



Open Research Online

Citation

Lucas, Mike and Wright, Alex (2013). Liminal performativity: Modern-day festivals and embodied practice. In: European Group for Organization Studies Colloquium (EGOS 2013), 5-7 Jul 2013, Montréal, Canada.

URL

<https://oro.open.ac.uk/44655/>

License

None Specified

Policy

This document has been downloaded from Open Research Online, The Open University's repository of research publications. This version is being made available in accordance with Open Research Online policies available from [Open Research Online \(ORO\) Policies](#)

Versions

If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding

Liminal performativity: Modern-day festivals and embodied practice

How does liminal performativity emerge? This paper draws from ethnographic field data of a modern-day festival in rural Sweden to examine performativity in a liminal space. We illustrate how practice arranged around the accomplishment of a festival is performative, and how the physical location of a small village in rural Sweden constitutes a liminal context. This example allows us to theorise liminal performativity, which we see as organizing that is, in part, constituted by and through the spaces within which it occurs. We focus on liminal spaces because we see such locations as sites betwixt and between (Turner, 1969) formal organization, and by studying such constitutive phenomena we develop our knowledge of informal organization and organizing that frequently occurs at physical margins or in formal spaces that are made marginal. Modern-day festivals provide interesting and revealing sites for investigating performative practices, as in such contexts it is often an overarching idea, rather than a specific theory, that stimulates and guides activity. We speculate that ideas in organizations are much more performative than previously considered and should be considered alongside theories, models and concepts as performative phenomena.

We claim contributions to two literatures. First, we extend existing performativity theory (Austin, 1975) by explicating space as constitutive of performative organizing. Drawing from a long and substantial history of studies in postmodern geography, (e.g. Abbott, 1952; Jones, 2009; Lefebvre, 1991; Thrift, 2006) previous studies have highlighted the importance of space in how organization unfolds; (e.g. Dale, 2005; Halford & Leonard, 2005) for example, Tyler and Cohen (2010) identified how gender performativity occurs in spaces that matter. Whereas Dobers and Strannegard (2004) tracked a piece of art ('the Cocoon') as it appeared in and at different art exhibitions across the globe, and discussed how these different places and spaces acted on the Cocoon changing the meanings it carried and was assigned. Beyes and Steyaert, (2012: 48) on the other hand, drew inspiration from a video installation, ('The Raft') to advance a performative concept of space "as enacted through material, embodied, affective and minor spacings." Our focus on a rural festival builds on this previous work as we consider how a liminal space (Küpers, 2011) is created anew every twelve months. Space becomes performative, we argue, when it appears as an active actor in the construct of meaning. Our rural space, through the entwined actions of humans and non-humans, was acted upon but also acted on in complex performative relationships with other actors.

Second, we contribute to the burgeoning literature on liminality in organization and management studies through our focus on liminal spaces as constitutive actors. Since its emergence in anthropological studies, (e.g. Turner, 1969 & 1982; Van Gennep, 1960) the notion of liminality has been drawn from to provide insight into how management consulting is accomplished, (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003; Sturdy, Schwarz & Spicer, 2006) how management self-help books act to create their own markets, (Cullen, 2009) how learning occurs in temporary project teams, (Tempest & Starkey, 2004) and, how identity change can emerge (Beech, 2011). Liminality implies space, as the construct is built upon the idea that social life involves occasions when individuals and groups are removed from their normal lived spaces and temporarily inhabit alternate contexts, often betwixt and between their regular experiences. Tempest, Starkey and Ennew, (2007) for example, locate their study of what happens when organisations overreach themselves in the May 1996 Everest disaster. This drama unfolds on Mount Everest a place made a liminal space through the combined actions of the humans and non-humans on the expedition. We argue that liminal spaces are themselves performatives. We recognise that such a claim is ontological as it posits space as active in the construction of reality. From this perspective, space can be seen as a 'text' and the realities that emerge from it as the unpredictable outcome of entwined performative communication and texts.

By integrating these two literatures, the performative and the liminal, we argue that both are enriched. To the performative literature, liminality helps articulate a fine-grained understanding of space that helps articulate how performative organizing occurs in spatial contexts that make a difference to how it unfolds. The liminality literature benefits from a performative sensitivity as it encourages those scholars interested in liminal contexts to consider them as actors in their own right, as texts that matter.

Theoretical base

Performatives

MacKenzie and colleagues' recent work in the sociology of economics arena has contributed to the rekindling of interest in how certain social phenomena exhibit the properties of performatives, in that they produce that which they are assumed to represent (e.g. Hardie & MacKenzie, 2007; MacKenzie, 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2006a,b; MacKenzie & Millo, 2003; MacKenzie, Muniesa & Siu, 2007; Millo & MacKenzie, 2009). This work draws from Austin's (1975) original exposition, that certain speech utterances perform that to which they refer. The expression "I apologize" is an explicit performative, in Austin's (1975: 83) terms, as its utterance conducts the act. Similarly, expressions such as "congratulations" and "I promise" are also performative utterances. Drawing from Austin, MacKenzie's considerable innovation has been to identify the performative power of models, concepts and theories, particularly economic theories, through work examining how the Black-Scholes-Merton pricing model did more than simply express price patterns that were already in existence, it influenced and shaped the behaviour of economists that affected the price of economic markets such that they resembled the Black-Scholes-Merton model more and more. MacKenzie and colleagues' great contribution has been to identify the performative power of models, concepts and theories.

The broadening of Austinian performative theory by MacKenzie in economic sociology and Callon and colleagues in science and technology studies has stimulated management and organization researchers to examine how theories impact practice. This work has produced new insight into how decision theory influences decision making practice; (Cabantous, Gond & Johnson-Cramer, 2010) how organizational routines are accomplished; (D'Adderio, 2008 & 2011) how market segmentation theory bears down upon practice shaping how segmentation is constructed in organizations; (Harrison & Kjellberg, 2010) how, following Butler, gender is performatively constituted; (Tyler & Cohen, 2010) and, how strategy-work is a socio-political performative practice (Kornberger & Clegg, 2011; Ottosson & Galis, 2011). These studies signal the potential a performative perspective holds for extending our knowledge of how theory and practice are present in complex entwinement. Treating theories, models, concepts *and* ideas as potential performatives encourages researchers to explore if and under what contextual conditions they impact upon what practitioners accomplish in their organizing. Outside of management and organization studies, Korobkin (2003) has offered an insightful study of bankruptcy law, focusing on its ritualistic and performative qualities.

In his study, Korobkin argues that the law in general is performance, and bankruptcy law in particular is performative in the sense that it embodies and constitutes a mode of meaning, what he terms a "space of meaning" (2003: 2144) through which law is accomplished. Korobkin (2003) identifies that bankruptcy law has as its aim, to move the alleged debtor through various public stages of admission, acknowledgement, punishment and readmission, which, drawing from the liminal anthropology literature, he describes as a "rite of passage" for the debtor as she/he confronts the fact that she/he is a debtor and is therefore stigmatized and marginalized, before being allowed back into mainstream society. Debtors have certain restrictions placed upon them so that they are

prevented from undertaking specific commercial activities. This places debtors in “a kind of liminal space, in which the ordinary rules and understandings that govern commercial practices are temporarily suspended [from her/him]” (Korobkin, 2003: 2154). The public nature of much of the bankruptcy procedure points to symbolic public acts being performative in the sense that the “debtor publicly stages his own powerlessness to change circumstances; he displays that his seeking to avoid his debts cannot be a moral choice, for he lacks the agency to choose” (Korobkin, 2003: 2154). Korobkin integrates the performative and the liminal within the setting of law and it is to the liminal and liminality that we now turn.

Liminality

Early research into liminality by van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1969 & 1982) focused on observations of rites of passage and rituals. Their anthropological research identified three phases individuals experienced: the preliminal or separation, the liminal, and finally the postliminal or reincorporation phase (Turner, 1969; van Gennep, 1960). Types of liminal experiences were identified in pregnancy, betrothal, and initiation (van Gennep, 1960), and birth, death, and twinship (Turner, 1969). The liminal, Turner (1982: 55) speculated, can be found in the activities of churches, sects, and movements, in the initiation rites of clubs, fraternities, and Masonic orders. He distinguished between the liminal and the liminoid. The liminoid, Turner (1982: 55) suggested, is constituted by volunteers and is *played* with, while the liminal is something one *works* at. Czarniawska and Mazza (2003) reject this, maintaining that in current organization and management theory such a distinction is not sustainable or helpful. Turner’s (1982) liminoid phenomena: leisure, genres of art, sport, pastimes and games, et cetera, are all sites of organisation and revealing arenas for the study of organizing. Modern-day festivals are liminoid phenomena in both Turner’s and Czarniawska and Mazza’s terms, they are both played with and worked at, and are legitimate sites through which our knowledge of liminality is extended.

Van Gennep’s (1960) early concern with space and time was recognized by Turner, (1982) who emphasized how such spaces acted to create the contexts where the norms and values of everyday society could be and were suspended. While liminal spaces can generate unsettling, disturbing and dangerous experiences, (Tempest, et al., 2007) they can also be sites of togetherness, creativity and self-fulfilment (Simpson, Sturges & Weight, 2010; Sturdy, et al., 2006). Liminal spaces are often the contexts where identities are challenged or change, where previous subject positions are no longer sustainable and actors adopt new identities, which may be permanent or remain temporary. Studies of identity (re)construction in liminal spaces (e.g. Beech, 2011; Ellis & Ybema, 2010) highlight the precarious, dynamic and ambiguous nature of these processes as the liminal contexts blur and question existing boundaries. Social boundaries are made even more permeable (Sturdy, et al., 2006) in liminal locations as the conventions shaping behaviour no longer apply. However, little has been written about how liminal places become liminal contexts, what we mean by this is how a fixed place becomes a dynamic space, (Dobers & Strannegard, 2004) as it seems to us that for a liminal space to be discerned some activity is necessary to constitute such a translation.

In postmodern geography, places are seen as stable and secure, while spaces are open, free and can be more threatening (Kostera & Kociatkiewicz, 1999; Tuan, 1977). Tuan (1977) has argued that place emerges out of space, that stability unfolds from change. Space, it is argued, is continuously made, unmade, and remade; (Jones, 2009) whereas place is fixed, perpetual and unchanging. In Latour’s (1987) terms, place is an immutable mobile, while space is a mutable mobile. Thrift (2006: 140) has asserted that space questions the notion that boundaries exist at all, arguing that “[all] spaces are porous to a greater or lesser degree”. To consider organization within performative and liminal spaces is different to thinking of it terms of place. Indeed, it may be we can see place as non-performative and space as performative, as a number of scholars have indicated (e.g. Beyes &

Steyaert, 2012; Dobers & Stannegard, 2004; Halford & Leonard, 2005; Lefebvre, 1991). However, further articulations of space as performative are needed, which we address in this paper.

Methodology

Between 2009 and 2011, one of the authors undertook a field research study to observe the organization of an annual cultural festival which takes place in 15 different villages and sites over a large area of forest in a central region of Sweden. It is one of many such rural community-based cultural events whose growth in popularity during recent years is documented in a range of studies across Europe (e.g. Quinn 2003; Costa 2001) and the United States (e.g. De Bres and Davis, 2001), and which has also begun to be specifically researched in rural Sweden (Ekman, 1999; Aldskogius, 1993). The broad goals of the festival studied, understood by the volunteers, participants and visitors alike, are to highlight the rich folk-culture heritage of the region, which continues to attract artists, musicians, performers, photographers and crafts experts with regional, national and in some cases international standing, and to promote the area as a tourist destination. Much of the work of all the participating villages is self-organized with the majority of roles and practices linked to the culture of the community based in that village.

Many ethnographic studies of festival events of all types links them to regular rituals of liminoid playfulness (Turner, 1968) – the temporary abandonment of working life routines in favour of “festive sociability” (Costa, 2001). Studies, such as that by De Bres and Davis (2001), focus on how a festival is used to engender stronger community ties linked to place, identity and organizing group cohesion. The central issue which our study addresses builds on this theme by investigating how a community is both symbolised through and constituted in the organizing practices of a festival event. This has led us to posit the view that, in this case, the festival may be seen as a performative for community, i.e. that practices of organizing the festival constitute and represent new substantive practices of community (and indeed vice-versa).

The study overall may be characterised as a multi-modal ethnographic study (**Ref. needed?**), which is made up of three principle forms of primary data collection: in-situ field notes which record immediate observations of events, conversations and ‘interviews’ during the three annual periods of the festival; photographs which attempt to capture the embodied experience of being part of the festival; and reflexive/reflective entries into a personal journal kept all-year-round recording a mixture of emotional and intellectual responses to the author’s involvement in the festival in an emergent auto-ethnographic account. The study has also involved reviews of festival brochures, maps and other visual promotional materials.

The research design may be viewed as an evolving one, conducted with increasing intensity since the author’s initial encounter with the festival in 2008. The practical and ethical evolution of the study has stemmed partly from opportunistic necessity, as he has been for the last three festival celebrations, part of one of the volunteer groups whose practice he has been documenting, and has a long-term commitment to the community (as a holiday home owner in the region). The author is also conscious that he is also simultaneously a visiting observer, as both an annual tourist and a researcher. This combination of ‘participatory engagement’ and a dispassionate search for ‘otherness’ has posed significant challenges in both the conduct of the research and its articulation. Hence the study is still evolving in an epistemological sense. As Denzin and Lincoln (2010) attest “the processes that define the practices of interpretation and representation are always ongoing, emergent, unpredictable and unfinished” (p.563).

Festival organization: the role of place and space

The spatial dimensions of the study initially offered two quite distinctive features. Firstly the festival in question is a multi-site one. Most festival studies focus on single place festivals (Ekman 1999; Quinn 2003; Costa 2001) and where multi-site festivals have been examined (De Bres and Davis, 2001), they have focused on macro-level impacts, whereas the focus of this study was on

documenting micro-level events and practices. While the study was not strictly a multi-site ethnography, data drawn from a number of other participating villages allowed the author to view the observed group's practices in their overall context and scope as part of the larger festival - what Nicolini (2009) refers to as 'zooming out'. It also offered the opportunity to observe how the different participating community groups displayed differing "interpretive repertoires" (Potter, 1996) in the organization of their festival spaces and how these repertoires developed over the three annual cycles. Secondly, the festival takes place in a managed forest which stretches across quite a wide geographical area with no discernible population centre – indeed a number of interviewees have noted that part of its purpose is to celebrate the 'spaciousness' of the area. The name of the forest is central to the symbolic meaning of the festival to organizers, participants and visitors alike. We argue in this paper that the *idea* of place (and its relationship to 'space' in the abstract sense), as represented symbolically in the fixed festival name, is reinterpreted in each of the participating communities and re-presented through the organization of their own festival space. This space becomes the 'text' of their re-presentation.

As we have hinted, a key part of the study on which this paper is focused deals with the practices of a small organizing group, of which one of the authors was a part, based in one of the participating villages. The group's work is aimed at providing their village community's contribution to the wider festival. There is a framework of agreed rules around the resourcing of their work, and a liaison and reporting process to the Festival's central organizing committee, but very little else by way of formal organizational structures and processes.

Following Schatzki's (2005) observations on the nature of practice, a number of specific "activity bundles" were identified by the author from close observation and involvement in festival organization. Five of these are specifically associated with spatial organization, as follows

- Site clearance and preparation - This happens over a period in the spring and early summer months of April to June. It initially involves ground clearance and removal of obstacles which have either grown since last year or are part of the site which has been adopted for use since the previous year. It also covers the preparation of site specific features such as access and car-parking, drainage, permanent building maintenance and on some sites the construction of temporary visitor features.
- Site layout and organisation – In the weekend prior to the festival the site is laid out with marquee plots designated and exhibition spaces allocated. This also includes the erection of the second-hand sale marquee and food servery bar with seating and overhead awning. The precise layout can take 3 or 4 days to agree and at various times involves all of the volunteer group members
- Stall-holder placement – this involves the planning and communication of temporary stall placings with the externally based artists, crafts-persons and retailers operating on the village site, along with support for them in setting up stalls and maintaining them over the brief festival period.
- Running the village stalls – During the days of the festival itself, the second hand sale and food servery is staffed on a rota basis by all the Swedish speaking members of the group as the festival audience is largely Swedish. The centrality of these two temporary structures to the site reflects something of the cultural commitments of the community to communal food consumption and the sale of recycled goods to fund charitable or community work.
- Taking down and clearing away – The stall-holders clear away their goods and temporary housings in the early evening of the Saturday with the help of remaining villagers. Many drive home directly, and some remain to attend the final evening performance event at a lake around 15 km to the north. The villages own temporary structures – food servery and second-hand marquee - are generally taken down and packed on the Sunday after the festival has ended by broadly the same group who laid out the site a few days earlier. They

are then stored until the next festival in a small storage area at the back of the fishing club building.

The nature of these practices is viewed as *embodied* in the sense that they all comprise a balance of intellectual, physical and affective elements, rooted in the group members' emotional attachment to their village and its community. This notion of embodied practice is important from the perspective of the individual participant in the way space is perceived (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) as part of their practice. This has lent an importance in the research to evoking the individuals' sense of space through photographic and auto-ethnographic means. It is also important from the perspective of the place-community, the 'body' of which is mobilised in the organization of each individual's labours to co-construct their festival space.

The production of a spatial 'text' is thus prompted by a bringing together of individual embodied spatial practices in acts of symbolic co-construction. However to be completed these 'texts' must also comprise two further essential elements: first, they are populated and organized for the temporary period of the festival through *liminal* work practices; secondly they incorporate the agency of *non-human* elements, particularly natural artifacts. The weeds, overgrown grass and newly seeded saplings are an active part of the liminal site clearance practices. The alluvial boulders scattered across the forest's glacial valley floor actively influence the placement of temporary stalls on the festival site space. In playing this influential role they may be seen as agentic in the development of spatial organization practices adopted year after year in the festival.

Liminal space as text: review of findings

The village's choice of main site for their festival contribution is a small area of flat ground immediately adjacent to the community fishing club cabin, offering direct views of the lake on whose shores the village lies.. Many of the neighbouring villages also choose main sites adjacent to permanent buildings which have some significance to the host community, such as community centres and historically significant buildings.

What follows here is the presentation with commentary of some of the photographic evidence of the development of the village's 'spatial text' in its organization of the festival contribution. These are organised according to the broad framework of spatial practices identified above.

Site clearance and preparation

The photograph below, taken in April 2011, is of two members of the village group removing a young tree from the edge of the site in order to offer better transport access for participant stall holders



The next photograph displays the temporary parking arrangement negotiated with a village householder, who is also part of the volunteer organizing group. The access road to the site is a small rough track which runs along the right hand side of this house, and the site itself only has space for stall-holder vehicles. Visitors are invited to park by this house on the main road though the village, and walk the 200 metres or so to the fishing club/festival site. The temporary parking (Parkering) signs can be seen on the house and barn.



Site layout and organization

The following photograph offers a full view of village festival site from the small access road. This emphasises the temporary/liminal nature of the spatial text which each community constructs and the ways in which existing features of the space such as ‘permanent’ buildings, natural and ornamental features, are accommodated in the spatial organization of the festival’s temporary structures.



The following photograph from a neighbouring site also shows how existing inside space is re-imagined and re-used for festival purposes. It shows how an old barn on another festival site is re-imagined as an art/café.



Stall-holder placement

Many stall holders, such as the one shown in the following photograph, are regular traders at temporary markets and summer events, so they carry their own temporary structures to erect in the space designated by the organizers.



Others are relatively new or highly specialist traders, such as the in-situ wooden furniture maker in 2010 who was assigned a placement which offered a space appropriate to their work and access to amenities such as overnight storage or electricity.



Running the village stalls

The food servery is an annual part of the villages festival contribution. Though housed by a similar temporary structure to those of other participants, its position is central in the site, emphasising the importance to the group of a social food consumption space. At the same time it needed to be positioned carefully in 2010 to accommodate the drainage of the site in poor weather conditions.



Meanwhile the other regular structure is the second hand tent, emphasising their commitment to recycling and mutual charity and community work. In 2010 this was a place to browse under shelter from the weather

Taking down and clearing away

This final photograph is a view of the fishing club and, hidden behind the foliage to the left, the festival site, as the village temporary structures are taken down and cleared away in July 2011. From this we can see that the choice of festival by the village group reflects their ongoing relationship with the lake and its shoreline features both natural – the boulder in the foreground – and the more ‘permanent’ man-made constructions – the fishing club building and its jetties.



Discussion and conclusion

This paper seeks to integrate two constructs, performative and liminal, and through the example of a modern-day festival add to our understanding of both. A question that arises in any study that examines performative phenomena is; what is the performative? In our case we argue that it is a specific idea of community that is the performative. This idea, which is based on a wish to embody a version of rural life through practicing and showcasing arts and crafts associated with the geographic location of the festival, is, we argue, as performative as any organizational theory, model or concept more typically studied. By considering the notion of liminality alongside that of a performative ideas, we unpick the performative power of space, conceptualizing as a constructed text.

Place to performative space

Existing examinations of performative space (e.g. Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Dobers & Stannegard, 2004) have been helpful in highlighting how the spaces organizing unfolds within are consequential for how organization emerges. What we add to these is a longitudinal description of how a place, prior to site clearance and preparation, is transformed and in turn transforms through entwined human and non-human inter-relating into a performative space. Our photographic data shows how, for example, small rough track alongside a house becomes the main thorough-fair through which visitors are invited to walk to reach the main festival site. This temporary re-arrangement of place into performative space we suggest occurs in organizations quite frequently as offices, warehouses, stockyards and the like are transformed into something new. These spaced places become performative when they act upon the transformations shaping it as it shapes them. What we mean by this is that the meanings spaces carry and have assigned to them integrate into the meanings humans seek to advance for their organizing, affecting and shaping it.

That space is not neutral in how organization is achieved, should be more than a mere truism. Space matters, but its performative quality needs unpicking. We suspect that performative space is important because its impact is not even, but operates to different degrees depending on the nature of the performative idea. Obstacles to space functioning as a performative are removed, for example, a young tree is removed allowing for better transport access, while natural and ornamental forest characteristics are maintained and made part of the idea of a rural community actors are seeking to promote. Again, we foresee likely parallels with more formal sites of organization we are familiar with. Physical barriers to organizing are routinely removed to allow for the smooth flow of work, whereas those non-human artifacts that contribute to unfolding practice are incorporated into it making them indistinguishable elements of human/non-human activity. One

test for if such materiality is performative is to ask if it were removed would this significantly effect both the process and outcome of organization?

Conceptualizing space as text offers a vocabulary related to discursive and communicational framings of organization that is productive for exploring performative organizing. It also offers a theoretical anchor back to Austin, who original exposition focused on the performative power of words. A text is not just a written document, although it can be, a text is any non-human artifact or construct that humans inter-relate with as organization unfolds. Space is a text, in this sense, as it is a construct that inter-relates with human actors in the accomplishment of organizing. Performative space, in its inter-relating, influences how practice emerges and what it achieves. Inter-relating, as opposed to inter-acting, (Emirbayer, 1997) also acknowledges that performative space is not a fixed construct but through its engagement with human and non-human actors evolves and changes, so that even if its outward appearance remains unaltered the meanings claimed and assigned to it do not. The discursive framing of space as text signifies its importance in communicative constitution of organization, as an emerging consensus is forming that organization emerges through entwined flows of conversation and text.

Liminal spaces

The notion of liminality has been drawn upon by management and organization scholars to advance our understanding of how contexts influence and shape the practice that occurs within them. Existing studies have tended to focus on those actors that can be argued to be experience some form of liminal existence; such as temporary employees (Garsten, 1999) or Chinese MBA students, (Simpson, et al., 2010) less emphasis has been placed on the spatial contexts where organizing is constructed (see Sturdy, et al., 2006 for an exception). Liminal space defers from non-liminal space in that it is where normal social relations are suspended and new ones formed. Liminal spaces can appear physically unaltered and yet the meanings assigned to them can change making them liminal. A project can be assigned to a team, for example, and while the physical location of the team may not change, the new meanings assigned to it through taking on the new project can result in the space it occupies becoming liminal as the team separates from former colleagues to work on the project, while remaining in the same physical location. For some, liminality can be unsettling, disturbing and dangerous, while for others, as found in our illustrative case, it can be creative, self-fulfilling and community-building. Organizing within and through liminal spaces is an under-researched area in management and organization studies.

Korobkin's (2003) study offered several insight relevant to our study and for the research of organizing more generally. His identification of "space[s] of meaning" (Korobkin, 2003: 2144) refers to the potential that exists for meaning(s) to be assigned to organizing practices; and that this meaning-assigning becomes heightened when the organizing that is to be given meaning occurs in a liminal context, i.e. a context betwixt and between formal and normal organization. In such settings: a cleared space in a small hamlet, or a reclaimed office; for example, meanings assigned to such spaces are created anew. This could be through shared understandings regarding the idea the space embodies, or it could arise through conflict and contestations as competing ideas are played out in the liminal contexts. As with Korobkin's (2003) example and our own, a sense of ritual pervades such practices, which imbues space with a certain historical anchor that claims a legitimacy for the meaning(s) assigned. Such legitimizing, if accepted, allows actors to adopt subject positions commensurate with the idea made flesh.

Following the distinction made by Dobers and Stannegard, (2004) and Jones, (2009) we distinguish between liminal place and liminal space. Our village in central Sweden can be seen as a liminal place prior to site clearance and preparation as, for its all-year-round residents, it is a stable and secure location, albeit somewhat geographically removed from the majority of Swedish society. It

becomes a temporary liminal space when the first activity bundles associated with getting the place ready for the festival are accomplished. For those involved in it, such acts are creative and affirm a close connection to the over-arching idea the festival portrays and constitutes. As the festival is held annually, its regularity suggests a routineness found in much of the early anthropological research on liminality, as the liminal space is made, unmade and remade (Jones, 2009) from the liminal place of the village. Carrying the distinction between liminal place and liminal space into organization and management theorizing should help researchers produce more finely-grained analyses of space and place, and recognizing the liminal from the non-liminal promises sharper context-sensitive theory-building.

References

- Abbott, E. A. (1952) *Flatland: a romance of many dimensions*. New York: Dover
- Aldskogius, H. (1993) "Festivals and Meets: the place of music in 'Summer Sweden'", *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography* 75(2): 55-72
- Austin, J. L. (1975) *How to do things with words* Second Edition. Edited by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Beech, N. (2011) "Liminality and the practices of identity reconstruction." *Human Relations* 64(2): 285-302
- Beyes, T. & Steyaert, C. (2012) "Spacing organization: Non-representational theory and performing organizational space." *Organization* 19(1): 45-61
- Cabantous, L., Gond, J-P. & Johnson-Cramer, M. (2010) "Decision theory as practice: Crafting rationality in organizations." *Organization Studies* 31(11): 1531-1566
- Costa, X. (2001) "Festivity: Traditional and Modern Forms of Sociability." *Social Compass* 48(4): 541-548
- Cullen, J. G. (2009) "How to sell your soul and still get into Heaven: Steven Covey's epiphany-inducing technology of effective selfhood." *Human Relations* 62(8): 1231-1254
- Czarniawska, B. & Mazza, C. (2003) "Consulting as a liminal space." *Human Relations* 56(3): 267-290
- D'Adderio, L. (2008) "The performativity of routines: Theorising the influence of artefacts and distributed agencies on routines dynamics." *Research Policy* 37: 769-789
- D'Adderio, L. (2011) "Artifacts at the centre of routines: Performing the material turn in routines theory." *Journal of Institutional Economics* 7(2): 197-230
- Dale, K. (2005) "Building a social materiality: Spatial and embodied politics in organizational control." *Organization* 12(5): 649-678
- De Bres, K. & Davis, J. (2001) "Celebrating group and place identity: a case study of a new regional festival." *Tourism Geographies* 3(3): 326-337
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011) "Introduction to Part V: The art and practices of interpretation, evaluation and representation." In Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE pp.563-7
- Dobers, P. & Strannegard, L. (2004) "The Cocoon - A traveling space." *Organization* 11(6): 825-848
- Ekman, A-K. (1999) "The revival of cultural celebrations in rural Sweden. Aspects of tradition and transition." *Sociologia Ruralis* 39(3): 280-292
- Ellis, N. & Ybema, S. (2010) "Marketing identities: Shifting circles of identification in inter-organizational relationships." *Organization Studies* 31(3): 279-305
- Emirbayer, M. (1997) "Manifesto for a relational sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 103(2): 281-317
- Garsten, C. (1999) "Betwixt and between: temporary employees as liminal subjects in flexible organizations." *Organization Studies* 20(4): 601-617
- Halford, S. & Leonard, P. (2005) "Place, space and time: Contextualizing workplace subjectivities." *Organization Studies* 27(5): 657-676
- Hardie, I. & MacKenzie, D. (2007) "Assembling an economic actor: The *agencement* of a Hedge Fund." *The Sociological Review* 55(1): 57-80
- Harrison, D. & Kjellberg, H. (2010) "Segmenting a market in the making: Industrial market segmentation as construction." *Industrial Marketing Management* 39: 784-792
- Jones, M. (2009) "Phase space: geography, relational thinking, and beyond." *Progress in Human Geography* 33(4): 487-506
- Kornberger, M. & Clegg, S. (2011) "Strategy as performative practice: The case of *Sydney 2030*." *Strategic Organization* 9(2): 136-162
- Korobkin, D. R. (2003) "Bankruptcy law, ritual, and performance." *Columbia Law Review* 103(8): 2124-2159

- Kostera, M. & Kociatkiewicz, J. (1999) "The anthropology of empty space." *Qualitative Sociology* 1(1): 37-50
- Küpers, W.(2011) "Dancing on the limen - Embodied and Creative Inter-Places as Thresholds of Be(com)ing: Phenomenological Perspectives on Liminality and Transitional Spaces in Organisation and Leadership" *Tamara - Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry*. 9 (3-4): 45-59
- Latour, B. (1987) *Science in action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The production of space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Malden, MA: Blackwell
- MacKenzie, D. (2003) "An equation and its worlds: Bricolage, exemplars, disunity and performativity in financial economics." *Social Studies of Science* 33(6): 831-868
- MacKenzie, D. (2004) "The big, bad wolf and the rational market: Portfolio insurance, the 1987 crash and the performativity of economics." *Economy and Society* 33(3): 303-334
- MacKenzie, D. (2005) "Opening the black boxes of global finance." *Review of International Political Economy* 12(4): 555-576
- MacKenzie, D. (2006a) "Is economics performative? Option theory and the construction of derivatives markets." *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 28(1): 29-55
- MacKenzie, D. (2006b) *An engine, not a camera: How financial models shape markets* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press
- MacKenzie, D. & Millo, Y. (2003) "Constructing a market, performing theory: The historical sociology of a financial derivatives exchange." *American Journal of Sociology* 109(1): 107-145
- MacKenzie, D., Muniesa, F. & Siu, L. (eds.) (2007) *Do Economists Make Markets? On the performativity of economics* Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ
- Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: SAGE
- Merleau-Ponty, M.(1962) *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Millo, Y. & MacKenzie, D. (2009) "The usefulness of inaccurate models: Towards an understanding of the emergence of financial risk management." *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 34: 638-653
- Nicolini, D. (2009) "Zooming in and zooming out: A package of method and theory to study work practices." In Ybema, S., Yanow, D., Wels, H., & Kamsteeg, F. (eds.) *Organizational Ethnography* London: SAGE pp.120-138
- Ottosson, M. & Galis, V. (2011) "Multiplicity justifies corporate strategy." *Journal of Cultural Economy* 4(4): 455-475
- Potter, J. (1996) "Discourse analysis and constructionist approaches: theoretical background." in Richardson, J.T.E.(ed.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for Psychology and the Social Sciences*. Leicester, British Psychological Society pp.125-140
- Quinn, B. (2003) "Symbols, practices and myth-making: cultural perspectives on the Wexford Festival Opera", *Tourism Geographies* 5(3): 329-349
- Schatzki, T. R. (2005) "Peripheral Vision: The sites of organizations". *Organization Studies* 26(3): 465-484
- Simpson, R., Sturges, J. & Weight, P. (2010) "Transient, unsettling and creative space: Experiences of liminality through the accounts of Chinese students on a UK-based MBA." *Management Learning* 41(1): 53-70
- Sturdy, A., Schwarz, M. & Spicer, A. (2006) "Guess who's coming to dinner? Structures and uses of liminality in strategic management consultancy." *Human Relations* 59(7): 929-960
- Tempest, S. & Starkey, K. (2004) "The effects of liminality on individual and organizational learning." *Organization Studies* 25(4): 507-527
- Tempest, S., Starkey, K. & Ennew, C. (2007) "In the Death Zone: A study of limits in the 1996 Mount Everest disaster." *Human Relations* 60(7): 1039-1064
- Thrift, N. (2006) "Space." *Theory, Culture & Society* 23(2-3): 139-155
- Tuan, Y-F. (1977) *Space and place. The perspective of experience*. London: Edward Arnold
- Turner, V. (1969) *The Ritual Process: Structure and anti-structure*. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction

Turner, V. (1982) *From ritual to theatre: The human seriousness of play* New York: PAJ Publications

Tyler, M. & Cohen, L. (2010) "Spaces that matter: Gender performativity and organizational space." *Organization Studies* 31(2): 175-198

Van Gennep, A. (1960) *The rites of passage*. Translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press