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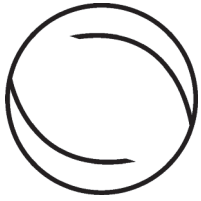
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What is This?

Spaces that Matter: Gender Performativity and Organizational Space

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between gender performativity and organizational space. Specifically, it focuses on some of the ways in which gender is materialized in and through workspace in accordance with the dominant gender norms shaping organizational life, a theme that has been relatively neglected within organization studies to date. Judith Butler's (1988, 1993, 2000 [1990], 2004) performative analysis of gender draws critical attention to the body as a medium through which the gendered subject is brought into being, or made to 'matter', as she puts it. This paper seeks to extend Butler's analysis of gender performativity, focusing on the evocation and materialization of these norms through the gendered inhabitation of organizational space. Inspired by a piece of work by contemporary video artist Sofia Hulten called *Grey Area,* it develops Butler's analysis with reference to data generated in a series of focus groups and interviews with women working in diverse roles within a university setting. The analysis of the findings of this research links Butler's work on 'bodies that matter' to Lefebvre's (1991) concept of 'representational spaces', arguing that an important but relatively neglected aspect of the organizational materialization of the gendered self is the performance of 'spaces that matter'.

Keywords: gender performativity, materiality, Judith Butler, organizational space, representational spaces

Introduction

> *'Workplaces matter to the ways in which we have to negotiate our gender identities at work.'* (Halford and Leonard 2006: 54)

Our interest in the relationship between organizational space and gender performativity developed largely as a result of two apparently unrelated experiences. The first occurred a couple of years ago when a visiting female colleague advised us that it was not only unprofessional to display family photographs and children's drawings in our university offices, but that to do so was fundamentally anti-feminist, evoking a set of associations that feminists have fought hard to challenge. To be honest, we were somewhat taken aback by her tirade; what little thought we had given to these apparent displays of essentialism had been based largely on the assumption that they simply brightened up our offices, giving them (for want of a better word) a more 'human' touch. Yet, our colleague was suggesting that they made us look as if we were, well, not 'serious academics'. We gradually noticed that few of our male colleagues, particularly senior ones, had similar displays, and

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began to wonder if ours weren't a little too much. Perhaps a more discrete framed photograph would be more appropriate, pro-feminist, professional even? This set us thinking about how we display ourselves in our offices; that is, about the ways in which we perform our gender identities in and through our workspace, and about the ways in which these performances matter, both in a material sense, and in terms of who and what is valued within organizational life.

A second, seemingly unrelated incident occurred during a visit to a photographic exhibition on office life, held at the Photographers' Gallery in London. Here we came across *Grey Area*, an installation by video artist Sofia Hulten. In *Grey Area*, the artist performs in a grey suit that she uses as camouflage, as she hides in various places in an office until she eventually gets into a bin liner and throws herself away. The effect is comical, but also deeply disturbing because of what it seems to suggest about the way that women feel about themselves and about each other in the workplace. Watching for the first time, we were struck by the apparently irresolvable tension Hulten depicts between the seemingly rational setting of the office and the woman's unsuccessful bid for escape. We found the video unsettling; though strangely familiar, it evoked feelings we hadn't previously been conscious of, and certainly hadn't (knowingly) articulated. Thus, *Grey Area* offered, to us at least, a visually poetic point of departure for thinking about the complex role of organization, and particularly of organizational space, in the constitution of gendered subjectivity. *Grey Area* seemed to say something resonant to us about the lived experience (and management) of women's organizational Otherness. It never occurred to us that these images were in any sense representative of an external, organizational reality, but rather that the video itself was a fascinating artistic statement that provoked in us a whole range of thoughts and feelings. Having been 'moved' by Hulten's work, we were interested in exploring whether her images struck a chord with other women and if the sense of abjection and alterity her video powerfully evoked in us resonated with others' readings and lived experiences.

To this end, we used still images from *Grey Area* (Figure 1) as the basis for a series of focus groups and individual interviews with women in which we discussed their lived, embodied experiences of the workplace. Our aim in doing so was partly to take up the challenge of exploring 'aesthetic issues using artistic means' (Warren 2008: 560) in order to advance our critical understanding of gender performativity within organizational life, and to reflect on some of the ways in which this performativity is lived and experienced in and through organizational space. While in recent years there has been something of a burgeoning interest in organizational space, and especially its relationship to power and control, gender has been a relatively neglected theme in this literature. Indeed Taylor and Spicer's (2007: 326) recent narrative review of research on organizational spaces emphasizes that while 'the field of organizational spaces is approaching maturity', stronger links need to be made 'between this emerging field and other social science analyses notionally "outside" the field of business and management' including, we would argue, feminist theory and gender studies. Part of our intention here is also to take up this challenge, contributing methodologically, empirically and theoretically to a gendered understanding of organizational space as the materialization of power relations, and to a feminist analysis of the ways in which this materialization process is lived and experienced.

Figure 1.
Stills from Sofia
Hulten's *Grey Area*

Just as gender has been a relatively neglected theme in the analysis of organizational space, the latter has remained a somewhat marginal concern within feminist approaches to the study of organizations. This means that while feminist work on organizations has begun to move towards an ontology of gender as a largely performative, *situated* social practice (Gherardi 1995; Fournier 2002; Bruni and Gherardi 2002; Bruni et al. 2004, 2005; Poggio 2006; Pullen 2006), the materiality of gender, including its spatial performativity within organizational life, remains relatively under-explored. With this in mind, this paper considers some of the ideas and issues that have emerged from recent research on organizational space through the lens of a performative gender ontology, in order to reflect on some of the ways in which gender performativity is materialized in and through organizational space, and hence to begin to go some way towards addressing this gap. Specifically, if organizational space is embedded within power, yet is also an important site on which such power relations can be contested and negotiated, in what ways is this contestation shaped and experienced through gender relations? What do organizational spaces demand of us, in terms of the ways in which we perform gender in accordance with (or in opposition) established power relations? Conversely, what do we require of our organizational spaces in order to perform gender in organizationally appropriate ways, and hence be able to conform to (or negotiate with) established power relations?

In thinking about these questions, we begin by considering the concept of gender performativity, drawing particularly on Judith Butler's account of 'bodies that matter' (Butler 1993), and linking her analysis of the materiality of gender performativity to recent work on gender and organizational space. Although much of this work has drawn on phenomenological insights, in organization studies Butler's writing has to date been relatively neglected in making sense of the ways in which gender is enacted within and through organizational space. This may be explained

partly by the fact that Butler is read largely as a post-structuralist, drawing as she does (particularly in her early writing) on the work of Foucault and Derrida, to the extent that the more phenomenological aspects of her thinking tend to remain relatively unexplored, within organization studies at least (see Borgerson 2005, and Hancock and Tyler 2007). With this in mind, this paper seeks to advance some of the inroads that Butler's thinking has made into organization studies by linking her writing on gender performativity with recent work on space and the social materiality (Dale 2005) of organizational life. In the next section, we outline the methodological approach we took to explore women's lived experiences of the workplace, reflecting on the ways in which we sought to integrate material from Hulten's *Grey Area* into our methodology. Then, in discussing our findings, we link Lefebvre's (1991) concept of 'representational spaces' to Butler's performative ontology of gender. While we are mindful of some of the important differences between these two writers, it is their shared interest in the relationship between space, materiality and subjectivity that we draw on here, and in particular their common concern with the ways in which space materializes or 'matters' subjectivity.

In sum, then, the paper seeks to contribute to our understanding of the relationship between gender performativity and organizational space in three broad ways. First, it aims to develop our empirical understanding of the ways in which gender is materialized in and through organizational space, and to describe some of the ways in which women live and experience this materialization, focusing particularly on the ways in which gender performativity is embedded within organizational power relations. Second, we aim to make a theoretical contribution to our understanding of space within organization studies by drawing together insights from two theorists whose shared interests in the relationship between space, subjectivity and materiality help us to develop our understanding of the ways in which space 'matters' within organizations; that is, of space as the 'materialisation of power relations' (Taylor and Spicer 2007: 325), yet also as lived and experienced. In doing so, our analysis extends the inroads that Butler's thinking has begun to make into organization studies, emphasizing the potential value of drawing not only on Lefebvre, whose work has tended to be the main theoretical reference point for organizational scholars with an interest in space, but also on Butler, whose analysis of gender materiality has been relatively neglected in the analysis of organizational space. Third, the paper aims to make a methodological contribution to research on organizational space, and on the material and aesthetic aspects of organizational life more generally, by further exploring the efficacy of incorporating artistic materials, such as the stills we used as the basis for our focus groups and interviews, into organizational research.

Gender Performativity and Organizational Space

Butler's (1988, 1993, 2000 [1990], 2004) performative analysis of gender draws critical attention to the body as a medium through which gendered subjectivity is brought into being, or made to 'matter'. Here Butler plays on the term 'matter'

as simultaneously a materialization of gender, and its performance in accordance with the norms of what she calls the 'heterosexual matrix' — an ontological, epistemic schema that privileges masculinity through the configuration of gender in binary and hierarchical terms. Gender performativity and its materialization in the form of 'bodies that matter' is driven largely by the desire for recognition of the gendered self as a viable, intelligible subject. In other words, underpinning our performance of gender is the desire to project a coherent and compelling identity, one that is recognized and valorized by others, but one which in Butler's terms, produces its coherence at the cost of its own complexity. She emphasizes how the recitation of particular gender norms (and not others) is necessary in order to be accorded recognition as a viable subject. Hence, performances recognized as successful are those that conform to the binary and hierarchical terms of heteronormativity. As a 'performative accomplishment' (Butler 2000: 179), gender configurations are therefore compelled by the matrices of cultural intelligibility that govern social and, indeed, organizational life (Borgerson 2005).

Although (as noted above) Butler's analysis of gender performativity focuses primarily on the recitation of cultural norms over time, it is her reference to the materialization of gender in space, and her passing comments on gender as 'instituted in an exterior space' (Butler 2000: 141) that most interest us here. Using findings from our *Grey Area* study, we seek to develop Butler's analysis of the materialization of gender in organizational workspaces. In doing so, we aim to contribute to emergent debates within organization studies on the issue of gendered spatiality, by exploring some of the ways in which gender, and particularly women's perpetual Otherness, is played out in and through organizational space.

There is now a relatively well established body of literature focusing on the ways in which women continue to be positioned as Other — *in* the organization but not *of* it (Bruni et al. 2004; Knights and Kerfoot 2004; Höpfl and Matilal 2007). This literature draws attention not only to the structural disadvantages women face (Alvesson and Due Billing 1997), but also to their relative cultural marginalization and symbolic negation (Gherardi 1995; Czarniawska 2006). It has also highlighted some of the ways in which women tend to be equated with the embodied and emotional aspects of organizational life, so that female employees especially are required to manage their presentation of self in such a way as to engender a particular emotional or aesthetic experience in others (Lewis and Simpson 2007; Höpfl 2003). However, within these analyses the gendering of space remains a relatively neglected theme, as does the role of space in perpetuating, and in challenging and resisting, women's relative marginalization and negation, and (often simultaneous) co-optation.

Although recent interest in organizational space has been influenced by a largely phenomenological concern with the ways in which space is lived, embodied and 'made to mean' (Hancock 2006), Butler's work has thus far made little impact on such analyses — this, despite the acknowledgement that her writing has 'profound implications for organization theory' (Borgerson 2005: 64; see also Parker 2002, and Tyler and Cohen 2008). Two notable exceptions to this are McDowell and Court's (1994) account of bodily representations of women in merchant banks, and Gregson and Rose's (2000) study of community arts

projects and car boot sales as alternative spaces of consumption. While the former emphasize that 'materiality, representations of appropriate space, gendered performances, and everyday social practices in combination differentially position men and women at work' (McDowell and Court 1994: 732), it is the embodied rather than spatial aspects of this combination that are the main focus of their analysis. Drawing more closely on Butler's account of gender, Gregson and Rose (2000) argue that more work needs to be done to tease out the performative qualities of space and the gendered practices that bring particular spaces into being. As indicated above, one of the aims of this paper is to address this issue, exploring how gender is performed in and through organizational space.

Emerging mainly from the literature on organizational aesthetics and symbolism (Gagliardi 1990; Turner 1990; Strati 1999; Linstead and Höpfl 2000; Carr and Hancock 2003), and what has been described as the 'aesthetic turn' in organization studies (Minahan and Wolfram Cox 2007), recent interest in organizational space has tended to focus on space as simultaneously a mechanism of organizational control (Kornberger and Clegg 2004; Hancock 2006; Dale and Burrell 2008) and as a site on which such control can be challenged and resisted (Baldry 1999; Fleming and Spicer 2004). While the former draws attention to the ways in which spatial organization is linked to the management of identity as a form of control, the latter emphasizes that the organizational regulation of identity, and of space, is a precarious and contested process (Taylor and Spicer 2007: 331). Dale (2005) highlights this in her account of the spatial and embodied politics of organizational control at Energy Co, noting the potentially contradictory relationship between how organizational space is managed and designed and how it may be lived and experienced. Similarly, Warren (2006), in her analysis of what she calls 'hot-nesting', proposes that the personalization of office workspace in an organization that had recently introduced hot-desking enabled her research participants to feel more 'at home' in their work environments, and to re-establish a sense of belonging in their new workspaces. While neither Dale or Warren focus on gender in any sustained way, or on the ways in which space is performed for others, in accordance with the norms governing the desire for recognition of oneself as a viable subject, both of their respective accounts emphasize how the inhabitation of organizational space is a negotiated practice involving active identity work. Drawing on Butler's critique of the heterosexual matrix, we would argue that an important but relatively neglected question, in this respect, is how is gender performed in and through organizational space, and what are the power relations underpinning this performance? What compels or constrains this performance? Because, as intimated above, the literature on gender has evolved relatively separately from the literature on space within organization studies, questions such as these remain largely unaddressed.

Yet, the identity work involved in negotiating space, the resources on which it is based, the imperatives which compel it, and the materiality within which it is embedded, are of course far from gender neutral. Here Lefebvre's work on the social production of space is useful in that, as Dale outlines, it connects spatial materiality to the ways in which space is lived and experienced. At the risk of oversimplification, Lefebvre (1991: 38–40, original emphasis) makes a distinction between *spatial practice*, what he calls 'perceived space' — 'the routines

and networks which link up the places set aside for work, "private" life and leisure'; *representations of space* ('conceptualized space') — 'the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers'; and *representational space* ('lived space') — 'space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of inhabitants and users'. These elements combine in the social production of space, not necessarily as a coherent whole, but rather as the outcome of a dynamic process. Often characterized by conflict and tension, this process is based on the establishment of consensus, on cultural codes that enable subjects to move relatively seamlessly between Lefebvre's three spatial realms. Drawing on Butler, we might suggest that one such cultural code is the heterosexual matrix, according to which men and women are compelled to materialize themselves in and through space in gender-differentiated ways, so that, for instance, in order to be perceived as feminine, women feel a compulsion to occupy space in a more tentative way than men. Yet how is women's 'bounded spatiality' (Young 2005) lived and experienced within organizations? The ways in which this compulsion is materialized in organizational space was something our research aimed to explore, in order to shed light on the some of the ways in which such space can be understood as a materialization of gender performativity; that is, as a site on which gender is played out within organizational life.

While each realm in Lefebvre's account (and indeed the relationship between them) is important in his analysis (see Dale 2005), it is his third realm, space as directly *lived* and, as Dale has emphasized, *embodied* that most interests us here. Of course, we are mindful that space needs to be understood as simultaneously planned, practised and imagined (Soja 1996) and our analysis proceeds on the basis of an understanding of workspace as the outcome of a dynamic relationship between each of these three elements. Analytically, however, we focus here on space as it is lived and experienced, arguing that, by drawing on Butler's theory of gender materialization, we can begin to understand some of the ways in which gendered organizational power relations are spatially enacted and embedded, thereby connecting different spatial levels in our analysis (Taylor and Spicer 2007).

According to Lefebvre, what he calls 'representational space' is at once dominated and hence passively experienced, and at the same time is appropriated and changed by the imagination. Resonating with Butler's (2000: 141) largely phenomenological point that gendered subjectivity is 'instituted in an exterior space', Lefevbre (1991: 17, 35) emphasizes that the social production of space 'implies a process of signification' in which subjects 'must either recognize themselves or lose themselves'. In this sense, social space literally 'incorporates' social actions and power relations — it comes into being by being inhabited, and, from a performative perspective, materializes subjectivity as it simultaneously inaugurates it. To reiterate, the ways in which this process of inhabitation takes place within organizational settings, and specifically how it relates to gender performativity, is our central concern here. Indeed for us, as for the women who took part in our study, the relationship between the material and interpretive dimensions of space is shaped by power relations and by the norms governing viable, valorized, intelligible subjectivity that Butler argues constitute the

heterosexual matrix. In our research, this was particularly evident in our participants' reflections on their gendered performances, and in their bounded appropriation of space, a point we return to below.

Researching 'Grey Areas'

We began our research by circulating a 'call for participation' on the university campus where we both work. We decided to base the research here for two main reasons. The first was pragmatic: we were concerned to make the methodology as open and accessible as possible and to encourage participation, and so thought that by arranging the focus groups in our own institution we would be able to provide a relatively convivial setting in which the participants could openly discuss the issues. It was also important, given the largely aesthetic, symbolic nature of the methodology, to conduct the individual interviews in a relaxed atmosphere — wherever possible in the participants' own workspaces. Our feeling was that undertaking the research in an organizational setting in which we were ourselves immersed would strengthen the methodology in this sense, although we were, of course, also conscious that it would impose certain limits, not least in terms of the applicability and perceived credibility of its findings. Further, while we appreciate that incorporating a more ethnographic element into the visual dimension of the methodology (for instance, asking respondents to photograph their own office spaces, and then using these as the basis for interviews in a similar vein to the stills from *Grey Area*) might have added to the richness of the data and contributed a more collaborative element (Pink 2001; Warren 2006, 2008), we decided, on balance, that this might be too intrusive and so too much to ask of our participants (not least because it would undermine our efforts, for instance through the use of pseudonyms, to conceal their individual identities).

Second, we felt that a university campus would be a particularly interesting site on which to base the research. Echoing insights from the literature on women's organizational Otherness discussed above, there is a growing body of research focusing specifically on women's lived experiences of academic life, much of which highlights continuing structural disadvantage and cultural marginalization, manifest, for instance, in the persistence of the gender pay gap and in sedimented patterns of horizontal and vertical segmentation (Knights and Richards 2003). Ramsay and Letherby (2006: 26) sum this up when they argue that the gendered organization of academia is characterized by a 'wealth of practices which render women academics' participation undervalued, unrecognized and marginalized, leading to *an overwhelming feeling of otherness* [emphasis added]'.

While in the main this literature focuses on the experience of women academics, universities are clearly host to a whole range of very different occupations; they are complex organizations incorporating a variety of often competing or conflicting workplace cultures, identities, roles and workspaces. Furthermore, the boundaries between work and non-work, especially as these are materialized in spatial terms, are relatively blurred for many but not all of us working in a university setting. Through our study, we sought to capture something of this complexity and to link it to our interest in women's Otherness, and to the apparent

struggle for recognition that we had encountered in Hulten's work, as well as to the discomfort we had both experienced following the comments made about our own workspaces.

The response we had to our call for participation was overwhelming. Many women were extremely keen to be involved, partly because they said they were intrigued by the methodology, but also because many of them felt that they had no other forum in which to talk about their own, or listen to others' experiences of the workplace. We undertook three focus groups, each held a week apart. Nine women took part in the first one, which lasted for 1 hour and 20 minutes (amounting to 22 pages of transcript); 11 women in the second, which lasted for 1 hour and 10 minutes (amounting to 20 pages of transcript), and 10 women in the third group, which lasted for 1 hour and 30 minutes (producing a 24-page transcript). Of those 30 women who took part in the focus groups, 23 offered to take part in a follow-up interview, an additional 10 women who had volunteered for the focus groups after they were full took part in individual interviews, and a further 14 subsequently agreed to be interviewed. So, in total, 30 women took part in the focus groups and 47 women were interviewed individually (23 of whom had already taken part in one of the three focus groups).

Participants worked in a broad range of departments: some in mainly female work groups, others in gender-mixed groups, and some worked in largely male groups. Most were in departments in which the senior members of staff were disproportionately male, and a few in groups in which they were the only women. Participants represented a broad range of age groups and work roles, from very senior to entry level, manual and non-manual occupations, and included women who described themselves as single, co-habiting with partners, married, divorced or widowed, and identified with various sexual identities. However, the nature of the sampling technique we used and our choice of research site meant that the sample was relatively ethnically homogenous and did not represent a full range of socio-economic groups. We fully recognize that this is a limitation of the research, but also see the university as a rich research site, given the features noted above.

We used printed colour sheets of stills from *Grey Area* as a starting point for the focus groups (reproduced here in greyscale, see Figure 1), laying the room out so that participants sat around a large table facing each other, with an A3 sheet of the stills in front of them. We were loosely guided by an interview schedule, in which we asked the women taking part to reflect on the images and on how they might relate (if at all) to their own experiences of the workplace, and of their own workspace. We asked participants about their first impressions, if there were any images in the sequence that struck them as particularly interesting or important, and why. We then talked about how the images made them feel, and about how they thought the woman in the video might be feeling. At various points, we focused on the theme of hiding, and particularly on the woman throwing herself away at the end of the sequence. We also had lengthy discussions in each group about why the video is called *Grey Area*, and about what greyness connotes in relation to gender, identity and workspace. In each of the sessions, participants asked questions of themselves, of us and of each other. With participants' consent, we recorded these discussions in their entirety and

had these transcribed, subjecting the transcripts to in-depth analysis using manual coding informed by the conceptual and theoretical insights gleaned from the literature discussed above.

When we arranged and undertook these focus groups, we worked with two other researchers, one of whom was a part-time researcher within our work group, and the other an experienced research student. One took charge of the recording equipment, leaving us free to concentrate on the discussion itself; the other took notes on the discussion, observing, for instance, the participants' body language and interaction as well as the apparent power relations that emerged within each group. We also annotated our own hard copies of the stills during the discussions. The four of us met straight after each group to reflect on the discussion, incorporating the notes we had all made. We had the recording of each focus group transcribed immediately so that we could talk about it before the next group met. Once all three transcripts were available, we spent time working through them, immersing ourselves in the data over the course of several readings and discerning themes that seemed to be particularly important to participants or that recurred throughout the course of each group session, and/or across all three.

Following the focus groups and our iterative analysis, we developed an interview schedule based on the themes that had emerged. We used this as the basis for a series of individual interviews in which we asked women to reflect on their lived experiences of their workspace. Here, as in the focus groups, we asked participants to talk not only about their current employment, but also previous jobs. Interviews, like the group discussions, were recorded and fully transcribed, and we made notes on our own observations of the interview and of the setting. The interviews were all conducted in participants' workspaces, some of which were private, others shared. While we were conscious that an interview might not always be the most appropriate method for collecting data on the actual practices of everyday working life (De Certeau 2002), particularly as these are spatially situated, we aimed to mitigate against some of these limitations by conducting the interviews in situ.

Interviews lasted between 50 minutes and 2 hours, the average being 1 hour 10 minutes, and the average length of a transcript being about 20 pages. This meant that, in total, we derived some 940 pages of transcribed material, in addition to the 66 pages collected from the three focus groups. We subjected these transcripts to in-depth thematic analysis, reflecting on the findings of the focus groups and, again, taking part in regular discussions with each other, before undertaking the next few interviews. This meant that data collection and analysis became part of an ongoing, integrated and largely interactive process throughout both phases of the research.

Inspired by O'Neill et al.'s (2002) work on 'ethno-mimesis', our intention was to use the images from *Grey Area* to 'move' respondents, and so to encourage them to reflect on aspects of their own and other women's lived, embodied experiences that they might not otherwise think about or find easy to articulate. In this sense, our research sought to create a reflexive space within which those who took part could interact and reflect on their own and each others' everyday organizational lives. Our aim, then, was to encourage other women to reflect on their own and each others' lived experiences of their work environments, incorporating

the stills from *Grey Area* that we had found so compelling, in order to draw them into the research and encourage a greater sense of involvement. Notably, it was through the research process itself that some women became conscious of their workspaces as performative and as highly embodied.

Articulating this theme, one of the participants in the second focus group asked us if she could display the still images from *Grey Area* in her own office after taking part in the research:

'I really liked this last one [image] I mean I like it. I actually would like to take it away and pin it next to my computer or something. I know how stupid that sounds, but it's just like, it's a humorous kind of "Yeah, yeah, it's escape". It's stupid, but, you know, sometimes it's necessary to have that kind of reminder that … to take the lighter side of it and just think, you know, you're asked [to do] too much sometimes. So I'm going to take it and pin it up.' (Group discussion, November 2005)

Gender and Spatial Matters: Living and Working in 'Grey Areas'

In both the group discussions and the interviews, the women in our study slipped between reflecting on and discussing their own and each others' thoughts on the images in the video and their lived experiences of organizational life. Spatial matters recurred in both the group discussions and the interviews, coalescing around what might be regarded as a sense of spatial contestation or struggle. This was shaped, on the one hand, by an apparent feeling of spatial constraint, of invasion and of simultaneous erasure and over-exposure for the women who took part, and, on the other hand, by a more tactical personalization of workspace, involving attempts to challenge or resist the sense of negation that many women said they felt. However, this personalization was often enacted in a highly bounded, guarded way in accordance with the perceived gender norms within the organization, adherence (or, at least, perceived adherence) to which women felt would render them acceptable within the organization. In the following section we consider these findings, and then in the penultimate part of the paper we link them to the literature outlined above. We argue that our data illuminate some of the ways in which organizational space materializes gender, and hence brings both into being in a particular way; that is, in a way that is congruent with organizational norms governing gender relations that situate women within a constrained, contained space, and which compel the performance of gender in accordance with the perceived norms and imperatives of organizational life.

Spatial Constraint

In the first discussion group, several participants commented on the theme of spatial constraint, noting, for instance, with reference to the woman in the images (see Figure 1) how 'it looks as though the environment is actually closing in on her. She's in a confined space … She seems claustrophobic, desperate to escape' (Group interview, November 2005). This theme of being trapped was linked to the 'trash' metaphor, with this particular woman summing up what seemed to be the view of many of the participants:

'It's like she's hiding in and from the space at the same time … It's almost like she's sort of identifying herself with the trash. There but not there … She feels unworthy.' (Group interview, November 2005)

Here, this participant links the woman throwing herself away with her apparent desperation to escape, coupled with what seems to be a sense of worthlessness. Hence she is 'identifying herself' with the trash and, while she is physically present (her physical form cannot be entirely erased), she appears as a non-person, 'there but not there'. Another woman linked this feeling of worthlessness with the struggle for belonging in a masculine environment:

'I guess it's like a woman trying to find her place in the work place and failing, because women are normally associated with the home. Being in the workplace … I mean you aren't necessarily naturally seen to be there and take part actively, so it's … I guess it's just a kind of trying to find an identity within a male dominated world. It's a way of saying, 'here I am', but she's failed and that's why she's trying to get out.' (Group interview, November 2005)

This image of simultaneous erasure and over-exposure provided the starting point for a discussion, in each of the focus groups, of women's spatial and social availability within organizations more generally, as women slipped between discussing the woman in the video stills and their own and each others' experiences. As one participant put it:

'I think there's a demand that women especially are accessible. When you're talking about women being in offices where … where you can't hide away, I don't know, somehow I think as a woman you're expected to be always happy, happy, shiny, accessible for people to come and talk to, whereas I think men can get away with … telling you they're too busy to deal with your work.' (Group discussion, November 2005)

These were likewise themes that women developed further in their follow-up interviews, reflecting on their feelings of, on the one hand, being overwhelmed or even rendered invisible in their workspaces while, at the same time, feeling too visible and hyper-accessible. Here, an important theme was participants' tentative, even resigned perception of their right to space, particularly where it was regarded as a scarce resource and/or status symbol. As Bethan noted:

'I have just kind of accepted that we are in a small space, but it's not terribly comfortable. I feel terribly crammed in … I have a desk, I have a pedestal and I have appropriated a shelf. It's not really mine, but you know.' (Interview with Bethan, February 2006)

Echoing Bethan's apparent resignation to her sense of being hemmed in and her resulting feeling of discomfort, and linking her apparent lack of entitlement to space with what she assumed to be her marginal status, Jane reported how:

'a lot of people think it's a bit small and poky in here and that it's no … it doesn't represent a very good impression of me, and the work I do. It maybe suggests that I'm not an important part of the organization, perhaps that I ought to do more. When people see my office, they think I'm not important. Genuinely.' (Interview with Jane, April 2006)

In these reflections, gender performativity is played out not only in terms of who is seen (by themselves and others) as a legitimate occupant of space — who is allocated space and who is not, and the symbolic implications of these arrangements — but also in boundary management. At times, as suggested in the two extracts above, women felt that their physical positioning had led to their

feelings of being 'out of bounds', and consequently not regarded as valid subjects within their organizational settings.

Spatial Invasion and 'Spillage'

A number of women, both in the groups and the interviews, spoke with some frustration about how colleagues invaded their workspace, leaving them feeling perpetually exposed. In an attempt to gain an element of control over persistent feelings of invasion and vulnerability, Lisa talked about the changes she had recently made:

'I changed my desk layout a few months back … I'm tucked round a corner so my space is very limited ... and I'd been sat with my back to anybody who was approaching my area and I realised I was very uncomfortable with this because whereas some people would speak as they approached so I knew they were coming, there were a couple of ... men who would come and stand and that was creepy … So I rotated my desk round.' (Interview with Lisa, February 2006)

For other participants, the problem instead was how male colleagues who worked close by 'spilled' into their workspaces. Claire, for instance, reflected somewhat despondently on her attempts to contain these 'spillages', while at the same time feeling awkward about articulating her concerns:

'I've tried to tidy it up a bit because it just is so awful. I mean I'm still trying and I shall carry on trying, but it's a bit of an uphill battle because the amount of paper he generates is just … I mean there's a stack of stuff … I can organise things a bit, but I wouldn't feel comfortable about saying anything … You know, if he's not going to be comfortable with it then I'm not going to say anything, but …' (Interview with Claire, April 2006)

Similarly, Sue felt that she could only try to contain this spatial invasion when her male colleague with whom she shared an office was away. This seemed to be not only because she felt that she could deal with the problem more effectively in his absence, but also because he dominated the space both physically and symbolically when he was there:

'When [he's] here I'm continually being bombarded with him and his stuff. When he's away I can take a bit of a step back and just catch up and so one of the things I'm going to catch up on next time is with sorting this lot out [points to piles of paper] and binning or filing it or something, and just trying to sort of tidy up a bit more, but realistically … I'm fighting a losing battle [why do you think so?] … *Well, it's just come to be seen as his space. I suppose I sort of see it like that too. I'm here, but it's ... his space. Which it isn't really.*' (Interview with Sue, March 2005, emphasis added)

This interplay between spatial control and a guarded, tentative form of resistance recurred throughout our research, particularly in participants' reflections on the more representational aspects of their workspaces. There were numerous examples of the kind of spatial negation Sue alludes to above when she says 'I'm here, but it's his space', and of women consciously negotiating (and in many instances actively challenging) their sense of Otherness. However, they did this in a bounded way, driven largely by the constraints of what they thought would be deemed acceptable and appropriate, and by what in their view other people would find interesting or welcoming.

Bounded Appropriation

Most of our participants had taken some steps to personalize their workspaces, but almost all had done so within clear boundaries. Rachel for instance describes her attempts to reflect aspects of her personal life in her office space, but only in moderation:

'I've got photos — you know, a photo of the kids up I think. I've got a couple of their drawings. What else have I got? Stuff that friends have sent, but apart from that *not masses … I feel it's the right balance. You know it's not like there's pictures plastered everywhere and that's all there is to me*. You know, it's kind of there's just enough there I just feel like I've got enough for them [her children] to be there, if you see what I mean, but not so much that it just looks ridiculous.' (Interview with Rachel, March 2006, emphasis added)

Reflecting on why she chose to display her children's photographs and artwork, Susan suggests:

'I think it was just to have my kids near me I suppose. I guess *it shows people I'm human and that I'm approachable. That's what I'd like them to think*. You know, it's not … It wasn't a conscious effort on my part to make me seem mumsy or anything, you know. It's funny you should ask me about it because I'm noticing all these things now — like there's a butterfly I made out of my son's hands [using handprints] over there as well — and just like work is my escape and yet, I've surrounded my office with all these things that remind me of them.' (Interview with Susan, February 2006, emphasis added).

Several interesting issues emerge in these extracts. On one hand, some women explained how displays of family photos reminded them of their identities and commitments outside of work, which arguably helps to counteract the sense of not belonging and of negation noted above. However, others vehemently chose not to display mementos in this manner. For some, such as Lauren, this was a way of actively resisting what they saw as an organizational appropriation of their selves:

'I don't want them looking at my life. It's mine. It's secret, at home where I've got control of it. That's one thing they can't encroach on.' (Interview with Lauren, May 2006)

Ellen's account reflected elements of both points. It was important to her that her workspace contained symbols of her out-of-work interests and identities, but at the same time she felt the need to conceal certain aspects. Thus she personalized her office in a selective, bounded way:

'I have crystals on my desk but they're just like paperweights … I have a lot of interest in alternative therapies and spiritual practice. People think that I'm a bit of a weird hippie, but beyond that it's just the crystals on my desk to remind me that I have another life … You just feel you need to conceal part of yourself, whereas others [men] don't.' (Interview with Ellen, April 2005)

In contrast, for other women, such as Carole, choices about what to display were carefully calculated to conform to what they perceived to be the informal rules of the organization and what they saw as the damaging consequences of trangression:

'I mean it sounds a bit calculating, but it depends. If I think it serves my purpose between not to show them [she keeps photographs in her desk drawer] and if I think at the end of the day I'm more likely to achieve the aims I want by not revealing them, and the depth of my emotion, then I'll do that. Sometimes though it really gets to me and they come out. [What gets to you?] The control, it just feels like leading a double life.' (Interview with Carole, April 2005)

Notably, a number of our participants talked about how they decorated their workspaces to please their colleagues, so that their offices, as representational spaces, were performed in accordance with how our respondents thought they would be perceived by others. Katy, for instance, saw a bright office as part of the 'cheery' image she sought to convey to colleagues:

'I often feel that if I just took another few minutes I'd put more postcards up … When I had Christmas cards up and they're visible — because I have the door open so these things are visible from the door — it did look nice and bright and one or two people commented on it and I do think I should do more things like that [did you like those positive comments?] Oh yes. Yes, because it did make it look more colourful … and welcoming.' (Interview with Katy, March 2006)

Katy is certainly not alone or unusual here; where respondents incorporated personal items into their office space — photos of family and friends, children's artwork or holiday mementos — as many did, this was largely in accordance with what they thought other people would find appealing, or would perceive as appropriate ('I'm a bit of an approval junkie', as one respondent put it). In another case, although she actually found her office space terribly uncomfortable to work in, Anna took pleasure in the fact that others liked it:

'*It's very important to me that people find this space welcoming and interesting and that they see that actually it's got a personal dimension* … [People] find it welcoming … but *it doesn't function* … that's what's missing. *But I like it because people do find it welcoming and homely*.' (Interview with Anna, March 2006, emphasis added)

While some of the women we noted above personalized their workspace to remind them of their lives outside of work, Barbara connected the ways in which she had personalized her office space to the kind of image she was trying to portray at work:

'when they're looking at all those pictures … because it's another dimension to you, and shows you're a more rounded person than just what people see at work. But I could be over-personalizing it … and it's important not to, because at the end of the day, I'm here to do a job, and *as a woman I want people to see that I'm aware of that*, and that's how I think of it.' (Interview with Barbara, May 2006, emphasis added)

For Barbara, then, it seemed that while she wanted people to perceive her as a 'rounded' person with a life and interests outside of work, she was also conscious of the extent to which 'as a woman' she needed to be perceived as committed to the organization, and that she was serious about her work — hence her comment, 'I want people to see that I'm aware of that.' When asked to elaborate on this, she reflected:

I mean I have all these other things going on outside of work, and I need people to see some of that, but it can't take over, otherwise that's all people will see when they come in here.'

Implicit in Barbara's words is the importance she places on appearing to be competent, an issue that recurred throughout our data. In the following extract, Sarah similarly reflects on how her workspace is designed to make her look competent, for instance, by displaying her academic and professional qualifications alongside other more personal mementos:

'In these particular circumstances, it all boils down to having to prove that you can do the job, and I think it's a woman has to prove it more than a man does in that situation because they see a bloke and think like … You know, the automatic assumption when you walk into a man's office is he'll know what he's talking about. If they see a woman the automatic assumption is she won't … so you've got that barrier to overcome. It's a social barrier, but also a physical barrier because it's about how people see you, and where you are.' (Interview with Sarah, April 2005)

Ruth too reflected on how important it is to her that she is seen as organized and efficient at work:

'I just feel that not so much in terms of work identity, but more because of personal charac- teristics and other responsibilities [such as?] … well, mainly children and home, that *there are ways I need to project myself* … say for example, I want to come over as being really well organized, but I actually don't feel well organized. *So that's something I really have to manage in order to project that.*' (Interview with Ruth, March 2006, emphasis added)

Reflecting on why she feels she has to 'project' herself in this way, Ruth's rationale connected how she is perceived at work to gender expectations of women's roles within the workplace and society more generally:

'There's just this assumption that women can juggle everything, and that they'll always be available. The chaos behind that means that you just have to look really calm and orga- nized … it's just so ironic because most days I don't feel organized at all. But I have to look it [why is that?] … It's just expected. It's just the ways it is.'

Expressing similar sentiments but in different terms, Mandy, in the following extract, likewise makes explicit connections between gender performativity and the presentation of office space, linking her office as a representational space to her own feminine performativity:

'*I want the office to be hospitable — yeah, to be a pleasant place where ... people feel wel- come. And I also try ... to be pleasant when people come into the door*. So I try to stand up and make a fuss about them being there — you know, like to pay a tribute to their visit. *That's very much how I'd like to be seen — as someone who does that, you know*. My mum and my grandmother groomed me for keeping households tidy, pleasant too. Being pleas- ant in the hospitality element is very important to me. So I think I'm carrying that … I'm creating an impression, yes.' (Interview with Mandy, May 2006, emphasis added)

Our data contained numerous examples of how participants explicitly used their workspaces to elicit a desired, often highly gendered response from others — to make colleagues feel comfortable and welcome, or to appear as confident and in control. Notably, this was often expressed in the kind of embodied terms that Mandy alludes to above. Indeed, several respondents reflected on how they used and presented their bodies in their workspaces in particular ways, often emphasizing the kind of bodily constraint and inhibition that is thought to characterize women's spatiality more generally (Young, 2005). For example, Katy reflected:

'You know the way we're supposed to sit neatly while men are allowed to sprawl sort of thing? Well, I do a bit of sprawling but if somebody comes in, you know, I'd sit neatly, properly … you know, it's not like I'd talk to them like that. So I'm not too inhibited, but *relatively inhibited*.' (Interview with Katy, March 2006, emphasis added)

Drawing on the metaphor of 'face' to discuss how she appears to others, Deborah also reflected on how, within her office space, she needs:

'to appear competent and … yeah, in control of something. The way I am, in myself, needs to do that. I have an internal face which is casual and relaxed, and an external face which is more formal, and my office space needs to be more external.' (Interview with Deborah, April 2005)

Articulating similar concerns with the perception of others, Hilda commented how:

'Because it's an open door policy anybody could walk past, so I try to maintain a professional look for anybody. I think possibly, you know, if you're behind a closed door, then it would be nice to be able to put your feet up and read a paper, but no, not in an open environment.' (Interview with Hilda, May 2006)

In sum, then, three main themes recurred in the women's discussion of the video images, and in their reflections on their own and each other's lived experiences of work: spatial constraint, invasion and spillage, and what we have called a 'bounded appropriation' of space, which women experienced in highly gendered, embodied ways. In relation to each of these three themes, the women we interviewed seemed conscious of how their occupation of space related to how they were perceived in the workplace, and several of those who took part talked about the connections between the way they presented themselves in and through workspace, and the kind of image of themselves that they wanted to portray (for instance, being welcoming, or organized). In the following section we discuss these findings with reference to Butler's theory of gender performativity and Lefebvre's concept of 'representational spaces', arguing that what is at stake in the findings discussed above is the materialization of gender in and through the performance of spaces that matter.

Organizational Space as (a) Gendered Matter

In making sense of the findings reported above, we return to the questions outlined at the outset of our discussion, questions that we argued had remained relatively neglected within organization studies: how is gender performed in and through organizational space, and what are the power relations underpinning this performance; what compels or constrains this performance, and how is it lived and experienced? Reflecting on their own and each others' experiences, and on their thoughts and feelings about the images in the video, the women who took part in our research articulated some of the ways in which gender power struggles are materialized within organizations. On the one hand, they described feelings of spatial constraint, containment, and invasion, as well as simultaneous invisibility and over-exposure. At the same time, they talked about the ways in which they had tried to personalize their workspaces. However, in the main, they had done so in a bounded way; that is, in accordance with the perceived gender norms of the organization and of society more generally, and in congruence with what they thought would render them acceptable in organizational terms.

What this suggests is that the women who took part in our research performed their gender identities in and through their workspaces largely in accordance with the norms of the heterosexual matrix described by Butler (1990), simultaneously enacting and signifying themselves as 'normal' women. They did so, for instance, through their resigned acceptance of spatial constraint and spatial invasion — a practice that feminists have argued is typical of women's 'bounded

spatiality' (see Young 2005) — and through their apparent deferral to masculine authority in this respect ('I'm here, but it's his space'). This performance was likewise played out in their overt but contained displays of familial roles and identities, and more implicitly in the ways in which they sought to make their workspaces welcoming and pleasing for colleagues, and in their concern to be perceived as competent and in control. The women we interviewed talked about the ways in which they made use of the space, its objects, meanings and so on, and they (often consciously) projected the ways in which they wanted to be perceived onto it — in other words, they materialized themselves in and through it.

Linking this back to Butler and Lefebvre, in a representational sense, then, these women seemed to inhabit their spaces so as to convey not only their adherence to the norms of the heterosexual matrix, but also their apparent competence in what Bruni and others (drawing on Butler) call 'gender switching' (Bruni and Gherardi 2002; Bruni et al. 2004). Thus, for many women the bounded personalization of their workspaces was designed to demonstrate their ability to move as seamlessly as possible between different (often competing) gender hegemonies, involving what Nippert-Eng (1995) has described as 'boundary work', in accordance with what they perceived would be recognized as viable gendered, organizational subjects. In doing so, they consciously sought to invest meaning in their workspaces, and used them to convey meaning to others, as a way of securing their own legitimacy. For the women in our study, this process involved not just a management of boundaries, however. It also often meant containing things that they felt would 'reveal' (as one respondent put it) too much about themselves (artefacts associated with witchcraft, or children's photographs and drawings, for instance), either as a conscious strategy of resisting the organization's appropriation of their entire selves, or as a more calculated way of conforming to what they thought would be regarded, and recognized, as organizationally appropriate in gender terms.

To borrow from Butler, this suggests that, in its relationship to gender performativity within organizations, space is not merely matter but 'a materializing of possibilities' (Butler 1988: 52). In other words, we do not simply occupy space, but rather we become ourselves in and through it. Furthermore, this spatial performativity is driven very much by our desire for recognition as viable, intelligible (organizational) subjects and hence is performed largely in accordance with its governing gender (and organizational) norms. In our findings, this was manifest in several ways: in women's simultaneous over-exposure and erasure, in their reluctance to complain about male space invasion, in women's bounded personalization of their workspaces in accordance with what they thought others would find appropriate, and in the contained and self-conscious ways in which women physically occupied their workspaces. The 'deviant' use of space as it is lived, experienced and practised, to which Taylor and Spicer (2007) allude in their analysis, therefore needs to be understood within the broader context of gendered organizational power relations within which this apparent deviance is enacted, for doing so enables us to think more carefully about the ways in which gender is situated within organizational life and the power relations shaping it.

In terms of the performance of gender, we would argue, then, that space (much like the body) is 'an intentionally organized materiality' (Butler 1988: 521), not

a neutral backdrop against which gender is performed within organizations. 'Spaces that matter' are therefore those that represent a materialization of the cultural norms according to which particular gender performances are enacted, and through which adherence to those norms is signified, successfully evoking recognition of viable gender subjectivity. To borrow from Dale (2005), they are the 'social materiality' of the organization. In contrast, we might say that those spaces that don't (matter) are those that fail to conform to these norms, or fail to convincingly signify such conformity, and so are denied recognition as materializations of viable subjectivity (the colleague we referred to at the outset seemingly saw our own office spaces, and by implication ourselves, in this light).

In addition to the empirical insights gained from undertaking this research, we have sought to develop here the impact that Butler's writing has begun to have on organization studies in recent years. First, we have applied insights gleaned from her analysis of the materialization of gender, developed particularly in her writing on 'bodies that matter' (Butler 1993), to help us make sense of the women's experiences of gender performativity discussed above. Second, in doing so, we have sought to make connections between Butler's concern with gender materialization and Lefebvre's account of the social production of space, and particularly his concept of 'representational spaces', enabling us to link their common interests in space, materiality and subjectivity. We have done so partly in order to address what we saw as a theoretical lacuna in the analysis of space within organization studies, namely, a relative neglect of the ways in which space is gendered. Drawing on both Butler and Lefebvre, we have argued here that gender materialization constitutes an important theoretical lens through which to understand the gendering of organizational space. We have also sought to tease out connections between these two otherwise rather diverse writers in order to emphasize that, while Lefebvre is clearly an obvious theoretical starting point for the analysis of organizational space (see Taylor and Spicer 2007), Butler too has an important contribution to make to our understanding of the social materiality of organizational life, and particularly of the ways in which gender power relations are materialized in and through the spaces of organizations (and the organization of space; Dale and Burrell 2008). From this combined perspective, we can begin to understand that just as 'the workplace is brought into being through patterns of spatial practice … spatial planning … and spatial imaginaries' (Taylor and Spicer 2007: 337), so too is gender.

We have also aimed to further explore the incorporation of artistic materials into organizational research, and to reflect on some of the methodological benefits and challenges of doing so. While lengthy reflection on the efficacy of integrating visual methods into research on the aesthetic aspects of organizational life is beyond the scope of our discussion here (see Warren 2008 for a summary), suffice to say that all of the researchers and the respondents involved in this project felt that without the video stills the research would have been very different. *Grey Area* itself, as outlined in our introduction, provided a thought-provoking point of auto-ethnographic departure for us, as indeed it did for many of the other women who took part in our research. Many of these women felt that these images helped them to articulate thoughts, experiences and observations that would otherwise have been overlooked, or which they might otherwise have found very difficult

to put into words. As Sue put it in her interview, 'I just wouldn't have thought these everyday, routine things like what I put on my walls, or how I feel other people see me at work, would have been of any interest to anyone.' While this view was certainly not unique to Sue, or indeed to research projects such as this one (in our experience, research participants are often puzzled or even amused by researchers' interest in aspects of their lives that they see as mundane), it does highlight the role played by the video stills, encouraging women to talk about issues they might not otherwise have talked about, or even been conscious of.

What this suggests then is that artistic materials such as *Grey Area* enable us as researchers to access what O'Neill et al. (2002: 78) describe as the 'sedimented stuff' of life, that is, that which is 'normally unseen/hidden/overlooked'. They enable us to get in touch with aspects of our social lives and, to an extent (as our findings outlined above suggest), the experiences of others, in ways that demand critical reflection, or at least are unsettling. In the main, of course, artistic materials such as stills are unable to capture the dynamic processes that constitute social and organizational life — those we are most easily able to incorporate into our methodologies are by definition static, and so we might say are unable to convey what it feels like to work in an organization (Warren 2008). They are nevertheless, as we have argued here, powerful tools of exposure, particularly when combined with other methods of data collection, such as interviews, that serve to 'open up' the methodology to a more dynamic and dialogical engagement than might otherwise be the case. For this reason, we might say that artistic methods potentially take organizational research 'beyond the scope' of what is thought to be methodologically viable (Cohen et al. 2006).

Concluding Thoughts

Our aim in this paper was to link a critical analysis of the production of space to the performance of gender within work organizations. This led us to focus on what our workspaces require of us in terms of self-presentation and performance, and vice versa, that is, what the subjectivities we perform within organizational settings require our workspaces to materialize. We have used the term 'spaces that matter', borrowing from Butler, to describe the ways in which gender is performed and materialized in and through space, largely in accordance with the requirements of the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler 2000 [1990]), in order to elicit recognition as viable subjects. The materialization of gender in and through space in this respect is a crucial element of what Borgerson (2005) describes as 'organizing subjectivities' within the context of contemporary work organizations. The research reported here suggests that a central element of this materialization process is the spatial embodiment and enactment of appropriate gender norms.

In the discussion of our findings, we explored this theme by linking Butler's analysis of the performance of 'bodies that matter' with Lefebvre's (1991) notion of 'representational space', arguing that an important but relatively neglected aspect of the organizational materialization of the gendered self is the performance of spaces that matter. So, while we appreciate that, for many of us, working practices may well be becoming increasing spatially and temporally flexible,

and despite the proclamations of management writers such as McGregor (2000) that, in the near future, work will no longer be a place, our research suggests that the social materiality of space (and relatedly of gender) continues to matter. It matters, to borrow from Butler, both in terms of its meaning, and also in the sense that it continues to embody — to materialize — socially significant aspects of identity, of social interaction and, perhaps most notably, of power relations. In other words, *workspaces matter* to the myriad ways in which we continue to perform, practise and negotiate gender at work. Our research has focused specifically on gender, and on the lived experiences of a relatively small group of women working in a university setting. In our view, more work needs to be done to further explore the ways in which gender materialization is enacted and experienced within a broader range of organizational settings, teasing out the different levels of spatial interaction, and the power relations within which they are embedded, as well as the aesthetic and symbolic artefacts through which they are encoded. In other words, as we have argued here, organization studies needs to further explore the myriad ways in which 'space matters' (to) gender.

Acknowledgements

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