

Document Version

Final published version

Licence

CC BY

Citation (APA)

Hasbi, M. M., & van Marrewijk, A. H. (2026). Let's eat together! Rhythmanalysis of commensality and critique of everyday life in organizations. *Organization Studies*, 47(4), 639-663. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01708406251380998>

Important note

To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable).
Please check the document version above.

Copyright

In case the licence states "Dutch Copyright Act (Article 25fa)", this publication was made available Green Open Access via the TU Delft Institutional Repository pursuant to Dutch Copyright Act (Article 25fa, the Taverne amendment). This provision does not affect copyright ownership.

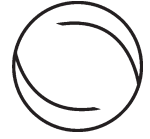
Unless copyright is transferred by contract or statute, it remains with the copyright holder.

Sharing and reuse

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download, forward or distribute the text or part of it, without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license such as Creative Commons.

Takedown policy

Please contact us and provide details if you believe this document breaches copyrights.
We will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Let's Eat Together! Rhythmanalysis of commensality and critique of everyday life in organizations

Organization Studies
2026, Vol. 47(4) 639–663
© The Author(s) 2025



Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/01708406251380998
www.egos.org



Marie M. Hasbi¹  and Alfons van Marrewijk^{1,2,3}

Abstract

This article offers a rhythmanalysis of commensality, the practice of eating together, in the context of flexible offices, as organizations carefully arrange time-space to engage employees and invoke specific senses of community. Drawing on a longitudinal ethnographic field study of a major banking organization in Paris, multiple commensality rhythms were found that coalesce and are sutured into rhythms of order and dressage, rhythms of harmony, and rhythms of disturbance and disharmony. These findings offer an open-ended and performative understanding of commensality, which opens up to a triadic view of the organizational everyday and to a critique of everyday life in organizations that integrates rhythms of alienation, disalienation, and new alienation.

Keywords

commensality, ethnography, everyday life, Lefebvre, organizational everyday, rhythmanalysis, space, time

Introduction

Consuming food with others holds great value for organizing and shaping work life and practice (Briner & Sturdy, 2008; Moser, Reinecke, den Hond, Svejenova, & Croidieu, 2021). Food-sharing in organizations is central to togetherness and allows a state of communion to emerge (Rosen, 1985), as it forges and confirms social bonds and mutual obligations (Mennell, Murcott, & van Otterloo, 1992). Food-sharing in the social sciences and humanities is termed “commensality,” understood here as the practice of eating and drinking in the presence of others (Bloch, 1999; Fischler, 2011). Food-sharing in organizations has attracted academic attention (Briner & Sturdy, 2008; Moser et al., 2021; Pina e Cunha, Cabral-Cardoso, & Clegg, 2008). Commensality has been

¹Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

²Delft University of Technology, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

³BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway

Corresponding author:

Marie M. Hasbi, Department of Organization Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1081, Amsterdam, 1081 HV, the Netherlands.

Emails: m.m.hasbi@vu.nl; marie.hasbi@gmail.com

regarded as a recurrent practice but not considered as performative, spatial, and rhythmic, which is the understanding of everyday commensality as a way of bringing organizations into being (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012, 2013).

Our study aims to grasp how the mundane, repetitive, and exceptional commensality interrelate with the totality of relations that constitute everyday life in organizations in terms of their differences and conflict-ridden potential. Everyday life is “profoundly related to *all* activities, and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts” (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 119). Furthermore, everyday life “continually produces irreducible remainders that bear traces of dissent, resistance and subversion, of transformation and critique” (Beyes, 2018, p. 35). The “substance” of everyday life “pierces through all alienation and establishes ‘disalienation’” (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 119). As with his theorization of space, Lefebvre introduced the term “everyday life” as part of a triad (Beyes, 2018) and criticized the term in relation to the two interlaced terms of “everyday” and “everydayness” (Lefebvre, 1947, 1961, 1968). The latter reflects concerns of rationality, organization, and planification (Lefebvre, 1968). The everyday is “the place where repetition and creativity meet and confront each other” (Lefebvre, 1961, p. 241). Defined as “the site of a three-term dialectical movement” (Lefebvre, 1981, p. 18), questioning the everyday’s relevance and demystifying its mysteries was at the heart of Lefebvre’s analysis and critique of everyday life¹ (Lefebvre, 1947, 1961, 1981, 1991a).

We investigate everyday commensality in organizations through the concept of rhythm, which is a repetition in time and space but without identical absolute repetition, as “there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 16). Rhythmanalysis is significant for studying and examining the unfolding of everyday practices in time-space (Edensor, 2010; Katila, Kuismin, & Valtonen, 2020). In attending to the rhythms of urban walking practice, Lefebvre emphasized the invasiveness of political and commercial power into everyday life by ordering the rhythms of its practices through time-space manipulations as “political power knows how to utilize and manipulate time, dates, time-tables” (2003, p. 78). From this invasiveness, the everyday “establishes itself” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 16) in continual interaction with everydayness and everyday life. In organization studies, the Lefebvrian critique of everyday life has inspired considerations of everyday organizational space and its processual production allowing one to discern how everyday life itself is organizational in character (Vandeventer, Lloveras, & Warnaby, 2024). It also inspired a nascent trialectical movement connecting organizational rhythms to elements of everyday trialectics (e.g., Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Nash, 2020; Thorpe et al., 2023). This movement revealed how everyday urban life is spatially structured by the global and local rhythms of finance in a way that makes the organizational everyday passive (Nash, 2020). Furthermore, it allowed the foregrounding of the organizational everyday’s richness of affect and embodiment (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012) and gendered politics (Thorpe et al., 2023). Rhythmanalysis is at the “heart” of the everyday, aiming to demystify its “mysteries” (Lourau, 1992) and allowing for insight into everyday life in organizations (Beyes, 2018). Therefore, this study examines *how a rhythmanalysis of commensality can help move towards a more generative understanding of the “trialectics” of everyday life in organizations.*

To elaborate on this empirically, we draw on materials from an ethnographic field study (Ybema, Yanow, Wels, & Kamsteeg, 2009), spanning 2011–2019, of *Digibank*, a major banking organization in Paris, which introduced a change in the spatio-temporal organizing of everyday life, regulating and norming the practice of commensality. The findings show that multiple commensality rhythms coalesce and are sutured into ensembles: an isorhythmia rhythmically ordering commensality and disciplining employees’ bodies; an eurhythmia forming alliances with the rhythmic order; and an arrhythmia disturbing the rhythmic order via secret rhythms of commensality, outdoor rhythms of commensality, and fatal desynchronization. These findings allow for: (1)

foregrounding commensality as performative, open-ended and multiple, rhythmic and embodied (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012, 2013); (2) unravelling some of the complexities of the organizational “everyday” (Beyes, 2018; Beyes & Steyaert, 2012) by showing its richness of embodiment, affects, and politics; and (3) allowing a triadic understanding and a critique of everyday life in organizations that integrates a perpetual rhythmic interplay of three elements affecting, and affected by, each other: alienation, disalienation, and new alienation.

From Commensality as a Practice to a Rhythmanalysis of Commensality

The etymology of the term “commensality” derives from the medieval Latin *commensalis*. The prefix *com* pertains to the social dimension of commensality, while *mensalis*, which refers to sharing a table used for food, emphasizes commensality’s material dimension. The manifold social effects of commensality have been the focus of sociological (e.g., Fischler, 2011; Mennell et al., 1992; Simmel, 1997) and anthropological studies (e.g., Bloch, 1999; Douglas, 1972; Kerner, Chou, & Warmind, 2015). According to Simmel (1997, p. 130), a communal meal turns “the selfishness of eating” into a routine of being gathered together, which leads to common actions. As Freud (1938, p. 174) remarked, “to eat and drink with someone was at the same time a symbol and a confirmation of social community and of the assumption of mutual obligations.” Commensality “will cause, or at least maintain, a common substance among those who commune together” (Bloch, 1999, p. 133), as it designates eating together in the same physical or spatial setting (Kerner et al., 2015).

This understanding of commensality has been valuable in studying its role in creating social bonds and communality in organizations. For example, Parker (2008) connected meal-sharing with a sense of community within mafia organizations. Commensality thus strengthens social bonds but also excludes outsiders (Fischler, 2011). For example, while communal cake-eating helped to foster a sense of belonging and collaboration among physiotherapy team members, other therapists felt excluded (Thomson & Hassenkamp, 2008). In another example, Cambridge University’s formal dining is central in promoting a sense of togetherness but also separates ritual insiders (Cambridge graduates) from ritual outsiders (non-Cambridge graduates) (Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010). Finally, commensality is associated with power and politics, originating in the banquets held by the most powerful families in ancient Greece as an integral part of the Athenian democracy’s emergence (Hirschman, 1996). Since then, food-sharing has been instrumentalized to normalize power and express organizational order (Pina e Cunha et al., 2008). For example, external consultants used and valued liminal dining as a means to negotiate and effect consultancy projects and broader change (Sturdy, Schwarz, & Spicer, 2006).

Commensality is thus central in the reproduction of social relations in organizations through temporal regularities and material norms (Fischler, 2011; Grignon, 2001; Pina e Cunha et al., 2008). Simmel (1997, p. 131) linked this role with “a frequency of being together, with a habit of being gathered together [. . .] on occasions of a higher and intellectual order.. Meals are served in normed aesthetically appealing settings: “it [meal] arranges itself in a more aesthetic, stylized and supra-individually regulated form” (Simmel, 1997, p. 131). Since then, scholarly attention has been directed towards forms of commensality that echo what Grignon (2001, p. 27) referred to as “exceptional commensality,” which requires effort, involves constraints and social codes, but is intrinsic to the annual calendar and life cycles. For example, beer drinking as a ritual was studied to understand an organizational culture’s embodiment as experienced in the immediacy of employees’ bodies (Flores-Pereira, Davel, & Cavedon, 2008). Another example of exceptional commensality is the annual Christmas dinner instrumentalized by management to reinforce social order and

re-exert normative control (Rosen, 1988). Additionally, the annual breakfast-sharing between members of an advertising agency to mark organizational performance involves a social drama enacted in a rich politico-symbolic setting (Rosen, 1985). Finally, according to Di Domenico and Phillips (2009), the long-standing formal conventions of commensal dining at Oxbridge uphold the collegiate system's behavioral norms.

Scholars have also researched regular and mundane commensalities: Cook and Wyndham (1953) showed that temporal and spatial regularity of cultural groups of industrial workers lunching together at the same restaurant reflect social hierarchy. In another example, Dacin et al. (2010) noted daily commensality's centrality in establishing and maintaining a sense of community among Cambridge graduates. Furthermore, Roy (1959) found that the daily sharing of peaches and bananas established a distinct organizational rhythm that allowed machine operators to escape the monotony and boredom of their work. Finally, Sturdy et al. (2006) observed that frequent outdoor commensality allowed for more extensive learning about organizational secrets than when commensality occurred in the office.

This exploration helps us to understand how important commensality is in organizations; however, it regards the spatio-temporal patterns of commensality as stable (Edensor, 2010). Therefore, we turn to rhythmanalysis to examine everyday commensality practice.

Rhythmanalysis and rhythm

Posthumously published and edited by René Lourau, *éléments de rythmanalyse* (Lefebvre, 1992) or *Elements of rhythmanalysis* fulfills the promise of Lefebvre (1991a) to develop a new science analysing the various rhythms pertaining to the everyday, and thus can be considered as the fourth volume of *Critique of everyday life* (Elden, 2004). Lefebvre (1981, p. 130) introduced the concept of rhythm late in his critique of everyday life as “an integral and determinant part of qualitative time. It also possesses a quantitative character: it is measured—frequency, intensity, energy expended, and so on.” He also announced his project of *Rhythmanalysis*, or “the analysis of rhythms,” as “a new science that is under construction, studies these highly complex processes [. . .] It is located at the juxtaposition of the physical, the physiological and the social, at the heart of the everyday” (Lefebvre, 1981, p. 130).

Rhythmanalysis studies “the complex interferences between the cyclical rhythms and the linear rhythms” (Lourau, 1992, p. 5). The cyclical rhythm comes “from the microscopic to the astronomical [. . .] the alternation of days and nights, months and seasons, and so on” (Lefebvre & Régulier, 2003b, p. 84). Additionally, the linear rhythm comes “from social practice, therefore from human activity” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 18) and imposes routine, monotony, and work movement. Moreover, preparing a non-exhaustive list, Lefebvre (2003) classified the rhythms of everyday life into, for instance, public and secret, outdoor and indoor, desire and need.

Rhythmanalysis provides a framework for the analysis of sequences of actions and processes of “real and concrete cases that feature the lives of individuals and groups” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 25). This framework is constituted by the complementary concepts of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia, isorhythmia, arrhythmia, and dressage (Lefebvre, 2003). *Polyrhythmia* is understood as the interweaving of multiple rhythms that produce a time-space (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012). To illustrate this, Verduyn (2015) foregrounded entrepreneuring as a polyrhythmia produced by the interrelation of various rhythms, such as bodily rhythms of entrepreneurs, mechanical rhythms of machines, and natural rhythms.

When rhythms composing a polyrhythmia are coordinated in harmony with each other, *eurhythmia* emerges. Examples include the bodily rhythms of individuals waiting at the bus stop when

uniting with one another (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012) and the alignment of marathon runners with the rhythmic order of the marathon (Edensor & Larsen, 2018).

Rarely, eurhythmia devolves into *isorhythmia* when the combined rhythms are perfectly ordered and in tune. Isorhythmia refers to “hierarchically synchronized rhythms” (Edensor & Larsen, 2018); as Lefebvre (2003, p. 77) stressed, “there are few isorhythmias, rhythmic equalities or equivalences, except of a higher order.” For example, by imposing a social order on time and space, marathon organizers attempted to produce an isorhythmia (Edensor & Larsen, 2018).

Conversely, *arrhythmia* emerges when different rhythms “break apart, alter and bypass synchronization,” supposing “a divergence in time, in space, in the use of energies” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 78). This can occur when a group of individuals break apart from the rhythmic order established by the state or “the powerful” (Lefebvre & Régulier, 2003a). For example, arrhythmia emerged when the runners’ rhythms were not coordinated with the rhythmic order (Edensor & Larsen, 2018). Finally, arrhythmia can “go as far as morbid and then fatal desynchronization” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 78).

At a bodily level, a rhythm is absorbed through *dressage* to train the body to perform and condition it to synchronize with particular beats (Edensor, 2010). Dressage is a process that subjects the body to the ordering tendencies of linear repetition, as one “breaks in another human being living by making them repeat a certain act, a certain gesture or movement” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 48) until the mechanical repetition becomes routine. To illustrate, Lefebvre (2003) foregrounded military training as a key example of dressage. Furthermore, Katila et al. (2020) highlighted that participants in the business idea development practice engaged with repetition as a form of dressage to ingrain the practice’s rhythmic order in their bodies. Lefebvre (2003) noted that emotions and desire can alter urban walking’s dressage. He also revealed that bodies have the potential to disobey dressage through the example of female bodies resisting the virile model via feminist movements: as he noted, “the dressage of girls and women was always harsh, especially in the so-called privileged classes. The resistance was equal to the pressure” (p. 50).

From a Lefebvre-Inspired Spatial Turn to a Lefebvre-Inspired Trialectical Organizational Everyday

Lefebvre and Régulier (2003a) emphasized the importance of grasping space and time together in conducting a rhythmanalysis, as “all rhythms imply the relation of a time to a space” (p. 96). For Lefebvre (1991b), the production of space should be complemented by engaging more explicitly with the topics of time, body, desires, and sensational experiences of everyday people. This engagement allowed, for example, Farrington (2021) to acknowledge desire as a subversive political force in the Minneapolis uprising. Furthermore, using Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis to study the interrelations of rhythms that constitute the city, Crang (2001) suggested considering time-space as generative, i.e., fluid instead of just a container.

Lefebvre’s theory of space was used widely by scholars critically engaged in space research in organization studies, which gave rise to a Lefebvre-inspired “spatial turn” (Beyes, 2018). Lefebvre (1991b) proposed a heuristic triad to capture how space is produced by, and produces, social relations. This triad comprises three elements of space (Beyes, 2018; Beyes & Holt, 2020): conceived (ideas and visions to be inscribed into an idealized space), perceived (the embodiment of these ideas and visions in human habits), and lived (expressive spatial experiences of the accidental and creative resistance). This spatial turn has, among others, highlighted the materialization of power and identity in organizational space (Beyes & Holt, 2020), tending to “colonize and determine the organizational everyday” (Beyes, 2018, p. 30). In this way, certain values can be triggered, e.g.,

collaboration and openness (Fayard & Weeks, 2007), but so can unintended consequences, such as failing team cohesion and inducing social isolation in flexible offices (Millward, Haslam, & Postmes, 2007; Sewell & Taskin, 2015).

These studies tend to reduce the Lefebvrian triad into a binary thinking that opposes the conceived space to the lived space. However, Lefebvre's spatial triad must be understood as a dynamic one in which the conceived, perceived, and lived spaces affect, and are affected by, each other (Beyes & Holt, 2020). The processual analysis gave rise to a multiplicity approach to organizational space (Beyes & Holt, 2020). In this approach, space becomes performative by foregrounding embodied affectivity as a key dimension of spatial multiplicity (Beyes & Holt, 2020), which implies a rethinking of the organizational everyday (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012) and an extending of the spatial turn through a focus on everyday organizing (Vandeventer et al., 2024).

Accounting for the multiplicity of space, Vesala (2024) argued for the relevance of examining rhythmic movement between different workspaces as a way to cope with feelings of loneliness in the hybrid workspace. In the same vein, Katila et al. (2020) suggested attuning the rhythms of organizational practices to aesthetics and embodied affects. Furthermore, Lefebvre's (2003) rhythm-analysis was deployed as a research method in organization studies to examine how the rhythms of urban capitalism are experienced (Nash, 2020). By doing so, Nash (2020) mapped how rhythm-analysis can be applied by organizational scholars familiar with Lefebvre's theory on space and discussed the organization of everyday urban life. Similarly, other organizational rhythm-analysis criticized everyday life and attempted to reveal the "complexities" of the organizational everyday (Beyes, 2018). In this sense, a rhythm-analysis of entrepreneuring revealed the existence of an everydayness that tends to colonize the familiar everyday life of entrepreneurs (Verduyn, 2015). Moreover, a rhythm-analysis of pandemic gendered time-space led to a critique of everyday life in organizations that exposed gendered constraints and iniquities and showed women's potential to transform the organizational everyday (Thorpe et al., 2023).

The trialectics of everyday life

In relation to rhythms, Lefebvre and Régulier (2003b) understand everyday life (*la vie quotidienne*) to be in interaction with two separate but interrelated concepts that affect each other: the everyday (*le quotidien*) and the everydayness (*la quotidienneté*). They noted,

Everyday life is modelled on abstract, quantitative time, the time of watches and clocks [. . .] This homogenous and desacralized time has emerged victorious since it supplied *the measure of the time of work*. Beginning from this historic moment, it became the time of everydayness, subordinating to the organization of work in space other aspects of the everyday: the hours of sleep and waking, meal-times and the hours of private life [. . .] However, everyday life remains shot through and traversed by great cosmic and vital rhythms [. . .] In the everyday, this results in the perpetual interaction of these rhythms with repetitive processes linked to homogenous time. (p. 82)

In this sense, everydayness represents the locus where practices pertaining to everyday life are organized, regulated, and normed (Beyes, 2018; Elden, 2004). This is where eurhythmia happens, where "rhythms unite with one another in the state of health, in normal (which to say normed!) everydayness" (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 25). For Lefebvre (1981), the everyday (*le quotidien*) is a concept to be metaphilosophically grasped in unity between lived, philosophical, and political perspectives, as its complexity results from multiple interferences of "the realization of the social being known as 'human' found itself thwarted by distortions and alienations that were themselves attributable to a multiplicity of causes—the division of labour, social classes, ideologies and

‘values,’ oppression and repression” (p. 19). Regarding everydayness, Lefebvre (1961) stressed that “either man will be everyday or he will not. He will be everyday by superseding the everydayness he lives today, or else he will no longer be” (p. 29). Furthermore, the result of interferences between linear and cyclical rhythms can be seen in the everyday (Lefebvre & Régulier, 2003b). Lefebvre (1968) considered everyday life as a non-philosophical concept that “represents reality in relation to ideality” (Lefebvre, 1968, p. 17). He noted, “It is the *residuum* (of all the possible specific and specialized activities outside social practice) and the *product* of society in general; it is the point of delicate balance and where imbalance threatens” (p. 35). Regarding organizations and organizing, Lefebvre (1961) foregrounded everyday life of armies as “made up of a lot of boredom and a couple of dangerous moments” (p. 47), where everydayness erases the everyday. In another example, he suggested that everydayness in factories can lead to strikes and/or the introduction of new technologies in everyday life.

At the heart of Lefebvre’s work was questioning and criticizing everyday life, surpassing his well-known spatial thoughts (Beyes, 2018). His critique of everyday life aimed to transform the everyday, elucidate its contradictions, and expose the alienations pertaining to everydayness (Lefebvre, 1947, 1961). Centering his thoughts around the Marxist concept of alienation, he suggested that alienation turns the human worker into “a tool to be used by other tools (the means of production), a thing to be used by another thing (money) and an object to be used by a class, a mass of individuals who are themselves ‘deprived’ of reality and truth (the capitalists)” (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 186). In his later life, he questioned the relevance of the concept of the everyday and the extent of its difference from everydayness, as global industry produced homogenization that dominated society (Lefebvre, 1968). Yet, earlier in his life, an optimistic Lefebvre (1947) foregrounded free-from-work commensality in French cafés based on personal affinities as a practice that disalienates from everydayness, epitomizing the everyday, but at the same time, part of everyday life.

Regarding everyday life in organizations, Courpasson (2017) defended the relevance of the concept of everyday but argued for a dialectical view of the organizational everyday that only shows a movement of emancipation from alienation, highlighting a binary relation between alienation and disalienation. Similarly, Thorpe et al. (2023) highlighted gendered disalienation from the alienations imposed by everyday life in organizations on female workers. Such binary thought was criticized by Lefebvre (1947) as excluding “the possibility that there can be nothing more to say about the human or any domain of human activity” (p. 195). For Lefebvre, a dialectical view comprises three terms simultaneously affecting each other, stressing the processual and continual movement between them, not prioritizing one term over the other and not considering the third as the result of, or solution to, the two others (Beyes, 2018). Lefebvre (2003) stressed that, “with regard to *dialectical* analysis, [. . .], it separates out *three* terms in interaction: conflicts or alliance” (emphasis in the original pp. 21–22). For instance, regarding alienation, Lefebvre (1947) suggested an integrated understanding of alienation, fetishism, and mystification as a whole. This trialectical view explains what he termed social mystification, wherein “the very people who participate in society and who maintain it through their labour [. . .] are ignorant of what they do and what they are” (p. 194). This can be explained by a fetishism disguising human relations, as, for instance, “when we handle money, we forget, we no longer realize, that is merely ‘crystallized’ labour and that it represents human labour and nothing else” (p. 193). Thus, Lefebvre (1947) suggested that an alienated everyday can be restored through “immense effort of thought (consciousness) and action (creation)” (p. 197).

Based on the above, we propose to move commensality towards a performative, embodied, and rhythmic notion and to open up the study of everyday life in organizations to this kind of generative complexity. To investigate this further, we conduct a rhythmanalysis of commensality in the context of a spatio-temporal transformation of Digibank, which we introduce in the next section.

Research Context and Methodological Approach

Insights emerged from an open-ended and inductive research design (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012), wherein the initial focus was everyday working life in Digibank following its spatio-temporal transformation. This transformation included introducing working from home one or two days a week and implementing new flexible workspaces. In these workspaces, individual desks were no longer allocated to specific employees. Instead, workers moved around the open workspace to find the required facilities they need to perform three types of activities: individual work, support tasks, and collaborative activities. For collaborative activities, meeting rooms, project areas, and commensality spaces were designed. Specifically, commensality spaces refer to breakout areas on floors and restaurants in atriums.

Longitudinal fieldwork was used to explore the everyday commensality practices of Digibank, where the first author (she) was employed as an internal consultant in one of its divisions (Wealth) from 2011 to 2014. At that time, and as noted by Lefebvre (2003, p. 37), she had been “grasped” by Digibank’s working rhythms through visuals taken while walking around the headquarters, “abandoned” herself to sharing food with colleagues, and engaged in understanding “meanings and connections” via broad-ranging discussions with management and in “a certain exteriority” via observations of everyday food consumption and work practices. Courtesy of her former colleagues, she was later granted research access to the organization. During the fieldwork (2016–2019), her role as a researcher was that of participant-as-observer, i.e., she was immersed in the community but known to be conducting research having sought explicit permission (Ybema et al., 2009).

The empirical material was gathered from three divisions in three separate locations, as rhythms depend on the spatial scale through which they resound (Edensor, 2010). Each division offered markedly different experiences of spatiality. The “Wealth” division was located in the center of Paris, “Loans” was situated among business and shopping districts in the west and easily accessible by public transportation, and “Capital” was located in the suburbs of Paris. These divisions were interesting sites for researching commensality rhythms, as the type and style of interaction between participants in commensal events may have involved some dependence on physical surroundings (Fischler, 2011).

Data collection

This empirical investigation adopted various qualitative tools, with ethnography as the main method (Ybema et al., 2009), which is consistent with Lefebvre’s (2003, p. 29) “rhythmanalyst portrait” as well as previous research that applies rhythmanalysis to grasp everyday practices (e.g., Katila et al., 2020). The first author used thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) based on participant observations, interviews, visuals, and her autoethnographic accounts. Autoethnography brings together the “self” (*auto*), the culture (*ethno*), and the research process (*graphy*) (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Auto-ethnography aims to systematically describe and analyse personal experiences over a longer period of time (Ellis, 2004). Therefore, the researcher can give meaning to the cultural phenomenon under study and present a more personal narrative and perspective (Reed-Danahay, 1997).

The data collection, conducted over two years, comprised three phases. This period allowed her to size the cyclical repetitions entangled with linear processes. The first phase started in June 2016, just before the implementation of the change at Digibank, and lasted approximately four months. Architectural plans, design notes, and spatial and temporal guidelines were collected to obtain a clear picture of the institutional rhythms. Interviews were also conducted with organizational planners, including three facility managers, two architects, and four top managers (see Table 1).

Table 1. Interviewees.

Role	Codes for interviewees	
	Frequency of interview = 1	Frequency of interview = 2
Top management		#C1, #C2
Middle management	#P17	#M3
Team managers	#P27, #B35	# B19, #B15
Operational staff	#P28, #B30, #B27, #M11, #P1, #P7, #M9, #B29, #B26, #M15, #B8, #M22, #M21	#P34, #B34, #B44
Consultants	#M17, #B20	
Expatriates	#M14, #M18	
Organizational planners		#W1, #W2, #P10, #B6

Note: C = Corporate headquarters; W = Consultancy building, P = Wealth, M = Capital, B = Loan.

The second phase, from October 2016 to July 2017, corresponded with the initial period after the transformation in which the research perspective shifted towards emerging practices, social interactions, and commensality routines. The first author “listened” to employees’ initial rhythms of food consumption. She observed daily commensality practices and events in the three Digibank buildings. Moreover, she conducted 27 unstructured interviews with employees, including facility managers, to glean their initial interpretations of the new commensality ordering.

The last period was one year after the change implementation, from September 2017 to February 2019. Observations were made through habitual interaction with regular commensality spaces, nodes, and paths (Edensor, 2010), as well as through mapping and “following rhythms of secret meetings” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 79). These were interlaced with the first author’s accounts of commensality experience at Digibank while listening first to her body and mobilizing all her senses (Lefebvre, 2003). She then “listened” to the rhythms of Digibank’s employees. She gave 85 participants from the three research sites, reflecting the polyrhythmic nature of the organization, a digital camera and asked them to photograph meaningful spaces and objects representing their daily commensality experience (see Table 1). The photographs were subsequently discussed in the interviews, which “offered a closer look at what participants consider important [. . .] open space for the emergence of unexpected topics and themes” (Slutskaya, Simpson, & Hughes, 2012, p. 29). All interviews were recorded and manually transcribed. Quotes were translated from French to English by the first author, and pseudonyms were assigned.

Data analysis

In line with previous research on rhythms of everyday life (Edensor & Larsen, 2018; Nash, 2020), the analytical process followed indications given by Lefebvre (2003) to conduct an analysis of rhythms, even though these indications were not explicit regarding practices (Edensor, 2010). We used a five-step interpretive method (LeCompte, 2000) to analyse intensities, rhythms, and detailed descriptions (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012). The first step involved reading and coding all data and becoming familiar with topics and themes on rhythms and commensality. The second step involved listing all of the commensality practices and events and their recurrences in both time and space. For each commensality event, we listed other rhythms that coincided with the rhythm of commensality, since Lefebvre (2003, p. 31) highlighted that the rhythm analyst should “simultaneously catch a rhythm and perceive it within the whole.” For instance, we found rhythms of desire and

linear organizational rhythms such as teams' weekly meetings. In the third step, we followed Lefebvre (2003, p. 42), who indicated that there is an order "which reveals political power, other orders suggest themselves: a logic, a division of labour," and searched for those orders within the found rhythms. The higher order "isorhythmia" became our "metric that gives rhythm," as in music for Lefebvre (2003, p. 71), and allowed us to uncover a series of repetitive imperatives enmeshed in employees' bodies. In the fourth step, we focused on how employees individually and collectively attune, in interaction with the other rhythms grasped, to the metric. This allowed us to trace moments of arrhythmia via disruptions to the "higher order" producing counter rhythms (Edensor, 2010) and alternatively moments of eurhythmia via harmony with the "higher order." For each moment of eurhythmia, we looked for the compromises and alliances between rhythms that gave rise to the harmony, since Lefebvre and Régulier (2003b, p. 78) indicated that "alliance suppose harmony between different rhythms." This led us to two harmonies: (1) alliance with top-down choreographies and (2) alliance with marginal groups' social rhythms. For arrhythmia, as Lefebvre and Régulier (2003b, p. 78) noted that "conflict supposes arrhythmia," we grasped those commensality rhythms that highlighted conflict with the "higher order." This led us to (1) secret rhythms, (2) outdoor rhythms, and (3) fatal desynchronization. We then looked at which rhythms were involved in the conflicts that were found. This resulted in conflict with (1.1) teams' rhythms, (1.2) sensations and desires, (2.1) business impression rhythms, (2.2) sensations, (3.1) physical rhythms, and (3.2) linear rhythms of timetables. The final text was written in the fifth step from the iterations between tentative assertions and field data (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006).

Isorhythmia

At 12:20 p.m., I left the building for lunch with three colleagues. It was my turn to choose the restaurant, and I opted for a traditional brasserie that was 10 minutes' walking distance from the building. We were strolling, enjoying the sun, pausing for window shopping, and sensing bodies of shoppers and tourists brushing past us, taking pictures of the Haussmannian facades and selfies with the *Palais Garnier*. Arriving at the brasserie, we were welcomed by the waiter, who walked us to our table at the terrasse, brought the menu and explained the *plat du jour*. We ordered a bottle of *Sancerre* and an assortment of oysters when my friend, who worked nearby, joined us for lunch. We then ordered the principal plate separately. We exchanged stories about our private lives, made jokes, evaluated each other's food, and waved a *bonjour* to two other colleagues passing by the terrasse, eating sandwiches while walking in a hurry. At 1:50 p.m., after sipping coffee, we paid with the company vouchers. On our way back to the office, we walked fast, leaping between cars and traffic, past the agitated *Place de l'Opéra*. (first author field notes, Paris, 9th arrondissement, April 2014)

This account reveals that, before Digibank's spatio-temporal transformation, employees' trajectories during lunch breaks separated and extended out of the office's building into the Parisian streets. These trajectories were mixed with the multiple rhythms of the city, including workers' pace, café consumers, tourists, shoppers, and vehicle traffic. Moreover, the lunch rhythm was freely combined with the rhythms of outsiders, such as friends, and followed the flow of bodily desires.

In the new flexible offices, these diverse lunch rhythms were brought together, aspiring to turn a messy polyrhythmic lunch into isorhythmia, falling into indoor restaurants established by Digibank management. Jack, the corporate head of Human Resources, explained that "Restaurants offer an opportunity to create a large work community between employees from all floors. So, we offer our employees a new design that can compete with outdoor restaurants" (Jack #C2, July 2016). The indoor restaurants were situated in each building's atrium to encourage the desired

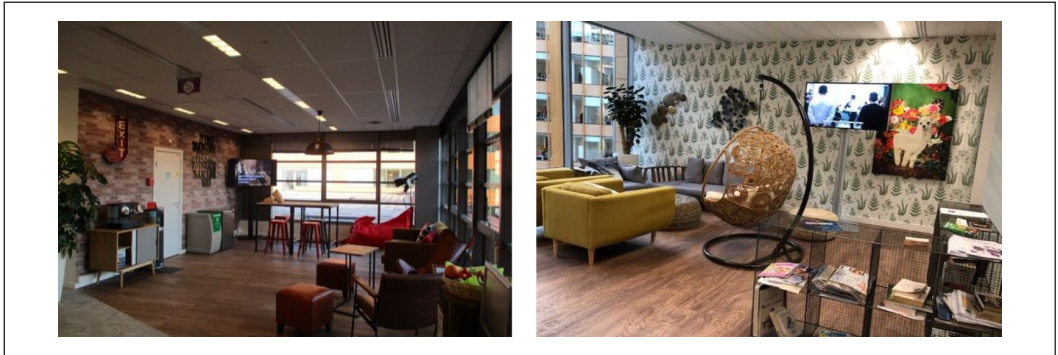


Figure 1. Examples of conviviality space (courtesy of author).

community and support interactions between employees from different floors. Each restaurant was furnished with large, brightly colored tables and buffets. The resemblance with outdoor bistros and brasseries was evoked through material arrangements, including two semi-circular bar counters, one with baristas serving coffee and the second serving alcoholic beverages. Moreover, a mobile open-air restaurant was added to the green area in the Capital building in spring and summer. All the food prepared and served in these restaurants reflected a multicultural unity, as “special attention is paid to the cultural, religious, and dietary diversity of the menu” (Jack #C2, July 2016).

During the rest of Digibank employees’ working day, temporalities of consuming and drinking were spatially assembled into a commensality rhythm in breakout areas on each floor, primarily designed to encourage employees to gather and interact there. According to John, a top manager responsible for the flexible office’s implementation, “We believe in the catalyst effect of unexpected encounters around the coffee machine, the communal table, and food. These serendipitous interactions can break down barriers and silos” (John #C1, July 2016). These breakout areas were labeled *conviviality spaces*, thus symbolizing Digibank’s communal aspiration, as conviviality forges group social bonds (Neal, Bennett, Cochrane, & Mohan, 2019). Conviviality spaces were designed as open spaces and located centrally on each floor. The strategic intent of their location was to “signal that these spaces are nodes where serendipitous interactions between employees from the same or different departments can happen” (Clement #W2, July 2016). This resembles the idea of functional centrality (Fayard & Weeks, 2007), as “any employee should pass by a conviviality space several times a day, while walking from the floor entrance to the workstation or from the desk to meeting rooms” (Clement #W2, July 2016). The conviviality spaces’ visual and architectural features were designed to create relaxing sensations (Katila et al., 2020), similar to domestic comfort. Victoire, the internal architect responsible for designing these spaces, described them as “welcoming areas that look like employees’ domestic living rooms so they can feel at home while at work” (Victoire #W1, September 2016). Closer scrutiny of the displayed décor reveals the arrangement of colored or leather sofas, communal tables, relaxing hammocks, magazine shelves, and genuine artworks (see Figure 1).

Furthermore, Digibank’s management introduced a rhythmic order that shapes food consumption explicitly via three rhetorical injunctions: “Do not circulate in office spaces with food and drink!”; “Consume food and drink (except for water) exclusively in commensality spaces!”; and “Eat lunch at the corporate restaurant open from 12 to 2 p.m.!”

Dressage

Commensality rhythmic order was embodied in employees through different forms of what Lefebvre (2003) termed “dressage,” including training, order maintenance, and repetition. During the weeks preceding the move to flexible offices, employees were enrolled in a mandatory three-hour preparatory training to acculturate them to the expected behaviors and regulations in the flexible workspace. Moreover, each building facility manager was responsible for maintaining order. After the move, the regulatory order was communicated and disseminated through the buildings, intranet, and weekly newsletters. Emma, responsible for internal communication, drew on rhetoric repetition so that the desired rhythm became second nature: “The regulations are framed everywhere. We repeat them again and again on different occasions, such as the monthly divisional meeting, so they become normal” (Emma, #B6, February 2017).

However, these forms of dressage were not fully in effect, as stressed by Patrice, the Wealth division facility manager: “The first few weeks post-move, employees played the game, but since then, what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh. My main concern as facility manager became food consumption. I am literally chasing those who do not respect the regulations” (Patrice #P10, November 2017). Interestingly and similarly to Patrice, the facility managers of the two other research sites had not noticed any major disruptions to the rhythmic order of commensality in the first weeks after initial training. This was supported by the first author’s observations, suggesting that a relative eurhythmia initially prevailed.

The following sections examine further moments of eurhythmia that occurred afterwards, reproducing the rhythmic ordering of commensality, as well as moments of arrhythmia disturbing this ordering.

Eurhythmia

Senior and middle management formed an alliance with the rhythmic order of commensality through choreographies of commensality. Marginal organizational members seeking socialization and social acceptance formed alliances with the rhythmic order of commensality.

Alliance with top-down choreographies

In the restaurants, the first author observed a set of rhythmically ordered lunch events hosted by senior management that division members attended, varying from annual celebratory lunches to those aiming to formulate divisional strategies in sync with organizational timetables. She was present at an annual learning programme launch of “digital intrapreneurship,” wherein funds and entrepreneurial training were awarded to successful applicants. All internal members were expected to attend. Generally held in February, this annual event began at approximately noon when the division board members arrived. They sat spread out at communal tables with subordinates. Each table was set with linen, glasses, plates, and cutlery for a three-course menu. As employees arrived, they were served wine or water, followed by a starter. The CEO then clarified that the purpose of this type of commensality was to “galvanize the company’s collective energy and turn something that begins as a single person’s idea into an innovative process that’s carried forward by the teams and the company itself” (first author’s field notes, February 2017). The main course was served after the CEO’s speech. The innovation department head then praised the applications and announced the winners, who subsequently presented their ideas to the audience and were then applauded. This was followed by ripened cheese and dessert coffee platters, allowing those present to interact informally. Such choreographed commensality encouraged organizational members to

participate by providing knowledge about strategic projects and enabling interaction with senior management. Gregory stated,

I look forward to these lunches. I mean, it's not every day that you get to eat at your workplace as in a Michelin-star restaurant. I enjoy these moments of grandeur. Besides, each time I attend these events, I learn a new thing about the strategy of the firm, and it also allows me to easily approach the ones who make decisions. (Gregory, #B8, February 2017)

In the conviviality spaces, the first author observed frequent brief commensality events organized by management to launch strategic projects related to departmental life; these were held at times of breaks from work—at 10 a.m. or 4 p.m. Moreover, every Tuesday before the school holidays, divisional departments joined efforts to help newcomers adapt to their new workplace through socialization routines involving food-sharing. Hosted in turn by a department, these commensality events were co-organized by the communications and human resource departments in the department host's conviviality space. They were usually promoted via the intranet and posters featuring a thematic dessert, such as *crêpes* for Candlemas. Newcomers' participation was mandatory during their first year.

At one such event, a large buffet table was arranged in the conviviality space and set with glasses, porcelain, and flatware. Employees started arriving at 1:45 p.m., and by 2 p.m., the department heads had walked to the large video screen in the middle of the conviviality space. They began by welcoming the attendees, then narrated lyrical stories about the host department's function, shared brief news of the division, and concluded by putting the newcomers in the spotlight. Commensality continued, and attendees huddled together at the buffet table. They were served *tartlets*, *petit fours*, and seasonal fruit salads. Coffee was continually served by the three department heads and their assistants, acting as hosts. They mingled among the attendees, making small talk and encouraging interaction, reminding attendees to serve themselves from the buffet table.

Newcomers described these events as important for acquiring new information about the organization and developing an informational network from different organizational units in a flexible office where they struggled socially. Showing a picture of cakes stylized with Christmas decorations and Digibank's name and corporate colors, newcomer Marine stated, "I had no idea who worked with who until the day I was invited to this event for newbies. I finally started to put some names to faces and got an idea of the structure" (Marine, #P7, January 2018).

Although at some of these events, the first author noticed employees with annoyed faces gazing at their plates or phone screens and leaving as soon as the serving of food was finished, they did not interrupt or create unexpected incidents disturbing the order of commensality.

Alliance with marginal groups' social rhythms

Unlike the integrative support for newcomers via choreographies of commensality, new consultants had to exert greater social efforts to adjust to insiders' rhythms, as they were excluded from all organizational commensality events. These efforts included engaging in social relationships with insiders through informal commensality gatherings in conviviality spaces during afternoons of slow work movements, usually around homemade food, to convey care. As one consultant expressed,

We, as externals, are excluded from these events. Informal occasions where I can pick up information are lacking. So, mainly on Friday mid-afternoon, I bring homemade pies and invite everyone passing through the café. People appreciate homemade food as they know it was prepared with care and are usually willing to take breaks before going on weekends. (Brigitte, #M17, February 2018)

Such informal commensality was a valuable way for these “outsiders” to interact with insiders and integrate organizational knowledge, particularly since the flexible office intensified their feelings of under-socialization. Expatriate workers looked happy to meet over homemade food at conviviality spaces and adjusted to their festive calendars (e.g., the Asian or Muslim calendar) to fulfill integration needs. Although they were invited to organizational commensality events, they saw these gatherings as emphasizing cultural differences between them and the local organizational members instead of being integrative. According to one expatriate,

When we bring homemade Asian dishes to the office and make them available here so that colleagues can serve themselves, they seem interested. We get questions about food, about us. It’s nicer than the company events where we don’t mix much with French co-workers as they don’t make an effort to speak English. Certainly, we’re in France, but it is supposed to be an international bank, after all. (Zhào, #M14, November 2018)

Thus, sharing cultural homemade food allowed this group to transcend linguistic differences and connect with the local group members, as ignoring a food invitation is generally considered inappropriate: “I emailed the department inviting them to join me in tasting Eid cakes. I was impressed by the number of people who showed up; people don’t say no to such invitations” (Amal, #M18, December 2018).

Employees who experienced social isolation because of the new flexible office re-shuffled their morning routine to coordinate with commensality in conviviality spaces to connect with colleagues. As Pascal noted, “This basket of pastries helps me not to be lonely, as I invite co-workers passing by to taste them with me. It’s a good morning routine set-up” (Pascal, #M9, November 2018). Living alone and in need of social interaction at work (where he spent most of his time), every morning, Pascal turned to commensality in conviviality spaces to alleviate loneliness. Socially active employees with weak social connections at work also resorted to conviviality spaces to reverse the adverse effects of workday loneliness. Christophe, an IT developer, said,

In the flex office, human contact is missing. Each time I turn around, I see unusual faces wearing headphones. I think if I scream, no one will notice, so each day, I go to conviviality spaces during rush times on the off chance of bumping into someone I know or having a little chat with new ones while queuing at the coffee machine. (Christophe, #M22, January 2018)

Arrhythmia

We now focus on commensality rhythms incurred by conflicts between the rhythmic order and other rhythms. These commensality rhythms are secret, outdoor, and fatal desynchronization.

Secret rhythms

Characterized by their divergence in space and/or time from the rhythmic order, secret rhythms highlight the conflict between the rhythmic order and two rhythms: groups’ rhythms and bodies’ sensations and desires.

Conflict with groups’ rhythms. To restore teamwork and bring together flex workers, the managers of large teams synchronized the rhythms of team meetings with shared breakfasts in meeting rooms. Aurélie, a team manager, explained this synchronization:

Flexible offices are dehumanizing! So, I decided to humanize our work, and what could be better than a nice breakfast with fresh pastries that I bring?! I also ask each time that someone from the team bring something else the next time. We held our bimonthly breakfast in a bookable meeting room just for us, far from the eyes of others. (Aurélie#B19, January 2018)

Likewise, other team managers, acutely aware of the value of face-to-face interactions, followed Aurélie's lead and mixed teamwork rhythms with commensality rhythms. Mark's weekly team meetings started with the sharing of a continental breakfast:

The [weekly] continental breakfast brings the whole team physically together. So, I take advantage of their presence to adopt a visual approach. We hang our bitmojis on the flipchart and associate them with tasks. If a deadline is approaching, we add someone to the task. It's more encouraging than videoconferencing and gives us more visibility on projects. (Mark, #B35, May 2018)

Secret commensality rhythms in closed meeting rooms allowed Mark to access the human contact he missed in virtual meetings.

Small teams also enacted secret rhythms of commensality in conviviality spaces but at alternative times to restore team cohesion. Paul, a manager of a small team whose members predominantly interact using information and telecommunication technologies, restored team cohesion via weekly breaks in conviviality spaces at deserted times. As he explained, "Due to the new ways of working, team cohesion gets lost. I feel like I am again working for a consultancy firm. Fortunately, we have these spaces. It allows me to gather my team around coffee, croissants, or sweets once a week. We try to come here at moments when others are not here" (Paul, #B15, March 2018).

In situations where team members were in the same building but on different floors, small team managers developed brief daily breaks from work around sharing coffee in conviviality spaces to encourage informal conversation. As Yann explained, "We all agreed that every day, we should take a few minutes to drink coffee together and have quick chats. We send a group message to coordinate: 'In five minutes, we are going to the coffee machine'" (Yann, #P27, November 2018). These breaks created a sense of belonging, as "being in the flex office makes me feel like I do not belong to a team anymore. I come to know fellow members only by name but not by face [. . .] so now that we have these coffee breaks, work has become more personal" (Celestine, #P28, December 2018).

Likewise, internal teams would hold hidden parting commensality events for external consultants in the separation phase from Digibank. This commensality usually melded into the final consulting report presentation in the project space. Consultants valued sharing festive food and alcoholic beverages with internal teams. They perceived this as a means of emotional and professional support: "As consultants, we need closure to each mission, so leaving surrounded by client teams helps us move on. There was talk about my next move; I received recommendations and even interesting proposals" (Djamel #B20, September 2018).

Bodies' sensations and desires. Regarding commensality ordering in conviviality spaces, our participants often reported discomfort and apprehension: "It is frustrating to be pressured to talk and socialize every time I drink a coffee at the conviviality spaces. I don't like to share my personal life details at work" (Alain, #M15, December 2018). To avoid these stressful interactions, employees bypassed hectic times of coffee drinking: "I avoid going to conviviality spaces at 10 a.m. or 4 p.m. when it's quite crowded" (Aline, #P1, February 2018).

Other respondents associated commensality with their desire to choose companionship and thus displaced the public rhythmic order of lunch to a secret one in forbidden spaces. Claire stated,

I don't eat at corporate restaurants because I don't have any choice of who eats next to me. But it shouldn't be like that. To me, commensality is a moment of pleasure inside work that I can share only with people I like. Therefore, my gang and I only come down at noon to take lunch up to a project room. (Claire, #M21, March 2018)

Likewise, other employees with shared affinities displaced afternoon public rhythms of commensality to quiet, closed spaces, such as silent rooms, to share foods, such as chocolate, which acts like a "social drug" (Topik, 2009):

This is my afternoon anti-depression drug [laughing]. I always have one of these in my locker. When I have the blues or work-related problems, I invite my closest friends here to join me around this box of chocolates. We never meet on the floors where we work; we look for an empty, closed, silent space and boost each other's morale. (Florence#B44, February 2018)

Sharing food with selected peers, far from managers' hearing distance, while engaging in casual conversation and gossip about superiors was a widespread desire among employees during mid-morning and mid-afternoon coffee breaks. Pierick recounted the following about a corner balcony:

We cannot speak openly in open spaces; the manager may be next to us and listen. Neither can we talk openly in conviviality spaces because it is worse there; big bosses can be around, and generally, people keep talking about work, but we only want to chill down and talk about light topics. So, at each coffee break, we move chairs and tables from the conviviality space; *et voilà*, we have our conviviality space. (Pierick, #B26, February 2018)

Outdoor rhythms

Outdoor rhythms of commensality emanated from conflict between the rhythmic order and two rhythms: rhythms of business impression and bodies' sensations.

Conflict with rhythms of business impression. Outdoor lunch in distinctive restaurants continued to punctuate working life at Digibank, as reflected in Caroline's narrative while showing a picture of an off-site restaurant:

This is where I took my customers. Even though HR refuses to reimburse me the fees for these business lunches, I keep doing it. For me, no matter what culinary chef they bring onsite, this will still be a canteen, and we don't take guests to a place where we have food on a tray! (Caroline, #P34, September 2018)

Considered a matter of business impression (Cabral-Cardoso & Pina e Cunha, 2003), the off-site business lunch caused recurring tensions between Digibank's management and employees. The latter regarded a good restaurant as crucial for a successful business lunch with international partners. Stéphane, an international programme director at Loan, stated,

Every time I received big international clients, I took them out for dinner. I put effort into choosing the restaurant; it must stand for the value of a real French gourmet experience. So, the menu, the service, and the atmosphere become a nice starting topic for discussion before tackling annoying subjects. (Stéphane, #B29, January 2018)

Conflict with sensations. Middle managers seeking to monitor subordinates used off-site lunches to scrutinize unit functioning. While enjoying a distinctive culinary experience, subordinates disclose sensitive information to their managers, as illustrated by the following typical comment: “I added to my work routine a bi-monthly lunch invitation of my team members to a nice outside restaurant. It helped me know them better, be closer and get missing information” (Yann, #P17, March 2017).

Employees also established a routine out of sync with work schedules when positive emotions flourished to invite their superiors to after-work commensality, to curry favor with personal and organizational interests: “My colleagues and I decided to go out for after-work drinks each month with the manager. This is important to us, as in such relaxed moments, we can easily approach the boss and discuss delicate topics such as salary increases, leave, etc.” (Christelle, #B30, March 2018). They could also interact with their superiors regarding work-related information and decision-making; as Christelle added, “Whenever I need to catch up on missed information, I use these afters to ask the boss. We even reach decisions efficiently.”

Fatal desynchronization

Arrhythmia devolved into a fatal disorder when the rhythmic order diverged in time, space, and energy from other rhythms. These other rhythms include physical rhythms and linear rhythms of public timetables.

Conflict with employees’ physical rhythms. When employees’ physical rhythms conflicted with the rhythmic order of commensality, arrhythmia devolved into a state in which commensality became morbid. Specifically, the ban on drinking coffee at one’s desk was contested by most employees due to concerns about time use and work productivity. Drinking coffee alone at their desks punctuated employees’ everyday working lives in all three researched buildings. Subverting this rule was typically justified in terms of coffee’s potential to energize the mind: “I cannot work without having my cup of coffee near me. I am not productive without it. But, if, every time I need coffee, If I bow to the policy and walk to the conviviality space, I will lose time, or I will spend the day there [ironic tone]” (Albert #M3, May 2017). Following this act of resistance, a managerial gesture was made involving artefacts. Mugs with lids were offered to employees as a compromise between employees’ contestation of coffee being prohibited at desks and facility managers’ concerns about building cleaning costs.

Morbid commensality continued to mark Digibank’s everyday life, as exhausted employees running low on energy, especially by the end of the working day, turned to solo snacking at their desks. This was emphasized by Gerard when he showed the first author a picture of an old printer transformed into a sweets container (Figure 2): “Well, they think they are smart with their suffocating regulations, but look what I did [laugh]. I have my vending machine so I can eat at the desk while working whenever I feel a drop in energy” (Gerard #B34, February 2018). Other employees stressed the need for a reviving lunch break to re-energize their bodies. They turned to lone lunch at their desks, away from others’ rhythms, as echoed by Marjorie:

At first, eating with colleagues and superiors was fun, but over time, I realized it became a work effort. It requires politics, compromises, and forced smiles. I can do it from time to time, but not every day. I need to chill out while having lunch, so I go down to the company restaurant and bring back my meal tray to eat at my desk. (Marjorie, #B27, March 2018)



Figure 2. Example of fatal disorder (courtesy of author).

Conflict with linear rhythms of public timetables. Likewise, employees apprehending rhythmic inconsistencies with linear rhythms of timetables (schools, commuting) enacted lone, quick routines of eating lunch at their desks and thus distanced themselves from commensality with peers and its inherent role as a time thief. Marion, a single mother, described her solo commensality routine as follows:

I eat my lunch at the desk, even if it's against the rules. It's not that I hate eating with others; on the contrary, I tried it, but it is time-consuming between talking and waiting until others finish to leave. I can't afford to lose time as I need to finish my workday by five to pick up my daughter from school at 5:30 p.m. (Marion, #M11, November 2018)

Faced with these forms of arrhythmic disturbances to the rhythmic order of commensality, at the end of the fieldwork and in an attempt to restore eurhythmia, Digibank management introduced new reinforcement measures, including a reward system (annual bonuses) for team managers coercing their team members into conformity.

Discussion

Through a *rhythmanalysis* (Lefebvre, 2003) of commensality in Digibank, we found that multiple commensality rhythms coalesce and are sutured into (1) an *isorhythmia* rhythmically ordering commensality and disciplining employees' bodies to embody the rhythmic order; (2) an *eurhythmia* emerging in harmony with the rhythmic order; and (3) an *arrhythmia* disturbing the rhythmic order through secret rhythms of commensality, outdoor rhythms of commensality, and fatal desynchronization. *Eurhythmia* reveals alliances between the rhythmic order and two rhythms: top-down choreographies and marginal groups' social rhythms. *Arrhythmia* reveals a conflict between the rhythmic order and other rhythms, including rhythms of groups, employees' sensations and desires, physical rhythms of employees, and linear rhythms of timetables. These findings contribute to the academic debate on (1) organizational commensality, (2) trialectics and complexities of the organizational "everyday" (Beyes, 2018; Beyes & Steyaert, 2012), and (3) critique of everyday life in organizations (Courpasson, 2017; Thorpe et al., 2023).

Commensality in organizations through the lens of rhythmanalysis

This study contributes to the debate on commensality in organizations (Briner & Sturdy, 2008; Moser et al., 2021; Pina e Cunha et al., 2008) through the lens of rhythmanalysis (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Lefebvre, 2003; Nash, 2020). Previous studies foregrounded the spatio-temporal patterns of commensality in organizations as stable (Di Domenico & Phillips, 2009; Roy, 1959; Sturdy et al., 2006). Our study reveals commensality in organizations as open-ended and performative (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012), acknowledging both the co-existence of multiple generative time-spaces (Crang, 2001) and the affective role of the body (Katila et al., 2020)—being affected by dressage, resisting dressage, and affecting via its sensations, desires, and needs—in producing continually changing movements. In these movements, commensality revolved around a manipulated practice, a practice embodying the rhythmic order, a reactive practice, a morbid practice, and a managerial imposition.

Digibank's management recognized commensality's socializing power role in triggering the emergence of a commonality (Simmel, 1997) and developing a sense of community (Bloch, 1999; Fischler, 2011; Parker, 2008). Management thus attempted to norm the organizational enactment of commensality in accordance with prescribed rhythms. A polyrhythmic commensality (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Verduyn, 2015) is organized by architects, designers, and managers (Lefebvre, 2003), while an isorhythmia emerges to fix and stabilize the time-space of commensality (Edensor, 2010). Thus, commensality becomes a manipulated practice (Lefebvre, 1981). Dressage and aesthetics played a role in this manipulation (Katila et al., 2020; Lefebvre, 2003). For example, conviviality spaces were furnished like a living room to induce relaxation sensations. As for dressage, preparatory training on commensality regulations was scheduled to allow employees to gain sensible knowledge about the rhythmic order. This has led to an initial eurhythmia in which commensality becomes a practice embodying the rhythmic order.

Mimicking military regimes (Lefebvre, 2003), dressage continued to affect bodies through the "repetition" of rules by communication departments and "internal control" by facilities managers. Commensality embodied the rhythmic order, as eurhythmia continues to reign from the alliances between the rhythmic order and exceptional commensality intrinsic to special dates in the organizational calendar (Di Domenico & Phillips, 2009; Rosen, 1985; Thomson & Hassenkamp, 2008). Eurhythmia also emerged from the alliances between the rhythmic order and the repetitive and mundane commensalities (Cook & Wyndham, 1953; Roy, 1959) enacted by marginal groups to foster a sense of belonging (Thomson & Hassenkamp, 2008). A reactive commensality (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012, 2013) emerges, diverging in time-space in interaction with the sensations, needs, and desires of employees' bodies (Farrington, 2021). For instance, employees affected by positive emotions transformed monthly outdoor restaurants into a time-space for enacting a reactive commensality that can lead to the currying of work favors.

Arrhythmia devolved into a fatal desynchronization (Lefebvre, 2003), marking the death of commensality. Specifically, in line with feminist movements that resisted virile models of dressage (Lefebvre, 2003), desks and work time in sync with bodies' needs and desires became the time-space of a morbid commensality that resisted dressage. As "with every closing down comes an opening up" (Beyes & Holt, 2020, p. 15), following these transformations of commensality time-space and bodies' resistance to dressage, management initiated a new intervention to fix and stabilize the rhythms of commensality in time-space. Consequently, commensality once again became a managerial imposition.

The trialectics and complexities of the organizational everyday

This study contributes to research on organizational rhythms (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Katila et al., 2020; Vesala, 2024) by complementing a nascent trialectical movement in organization studies connecting rhythm analysis to elements of the Lefebvrian everyday trialectics (e.g., Nash, 2020; Thorpe et al., 2023; Verduyn, 2015), through a generative understanding of the trialectics of the organizational everyday that reveals some of its complexities (Beyes, 2018; Beyes & Steyaert, 2012). Our study shows the organizational everyday in continual relation (harmony and conflict) with everydayness and everyday life in organizations and beyond. In this continual interaction, our findings show that, in its richness of embodiment, affect (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012), and politics, the organizational everyday revolved around passivity, normalization, and retaliation.

First, our findings reveal that a polyrhythmic commensality, be it in the organizational everyday, as “the everyday reveals itself to be a polyrhythmia from the first listening” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 25), intersects with everyday life in organizations that entered into a “technocratic rationality” (Lefebvre, 1981). An everydayness arises, attempting to erase an organizational everyday (Lefebvre, 1961; Verduyn, 2015) that becomes “passive” (Lefebvre, 1981; Nash, 2020).

Second, through dressage, the organizational everyday builds up embodied routines (Katila et al., 2020), as in the few weeks after training, an eurhythmia “in normal (which to say normed!) everydayness” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 25) prevailed. The organizational everyday becomes “normalized” (Lefebvre, 1981). Being affected by dressage, the embodied routines continue to emerge from the harmony between everydayness, the organizational everyday, and everyday life in organizations. Our findings also reveal that in eurhythmia, which “supposes harmony” (Lefebvre & Régulier, 2003b, p. 78), the rhythmic order formed alliances with two rhythms from everyday life in organizations: top-down choreographies and social rhythms of marginal groups.

Third, in terms of being affected by bodies’ desires, needs, and sensations, in its interactions with everyday life in organizations, the organizational everyday “retaliates” (Lefebvre, 1981). Our findings reveal that in arrhythmia, which “supposes conflict” (Lefebvre & Régulier, 2003b, p. 78), the rhythmic order conflicted with different rhythms in everyday life in organizations and beyond (Thorpe et al., 2023), including rhythms of groups, work rhythms, physical rhythms of employees, and linear rhythms of timetables. This retaliation was followed by an everydayness trying again to erase the organizational everyday via the introduction in everyday life in organizations of a new form of dressage resonating again with military regimes (Lefebvre, 2003), which included “rewards” for team managers coercing their team members into conformity. The organizational everyday enters again into the realm of “norms and conventions” (Lefebvre, 1981).

Triadic theorization and critique of everyday life in organizations

Previous studies suggested a dualistic view of everyday life in organizations by showing a binary relation of opposition between alienation and disalienation (Courpasson, 2017; Thorpe et al., 2023). Our case shows that, in its continuous interaction with everydayness and the organizational everyday, everyday life in organizations reveals a triadic relation between alienation and disalienation (harmony and conflict), bringing about alienation–fetishism–new alienation as a whole in everydayness and allowing a critique that integrates alienation–disalienation–new alienation as a whole.

In our case study, a practice foregrounded by Lefebvre (1947) as disalienating everyday workers from everydayness led instead to the emergence of an everydayness (Lefebvre, 1961; Verduyn, 2015) alienating organizational members from their differences and desires in enacting

commensality. From its interactions with everyday life in organizations, the organizational everyday establishes itself in both harmony and conflict with everydayness.

In its harmony with everydayness, the everyday exposes the “fetichism” (Lefebvre, 1947) of exceptional commensality (Rosen, 1985, 1988) and other forms of ambiguities in everyday life (Lefebvre, 1961; Nash, 2020). Similarly to the fetishization of money (Lefebvre, 1947), Digibank’s management used a dramatized exceptional commensality reflected in aspects such as the order in which menu courses followed the sequence of speeches and the symbolic food selection, arrangement, and serving (Rosen, 1985) to unite employees with the rhythmic order of commensality. This fetishism not only “disguised” the rhythmic order but was also an instrument to effect organizational projects (Sturdy et al., 2006) and express organizational order (Pina e Cunha et al., 2008). Notably, we have seen employees seduced by the orchestration of these commensalities and no longer realizing that, by doing so, they are abiding by an order.

Harmony with everydayness also exposes other forms of ambiguities and tensions in everyday life in organizations, such as exclusion and marginalization. While exceptional commensality aimed to promote a sense of togetherness (Parker, 2008) and communion between employees (Bloch, 1999), it also considered consultants as “outsiders” and excluded them from exceptional organizational commensality (Dacin et al., 2010; Thomson & Hassenkamp, 2008). Exceptional commensality also marginalized the national culture of expatriates via the domination of French culture in these events. To remedy such tensions, consultants united with the rhythmic order to strengthen their social bonds with “insiders” via commensality (Fischler, 2011). Expatriates used food that reflected their national culture to affirm their membership in and reshape organizational culture (Flores-Pereira et al., 2008). Everyday experiences of alienated organizational members also revealed an increasing feeling of loneliness (Vesala, 2024) and social isolation (Sewell & Taskin, 2015) following the transformation of workspaces in everyday life in organizations.

In its conflict with everydayness, the organizational everyday exhibits the consciousness and strength of employees who resist the rhythmic order. Simultaneously, it exposes the alienations of everydayness, disregarding employees’ needs, desires, and emotions. This was highlighted in our study by the needs of team managers experiencing difficulty in maintaining group cohesion in a flexible office (Millward et al., 2007). Moreover, as Parker (2008, p. 1001) astutely noted, “words like community, commensality and communal are simultaneously claustrophobic and comforting”; Digibank employees felt “claustrophobia” and expressed stress and discomfort under the imposition of commensality ordering. Yet, everydayness disregarded their feelings and emotions. Our findings also highlight how everydayness ignored employees’ desires and views on commensality as an intimate practice to be engaged in by close peers; as Douglas (1972, p. 66) stated, “Meals are for family, close friends, honoured guests [. . .] the meal expresses close friendship.” Everydayness also disregarded organizational members’ needs to impress via business commensalities (Cabral-Cardoso & Pina e Cunha, 2003). We have seen organizational members using outdoor commensality in distinctive restaurants as a social transaction to create a positive impression with internal business partners and subalterns. Finally, everydayness negates the human body and its physiological rhythms and needs, as highlighted by exhausted employees running low on energy by the end of the working day. Conscious bodies showed agency (Farrington, 2021) by superseding the spatio-temporal orders of everydayness through creative actions (Lefebvre, 1947, 1961). We have seen, for example, employees resisting orders by drinking coffee at their desks alone, consistent with their physiological needs and desires, and we have also seen that their resistance mattered as management made compromises. Therefore, in line with others (Courpasson, 2017; Thorpe et al., 2023), we argue that the organizational everyday still matters.

In line with Lefebvre's (1961) critique of everyday life in factories, everyday life in organizations was the home of disalienation and new alienation. Specifically, our case shows that the organizational everyday continues to be "alive" (Lefebvre, 2003) through employees' creative actions, highlighted by the transformation of old printers into sweets containers so that they could have food at their desks, in accordance with their bodily needs and desires. In response to these creative actions, management attempted to restore everydayness via a new alienation. Therefore, in line with Lefebvre's (1961, p. 71) critique of everyday life, our critique of everyday life in organizations reveals "maximum alienation and relative disalienation."

Conclusion

This study conducted a rhythmanalysis of the practice of commensality in a major banking organization in Paris. Based on a longitudinal ethnographic field study, multiple commensality rhythms were found that coalesce and are sutured into three ensembles: isorhythmia, eurhythmia, and arrhythmia. These ensembles indicate a rhythmic order, dressage, alliances, and conflicts between rhythms. Our findings (1) allow a performative and open-ended view on commensality that foregrounds time-space as generative and the body as affective; (2) unravel some complexities of the organizational everyday and show its richness of embodiment, affects, and politics; and (3) offer a triadic theorization of everyday life in organizations serving as an entry to its critique. This critique enables a heightened understanding of the circumstances of alienated organizational members by revealing hidden alienations. It also allows the argument that the organizational everyday still matters through consciousness and actions that disalienate. Furthermore, this critique highlights the unpredictability of everydayness continually imposing constraints on employees' bodies. In engaging Lefebvre's thought on rhythmanalysis and everyday life to elicit the pervasive regulations of practices in organizations and time-space manipulations by the powerful, we have suggested that, in Lefebvre's work, one can find an invitation to analyse other practices in organizations and organizing trialectically. By doing so, future research can enrich the critique of everyday life in organizations, demystify the organizational everyday with the purpose of its transformation, and expose the alienations of everydayness. Thus, let's extend the everyday trialectical movement in organization studies through new readings of Lefebvre's oeuvre!

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to our senior editor, Timon Beyes, for his masterful editorial guidance, ongoing encouragement, and generous support throughout the editorial process. Under his remarkable editorial "baton," the article's initial messy rhythms turned into a "harmony." We also thank editor-in-chief Paolo Quattrone for his support and the three anonymous reviewers for their constructive, critical, and thought-provoking engagement with this article. Furthermore, earlier versions of the article benefited from invaluable comments from the conveners and participants in the sub-theme "Organizing inclusive spaces: Processual approaches to space in organizations" at the 37th EGOS Colloquium in Amsterdam (2021), as well as from the participants of the 82nd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management in Seattle (2022).

ORCID iD

Marie M. Hasbi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6132-5958>

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Note

1. The first author compared the original French version to the English translation and translated the key terms herself.

References

- Beyes, Timon (2018). Politics, embodiment, everyday life: Lefebvre and spatial organization. In Karen Dale, Sytze F. Kingma, & Varda Wasserman (Eds.), *Organisational space and beyond: The significance of Henri Lefebvre for organisation studies* (pp. 27–45). New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Beyes, Timon, & Holt, Robin (2020). The topographical imagination: Space and organization theory. *Organization Theory*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2631787720913880>
- Beyes, Timon, & Steyaert, Chris (2012). Spacing organization: Non-representational theory and performing organizational space. *Organization*, 19, 45–61.
- Beyes, Timon, & Steyaert, Chris (2013). Strangely familiar: The uncanny and unsiting organizational analysis. *Organization Studies*, 34, 1445–1465.
- Bloch, Maurice (1999). Commensality and poisoning. *Social Research*, 66, 133–149.
- Briner, Rob B., & Sturdy, Andrew (2008). Introduction to food, work and organization. *Human Relations*, 61, 907–912.
- Cabral-Cardoso, Carlos, & Pina e Cunha, Miguel (2003). The business lunch: Toward a research agenda. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 24, 371–379.
- Cook, P. H., & Wyndham, A. J. (1953). Patterns of eating behaviour: A study of industrial workers. *Human Relations*, 6, 141–160.
- Courpasson, David (2017). The politics of everyday. *Organization Studies*, 38, 843–859.
- Crang, Mike (2001). Rhythms of the city: Temporalised space and motion. In Jon May & Nigel Thrift (Eds.), *Timespace: Geographies of temporality* (pp. 187–207). London: Routledge.
- Dacin, M. Tina, Munir, Kamal, & Tracey, Paul (2010). Formal dining at Cambridge colleges: Linking ritual performance and institutional maintenance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53, 1393–1418.
- Di Domenico, Maria Laura, & Phillips, Nelson (2009). Sustaining the ivory tower: Oxbridge formal dining as organizational ritual. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 18, 326–343.
- Douglas, Mary (1972). Deciphering a meal. *Daedalus*, 101, 61–81.
- Edensor, Tim (2010). Introduction. In Tim Edensor (Ed.), *Geographies of rhythm: Nature, place, mobilities and bodies* (pp. 1–18). London: Routledge.
- Edensor, Tim, & Larsen, Jonas (2018). Rhythmanalysing marathon running: ‘A drama of rhythms’. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 50, 730–746.
- Elden, Stuart (2004). *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*. Edinburgh: A&C Black.
- Ellis, Carolyn (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Oxford: Alta Mira Press.
- Farrington, Alex (2021). Reorienting the production of space: Rhythmanalysis, desire, and “the siege of the third precinct”. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 39, 938–954.
- Fayard, Anne-Laure, & Weeks, John (2007). Photocopiers and water-coolers: The affordances of informal interaction. *Organization Studies*, 28, 605–634.
- Fischler, Claude (2011). Commensality, society and culture. *Social Science Information*, 50, 528–548.
- Flores-Pereira, Maria Tereza, Davel, Eduardo, & Cavedon, Neusa Rolita (2008). Drinking beer and understanding organizational culture embodiment. *Human Relations*, 61, 1007–1026.
- Freud, Sigmund (1938). *Totem and taboo: Resemblances between the psychic lives of savages and neurotics*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books.
- Geertz, Clifford (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

- Grignon, Claude (2001). Commensality and social morphology: An essay of typology. In Peter Scholliers (Ed.), *Food, drink and identity: Cooking, eating and drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages* (pp. 23–34). Oxford: Berg.
- Hirschman, Albert O. (1996). Melding the public and private spheres: Taking commensality seriously. *Critical Review*, 10, 533–550.
- Katila, Saija, Kuismin, Ari, & Valtonen, Anu (2020). Becoming upbeat: Learning the affecto-rhythmic order of organizational practices. *Human Relations*, 73, 1308–1330.
- Kerner, Susanne, Chou, Cynthia, & Warmind, Morten. (2015). *Commensality: From everyday food to feast*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- LeCompte, Margaret D. (2000). Analyzing qualitative data. *Theory Into Practice*, 39, 146–154.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1947). *Critique de la vie quotidienne, t. I: Introduction*. Paris: Grasset.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1961). *Critique de la vie quotidienne, t. II: Fondements d'une sociologie de la quotidienneté*. Paris: L'Arche.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1968). *La vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1981). *Critique de la vie quotidienne, t. III: De la modernité au modernisme (Pour une métaphilosophie du quotidien)*. Paris: L'Arche.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1991a). *Critique of everyday life*. London: Verso.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1991b). *The production of space (Donald Nicholson-Smith, Trans.)*. London: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1992). *Éléments de Rythmanalyse: Introduction à la connaissance des rythmes*. Paris: Éditions Syllepse.
- Lefebvre, Henri (2003). *Rhythmanalysis: Space, time and everyday life* (Stuart Elden & Gerald Moore, Trans.). London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Lefebvre, Henri, & Régulier, Catherine (2003a). Attempt at the rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean cities (Stuart Elden & Gerald Moore, Trans.). In *Rhythmanalysis: Space, time, and everyday life* (pp. 93–106). London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Lefebvre, Henri, & Régulier, Catherine (2003b). The rhythmanalytical project (Stuart Elden & Gerald Moore, Trans.). In *Rhythmanalysis: Space, time and everyday life* (pp. 81–92). London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Lourau, René (Ed.) (1992). *Henrisques*. In *Éléments de Rythmanalyse: Introduction à la connaissance des rythmes* (pp. 5–10). Paris: Éditions Syllepse.
- Mennell, Stephen, Murcott, Anne, & van Otterloo, Anneke H. (1992). *The sociology of food: Eating, diet and culture*. London: Sage Publications.
- Millward, Lynne J., Haslam, S. Alexander, & Postmes, Tom (2007). Putting employees in their place: The impact of hot desking on organizational and team identification. *Organization Science*, 18, 547–559.
- Moser, Christine, Reinecke, Juliane, den Hond, Frank, Svejnova, Silviya, & Croidieu, Grégoire (2021). Biomateriality and organizing: Towards an organizational perspective on food. *Organization Studies*, 42, 175–193.
- Nash, Louise (2020). Performing place: A rhythmanalysis of the city of London. *Organization Studies*, 41, 301–321.
- Neal, Sarah, Bennett, Katy, Cochrane, Allan, & Mohan, Giles (2019). Community and conviviality? Informal social life in multicultural places. *Sociology*, 53, 69–86.
- Parker, Martin (2008). Eating with the Mafia: Belonging and violence. *Human Relations*, 61, 989–1006.
- Pina e Cunha, Miguel, Cabral-Cardoso, Carlos, & Clegg, Stewart (2008). Manna from heaven: The exuberance of food as a topic for research in management and organization. *Human Relations*, 61, 935–963.
- Reed-Danahay, Deborah (1997). *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Rosen, Michael (1985). Breakfast at Spiro's: Dramaturgy and dominance. *Journal of Management*, 11, 31–48.
- Rosen, Michael (1988). You asked for it: Christmas at the bosses' expense. *Journal of Management Studies*, 25, 463–480.
- Roy, Donald F. (1959). 'Banana time': Job satisfaction and informal interaction. *Human Organization*, 18, 158–168.
- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, & Yanow, Dvora (2012). *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Sewell, Graham, & Taskin, Laurent (2015). Out of sight, out of mind in a new world of work? Autonomy, control, and spatiotemporal scaling in telework. *Organization Studies*, 36, 1507–1529.
- Simmel, Georg (1997). The sociology of the meal. In David Frisby & Mike Featherstone (Eds.), *Simmel on culture: Selected writings* (pp. 130–136). London: Sage Publications.
- Slutskaya, Natasha, Simpson, Alexander, & Hughes, Jason (2012). Lessons from photoelicitation: Encouraging working men to speak. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 7, 16–33.
- Sturdy, Andrew, Schwarz, Mirela, & Spicer, Andre (2006). Guess who's coming to dinner? Structures and uses of liminality in strategic management consultancy. *Human Relations*, 59, 929–960.
- Thomson, Di, & Hassenkamp, Anne-Marie (2008). The social meaning and function of food rituals in health-care practice: An ethnography. *Human Relations*, 61, 1775–1802.
- Thorpe, Holly, Brice, Julie, Soltani, Anoosh, Nemani, Mihi, O'Leary, Grace, & Barrett, Nikki (2023). The pandemic as gender arrhythmia: Women's bodies, counter rhythms and critique of everyday life. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 30, 1552–1570.
- Topik, Steven (2009). Coffee as a social drug. *Cultural Critique*, 71, 81–106.
- Vandeventer, James Scott, Lloveras, Javier, & Warnaby, Gary (2024). Seeking organizational geographies: A multidimensional spatial analysis of everyday organizing. *Organization Studies*, 45, 1133–1160.
- Verduyn, Karen (2015). Entrepreneurship and process: A Lefebvrian perspective. *International Small Business Journal*, 33, 638–648.
- Vesala, Hanne (2024). Lived rhythms as a ground for togetherness and learning in hybrid workspace. *Management Learning*, 55, 366–385.
- Yanow, Dvora, & Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine (2006). *Interpretation and method: Empirical research methods and the interpretative turn*. New York, NY: Sharpe.
- Ybema, Sierk, Yanow, Dvora, Wels, Harry, & Kamsteeg, Frans (2009). *Organizational ethnography. Studying the complexities of everyday life*. London: Sage Publications.

Author biographies

Marie M. Hasbi is an external PhD researcher in the Department of Organization Sciences at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the spaces, bodies, and rhythms of everyday life in organizations, with a particular interest in placeless, agile, and hybrid work arrangements. Marie has a 10-year career in engineering and human resources, spanning both industrial and financial sectors. Between 2018 and 2021, Marie served as a representative-at-large for the Critical Management Studies division of the Academy of Management (AoM). Her research has appeared in proceedings of international conferences, such as the Academy of Management, and has been published in *Journal of Change Management*.

Alfons van Marrewijk is Full Professor Construction Cultures at the Department of Management in the Built Environment, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of the Delft University of Technology and Adjunct Professor of Project Management at the Norwegian Business School BI Oslo. Furthermore, he is Associate Professor at the Department Organization Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. In his academic work he uses anthropological theories and methods for studying the everyday life of employees in (temporary) organizations. He has published in journals such as *Organization Studies*, *British Journal of Management*, *Environmental Innovation and Sustainable Transition*, *International Journal of Project Management*, and *Project Management Journal*.

