of fixed rules, rigid master planning and long-term strategies’ (Madanipour, 2017, p. 4). It is exactly this ‘cluster of promises’, in Anderson’s (2022) words from the previous circuit, that produces an attachment to the discourse and practice of temporary urbanism. Temporary urbanism shows how the attachment to a temporal order often associated with experimentation and playfulness – the temporary – becomes systematized and embedded into planning systems to gain traction as a temporal order.

Time sensibilities

Going beyond a diagnosis of how globalization is linked to speed, Sharma (2014, p. 15) shows how ‘chronographies of power have to do with how different time *sensibilities* are produced” (my emphasis). The question of how time is sensed is a different starting point for studying time than, say, how the city is managed through business cycles or the organization through temporary projects. It indicates another layer of power-chronography that not only describes the ‘external’ regulation of everyday life through temporal orders such as in the above, but also encompasses everyday acts of temporal adjustment and alignment, or what Sharma (2014) calls recalibration. Sharma introduces the notion of recalibration to describe the way people read and then adjust to dominant temporalities. Recalibration is a skill in so far as it allows one to feel some form of control over the future through temporal adaptation, but it is a complicated and forced skill because it reproduces the pressures of the dominant temporal order to which one must incessantly recalibrate to not feel temporally estranged. Recalibration, then, is the temporal aspect of subjectifying to power discussed in relation to attachments in the previous circuit.

In the context of organization studies, Nash (2020) approaches time as situated rhythms that begin to indicate how this recalibration works and can be studied. Using Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis as a sensory method for spatio-temporal analysis, Nash analyses how the rhythm of work in London’s

business district suffuses the street and comes to limit what can be sensed. In a lucid quote, one worker interviewed says: ‘It’s just all about work, there is nothing else going on here ... whether this is true or not I don’t think it matters, to me there are no schools, no hospitals, there are no parks, no theatres, no cinemas. You can’t stop for them, you see’ (Nash, 2020, p. 311). Borch et al (2015) theorize even more explicitly how bodily rhythms and capitalism align, comparing two different spatial and historical settings: the open-outcry pit and high-frequency (algorithmic) trading. While Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis is often used to explore everyday life as the ‘time of living’ (Lefebvre, 2004[1992], p. 51) opposed to the linear controlling rhythms of capitalism, Borch et al. (2015, p. 1083) show how capitalism is also capable of producing rhythms without bodies to which one must recalibrate.

Aesthetic time

‘If it [temporary urbanism] is associated with the multiplication and acceleration of temporality in the city, does it make life more precarious or more creative?’ (Madanipour, 2017, p. 1). The question is posed at the beginning of one of the few conceptualizations of temporary urbanism that starts from a critical concept of time, Ali Madanipour’s *Cities in Time – Temporary Urbanism and the Future of the City*. The question gets to the heart of how the temporary relates to the aestheticization of the city, as discussed in the first circuit. To come full circle, having introduced the concept of temporal orders and their sensibilities, we can begin to discern how aestheticization also works by valuing certain temporalities and ways of navigating temporally as more creative or aesthetic than others. The culturalization of cities was described in the first circuit as the intensification of aesthetic-sensory life because it relies on ‘the systematic heightening and concentration of sensuous, affective urban atmospheres’ (Reckwitz, 2017b, p. 180). Another, and more temporal, dimension of this is that it relies on the imperative of permanent innovation. This is true for organizations as well as for cities that ‘are now expected to pursue permanent aesthetic self-renewal (...) feeding the desire for the creation and perception of novel and original objects, events and identities’ (Reckwitz, 2017b, p. 3f).

As a cultural form and logic, temporariness thrives on perpetual renewal and resists closure at the expense of certainty (Reckwitz, 2017b). This in turn sets the temporal scene into which citizens can think and act; as temporary inhabitants, entrepreneurs or otherwise users, they must adapt to the imperative of temporariness by developing specific skills and ways of inhabiting space that in turn influence the way they participate in the making of the future. While time and globalization are frequently connected, often with an emphasis on acceleration (Rosa, 2019) and speed (Virilio, 2006[1977]), we still need to understand more about aestheticization and time. Temporary urbanism crystallizes the need for a different cultural critique of time given its focus not on acceleration or speed (particular temporalities that subsume all activities) but on the temporary as a way of *valorising the permanently open-ended* across social fields. Whether temporary urbanism makes life more precarious or creative is then a question of whether one is able to pursue, and thrive in, this permanent aesthetic renewal of self and spaces. What are the limits of this renewal? To whom is it an opportunity or promise? What forms of entrepreneurial risk-taking does it require? And what about, as Berlant writes (2011, p. 170), the need to live lives that are not implicated in the

constant reinvention of oneself? These are questions that a power-chronography of temporary urbanism with a sensitivity to forms of attachment can ask and begin to answer.

Finally, aesthetic time connects Rancière's idea of the distribution of the sensible, briefly introduced in the first circuit, to the question of temporal orders. The distribution of the sensible as 'a set of relations between the perceptible, the thinkable, and the doable that defines a common world' (Rancière, 2013) also implies common understandings of time. As Rancière says in a lecture titled '*In what time do we live?*' at the European Graduate School in 2013, any evocation of the end of an era, or reference to our times as 'times of crisis', comes with an array of selections and exclusions of worlds, futures, and ideas. In fact, we have not left other times behind as much as excluded them from the sense of the possible through the construction of temporal frames. This is another way of describing how temporal orders work aesthetically, quite different from Virilio's critique of globalization as a synchronization and unified time of speed (see also Massey's (2005, p. 36ff) critique of the 'prison-house of synchrony'). The critique of globalization as characterized by speed (or any other temporal characteristic, such as acceleration in the work of Hartmut Rosa), Rancière contends, presupposes a unity between global time and the time of individuals. Instead, he draws our attention to 'the institutions that make temporal coincidence and non-coincidence their main affair' (Rancière, 2013, no page). It is the 'regulation of the convergence and divergence of times', and not the idea of a synchronized, sped up present, that makes time a question of the structural distribution of the sensible.

Prelude to the fourth paper

With this circuit, I have presented a framework for considering time politically, and how that connects to the senses or the 'distribution of the sensible'. As both Rancière (2013) and Sharma (2014) show, domination and normalization also take place through the valorisation of certain historical periods (Rancière) or temporalities (Sharma) over others. The fourth paper, 'Feeling the Future', is an empirical analysis of how the temporary emerges as a temporal order, and how it comes to have a hold on and organise what counts as good urban spaces and successful future-making, to paraphrase Anderson on the lure of attachments (2022, p. 11). While the paper is not explicitly about temporary urbanism as an attachment (such an analysis could certainly be made, and the discussion suggests how), it analyses how the temporal order of the temporary works on place attachments through a sense of loss and nostalgia. The study finds that temporary urbanism organizes – enables and conditions – projective agency, but projective agency does not appear in the strong form theorized in the literature on future-making, to which the paper contributes. Rather, the forms of agency I find to be shaped and constrained by temporary urbanism are weak; they are closer to time sensibilities or activity-sensibilities, recalling Hennion on attachments as an almost-passive form of action, than to actions or practices. From this finding, I discuss the importance of considering how temporal orders shape what becomes valued as strong or weak temporal agency. I argue that the concept of future-making should be made to include feelings of a closed future to fully account for the politics of future-making.

In the context of the thesis as a whole, the idea of aesthetic time as the distribution of the sensible, taken together with Sharma's analysis of the normalizing powers of time and how they work

through rhythms and recalibration, leads to my understanding of the aestheticization of cities – and more specifically, the management of the meantime that aestheticization creates – as a series of temporally-made connections and disconnections from the sense of the possible. This gives temporal and sensory nuance to the concept of capitalist realism with which, in the introduction, I described how locals sense and navigate change in the aestheticizing city.

Epilogue: On making inhabitable worlds

My framing of the senses, attachments, and time in the above has emphasized how they become instruments of power in two ways: either as power-over (or *pouvoir*), characterized by external determination, or as a more post-hegemonic form of power (or *puissance*) that works through the senses, attachments, and time, as alluded to in the above (Lash, 2007, p. 59). I have paid less attention to the other side of *puissance*; that is, the ways in which the force of the senses, attachments, and time can also contain possibilities for emancipation. In part this is because – as the next section on my research process will show – my empirics have not prompted me strongly in the direction of considering forms of resistance. Nevertheless, in both theory and in everyday acts of managing, and not being managed by, one's senses, attachments, and time, there are good reasons to also look at the other side of the management of the meantime – the sense of time that my research question alludes to, and which the fourth paper conceptualizes as a socially located feel for the future. In this epilogue to my theoretical framing of the subsequent papers, I'd like to briefly reflect on the following: How do attachments help organize living and navigating in temporary urbanism? What kind of heterochronies can be composed through attachments?

How do attachments help organize living and navigating in temporary urbanism?

In the organizational literature on attachments, there is an emphasis on how power holds or even traps subjects in their attachments. This view comes from Butler in particular, who stresses how subordination is central to subjectivity (1997, p. 7). Less emphasis, however, is placed on how attachments are also ways of making and inhabiting lives. The contours of this perspective on attachments appears in Ashcraft's (2017) notion of inhabited criticism in which attachments are not only subjectifying; they also provide a strange sort of shelter, a 'shaky anchor' as Berlant writes, from which to be critical of one's own attachments while still in them. As a form of shelter, or an intimate territory of investment that complicates resistance (Ashcraft, 2017, p. 41), attachments are not exactly free or freeing, but there is room to move around. This perspective on attachments also surfaces in Resch et al.'s (2021, p. 806) reflections on 'moments of moderation' between pain and pleasure. By refusing to make normative judgment on the exploitation of attachments (desire), they leave a door open for the possibility that attachments may also be a resource for making and inhabiting lives.

This manoeuvrability is central to Berlant's way of conceptualizing attachments as both resource and constraint. Anderson (2022) describes this as 'the double-bind of attachments': that they both allow subjects to make and inhabit lives, *and* that they constitute a soft spot in which power can hold subjects. Berlant is alert to how attachments 'organise the felt present into something

habitable and potentially better, at least for the subject(s) held in the attachment' (Anderson, 2022, p. 10). Anderson (2022, p. 10) emphasizes the difference between how Butler sees power as folded into subjectivity, which makes the attachment a trap, while Berlant stays with the attachment as an, at least *in part*, conscious investment to allow the present to feel a certain way, to matter more than another present and another feeling. Berlant's concept of attachments is more optimistic than the 'trapping of subjectivity' through attachments, not because it believes in the possibility of *reaching* the object of attachment, but because of the life-sustaining (and future-making, following Paper 4) activity it is to strive for something. Attachments are, in Berlant's work, described exactly as this movement towards a promise which makes attachments 'intimate with the workings of some forms of power, but (...) also more than that' (Anderson, 2022, p. 8). This suggests, although only in a sketchy way that does not do justice to especially Berlant's work on the double-bind of attachments, how the attachment can also be an inhabitable place.

What kind of heterochronies can be composed through attachments?

To Rancière, who borrows the term from Foucault, a heterochrony is a redistribution of times that invents new capacities for framing the present. Emancipation is, from the perspective of time, 'a way of putting several times into the same time' (Rancière, 2013, no page). Rancière exemplifies with the ways in which the speed of social media short-circuits the time of political systems, and other moments when 'one of the social machines that structure the time of domination break down and stop'. The recent global pandemic comes to mind as an obvious example, not as an act of emancipation but nevertheless as an interruption that shed light on social machines that structure the dominant combination of convergence and divergence. As a social machine for structuring time, the institution of urban transformation uses temporary urbanism to create this combination of convergence and divergence. Some forms of attachments are acceptable (those attachments to ideas that lead to entrepreneurial risks, for instance) whereas other forms of attachments (such as those that lead social groups to insist on their rights to the city) are not. In the latter case, attachments to places of belonging are (de)valued in relation to the imperative of permanent innovation. But this also means that attachments that have been excluded from the dominant temporal order have the potential to instil other temporal values than those given by permanent innovation.

Despite the way temporary urbanism has been described in the above, as a strategic exploitation of the open-ended promise of alternative spaces and times, studies also point to the possibilities of reclaiming space through temporary use. Ferreri, for instance, finds that side by side with 'the memoryless festivalisation of place and utopias of project-based connectivity', there are practices of temporary urbanism that help to 'sustain life and everyday use as opposed to unfettered commercialisation and enclosure' (2021, p. 167). Others have used similarly used notions of 'time-tricking' or 'future-tricking' to describe the work that subjects undertake to change their perception of time, often in an attempt to reorient the succession of capitalist time (Bear, 2016; Moroşanu & Ringel, 2016). Time-tricking could be an orientation towards permanence in a situation where the temporary dominates; insistence on making long-term plans, or what Mara Ferreri (2021, p. 168) calls radical emplacement, the reclaiming and maintaining of positions, including other ways of valuing time. This, then, points to not just a temporal but a spatiotemporal

openness that is at the opposite end of the closing of time (and space) through temporal orders. Massey (2005), like Rancière, links spatiotemporal openness to the constitution of political openness, as the third paper of the thesis also discusses.

How does all of this relate to attachments? Part of Anderson's (2022, 2023) and Berlant's (2011) interest in attachment is to understand why detachment is so difficult. Why do we keep investing in precarious forms of work as a way to achieve permanent employment? Why do we keep hoping for temporary urban spaces to change the city permanently? Why does urban creativity appear as an alternative when it is at the same time so mainstream? This conundrum is also captured by Rancière, for whom the contradictions of emancipation are far more interesting than the 'ready-made discourse that reduces the contradictions of emancipation to tricks of domination' (2013, no page). This thesis' focus is exactly on how that 'contradiction of emancipation' is lived through attachments. This can only mean that the boundaries between what appears as power and resistance, or strategy and tactics, are blurred. Instead, as Rancière ends his lecture, 'the tension of living in several times at once remains unresolved. This means that it remains at work'. The tension of living in several times at once – the alternative futures or pasts that promissory objects illuminate (Coleman, 2023, p. 4) – is a heterochrony composed by the attachment.

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology section serves two purposes. First, it accounts for my research process to show how I arrived at my research problem, analytical strategy, and conceptual focus through interaction with the field. To do so, I go into detail about a selected part of my ethnographic fieldwork that was particularly fruitful in terms of disappointing my expectations and causing me to develop my abductive analytical strategy and make conceptual choices about how to theorize my case study. I discuss how an analytical interest in affect and sensory ordering can help understand the aesthetic economy, exemplified through an introduction to Paper 3 ('How Space Holds'). I also introduce Paper 1 ('The Sensory Imperative') and Paper 2 ('Engaging with Engagements') that situate my methodology in debates about sensory methodologies in MOS and other fields.

Second, it reflects on the methodology and methods of doing place-sensitive ethnographic research. I build on research methods in the intersection between human geography and organization studies with an interest in space such as participant observation, walking, and walking interviews. I also elaborate on the role of time and space in my ethnography.

Research process: Making a case

My research process is intertwined with the beginning and end of a local association of renters that was the centre of my fieldwork and my most important entry point to the site. It was therefore also in the interaction with this association that I came to identify the scientific problem, and hence concepts, that were to guide the thesis analytically. First, I will briefly outline the history of the dual process of my research process and the development of this association that kindly allowed me to track changes in the transformation of Refshaleøen. Second, I describe how abductive analysis moved me from an overall intention and expectation to study how local cultural actors organize and participate in urban transformation, to a study of how place attachments and time sensibilities work and feel in the aestheticization of urban space. While the case study can be seen as the ‘problem-event that animates judgment’ (Berlant, 2007, p. 553), the task of constructing what the case is a *case of* is also where theorizing begins: ‘It is precisely in the reflection about what x is a case of that real theory arises’ (Abbott, 2001, p. 129). Therefore, thirdly, I reflect on my use of concepts and the relation between theory and empirical material.

In presenting this research process, I rely on distinctions between narrating the case study (as I have done in the above introduction to the site) and working out what the case is a case of (Berlant, 2007; Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 86), or the process of *casing*. The question of the ambition to generalize in qualitative studies such as this is also up for debate in management and organization studies. Cunliffe (2022), for instance, suggests we replace generalization with resonance. While I like the idea that research results should produce resonance, the critique of generalization risks proposing the opposite: Singularity, which does not need to defend itself. To me, the ambition to generalize is not the same as detachment from empirical reality. It is to distinguish between a ‘merely gestural instance, illustration, or example’ and ‘the adequacy of an object to bear the weight of an explanation worthy of attending to and taking a lesson from (...)’ (Berlant, 2007, p. 666). Tsoukas (2018), in his book on organizational philosophy, also addresses this question of how findings from case studies and ethnographies can be generalized. As a recent special issue call for qualitative methods papers in organization studies attests to, ethnographic single case studies are no longer questioned on the grounds of a skepticism towards generalization understood narrowly as a question of validity. To Tsoukas, a more advanced understanding of generalization has made it possible to consider it a heuristic for ‘generic understanding without annihilating the epistemic significance of the particular’ (2018, p. 386).

Expectations and frustrations

My fieldwork started towards the end of 2019, around the same time as a new association of cultural renters was beginning to take shape. I already knew the initiator, a theatre director and long-time local, from a collaboration on site-specific teaching on the island (see Samson & Juhlin, 2023). I remember he was introducing our students to the site wearing an orange worker’s suit. He explained how each of the buildings he rented – the constellation of places he called the ‘Theatre Island’ – opened opportunities for doing theatre because of their different spatial features: perfect darkness, a room with no pillars, a good floor that didn’t make any squeaky noises. As he

was explaining his spatial business strategy with great enthusiasm, he also remarked on its riskiness: 'It's like the worry that comes with having kids,' he said. He was of course referring to the uncertain future of Refshaleøen, but his metaphor seemed to indicate that the worry was a price he would willingly pay.

As this shows, I had my case study in place. I already knew the site I wanted to study, I had an entry point, and I knew I wanted to study this sense of uncertainty and urgency that surrounded the initiative to start a local association. The urgency came from a feeling among locals that urban transformation was approaching. It was a feeling, as also described in the case introduction, more than anything else. My initial plan was to study how the local association organized to become as an active participant in the coming transformation process, and to focus on its role as cultural actors in this. With a background in urban studies, I was all too familiar with the dynamics of gentrification and the privatization of space, and the ambivalent role of culture in these processes. I was also susceptible to peoples' sense that Refshaleøen was one of the last 'free' spaces in the city and I was struck by the sentiment I so often encountered when working as a consultant with citizen involvement: that urban transformation was not perceived as an improvement but as a destruction of the city. This raised questions of power such as those guiding what Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 60) calls phronetic research: Where are we going? Is this desirable? What should be done?

The goal of the association was – in accordance with my initial research focus – to create a local, united voice of cultural renters who could participate constructively in what at the time (2019) felt like the very near future of urban transformation. In the beginning, the association consisted of the director of a food market, a curator at a large international art centre, the theater director just mentioned, a manager of a music studio, a community manager of a temporary student housing project, and a communications director of a high-end restaurant. Later, they were joined by a local carpenter, and some of the others left. The board consisting of these local actors met regularly, albeit with the interruption of the pandemic, both with each other and gradually also with the private development company. The board members took turns hosting the meetings that revolved around sharing rumours and knowledge about the transformation process, talking about the agenda of the association, the daily life and insecurities of being a renter in this space, and how to mobilize members among the other renters on the island.

From the beginning, I was surprised to find that the association was very clear about the role it wished to play in the transformation process. Members were aware – and weary of – a long history of bad communication between the development company and the renters. They did not want to represent dissatisfied renters and they certainly did not want to become activists. Instead, they wanted to become a 'constructive dialogue partner' in the coming process – a united voice the development company could turn to in the transformation process when it needed to tap into knowledge derived from having run a business and been a local in this place for many years – knowledge that derived, essentially, from their place attachments. Participating in these meetings gave me a first-hand experience of what locally was perceived to be problematic about the transformation process. These problems, as it turned out, were quite different from those indicated by Flyvbjerg's questions of power. The members of the association were more interested in gaining

information to minimize uncertainty, and in finding ways to adapt and participate, than they were in questions of power, visions, and stakeholders.

As the research process unfolded, and the dominant attitude in the association remained an anti-activist one, I admit I was disappointed that my fieldwork did not live up to my expectations of what I thought I would be studying. I participated in many meetings where both I and the board members had a sense that nothing really happened. It culminated on the 19th of September 2022, at a meeting at the Mayor for Culture's office. The association had waited more than a year for this meeting. When it finally happened, the association had more or less dissolved, and only two of the members, besides me, showed up at the city hall on that late summer day. The mayor immediately asked how many people the association represented. This was, of course, a soft spot. They answered that they had a strong board and a large Facebook page, but the mayor was adamant; if they wanted to make a difference and influence the future, they would need a strong, united voice; they would need to represent *a lot* of locals. The mayor referred to other development sites in the city where citizens had succeeded in influencing the district plan through hard work. She encouraged the association to find a strong story around which they could unite different interests, and to keep themselves up to date with ongoing plans, hearings etc. While the meeting was set to last thirty minutes, the two members of the association started guiltily collecting their things after twenty minutes.

The association's failure (I hasten to add that this is not just my own judgment but was also a shared understanding in the association) to mobilize members and generate a sense of a common cause frustrated me a lot. Why were they so uninterested in contesting the transformation process? Why could they not see that by aligning themselves with the development company, they missed their opportunity to formulate alternative visions for urban development? I realized I was schooled to find urban politics in scenes of contestation and struggle. Puzzled by this compliance or willingness to collaborate, I didn't really know *what* I was studying – apolitics? Or had they just not realized what would eventually happen to the place – in other words, was I studying naivety, were they paralyzed by the apparent seductiveness of the use of culture in temporary urban spaces? I also saw the failure of the association as a failure of my own case study and started to doubt whether I had been looking for urban politics in the right places.

Analytical strategy

Using such frustration and doubt productively, I tried to make sense of my failed expectations. Van Maanen et al. (2007, p. 1149) writes about abductive reasoning that it 'begins with an unmet expectation and works backward to invent a plausible world or a theory that would make the surprise meaningful'. They further write that 'unmet expectations are clues that motivate theorizing' (2007, p. 1149). These words spring from a pragmatist concern with making doubt generative in the 'discovery process' of research (Locke et al., 2008), and more generally with an abductive analytical strategy (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Abduction is the 'inferential creative process of producing new hypothesis and theories based on surprising research evidence' (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 170). Importantly, abduction is not a privileged activity of the

researcher; it is what social actors do every day as they try to make sense of surprising phenomena. As such, it resonates with pragmatic sociology's concern with the critical capacities of ordinary social actors (Delanty, 2011, p. 88). In the context of organizational ethnography, Van Maanen (1979, p. 521) also writes that 'qualitative methods are rather similar to the interpretive procedures we make use of as we go about our everyday life'.

Whereas theory construction based on induction excludes existing concepts from the process of theorizing, abductive analysis always recognizes surprising findings *in light of* existing theories (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 168f). As already indicated, my frustration at the lack of resistance I found in the association and in the site in general was informed by my theoretical schooling in Marxist critical geography. It was set against a backdrop of theoretically informed expectations to find strategy (the planners and planning that fix space according to dominant institutions) and opposing tactics (the appropriation and unsettling of fixed plans from below). What I found surprising or frustrating would not necessarily have come as a surprise to a researcher schooled in, say, entrepreneurship and the role of entrepreneurs in urban transformation. Therefore, it is not only my interactions with, and in, the field that must be viewed in light of my positionality as so often argued in ethnographic methodologies, but also the way in which I 'case' the phenomena I am studying (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 173).

Turning to theory, I started exploring alternative casing, the goal of which is 'to force researchers to rethink their data, to try and see it in light of different cases, to case it in as many ways as possible' (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 179). Coming from critical urban geography, I initially interpreted the lack of resistance as a case of cultural gentrification, but my case only affirmed existing studies of the role of culture in urban transformation through the privatization and gentrification of urban space (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 177). Rejecting such interpretations, I turned to literature on temporary urbanism combined with organizational research on future-making and the affective dimension of time, and developed hypotheses around the role of time, in particular the strategic use of the temporary, as a way to endlessly postpone a clear, recognizable 'change' against which one could mobilize, to help explain the 'lack of resistance'. This casing of the material with the concept of temporality and the politics of time eventually turned into the fourth paper on future-making and temporal orders.

I also started exploring the case as a case of hope. In dialogue with the concept of hope in sociological analysis and the politics of hope in geography, I tried to understand how local actors on one hand noted the repeated failure of temporary urbanism to generate long-lasting effects, and on the other hand continued to believe that *this time* would be different, this time culture and creativity could succeed in creating a blueprint for a different kind of urban development. Eventually, this casing of my material through hope did not end up in the thesis, but testifies to the many conceptual efforts, including 'dead ends', that constitute an abductive analytical process. The paper-based PhD format allows for an honest reflection of such a process where elements do not necessarily 'add up' but track different trajectories of explanation through the same material. Rather than mere guess work, however, each of these explanations must go through rigorous analysis and validation by communities of inquiry (Tavory & Timmermans, 2013).

Working ‘backwards to invent a plausible world’, I finally centred on the problem of place attachments and time sensibilities as a way of casing my empirical material that could encompass my different interpretations. An important reason for this choice of interpretation was the way in which it opened the politics of my case towards something other than, on one hand, ‘the visible coastline of politics’ and, on the other hand, ‘strategies of resistance that go unnoticed’ (Scott, 1990 quoted in Thévenot, 2020, p. 224). Inspired by Thévenot’s (2007, 2014) pragmatic interest in how the political takes shape from familiar engagement with the world that cannot necessarily be verbalized or publicly disputed, place attachments and time allowed me to study politics as something less recognizable, and less public, than in the Marxist critical geography tradition. Both the second and fourth paper of the thesis build on this view of politics as studied from scenes of intimacy.

As these examples of theorizing with, and from, my unexpected findings show, I tried to ask the question of ‘lack of resistance’ in new ways through, respectively, the question of how time is sensed, of hope as an affective response to urban transformation, and through place attachments. Along the way, my analytical strategy shifted from a value-normative one that looked for politics in tactics, strategy, and interests to the affective and temporal structures created by aestheticization; the desires, hopes, and fears it evoked. Moving recursively back and forth between analysis and fieldwork, I proceeded with an analytical strategy informed by my conceptual engagement with urban transformation as an affective phenomenon that organizes attachments and detachments. An affective analytical strategy shifts the focus from identities to intensities (Staunæs & Grønæk Pors, 2021, p. 45). Thus, rather than questioning the ‘what’ of the aestheticization of urban space, I developed a sensitivity towards local’s *sense* of aestheticization, and how it *charged* spaces and situations.

Paper 1 ‘The Sensory Imperative’ and Paper 2 ‘Engaging with Engagements’

While this attention to senses and intensities is often associated with an immersive style of research that aims to get as close to phenomena as possible and to draw on one’s own experience in analysis, my analytical strategy was different. While the call for sensory and affective methodologies in principle concerns both the ‘sensory orders of those whom we study as well as the need for being reflexive when it comes to one’s own body’ (Stoller, 2004 in Low, 2015, p. 299) the latter is often emphasized over the former. The question of how to study the senses and affect as part of the social analysis of power, for instance, is forgotten in favour of extensive methodological reflections on the researcher’s own sensory body as a research tool in ethnography (for examples, see Longhurst et al., 2008; Mears, 2013; Pink, 2009). Nevertheless, ‘power, management and control have always entailed sensory orders and the work of sensory ordering’ (Beyes et al., 2022, p. 626; see also Jørgensen & Holt, 2019). We elaborate on these points and what they mean for doing ethnography in Paper 2 ‘Engaging with Engagements’.

In the first paper presented in this thesis, ‘The Sensory Imperative’, we relate this analytical strategy for the study of sensory orders in aesthetic capitalism. It begins by drawing a distinction between the senses as a means of, and as an object of, study. The paper sheds light on a tendency

(which we name the sensory imperative) to place the senses on the side of resistance rather than power and representation. Consequently, it proposes a sensory research agenda in which the senses are seen as an *intervention* into power, and a way to sidestep the dry representation of social life that reduces the immediacy of the senses to abstract categories. Instead, we suggest that aesthetic economy works as a sensory ordering, and that studying the senses as a means of resistance will therefore miss out on essential features of post-hegemonic power. Second, that important aspects of sensory ordering can be studied in the ways in which people make sense of their sensory experiences – in other words, what we call lived representations, and what pragmatic sociology, described in Paper 2, calls the critical capacity of social actors.

With Paper 1, we therefore suggest an analytical sensorisation that locates sensory life in/as shaped by representations rather than outside of them. This has consequences for my choice of methods, as elaborated in the next section, but it also has consequences for my analytical strategy. It enabled me, for instance, to see place attachments as collective structures of feeling rather than individual relations with a place. It also attuned the study to the connection between place attachment as an affect/emotion, and the aesthetic economy. I observed how place attachments became a management issue for the private development company. It nurtured attachments in so far as the strategy of temporary use depends on people's willingness to invest themselves: to rent temporary spaces and run entrepreneurial businesses, to co-create shared atmospheres and culturally vibrant scenes, to single out a space as significant. At the same time, place attachments had to be kept in check and at times appeared as a threat. By keeping contracts short, and by constantly referring to its own role in making the place what it is today, the development company is alive to how attachments can get in the way of the aesthetic temporality and economy of constant renewal if people start to hold on too tightly. To keep the place in a constant state of readiness, it had to manage attachments carefully.

On my use of concepts

This shift in my analytical object (from 'identity to intensity', as Staunæs and Grønbæk Pors (2021) write) calls for a way of theorizing that is not about explaining phenomena (of temporary urbanism or the aestheticization of cities) but about 'what it means to be human and to features of our experience that may be shared or shareable' (Cunliffe, 2022, p. 14). Cunliffe writes in the spirit of a rebellion against the dominant (and male-dominated) equation between strong theory and abstraction. By this logic, weak theories are those that are simply descriptive. Cunliffe shows, however, that strong theories depend on the exclusion of imagination, or at least the 'proceduralization' of imagination, a tendency which continues to define and reproduce what is considered good theory. Preceding Cunliffe's analysis, albeit with a different agenda, Weick (1995) also notes the monism of understandings of good theory in organization studies. He suggests we should not save the label 'theory' for perfected end-products, but also consider the role of theorizing in the process – or the 'interim struggles' – of understanding (Weick, 1995, p. 386).

My analytical strategy, including use of concepts, is informed by such debates, and of Kosofsky Sedgwick (1997) and Stewart's (2008) elaboration of 'weak theory' that alludes not to a continuum

between weak and strong, but to a relation between theory and empirical material. Weak theory is the kind of theorizing that follows the objects it encounters and is somehow undone or at least altered by these encounters. Weak theory is opposed to strong theory that tends to shape its analytical subjects according to itself to create a world that ‘fits’. Weak theory, in contrast, does not aim to make things ‘add up’ and yet it always threatens to, as Kathleen Stewart explains. It threatens to add things up by trying to make connections between events, by producing a vague sense that something is going on (Stewart, 2008, p. 72). To Stewart, the use of concepts is ‘a mode of production through which something that feels like something throws itself together’ (2008, p. 73). The conceptual focus on place attachments in Paper 3 emerged from this feeling of ‘something’ that permeated my empirical material.

This is not necessarily as speculative as it sounds. It comes with an attention to form, or structure even, but it is interested in form or structure only in so far as these matter to ordinary modes of living. Thus, translated to my case, the aestheticization of the city drew my attention not because it provides an explanation for temporary urbanism, but because it structures ways of navigating sensorially and temporally. While strong theory has its eyes fixed on big systems of which small things can act as signs, weak theory pays attention enough to dwell on moments in which these big systems jump into form in ordinary experience (Stewart, 2007, p. 4) – not as a theoretical move after the event, but as something encountered in the event (see also Cunliffe, 2022, p. 6). It is not an extreme empiricism, it does not denounce theory or the interpretation of events as the above abductive analysis also showed, but it takes its theoretical clue from what is going on. The argument that Stewart (and others, such as Lauren Berlant (2011)) makes, is that the refusal to use theory to add things up into totality honours the reality of everyday life compositions, in which things (feelings, events) do not just add up.

Adding these perspectives to an abductive analytical strategy as presented in the above, I suggest that pragmatist approaches to analysis and theorizing can be fruitfully combined with weak theory into what I call an abductive-affective approach. While I have not been able to find this drawing together of abductive and affective analytical strategies in existing literature, I find support in Trajkovski & Williamson’s (2021) Peircean reading of how feeling an emotion is akin to an abductive process as it depends on recognizing patterns in one’s bodily states: ‘In that respect, feeling an emotion resembles *insight*’ (2021, p. 4 emphasis in original), they write. While the analytical interest in emotions and affect is often associated with ‘post-qualitative’ inquiry (St. Pierre, 2017) and therefore linked to more experimental methodological frameworks, I find that it shares with pragmatism an interest in the knowledge and concepts of ordinary life, and the way of using theory probingly to test relations between the particular and the general (Paulsen Hansen et al., 2024 (forthcoming); Styhre, 2022).

Paper 3: 'How Space Holds: A Reworked Concept of Place Attachment'

Aiming for weak theorizing about the aestheticization of places to which one feels attached, in the third paper of the thesis I combine two different concepts in what Husted and Grønbæk Pors (2020, p. 5) call an analytical strategy of 'frictional eclecticism'. Friction refers to tensions between different concepts that are kept alive (rather than integrated) in the process of theorizing. I begin from the rather well-known concept of place attachment that already holds two concepts in one: place and attachment. The concept has mainly been used to focus on place, and attachment has been reduced to a heuristic device for understanding the emotional and subjective experience of place. Thus, place attachment as it is commonly used does not help me understand what I observed in my case; it holds no friction between 'place' and 'attachment'.

In shaping my conceptual contribution along the lines of weak theory rather than a totalizing system, the paper therefore holds on to tensions (frictional eclecticism) in two ways. First, I unfold the concept of 'place' in place attachment in relation to ongoing discussions about space and spatial thinking as a globalized and politicized counterpart to place. As will become clear in the paper, there is no easy reconciliation between the concept of place and space. Second, I treat the 'attachment' in place attachment as a distinct, rather than subsumed, concept to learn from contemporary affect theories about how attachment is not only a safe, psychological experience but also an ambivalent and intersubjective affect. With the notion of the double-bind of attachments, I work productively with the contradictory affects and politics of feeling attached to something.

Holding on to opposing elements within and between the two different literatures (space/place and attachments as safe/ambivalent) helps me to analyse the role of place attachments in my case study of temporary urbanism, and to draw conclusions about the role of place attachments in aesthetic capitalism's urban transformation. For instance, it sheds light on how place attachments can both give rise to a deep sense of loss at the face of urban transformation *and* be a resource for the aesthetic transformation of urban space. It also illuminates possible ways of understanding a place attachment that does not lead to place-based struggle but remains a contradiction one learns to live with.

Summary of the research process

In these three steps of my research process, I have given an account of how doubt and frustration, in line with an abductive approach to research and analysis, led me to delineate a research problem, develop my analytical strategy, and make a conceptual choice to engage with affects, attachment, and sensory ordering that in turn influenced my analytical strategy. I also engaged in the ongoing debate in management and organization studies on the role of theorizing in making sense of empirical material and placed my qualitative study in these debates. In the following, I proceed to discuss in more practical terms how my approach to doing ethnography resonates with the above.

Methods: Doing ethnography

In this section, I unfold my spatial ethnography through Dumont's (2022) four methodological requirements for organizational ethnography, adapting them to my specific study and conceptual interests. For each methodological requirement, I detail the methods I have used by building on research methods in the intersection between human geography and organization studies with an interest in space such as participant observation, walking, walking interviews, and (spatial) ethnography. I end with an overview of the empirical material comprising the study.

Involvement: Establishing a social role

The thesis is based on ethnographic research on Refshaleøen over a period of four years (2020-2023). In organization studies, ethnography is widely used and acknowledged as a methodology for getting close to research participants and to access meaningful practices as well as to tell convincing stories that ideally weave in and out of voices, observations, and concepts (see e.g., Cunliffe, 2010; Dumont, 2022; Jarzabkowski et al., 2014; Pink, 2021). Dumont (2022, p. 443), like many others, emphasizes the (slightly condescending) 'get your hands dirty' approach to research that ethnography demands. What he means, of course, is that it is not enough to just watch, but one must get involved enough to understand the field's core activity and to construct a social role for oneself in the field. Adhering to this, my fieldwork involved the process of acquiring a social role in the local association of actors presented in the previous section 'Research process – expectations and frustrations'. I did participant observation in fifteen board meetings in the local association, but my participant observation was supplemented by walking interviews (to be elaborated on in the next section) with each of the members as well as informal conversations before and after meetings and during events on the site (for a complete overview, see table at the end of this chapter).

The meetings and members of the local association became the centre of my fieldwork and my access to the site. It was through its members that I was kept up to date on events and meetings with the private development company, got to know the employees of the development company, and got information on other renters I would later interview. In other words, the association played an important role in my efforts to acquire a social role and to build a network that could give me access to other actors and communities (e.g., houseboat owners or the private development company) in the field through personal recommendation (Weber, 2001, p. 481). Consequently, I also did participant observation in six open meetings between a larger group of local renters and the private development company, two public full-day workshops hosted by the development company about the future urban transformation process, two general assemblies in the local association, and one meeting at the city hall (previously described) as well as the final launch of the architectural competition for urban transformation in the autumn of 2023, and the announcement of the winners in January 2024.

In the beginning, I mostly took the role of participant observer during the meetings of the association. For instance, I did not offer my opinions unless I was asked to, but I did intervene in conversations by reminding them of previous discussions or unresolved matters. ‘Playing back’ their own conversations or themes to them became one of the methods I developed to offer something back. I later learned about research methods such as John Shotter’s that aim to help research participants orient themselves differently towards situations and problems (Cunliffe, 2010, p. 232). When asked, I agreed to write minutes for the meetings that I extracted from my verbatim field notes. For each meeting, I therefore have two documents: one version with my field notes that includes atmospheres and awkward silences as well as my own thoughts, and one version that I shared with them after each meeting, focused on decisions and actions. I had a sense that my participation provided a structure and continuity to the meetings that they appreciated because none of them had the association as their first priority. My presence seemed to remind them that the work they were doing was important. When one of the members of the board gave me a key and an open invitation to use his office whenever I was on the site, I felt I had succeeded in the difficult task of getting close to the field in the way I had hoped for.

On the initiative of my research participants, I gradually became what Dumont (2022, p. 443) describes as a first-hand participant or functional member. While very useful for the quality of my ethnographic material (Dumont, 2022, p. 445), one of the challenges this role posed was that it sometimes made me tempted to become an action researcher. Although there are overlaps regarding the degree of involvement, action research differs from the immersion of ethnography in the explicit normative intention to influence the field through the social role one acquires (see e.g., Shotter, 2010). I was tempted, following from my frustrations described in the previous section, to prompt them in more activist directions, but this was not my task. My task was to understand how the local actors of this place sensed, participated in, and responded to the aestheticization of urban space. If such participation and response included collaboration and compliance, my task was to understand why.

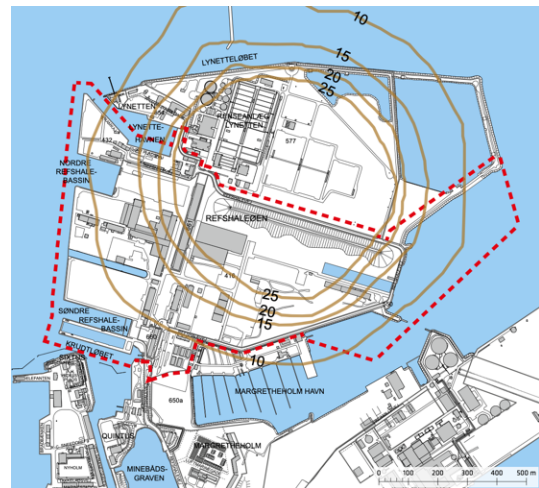
Another way to describe my gradual involvement is that my role shifted from participant observer to that of an observant participant (Moeran, 2007). Some argue that this distinction describes the move from the front stage to the backstage in Goffman’s terms (1990), implying a move from research subjects’ self-presentations to their actual doings, and from what *they* think is the problem to what the researcher finds problematic. This view permeates the use of words such as ‘reveal’ and ‘disclose’ to describe the outcomes of successful ethnographic immersion. I disagree with this view and have instead been inspired by the pragmatist idea of social actors’ own critical capacities (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999) and the notion of practical theories, meaning the ways research participants make sense of their experiences (Cunliffe, 2022; Dumont, 2022, p. 445). For instance, as previously mentioned, one houseboat owner explained to me that she had invented the word ‘place-readiness’ to describe a place attachment that was not at odds with, but adaptable to, change. In the case of the local association, moving backstage meant getting a better understanding of how the association problematized the situations its members found themselves in as temporary renters (Barnett & Bridge, 2016).

Engagement: Adhering to Participants' Ways of Thinking

Dumont (2022, p. 445) uses the term 'engagement' to describe getting involved not just in the practices, but also in the ways of thinking of research participants. Accessing participants' ways of thinking can require ethnographers to 'build upon their bodily experience as a medium to access a new world of perception' (Dumont, 2022, p. 446) in the recognition that ways of thinking also extend towards bodily forms of knowledge (see also Zundel, 2013). However, resonating with a critique later to be presented in Paper 2 of the tendency to emphasize researchers' own experiences and bodies when adopting sensory methodologies, Dumont only emphasizes examples in which researchers' autoethnographic work and bodies take centre stage (2022 table 3, p. 446). Such an approach relates to a reflexive turn in anthropology and the social sciences (see e.g., Emerson, 2001) that made room for emotional and sensory aspects of fieldwork. While my fieldwork, of course, builds on such an awareness of the importance and partiality of my own presence, I have not used autoethnographic methods aspiring to an ideal of immersion, as implied by Dumont's title ('Immersion in Organizational Ethnography') and much ethnographic debate on embodiment. Rather, I aimed for a balance between engagement and distance as also elaborated with the term 'analytical sensorisation' in Paper 1 (Chapter 4), 'The Sensory Imperative'.

I sought insight into participants' ways of thinking through the method of walking and the walking interview to emphasize not just their (and my) embodiment but also emplacement – the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment (Howes, 2004, p. 7). To walk through a place, as Adams et al. write in *Textures of Place* (2001, p. 188) 'is to become involved in that place with sight, hearing, touch, smell ...'. But emplacement further emphasizes the sociality and materiality in which the emplaced ethnographer becomes engaged (Pink, 2021, p. 42). Organizational researchers have expanded on walking as a way of knowing (Beyes & Steyaert, 2020; Zundel, 2013).

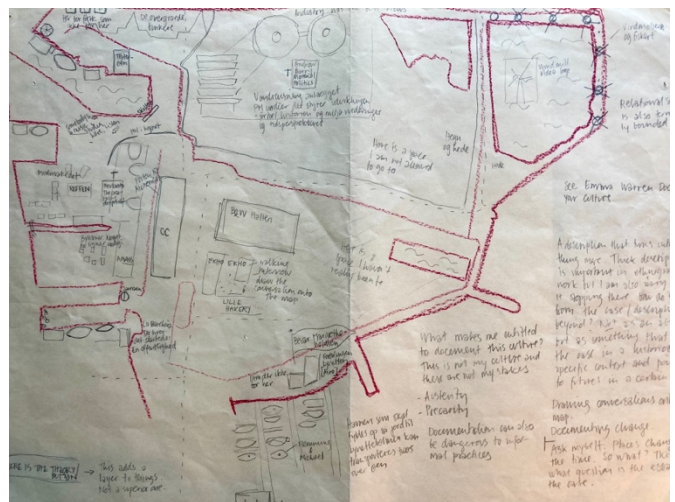
Emplacement overlaps with an interest in embodied and sensory forms of knowing as well as the role of materiality in the construction of meaning (Bilsland & Siebert, 2023, p. 1; see also Cnossen & Bencherki, 2019). For instance, walking allowed me to trace the shifting sensory effects of the wind that distributed the smell from a local wastewater treatment plant. This smell, as I learned from one of my walking interviews, is in fact a very real actor in urban development as it prevents the construction of housing in the affected areas (see the map). Walking also gave me a bodily understanding of the vastness of the space and the contrasts between the seasons, the buzz of the place in summer when water becomes the main attraction, and the sense of complete emptiness on windy winter days when the distances seem to grow. Such walking certainly did not give me an exhaustive overview of the site but practiced my sense of the ambulatory environment (Zundel, 2013, p. 121).



From 'Lokalplan nr. 209 Refshaleøen med tillæg nr. 1' – link in references

Rather than just following my own immediate sensory impressions (a flâneur-like state which can be criticized for its detached relation to places), I wanted to trace these impressions in and with others to relate them to the *mediation* of the senses and affect in the environment. In her seminal paper ‘Street phenomenology – The go-along as ethnographic research tool’ Kusenbach (2003, p. 458) emphasizes how go-alongs are useful for the study of ‘the constitutive role and the transcendent meaning of the physical environment, or place’. Organizational researchers have also taken up the method of walking interviews from its use in the field of human geography (Bilsland & Siebert, 2023; Cartel et al., 2022). I did thirty-two semi-structured interviews with locals and employees of the private development company. The main part of these were conducted as walking interviews¹ (see overview). As a supplement to the participant observation described in the previous section, the walking interviews brought me one step closer to local experiences of change and relations with the place. While becoming a functional, fully-immersed member is often seen as an ideal position for doing ethnomethodological inquiry, this position can also get in the way of a more proactive effort to understand other people’s experiences (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 461) – an understanding that requires a balance between analytical distance and ethnographic immersion (Pilbeam et al., 2023).

As will also be described in Paper 4 (Chapter 7), ‘Feeling the Future’, the walk was always structured by the interviewee who chose the starting point and the route and pace of our walk. I subsequently drew the route and used it as a supporting device in analysing the interview and highlighting points on the map that connected to the conversation. This helped me get a sense of local ways of relating to the place. While the static sit-down interview tends to gravitate around themes that are not context-sensitive (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 463),



Map from one of my walks

walking together helped bring out experiences of (dis)connections and their sensory, affective and material manifestations. For instance, one interviewee kept coming back to the feeling of change as a *pressure* on the space, something that made the space – and particularly *his* space – feel smaller. He kept gesturing towards the water to illustrate the openness and quietness that once characterized the whole space, now overtaken by crowds of urban consumers. When we returned to his office, he insisted on finding old photographs on his computer to show me how the place used to look like. In Paper 4, ‘Feeling the Future’, I relate the walking interview as a method to the analysis of urban biographies to show how personal histories and urban spaces are narrated alongside each other. Walking interviews are thus useful for ‘gather[ing] participants’ stories

¹ When the interview took place as a regular interview in one place, it was either due to time constraints or convenience for my interviewees, or because we had walked together several times before.

connecting self and place' (Cartel et al., 2022, p. 358), and therefore for the study of place attachments.

In line with my study, Cartel et. al. are also interested in 'outlining how to study people's *sense of* (...) place' (Cartel et al., 2022, p. 352 emphasis in original) by, among other things, focusing on the sensory experience of place: 'As individuals process sensory knowledge of the world around them (e.g. warm, dark, noisy) they develop their own unique emotional response' (Creed et al., 2020 cited in Cartel et al., 2022, p. 354). While I agree, I add to this focus by considering the many ways in which sensory knowledge of the world is not just immediate, naturally 'of' the place, but mediated by the form, structure, and norms of the city that go into the constitution of corporeality and/as subjectivity, as Grosz so evocatively describes in an essay on bodies and cities (1995). In that sense, the environment became a source of information, not only 'raw data' (Rodaway, 1994, p. 20), following a recognition that 'it is not simply the immediacy of experience that informs this process [of perception], but also previous knowledge, attention, and the task at hand' (Pink, 2009). As Kusenbach also notes (2003, p. 468), values inform perception. For instance, two different walking interviews mentioned the student housing that consists of a group of floating containers. To one research participant, these containers made him think about the flexibility and experimental character of the space - nothing was permanent, and this instilled in him a sense of opportunity and play. To another participant, the very same containers made him comment on the lack of transparency related to who gets granted a place. The containers reminded him of a system of dispensations given according to prevailing interests (containers do not need a foundation, and are therefore exempt from planning regulations), something which made him suspicious about the 'politics' of it all.

Finally, walking to learn (Zundel, 2013), I also did walks and seminars on the site with students, colleagues, and visiting scholars with an interest in urban space, presenting and discussing my findings *in situ* and taking advantage of what Cunliffe (2022, p. 16) describes as 'conversational features': '[E]mphasizing the 'we-ness' rather than the 'I-ness' of lived experience and meaning-making'. In addition to dialogue in place, this practice also, through comparison, wove in other post-industrial sites in Montreal, Oslo, Liverpool, and Glasgow and generated rich dialogue about each their specific versions of the aestheticization of the city that varied with local histories of (de)industrialization and different versions of neoliberalism.



A walking exchange with a colleague

Duration: Aligning with the Temporal Pacing of the Phenomenon

The field site is located in the city in which I live and work, which meant I was able to be present in the field on and off throughout the whole project (2020-2023), adjusting to meetings and events, scheduled interviews, and whenever I felt like I needed to update myself on the rapid changes or remind myself of the place that informed my conceptual work. This in turn enabled me to align with the temporal pacing of the phenomenon as my key indicator of how much time to spend in the field (2022, p. 448), the third methodological requirement stipulated by Dumont. As a methodological choice, aligning with the temporal pacing of the phenomenon helped me bring out the processual characteristics of my case. While some argue that fieldwork necessarily requires intensive and long-term participant observation (see e.g., Clifford, 1992; Okely, 1992) others have argued for loosening the time-consuming demands of ‘real’ fieldwork, partly due to pragmatic concerns but also by methodologically arguing for ‘intense routes to knowing’ (Pink & Morgan, 2013). My approach was somewhere in between. On one hand, I knew I needed time to study ‘the implications of movements, change activities as well as temporal evolution of events’ (Bakker et al., 2016, p. 1711). On the other hand, as the abductive analytical strategy explained in the above, fieldwork was frequently supplemented with periods of conceptual work, reflecting a deliberate choice not to aim for ethnographic immersion in the sense of ‘going native’.

Another methodological point that informed the temporal aspect of my fieldwork was an awareness of the timing of my fieldwork in the longer period of temporary urban transformation I was studying. Pink (2009, p. 35) emphasizes that ethnographers do not just study a place, as elaborated in the next section, but also particular spatio-temporal events. I became gradually aware of the importance of the period in which I was doing my fieldwork. For instance, as I was collecting contacts for doing a series of interviews with houseboat owners, I realized that I had missed one houseboat owner by a few weeks. He was one of the oldest inhabitants who had lived on his boat before houseboats became ‘a thing’, and as his neighbours told me, he was the only one left who really knew how a boat worked as more than just a floating house. He had finally been forced to move because of increased rent and his gradual sense of alienation from what the place was becoming. I realized that had I been doing my fieldwork ten years earlier, the socio-economic fabric would have been very different, and my experience of a ‘lack of resistance’ might have looked very different too. Given these reflections on timing, I tried to pay attention to other phases of the temporary by tracing ‘shadows of the past’ (Stjerne & Svejenova, 2016) as they emerged through local stories and absences.

Sites: Constructing the space for social action

In the previous three sections I have, following Dumont’s framework, reflected on the ‘involvement and engagement of the ethnographer in the field over time’ (2022, p. 449). The final point concerns the importance of the site. While place is pivotal to any ethnography, it is of particular relevance to my study since I have been interested in the ethnography *of* a place and in place attachments. The risk of focusing the ethnography on a particular place, however, is that place can too easily be viewed as a container that fixes our understanding of culture instead of a

focus on social and political processes of place making (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997). This distinction will be further discussed in Paper 3 (Chapter 6) as a distinction between place and space. Here, I am concerned with what it means in methodological terms. On the one hand, ‘how can place be defined if it is something that is not fixed or enclosed’ (Pink, 2009, p. 29)? And on the other hand, how can an ethnography of a single place also analyse ‘the complexity of global processes’ (Pink, 2009, p. 11)?

Dumont (2022, p. 449) argues (along with others such as Appadurai, 1996; Tsing, 2005) that globalization has changed the spaces of social action. Action cuts across time and place through e.g., digital spheres and the increased mobility of actors whose daily practices may very well entail traversing multiple spaces (Dumont, 2022, p. 449). To better account for a reality in which places are deeply interlinked, organizational ethnographers have suggested methods such as team-ethnography to cover multiple sites or organizations (see e.g., Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). Dumont suggests that instead of doing ethnography of multiple places, we ought to follow actions and interactions to the multiple places they may take us as they constitute the space for social action. This resonates with relational ethnographic analysis and the de-prioritization of place, one that thinks about fields instead of places ‘to move away from conventional, single-site locations to more iterative tracings of global systems of capitalist world systems that cut through dichotomies of *local* and *global*’ (Simpson, 2022, p. 7).

In the case of studying place attachments, this call seems tricky. Does place attachment not imply a rather fixed notion of place, one that settles into studying localized relations and emotions? This conundrum is conceptualized in Paper 3 (Chapter 6) on place attachments. Here, I pay attention to how place attachments affectively draw connections to other space-times rather than settling in one space. This approach to a relational ethnography of place comes closer to other organizational scholars who are interested in the study of space as enacted through relations. For instance, topology has been proposed as a way to challenge the stability of organizational space (Beyes & Holt, 2020; O’Doherty, 2013; Ratner, 2020). Topology is used to consider the continuous deformation and open-endedness of space, such as in Ratner’s use of shadowing to show how spaces otherwise considered separate become interlinked through human and non-human agencies. Here, multiplicity is not just a matter of the ethnographer moving between different places to patch together the field of social action but can also be about attending to different topological formations of the same space through time and imagination.

My spatial ethnography took place in a single site. I did not follow actors as they moved between different places of the city, but only moved around with them on the site as described in the walking interviews. This does not mean that I did not pay attention to how other spaces were folded into this one. For instance, frequent comparisons between this place and other, similar urban transformation processes emerged in conversations as a form of collective memory. Past versions of the place were made present, such as when a research participant wanted to show me his photographs of the place twenty years ago. During walks, people would also often evoke future spaces by imagining how transformation would change the site. As I was standing on the tip of the island during a walking interview, one of my research participants commented on our view across

the harbour where we could see another post-industrial site, now fully developed with high density high-rises in tones of grey. To him, this was not just a view of another place but also of the future of the place we were in, as he was noticing how urban transformation makes all places look the same. In moments like this it became apparent how ‘the phenomenology of everyday encounters [happen] in relation to and as co-implicated with the complexity of global processes’ (Pink, 2009, p. 11). As I will argue throughout the theoretical framing and discussion of the papers, place attachments amplify this conceptual and methodological debate about local phenomenological experience as implicated in global spatial politics or, in my case, the political economic forces of aestheticization.

Overview of empirical material

Data source	Details
Board meetings in the association of local renters	15 board meetings. 2 with the participation of the private development company. Duration: 1 hour each Period: From 31 st of August ‘20 to 30 th of May ‘22
General assembly for the association of local renters	2 general assemblies with local renters Duration: 1.5 hour each. Period: Yearly 2021 and 2022
Meeting at city hall	Meeting between the association and the Mayor of Culture in Copenhagen Duration: 30 minutes
(Walking) interviews with 4 different employees of the private development company (1-3 interview with each)	7 interviews, of which 5 walking interviews Duration: 1-2 hours each
(Walking) interviews with individual board members (1-4 interviews with each member)	13 interviews, of which 11 walking interviews
(Walking) interviews with different locals not in the association	10 interviews, of which 6 walking interviews
Exit interviews with board members	3 interviews off-site, as part of exiting the field and following ‘what’s next’ for my key informants Duration: 1-1.5 hours
Site visit days excluding interview days	38 Duration: Full days

Workshops and meetings hosted by the private development company	<p>6 'after work' meetings with the renters Duration: 2 hours for each meeting Period: From 26th of October '21 to 8th of June '23</p> <p>2 full day workshops as part of public participation process Duration: 6 hours each Period: 4th of February and 4th of March '23</p> <p>Announcement of idea competition for the future plan and announcement of winners Duration: 1.5 hours each</p>
Guided walks and site-specific seminars with colleagues (other researchers and urban planners)	<p>6 walks and seminars presenting and discussing preliminary findings Duration: 2-4 hours</p>
Comparative study of Margretholmen Marina (adjacent neighbourhood to my case study site)	<p>3 interviews with chair of the board of the association Duration: 1-3 hours</p> <p>2 interviews with other members of the association Duration: 1 hour each</p> <p>3 site visit days with informal talks with boat owners Duration: Full days</p>

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Link to source of illustration (smell zones map):

<https://www.kk.dk/sites/default/files/agenda/4998159b-80b6-4872-ad73-235059fd3257/1ea4ab9e-e3b1-43de-9653-ea93f31d5a50-bilag-2.pdf>

PAPER 1

THE SENSORY IMPERATIVE

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Abstract

With this essay, we identify and resist a sensory imperative in management and organizational research and beyond. We define the sensory imperative as an uncritical embrace of the idea that the senses offer a unique and attractive methodological and political position for studying managerial and organizational life and for challenging dominant forms of knowledge production. By falling in with this imperative, the turn to the senses in management and organization studies risks losing sight of its own mediations. We propose three ways of regaining sight of these mediations, which, we argue, come together as an analytical sensorisation – a study of, rather than with, the senses.

Keywords

Representation, senses, sensorial politics, sensory methodologies

Introduction

In *The Gay Science* Friedrich Nietzsche (1887/2001: §121) expressed a profound scepticism at those systematisers of knowledge who discounted the immediate world of sensory appearance in favour of a permanent (idealized) state of finalities and fixed meanings. They treated life as an argument: their concepts and causal standards were so deeply entrenched in their cognition that they mistook their representations as revealing the true condition of the world. They failed to appreciate just how cognition bled out from the mind, to the skull, skin, the body, and more broadly still, the environment. Abstract concepts, Nietzsche suggested, are grammatical elaborations of felt, bodily experiences. Juxtaposing representation with embodied situated knowledge, Donna Haraway expresses similar scepticism at the ability to represent while escaping representation. She calls this a ‘god trick’, a gaze from nowhere that creates unlocatable and therefore irresponsible knowledge claims (1988: 581, 583). Yet, Haraway (1988: 579) also reminds researchers that the ability to recognize “our own ‘semiotic technologies’ for making meanings” – the body and its senses being one such technology – is not enough because it borders on radical constructionism. Though necessarily contradictory, she argues for the necessity of combining the awareness of semiotic technologies with the insistence on the possibility of providing “faithful accounts of a ‘real’ world” (1988: 579). This too was Nietzsche’s (1887/2001: §112) concern, to be aware that in no way does nature wish to imitate the purposive, organized condition of humans, and that the role of inquiry was to naturalize humanity by redeeming nature of the continual attempt to humanize it. Haraway’s reminder is a timely one: without an experimental commitment to faithfully accounting for the real world, the turn to the senses in research risks becoming “a story that loses track of its mediations just where someone might be held responsible for something” (1988: 579). This essay examines the turn to the senses from Haraway’s insistence, often overlooked in practical and theoretical appropriations of the senses, that even knowledge from the body should be held responsible for its own mediations. We consider whether reclaiming the sensory system in management and organization studies heeds Haraway’s warning or whether, in an eagerness to transcend the dry, representational language of disinterested reasoning, it exposes researchers to ‘a perceptual barrage of immediacy’ (Jameson, 1991: 412-13) which prevents their studies from saying anything at all (Barnett, 2008).

The ‘god trick’ of body and feeling

In Haraway’s spirit, our essay is cautionary. We caution against what we sense is an equally pervasive ‘god trick’ in which the dominance of mind and reason gives way to the dominance of body and feeling. We call this the sensory imperative. The sensory imperative is an uncritical embrace of the idea that the senses offer a unique methodological and political position for studying human life and for challenging dominant forms of knowledge production. It is, we argue, the consequence of the turn to the senses losing sight of its own mediations. To regain sight of these mediations, we encourage researchers to disassociate the senses from an *a priori* position of marginality and resistance, to instead review the sensory turn in light of a mainstream sensorial politics (Davidson and Brash, 2021) and the ordinariness of the senses (Stewart, 2007). Whilst sensory methodologies can constitute a radical break with representation, they can also, by

advocating an intensification of feeling and experience, be understood as yet another aspect of social structuring. We are far from arguing that sensory methodologies are merely mediated by aesthetic capitalism, but we do argue that it is not from the margins but from the pervasive sensory and affective structuring of society that sensory methodologies must be exposed, questioned and directed. This leads us to inquire into the intimacy, rather than opposition, between the senses and representation.

The enminded body

We take this essay as an occasion to replace one embodied, situated activity – going along with, moving with the sensory forces – with another embodiment of judgmental interruption. Stepping back from unfolding processes and taking a disengaged position – one of the sins of representational theory (Beyes and Steyaert, 2020: 225; Zundel, 2013: 110) – does not have to be a mental cognitive abstraction. It also involves a body coming into a considered, non-coincidence with itself (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 148). If perception takes place in “circuits that cross-cut the boundaries between brain, body and world” (Ingold, 2000: 244), then surely thinking does too? Rather than just calling for embodiment, Ingold talks of the enminded body (Ingold, 2000: 171), something Hayles and Pulizzi (2010) elaborate on in their idea of cognition, consciousness and language being inseparably woven together. This intimacy of meaning, thought, perception and knowledge is further distributed, stored, split and re-formed through sensory electrical pathways that are both organic and machinic, processed by layer upon layer of software and operating systems, all at speeds far out of reach to ordinary human perception. We too acknowledge the bodily activity involved in thinking and language yet remain sceptical towards the proposal of bodily activity *as* thinking and *as* language, a proposal which runs through the sensory imperative as an insistence that one can retain a hold on the world while being immersed in it (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 148). To take hold of the world, in our view, is to sever from it, to cut out from the immersed, networked, endlessly entailed affective exchange of force, and to think. Thinking involves what Hannah Arendt (1978: 227) called a completion of the event, something which Marilyne Strathern (1996) likens to an act of cutting the network, which for Arendt took the form of deliberate, active remembrance and quest for shareable meaning between speaking bodies. Arendt was also thinking of Nietzsche here, (1978: 334-337) of his coruscating attack on the representational theories, but then also of his reluctance to turn away entirely from the structures of deliberate, active thought (the collective structures of freely exchanged opinions she associates with politics) and immerse oneself into the ever-renewing succession of life’s processes that course through sense and feeling. Ridding oneself of Apollo in favour of Dionysius – as though it were a choice, somewhat ironically – discounts utterly the severing, creating role of the thinking subject in favour of submission to biological process. It borders on a carnal intoxication: a lust for connectivity and propinquity that derides the thinking human subject as little more than an anachronistic ontological overthrow from the twilight age of Cartesian doubt.

The senses: Objects of or means of study?

To understand the methodological implications of studying the senses through immersion, Wacquant draws a useful distinction: Sensory formations can either be taken as objects of study

(he calls this sensual ethnography¹), or as means of study (carnal sociology), his own engagement with the senses being positioned in the latter. Carnality creates an immersive, involved understanding grounded in deep familiarity and care which is necessarily curtailed by contemplation (Wacquant, 2015: 6). Recent years have seen increasing interest in sensory methodologies that develop this carnal sociology based on an immersive research agenda. These methodologies do not just study but actively ‘engage the senses’ as a way to get to new ways of knowing and thinking (Pink, 2013), such as when autoethnography is taken up for its ability to actively generate experience and empathy (Boncori and Smith, 2019). In turning to their own bodies and to extensive writing about methodology to ground their challenge of representational knowledge production and learning, such as in recent work on the sensuous nature of writing (Brewis and Williams, 2019; Essén and Värlander, 2012) and walking (Michels et al., 2020), management and organization scholars take up Wacquant’s carnal sociology uncritically. But why should the study of the senses from the body enjoy such eminence? Isn’t this just a new picture being constructed with the old logic of hierarchies in method? Emphasizing walking and writing as ways to immerse researchers in the world of feeling carries potential, but not if it comes with a loss of critical sight into how the senses are themselves being discursively and technically mediated. With the triumph of feeling comes the danger of stopping before – as Haraway would have it – anyone can be held accountable for what is felt.

Aspects of the sensory imperative

Unfolding the arguments from the introduction, we identify two aspects to the sensory imperative. The first aspect is an advocacy of closeness as a methodological ideal with which to challenge the ‘god trick’ of representation: by bringing the world ‘in’ through sensory proximity, studies are presumed to be more real to life. The second aspect is a commitment to a politics of sensory methodologies: it is presumed that sensory research, *ipso facto*, challenges the prevailing rational, heteronormative, industrialized, institutional orders by which subjectification is continually seeded.

First aspect of the sensory imperative: The desire for closeness

A desire for closeness has developed in the field of sensory studies, arguing that, far from being seen as signs of cultural models, the senses should be studied as unmediated, experienced phenomena of life (Ingold, 2000, 2011; Pink, 2009, 2010; Wacquant, 2015). Taken up in management and organization studies, researchers seek methods that are “as sensuous as possible” (Michels et al., 2020: 560) and strive to learn “how to write in a more embodied way, with more emotion” (Essén and Värlander, 2012: 406). While such aspirations are of course not problematic

¹ Not to be mistaken with Sarah Pink’s sensory ethnography/anthropology (2009/2010) or Stoller’s (1997) influential ‘sensuous scholarship’, which are both closer to carnal sociology than to sensual ethnography in Wacquant’s vocabulary. In the anthropological field of sensory studies, we read the confusion about what to call the field as a testament to the failure to distinguish between the senses as an object of and means of inquiry and by extension a disagreement about which one of these gets closer to experience (see debate between Pink and Howes, in Pink, 2010).

in themselves, they often approach the question of ‘feeling more’ uncritically. To what end should we feel more? What kind of encounters does it produce?

The sensory revolution

Similar to Wacquant’s distinction in the previous section, Pink (2010: 338) describes a transition from an anthropology of the senses to the more carnally direct sensory anthropology, where the representational ‘of’ gives way to experience and practice. The anthropology of the senses, an important driver of the sensory revolution that challenged the linguistic turn of the 1960’s and 70’s, is a relational approach to the study of the senses and sensory orders that compares different cultures and studies their ideas and beliefs through sensory characterizations (Howes, 2013: part III para. 5). Emerging in the early 1990s, it was animated by a critical relation to the ways vision and formal classificatory systems had colonized knowledge production, blinding research to understanding other ways of being in the world that were not marked by vision or articulation, but by taste, listening, feeling or smelling.

Paradoxically, while the anthropology of the senses has contributed to the sensory expansion of accepted knowledge forms, it has itself become a battlefield over the question of how and whether to make sense of the senses (Ingold, 2011; Pink, 2010). The debate is grounded in disputes over a particular sense: vision. For some, the association of sight with rational and mental projection, and its concomitant superiority as a dominant sense that places subjects in distinction to the world, make vision questionable. Wacquant, for example, likens the detachment of abstract and artificial thinking with the gaze whereas the hands capture the natural flow of life (2015: 9).

Against this anti-visualism, however, Tim Ingold cautions against the idea that vision can possess inherent capacities such as detachment and objectivity. This, he says, is “to separate out the discourse surrounding vision from the actual practices of looking” (2000: 286). To correct the dominance of vision with the introduction of other senses might not be enough, then, if eyes are separated from looking, ears from listening and skin from feeling (Ingold, 2011: 325). What gets left behind by the anthropology of the senses, Ingold (2000: 184) suggests, are practical activities of perception. Ingold is no fan of representational knowledge and remains intensely interested in direct multi-sensory experience. Yet, proximity is not necessarily found by eulogising different senses: the job at hand is to understand everyday phenomenal experience, not to coral specific aspects of it.

The desire for closeness in management and organization studies

In management and organization studies, the interest in blurring the divisions between cognition and feeling, or representation and enactment, enjoins itself to a methodological desire for closeness (Beyes and Steyaert, 2020: 227; Brewis and Williams, 2019: 89; Essén and Värlander, 2012: 412). Beyes and Steyaert, for example, describe their pedagogy of affect as part of a ‘more-than-representational’ urge to replace accurate representation with experience through multi-sensory ethnography (2020: 228-229). The advocacy of embodied practices of learning through techniques like walking recall Ingold’s emphasis on the practical activity of perception (Beyes and Steyaert, 2020; Zundel, 2013). Also addressing the practical activity of perception, Essén & Varländer

(2012: 402) argue that access to other researchers' experiences of writing is arrived at through a "pre-conceptual, pre-discursive and bodily capacity to grasp their emotions, intentions and experiences". Yet this grasping, and appearance of emotions etc., is already a conditioning of the world being arranged for the sake of a particular form of structured understanding by which humans are to get ahead. There is little attempt to understand this ontological structuring of the senses. Writing and walking are being invoked here more in the spirit of closeness advocated by Wacquant and Pink; being close is, evidently, enough. But in giving priority to such embodied ways of knowing, how then do these studies hold on to the "self-restraining sobriety" (Zundel, 2013: 122) needed to obtain "insights beyond the self" (Essén and Varländer, 2012: 415)?

Though aware of the potential dangers of "narcissistic accounts" (2012: 415) when doing research from the body, Essén & Varländer's study risks failing to heed its own warning. Writing, in their case, is directed at increased self-understanding (2012: 404) and at the understanding of an erotic desire involved in academic writing (Essén and Varländer, 2012: 415). While the body is seen as an active force and agent in academic research practices, Essén & Varländer's concern is less in how the agent-body meets a research field than in how it meets itself. With the walking practice of the *dérive*, Michels et al (2020: 560) go further still, into the unconscious hidden desires of researchers, in search of new imaginative capacities and with the aim to sensitize prospective managers to their own bodies. It is "[t]he drifter's own experiences [which] serve as the main material for such a spatial analysis" (Michels et al., 2020: 562). Yet this elevation of a drifting, bodily phenomenology becomes akin to a profound loneliness. If the senses and experience are grounding conditions of knowing, and if, because of this, what appears as the world is an open, restless and sometimes transforming array of things and events, then each body is confined to their own private sensorium.

Encountering the senses through representation

Other sensory management and organization studies continue to see value in representations. While walking can certainly be theorized as a sensuous experience of self-encounter (see O'Doherty, 2013), in Beyes and Steyaert's (2021) study of Berlin, it is deliberately tuned toward encounters with others: queer movements, squatted houses, homeless persons, street musicians and drug dealers, remnants of working-class culture, bourgeois culture in unexpected places. In short, so many ways in which moving does move you (their pedagogy of affect is predicated on the rule 'move to be moved'; Beyes and Steyaert, 2021: 229), but with an analytical emphasis on *what moves* rather than *being moved*. Sensory regimes are encountered through representations, such as of economy and history: "atmospheric and existential consequences of economic theories" and "the way Berlin's loaded history keeps shaping its affective landscape" (Beyes and Steyaert, 2020: 234).

Given such sensory attunement to representations that move (as opposed to speaking directly to cognition), what, then, of the claim for affective pedagogy to be 'more-than-representational'? What 'more' is being hoped for here? In part, it is the "process of participating, engaging and imagining" (2020: 229), but what does analysis then produce, beyond its own performance? Perhaps the 'more than' is not an addition to representation, but a concern with its

transformation? For sure, the speculative multiplicity that can characterize the hybridity and inventiveness of sensory methodologies is needed to upset the plinths upon which knowledge has been placed, but representation itself can play a full role in this. It can be stygian and uncanny, it can disturb, it can contribute to the challenges of critique. Surely the ‘more than’ should not confine research to a desire for closeness with sensory worlds that strives deliberately towards less cognition and coherence (Brewis & Williams, 2019: 89)?

Lessons for an analytical sensorisation

To recur to Ingold’s suspicion of representation and how it survives even the sensory turn, his critique of the anthropology of the senses is entirely in line with what we have identified as the desire for closeness in the sensory imperative: That we can be freed of the curse of distancing abstraction by refusing to know through representation as a weapon of categorizing. Yet, Ingold’s desire for closeness as a methodological ideal for studying sensory perception is not a rejection of representation as such. Rather, it marks the difference between giving conceptual priority to the senses – cultivating a ‘sensory imagination’ which opens “not upon the world itself, but upon a simulacrum, of the world” (Ingold, 2011: 316) – and giving practical priority to the senses. Stretching his critique of the anthropology of the senses towards the desire for closeness in Wacquant, Pink and in management and organizational research, there is a sensory imagination at play here too when the discourses surrounding senses (contemplation) are separated from the actual practices of sensing (immediacy).

Giving practical priority to the senses as Ingold advocates does claim to be able to access life itself with its problematic connotations of unmediated vision against which Haraway warns, but this is a life which is already riven with representations constantly affecting experience and perception (Ingold, 2000: 286). Thus, to be sensitized towards these practical and sensory experiences of representation would be one way to stall and disturb the sensory imperative. To paraphrase Ingold’s critique of anti-visualism this, however, demands that we give up on seeing distance as an inherent feature of representation. It also demands that we stop taking proximity as a precondition for sensing given that sensory lives are constantly technologically mediated at a distance.

Second aspect of the sensory imperative: Politics without representations

The second aspect of the sensory imperative poses the senses as forces from the margins with an *a priori* resilience in the face of disciplinary power. Following from the politics of admitting the situated body, research (contrary to Haraway’s intention) becomes politicized by virtue of the very positions it takes rather than the subjects it analyses. This is “the politics of forming understanding from a different orientation point” (Dewsbury, 2003: 1914) which has, for instance, led to the elevation of witnessing (as opposed to explaining and making sense of) as a particularly ethical and political position from which to engage with the world (Beyes and Steyaert, 2020: 235; see also Dewsbury, 2003: 1909). And yet, as Haraway (1997: 24) shows, in the history of modernity the witness is also the one who holds the power to establish the facts, to claim its subjectivity as its

objectivity. There is an onus, then, on sensory studies to expand on how such witnessing is more attuned than other forms of relating to things. Similarly, if, as some claim, “the avowal of disharmony, incoherence, and contradiction amidst ourselves [researchers] is a necessary first step to prefigure non-capitalistic difference, change, and the potential for successful political interventions” (Zanoni et al. 2017: 584), then in what ways is this move from personal disharmony to political emancipation structured, and how is it that a sensitivity to a multiplicity of ungovernable feelings and desires contributes to the success of such political intervention? In other words, the assumed elevation of the body and the embodied subject as a site of resistance ought to raise concerns about whether we slip into an abstraction of politics (similar to Ingold’s concern of the previous section) rather than addressing the lived politics of the senses. Surely more has to be done to elaborate on how disturbed, appalled bodies do not just become a fertile ground for seething resentment, but a generative, organized and collective space for the appearance of new beginnings that “open up some space of freedom for action that actually sets the constituted body of citizens in motion” (Arendt, 1976: 356).

The turn to the senses, and the methodological proposals to which it has given rise, ascribe certain values and affects to particular styles of analysis (Barnwell, 2016: 11) – styles that often involve encountering or crossing the limits of language. Framing embodied sensory studies as sites of resistance and opposition, the sensory imperative invokes a politics outside politics, or what Thrift (2008: 3) calls “politics which are not yet of politics”. The most explicit relation between such emancipatory politics and the senses is established in non-representational theory. Here, standing outside politics is seen as a precondition for exposing the sensory orderings that characterize late modernity and globalized capitalism, to then splinter, dissolve or transform them (Thrift, 2004: 68, 2008: 4). The diagnosis of the centrality of the senses in late modernity leads to an interventionist, experimental political program which takes the new openness of the world as its license to experiment on the sensory dispositions embedded in everyday spaces and subjectivities (Thrift, 2008: 68ff).

Politics without representations in management and organization studies

Drawing directly or indirectly on this non-representational view on politics, proposals for a pedagogy of affect, for the use of the *dérive* in learning, for writing-as-skin and autoethnographies of embodied experiences of writing, are all methodological experiments in management and organization studies that are animated by a wish to challenge the political effects of representation with its disciplining and suppression of the sensing body. On the one hand, this makes welcome room for the provocations of indetermination, for a critical approach to creativity and experimentation as both a subject of and means of study, and finally, for forms of language that cannot be corralled by sedentary and disembodied forms of learning (Beyes and Steyaert, 2020: 236–239). On the other hand, and notwithstanding these affordances, the non-representational notion of politics also entertains the idea that it is possible to willfully frame contributions “outside of preconceived and instrumental ways” (Zundel, 2013: 19-120), which compromises the possibility of these experiments to analyse political structures.

Self-marginalization

Playing with the apparent intimacy between the senses and the marginal, recent work in management and organization studies explores writing as resistance against the way in which scientific norms can silence the sensing body (Gilmore et al., 2019). Boncori and Smith (2019: 75–79), for instance, resist such norms through a detailed autoethnography that deals with the intimate bodily issue of perinatal loss (see also Peretz, in this issue). Here, it is not only ‘writing differently’ (Gilmore et al., 2019), but also the sensing subject which is taken to be a source of resistance. Seeing words as extensions of flesh, and embodiment as a site of resistance to the “masculine and patriarchal norms of what is acceptable” (2019: 80), writing mobilizes the senses from the margins against what is perceived as mainstream. What gets lost in this insistence on the senses as being at the margins of organization, mobilized by individuals, is twofold: First, it overlooks the equally sensuous and embodied practice of silencing bodies in organizational settings. The turn to the senses is no longer only a site of resistance, it is also a source of power (Lash, 2007). Second, with the explicit intention to ‘write differently’, a certain attitude toward the potentiality of thinking as *écriture* (see special issue by Gilmore et al., 2019) takes individuality itself to be a site of resistance (Berlant, 2011: 124). At best, this overevaluation of what methodological ideas might do politically is an occupational hazard; at worst, it comes from “a certain mode of virtuously intentional, self-reflective personhood” (Berlant, 2011: 124). Individuality is a much more contrary form, Berlant argues: It encompasses both commodity fetishism, psychoanalytic desires and cultural and national modernity. Thus, linking political resistance with specific methodological goals such as ‘writing differently’ is a heroic staging of agency that distracts attention “from the hesitancy and recessiveness in ordinary being” (Berlant, 2011: 124).

Interventions above encounters

The eagerness in the sensory turn to bring about social change (e.g., by challenging the representational spaces of knowing through interventions from the outside) can lead to such dramatizations. Needless to say, it is not that taking up the issue of perinatal loss or silencing of bodies are dramatizations – it is the idea that such issues *become political* when written about differently, when emphasized through the senses. Take the use of the *dérive* in management and organization research as an example, as it displays a tendency to think resistance from the sensing individual (Michels et al., 2020: 563), and it is associated with affect, play and subversion (Beyes and Steyaert, 2020: 233–235). Like writing differently, the *dérive* is a practice that becomes political through the sensing individual: It is the witnessing in movement of the environment, and the subject’s folding of experience into that environment, which to the Situationists made it a political act. Yet, the difference between using the *dérive* for ethnographic encounters that involve dirt and estrangement (Beyes and Steyaert, 2020: 233f), and for playfully opening up spaces of imagination (Michels et al., 2020: 572), is telling. In the first, the senses become political when encounters confront students with places and lives they wouldn’t otherwise see, or when their notion of urban creativity is stretched well beyond their comfort zones (Beyes and Steyaert, 2020: 234). In the latter, the senses become political when the imagination intervenes in a situation to make something of it (Michels et al., 2020: 573). It is the difference between sensory orders seen as something already existing in the field and sensory orders as something which is affirmatively

added to the field, or the difference between perceptual practice and sensory imagination (Ingold, 2011: 216). If the latter is all there is, its political heft remains limited to individualized acts of somewhat flippant derangement whose political effects are minimal. In his film *Critique of Separation*, Debord himself was somewhat skeptical of the isolating individualism of *dérive*, alive to how, if left to its own devices, it amounted to little more than a continual adaptation into a network of possible itineraries that achieved very little.

Lessons for an analytical sensorisation

We are thus back at the question of what makes the senses political in sensory methodologies. Is it through sensory interventions, as non-representational theory and methodologies propose, where politics is understood as a matter of intervening in representations from the outside – of writing, walking and positioning oneself differently? Or is it when environments are encountered as sensory orders that shape those, as well as multiple other, encounters? We argue that it is of little political use to take sensory lives seriously if the analysis intervenes to undo social structure and order instead of critically seeking to understand it. The sensory imperative, nurtured by a non-representational politics as described here, emphasizes a political sensorisation aimed at *bringing about* social change, but disregards an analytical sensorisation aimed at *analysing* shifting forms of sensual perception and structuration (Reckwitz, 2012: 256f). Thus, it does not capture the ways in which people manage structuring and being structured in everyday lives (Barnwell, 2016: 16), that is, the ordinariness of feeling. An analytical sensorisation, by contrast, encounters structures not as invisible relations and objective distributions we should avoid apprehending for the risk of maintaining them, but as a lived structure (Berlant, 2011: 67) or structures of feeling (Williams, 1977: 132): To locate the senses within social structures instead of outside of – or even in opposition to – them is the starting point for an analytical sensorisation which recognizes the political centrality and ordinariness of the senses.

Ways out

While we caution against the uncritical use of sensory methodologies that privilege the bodily condition, and against the elevation of ‘the margins’ as a starting point for a politics without representations, we do not mean to ignore or repress the senses in management and organizational research. Rather, we ask whether the senses can be made meaningful without being translated into cultural models (as they are in in the anthropology of the senses), and without being confined to an unmediated encounter with life, beyond any need for explanation. We propose three ways out of the sensory imperative, towards an analytical sensorisation. The first takes its cue from the management and organization studies already discussed in our essay. The second way draws on Kathleen Stewart to question the idea that the attempt to make sense of the senses is an academic practice out of joint with lived experience, which we must therefore work against. The third plays with Walter Benjamin’s notion of mimesis, which reveals to us the limitations of the words we have used here – ‘representation’ and ‘non-representation’ – when trying to understand the bodily implications of composing analysis.

First, moderations of the sensory imperative suggest that we maintain a will to communicate, to reform rather than reject (Brewis & Williams, 2019: 90), that we maintain the need to make sense of the senses (Beyes & Steyaert, 2021: 229) and that we reserve a track for experimentation alongside, but not instead of, the effort to abstract (Brewis & Williams, 2019: 90). But to use these moderations to resist the sensory imperative, we first need to insist on the ordinariness of sensory lives rather than taking the senses to be a source of political resistance from which we can mobilize against representational knowledge production. Taking a more cautionary approach to the experimental wonders of embodied learning, we might lessen the force of the sensory imperative by pointing to the mainstream life of senses, “the most usual fact that there is something and not nothing” (Zundel, 2013: 121 paraphrasing Heidegger, 2000). As the turn to the senses is slowly becoming less antithetical to the fields of management and organization studies, the suggestion to let the senses ‘just be’ seems counterproductive – should we not push this agenda further still, to counteract lifeless analysis? Yet, the sensory imperative encourages the active persuasion and increase of the senses in ways which compromise the realization of its own emancipatory politics. Using the senses to get as close as possible, or even to strive for an ‘enactive ethnography’ (Wacquant, 2015: 5) as a style of immersive fieldwork, seems to us to relinquish the two-in-one contemplative distancing necessary to maintain an experimental sense of the limits conditions by which subjectification is being continually instituted. Rather than simply assume our senses have an innate capacity to challenge systems of power and the classifications and law-like arrangements of representational knowledge, Zundel (2013: 121) suggests an alternative is to conduct research as a ‘non-willing waiting’. As he admits, it is a slow and rather unfashionable position to advocate. Nevertheless, refusing to fall too easily for the infectious eagerness of the sensory imperative to move and be moved might be a better position from which to realize a social analysis of sensory orders. To wait, and to listen, rather than leap.

Second, to nurture the sensory turn in management and organization studies as an analytical sensorisation, we ought to abandon the idea that making sense of the senses is an academic abstraction which stands in opposition to lived practice. By insisting on lived experiences of representation as a field study of the senses, the senses can be studied in a much wider range of phenomena, not just those marked by radical experimentation or immediacy beyond words. Instead of thinking about closeness as a methodological tool and ideal, we might start to think of analytical sensorisation as the capacity to attune to the practical ways in which the senses are made sense of in experience. This way out draws on the sensibility towards immersive fictions in Kathleen Stewart’s work. Here, the researcher’s immersion and peoples’ lived immersion in compositions, habituations, performances and events are one and the same thing. Stewart does not operate with different *kinds* of immersion, suggesting that they might get one closer to, or more distanced from, the real, but with one immersive fiction (2008: 73). It is a fiction because the worlds being studied are made up of “generative modalities of impulses, daydreams, ways of relating, distractions, strategies, failures, encounters, and worldings of all kinds” (2008: 73) and because attending to them takes “the capacity to imagine trajectories and follow tendencies into scenes of their excesses or end points” (2008: 78). But importantly, such imaginative capacities are not methodological tools, they are the very strategies people use to go on living, and all researchers can do is to keep an eye out for those contact zones where these strategies appear meaningful to

people themselves – not as mirrors of what is going on but as residues of lived experience (Stewart, 2008: 77). Referring to Barthes' (1985) critical writings on representation, Stewart calls this a third meaning, a significance which emerges in the way “something picks up density and texture as it moves through bodies, dramas, and scenes” (2008: 76). Making sense of something cannot be reduced to, and then rejected as, an abstracting representational knowledge claim removed from practical perceptual activity. How things jump into form (Stewart, 2008: 75) is also a lived practice and therefore, when analysed, not necessarily added ‘on top’ of lived, bodily experience (Ingold, 2000: 286). To let the sensory imperative be, we need to attend to practical perceptual activity not only in its immediacy, but also in the ways in which sense emerges from the field of the senses, as practical activities of representation, not just of ‘being’ but of being “*in* something” (Stewart, 2008: 77).

Third, and in the spirit of questioning this essay's own reproduction of a sensory imperative by keeping alive the distinction between representation and non-representation, we invoke Walter Benjamin's notion of mimesis – that faculty by which one gets hold of something by means of its likeness – and how it flips the desire for closeness which we have been questioning. Mimesis always involves part copy and part contact, “a language of the body combining thought with action, sensuousness with intellection” (Taussig, 1993: 20). It is both an immersive performance and an intellectual act of disciplinary thought. Like Kathleen Stewart's immersive fiction, mimesis elides the struggle over how to capture or define what counts as real, and instead works to make apparent the distribution of what can be seen, said and thought from within these structures. Reminding us that mass culture is the new schooling for our mimetic powers – “people whom nothing moves or touches any longer are taught to cry again by films” (1978: 86) – Benjamin shows how representations too are a matter of the senses, and that getting closer to the real takes on a radically different meaning when that real is itself a screen, an image, a montage, a commodity. They are ‘eyes’ of technology that, just like our organic eyes, function as active perceptual systems “building on translations and specific ways of seeing, that is, ways of life” (Haraway, 1988: 583). Benjamin's notion of mimesis reveals a kind of ghostly or uncanny movement or manipulation that is not representation (and certainly doesn't claim to be non-representational) but has a life of its own in the “sticky webs of copy and contact, image and bodily involvement” (Taussig, 1993: 21). Thinking through the notion of mimesis, non-representation, as that moment of sensuous contact (from which the sensory imperative claims to begin), is always a potential, but incidental, effect of careful efforts to represent, moments in which the bodily stakes involved in copying something can lead to contact.

References to Chapter 4

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PAPER 2

ENGAGING WITH ENGAGEMENT: ETHNOGRAPHIC SENSITIVITY IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF REGIMES OF ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

This article investigates a hitherto neglected question of what kind of methodological sensitivity is required in ethnographic research using Laurent Thévenot's sociology of regimes of engagement (SRE). Thévenot's call for capturing proximate forms of engagement 'below' the public correlates with the recent turn to non-representational methodologies in ethnography. Thus, we discuss the methodological consequences of the ontological commitment of SRE through a dialogue with the epistemological arguments of non-representation, including sensory, affective, and embodied ethnographies. We do so by zooming in on three key focal points of SRE: *plurality* of different regimes of engagement, *investment* of people in their environment to secure goods, and *versatility* between trusting and doubtful engagements. We argue that although SRE and non-representational ethnography share a concern for the unspoken, affective and embodied practices, SRE requires a sensitivity towards the dynamics between the representational and non-representational.

Keywords

Laurent Thévenot, Regimes of engagement, ethnography, non-representation, affect, embodiment

Introduction

This article discusses the methodological implications of French pragmatic sociology for ethnography, specifically in relation to the recent turn to non-representational ideas in methodological considerations in ethnography. This tradition marks a decisive move away from cognition (Vannini, 2015) as researchers engage with the more-than-human, more-than-textual and multi-sensual worlds (Lorimer, 2005, p. 83). The ambition in non-representational methodologies is to sensitize social scientists (Thrift, 2008, pp. 18ff) by focusing on affect, events, complexity, and the openness of everyday performances (Vannini 2015, pp. 319–20). This ambition is seen in kindred discussions on affective ethnography (Gherardi, 2018), embodied knowledge (Okely, 2007) and sensory ethnography (Pink, 2015).¹ The intent has been to challenge the hegemonic power of discursive language that defines and hence controls human lives within categories, roles, assignments, and causal entailments.

In this paper, we discuss French pragmatic sociology with a focus on its latest theoretical extension, Laurent Thévenot's (2001, 2006, 2011) sociology of regimes of engagements (henceforth, SRE) to show that this specific literature can contribute to the broader methodological debates in sociology about how researchers can and ought to be sensitive to their research object when it includes the non-verbal, affects, and materiality. While there have been discussions around the methodological issues in justification analysis (e.g. Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016), methodological questions related to SRE have only been addressed in few studies (e.g. Hansen et al. 2016; Thévenot, 2020; Carlsen 2020; Bullinger 2014) and not systematically (Hansen, 2023). By focusing on SRE, we show that the methodological implications of this framework, while in some ways aligned with the turn to non-representational methodologies, can be used to specify engagement, both the researcher's engagement and the study of actors' engagements. While non-representational ethnography leans towards the epistemological implications of how to capture what lies beyond cognition and discourse, SRE provides valuable ontological insights to what researchers should capture and why.

The article is structured as follows: We start by describing the methodological implications of French pragmatic sociology with a focus on the role of ethnography which lead us to discuss the potential match between SRE and non-representational ethnography. Then, we go on to discuss the methodological implications of SRE through three key focal points: 1) *plurality*, in the sense of how to capture a range of different regimes of engagement, 2) *investment*, i.e. how to be sensitive to people's attempts to invest in their environment to secure goods, including the most close and proximate, and 3) *versatility*, that is how to study the changes between trusting and doubtful engagements. This allows us to discuss how SRE may contribute to debates about non-representational ethnography and vice versa. These discussions are informed by our own previous and on-going research using SRE (author, author, author, author) and by the few discussions available in the literature on French pragmatic sociology and methodology. We end our paper by discussing how methodological questions and concerns in SRE can contribute to debates about non-representational ethnography and how researchers can develop and make use of the

methodological advantages of this theoretical approach. Throughout the article, we focus on meta-methodological issues without going deep into either questions of philosophy of science and theorizing or very hands-on questions such as concrete styles of observation and interview techniques.

The odd couple of French pragmatic sociology and ethnography

In the late 1980s, Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot initiated a sociological program outlined in the book *On Justification* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1987, 2006), later to be labeled French pragmatic sociology (Breviglieri and Stavo-Debaugé, 1999). This article discusses the methodological implications of French pragmatic sociology with a focus on its latest, and most significant theoretical extension, Thévenot's SRE. Although the analytical model of orders of worth drew upon a number of ethnographic field studies (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1989, see Lemieux, 2014, p. 156) the relationship between French pragmatic sociology and ethnography has rarely been addressed.

On Justification was influential in pointing to the need for studying situations of dispute as processes of justification, critique and pragmatic compromises between a plurality of 'orders of worth'. Compared to its main adversary at the time, Bourdieu's critical sociology, Boltanski and Thévenot's sociology of critique offered another ontology of the 'critical capacities' of 'ordinary people' and of power, not imbued in the unconscious or false consciousness and symbolic violence but in composite 'arrangements' that were occasionally questioned and reshaped. This novel, and then provocative, displacement in attention of the empirical object of analysis also came with some key methodological arguments and ideas. In taking 'ordinary' actors' critical capacities and actions seriously and describing them with the same analytical model as could be used to describe the critical actions of the sociologist, Boltanski and Thévenot argued for the 'symmetry' between researcher and the researched actor (Guggenheim & Potthast, 2012).

To study critique in a symmetrical way both entailed a 'pragmatic situationalism' in studying disputes as they unfold (Diaz-Bone, 2011; see also Barthe et al., 2013), and a nominalist approach to interpreting them (Lemieux, 2008; Hansen, 2016), that obliges the researcher 'in her description, to adhere as closely as possible to the procedure the actors themselves use in establishing proof in a given situation' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006, p. 12). In terms of methods, the symmetrical approach posed only limited additional epistemological challenges since one of the key requirements to justification and critique was that they were public and prepared to a third other. In this way, disputes were interpretable to the researcher, keeping in mind the epistemic gap between the practical and intuitive mastering of orders of worth of 'ordinary actors' vs. the theoretical conception of the researcher (Lemieux 2014, p. 155).

Methodological debates related to the use of French pragmatic sociology have concerned questions of generalization and theorizing as well as how to study justification and critique through analyses of discourse. Regarding the former, Boltanski and Thévenot suggested that it was possible to study macro-sociological phenomena related to politics and morality through micro-situations

of everyday disputes. In one of the few articles discussing *On Justification* in relation to ethnography Dodier and Baszanger point to the way the orders of worth model presents a ‘non-cultural conception of the field’ seeking to understand ‘dynamic concrete activities of persons in the context of complex normative, situational and non-unified references’ (Dodier & Baszanger, 1997, p.51). French pragmatic sociology operates with a ‘combinatorial ethnography’ as opposed to the ‘integrative ethnography’ of interactionism and grounded theory (Ibid.). The emphasis on situations as composite, ‘non-unified’ and ‘non-cultural’ has also been labeled ‘descriptive pluralism’ (Bénatouïl 1999, p. 382).

With regards to the question of discourse, methodological contributions have departed from ethnography to document analyses, sometimes developing and using software and quantitative methods (see e.g. Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999; Chateauraynaud, 2003). Lately, this has been developed into a distinct model of ‘justification analysis’ for studying argumentation in conflicts and public debates (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016; see also Patriotta et al. 2011; Eranti, 2017). However, apart from a recent paper on the importance of materiality in *On Justification* emphasizing the way objects, things, and spaces are activated in moments of dispute (Pires & Alperstedt, 2022), questions of ethnography have faded away.

Even though methodological questions of ethnography in relation to Thévenot’s work have only been addressed explicitly in a few studies (e.g. Hansen et al. 2016; Thévenot, 2020; Hansen, 2023, Carlsen 2020, Bullinger 2014), the studies that build on this sociology, including Thévenot’s own, often make use of ethnographic methods (Blok & Meilvang, 2015; Breviglieri et al., 2003; Centemeri, 2017; Cheyns, 2014; Luhtakallio, 2012; Thévenot, 2002). The lack of methodological debate around this choice of ethnography is thus unfortunate since as we will show in this article, SRE reaccentuates the question of the sensitivity of ethnographic methods by extending the original sociology of critique and public disputes to a much broader sociology of action going from the intimate and, often, unspoken, to the public spheres of every-day life as well as from the coordination with oneself to the coordination with others (Hansen, 2023).

Thus, Thévenot has turned to studying smaller-scope formats in which intimate experiences and personal concerns are transformed into common formats. He calls this a ‘reverse view of politics’ (2019: 222) because it starts from personal concerns rather than from the level of the public sphere, which would imply the exclusion of anything ‘below’ this level from our understanding of politics. Thévenot (2007: 224) describes this as a shift from the visible coastline of politics to the continent that lies beyond. Capturing tacit, bodily, and ideosyncratic forms of engagement that may be expressed in gestures of doubt, trust, (un)ease and (dis)comfort requires another sensitivity than mapping justifications and critique prepared for a third other. Therefore, the existing methodological debates around Boltanski and Thévenot’s sociology of critique are insufficient to address the challenges that SRE poses. In particular, SRE challenges the idea that people’s engagements can simply be observed from the outside. In other words, it requires another epistemology.

It is the attention towards the proximate, situational, and material that renders SRE prone to ethnographic methods. Definitions of ethnography are legion and the discussion of ethnography as a discipline that is always ‘about’ something and of the relation between ethnographic theory and method is well alive (e.g. Ingold 2014). However, in this article we focus particularly on ethnographic methods following Willis and Trondman’s definition of ethnography (Willis and Trondman 2000, p.5) as ‘a methodology that draws on a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents’. To this we may add that ethnography requires an open empirical inquiry with ‘direct observations, in situ, of activities taking place in a field’ (Dodier & Baszanger, 1997). However, this definition still is imprecise in order to capture what sensitivity SRE requires.

As pointed to by Centemeri (2017) the methodological challenges of studying proximate forms of engagement resonate with the sensory (Pink, 2009) non-representational (Thrift, 2007; Vannini, 2015) and affective (Gherardi, 2019) turns in ethnography. As a response to the representational problems of the linguistic turn, these approaches problematize the foregrounding discourse and signification by arguing for an affective turn away from cognition, symbolic meaning, and textuality (Lorimer, 2005) towards capturing everyday life as “a mix of taken-for-granted realities, habit, and routine as well as impulse, novelty, and vivaciousness” (Vannini, 2015, p. 320). Likewise, sensory ethnography has, for instance, helped study how the senses mediate our engagement with the world (Pink, 2009; Low, 2015). They have also rethought experiences as embodied (Okely, 2007; Low & Abdullah, 2021).

A common denominator in this literature is the ambition of developing methodologies that are meant to sensitize the researcher (Thrift, 2008, p. 18ff). To Vannini (2015, p. 318-9) this entails an ‘impressionistic and inevitably creative’ researcher that ‘flirts’ with reality”. Others point to the need for producing ‘emotionally sensed knowledge’ (Hubbard et al., 2001) working on the researchers own emotional responses such as the uncomfortable (Evans et al., 2017), fear (Duvoux, 2015), and the uncanny (Beyes & Steyaert, 2013). Unsurprisingly, this literature argues for a more engaged, immersed and, in the end, performative researcher with a ‘capacity to affect and be affected in order to produce interpretations that may transform the things that they interpret’ (Gherardi, 2019, p. 742). Similarly, Beyes and Steyaert (2013, p. 1446) describe research ‘as an aesthetics of defamiliarization and displacement, namely through witnessing and enacting the feelings, intensity, and rhythms that are as much part of everyday life as they perform it.’

However, the match between SRE and non-representational ethnography is not unproblematic. First, a fundamental difference between the SRE’s intention to get close to the non-verbal, embodied and affective, and non-representational ethnography, is SRE’s intention to follow the transitions from the non-representational to the representational, or, in Thévenot’s vocabulary, from the particular to general forms. This difference pertains to a persistent methodological debate in non-representational ethnographies about the ‘distortion’ of lived experience through representation, or the tendency to idealize closeness (Barnett, 2008; Juhlin & Holt, 2022). SRE is only concerned with the immediacy of experience in so far as it provides a window into the cognitive formats with which actors engage and shift their engagement.

Second, while SRE's main concern is ontological, in the sense of theorizing how and by what means people engage, non-representational ethnography has been criticized for overemphasizing epistemology and the researcher's own engagement. For instance, some prominent anthropologists have indeed lamented a crisis of ethnography, pointing to the dangers of too limited ethnographic theory, to a lack of original insights arising from the discipline, and to a potential situation of 'intellectual suicide' (da Col & Graeber, 2011, p. ix). Others have stressed the ontological commitment of ethnography (Ingold, 2014, p. 388), recasting the relation between methodology, ontology and epistemology and pushing an "ontological turn" in anthropology (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017). Intervening from the discipline of sociology, Wacquant has called for binding 'ethnography more firmly to theory, against the epistemological illusions of Geertzian 'thick description,' the philosophic naïveté of Chicago-style empiricism, and the glamorous seductions of postmodern storytelling' (Wacquant, 2015, p. 4).

While these critiques may jeopardize the match between SRE and new approaches to ethnography, the 'ontological commitment' of SRE is not necessarily aligned with the critics mentioned above. For instance, Wacquant's commitment to 'detect and document (...) the cognitive, conative, and affective building blocks of habitus' is different from SRE's commitment to map the moral, composite and versatile nature of engagement (Hansen, 2023). Thus, the coming sections explore the methodological implications of the distinct ontological commitment of SRE. In other words, what does methodological sensitivity entail? This serves two purposes: First, the article adds to the methodological debate within French pragmatic sociology by, for the first time, discussing the role of ethnography in SRE. Second, by doing so, the article also presents an intervention in debates about ethnography by putting nuance and clarity to the complex role of engagement as an important ontological phenomenon rather than (merely) an issue related to the researcher's immersion/detachment (Pilbeam et al., 2023) or ethical commitments (Low and Merry, 2010; Pacheco-Vega et al., 2018). We do so in the following by discussing three key focal points – plurality, investment, and versatility – of the ontological commitment of SRE.

Plurality: Sensitivity towards plural forms of engagement

With this section we introduce the different regimes of engagement that form the basis for the subsequent sections and are the core of Thévenot's sociology. We briefly unfold how each regime relates to a notion of good, a reality, and how they can be tested and lead to material, moral and political adjustments. We then discuss how studying plural regimes of engagement, unlike the 'descriptive pluralism' of orders of worth, brings a classic ethnographic question of the researcher's own engagement or even immersion to the forefront. We relate this classic ethnographic question to its more recent treatment in non-representational methodologies and show how SRE adds nuance to the methodological ambition of getting close to the field. Notably, it adds a sensitivity towards not just actors' plural forms of engagement, both the representational and non-representational level, but also how the researcher's engagement must take different forms.

In SRE the ‘descriptive pluralism’ of the model of orders of worth is extended to a plurality of regimes of engagement. The regimes of engagement (Thévenot, 2011) comprise engaging in familiarity, exploration, plans, and justification. In *familiar* engagement, people invest in the environment by continued use and by seeking comfort or ease in their surroundings. This regime of engagement is sustained through the comfort of familiarity and therefore requires a union between bodily gestures and an environment which is adapted to provide local convenience (Thévenot, 2000, p. 70). Unlike familiarity, which reaches into the past through habit, the regime of engaging in *exploration*ⁱⁱ, is solely present-oriented. It seeks constant novelty by reconfiguring the environment and one’s own body to produce ‘the shock of the new’ and is tightly linked to contemporary forms of production and consumption (Thévenot, 2014a, p. 15). As opposed to both familiarity and exploration, engagement in *plans* is future oriented, as it entails the capacity of projecting oneself into the future through a rational and functional relationship with one’s surroundings. Lastly, the regime of justification refers to the form of engagement in justification, critique, and pragmatic compromises between a plurality of ‘orders of worth’ with a variety of temporal orientations depending on the order of worth.

Thévenot’s development of French pragmatic sociology towards a plurality of cognitive and evaluative formats centers around the ways in which people coordinate with themselves and their environment; it is this coordination Thévenot captures with the notion of ‘engagement’. Each engagement values a certain good and provides different frameworks for apprehending one’s reality (Hansen, 2016, p. 132). While often studied as part of a practice turn in sociology, the term ‘engagement’ is chosen over action or practice because the latter tends to focus on the human agent (Thévenot, 2007, p. 415), whereas engagement emphasizes the dependency on the environment to support and challenge cognitive formats (Thévenot, 2000, p. 72). As a term, engagement also implies a commitment to a good or a quest as the cognitive format through which the environment is understood (Thévenot, 2007, p. 415). The environment and the good driving practices are confronted in pragmatic tests: A notion of good is subjected to a reality test when it is realized in the evaluation of some performance (Thévenot, 2000, p. 68). Pragmatic tests lead to tensions that not only give rise to material adjustments but also to adjustments of moral or political positions (Thévenot, 2000, p. 68). In sum, ‘regimes [of engagement] are social devices which govern our way of engaging with our environment inasmuch as they articulate two notions: (a) an orientation towards some kind of good; (b) a mode of access to reality.’ (Thévenot, 2000, p. 75). Regimes of engagement thus add a moral element to the interest in practices absent from frameworks building on a notion of already negotiated social norms (Thévenot, 2000, p. 67).

To answer the question of what kind of methodological sensitivity the plurality of engagements requires, the researcher needs to consider possible ways to methodologically embrace more proximate and intimate forms of engagement that is more demanding to observe (Thévenot, 2020, p. 230). Thévenot’s extension of French pragmatic sociology’s ‘descriptive pluralism’ from a focus on disputes to engagement and social action brings it close to classic questions of ethnography of the engagement, and, in the end, ‘immersion’ of the researcher will enable her to map the ‘lifeworlds’ of people (Pilbeam et al., 2023; Dumont, 2023). In classic early ethnographic field research, duration was seen as essential, with many arguing for long-term, even up to several years,

of fieldwork (e.g., Malinowski, 1922). More recently scholars have lamented ‘quick-and-dirty’ ethnography (Geertz, 1998: note 3). In response to this, other studies using non-representational and sensory approaches have argued for more ‘intense’ routes to knowledge and have shown how short-term field studies can also offer deep understanding (Pink, 2009). Thus, non-representational ethnography argues that (even) more attention should be paid to the ‘habituated and routine nature of everyday existence’, ‘pre-cognitive’, ‘non-discursive’ (Vannini, 2015, p. 322), ‘embodiment as an affective experience’ (Gheradi, 2018), and emotions (Hubbard et al. 2001). In this way SRE resonates with non-representational ethnography’s epistemological considerations of embracing more ‘impressionistic’ methods in which the researcher is not only capturing affect, but is also affective (Vannini, 2015, p. 321) and moves from ‘being there’ to ‘being with’ in the field (Gheradi, 2018, p. 745). Thévenot has addressed the dynamic between the engagement of the researchers and the engagement they are trying to capture. For instance, he argues that in studies of familiarity the researcher needs to give something of himself in the interaction and to be emotionally involved and to confide in the other moving the format from an interview to a ‘conversation’:

To communicate their embarrassments and troubles to investigators, residents have to leave the public engagements that interviews prompt, and shift towards closer ones. In the same movement, investigators have to offer convincing guarantees of their own familiar engagement, disclosing clues about their personal attachments to create confidence during a tête-à-tête that becomes a conversation rather than an interview. (...) When engaging in familiarity, the role of language is less central and not oriented towards arguing or expressing one’s individual opinion. Its in situ deictic function leads us to pay particular attention to gestures and the material environment at hand. Observation is made more difficult without deictic additions and comments, because of the highly idiosyncratic familiarization. (Thévenot, 2020, p. 230)

Further, the researcher’s awareness of his lack of a sense of engagement can create new insights (Hansen et al., 2016, p. 275). Yet, it is important to note that the ontological commitment of SRE differs from that of non-representational ethnography. In its ontological commitment, non-representational ethnography wants to access a more authentic level of everyday life, such as the ‘uncanny’ (Beyes & Steyaert, 2013) or the ‘temporal complex lifeworlds’ and the ‘enchanted processes through which life constantly mystifies us’ (Vannini, 2015, p. 320). In this sense, non-representational ethnography tends to idealize closeness.

However, a fundamental difference between the SRE’s intention to get close to the non-verbal, embodied and affective, and in non-representational ethnography, is the SRE’s intention to follow the dynamics between the non-representational to the representational, or in Thévenot’s vocabulary from the particular and proximate to general and public forms. This difference pertains to a persistent methodological caution in non-representational ethnographies towards the risk of domesticating lived experience through representation (see e.g. Wetherell, 2013 for a critique of this). SRE, on the contrary, approaches representation and generalization as something that not only researchers but also actors do. Whereas the methodological interest in affect and

embodied knowing thus tend to prioritize the non-representational (Barnett, 2008, p. 188ff), SRE is interested in how actors transform something non-representational (familiar engagement) into something representable and how they handle tensions between different regimes of engagement, for instance, how formats for expressing concern and the embedded moral justifications in standards favor some engagements over others (Thévenot, 2009; Cheyns, 2014). Thus, whereas non-representational methodologies ‘fix’ actors’ experience in an immediacy that does not refer to anything outside itself, SRE studies actors’ capacity to shift between engagements. SRE, thus, requires a more ‘mixed’ methodology. This goes for the question of spatial positioning from intimate to public venues, that we will come back to in the next section.

The plurality of engagements and their differing temporalities also opens and nuances methodological considerations of time. In studies of engagements the question of time is not solely a matter of short- or long-term fieldwork but must relate to the question of each of the four engagement regimes’ different orientation in time. The explorative engagement is exclusively present-oriented (Brahya, 2014), while the engagement in a plan implies projection into the future and the familiar engagement contrastingly is reassured through past habituation (Thévenot, 2014a, pp. 13–15). The same variety is evident within the regime of justification depending on the order of worth. Methodologically, this challenges the researcher, who needs to consider that while, for instance, the explorative engagement is momentaneous, the familiar engagement’s idiosyncratic customs, habits, and repetitive patterns of actions can require time for the researcher to be able to notice and recognize them. This affects the possibility of ‘intense routes to knowledge’ (Pink and Morgan 2013).

In particular, the differences between the explorative, planned, and familiar engagement have, in our research, presented methodological challenges connected to the question of time (Carlsen 2020, 2022). While actors engaging in the exploratory regime’s present-oriented quest for ‘shock of the new’ can be studied with more intense methods, more time seems necessary to be able to recognize repetition and patterns of accommodation, for instance, through the observation of the recurrence of acts, movements, people, and things that are particular to the familiar engagement. In addition, to understand the engagement in justification (and critique) it is important to know how present and past compromises came about. Such inquiries may entail archival research and interviewing actors with memories of past events. As such, a combination of ethnographic methods that both get close to people in their familiar environment, such as participant observation and interviews (when performed in a certain way), and also focus explicitly on the representational and discursive level, such as document analysis and to a certain extent interviews, is required to grasp the actor as she engages differently with herself and the world and shifts between engagements.

Investments: The role of the environment and materiality when studying closeness

In this section we focus on the relation between regimes of engagement and the material environment. We show how the emphasis on the material environment in SRE relates to politics because it relates to the connection between personal investments and what can be seen and studied as public or common. The question of how to study materiality and space is also of central concern to non-representational methodologies. Here, space is often associated with that which exceeds the cognitive. We compare these different approaches to the study of materiality to show how SRE connects an interest in the environment and materiality to the methodological *and* political question of how to make personal investments and concerns available to others.

Forms of engagement take place in response to environments that are formatted to provide support of cognitive formats. The environment (once put in the right format) helps to reinforce a particular form of engagement, such as when engaging in familiarity ‘accommodates things in the environment with which idiosyncratic dependencies are woven’ (Thévenot, 2019, p. 228). The environment is thus a spatial extension of forms of engagement, which makes it possible to materially study the transformation of an engagement ‘from intimate formats of closeness to formats required for commonality and politics’ (Thévenot, 2019, p. 228). To study physical and spatial environments is therefore to study how these environments are formatted to support a particular engagement. This also calls attention to the ‘investment in form’ that has been required to form and shape these environments (Thévenot, 2014a). The concept of investment in forms means that actors invest in a form that makes coordination possible, while also sacrificing other potential forms of coordination (Thévenot, 1984; 2013).

The regimes of engagement add a moral element to the interest in space and materiality where non-observable elements are often disregarded as representational discourse. In SRE, adding a moral element to spatial analysis is also a precondition for studying politics. Salminen’s (2018) study of ‘how people reason spatially as they justify their views’ shows, by using written arguments in online discussions as its empirical material, that people refer to spatial metaphors and material objects, when they work to establish a common ground through shared moral values. Spatiality and a shared living environment (Thévenot, 2019) thus support moral ideas. Spatial analysis can be one way of overcoming the methodological challenge that comes with studying familiar engagement because it does not involve verbal appeals to public justification or expressions of individual opinions and plans. Spatial analysis might, then, be used to study personal concerns as they are expressed non-verbally through use. In fact, familiar engagement might be difficult to express in words but has to be ‘proved’ through presence or via ‘personal affinities to common-places’ (Thévenot, 2019, p. 228). Yet, in SRE, personal concerns or familiar engagement must always go through a process of formatting, which makes it possible to communicate. Therefore, even when the researcher takes space seriously in social analysis, spatial observations must be combined with in-situ interviews that situate such observations. Space and things in SRE do not speak for themselves. While material configurations are extensions of and support for regimes of

engagement, they do not speak of such moral, intentions, plans or evaluations that are invested in them. Without this, a spatially sensitive analysis misses out on how reality is engaged in the course of practice (Thévenot, 2000). In short, we need to understand how human beings *qualify* their formation of space and things, and to assess the level of qualification, spatial observations must be supplemented with the context given by in situ conversations – conversations in and around space.

As engagements are characterized by a personal investment in a good, engagement studies take departure in the single person's engagement and coordination with others, their environment, and physical surroundings. Rather than taking shared collective norms as a starting point, SRE take the actors as their starting point to understand how shared coordination is formed. Methodologically, some known and developed ethnographic methods, such as shadowing (Wolcott, 1973; Czarniawska, 2007) and the walking interview/go-along (Kusenbach, 2003), offer themselves as useful tools for understanding actors' close attachments to the environment and materiality and for observing a person's activities and movements across various contexts, environments, and situations.

The walking interview is a conversation form that situates close attachments in space and materiality while bringing about a tentative transformation of personal concerns to something communicable. It is dependent on language, but language is connected to a practical engagement in the situation (in this case, of walking through a space which is the object of familiar engagement). Walking interviews make room for reflexive evaluations as part of practice – woven into space through judgments made along the way – rather than as retrospective discursive sense making. The combination of participant observation and interview in the walking interviews makes it possible for the researcher to both ask questions, listen, and observe (Kusenbach, 2003). When struggling to understand what we can learn about social processes from spatial change – something which spatial observations alone cannot arrive at – walking interviews help link spatial change to changing forms of engagement. Kusenbach (2003) emphasizes that walking interviews (or go-alongs) should always be conducted as 'natural go-alongs', meaning the researcher should follow the informants on trips and outings they would normally go on, because this is close to the subjects' authentic practices and interpretations (Kusenbach, 2003: 463-464). As the ambition for SRE is not to get closer to some authentic practice of the actor, but to understand the different engagements and the moral goods invested in specific forms, the researcher does not have to follow actor's in their daily routines (even though this is also relevant), but can arrange an interview in an environment of analytical interest and still learn about the moral, intentions, plans or evaluations that are invested into the formation of space. Space is of interest to the researcher only insofar as it gives an insight into the engaged reality of a situation, but this does not reduce space to the mere representation of forms of engagement: Space also works performatively on forms of engagement.

In shadow observations, the researcher follows one person in his or her activities and movements across various contexts, environments, and situations for a certain time. Shadowing allows observations of shifts or tensions between engagement enacted and experienced by this person

during a selected period (Author 1). This makes it possible to focus closely on specific personal acts of proximity, bodily gestures, and movements which could be indicative of shifts of engagement and of attempts to engage others in a certain way. Thus, shadow observations have proven to be a way to both aid our study of closer forms of engagement as well as shifts between a plurality of engagements, as getting acquainted with one person's behavioral pattern supports the attention of shifts in the person's actions and expressions in her interactions with the environment and others.

These two methods can help the researcher pay attention to closeness. Both walking interviews and shadowing thus help transform proximate investments into a format the researcher can understand. The transformation is not a 'domestication' in the sense of reducing non-representational experience into mere signs of that experience but points the researcher in the direction of the politics involved in having to transform one's close engagements to others. Firstly, as 'closeness' invokes space, it demands that we consider the spatiality of our methods when attempting to study close attachments, such as how a space is either deliberately maintained or neglected, or how material measures are taken to secure either privacy or exposure of certain activities. However, getting close to such material details is not an aim in itself, as in the idea of 'immersion' (Wacquant, 2015), but is intimately tied to an analytical ambition to understand the "closeness of politics" (Thévenot, 2020).

Thévenot emphasizes how space must be taken seriously in the process of analyzing how personal concerns become political. Because orders of worth aren't necessarily made explicit by actors who engage in close attachments where explicit value claims are rarely present, the relation to space and materials gives the researcher an alternative access to these orders of worth. This allows the researcher to move from the facts of materiality (fieldwork) to the values at stake in urban politics (analysis). Therefore, getting close is not enough, one must also maintain enough analytical distance to catch a glimpse of how subjects try to 'overcome' this closeness. This means that when we aim for closeness methodologically, it is with the ambition of studying the formation of this closeness into common formats, that is, into politics. Closeness in SRE maintains an analytical distance which is at risk of disappearing in more radical appeals to closeness (Juhlin & Holt, 2022). Getting close to the person, therefore, is not about getting closer to a certain kind of authenticity, as in non-representational methods. It is about understanding the actors' investments in a moral good. The analytical distance is necessary if one wants to understand how close attachments can make it difficult for subjects to coordinate and therefore obtain situational power.

Versatility: Studying doubt and trust

In this section, we focus on a key ontological commitment and theoretical invention of SRE, what we call the versatility of engagement, and what this commitment poses as challenges and possibilities for ethnography. Versatility means that actors can either engage in a trusting or a doubtful relationship with themselves and the world. We describe the kind of ethnographic

sensitivity that is required to capture trust and doubt and the ambition, in SRE, to understand how personal and weakly formatted concerns are made (or not made) into common issues.

An important aspect of regimes of engagement is that there is a certain versatility to engagements (Thévenot, 2019). This versatility is the oscillation between two attitudes or stances: trust and doubt. For actors involved in any situation there are the possibilities of either trusting the engagement taking place or doubting it and the associated sacrifice. These movements between trust and doubt can be subtle shifts or adjustments, or they can be powerful statements of critique. Either way, Thévenot describes this dynamic as the difference between closing or opening your eyes, or between the two meanings of ‘conventional’ (Thévenot, 2009). When closing one’s eyes, actors have blind confidence in the conventional form agreed upon by other actors and supported by the material equipment of the situation. Conventional here means what is established and accepted. Shifting from closed to open eyes, the actor experiences doubt and suspicion towards their material environments and people around her. Here, the conventional becomes the arbitrary, inauthentic, and conformist – something that is ‘just’ a convention. This movement between closing and opening one’s eyes is a fundamental aspect of the uncertain coordination among actors and between actors and their surroundings. The two stances, doubt and trust, look different in the different regimes of engagement. Trust in familiarity is engaging routinely with the world, while trust in the regime of justification is relying on public conventions.

This aspect of engagement, that coordination is always uncertain, requires that the researcher pays close attention to everyday tensions and everyday situations of critique as well as critiques that are expressed more generally, for instance in the public sphere. However, it also points to the importance of considering the good that comes from conventions. As Thévenot points out, sociology has a normal degree of skepticism towards conventions and often exercises a critical capacity in doubting formalities and conventions (Thévenot, 2015). This suspicion comes from the idea that the conventional sacrifices sincerity, authenticity, and actuality. This is true in SRE, but it is also true that the conventional has coordinating powers and can bring people together to ‘the same meeting point’ (Thévenot, 2015, p. 196). It is therefore not enough to study either the conventional (or representational) agreed upon forms or the insecure and doubtful engagements of actors. One is not more authentic than the other, they are two sides of the same coin. In SRE, the researcher should study the move from one of these sides to the other, and the sacrifice that lies in both closing and opening one’s eyes.

To study how and in what ways engagements are opened and closed, Thévenot himself suggest studying the way engagement moves around invested forms (Thévenot, 2014b), either supported by the form in trust or questioning the form and the sacrifice involved in supporting it in doubt. Methodologically, this could involve that the researcher uses different images, such as video (Breviglieri, 1999) and photography (Breviglieri, 2006; Meriluoto, 2023), to prompt emotion and communication. Since the changes between doubt and trust in some of the regimes, especially the regime of familiarity, are not easily communicated in language and in a public way, to study these shifts ethnographically also requires a different way of writing (Thévenot, 2014a). Literary forms, both fictionalized such as the novel, or more essayistic as the journal or memoir, offer itself as

possible ways of communicating such ethnographies. At the same time, the researcher must be aware of these same forms in interviews or observations, since if changes in trusting the form or doubting it are articulated, it is often through literary or artistic forms, such as irony, comedy, artistic mimicry (such as telling one's life story as a fairy tale), or other forms of imitation. These methodological ideas can be useful, but how to exactly capture the very subtle shifts between opened or closed is still, we think, an open question.

The way of working as a researcher that draws on artistic forms looks somewhat like the idea in non-representational ethnography of the creative and impressionistic researcher (Vannini, 2015). The ambition in SRE, however, is very different. As opposed to the non-representational literature that seeks out creative processes for the sake of performativity and to 'flirt' with, and avoid representation of, reality (Vannini, 2015, p. 319), SRE is interested in following the different ways that doubt and trust manifests and the way actors invest in conventional forms. How such forms are supported, closed, or opened is key to understanding actors' coordination and engagement in the world. Approaching engagement is both trusting and doubting marks another important difference from non-representational ethnography. Engagement, even in its proximate forms of plans, familiarity and exploration, remains evaluative (Thévenot, 2023) rather than merely affective and pre-cognitive as in non-representational ethnography (see Barnett, 2008).

Invested forms can be small, for a small group and short lived, but they can also be enduring and common structures. SRE does not study contingency, doubt, and discomfort just to show that these states exist in everyday life or to get closer to some sort of authenticity or vitality but to understand how personal and weakly formatted concerns are made (or not made) into common issues. Studying situations of doubt and trust is thus a way of studying politics. This is very different from non-representational ethnography that has been criticized exactly for not paying attention to issues of power and politics (Vannini, 2015, p. 324) by refusing to explain away affects with the reproduction of structures. Trying moments and tests, even subtle experiences of doubt such as unease, reveal actor's moral and political engagements with the world, even if these engagements do not become fully articulated critiques.

Concluding discussion: SRE, ethnography, and non-representational methodology

From our discussion of three important focal points – plurality, investment, and versatility – of the ontological commitment of SRE, we suggest how future research interested in issues of affect, embodiment, and materiality with and beyond the analytical framework of SRE can explore the methodological advantages of this theoretical approach.

First, the idea in SRE of a plurality of the regimes of engagement leads to the question of how to capture this plurality. To understand the different engagements, the researcher needs a combination of different methods that are composed in a specific way to capture the different

engagements. Some methods, such as interviews, are formatted to gain insight into the engagements that are easily communicated verbally and thus already formatted to some sort of 'public' level. Other methods, such as observations or in situ interviews, can more easily reveal different engagements 'below the public'. What is important in SRE is that these engagements are related, hence, the analytical interest in the shifts and tensions between the different engagements. This means that, in line with a non-representational methodology, it is important to go 'below' the discursive and representational level, but this should be combined with methods that capture this level as well and most importantly, the relationship between these.

Second, the idea of investment in form leads to the question of how to be sensitive to people's attempts to invest in their environment to secure goods, including the most intimate and proximate. The combination of different methods can help the researcher capture this, but more specifically, hybrids between participant observation and interviews (Kusenbach, 2003) such as the walking interview or shadowing help transform close attachments into formats that researchers can understand, and gain insight into the ways that actors themselves transform personal attachments into public concerns and the moral investments they make in their material and physical environment. As opposed to a non-representational methodology, getting close to the person is not about sharing unmediated lifeworlds with research participants. Instead, it is about, on a more ontological basis, to understand the good people are invested in, and the sacrifice this entails.

Third, SREs idea of versatility and the two different stances of doubt and trust, leads to the question of how to study these two states and especially the subtle changes between them. Methodologically, this is still, as we see it, an open question, but drawing on artistic formats, such as different poetic or literary writing styles (Thévenot 2014b; Van Buskirk & Zorin, 2012) or incorporating images and pictures (Thévenot, 2022; Meriluoto, 2023) into the data collection, could be one way of approaching this. Even though these ideas resemble the non-representational idea of a creative and impressionistic researcher, the ambition in SRE is different. SRE studies these situations of trying and test because in these situations, we can most clearly see what is at stake in the situations. These situations can show us how personal and weakly formatted concerns are made (or not made) into common issues. Studying situations of doubt and trust is thus a way of studying politics in so far as politics is understood as the process of making something available for dispute.

Thévenot is, he states, 'deeply concerned by the various ways the natural and artificial equipment of the human world is involved in diverse conceptions of the good' (2000, p. 65). The sociology of engagements enquires into this dynamic adjustment. While emphasizing embodied knowledge on the limits of language, a methodology for the sociology of engagement remains attentive to the capacity to 'take part in 'games of giving and asking for reasons'' (Barnett, 2008, p. 187). It balances between the implicit (embodied knowledge, affect, emotion) and that which is made available for and by analysis: 'What is shared is not the gesture which might be hardly understandable, but the mode of engagement from which this gesture gets its propriety' (Thévenot, 2000, p. 74). An example of how the sociology of engagements remains willing to take part in

games of giving and asking for reasons is its view on politics. The point of expanding the scope of politics towards affect is not to remove the study of politics from its concern with language or to rethink politics altogether, but to seek out the relations between the personal and existing political formats.

Looking at the current turn towards the embodiment, the senses, and non-representation within methodological debates, we have found inspiration to discuss methodological challenges within SRE. We suggest that studies within SRE do require a personal and bodily engagement from the researcher in the people in the field, while asking them questions, observing them, or walking with them. Through a personal engagement, the researcher gains access to situations where engagements unfold themselves, between different regimes as well as between eyes open and closed, and at the same time uses their experience of, for instance, surprise, ease, groping, hesitation or unease as setoffs for further investigations in the field. In other words, method within SRE is also a matter of engaging with engagements. What is different from non-representational ideas in this methodological effort is that SRE's concern with the immediacy of experience is also a concern with the way actors invest in common forms, in the way that personal engagement does or does not transform into public forms or are oppressed by such. Thus, understanding actors' cognitive formats, not directly observable, is an integral part of the methodological challenge.

As non-representational ethnography has been criticized for overemphasizing epistemology, the ambition in SRE is ontological: How can we understand engagement as an ontological phenomenon? Engaging oneself as a researcher and 'getting close' is not a goal in itself but is intimately tied to an analytical ambition to understand the role closeness plays in politics and to catch a glimpse of how subjects try to 'overcome' this closeness and transform personal, local engagement into public justifications and critique. This ambition requires the researcher to work with an analytical gaze that allows the researcher to translate close attachments into public engagement, and to unfold the moral and political dimensions of engagements and the efforts of human beings to make themselves heard as well as the ways in which their voices are being formatted. Insights into engagements are achieved through continuous methodological experimentations and reflections about the researcher's doing in the field and about how this possibly opens or delimits insights into engagements.

References to Chapter 5

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PAPER 3

HOW SPACE HOLDS - REWORKING THE CONCEPT OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

Abstract

With this paper I theorize the relation between people and places through the concept of place attachments. I argue that whereas place attachments used to be understood as psychologically safe and spatially stabilizing (the familiar place as opposed to the abstract space, the local as opposed to the global), place attachments today are part of the politics of space in more complex ways. We can feel attached to a place to which we do not belong, such as in immigrants' aspirations for a better life on the other side of the border. We can feel attached to a place that is harmful, such as when the home becomes a means of suppression to which we nevertheless cling. And we can feel attachment to a place that is no longer there, such as in the longing for the clear boundaries of a shrinking nation state. The problem of place attachments, and how they relate to spatial politics, has been theorized by Marxist human geography and taken up in organization studies' spatial turn, notably through a processual and relational understanding of space. Here, place attachments are either celebrated as emancipatory or criticized for their essentialism (the stabilization of identity through place), but this critique does not help us understand the ambivalence in the examples above. Combining the spatial turn's insights into the politics of space with feminist theories of attachment, the paper proposes a reworked concept of place attachment that is better situated to understand and study its forms and functions in contemporary spatial and organizational politics.

Introduction

Attachments bind people to places. When strong, they prompt people to engage in their close environment, to participate actively in its making and by doing so, to take part in the making of a space for themselves. But attachments can also be painful, such that when places are transformed it is not only the environment but also one's place in it that alters, along with the possible futures it promised. Despite the nomadism of contemporary work practices that sometimes suggest we have moved beyond the need for location, there is a parallel consistent claim that places still matter (Cnossen & Bencherki, 2019; Taylor & Spicer, 2007). In a reflection on the function of property, Bencherki and Bourgoïn (2019, p. 497) confess this need for lasting places: "We yearn for a space we can call our own, physical or otherwise". In her seminal essay 'A Global Sense of Place', geographer Doreen Massey (1991, p. 26) writes, despite being a fierce critique of essentialist notions of place: "There is a need to face up to – rather than simply deny – people's need for attachment of some sort, whether through place or anything else."

The interest in place attachments is naturally situated in organization studies' spatial turn that has drawn our attention towards not just the inherent *situatedness* of organizations – the fact that organizations literally take place – but also how places coproduce our ways of organizing social relations (Beyes & Holt, 2020; Kornberger & Clegg, 2004). The spatial turn in organization studies has succeeded in changing our perception of space from "a mere problem of what it contains" (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004, p. 1100), to also concern for instance how power is manifested through space (Taylor & Spicer, 2007) and how social relations are influenced by the materiality of space (Cnossen et al., 2020). In this paper I argue that despite a well-established spatial turn in organization studies, the spatial turn has not yet faced up to this need for attachment as Massey writes, and the affective 'yearning', in the words of Bencherki and Bourgoïn, it entails. By following what Beyes & Holt (2020) in this journal have playfully outlined as four twists in the spatial turn and combining these with a closer reading of the strands of human geography that have informed these twists, the paper shows how the lived phenomenon of place attachment is obscured by conceptual dualisms.

It is not as if place attachments have not been studied in spatio-organizational studies. In fact, place attachment is of central concern to the spatial turn in organization studies because it anchors foundational conceptual debates through which the turn has unfolded. More specifically, I show how a phenomenological understanding of place attachments as safe and familiar (Courpasson et al., 2017; Shortt, 2015) is contrasted by spatial thinking that challenges us to see social phenomena through the conceptual lens of the contingent, unstable, and topological (Beyes & Holt, 2020; Ratner, 2020; Stephenson et al., 2020). With this spatial move towards processual organizing – or *spacing* (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Kuusmin, 2022; Vásquez & Cooren, 2013) – follows a scepticism towards the discursive and spatial stability promoted by phenomenological views of place attachment. The conceptualization of place and space is thus tied up with questions of politics that have implications for how we theorize attachments: Seen from the point of view of spatial thinking, place attachments threaten the very possibility of the political because they ground questions of

belonging and identity in place. Seen from the point of view of phenomenology, such grounding is necessary to create a sense of continuity between oneself and the environment.

Continuing the topographical imagination of the spatial turn in organization studies, I ask in this paper: How can we understand place attachments as contentious sites for exploring the affective relations between people and places? Answering this question is necessary to open analysis in the spatial turn towards contemporary forms and functions of place attachments; how relations between people and places are reconfigured in, for instance, the aesthetic economy and workplace transformations that favour flexible over deep attachments. In these contexts, it becomes apparent how place attachments do not just essentialize identity and belonging, but form part of an affective way of navigating change (see Alimadadi et al., 2022; Otto & Strauß, 2019); or more simply put, something to hold on to. The paper contributes to the spatial turn by opening it to such enduring and ‘sticky’ attachments that complicate the association of standstill with the apolitical and change with politics. It also contributes to an emerging interest in attachments in organization studies, that so far has focused on affect (Otto & Strauß, 2019) and psychoanalysis (Kenny et al., 2020; Resch et al., 2021), by theorizing the spatiality of attachments. When considered together, the paper encourages future research to unfold this intersection between attachments and space.

The theoretical argument of the paper proceeds in four parts. Part 1 outlines a brief conceptual history of place attachments. Part 2 traces this history’s influence on organization studies’ spatial turn, emphasizing the first two twists – *Site* and *Contestation* – that draw on phenomenological human geography and representational notions of meaning and identity. Part 3 follows the third twist – *Multiplicity* – accompanied by a reading of Marxist and feminist human geography that exposes the problems of representation and of place attachments. Across part 2 and 3, the paper makes a case for how the different twists of the spatial turn have implications for how we can (or rather cannot) theorize place attachments; as the concept of space becomes increasingly processual, attachments to place become increasingly hard to conceptualize spatially. Part 4 turns to conceptualisations of attachment outside the spatial turn to bridge this gap between attachment and spatial thinking aided by the fourth twist, *Poetics*. It draws on feminist and affective understandings of attachment to propose a reworked concept of place attachment. The paper concludes by proposing attachments as a concretization of and challenge to the fourth twist in organization studies’ spatial turn.

Part 1: Place attachments - a brief conceptual history

In developmental psychology, from which attachment theory originates, attachment is used to describe an infants’ activity of seeking and maintaining proximity to an attachment figure (Bowlby, 1969)¹. Attachment theory emphasizes the importance of secure attachments as essential for the

¹ Bowlby considered the attachment to a parent figure as part of a larger set of systems for maintaining a stable relationship with a familiar environment – thus, the application beyond psychology to an environmental understanding of the term was already present in his theory (Bowlby, 1973 see chapter 9).

development of subjectivity as well as resilience in the encounter with the world. While it follows that the disruption of attachment is deeply problematic for developing a sense of self and continuity, attachments - when well established - constitute a safe place that allows for the exploration of the world (Giuliani, 2003, p. 141). This understanding of attachments from the field of developmental psychology has been influential in the development of the concept of place attachment in environmental psychology (see Giuliani, 2003). This is evident, for instance, in definitions of place attachment as “positively experienced bonds, sometimes occurring without awareness, that are developed over time from the behavioural, affective and cognitive ties between individuals and/or groups and their sociophysical environment” (Brown & Perkins, 1992, p. 284). Explicitly referring to the psychological notion of attachments, Fried (1966) for instance studied how reactions to the loss of a place resembled sorrow after the loss of a loved one as dislocation interrupted individuals’ sense of continuity.

Studies such as Fried’s on grieving a lost home provided a phenomenological alternative to the, at the time, dominant quantitative approaches to space that overlooked subjective experiences of space and the role of emotions. A qualitative understanding of place attachment was developed in human geography, pioneered by Tuan’s (1977) seminal work *Space and Place* in which the question of place attachment was understood through emotional affection (see also Relph, 1976; Seamon, 1989). Tuan’s claim was that it is the very process of forming attachment through embodied and sustained engagement that transforms an undistinguished space into a place. A place evokes affection, Tuan (1977) wrote, much in the same way an old raincoat acquires personality through use over time. With this phenomenological idea of attachment, attachment is not just a personal need or resource projected onto space but is deeply interrelated with the experience of space: Spaces are formless and profane until we experience them in ways that make them stand out, at which point they become places with emotional charge (Tuan, 1977). An emotional charge which to Tuan was – as the image of the old raincoat implies – safe and familiar.

The human geography of the 1970s turned meaning, and its interaction with practices and materiality, into the locus of studies of place attachment. A ‘sense of place’ (used synonymously with place attachment) is, to Tuan, a conscious force of creation and conservation through words, actions and the creation of artefacts. Rather than explaining attachment in psychological facts, human geographers understood place attachment as an aspect of the Heideggerian *Dasein*, a relationship towards the world through experience (Cresswell, 2009). Consequently, attachments were seen as universal and necessary for an authentic relationship with the world (Giuliani, 2003, p. 147). This search for an authentic sense of place must be understood in relation to the perceived threat of ‘placelessness’: “[T]he casual eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardized landscapes that results from an insensitivity to the significance of place” (Relph, 1976, preface). The urgency of an authentic sense of place arose from a “generalized condition of homelessness” (Said, 1979, p. 18) in which identities were becoming unhinged from territories. ‘Standardized landscapes’ are also what Augé (1995) described as non-places; classic examples are airports or malls, spaces that were seen as too insignificant to attract anybody’s attachment.

The sense that modern urban life dissolved true possibility for belonging and community - for place - is also at work in Simmel's notion of blasé (2002 (1903)). Whereas the metropolis produces a "rapid telescoping of changing images" that requires one to develop a shield of rationality, the small town produces "feelings and emotional relationships" (2002, p. 12). In a state of blasé, place attachment cannot unfold, and so attachment is connected to the "steady equilibrium of unbroken customs" whereas the senses – associated with the stimuli of urban life – are the site of detachment. Tuan also saw place as stable, a stability from which the "freedom and threat of space" can be safely observed. While both Tuan and Simmel recognize the necessary interplay between space and place as an interplay between movement and pause (see e.g. Tuan, 1977, p. 6), their notions of place are set against the loss associated with modern sameness-of-place, an "active desire for the particularity of place and for what is truly "local" (...) identity, character, nuance" (Casey, 1998, p. xiii).

Part 2: Meaningful places – place attachments in the first and second twist

Because of this emphasis on stability and belonging, the phenomenological approach to place attachment produces an understanding of place as "bounded, unique, with a clear identity of its own, having a genius loci, being historically rooted, and providing rest rather than movement" (Lewicka, 2011, p. 224). This view of space is particularly evident in the first of the four twists described by Beyes & Holt (2020, p. 7) that sees organizations as invariably sited, and space therefore as a stabilized, material site that expresses social facts. Organizational studies that draw on the phenomenology of the human geographers of the 1970s, described in the previous, show how space becomes meaningful to people in different organizational contexts. Consequently, of the four twists, this one is where identity plays the most explicit role with implications for how place attachments are theorized.

Following Tuan, studies of how attachments are formed through meaning emphasize that attachments transform abstract space into meaningful place. Courpasson et al. (2017, p. 328) take up the notion of free spaces understood as "small-scale settings outside the control of dominant elites". With reference to Tuan, place is understood as "a centre of security" and "a physical area offering shelter, stability, attachment and meaningful symbols" (2017, p. 328). Their study links the act of resistance to the emotional and subjective attachments people form to a particular place that comes to stand for and enhance their resistance, such as the basement that becomes a free space for the development of oppositional identities. Using Edward S. Casey's place-based philosophy, they argue that the process of assigning meaning to space creates dwelling places. Shortt (2015) similarly shows how the process of ascribing meaning to liminal spaces (lifts, doorways, stairwells, toilets, cupboards) instigates a transition from insignificant space to 'transitory dwelling place'.

Whereas space has “no fixed pattern of established human meaning” (Tuan, 1977 cited in Shortt, 2015, p. 636), place coalesces around established values. Both Courpasson et al. (2017) and Shortt (2015) find the place-based perspective useful for understanding the formation of identity. Drawing on Casey (Casey, 1998) they argue that places have “everything to do with what and who we are” (Courpasson et al., 2017, p. 239; Shortt, 2015, p. 636). With the notion of dwelling place, both highlight the idea that places provide stability and belonging – much like the attachment figure in Bowlby’s attachment theory. Places are thus understood to stabilize meaning and identity and meaning and identity in turn stabilize places. Therefore, the first twist in organization studies spatial turn implies a phenomenological definition of place attachments as a necessary anchoring against growing fluidity and mobilization. Similar to Augé’s notion of non-place, these studies understand meaning as antithetical to the fleeting, temporary, and homogeneous (exemplified by unfamiliar environments such as the airport or mall), whereas the meaningful tends to provide permanence and stability, even if only temporarily. This resonates with the notion of place attachments defined in environmental psychology as positively experienced bonds to a place.

The politics of meaningful places

Concerned with the politics of such meaningful places, both studies highlight how a ‘place-based perspective on organizational politics’ can help bring attention to “workers’ political tactics” (Courpasson et al., 2017, p. 256) by studying places of opposition rather than places of control. Here, they also become indicative of the second twist, in which political contestation through space takes centre stage (Beyes & Holt, 2020, p. 9). Free spaces or liminal spaces – understood as those places which organizational actors have been able to appropriate – allow for the development of “oppositional identities” because they are outside the gaze (and space) of hierarchical control (Courpasson et al., 2017, p. 238). In this regard, the organizational uptake of the phenomenological concept of place differs from the human geographers of the 1970s, for whom the politics of the production and contestation of places and their meanings was not a concern (see e.g. Cresswell, 2009). Organizational researchers in the second twist of the spatial turn, however, take an interest in the political potential of temporary dwelling places or ‘liminal places’ as settings where attachments can be more freely constructed and meanings and identities therefore established.

There is a contradiction, however, between this meaning-open space and meaningful places: If liminal spaces (or liminal places, as Shortt reframes them because of how attachments invest meaning into them) are places where ‘anything can happen’ (Turner, 1982 cited in Shortt, 2015, p. 637), even emancipation, how does this political openness relate to the discursive closedness (through meaning and identity) of place? In their place-based perspective on organizational politics, it remains unclear just how discursive stability – and by extension, place attachment – relates to emancipatory politics. Despite reference to a language of transgression, organizations (or their contestations) are sited and marked by fixed identity. Beyes & Holt (2020, p. 9) argue that the emphasis on meaning, which we find in this conceptualization of place attachments, reflects what Lefebvre (1991, p. 28) called the illusion of transparency through which “a rough coincidence

is assumed to exist between social space on the one hand and mental space — the (topological) space of thoughts and utterances - on the other”.

Lefebvre links the illusion of transparency to language and its tendency to remove the ‘traps and secret places’, the ‘hidden and dissimulated’, from its notion of space, to instead make space and social practice accessible as texts to be read ‘in a single glance’ (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 27f). The consequent conceptualization of space is one in which space “loses its material force to shape actions and practices” (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 246). Space is treated as a representation of already existing power relations (resistance is, for instance, located in the basement or in liminal spaces) rather than contribute to their reshaping. This ‘representational strategy’ (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012, p. 49) overlooks, for instance, how planning and control can also be embodied, or conversely how lived space can take part in the reproduction of spatial order. Singling out planned space or spaces of resistance then reproduces the illusion of transparency by reducing space to the meanings ascribed to it and the actions taking place in it. Spatial products are emphasized over processes of spatial becoming (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012, p. 49), and human agency in the social production of space is overemphasized at the expense of materiality (Reckwitz, 2012; Stephenson et al., 2020, p. 802).

Implications for the conceptualization of place attachments

The two first twists of the spatial turn have implications for how we can conceptualize place attachments. If attachment equals identity, and spaces are reduced to the meanings ascribed to them, we end up with uncomplicated attachments that produce stable places - the smooth alignment of mental and social space. This in turn reduces attachments to preferences or properties. On a conceptual level, this is problematic because attachments seem to emanate from human bodies towards the environment, overlooking the “processual aspects of encounters and interactions between myriad bodies” (Seyfert, 2012, p. 28). It creates clear distinctions between emotion and space as attachments are seen to move from the ‘inside’ of subjects to the ‘outside’ of their environments (Ahmed, 2014, p. 8). This results in a situation where “on [the] one side there are objects and their properties, on the other, subjects and their preferences” (Hennion, 2017, p. 17). This dualism produces “a system of identities that correspond to a set of things” (Hennion, 2017, p. 17). Empirically, this uncomplicated concept of place attachment is also problematic because it misses out on the tensions or shadow sides produced by place attachments. Feminist geographers have, for instance, pointed to the ambivalence of place attachment when the home becomes a trap (Lewicka, 2011) and to the role place attachments play in social and territorial conflicts (Di Masso et al., 2019; Fried, 2000).

Part 3: The problem of place attachments in the third twist

In the call for a more processual and relational approach to space, present in the third twist of organization studies’ spatial turn (see also Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Ratner, 2020), we find a rich

critique of this representational notion of space and, by extension, of place attachments. This is not just a matter of conceptual refinement, however. The critique of representation leans on wider geographical Marxist critique of the Heideggerian undertone of the phenomenological notion of place. Deeply inspired by the notion of dwelling, 1970s human geography walked on the edge of presupposing an essence to explain sense of place – what Deleuze calls a despotic signifier that seeks to stabilize identity while sacrificing becoming (Colebrook, 2002, p. 120). The humanistic division between space and place was criticized for naturalizing human efforts to take up space, overlooking the exclusions it also produced (Cresswell, 2009). Harvey (1993) and Massey (2005), notably, criticized how the notion of place was used in regressive and reactionary ways, calling instead for ‘a global sense of place’ (Massey, 1991) and insisting that “place in whatever guise, is like space and time, a social construct” (Harvey, 1993, p. 5). Searching for different concepts of space than the phenomenological one, then, relates to rethinking politics beyond essentialist tropes of stability and belonging.

In her essay *A Global Sense of Place* (1991) geographer Doreen Massey famously describes the problems of place attachment. Place attachments, she writes, are based on idealised notions of past coherence and homogenous communities that arise as a response to contemporary spatial fragmentation brought about by urbanisation and globalisation. While ‘idealised’ indicates that Massey does not recognize that such coherence ever characterized places, she does recognize the *longing* inherent to place attachments as a symptom of larger socio-economic forces. The longing connects questions of place identity with identity of self as it describes “a response to desire for fixity and for security of identity in the middle of all the movement and change” (Massey, 1991, p. 24). While the longing may be real, it is also contentious, as it sometimes gives rise to “defensive and reactionary responses – certain forms of nationalism, sentimentalised recovering of sanitised ‘heritages’, and outright antagonism to newcomers and ‘outsiders’” (Massey, 1991, p. 24). The result is “that place itself, the seeking after a sense of place, has come to be seen by some as necessarily reactionary” (Massey, 1991, p. 24).

The antidote to this essentialism is the challenge of space, to which the third twist of organization studies’ spatial turn is dedicated. The challenge which space poses to thinking about identity of self and place is, to Massey (2005, p. 37) “its openness and its condition of always being made”. This challenge of space also permeates the shift from organization as an entity to the interest in relational organizing (Cnossen et al., 2020, p. 3), and draws on more recent human geography’s concern with “the multiple, restless, indeterminate and as such inherently political nature of space” (Beyes & Holt, 2020, p. 4). To Massey, as Beyes & Holt also emphasize, it is the very fact that space is dynamic and open to change that makes it political. Massey’s *For space* (2005) deals with some of the most ingrained assumptions about space, for instance by showing how the separation between space and time has led to the association of time with politics and mobility, and space with stasis and closure.

Tropes of detachment

This critique is also present in the third twist's studies of the politics inherent in the movement of space, questioning the "fixity, stability and self-evidence of [our] objects of study" (Knox et al., 2015, p. 1002). The critique of the representational stability of space is, consequently, often enacted through movement. For instance, O'Doherty (2013) embarks on an experimental series of walks following a mathematical projection onto a city map. The aim is to "recover a more embodied relation to organization that challenges the inhibitions of sedentary modes of being" (p. 212) although, admitted, with the risk of disorientation. O'Doherty quotes Massumi, for whom motion keeps the body from coinciding with itself, and deliberately sets out to ignore the "poverty, inequality, social exclusion, urban decay, and deprivation" (p. 212) of the spaces through which he walks to instead generate new forms of exploration and narrative. The method developed in the paper focusses on the embodied sensate subject but from a point of radical displacement and dispersal as it dreams of an experience extended beyond what is 'factically possible' (p. 213), "displacing and redistributing that which is routinely understood and experienced as consecutive, integrated, or sequential in space and time" (O'Doherty, 2013, p. 213).

The walking method is inspired by situationist methods, most notably the *derivé*, whose aim is to make the familiar strange through movement (Beyes & Steyaert, 2013; Michels et al., 2020). Beyes & Steyaert (2013) explore the concept and affect of the uncanny with a methodology that actively seeks out a feeling of being lost, "an aesthetics of defamiliarization and displacement" (2013, p. 1446). They link the concept of the uncanny, taken from Freud's experiences on a street in Genoa where he first described the strange allure of the uncanny experience, to spatial theory that conceives of spaces as fluctuating conditions rather than stable places. These fluctuating conditions produce an unsettling of time and space which the authors describe as *unsiting* (Beyes & Steyaert, 2013, p. 1448). *Unsiting* is a form of aesthetic sensibility that opens the presence of other times and spaces in the present, what they call a doubling and what Massey (Massey, 2005, p. 52) would call *coeval coexistence*. The uncanniness of this doubling is amplified by the use of technology in the example of an immersive audio walk intervention with and through which the paper analyses *unsiting*. The meeting between technology and space evokes feelings of "the uncanny, like irritation, nostalgia, homesickness and boredom" (Beyes & Steyaert, 2013, p. 1455), making the interconnection between affect and space acutely felt by emphasizing 'unbelonging'. This affective emphasis of space relates to "forces we can feel, but never explicate" (Beyes & Holt, 2020, p. 4) or what Beyes and Holt call the poetics of space.

Despite the risk of universalizing movement, spatial theory or 'the challenge of space' presents a more nuanced framework for understanding the spatial politics of place attachments than the phenomenological notion of place. Rather than compartmentalizing space into dichotomies of resistance and control, politics is understood as the very possibility of contesting any configuration of space, and power cuts in lively circuits across conceived, perceived and lived space. This brings us closer to a vocabulary with which to problematize the politics of place attachments: How they can come to exclude the possibility of politics through identity claims, or how the movement of some enforces the attachments of others. This sensitivity to the political dangers of attachment is

an important addition to the phenomenological concept of safe attachments and stable places. Moreover, spatial thinking conceives of spaces as fluctuating conditions rather than stable places. This unsettling of time and space seems more useful for an analysis of how space works back on the meanings ascribed to it, rather than simply absorbing and taking shape through them.

A global sense of place

Is it possible to rethink rather than reject place attachments? To disassociate the concept from identification with stable and rooted places, the rigidity of Cartesian space, and the problems of essentialism and drawing of boundaries that follow? In a famous example, Massey (1991) takes her reader for a walk down Kilburn High Road in London. Describing the character of the street, she notes down all of the ways in which it relates to the rest of world. Her point is that her attachment to this place does not rely on a description of an internalised history and coherent identity: “If it is now recognised that people have multiple identities then the same point can be made in relation to places” (p. 28). Kilburn High Road is turned towards the world, and Massey’s attachment to it is global rather than local. This leads her to conclude that there can be a ‘global sense of place’, one that maintains a sense of rootedness without being reactionary.

Her account, saturated by left cosmopolitanism, is a critical response to political tendencies to insist on the authenticity of places with their discriminating and violent consequences. Some critique has been made, however, of how this ‘global sense of place’ overlooks or even hides its own attachments (see e.g. Bonnett, 2015). Invariably, Massey’s global sense of place, exemplified by her walk down Kilburn Road while registering the multiple global lines coming together in this one place, works to align the Western cosmopolite with others for whom this melting pot also *feels good*. The multicultural London neighbourhood is conditioned by discrimination and yet, Massey’s representation of this place speaks only of friendly co-existence. The question is whether such a progressive and global sense of place can also be empathetic towards affective desires for belonging, stability and home – are there room for senses that are ‘less than’ progressive?

Being aware of the differentiated experiences of space-time compression, Massey (1991, p. 26) recognizes the “need to face up to – rather than simply deny – people’s need for attachment of some sort, whether through place or anything else.” But while Massey’s contribution to the politics of space cannot be underestimated, also in organization studies’ spatial turn, her interest is in place and not in attachments. Translating the problem of place attachments into an affective, in addition to spatial, concern, (Bonnett, 2015, p. 120) points to the exclusion of certain kinds of affects (those marked by attachment such as loss and nostalgia) from the political left expressed in Massey’s global sense of place. This favouring of certain affects and ways of being in space is echoed in the tropes of detachment in processual studies of space. The processual conceptualization of space inadvertently risks mirroring the contemporary dominance of mobility characteristic of the new spirit of capitalism: “to move, to change – that is what enjoys prestige, as against stability, which is often synonymous with inaction” (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p. 155). As Ashcraft (2017, p. 41) shows, however, detachment is itself an affective, embodied disposition and reaction to the felt trap of attachment. Similar critique has been made by feminist geographers of the situationist

dérive and the celebration of the tactical hero of the street (Ross, 1996; Tamboukou, 2020). They argue that whereas spatial concepts that herald uncharted movements used to have their appeal as a radical response to representation, the “nomads of the real world (...) have challenged the romance of unregulated movement and force us to radically rethink the very concept of nomadism itself” (Tamboukou, 2020, p. 2).

Implications of the third twist for the concept of place attachments

Place attachments understood through meaning, as in the first and second twist, depend on and enforce a dualism of “a system of identities that correspond to a set of things” (Hennion, 2017, p. 117). Processual approaches instead offered a conceptual vocabulary with which to think about spatial multiplicity. However, looking at place attachments through ‘the challenge of space’ gives rise to new puzzles. With a relational concept of space, one in movement, a political sensitivity to the problems of attachments was pushed to the foreground. Critical of attachments, the relational concept of space evoked politics by exploring detachments: The uncanny, unfamiliar, unsited and unbounded. Local attachments were replaced by global ones. Politics got defined by change and opposed to the desire for (spatial) stability. Where does that leave the longing, and the “need to face up to – rather than simply deny – people’s need for attachment” (Massey, 1991, p. 26; see also Anderson, 2022)? If attachment is at the core of the space/place split, and attachment is deemed (reductively) to be on the side of place, the task is to work out how attachments might relate to space in other ways than through negation (tropes of detachment)?

Part 4: A reworked concept of place attachments

While critical of place attachments, Massey recognizes the *longing* they entail as a symptom of larger socio-economic forces. Despite scraping the surface of an affective understanding, neither Marxist critical geography, nor the third twist of organizational studies of space which it influenced, considers place attachments from the perspective of just that: Affective longing, loss, nostalgia, or desire for things to remain the same. This perspective shifts emphasis from representational to affective questions of identity and belonging. The fourth twist of organization studies’ spatial turn is the one closest to this affective concern. In Beyes & Holt’s reading, this twist pushes the spatial turn into the poetics of space and the limits of representation. The non-representational was also a part of the third twist, multiplicity, but with the fourth twist we move beyond any sense of place or space as a geographical location. Instead, spacing is “the generative and overflowing movements producing spaces of organizing” (Beyes & Holt, 2020, p. 15).

If the third twist, multiplicity, favored processual detachments over attachments, and located the political in movement rather than standstill, the fourth twist leaves us only with hints at what the implications of spatial poetics might be for reconceptualizing place attachments. The clues I take from the fourth twist are: A deep sense of the reciprocal relation between people and places by which space is not only created through interaction, but also modifies and transforms us (Ross

2008/1988 cited in Beyes & Holt, 2020, p. 17); an interest in ordinary affects and how they reverberate through space and time; and a full-on relational notion of space, one that sees space as manifest only in relations between events or aspects of events (Beyes & Holt, 2020 note 1 p. 22). Other than those hints, the fourth twist seems to be mainly a question of style: Of allowing space to enter the ways in which we think and write. This is, of course, not a lack as much as an invitation to continue the topographical imagination. Since this paper is not concerned with spatial methodologies but with understanding place attachments as sites for exploring questions of subjectivity and space, I play along: How can we retain a sense of concrete spaces, spaces that anchor, repel, move, or lure us, while not falling into the traps of place attachments, notably fixing identity and space into configurations of static meaning?

In the following, the paper proposes a reworked concept of place attachments in three steps. It draws on insights from studies of attachments outside the spatial turn to shed light on how attachments hold us in complicated dependencies. It offers a reworked concept of place attachments to relational studies of space; one that is better suited to understand the ambivalences of attachments as an affective, rather than representational, relation to space. Thus, the hope is to free the concept of place attachments from its troubled political implications and conceptual separations between space and subjectivity. The concept of place attachment is reworked in three steps: Movement, affect, and time.

Moving attachments

The first step of a reworked concept of place attachment is to reconcile the opposition that has been staged so far, and that permeates current critical approaches to place attachment: That between attachment and movement. If attachments are associated with all that sticks and gets stuck, movement does indeed seem to be its opposite. But whereas Simmel (2002) equated place attachments with the “steady equilibrium of unbroken customs”, place attachments today must be seen in light of navigating shifting environments rather than setting roots in the way Simmel and Tuan suggested. What if we think of attachments as in movement? Both Sara Ahmed (2004) and Lauren Berlant (2011) understand attachments through and as movement. In Ahmed’s work, movement refers to *being moved* by others. “What moves us,” she writes, “what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 27). Clearly informed by a spatial language, Ahmed shifts our attention from place as an object of attachment to the attachment itself as a dwelling place. But this place, the place of the attachment, is contingent: Paradoxically, it keeps us in place as it moves us. As Hennion (2017, p. 113) points out, the ‘-ment’ in attachment signals that it “has to be made even as it makes us in return”. In both the work of Ahmed and Berlant, as well as in Hennion’s sociology of attachments, thinking attachments as bound up with movement makes them dynamic, turns them into an activity rather than a property.

Movement is not simply an affirmation, a way of moving freely and autonomously forward. Rather, the encounter, that which moves us, “moves us sideways” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 33). Ahmed (2004, p. 27) reminds us that “movement may affect different others differently”. Ahmed’s thinking

of emotions is deeply spatial: “[E]motions delineate the contours of multiple worlds that are inhabited by different subjects” (2004, p. 25). As being moved by others therefore produces boundaries, fixity and surface, there is always the risk of fixing others, for instance by seeing them as ‘having’ particular politicised identities (Ahmed, 2004, p. 26). Being moved by others can work to “align individuals with collectives (..) bodily space with social space” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 26) in ways that affirm attachment to, say, white supremacy. To Berlant, movement is not always affirmative because it is driven by optimism. Optimism is “the force that *moves you* out of yourself and into the world in order to bring closer that satisfying something that you cannot generate on your own (...)” (Berlant, 2011, p. 1f, my emphasis). The fact that it is optimistic does not make it false, it only makes it vulnerable. If that which seems promising, that which incites movement, turns out to be harmful, the optimism, and by extension the movement towards proximity, becomes cruel.

This ambivalence when it comes to movement – movement is integral to attachment but that does not necessarily make it affirmative – exemplifies how attachments encourage a specific way of thinking about relations, different from the one in the fourth twist. Notice the slip in the following: “Attachment signifies a connection, restriction, restraint and dependence that reminds us that we are prisoners, confined on all sides by our history and our environment” (Hennion, 2017, p. 113). Attachments are not simply relational or networks if we by these understand any kind of connection. Attachments are specific kinds of relations: “[T]ies/bonds that endure” (Anderson, 2022, p. 5) and sometimes imprison. Attachments are understood amidst contingent relations as that which is *continued* and *maintained*. Another way of saying this is that attachments are not opposed to, but dialectically related to detachments when something that matters comes into focus through a sea of indifferences (Anderson, 2022, p. 9; Hennion, 2017, p. 117). This stands in contrast to the relational thinking at work in the third and fourth twist. Here, Massey thinks of identity not as the result of difference but of specificity in multiple relations. The relational thinking of attachments is more attuned to difference: It calls for an engagement with how attachments connect *and* set apart, how they move *and* fix (see also Anderson, 2023).

Attachments’ affect theory

The second step of a reworked concept of place attachment is to rethink place attachments from processes of individuals intentionally ascribing meaning to places, to collective processes of affecting and being affected by places.

Spatial theories tend to subscribe to theories of attachment that follow Deleuze and Massumi in conceptualizing affect as a non-conscious experience of intensity that takes place in the ‘half-second delay’ (Thrift, 2008, p. 243) between action and cognition. Affects are understood as excess, the ‘non’ or ‘more’ to the representational, and as such beyond discourse and signification. Hemmings (2005, p. 550) addresses this central argument of affect theories: It overlooks, she writes, “the myriad ways that affect manifests precisely not as difference, but as a central mechanism of social reproduction in the most glaring ways”. Recent work on the kinds of affect that strengthen rather than challenge social orders can be found in for instance Berlant’s (2011)

analysis of everyday life as constituted by “projects of affect management [that] provide registers for experiencing the structural contingencies of survival” (2011, p. 290). Tomkin (1963) conceptualizes affect as individual navigation strategies in which responses are informed by previous affective experiences. Berlant’s analysis of the ways structural forces materialize and reproduce affectively attends to “the messy dynamics of attachment, self-continuity, and the reproduction of life” (2011, p. 15) and thus shifts the focus away from transformation and rupture towards ‘structural contingency’.

While theories of attachment tend to use affect and emotion interchangeably, the affective vocabulary in the spatial turn in organization studies and in non-representational geography distinguishes affect from emotion. Emotions are seen as mere domestications of affect, a filtering layer that reduces affect to signification. McCormack (2003, p. 495), for instance, argues that emotion is a limiting concept that “refuses to grant sensibility and sensation the freedom of a movement and force that exists prior to such economies of meaning”. Seen as the possession of bounded individuals, emotions are portrayed as “a discrete, contained and containing space” (Thien, 2005, p. 452). This also implies that we *have* emotions while affects *happen* to us (Ashcraft, 2020). This concept of affect is also visible in the fourth twist’s poetics. Feminist geographers have shown how this concept of affect reproduces the dualism between emotion and reason, the feminized ‘personal’ against the affective transhuman (Thien, 2005). It is not surprising, then, that feminist theories of attachment have the same skepticism towards the way in which this notion of affect draws distinctions between the personal and the political. Attachment theories, instead, see emotions as neither in the individual nor the social, but “involv[ing] an interweaving of the personal with the social, and the affective with the mediated” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 28).

By insisting on the mediation of *all* bodily responses, and not leaving a special place for the immediacy of affect, feminist scholars of attachment show that even those reactions that are not consciously registered (think of bodily expressions of racism) can still be stored in the body and shaped by past histories. Probyn adds to this argument by turning to how space functions as an extended storage for such ingrained bodily responses. What is it, Probyn (2003, p. 290) asks, that “drags upon us as we move through space”? In her essay the ‘Spatial Imperative of Subjectivity’, Probyn (2003) connects our two central concerns here – space and subjectivity – by arguing for the relationality and spatiality of subjectivity: “Space always informs, limits and produces subjectivity. Equally subjectivity connects with space, and it rearticulates certain historical definitions of space. In this sense, neither space nor subjectivity is free-floating: they are mutually interdependent and complexly structured entities.” (Probyn, 2003, p. 298). And while we may think of subjectivity as an individual intimate possession, it is in fact a public affair (Ashcraft, 2020; Probyn, 2003). In the same way, a reworked notion of place attachments does not see the attachment as a property or possession, but as something that circulates publicly.

Thinking about attachments demands an affect theory that can account for how all relations can also become restrictions. While Massey (1991, p. 28) dreams of a definition of space that does not need any boundaries, and while boundarilessness forms a central tenet of processual approaches to space in organization studies, the affects of attachment (and attachment theories) move along

rather than transgress these boundaries. That is, emotions (or, if you like, affects) ‘affect’ the very distinction between inside and outside (Ahmed, 2004, p. 29), and in order to attend to how affect separates as much as connects us to others, we cannot avoid exposing ourselves to multiple processes of boundary construction (Pratt, 1998, p. 44). What Probyn calls the spatial imperative recalls Althusser’s famous scene where a police officer calls out on the street, and the by passer turns around: Who me? Being concerned with the mutual interdependency between space and subjectivity, Probyn reflects on how different bodies will feel compelled to turn around, and so reenforce their own constitution in space (as likely to be suspected or protected by the police). Probyn concludes: “In space, we orient ourselves and are oriented. That is the spatial imperative of subjectivities.” (2003, p. 298). Attachment theories conceptualize affect as that which helps us think about and study this mutual interdependency and how it is mediated.

The spacetime of attachments

The third step of a reworked concept of place attachment recognizes that attachments are as temporal as they are spatial. It rethinks place attachments as spacetime attachments.

The temporality of attachments builds on the concept of spacetime (Massey, 2005; Thrift & May, 2003). Thinking about the temporality of attachments implies an understanding of space as invariably intertwined with time. This point is at the heart of Massey’s (2005) critique of the dichotomization between space and time which posits space as the opposite of time. Time is also part of Massey’s critique of place attachments. In *Places and Their Past*, she questions place attachments not just for their tendency to hold places still physically, but also for the ways in which they use the past to naturalize the present or set the direction for future progress (Massey, 1995). Massey’s concern is with showing how any place is always made up not just of connections to other spaces, but also to other times. Multiplicity is therefore not only spatial, it is the bases for imagining a future which is radically open as opposed to predetermined by the narratives of progress, development, or modernity (Massey, 2005, p. 11). A reworked notion of place attachment begins from these insights into spacetime and the politics not only of space, but also of time. This resonates with the fourth twist’s emphasis on topology (Beyes & Holt, 2020, p. 21), that is the situational connectedness of points across space and time.

While the temporality of place attachments is central in *Places and Their Past*, it is also highlighted as yet another problem of attachments: A fixing of identity, a nostalgic tendency to cast all change as “the tragedy of loss” (Massey, 1995). This overlooks the capacity attachments have to not just sediment, but also problematize linear, historical narratives of globalization or progress. In fact, attachments orient us towards coeval “elsewheres and elsewhens” (Anderson, 2022, p. 6). Take the example of nostalgia. Nostalgia shows how attachments work both temporally and spatially: Longing for a place is always, invariably, a longing for a place-in-time. An attachment to a past spacetime is brought into the present and works to create future spacetimes (Anderson, 2022, p. 7). Longing for a past spacetime will charge the imagination of the future with a sense of loss. This geography of nostalgia points to the way attachments juxtapose, rather than fix, different spacetimes. While nostalgia, unsurprisingly, has the same reactionary reputation as place

attachments, some have pointed to its radical capacity to disturb the linear narratives of progress, development, and modernity (Bonnett, 2015). In this reading, attachments challenge spatial thinking's celebration of radically open futures, turning our attention to the chronopolitics that give value to certain temporal orientations (Sharma, 2014, p. 12). While nostalgia or hope bring other times into the present, this need not take the shape of claims to representational histories. Spacetime attachments are not normative statements, and as such they go under the radar of Massey's analysis of the politics of time. The place attachments criticized by Massey are assumed to be strong, agentic and oriented towards identity. Spacetime attachments have a more affective, and quieter, way of mobilizing the past, present and future; one that not only shows "what has come together, in this place, now" (Massey, 1995, p. 191), but also how a subject comes together, in this place, now.

Attachments are not only directed towards the past, but also towards the future. In Anderson's (2022) reading of Berlant's concept of attachments, he highlights how attachments work by making some objects more promising than others. "What characterizes a promissory object" Anderson writes, "is that it opens a valued future" (2022, p. 9). Essential to this reading is that attachments are not just relational, they are relations *that come to matter more than others*. This means that attachments orient subjects towards potentially better futures, futures that feel and are reconstituted as better than others because of promissory objects. Seeing attachments as essentially hopeful, or optimistic in Berlant's words, means that attachments are future-making practices (Ringel, 2021). This does not say anything about the attachment's capacity to 'realize' a better future, but simply that it has the capacity – in the present – to provide an orientation towards a future spacetime. This highlights the temporal dimension of thinking about distance/proximity through attachments: Attachments are not just dynamic in space but also in time.

Conclusion: Living place attachments

Following the spatial turn all the way into its most processual forms of spacing, it seems organizational place attachments are outdated. As both work and organization is becoming dispersed and attachments are increasingly directed towards social communities or ideologies rather than places as the material anchoring of these, the spatial turn is increasingly oriented towards process as opposed to endurance, movement as opposed to stability. Spatial thinking, rightly so, confronts representational figures of thought with the multiplicity of spaces to call for a better analysis of the politics of space that cuts across lived, conceived, and perceived space. Despite this move away from places towards processual spatial thinking, this paper has argued for taking place attachments seriously as affective, rather than representational, experiences of space.

While place attachments may be the ghost of the spatial turn in organization studies, the concept of attachment is gaining renewed interest in feminist studies of work and subjectivity. Although not directly concerned with spatial experience, these studies reveal that attachments are far more ambivalent affective and political phenomena than the place/space debate take them to be. Here,

attachments are revealed as complicated affects that tie people to institutions and to existing norms while also creating a foothold, a future, and an affective strategy for building continuity in circumstances where change is either not an option or not an ideal. Based on these insights, the paper has proposed a reworked concept of place attachments that shows how attachments are dynamic (movement), collective (affect), and temporal (spacetime).

With this concept, I hope to prompt future spatial research on the spatiality of attachments as more than just a question of belonging or not, and of (dis)identifying with a place of work or living. Place attachments can help us attend to reciprocal relations between people and places – how space is not just socially produced through infinite moving relations, but also a bundle of particular relations that come to hold us through space. As a concept, as feminist theories have shown, attachment thus opens spatial research to the ambivalent affects of dependency. With this reworked concept of place attachments, I hope to spur empirical research in the forms and functions of place attachments in contemporary spatial and organizational politics.

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PAPER 4

FEELING THE FUTURE – A CASE STUDY OF FUTURE-MAKING IN TEMPORARY URBAN SPACES

Abstract

In urban transformation, ‘temporary urbanism’ has become a widely used strategy for creating value prior to real estate development, typically in post-industrial areas that for different reasons are on hold in the transition from the functional to the cultural city. City governments, private developers or local stakeholders make use of temporary spaces and legislation to create temporary, vibrant neighbourhoods. The paper studies what this strategy does to future-making explored as actors’ feeling of the future and their sense of agency in its making.

Organizational literature typically defines future-making as the ways in which actors produce and enact the future. Responding to the recent call for organization studies to consider a wider plurality of ways to engage with the future, the paper explores a spectrum of future-making agency from weak to strong, and from sensed to practiced, contending that the agency of future-making takes form in response to and in turn creates temporal environments.

Introduction

The capacity to produce and enact a future that is different from or better than the present is an essential part of change whether organizational, societal or personal. This capacity is therefore of both organizational, political and personal concern. Governments might, for instance, emphasize individual actors' role in changing the course of global warming, spurring hope that adjustments to our individual consumption will contribute to the making of a better future. Prompting individual hope in a better future can be a way to prevent widespread climate sorrow and a feeling of the future as irreversibly closed. Meanwhile, governments continue to equate the future with economic growth, thus foreclosing other possible futures. The feeling of the future as open is momentarily enabled by hope (the possibility of reducing global warming, of effecting change if only we eat less meat or fly less) and restrained by disappointment when structural changes are postponed yet again – the future was not that open, after all. As this indicates, futures are constantly opened and closed politically, and the feeling of being able to influence the future opens and closes accordingly. The capacity to produce and enact a better future is therefore not only a skill that can be trained by individuals and organizations towards greater possibility of effecting change, it is also a feeling conditioned by the political opening and closing of futures.

In organizational studies of the future, future-making is often defined as the ways in which actors produce and enact the future in their everyday practices. The notion is meant to offer an alternative to seeing the future as closed and predetermined, externally crafted and decided. Instead of objectively existing 'out there', an eschatological deadline to the present whose arrival we can only await (Urry, 2016; Wenzel, 2022; Wenzel et al., 2020), organizational research on time and future-making now largely agrees that time is socially constructed, and that the future is performatively made through our practices in the present and through unfolding events (Hernes, 2022; Shipp & Jansen, 2021). As with other socially constructivist understandings of how social worlds are enacted, this has also given rise to an understanding of the future as radically open-ended. According to this view, the future cannot be anticipated, planned, fixed, foreseen or controlled – it can, however, be imagined, performed, and practiced moment by moment (Beckert, 2021; Beckert & Suckert, 2021; Thompson & Byrne, 2021) and as such, it remains open. This shift in the perception of the future 'democratizes' time by positioning everyone as equally capable of constructing, organizing and coordinating their own future.

Through a case study of how actors navigate in the open-ended future created by temporary urbanism (the temporary use of urban spaces before 'real' transformation), the paper nuances this proclaimed shift towards open and socially enacted futures. It asks: If the future is no longer a neutral temporal space but a field of projectivity, how do we account for varying experiences of and capacities to take part in this projection? While most empirical studies of future-making assume actors feel the future as open and available for their making, other empirical studies of the subjective and affective experience of time have portrayed how actors feel 'futureless' and stuck. This paper combines insights from these literatures by taking an interest in situations in which the future feels fixed and determined *and* in which actors still adapt and move on, albeit reactively

rather than inventively. These are ordinary situations in which a sense of powerlessness is coupled with a critical capacity to understand how to move forward by recalibrating to other peoples' time. In which future-making is not strongly proactive, but not absent either. They range from citizens' who disdainfully watch the effects of rising housing prices on the socio-economic diversity of the city but still work towards one day being able to 'enter the market', to academics who are appalled by senior managements' corporatization of the university but whose main reaction consists of trying to carefully and critically understand, and then adapt to, the situation.

Responding to the recent call for organization studies to consider a wider plurality of ways to engage with the future (Wenzel et al., 2020), the paper adopts the analytical framework of the sociology of plural regimes of engagement (Thévenot, 2001, 2007, 2014, 2020). It sheds light on how different regimes of engagement (here focused on the regimes of engagement through exploration, planning, and familiarity) range from personal experience, such as the intimate feeling of powerlessness when faced with a future that feels closed, to its public and more explicitly agentic forms, such as when actors organize to influence the future. This in turn enables the paper to show that organizational studies of future-making have so far assumed and favoured the study of actors who engage in the world through exploration and thrive in environments characterized by open futures, while overlooking those who engage through familiarity and for whom open-ended futures may therefore be experienced as a loss of the familiar present and its reassurance of belonging. With this approach, the paper takes a step back to explore a spectrum of future-making agency, ranging from weak to strong, through which the future comes to feel open or closed.

Through the case study and this analytical framework, the paper makes three contributions to the study of future-making. First, it shows that the future is still 'out there' in feelings of a looming and already defined future. This suggests we should not be too quick to disregard conceptualisations and empirical analyses of 'closed futures' or, at the very least, futures that feel closed or closing. Second, the paper shows that the idea of a performatively made future through imaginative practices is well aligned with contemporary work ideals such as creativity, flexibility, and an entrepreneurial capacity to see the open-ended as an opportunity. While this is not a problem in itself it calls on us to critically analyse how this form of future-making becomes dominant, rather than reproducing its dominance by focusing studies on strong and imaginative future-making. Thirdly, the analysis shows that in addition to these two well studied figures - an 'already made' or closed future, and a performatively enacted and radically open one - we find another, 'weaker' form of future-making. This form is analysed and discussed as a reflexive and critical feel for the future and describes the projective agency that characterizes ordinary situations of dealing with a future that feels 'ready-made'.

Future-making

Recently, there has been an interest in exploring other ways to think and move towards the future than the ideal of a fixed and predictable future waiting ahead, often equated with modernist planning approaches (Wenzel et al., 2020). As a result of growing uncertainty in late modernity, disenchantment with planning reverberates across disciplinary interests in the future. Adam & Groves (2007, p. 2), for instance, criticize planning perspectives on the future for assuming a ‘decontextualized future emptied of content (...) open to exploration and exploitation’. Sociological research has for a long time been concerned with questions of how people anticipate and organize the future in everyday practices (Bazzani, 2022; Beckert & Suckert, 2021; Tavory & Eliasoph, 2013). In organisation studies, Mintzberg (1994) famously declared the decline of strategic planning and its attempt to fix the world, and Chia and Holt (2009) that any order to the future emerged from spontaneous, purposive acts of wayfinding rather than from deliberate plans. In the field of urban planning, the modernist masterplans of Le Corbusier are replaced by notions and practices of ‘planning for not having a plan’ (Hillier, 2017).

As a result of this disenchantment with planning, future-making has emerged as a term to describe other, often more probing, ways of engaging with the future (Sachs Olsen & Juhlin, 2021). Wenzel et al. (2020, p. 3) define future-making practices as ‘the specific ways in which actors produce and enact the future’, while others extend the term to also encompass sensemaking, evaluation and negotiation of possible and imagined futures (Comi & Whyte, 2018). Future-making shifts our perspective from rational planning to an enacted, situationally dependent future, and as a term and practice it has therefore been linked to a ‘re-problematization’ of the future as fundamentally unknowable and ungovernable (Wenzel et al., 2020; Whyte et al., 2022). It also potentially shifts our perspective from those tasked with strategic planning or corporate foresight to ‘the often subtle, partly mundane, and perhaps even short-sleeved ways in which organizational actors engage with the future’ (Wenzel, 2022, p. 849). Empirically, this opens the study of the future to a plurality of actors and practices that reach beyond formalized skills and methods with which desired change is effectuated.

Futures in practice

Studies of future-making take a practice theoretical approach to the future as constantly enacted through social practices that always reach out into unprecedented futures (Schatzki, 2010), producing social realities ‘for another first time’ (Garfinkel 1967 cited in Wenzel et al., 2020, p. 3). The practice theoretical approach to the future thereby avoids seeing the future as already formed, objectively waiting ahead (Wenzel et al., 2020, p. 1444). Instead, Emirbayer & Mische (1998) describe future-oriented agency as the projective capacity to imagine alternative possibilities. All agency, in their seminal paper, is conceptualized as temporal because it is composed of ‘variable and changing orientations within the flow of time’ (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 964). Projective agency is the dimension of agency at work in future-making practices, in which an orientation towards the future dominates the ‘chordial triad’ of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 972).

Projective agency is mostly conceived of as generative; it holds the possibility for actors to surpass their schemas, habits and traditions by intentionally creating a future that is different from the present and past.

Beckert (2021, p. 21) argues that a wide range of organizational and strategic tools can be seen as oriented towards the '*making* of the future' (emphasis in original) in this sense. Organizational scholars have, for instance, turned to the study of the imaginaries and materialities of working with the not-yet. Visual artefacts are used to study the path from imagination to courses of action, emphasizing a sensorial rather than cognitive engagement with the uncertainty of the future (Comi & Whyte, 2018). Thompson (2018, p. 245) explores how imagination is used 'to create, alter and share perceptions and images of possible futures', and Thompson & Byrne (2021) analyse the role of imagined futures in instigating organizational and economic change. In these practices, imagining is a form of anticipation aimed towards creating a 'desirable future situation' (Thompson & Byrne, 2021, p. 250) or 'preferred organizational futures' (Whyte et al., 2022, p. 3). Imagined futures are seen as a 'central means to cope with turbulent environments, and [...] shape the economy' (Beckert, 2021, p. 2). Imagined futures have a rational purpose; they are 'engines' (Beckert, 2021) that can be activated in the pursuit of a projected future (Thompson & Byrne, 2021; Whyte et al., 2022). Leaving the territory of certain and predictive knowledge, imagined futures are associated with transformation and change (Mische, 2009). The concept of time that emerges is consequently 'the human and living time of intentions and goals (...) the time not of measurement but of human activity, of opportunity' (Jacques 1982 in Orlikowski & Yates, 2002, p. 686). Imagination is tied to a situational logic of opportunity by which actors can change the present in the direction of their future imaginaries. Consequently, imagined futures mostly take the constructive shape of desired futures (for an exception, see Alimadadi et al., 2022).

Comi & Whyte (2018) describe the agency at work in imagined futures as one of 'future perfect thinking', in which actors are agentic because of their ability to project an ideal future through fictional expectations (Beckert, 2021) or imaginary projections (Costas & Grey, 2014). This ability to become 'an entrepreneur of time control' (Sharma, 2014, p. 44) in the face of the uncertainty or openness of the future makes sense when viewed in relation to a contemporary demand to constantly adjust to new temporal landscapes e.g. in a temporary job market, an ephemeral built environment, or short-lived romantic relationships (Jokinen, 2016, p. 86; Tavory & Eliasoph, 2013, p. 927). The consequence, however, is that while critical of modernist planning ideals, studies of future-making that conceptualize agency as in the above studies, hold on to agency in 'the strongly purposive terminology of goals, plans, and objectives' (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 984) even if through a language of imagination, creativity and materiality.

While research on future-making in organization studies is born out of a contemporary disenchantment with the centrality of the 'big plans' of modernity and their way of approaching the future through corporate foresight (Wenzel, 2022), these have been replaced by smaller plans, closer to individual projects conducted by autonomous individuals. There is still an emphasis on actors who are explicitly given the task of making the future. This time, not the planners or strategists but the entrepreneurs, promissory organizations, creatives and artists – arguably, the

‘new professionals’ of future-making, those who are trained to thrive in uncertainty and are celebrated for their capacity to think new. With the idea of a continuously unfolding, agent-centred process of future-making, practice theoretical studies of future-making risk falling prey to what Bourdieu (1977, cited in Tavory & Eliasoph, 2013, p. 920) called the ‘occasionalist illusion’, positing that social reality is created only *ad hoc*, through effortful instances of agentic endeavour.

This leaves out those forms of future-making that do not look to the future as a ‘hopeful elsewhere’ (Tutton, 2022, p. 439)? Or, less dramatically, feelings of the future as already made, as something one can move towards but not have a say in? Variations of a feeling of powerlessness towards the possibility of making the future is an important aspect of the pluralization of future-making practices so far largely overlooked in organizational studies of future-making. Emerging research on the affective experience of time gives us a hint of a different future. It explores the limits of the unquestioned strong agency implied by future-making (Alimadadi et al., 2022; Johnsen et al., 2019; Kodeih et al., 2022; Otto & Strauß, 2019). In pluralizing ways to engage with the future, recent conceptualizations of future-making can learn from this shift from what we might do with time to what time does to us (Holt & Johnsen, 2019). As this paper’s empirical setting of temporary urbanism will show, living in uncertainty produces different experiences of the future and consequently different forms of future-making. To some, the temporary leads to insecurity about the future, to precarious feelings of being on hold while others decide on their future. At best, they manage daily life by hoping for a better future, which arguably is a minimal definition of future-making. This form of agency, as Berlant (2011, p. 11) argues, is more about maintenance than making, which draws our attention to aspects of future-making that do not lead to change or desired futures.

Others are propelled into neoliberal action by uncertainty, to becoming ‘an entrepreneur of time control’ (Sharma, 2022, p. 44) by ceasing the space of opportunity opened by the uncertainty of the temporary. The latter reaction to uncertainty implies ‘conscious, political or public action’ (Jokinen, 2016, p. 86) that lives up to the contemporary demand to ‘continuously make, reflect and negotiate choice’. Everyday forms of agency that do not live up to such ideals for individual sovereignty are consequently overlooked. In either case, uncertainty is not a ‘have and have not’ situation: ‘To be left uncertain or to feel certain is a form of temporal difference and condition of daily life tied to one’s relationship to things’ (Sharma, 2022, p. 44). Importantly, such perspectives on future-making encompasses empirical realities in which the ‘future feels foreclosed, rather than open and expanding’ (MacDonald, 2018, p. 57; see also Sand, 2019). However, if the practice theoretical view of the future as made anew everyday risks capturing future-making in the immediate situation, unrelated to larger temporal orders that structure future-making, studies of the absence of agency risk posing that social actors are stuck in the temporal reproduction of long-term inequality (Tavory & Eliasoph, 2013). This view is for instance at work when Bourdieu’s notion of protention, the temporal aspect of actors’ feel for the social game (Atkinson, 2019), is used to explain why social groups get ‘stuck’ in certain forms of projective agency, leading to the reproduction of their social status due to temporally (re)enacted inequalities.

Pragmatic future-making

Instead, this paper argues we need an analytical framework for understanding future-making as brought about by a plurality of agencies (Mandich, 2020; Welch et al., 2020) and as shifting responses to situations. This entails loosening the understanding of practices as necessarily productive or strongly agentic, to instead analyse how future-making takes shape in response to how actors feel the future in the larger trajectories in which their actions are embedded (Tavory & Eliasoph, 2013, p. 913). Laurent Thévenot's sociology of plural regimes of engagement and its burgeoning and promising adaptation to the study of projective agency (Mandich, 2020; Welch et al., 2020) provides the analytical basis for such a rethinking of strong agency in future-making towards a plurality of agencies. The sociology of regimes of engagement is based on four regimes of engagement between which actors can shift: familiar engagement, the plan, justification and exploration, of which this paper will focus on familiar engagement, plans, and engagement through exploration. Each engagement values a certain good and provides different frameworks for apprehending one's reality (Hansen, 2016, p. 132). This 'realist orientation' (Thévenot, 2001) differs from the social constructivism of practice theory as it focuses on how actors incorporate responses from their environment as they assess the relevant reality to their form of engagement. For this paper's concern with future-making, this means that future-making is tied to a concern with actors' reading of and adaptation to a temporal environment. It follows that different temporal environments call for, and give form and value to, different agencies.

Unlike Bourdieu's observation that different social groups are 'stuck' in different forms of projective agency that lead to the reproduction of their social status, pragmatic sociology emphasizes social actors' versatility. Actors are 'induced to change in accordance with the way situations are disposed and the way conduct is judged' (Thévenot, 2007, p. 410). The capacity to shift one's form of engagement, and therefore also one's future-making depending on the demands of the situation, is both a critical capacity actors have (see Thévenot & Boltanski, 1999), but it is also increasingly an imperative in contemporary society that demands a high degree of flexibility and openness to change (Thévenot, 2001, pp. 65–66, 2007, pp. 418–419). In the analysis, I take this double insight from the sociology of engagements (the critical capacity *and* imperative to shift one's form of engagement) to explore how actors feel and navigate the future under temporary conditions.

Methods

Research setting

The paper is based on a 4 year-long case study (2020-2023) of the gradual transformation of a post-industrial site in Copenhagen. From 1878 till 1996, Refshaleøen – the name of the site – was home to Denmark's largest shipyard, Burmeister & Wein. In its heyday it had 8000 workers and Northern Europe's strongest workers union. The shipyard was built on an artificial island that gradually expanded as the shipyard grew towards its current 115 hectares. Following the general decline of industry in the harbour fronts of Northern European big cities, the shipyard went

bankrupt in 1996. Refshaleøen was parked in municipal plans as a ‘perspective area’, waiting for development. In this meantime, the private owners of the site have made use of a well-known strategy in the transformation of cities often referred to as ‘temporary urbanism’. It refers to the strategic use of temporary renters and events to create a vibrant urban neighbourhood in the meantime before ‘real’ transformation. The study takes place at a point in time when the end of this temporary use is perceived among locals as approaching – officially, development is set to begin in 2031. The analysis studies how the future is felt in the context of urban transformation and the strategic use of time in ‘temporary urbanism’.

Data collection

The analysis in this paper is drawn from a larger case study comprising ethnographic fieldwork conducted during a period of 36 months (2020-2023) in this site. The data collection method used specifically for this paper is the walking interview. Walking interviews, a common method in fields such as urban studies, have recently been taken up as an organizational method that reflects the growing interest in urban space and the street as a site of organizing (see e.g., Cnossen et al., 2020). In addition to taking to the streets, walking interviews are seen as ways to foreground the more material and embodied dimensions of communicating and knowing (Beyes & Steyaert, 2020). In walking with locals, I aimed to surpass ‘distanced reflections’ to instead get close to an ‘everyday engagement with our surroundings’ (Zundel, 2013, p. 119) by letting the environment in (Beyes & Steyaert, 2020, p. 227). As such, urban space constituted a materiality of the method of walking interviews with which to evoke time both as memories of the past and images of the future (Ravn, 2022). Consider, for instance, how materiality, the present and the future entangle in this quote as a research participant stops to take in the landscape around us: ‘In the here and now, it’s still a wasteland – there is a tractor, and a vacuum cleaner, and an old boat – it still has this character, and there are still some ambitions not to make this a city as we know it. Or at least I hope so, for a while still’ (S., walking interview). The walking interviews were informal, meaning they did not rely on an interview guide but allowed for free-flowing narrative aided by the pace of the walk and the places encountered (Bilsland & Siebert, 2023; Kusenbach, 2003). As I planned the walking interviews, however, I would always ask the interviewee to decide our starting point with the question ‘where does Refshaleøen begin to you?’ and, when we met, invite them to lead the way.

Data selection and analysis

The data selected and analysed for this paper consists of detailed analysis of walking interviews with 5 locals, some of which I interviewed several times (see table below). I selected the walking interviews for this paper because they each tell personal stories of urban change that connect to larger timeframes of urban development, such as when one interviewee, J., confessed ‘I have a history of being attracted to threatened places’. With the aim of understanding how the temporality of the place shaped feelings of the future, the walking interviews provided rich material for registering the ways in which feelings for the future influenced future-making. This served as a reminder that large-scale change is always observed from personalized histories of change. As such, walking interviews gave insights into ‘how time appears in human experience, in private

moments (...) [in] the everyday and sometimes difficult sense of encountering time’ (Holt & Johnsen, 2019, p. 1558).

Table 1. Empirical material	
Data source	Details
Walking interviews with local renters (8 in total)	Walking interview T, 1; S, 2; P*, 2; CJ, 1; J*, 2 Duration of each walk: 1-2 hours Interviewees marked with * were also members in a local association in which I did participant observations and follow up interviews, see below
Ethnographic case study 2020-2023, selected data sources	Site visits: 38 full days Participant observation in a local association: 15 board meetings and 2 general assemblies Participant observation in the private development company: 6 meetings for renters (2 hours each), 2 full day public workshops

In analysing the selected walking interviews, I draw on the analysis of a wider corpus of ethnographic material (see table 1) to attend to regimes of engagement and the temporal environment they each respond to. To analyze and capture forms of engagement in temporary urbanism, I focused on how actors reflected upon their own life stories and engaged reflexively in this during interviews (Caetano, 2015; Cassell et al., 2020). Empirical analysis using French pragmatic sociology attends to what actors say and do ‘*en situation*’, not to a truth that lies hidden behind what they say or do (Hansen, 2016, p. 130). Following this credo into the analysis of data, I focused on trajectories (Andres & Kraftl, 2021; Ravn, 2022; Tavory & Eliasoph, 2013) to understand how actors placed themselves in the story of the city both temporally and spatially. Trajectories might, but do not always, take a narrative form as a story with a beginning, middle and ending (Ravn, 2022).

The method of analysis was inspired by one of my research participants, T., who said during a walk: ‘Everyone will notice something different, there are so many stories to pick up when you walk with someone (...). We all have this desire to tie the narrative about our own lives to the city’. As T. so aptly describes, stories give agency to actors in terms of how they choose to tell their stories, choosing between pasts and futures depending on their present perspective (Järvinen & Ravn, 2015). When analysed with a sensitivity towards wider temporal environments – in this case, temporary urbanism – they also, however, point to the ways in which ‘an individual’s projects, innovations, and creativity are never simply disconnected from larger cultural frameworks’ (Tavory & Eliasoph, 2013, p. 916). This sensitized the analysis to tracing links between everyday acts of feeling the future, and broader temporal environments influencing the agencies of future-making.

Analysis: Pragmatic future-making in temporary urbanism

Sensing the future

‘It’s not something I know but it’s a feeling I have (...) that Refshaleøen is changing’, S., a longtime local who works on a repurposed tugboat, tells me as we are standing on the tip of the island, watching the other side of the harbor in which urban development takes on more tangible forms than here: High rises, construction sites, beach promenades. ‘It feels as if it is on its way now, it can’t be long’. The future feels, as in Raymond William’s (1977, p. 123) description of how new phases of existing cultures emerge, something ‘active and pressing but not yet fully articulated’. Other locals describe the future in similar terms. CJ, for instance, senses the future as a pressure: ‘The new project that will begin in the future [transformation after temporary use], it *pressures* everything, people, businesses, and generally the whole area (...)’ While both describe the future as a ‘not-yet’, it is also viscerally felt in the present, giving rise to a sense of alertness: how will the future arrive? How will it change the place? Some locals imagine bulldozers. Others have a sense that it will be more of a soft transition: ‘2021 used to be a deadline for everything [but now I sense that] it will be a fluent rather than a hard transition’ another local, P., speculates. These visions of the future show how temporary urbanism influences imaginations: The future is something locals ‘read’ out of the present, rather than something of which they feel in control or invited to create.

Their imagination of the future is made possible by past experiences in similar places that have followed similar trajectories. ‘It’s something about the times we live in’, T. explains to me in a walking interview and continues: ‘This is the last place in Copenhagen (...) a last place where a certain form of openness can be found (...) we have come closer to a deadline, the point at which this becomes a normal rental project; the demands will tighten, the economy, all the formal things’. T.’s observation is made against a backdrop of experience – the familiar cycle of ‘a normal rental project’ repeating itself as he has seen it in so many other places of the city. S. also describes how, throughout his life, he has been attracted to ‘threatened places’, and tells me about his upbringing as intertwined with the fate of these places that have, eventually, been ‘closed down’, as he suspects this place will too. CJ recounts how he has seen the city change over the last 20 years, gradually destroying the livelihood of businesses like his own – ‘it’s completely ruined over the years’, which leads him to conclude, melancholically: ‘the last that’s left is Refshaleøen’. Their references to the decline of industry, the repetitive cycles of development projects, and a recent urban history of gentrification matter to the way they feel and move towards the future. Situating their own sense of agency over the future in a larger trajectory of urban development prompts their feeling of being ‘on the way out’ while others are ‘on the rise’ (Atkinson, 2019, p. 956). As CJ melancholically ends his story of urban development, anticipating his own temporal and spatial displacement: ‘[T]his is not our times, we are the kind of business that is not supposed to be here, [we are] supposed to be somewhere else’.

Unlike the future in practical anticipation, temporary urbanism keeps locals ‘on their toes’, as CJ says: ‘you can really sense that people are on their toes, what’s going to happen to their future?’.

The future is constantly in the foreground of experience. As Wenzel et al. (2020, p. 11) also argue, and as this shows, the prevalence of the future and actors' understanding of their practices as future-making may rise and fall in different situations. Here, the future takes on a critical role in the present (Mische, 2009). Rather than a tacit, habitual and practical anticipation, the future is thematic. It presses itself upon local actors who are forced to develop a reflexive projectivity in the absence of a sense of being able to change things. This is enforced when P., a local who runs a theatre, says: 'We [the renters] all went into this with our eyes open (...) We knew it was going to end in 2021'. CJ shares this temporal horizon: 'we knew all along it was going to come, that there will come a time when it would be over (...)'. This shows that while they may not feel in position to engage in the future with strong projective agency – the future does not feel open to them – they still have a critical capacity to move forward towards and despite their anticipated image of a future that is waiting 'out there'.

A weak form of future-making

The sense of the future as a loss, present in the trajectories in the above and on the site in general, can be better understood by diving deeper into the regime of familiar engagement. Familiar engagement is a subjective and personalised form of engagement that involves feeling at ease in an immediate environment, which in turn is shaped and appropriated to support this feeling of ease (Thévenot, 2001, pp. 69–70). More than a habit, familiar engagement implies a dynamic phenomenological process of familiarisation (Thévenot, 2007, p. 416) that resonates throughout the walks as local actors describe a sense of alignment with the place. This becomes most obvious when familiarity is broken. For instance, CJ uses the word harmony to describe how he feels about the place, and how this feeling is disrupted: 'When you move from the city to this place, you step into a different world [sighs] on a summer morning when the water is pale'. On such early mornings and in the winter, CJ can escape the pressure of a looming future and re-establish his sense of familiarity with the place: 'when it [a popular food market next to the space he is renting] is closed it's a liberation, it's like being born anew, even if the winter is tough, I enjoy it because there is peace and harmony'. Winters and mornings return him to a state of harmony, or familiarity, that he otherwise locates in the past. In a familiar engagement with the world, the past is prevalent because it creates continuity and a sense of reassurance and belonging (Thévenot, 2014, p. 13).

J., a local who describes his life as running parallel to an urban history of the closures of 'free' spaces in the city, describes how fear 'hardens' places. Referring to both Refshaleøen and another well-known place in the city, J. says:

People love what they have so much that they are afraid to lose it because they are not owners (...) there is a toughness in the place because there is a fear of getting kicked out (...) you constantly look ahead towards when you will get kicked out, and that has developed [X] in a bad way, a very harsh and rough place (...). A kind of toughness. And it's the same, in a way, out here, you're constantly like 'when and how long?', that threatening feeling (...)

Fear ‘destroys the immediate and intimate relationship with the future that familiarity makes possible’ (Mandich, 2020, p. 693). The recurrent reference to the fear of the future, and a sense of loss associated with it, shows that locals are hard-pressed to uphold a familiar engagement with the world. J. describes vividly how this influences not just the possibility of enjoying the present, but also how looking ahead, when the feeling of the future is charged with fear, changes places in the present. Such findings resonate with a more sensory sociology of the future, concerned more with the affective impressions of the future than the practices that enact it (Coleman, 2017, 2018).

A different regime of engagement, engagement in a plan, calls on actors to assess their familiar engagement. As T. remarked, ‘we have come closer to a deadline, the point at which this becomes a normal rental project; the demands will tighten, the economy, all the formal things’. This is the regime usually associated with ‘normal action’: autonomous agency with the capacity to project oneself successfully into the future (Thévenot, 2007, p. 417). Rather than ease and continuity, this regime is focused on the execution of plans. While the local actors do not shift to this form of engagement, they observe it on the horizon as the temporary free space seems threatened by ‘plans’ and ‘planning’. S., who has previously described how he enjoys this place because it is a wasteland and messy, recalls a past city that was not so ‘complete and architectural’, so ‘nice and polished’. Being at ease in the world, to him, is to be messy, and consequently a city that allows for such mess is one in which he can feel familiar. Increasingly, however, he sees how attempts to clean up the city and create ‘places where you can stay but not live’ puts pressure on social diversity and culture, threatening his sense of familiarity.

If the regime of engagement in plans is the most ‘normal format of action’, associated with the strong projective agency previously discussed, what form of future-making emerges through familiar engagement? It is not as if these actors simply experienced the future as a practical anticipation, a moment to moment moving forward. So how can we understand their future-making? ‘Remember,’ CJ tells me,

that this is a business we are running, and a life project, and one spends ones entire time and life on it, at least I do, so it’s not going to be fun to have to move – but one has to look ahead all the time and say ‘what’s going to happen next’?

J. comments, in a tone that is self-critical towards his own nostalgia, ‘every generation wants *their* time to last forever (...) I romanticize my upbringing, where everything looked like this [he gestures towards our surroundings]’. Unwillingly moving forward, their sense of the future as a loss or an end does not paralyze them; they are able to recalibrate to the temporal environment in which they find themselves. ‘What’s going to happen next’ is a weak form of future-making that scans for necessary adaptation in the context of the change imperative of temporary urbanism. This versatility, a key point in the sociology of regimes of engagement, is both their strength – it allows them to engage in future-making as a reflexive reading of and response to the situation – but it also makes them vulnerable to a future that feels as if it is being defined by others.

The political opening and closing of futures

Temporary urbanism sheds light on how temporal environments respond better to some forms of future-making than others, in turn reinforcing the strong projective agency of some forms over others. While the actors in the above expressed a feeling of the future as a loss, which prompts them to 'look ahead' by engaging in plans instead, others find ways to engage exploratively in the open future of temporary urbanism. The regime of engagement in exploration places emphasis on playfulness, innovation and creativity when engaging with the world. While the regime of exploration is described by Thévenot (2014, p. 15) as solely present-oriented, its orientation towards novelty and renewal clearly implies a future-making through imagination and creativity (Mandich, 2020, p. 694). When engaging through exploration, the future *feels* different, and consequently so does the feeling of one's own agency in its making. It is, as P. expresses it, a question of whether one can thrive in the waiting time of the temporary. Talking about the relation between the renters and the private development company managing the temporary phase, he says: 'If we want it [any kind of promise] in writing, we won't get it. But if we can wait [laughs] then we *might* just get it.'

Whereas the regime of familiarity was oriented towards ease and continuity, engaging through exploration values change. P., for instance, appreciates how the temporary makes change possible. Compared to other places in the city that are 'defined' and that single out places for creativity, he wants 'the whole place to have a taste of the possibility that it can change'. He understands himself and the other renters as in a process of negotiating the future: '[we] are constantly negotiating about the future, what is going to happen, and there is something very creative in that, right? It's something that brings us together.' T. similarly values the 'indefiniteness' of the site. This is what makes it easier, he says, to imagine things. As we walk, T. observes how the absence of 'the long-term' and formal plans have shaped the place: 'More is allowed, it is almost as if it is a more performative place because you can work with things in the short run, just try out things.' We walk past enclaves of containers transformed into student housing and he gestures towards them to elaborate: 'These playful modules (..) almost everything can be moved and changed immediately, and that gives it a kind of lightness, a kind of playfulness.' When engaging through exploration, temporary urbanism does not signal the end of a continuity between the past and the present; rather, it signals opportunity and playfulness, the possibility of negotiating the future, and the possibility that promises *might* be fulfilled.

The projective agency of this regime is therefore well recalibrated to temporary urbanism. T. imagines a city with less rules and restrictions, a future scenario for which he imagines this site will surely become a blueprint:

One could imagine a bargain with the municipality about a culture-based neighbourhood that would benefit the whole city and improve its profile, a prototype of a different kind of city, where architects, designers and craftspeople can make entirely different spaces.

Future-making in the regime of exploration is hopeful. It has confidence in its own imaginative power, as this future vision shows, and therefore does not rely on formal plans to project ahead. The hopeful attunement of this future-making is hence both nurtured by, and supportive of, the temporal environment created by temporary urbanism – one in which the future is unknown, and therefore open to be made, experimented with, and constantly shifted around.

Concluding discussion

This study examined future-making in and as feelings of open and closed futures in a case study of temporary urbanism. As a phenomenon, temporary urbanism exemplifies the disenchantment with the great masterplans of modernity. Unlike the masterplan that imposes a ‘future perfect thinking’ onto the present, and then works towards filling the gaps, temporary urbanism is spontaneous and based on an idea of ‘making the future as we go along’. Yet, this approach to ‘planning for not having a plan’ (Hillier, 2017) does not necessarily manifest in local actors as an open invitation to future-making, as the study showed. To reiterate the research question: In the ‘rediscovery’ of the future as a problematic temporal category, no longer a neutral temporal space but a field of projectivity, how do we account for varying experiences of and capacities to take part in this projection? The study calls into question the dominant assumption of strong projective agency and open-ended futures in the organizational literature on future-making.

As a concept and practice, the literature review shows how future-making typically evokes a process of actively crafting the future. Comi & Whyte (2018, p. 1056) emphasize how the focus on *making*, as opposed to sensemaking, draws attention to ‘the practical work of giving form to abstract imaginings of the future’ and the creation of a ‘realizable course of action’. As an organizational device, imagined futures are highlighted for their ability to create what Beckert (2016) calls ‘fictional expectations’, aligning decisions and relations in the present (see also Augustine et al., 2019; Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013). Thompson and Byrne (2021) also show that future-making is something entrepreneuring practitioners *do* when tasked with creating images of future business models. This emphasis on entrepreneurial ‘making’ resonates with the practice theoretical ambition to focus on what actors actually do, rather than lofty visions of strategies and ideal scenarios (Wenzel, 2022). Studies of future-making have introduced insights from the sociology of the future (e.g. Beckert & Suckert, 2021) into organization studies and paved the way for studies of the mundane and everyday aspects of making the future (Wenzel, 2022).

Contributing to this sociological and everyday perspective of the future in organization studies, the case study of feelings of open and closed futures in temporary urbanism continues this ambition to explore what future-making can be and how it relates to the ‘rediscovery’ of the future as an open-ended temporal category (Wenzel et al., 2020). Yet, the findings of the study also question some of the assumptions of this literature: First, that the experience of an unknowable future in late modernity has, to ordinary actors, led to an experience of the future as open (Wenzel et al., 2020, p. 7). And second, the implicit assumption that open-ended futures are equally accessible to everyone.

The future is still ‘out there’

While the future has been declared open by planners, strategists, sociologists and organizational scholars, the analysis and case of this paper shows that *feelings* of the future as fixed and closed proliferate. As Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 985 emphasis in original) writes in their seminal paper on temporal agency: ‘it *matters* to what degree they [people] understand time as something fixed and determinate, or conversely, as something open and negotiable’. It matters because to those who do not see themselves as having a strong say in the future, the future still looks and feels closed. Rather than declaring the future reopened in the context of disenchantment with strategies and plans, reintroducing ‘closed futures’ to the study of future-making extends the field to also encompass empirical realities in which the ‘future feels foreclosed, rather than open and expanding’ (MacDonald, 2018, p. 57; Sand, 2019).

As the analysis shows, future-making also appears in a ‘weaker’ form through which the future does not feel open to be made. Future-making here appears more as a reflexive and critical feel for the future, prompting the question of how to conceive of future-making that does not take the form of practices that create ‘realizable courses of action’. While this discussion does not allow space to properly engage with the practice theoretical approach that permeates current studies, this finding indicates one of its shortcomings; notably, a lack of attention given to actors’ evaluative, reflexive and critical stance (Thévenot, 2001; Welch et al., 2020, p. 440). In the analysis, this shortcoming was addressed through the sociology of regimes of engagement and a concern for the good (e.g., ease in familiarity, novelty in exploration) that oriented actors in particular ways towards the future, leading to shifting feelings of closed and open futures as they adjusted to their temporal environment.

This weaker form does not mean the absence of future-making, however. If taking organizational studies of the performativity of imagined futures seriously, imaginations of closed and sensory futures must be regarded as equally performative as their open and agentic counterparts. The interplay between desired and undesired images of the future (Alimadadi et al., 2022) and between sensed and practiced futures is an important aspect of pluralizing our understanding of ways to engage with the future. Instead of ‘future perfect thinking’ (Fuglsang & Mattsson, 2011; Pitsis et al., 2003), Jasanoff and Kim (2015) suggest – drawing on future-making in science fiction dystopias of modernity – that we also seek to understand the socially performative role (Oomen et al., 2022) of imperfect future thinking. Resonating with this, the paper suggests that in some cases, future-making is closer to an act of recalibration (Sharma, 2014) to a sensed, dominant future than an act of invention. This can extend the current conceptualization of future-making to also explore, for instance, what a climate changed dystopic vision of the future does to projective agency in the present. It challenges the dominant focus on strong projective agency and on actors whose role in negotiating and taking a part in the making of ‘a shared image of a desirable future situation’ (Thompson & Byrne, 2021, p. 4) is left unquestioned. It also helps studies of future-making get closer to the ‘dreams, wishes, desires, anxieties, hopes, fears, and aspirations’ that, according to Emirbayer and Mische (1998) constitute the other, and more overlooked, end of the spectrum of projective agency.

The politics of future-making

Rather than reducing this way of engaging with the future to mere reaction or futurelessness, the spectrum from weak to strong projective agency points to the politics of future-making. The open-ended future, celebrated by current conceptualizations of future-making and resonating with the regime of exploration, also risks leading to a de-politicization of the future. An open-ended future, made a new every day, cannot be contested. In the reflexive and critical form of future-making, on the other hand, we saw how locals used past experiences to qualify the future they sensed or anticipated; in doing so, they defined the future just enough to also engage critically in it. For instance, local renters were critical of the ways in which urban transformation changed the socio-economic fabric of the city, and how it cleaned up places along with their sense of reassurance from the past. Here, future-making may not be so much about inventing alternatives, but about using ones feel for the future to critically attune to futures that are folded into, and extend from, the present.

Socio-economic and historical contexts give rise to particular views of the future, as pointed out by both Wenzel et. al (2020) and Emirbayer & Mische (1998) in discussions of future-making and projectivity. Temporary urbanism shows how a dominant temporal environment grants agency to a dominant form of future-making. While the case study found different agencies in future-making, it also found that the entrepreneurial ability to transform an uncertain future (often temporary urbanism has no fixed end date) into an opportunity or creative constraint is essential. Those who may seek or need more certainty about the future find themselves estranged from the dominant temporality of the space, or they struggle to adapt. This points to the largely unexamined question of power relations in relation to future-making in organization studies. As Tutton (2022, p. 441) asks, ‘who is better positioned to see their images of the future incorporated into decision-making processes’? Further analysis of how the development company engaged local actors in the making of a future vision could have shed light on how explorative engagement with the future was systematically favored over the familiar concern for continuity between the past and present.

These inequalities in future-making become particularly salient in contexts such as temporary urbanism and other forms of temporary organizing, in which the ability to thrive in uncertainty is valued over the need for certainty. In these and other settings characterized by the absence of plans, organizational studies of future-making can inquire critically into which forms of projective agency are cast as strong under which organizational circumstances. As a planning tool, temporary urbanism can be seen as one of the results of the ‘self-erosion of the dominance of planning practices’ (Wenzel et al., 2020, p. 7), and an alternative way to engage with the future that breaks with the master plans of modernity. But the experience of an open-ended future is also an aspect of secular, capitalist time, as temporary urbanism relies on the constant production of future, unknown possibilities and open promises. It is not just specific possible future scenarios that are marketized and circulated (Beckert, 2021, p. 11f), but also the affective atmosphere of openness itself. This insight is illustrated by one local’s suspicion that temporary urbanism creates a city ‘ad hoc’, experimenting rather than planning its way forward, resulting in untransparent

prioritizations of certain groups and practices. His observation reminds us that the critique of plans and planning must take heed of the democratic sacrifices involved in ‘institutionalized forms of wayfinding’ such as temporary urbanism. This calls for future studies of future-making to pay attention to the temporal environments in which some forms of future-making grow stronger than others. Guiding such future inquiry into the politics of future-making, we might ask: To whom does the future feel open-ended? Does that openness feel precarious or present itself as an opportunity? Who is the ‘we’ that becomes affiliated with open-ended futures, and how are futures lived differently?

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CHAPTER 8

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION: THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MEANTIME IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

In this thesis, I have investigated the role of the senses, time, and attachments in urban transformation – areas of interest that all emerged from my interactions with the empirical site (Chapter 1), but also took on a conceptual life of their own (Chapter 2). This journey back and forth between field and concepts was described in the analytical strategy and methodology (Chapter 3), and different aspects of this were explored in four distinct research papers (Chapters 4-7). While only the last paper on future-making in temporary urbanism deals specifically with the analysis of the empirical material of the case study, I use this chapter to discuss how all the papers were both empirically motivated by, and can shed light on, the case study and related phenomena. Throughout the discussion, I draw conclusions on the study in four summarizing sections. These conclusions should be seen as overarching conclusions that supplement the conclusions of the papers with practical implications and suggestions for future research.

The senses and aestheticization

Research on the senses and the sensory turn – central in the two first papers, but also in the case study of urban transformation as a process of sensory-perceptive transformation – often draws on a family of concepts such as affect, atmospheres, emotions, materiality, and space. While their distinctions of course matter and are sometimes contested (some of these contestations are discussed in the various papers of this thesis), in the case of urban transformation they all indicate a shared interest in going beyond what we would usually consider central to urban politics: stakeholders, markets, urban planning policies, and deliberative democracy. In *Theoretical Framing* (Chapter 2) I started out by delineating the contours of aestheticization as a phenomenon related not only to the physical environment and its transformation (architecture, public space, and urban design) but to the reorganization of how we feel about, and attach to, places. While the material environment has been important to this study, as elaborated in the second part of the methodology on place-sensitive ethnographic research, I have been particularly interested in how the temporary atmosphere, and its gradual shift from the random to the strategic over the years, has charged or attuned attachments and time sensibilities to shape the ‘sensory and ambient conditions of everyday life in the city’ (Anderson, 2009; Blok, 2015, p. 123).

I have not, as others with a similar interest in the city and senses (e.g., Degen, 2008; Pink & Sumartojo, 2019) focused on the material manifestations of the process of aesthetic recoding (Reckwitz, 2017) of the city. In part, this is because the transformation process I followed was still very much ‘in the air’. It was in people’s anticipation of change, in the changing rhythms and crowds, in tensions between values, and in ways of comparing the site to other times and spaces to understand what might happen in the future. These are all sensory, or some would say atmospheric, concerns. They are ‘air conditions’, to use Sloterdijk’s (2009) term. How is change felt before it is seen? What are the sensory reorganizations that take place before, below, or next to the material and socio-economic processes associated with aestheticization, such as gentrification, culturalization, and the privatization of space? And what does it do to attachments, memories, anticipation? With these questions, I shift the focus from the role of the senses in the city (smell, sound, touch, etc.) as ways to enhance the material and embodied aspects of the city, to the process of sensing and making atmospheres as part of urban politics. Here, aestheticization is approached as a matter of ‘the persuasiveness of form’ (Strathern 2004 in Blok, 2015, p. 124).

This approach to the senses as part of social structures and conventional forms has been central to my claims about aestheticization. In Paper 1 on ‘The Sensory Imperative’, we discussed this approach in terms of the mediation of the senses. The basic claim of this paper was that rather than giving an immediate access to life worlds (in this case, urban space), analysis must attend to how the senses are *mobilized consciously* in the life worlds being studied. By ‘mobilized consciously’ we wanted to point to two different things. First, we pointed to people’s own ways of making sense of their senses and of using them pragmatically – their lived representations. And secondly, we pointed to a more explicitly political understanding of the engineering of atmospheres and intensities of feeling in contemporary society; the ways in which the sensory becomes a

mainstream, rather than a marginal, concern. While Paper 1 only hinted at the potentials of these two approaches to the senses (what we called an analytical sensorisation) as a counterweight to a tendency to reserve the senses to more emancipatory concerns, both politically and methodologically (what we called the sensory imperative), other parts of the thesis and the case study helped to flesh out the implications of our thoughts.

In this first part of the discussion, I mainly discuss the first two papers – ‘The Sensory Imperative’ and ‘Engaging with Engagements’ – and the concepts of the senses, affect, and atmospheres, to name and discuss the naming of ‘a more or less fuzzy sense of how a spatial situation – the affective materiality of a spacetime – feels (...)’ (Jørgensen & Beyes, 2023, p. 3). It follows that my concern in this part of the discussion is both methodological (how to approach the study of the senses in urban space) and conceptual (how I came to understand the senses through the case study of urban transformation).

Making sense of the senses: Methodological contributions

I begin by discussing the thesis’ methodological contribution through a discussion of people’s own ways of making sense of their senses. This opens the issue of the relation between the senses (and affect, space, embodiment, etc.) and representation, raised in Paper 1 on ‘The Sensory Imperative’ and further elaborated in Paper 2 ‘Engaging with Engagements’. While sensory methodologies’ rejection of representation is often based on an understanding of representation as something researchers do, another way to understand representation, proposed in these papers, is as an ordinary practice in/of the field. We hinted at this in Paper 1 with, among others, Kathleen Stewart, for whom attending to how things make sense or take form in ordinary life is a way to move from ordinary affects to ordinary representational knowledge. While few of us have the literary and analytical tenacity to adopt Kathleen Stewart’s affective and poetic way of tracing the jumps people make from ordinary affects to more general forms when they make sense of their experiences, the second paper on the sociology of regimes of engagement offers more concrete ways to attend to people’s ways of making sense of their senses.

In Paper 2, we argued that the sociology of regimes of engagement makes an important contribution to the question of how to draw lines from the senses (and affect, embodiment, and related concerns) to the general, i.e., communicable and shareable. Central to this sociology, as the paper showed, is the movement from intimate experiences or attachments that are hardly communicable to others (such as, say, a valued object, a familiar environment, or an idiosyncratic attachment to a controversial politician) to common formats. Not unlike Stewart’s attention to how things jump into form, we showed in this paper how to attend to actors’ capacity to shift between engagements from the un-formed (the ‘unexplainable’ attachment) to the formed or ‘formatted’, in Thévenot’s terms. In the paper, we highlighted how this intention is different from many sensory or non-representational methodologies in which the ‘un-formed’ is seen as a pre-cognitive truth and as such, closer to life than an analytical abstraction of it. Pragmatic sociology, by contrast, does not shy away from the cognitive; it sees the cognitive formats with which actors

engage and shift their engagement as central to any analysis of the social because cognitive formats are how human beings *qualify* their formation of space, things, or senses.

This qualification is a critical move that can be studied in the ways in which people make sense of situations. In her book on *Critical Affect*, Barnwell (2020) also, as we did in Papers 1 and 2, addresses the opposition that has been created between non-representational, sensory, and affective methodologies and representation. Barnwell is specifically interested in methods of critique as representational moves. She shows how non-representational methodologies and the affective turn rely on a rejection of the form of critique often described derogatively as ‘paranoid reading’ (Sedgwick, 1997); an intellectual abstraction concerned with causes and underlying agencies, obsessed with revealing the truth somewhere at remove from ordinary actors. Barnwell’s point in *Critical Affect*, however, is that ordinary actors are also engaged in ‘paranoid reading’ every day as they practice forms of suspicion and hypervigilance. This point resonates with a pragmatic concern for ordinary actors’ critical capacities (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999). Here, neither representation nor critique are intellectual abstractions but ordinary coordinative and critical methods. Barnwell takes Kathleen Stewart as an example of how – despite Stewart’s own avowed adherence to the non-representational – the sensory and affective often appear in her work through such ordinary critical methods that are saturated by ‘anticipatory reading and causal sense-making’ (Barnwell, 2020, p. 111) as people seek explanations with which to navigate their situation.

How do these insights – developed between Papers 1 and 2 – contribute to the methodology of the sensory and atmospheric aspects of urban transformation? Interestingly, while previously a strong proponent of a non-representational approach to the senses (Pink, 2009), Sarah Pink (Pink & Sumartojo, 2019) recently argued that in the study of atmospheres, we must turn our attention to how people feel about and name atmospheres:

It is the way that people feel about things that make atmospheres perceptible: anticipation, foreknowledge and pre-existing views of different material and immaterial elements play a crucial role in how atmospheres are co-constituted and perceived (Sumartojo 2016). Thus the task at hand becomes one of determining how those feelings and the elements that they are inseparable from become named by people who experience them: that is, how do atmospheres become categories and what do those categories enable people to express or do? (Pink & Sumartojo, 2019, p. 5)

While efforts to name and categorize were previously quite foreign to the study of the senses, atmospheres and affect, Pink and Sumartojo indicate a shift that can be seen as a pragmatic one: ‘Any understanding of atmospheres must be empirically grounded in the categories by which people might understand their experiences as atmospheric *in their own terms*’ (Pink & Sumartojo, 2019, p. 4 emphasis in original). The emphasis on people’s own terms of understanding resonates with the realism that is central to the sociology of regimes of engagement, in which actors engage their ‘sense of reality’ (Blokke & Brighenti, 2011, pp. 6–7) relevant to their regime of engagement.

In Paper 4, 'Feeling the Future', I attempted to apply this pragmatic understanding of the sensory to the empirical study of time. By identifying a socially located feel for the future, I wanted to show a form of future-making that relies on 'anticipatory reading and causal sense-making', as Barnwell (2020, p. 111) describes critical affects. While I did not use the concepts of this discussion – critical affect or atmospheres – explicitly, the paper can be seen as an attempt to capture how people critically named and categorized their experiences of the temporary atmosphere. For instance, they made sense of their sense of change by talking about the future as loss, by anticipating a future like the one they had witnessed in other places, and by linking personal concerns about uncertainty to larger temporal timeframes and politics of urban transformation. Through this process of naming and categorising, anticipating, and causal sense-making, they made the temporary atmosphere perceptible to themselves and to others. 'Making available' here points to two different processes. First, their naming and categorising made the pervasive atmosphere of the temporary available for study – it helped to format their sense of change into something we could talk about. It also made the temporary atmosphere available for political contestation: by insisting on naming and making sense of the future (as they anticipated it based on past experiences), rather than seeing it as an open promise made and (un)defined by temporary urbanism, the local actors also made the future available as something one could, at least potentially, dispute.

Conclusions on studying the senses

This thesis contributes to emerging research in organization studies on affect, embodiment, and the senses, including methodological research on how and whether to capture and make sense of these. The thesis contributes to these debates by critically assessing what we lose if we give up on representation on two accounts: methodologically and politically. Methodologically, the thesis concludes by suggesting the notion of ordinary representations as an intervention into methodological discussions about affect, embodiment, and the senses. With this notion, I wish to loosen the critique of representation and cognition as 'after the fact' moves. Ordinary representations emerge, for instance, in research participants' fumbling and embodied attempts to name an affect or an atmosphere, or to defend an attachment. In my case study, an example of an ordinary representation was local renters' sense of change that they could not quite pin down but which emerged as they picked up rumours, as they described a feeling of pressure, or as they looked to other places to get a sense of what was coming.

In addition to this methodological contribution, the thesis extends the methodological insights to also conclude on the political implications of a non-representational approach to affect, embodiment, and the senses. This link has so far been underexplored in debates about affects and representation. The thesis argues that ordinary representations are preconditions for politics in so far as politics is predicated upon surpassing our sensory experience and affective attachments to make ourselves heard by others. This ambition to make ourselves heard by others through more general forms than the senses and affect allow for does not, however, exclude the ambition to seek out shared languages that are more hospitable to our sensory experience and affective attachments. This, the thesis concludes, is true in both methodology and in politics.

In future research, I plan to build on these insights in relation to the politics of climate emotions. While political mobilization motivated by personal attachments to the environment needs to make itself heard in the context of deliberative democracy to gain influence, part of its activism also consists in expanding the political space to make room for sensory and affective ways of being affected by climate change. With the key contributions just presented, I want to explore how climate activists on the one hand seek ways to translate their affective states into public forms of representation in order to be heard, and on the other hand they fight to expand these possible forms of representation to ‘sensitize’ politics.

Management of the senses and atmospheres in temporary urbanism

In the following section, I move on from methodology to discuss contributions and conclusions related to the senses as an object of study in urban transformation. The study of the aestheticization of the city, when following the arguments of Paper 1, also concerns the relation between the sensorial and the political understood as ‘the engagement, management, and surveillance of the senses in relation to contemporary political and economic processes’ (Davidson & Brash, 2021, p. 1070). This relation is evident in the curation and management of temporary, cultural atmospheres on Refshaleøen. To illustrate and discuss how the empirical analysis of aestheticization could have been unfolded further in the thesis, I briefly discuss parts of my fieldwork from interviews and workshops with the private development company. While not included in the papers of the thesis, this material has the potential to expand on how the senses are mobilized to tune spaces and collective moods, and to circulate appropriate ways of feeling. This can contribute to knowledge about the aestheticization of urban space, but also more generally to a growing interest in organizational atmospheres and the management of the senses (Beyes et al., 2022; Jørgensen & Beyes, 2023). In particular, recent work on co-working spaces in the context of immaterial labour has taken an interest in the modulation and potentiality of organizational atmospheres, and I suggest that the findings of this study can contribute to this field of research.

In early spring 2023, the private development company hosted the first in a series of public meetings about the future of the site, inviting citizens from all over the city to contribute to the vision for future development. The director of the development company described the atmosphere of the site as one in which ‘small and large contrasts can meet’.¹ He meant, for instance, the coexistence of a large-scale music event with a discrete artistic intervention. Moving forward, he said, this is the atmosphere they want to keep: one that allows room for both of these things, by which I think he was alluding to the organized and the random, the mainstream and the subcultural. To secure this, the private development company sees itself as a curator of the site. It has an employee specifically for this task, a cultural manager whose job it is to ‘bring people together, support events, and spur ideas.’² In our walking interviews, the cultural manager detailed what this curatorial task entailed. For instance, it meant giving people spaces in which to prototype

¹ Field notes from public citizen meeting, 4.3.2023.

² Walking interview with the cultural manager, 11.10.2021.

their ideas, and creating the right selection and combination of renters as they were slowly in the process of replacing storage with other functions, ‘dead things’ to make room for ‘urban life’.

Curation is different from planning; it indicates the careful joining of events, practices, people, moods, and durations. It also indicates an awareness not to ‘overcode’ the site (see Michels & Steyaert, 2017, pp. 98–99). For instance, as we talked about wayfinding in this rapidly changing space, the cultural manager said they did not want to turn this into an ‘over-signed place where you don’t have to do any work with the senses to get around’. The same sensitivity to the balance between planning and openness was outspoken in a wayfinding workshop with locals, initiated by the development company to address some of the issues resulting from the rapidly growing number of visitors.³ Two very different understandings of the atmosphere of the place, and consequently how or whether to design it, were present in the room. On the one hand, there were those renters for whom easy navigation was essential to their businesses. They were frustrated that not even Google maps could find the way here, constantly leading people astray and into dead ends. One renter suggested a huge touchscreen, ‘like the one they have in malls’, where you could locate yourself and select your destination which the screen would then direct you to. Others suggested coloured lines on the pavement, ‘like they have in hospitals’. There was talk of signs that should be visible from far away and while in movement, ‘like signs on highways’.

Neither mall, hospital, nor highway seemed to fit with the development company’s understanding of the atmosphere of the place, though. Other renters also opposed these proposals and found that they worked fundamentally against the ‘nature of the place’. The developers and this group of renters seemed to agree about the aesthetic qualities of the place, but from different perspectives: while the development company was concerned with keeping the *atmosphere* of elusiveness, these renters cherished the fact that it was difficult to find your way and did not see it as a problem that needed a solution, however subtle. At stake in this situation was of course the question of atmospheres ‘by accident or by design’, as Michels and Steyaert (2017) discuss in relation to the composition of affective atmospheres, and the immaterial values people attach to a place. Elaborating on Michels and Steyaert’s findings on atmospheres in urban space, the curated atmospheres of temporary urbanism here merged accident and design into a ‘designed accidentality’, undoing the idea that it is indeed possible to talk about atmospheres as ‘untouched’ by design. In their recent book about atmospheres and urban spaces, Pink and Sumartojo (2019) similarly argue that atmospheres are always conditioned, and that any study of atmospheres must therefore attend to the *emergence* rather than just the feeling of atmospheres.

The wayfinding workshop shows how aestheticization takes place as ‘the systematic heightening and concentration of sensuous, affective urban atmospheres’ (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 180). This is a well-known aspect of the culturalization of cities. It also, more surprisingly, shows that temporary urbanism relies on the aesthetics of familiar atmospheres. In the sociology of regimes of engagement (discussed in Papers 2 and 4), different forms of engagement ‘invest’ in the material environment in particular ways to support the regime. Familiar engagement invests in the

³ Field notes from wayfinding workshop 15.12.2021

environment to support a feeling of ease, continuity, and personal appropriation – here, wayfinding is hardly an issue because we already know our way. The complicated instructions we give on the phone to help our visiting friends are part of the experience of getting here. In the regime of engagement through plans, the environment is invested in to support utility; it takes on a functional character (hence the hospital arrows or highway signs). Here, finding one's way is crucial to the realization of plans: getting there, and increasing visitor numbers. The case study showed, contrary to this idea of a 'fit' between form of engagement and the environment, that the development company is aware of the *functional* quality of a *familiar* atmosphere and has found a way to curate (with) it.

Here as elsewhere, the private development company seemed acutely aware of the importance of the atmosphere of the place in their efforts to preserve aspects of the temporary in permanent development. One of the declared visions of the development company is to be able to 'recognize Refshaleøen in the new neighbourhood'.⁴ My findings showed that the efforts to move into the future while preserving the temporary present gave atmospheres a particularly salient role in the transformation process. While urban politics is often framed as a site of material struggle, atmospheres create 'a different image of political space: diffuse and nebulous, it forms a constantly morphing structure, with points of intensity and heightened charge rather than something hierarchical and static that coalesces around a central point' (Closs Stephens, 2015, p. 100). The case study found that in reworking the temporary atmosphere, the development company was faced with two challenges: first, that atmospheres are not only about the immediate feel of a place, but are also made up of meaning and personal investments, and second, that atmospheres need not be equated with a 'scene' (Waters-Lynch & Duff, 2021, p. 398), recalling Böhme's description of the staging value of aesthetic capitalism; atmospheres can also – and certainly in the case did – take more intimate forms as homes or 'back stages'. Preserving the feeling of elusiveness is not the same as preserving elusiveness. This creates gaps between the social values attached to a temporary atmosphere (e.g., the elusive, the wasteland, the spatio-temporal break from the neoliberal city) and the aesthetic engineering (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2016) of the temporary atmosphere.

Conclusions on organizational atmospheres

The thesis concludes that urban transformation and the curation of temporary atmospheres provides a particularly rich setting for the study of how the senses and power interact. This conclusion advances the idea that the reason to admit the senses into social science is not just to account for the role the senses can play in resistance against detached representation or to enliven regulated urban spaces. Rather, the senses are part of a mainstream sensorial politics, such as those displayed in this case of urban transformation. With insights from the politics of space in organization studies' spatial turn, the thesis shows how sensorial power cuts across conceived, perceived, and lived space. This means that power is far more difficult to locate; where masterplans made it clear who was doing the work of change, contemporary forms of 'planning for not having

⁴ <https://refshaleoen.dk/aktuelt/vision/>

a plan' make both power and resistance more ephemeral. The examples of the engineering of temporary and familiar atmospheres show vividly how aestheticization, as a form of sensorial power, works by tuning in to how people feel about a place, and turning that feeling into an aesthetic form. The examples also conclude, however, that personal investments and social values cannot always be transformed into curated atmospheres, leaving locals with a suspicion that even though the temporary space still *looks* the same, things are changing.

This also has practical implications. In the context of an increasingly privatised city, even atmospheres seem to be privatising. In addition to being privately owned, the label as 'perspective area' – the formal term that describes the meantime until building permission will be given – means that the private owners are free to curate the place as they see fit prior to 'real' urban development. The absence of the municipality and formal urban planning at this stage of planning indicates that the municipality and politicians underestimate the power of the management of the meantime to shape the direction of development before municipal plans are shaped and effectuated. The findings of this thesis point to the importance of adding aestheticization processes to the list of phenomena we consider central to urban politics. This is particularly important because, if aestheticization makes changes that are felt long before they materialise, private actors have the anticipatory upper hand.

With these conclusions on the management and curation of atmospheres in temporary urbanism, the thesis contributes to the recent call to engage in the 'politically suspicious' aspects of organizational atmospheres (Jørgensen & Beyes, 2023; Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2016; Plotnikof & Pors, 2024). Future research on spatial and atmospheric politics can, for instance, draw on research on co-working spaces (Cnossen & Bencherki, 2019; Resch et al., 2021; Waters-Lynch & Duff, 2021), a field that shares similarities with this thesis' study of temporary urbanism as it conceptualizes the nexus between atmospheres, affective 'investments', and questions of community and ownership in affective forms of labour. Going beyond existing studies of spatial politics, the thesis argues that the point of studying atmospheres is not just to register a multiplicity of relations that make up the politics of space, but to inquire into the 'terms of the relations between different bodies, [and] the infrastructures and devices that condition the atmospheres in which they move' (McCormack, 2018 in Jørgensen & Beyes, 2023, p. 11).

The time it takes to transform a city

In the second part of the discussion, I turn to the issues of time, temporality, and temporal navigation that have been recurrent throughout my study. The research project began with a curiosity about the 'last places' of aestheticizing cities. As an urban enthusiast trained in human geography and urban studies, working as a consultant on projects broadly related to place-making, I was struck by the nostalgia so often evoked by the 'last places' in the city, and their gradual disappearance. Some of these last places, depicted on the map on the front page of the introduction to this thesis, have changed dramatically just while writing this thesis. On Nordhavn,

close to where I live, I nostalgically noticed years ago how the only thing left of the old industrial harbour was the street names that almost seemed to mock the past with their superficiality. The names had no references in the material environment. We *yearn* for a city that is less developed, less renewed, less conscious of itself. I heard this yearning in my professional work, but also found it expressed in popular culture such as in the award-winning documentary *Best in the World* directed by Hans Christian Post, a movie that explores the social, material, and affective shadow sides of Copenhagen's successful (by economic and 'liveability' measures) transformation. There was, and I felt it too, a fascination with the gaps, the exceptions, those places that were still untouched by the (implicitly in this feeling, inevitable) progress of urban transformation. This made me curious about the affects of urban transformation, and the role of time in these affective reactions to change.

As I began this research project, I was also struck by the ambition in the city's vision 2025 (Co-Create Copenhagen) to become a 'city with an edge'.⁵ The vision highlighted the importance of having an experience of contrasts between 'neatly trimmed parks and rough-and-ready, regenerated industrial sites'. It also stated that '[w]e need to pave the way for the city's diversity to play an even more prominent role'. The oxymoron of paving the way for the edges to appear captures the policy side, or perhaps even institutionalization, of this nostalgia. Keeping places 'as they are' is not an option - '[c]ities that don't constantly change become drab and predictable', as the vision states. Transforming them in the image of how they used to be, and creating the *experience of contrasts*, thus becomes the next goal of urban transformation in the transition from the functional to the cultural city. Notice how the experience of contrasts (between the large-scale cultural event and the small artistic intervention) was also highlighted in the previous section by the director of the development company when describing the atmosphere of Refshaleøen.

As argued in 'Introduction to the Empirical Place' (Chapter 1), this oxymoron is at the heart of urban transformation associated with temporary use and the aestheticization of the city as it was understood in the thesis through Reckwitz and Böhme: the remaking of not just the look, but the *feel* of the city. Here, the edges or the last places are not destroyed as they would have been in previous transformation logics (the infamous *tabula rasa*). Rather, they are recoded to sensorially (re)create the experience of contrasts, and materially pave the way for the edges to (re)appear. One of the key findings of this thesis is that this transformation logic comes with a distinct temporal orientation and valorization. Aestheticization relies on renewal (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 189), and hence the temporary that promises not to settle becomes the preferred temporal order in these processes. This is also clear in the city vision that says, declaratively: 'We want a more flexible and dynamic Copenhagen that reflects the myriad of lives lived here. There will be room for experimental projects that may have a limited lifespan. There will be freedom to start up and test new things.'

⁵ <https://urbandevelopmentcph.kk.dk/urban-planning/co-create-copenhagen>

Unequal temporalities

The empirical analysis of temporary urbanism in Paper 4 focused on the temporal implications of this statement: the notion of the temporary and the way it created an open-ended future. The paper showed that living with the temporary created pressure for those for whom flexibility and dynamism meant a disruption to their familiar continuity between the past and the present. What Copenhagen's 2025 vision describes as a reflection of a 'myriad of lives' in the flexible and dynamic city conceals the fact that being open to experimentation and flexibility requires a particular form of projective agency that is not equally distributed. It assumes that all actors can thrive in an open-ended temporary state and an ephemeral built environment, or at the very least it asks of citizens and inhabitants that they adapt to this condition to secure 'the edges'. The paper found the same implicit and unquestioned valorization of time in the literature on future-making that tended to emphasize a creative or entrepreneurial capacity to work imaginatively with an open future.

Paper 4 showed, contrary to this, that whether the future feels open and negotiable, or fixed and pre-determined, depends on one's form of engagement. Highlighting the difference between the familiar and the explorative regimes of engagement as developed in the sociology of regimes of engagement, the study showed that an atmosphere of experimentation and flexibility can create a feeling of a closed future as much as an open one. Nevertheless, as future-making is a question of politics and not a wish list, recalibrating one's form of future-making to dominant temporal orders was found to be a necessary aspect of living in a rapidly changing urban environments. As Sharma (2022) writes, pointing to this crucial but overlooked aspect of urban transformation:

The temporal order is held intact by the structural demand that one must recalibrate (...) Invitations and expectations to recalibrate permeate the social fabric (...) Recalibration accounts for the multiple ways individuals and social groups synchronize their bodies, their sense of the future or the present, to an exterior relation. These exterior relations are the chronometers of social control, be it another person, pace, technology, institution, or ideology. (Sharma, 2022, p. 45)

Sharma's notion of temporal orders as dominant ways of socially structuring time was introduced in 'Theoretical Framing' (Chapter 2). Adding to well-known critical perspectives of the speed-up of productivity in contemporary work, the notion of temporal order and recalibration stresses the social inequity expressed in, and nurtured by, different experiences of time. Following on from such insights, the findings of this thesis point to the importance of considering how the ambition to make a city for a 'myriad of lives' must also encompass people for whom constant change and flexibility is not a desirable or possible temporal state to live in. It shows that the aestheticized space of temporary urbanism is made up of different temporalities that are unequally valued. Therefore, the projective agency that comes with the regime of exploration – the future as something to be discovered – resonates well with an entrepreneurial discourse of celebrating the temporary, experimental, and open-ended that reaches far beyond the phenomenon of temporary urbanism. The thesis points to how flexibility and experimental openness are established as a dominant temporality in the aestheticized city, and how this dominant temporal order becomes

naturalized and requires temporal, affective, and material recalibration. This temporal perspective adds to the study of the sensory aspects of the aestheticization of the city as it highlights the demanding process of reading, and adjusting to, the time it takes to aestheticize a space. This process was conceptualized in Paper 4 on future-making as the socially located feel for the future.

Conclusions on the politics of the temporary

The thesis concludes that temporary urbanism is realized through what I call the management of the meantime. The management of the meantime becomes most evident in the way it creates a temporal order – a dominant social conception of time – that places value on the temporally, spatially, and affectively open-ended. It favours the ability to thrive in uncertainty, and to turn that uncertainty into a logic of opportunity. Consequently, the management of the meantime is affectively attuned towards hope; to keep the future open and undefined, it systematically works on sustaining the hope that the temporary will (ironically) create lasting alternatives to the permanent city. This open promise at the same time makes the future so undefined that it can hardly be contested. As an alternative to this celebration of open futures, the thesis proposes future research on the socially located feel for the future: a less ‘inventive’, but all the more ordinary and critical, way of sensing and moving towards the future through the felt conditions that make it.

The thesis’ identification of a prevailing management of the meantime that works by way of a temporal order points beyond the case of temporary urbanism. I suggest there is a need for critical research on the way in which the temporary becomes a way of valorizing the permanently open-ended across social fields and in dominant discourses, such as entrepreneurialism, temporary forms of organizing, and future-making. Sharma’s notion of recalibration can shed light on the temporal dimension of precarity as it arises, for instance, from the lure of temporary projects (Garsten, 1999) and the celebration of uncertainty in entrepreneurialism (Cockayne, 2016). The temporary also stretches into relations, including those with places and political institutions. Future research on how the temporary becomes a dominant temporal order can shed light on how the management of the meantime influences the spacetime of political participation. There are indications of this in my case study that can be unfolded in relation to future research and practical implications on temporal orders and political participation. Do temporary renters have rights, and if so, when do they begin and end? Who are the stakeholders of a place that is constantly renewed? What kind of political space can be established in the temporality of the temporary?

These are questions that the study could have pursued more, especially through the parts of my fieldwork that centred on the local association of renters who sought (and failed to) gain influence in the transformation process, and the participation process initiated by the private development company. For urban planning practice, this implies becoming aware of the implicit strains on the conditions for democratic participation that are created through the constantly renewing city. It becomes especially clear in the Municipality of Copenhagen’s vision where creativity is equated with the temporary. Urban planners can draw on the findings of this thesis to pay attention to how different temporalities of transformation serve different citizens in unequal ways.

Attachments to the temporary

The concept of attachment has been at the heart of this research project, and I unfold conclusions and contributions on attachments in this third and final section of the discussion. It began as an empirical conundrum. On the one hand, my fieldwork was saturated with attachments to the place expressed in a variety of ways, from nostalgia to hope. On the other hand, these place attachments did not act in the way I expected them to: they did not translate into strong claims about belonging, or rights to the city, nor did they fuel the organization of local actors around shared values. Place attachments seemed far more ambivalent, more atmospheric even. I also noticed how place attachments became part of the immaterial value circulated in the aesthetic economy of temporary urbanism. Trying to understand this strange presence of place attachments in my case, I traced the concept in human geography where it related to phenomenological experience of place, in Marxist geography where it was mostly criticized for stabilizing identity through space, in feminist theory where it related to the ambivalent dependencies forged through passion and desire, and finally in pragmatic sociology where it popped up as a concern for that which lies ‘below politics’ but is nonetheless political.

Drawing on these different understandings, attachments became a way for me to conceptualized what mattered to people, and how that ‘mattering’ created stakes. As Anderson (2022, p. 5) writes, ‘invoking attachment is, then, a way of orientating not to relations per se but to one kind of relation: ties/bonds that endure and affect the present’. When describing the character or atmosphere of Refshaleøen, people were not just describing neutral characteristics of a place (‘unregulated’, ‘free’, ‘the last place’, ‘wasteland’, ‘pressure’), they were describing characteristics that had come to matter to them for particular reasons: the work they were doing here that required certain material conditions, their sense of (un)belonging in the city at large, political values that could be lived out here in a way they couldn’t in planned spaces. These reasons showed that what matters to people also creates trajectories of dependency: attachments appeared as vulnerable acts of investing small parts of themselves in the environment, and thereby created a distributed sense of self.

From place attachments to affective attachments

However, as Paper 3 (Chapter 6) elaborated, it is exactly this emphasis on endurance and the connotation of ties/bonds that has given place attachments their bad reputation. With this paper and conceptual journey, I wanted to understand why. It struck me as odd that the feelings of place attachment that seemed so present in the atmosphere of this place, and more generally in an aesthetic economy that has made it its business to engineer affects and emotions, could not be accounted for with progressive and relational theories of space. Grounded in Massey’s spatial thinking, highly influential in organization studies’ spatial turn, attachments to places were seen as apolitical at best, essentialist at worst. I also showed that Massey was searching for a way to take place attachments seriously rather than just disregarding them as reactionary. However, I found that this strand of Marxist human geography was missing a sensitivity to the affective dimension

of place attachments so as to grasp what attachments express and do beyond making representational claims of identity and belonging.

In Paper 3, I drew on feminist and cultural theory to explore and rework the concept of place attachment. For this final part of the discussion, I briefly want to align my reworked concept of place attachments with recent research in organization studies that has also taken an interest in a more ambivalent and affective concept of attachment. With reference to the work of Lauren Berlant, Otto & Strauss (2019) introduce the notion of affective attachments. They show that attachment becomes a word for fantasies of the good life that have significant impact on everyday life and the constitution of subjectivity. Attachments point, for instance, to the ambivalence that arises when aspiring to norms of permanent employment while stuck in a permanent liminality. Extending their point towards contemporary uncertain work arrangements, Otto and Strauss show how attachments tell a story of affects that stick, affects that make people endure or even desire situations that harm them.

Research on creative labour has also taken up Berlant's notion of aspirational normativity (2011, p. 164) to describe the ways in which creative workers continually invest themselves affectively in discourses that reproduce their own precarity (Duffy, 2016; Gregg, 2015). As Paper 3 discussed, research on belonging in co-working (Resch et al., 2021) and on organizational loyalty and identity (K. Kenny, 2012; K. Kenny et al., 2020; K. M. Kenny, 2010) also addresses these affective ambivalences that arise from efforts to invest small parts of ourselves in other spaces, people, ideas, and institutions. As Felski (2020, p. 3) notes, and as Paper 3 on place attachments also elaborated, there is a tendency to denounce attachments 'as if the condition of being attached were an inherent weakness or defect, as if ties served only as restraints and limits'. Feminist thinkers such as Felski, Ahmed and Berlant, however, point to the ubiquity and inescapability of ties. The following empirical reflections discuss how, as previously argued in 'Theoretical Framing' (Chapter 2), attachments are 'intimate with the workings of some forms of power, but (...) also more than that' (Anderson, 2022, p. 8).

The forming and management of attachments

One of the questions that attachments can help to address, beyond the case of temporary urbanism, is how and why affect is invested in neoliberal sites of production that in turn reproduce precarious working or living conditions. This concerns the ways in which attachments also become subject to management and control in ways that are productive of particular spaces. Instead of seeing the attachments in my case as attachments to a place dependant on a fixed set of characteristics with which local actors identify both place and themselves, I here follow Anderson's suggestion to think of attachments as arising from clusters of promises. This perspective both emphasizes the ordering and governance of affective life through attachments, and also takes seriously the hopes and dreams of change that people invest in neoliberal sites of production.

Anderson (2022, p. 12) defines forms of attachment as 'an interlinked set of promissory objects which together offer a fantasy of the good life and are made available as a resource for subjects to

organise living through'. Further empirical analysis could have addressed the promises made by, in my case, aestheticized spaces, to shed light on this affective dynamic of reproduction – what ways of organizing living did they promise? What forms of subject formation, community, and spaces? How did these promises gain force during the course of my fieldwork; in other words, how were they governed? While I can only hint at answers here, it was clear from my fieldwork that temporary urbanism was associated with the promise of an 'opportunity for change and (..) a critique of fixed rules, rigid master planning and long-term strategies' (Madanipour, 2017, p. 4). It also, to some, came with a promise of a better future: a future that would make the temporary permanent, and in doing so halt the linear progress of neoliberal urban development. In meetings between the renters and the private development company, this promise was maintained. The private development company considers its biggest tasks in the coming transformation process are to 'take care of' and 'preserve' the temporary while transforming the space; this goal was frequently reiterated. In meetings between the development company, renters, and other citizens, the temporary was often talked about as a proxy for what people valued in the site. This promise also concerned imaginations of ways to organize living in so far as the temporary held out a promise of the unregulated and free opposed to the programmed neoliberal city with its threatening 'mass of detachment' (Anderson, 2022, p. 9). As such, the promise of the temporary was also that it could secure a different kind of community – one not marked by neoliberal privatization – and consequently, that it could secure different kinds of material spaces too. As one interviewee remarked as we were walking through a small patch of self-seeded birch trees: 'when the municipality thinks planning, this is not what they have in mind – this is not a park one would ever 'make'.⁶

Already here, we catch a glimpse of how attachments work to organise a space and a transformation process. While the development company seemed conscious of the importance of preserving some of the cultural and aesthetic traits of the temporary, it did not necessarily see the temporary as holding the same promises as some of the local actors did. Yet, the development company managed to sustain the temporary as an open promise that in turn made it possible for it to attach *just enough* of the desires of local renters for them to keep on investing in the temporary as a neoliberal site of production. Both Anderson (2022) and Dey et al. (2016) are concerned with how attachments are organized thus through a process of 'affective hegemonisation' that makes some promises appear more desirable, available for attachment, than others. While the point in the above and in Paper 3 has been to stall the too-quick judgment of attachments as either positive or negative, it is important to note that the ways in which power is exercised by holding subjects through their attachments does exactly that as '[n]ormative arrangements repeat themselves, closing down desire's excess and ambivalence by rerouting it towards particular forms of attachment and intelligibility' (Zhang, 2023, p. 2).

One of the consequences of this reworking of attachments towards particular forms also concerns political participation, as mentioned in the above. The 'devalorization' of strong ties by the management of the meantime has consequences for participation. While Paper 3 engaged with

⁶ Interview with local S, 4.12.2020.

the critique of attachments by arguing that attachments need not be equated with roots and a strong sense of ownership, there are also situations in which such ‘weighty’ attachments are necessary to make rightful claims to places in, say, contexts of forced displacement. One example could be the current Danish debate about what the government has termed ghettos, and what many people reclaim as their home⁷. This is what Mara Ferreri (2021, pp. 167–168), in the context of temporary urbanism and austerity, calls the need to insist on radical emplacement. This perspective was not properly covered by my case study because my fieldwork did not encompass situations of public resistance in which attachments were mobilized in this way. In future research, I would like to study how engagement in spatial politics begins with attachments to places, including places that are not just our immediate environments, but extend familiarity to felt connections with the environment and habitats of (non-human) others.

Inhabited attachments

While this perspective on the management of attachments is rather bleak, there are other ways to understand what attachments do to subjects and their place in the world. I here return to a question posed, and tentatively answered, in ‘Theoretical Framing’ (Chapter 2): How do attachments help organize living and navigating in temporary urbanism? As studies of attachments have shown (K. Kenny et al., 2020; Resch et al., 2021), and as the above discussed, insidious forms of power work through attachments, but they do not define them entirely; there is room for what Ashcraft (2017) calls inhabited criticism. I developed this perspective on the manoeuvrability of attachments in the reworked concept of place attachments in Paper 3, where I emphasized attachments as collective, dynamic, and temporal. Instead of repeating these points, I return here to the understanding of attachments as clusters of promises while exploring the other, more optimistic, side of the promise.



Attachments orient us to what seems meaningful and possible to actors in ways that are more nuanced than a mere equation with representational identity. Rather than just claiming an identity at the expense of others (‘this place is like this, for me, and therefore cannot be like this, for you’), it orients us to desires and possibilities. This sense of possibility ‘of encountering and building better objects to attach to’ (Zhang, 2023, p. 4) was quite literally at work when I met with one of

⁷ For a description of this debate, see (in Danish): <https://www.information.dk/debat/2020/11/fem-grunde-ghettoloven-loesningen-paa-skabe-blandet-by>

my key research participants in a new space he had just rented. He wanted to turn the space into a theatre rehearsal stage, so the first thing to do was to build a good floor. As he was making the floor, constantly interrupting our interview with loud hammering noises, he talked about how his strategy as a renter in this place had always been to make investments in the space despite knowing how short-lived it all was, or at least could be. Even though he could get kicked out of this building again anytime with no warning, he still had to make this floor, he had to invest in the space. At stake here is an optimism that maintains a hold on the present, an attachment to the place that is ‘on the move’ in so far as it keeps him oriented towards a future possibility (that it might last) through investments in the present.

In everyday situations like this, attachments appeared in my case study as an ‘investment in form’ (Thévenot, 2014, p. 12) that built continuity between people and their environment. Berlant similarly sees the attachment as something that, despite its potential cruelty, ‘enables the present to be better navigated and rendered more habitable’ (Anderson, 2022, p. 9). This is, I think, most beautifully captured by Ahmed (2004, p. 7), who writes that what makes us feel is also what keeps us in place. While the concept of cruel optimism is mostly used to highlight how social structures continually disappoint as people’s aspirations turn out to undermine their chances of ever realizing them, Berlant goes to great length to describe the value of the optimism that is involved in striving for continuity between oneself and the world. Regardless of potential disappointment, the attachment makes an object present both materially and affectively as ‘offering or affording the subject something better to come’ (Anderson, 2022, p. 8).

Another implication of staying with the optimism of attachments is that we catch a glimpse of how people invest small parts of themselves in their environment to ‘build the floor’ for potential political participation in that space. In Paper 2, we briefly described how the sociology of regimes of engagement takes a reverse view of politics. We described how politics begin in familiar attachments that point to what matters to people as a starting point for what later – through the general forms discussed in the beginning of this discussion – can become a common issue. The point here is that politics do not begin once attachments reach the public level of dispute, the full house, to stay with the image; it begins far below, with attachments that might or might not make it to the public. In a recent piece, O’Doherty and De Cock (2024) speculate about the emergence and potential of such a view on politics in organization studies. This, they write, would be politics understood as the

interstices prior to the separation of structure and agency, or the division of politics into a macro and micro realm, sometimes conceived in terms of power of ‘the establishment’ at a macro level and grassroots activism or resistance in the micro. Falling in the gaps between our analytical categories and distinctions, we don’t know if something is large or small, significant, or insignificant (within organizational terms). Hence, what might have been deemed small or marginal can proliferate and extend through channels of organization that make it suddenly become large and more of a ‘political’ presence (O’Doherty & De Cock, 2024, p. 24)

A key contribution of this thesis has been to point out how studying attachments can help locate politics in this interstice, and how pragmatic sociology can help us do this by attending to how the ‘small or marginal’, rooted in the senses and attachments, can gain a ‘political presence’.

Conclusions on place attachments

With this study of the aestheticization of urban space, the thesis concludes that place attachments in urban transformation have so far been treated mainly as a source of identity and representation, and conceptually criticized as such. With this focus, however, studies have overlooked other forms and functions of place attachments in urban transformation in the aesthetic economy. First, I conclude on how attachments are used as tools for organizing and governing ways of feeling about a place to make certain spaces and futures more desirable and available for attachment than others; and second, I conclude on how place attachments provided affective means of navigating change by creating a sense of hopefulness or optimism about lasting relations and spaces.

The thesis concludes that attachments are a central tool in the management of the meantime. The management of the meantime does not only manage a temporal order, as discussed in the above, but it also manages attachments. In this thesis I have studied the management of attachments to a place, but the conclusion equally applies to organizations, and can contribute to discussions of temporary organizing and its relation to permanent institutions (see e.g., Sydow & Windeler, 2020; Tukiainen & Granqvist, 2016). In the temporal order of the temporary, relations are necessarily kept superficial, ready for the next change. This was evident in the use of ever-shortening rental contracts (locals witnessed how leases used to be extended for five years at a time, then three, now one), but more subtly, it was also evident in the way the development company rhetorically *removed* the atmosphere of the place from the renters. It did this by, for instance, describing its own curatorial efforts as that which had created the place, even in the previous phases of temporary use (see timeline presented in Chapter 1) when its role was effectively very small, and the place was entirely accomplished by its users. Gradually taking ownership over the atmosphere of the site, both retrospectively and prospectively, is a way to remove a sense of ownership from individual renters and avoid the difficulty of a sense of rights. Furthermore, in meetings, the director of the development company often referred to the ever-changing nature of the place as if to say, don’t hold on too tight. At the same time, however, attachments were seen as necessary to realize aesthetic transformation. As the examples in the above showed, familiar attachments were of value to the temporary atmosphere that relied on signalling that it was not *too* designed, *too* planned or regulated. This would go against the legitimacy it gained as an alternative to the planned and regulated. Instead, the temporary atmosphere had to look and feel as if it emerged spontaneously or ‘by accident’. While it is easy to diagnose how neoliberal urban development produces detachments through the production of sameness, the aesthetic economy is more complicated. Future research should investigate the subtle ways in which the aesthetic economy balances the *right kinds* of place attachment at the right times. This will shed further light on the phenomenon of the management of the meantime in both urban planning and organization studies.

I suggest this has practical implications in light of what I have observed in my case study and elsewhere as a growing disenchantment among citizens about the promises of temporary urbanism. This disenchantment has reached developers too, and Copenhagen has recently witnessed what can be seen as different formal attempts to ‘rebrand’ the relation between the temporary and the permanent (see e.g., Jernbanebyens SPOR10 or Nordhavnens Tunnelfabrikken). These local cases call for more research and point us in the direction of a larger problem: what happens when the critique of temporary use becomes institutionalised? This question is especially relevant to citizens who have an eerie sense that creative, temporary spaces – even in new guises – are just another way to make money, but who cannot quite pin down what the problem is. With the findings of this thesis, I suggest that looking at the management of place attachments can help us hold on to a critical perspective on how urban transformation through aestheticization maintains promises without giving any rights – how it keeps attachments light.

The thesis also showed how attachments provided affective means of navigating change by creating a sense of hopefulness or optimism about lasting relations and spaces. This hopefulness or optimism was understood as ‘intimate territories of investment that complicate resistance’ (Ashcraft, 2017, p. 41). With this concept of attachments, the thesis proposes a more nuanced view of the study of phenomena such as temporary urbanism and other culture-led dynamics that, as this case has showed, rely on the affective investments and personal attachments of people. Rather than revealing the capture and exploitation of affect, attachments open a space for the analysis of the ambivalence that arises from investing yourself in an environment. This ambivalence or double-bind of attachments – that they both allow us to make and inhabit lives *and* constitute a soft spot in which power can get a hold on us – is, to paraphrase Rancière (2013), far more interesting than turning to a ready-made critique of the tricks of domination.



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