Constructing subjective spiritual geographies in everyday mobilities: the practice of prayer and meditation in corporeal travel

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Abstract

This paper contributes to contemporary geographies of religion by exploring how everyday spaces of mobility and flows can be transformed through specific practices such as prayer and meditation that contribute to personal spirituality. The work challenges traditionally held assumptions that sacred space or codified religious spaces requires stillness and calmness by drawing on the New Mobilities Paradigm to explore how spiritual practices are conducted within the flows and movement that characterise contemporary everyday life. Using questionnaires and diary-interview methods, everyday journeys of participants captured how prayer, meditation and encounters with others and the environment facilitated by movement can transform and be transformed by mobility and the mode of travel. Participant's accounts of their everyday mundane journeys reveal personalised associations of the everyday spaces that they travel through and the different routines they enact on a daily basis that incorporate religious objects, practices or ideas. These journeys and time-spaces form what I term a 'subjective spiritual geography', a network of the interrelated time-spaces threaded together by the individual's schedule and routine that create, maintain and reinforce personal and informal religious meaning in everyday life.

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, geographies of religion have paid increasing attention to personal experiences of religion as well as institutional and collective expressions, opening discussion to fluid and contested framings of sacred and profane space. This paper contributes to existing literature by developing the concept of 'subjective spiritual geographies' which recognises the implication of everyday spaces of socio-economic mobilities and flows in the religious and spiritual lives of the individual. In response to Kong's (2001) call for investigation of religion beyond the official boundaries of codified spaces such as churches, temples and mosques, geographers have increasingly interrogated everyday lived spaces. On occasion this has included some engagement with everyday spaces of mobility or the acknowledgement of the busy pattern of socio-economic responsibilities that characterises much of contemporary Western society (Holloway, 2003; Philo, Cadman, & Lea, 2011; 2015). An underlying theme of these studies is that the inclusion of religion and spirituality, manifest in either attitudes or behaviours, necessitates or imitates stillness and calmness for the individual. The New Mobilities Paradigm has instigated a re-evaluation of travel time, calling attention to the significance of journeys as valued by travellers as time away from responsibility or to indulge in enjoyment of music or the movement itself where social-economic structure of 'place' are also present (Jain & Lyons, 2008; Sheller & Urry, 2006). Following this framework this paper will use a qualitative diary-interview methodology explore participant's narratives of their everyday journeys for utility and recreation as potential time-spaces for spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation beyond of the 'official' boundaries of religion.

Such everyday journeys and time-spaces construct 'subjective spiritual geographies,' a relational network of time-spaces threaded together within the individual's daily or regularly repeated

routines where informal practices are performed that contribute to or are valued as part of their spirituality. The empirical data here develops an understanding of spiritual practices in everyday time-spaces of movement and flow, challenging often-held perceptions of sacred space and notions of the Divine as still, static and unchanging (for example, Eliade, 1957). The following section will position the research within the relevant literature, bringing together and building upon the work of the new mobilities paradigm with recent geographies of religion and spirituality that has been published since the early 2000s. Following this contextualisation, the methodologies employed – questionnaires and diary-interviews – are discussed. The findings of the research are then explored in developing the framework of subjective spiritual geographies.

Religion in a Mobile Society

New Mobilities Paradigm

Movement is a familiar and often taken for granted part of contemporary everyday life in the last century. Advances in speed and wider affordability of transport and communications technologies have allowed for employment, education, utility and recreation opportunities to be widely spread. By 2006 in the UK, people travelled five times further a year than they did in 1950, and that distance is expected to double again by 2025 (Larsen, Urry, & Axhausen, 2006). Rather than reducing daily travel time, faster transportation has encouraged people to travel further or more frequently rather than reducing time in transit (Ellegård & Vilhelmson, 2004; Korsu, 2012; Larsen et al., 2006; Mokhtarian & Salomon, 2001). Daily travel time is significant: the average time for commuting in the case-study area (South-west England) is 25 minutes reflecting 75% of British commuters who travel up to 30 minutes each way (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Yet until recently, travel time was often neglected by researchers and transport planners in favour of the origin and destination locations (Cresswell, 2010; O. B. Jensen, 2009; Sheller & Urry, 2006). Instead travel models were based on an idealised 'rational' traveller who chooses the most efficient route for their journey with an effort to reduce travel time as it is considered 'wasted time' and undesirable (Mokhtarian &

Salomon, 2001). Despite these negative perceptions of travel time, journeys are found to be valued

opportunities to mentally transition from origin to destination as well as engage in activities for the

individual, away for other socio-economic responsibilities (Jain & Lyons, 2008; Mokhtarian &

Salomon, 2001).

The New Mobilities Paradigm addresses the more-than-travel dimensions of journeys as well as the

intersections of different forms of mobilities and their accompanying networks. Journeys are more

than the travel from A to B but encompass a wide range of possible activities as well as a

representation of social status illustrated in the associations of public and private transport or the

social differentiation between first and standard class rail carriages (Binnie, Edensor, Holloway,

Millington, & Young, 2007; Clayton, Jain, & Parkhurst, 2016 (online first); A. Jensen, 2011; Urry,

2007). A mobilities approach acknowledges the desirable or pleasurable qualities that travellers can

derive from even the most functional of trips. Examples include enjoyment of travel for non-

functional purposes such as touring by motorcycle (Mokhtarian & Salomon, 2001); using the private

space of the car to engage in socially undesirable behaviour such as shouting at other drivers cyclists

and pedestrians or singing loudly to the radio (Bull, 2004); cars can become an extension of, and

filled with objects from, the driver's (and passenger's). Personalised features can help transform a

generic, mass-produced space of a car into a personalised 'dwelling-in-motion' (also Fallov,

Jorgensen, & Knudsen, 2013; Sheller, 2007). Public transport can also provide an environment to

enable work or leisure activities to be performed and personal space bounded with the use of

technologies, entertainment systems and other objects. The 'passenger' is constructed through a

combination of the objects they bring and the activities they perform (Clayton, 2012; Jain & Lyons,

2008; Jain, 2009; Watts, 2008). Passengers may take the opportunity to be deliberately

unproductive on the train by window-gazing resisting the aspirational challenge of making every

minute count (Holley, Jain, & Lyons, 2008). 'Time out' from socio-economic responsibilities or

obligations to window-gazing (in the case of 47% of rail passengers) or sleeping (18%) can relax and

rejuvenate the individual, readying them for the resumption of work or home based activities (Lyons, Jain, Susilo, & Atkins, 2011).

Different modes of transport are suited for different activities, engineering different levels of enjoyment in travellers. Activities and tasks are reviewed and delegated to certain segments of the same trip: the rail passenger may take advantage of the quiet coach of the regional train to London to work rather than on the connecting peak hour Underground journey and instead use this time-space as 'time-out' to listen to music (Jain & Lyons, 2008). Workload or obligations therefore are often broken down into tasks and activities and assigned to the most appropriate time-spaces for accomplishment in a Taylorist factory breakdown approach to management of work output (Holley et al., 2008; Laurier, 2004). The New Mobilities Paradigm's re-assessment of travel time is extended further in this work to explore the ways in which such time-spaces, constructed in discourse as secular and functional, can be transformed into opportunities for religious and spiritual practices.

Strategies and tactics

The New Mobilities Paradigm draws attention to the pre-supposed systems and networks that organise and control flows, and act to instil discipline and regulation into public spaces. Time-spaces of mobility segregate different modes of mobility through urban planning and the constitutive parts of the traveller as they submit to powers of surveillance (Adey, 2011; Bissell, 2011; Hornsey, 2010; A. Jensen, 2011), attempting to impose place identity and values. This paper recognises the socio-technical construction of such environments but draws on the work of de Certeau to argue that this does not represent absolute determinism over how these landscapes are consumed.

Michel De Certeau makes the distinction between planned *strategies* and improvised *tactics*. *Strategies* being the methods by which authorities, often embodied in the State or Capital, attempt to organise society. De Certeau observes that the planning of Manhattan's gridded street system as viewed from the World Trade Centre or, alternatively, the installation of regulated seating on the local bus service to provide a calculated unit of space for each passenger are examples of how

strategies are embedded into daily life to provide order. However, *strategies* cannot fully contain

the creative and critical energies of these individuals and collectives (Gardiner, 2000) that occupy

these spaces and improvise their own structure of power in everyday tactics to contest and confront,

albeit silently, the dominant structures of the State and Capital. *Tactics* are the channels of

resistance the individual can employ to reoccupy technocratically regulated space: the use of

unofficial shortcuts over private space in New York or the passenger's use of bags, coats and other

items to occupy the empty seat next to them on the bus or train or playing music through

Smartphones to territorialise space on public transport. Although de Certeau is criticised for a

masculinist or politically undesirable assumptions (Ahearne, 2010; Langer, 1988), he draws attention

to the channels of power that the individual and the marginalised possess, necessitating a re-

assessment of power relationships in everyday practice.

Adapting the distinction of *strategy* and *tactics*, Woodhead (2012a) applies de Certeau's approach to

differentiate between the institutional narratives of religion (*strategic* religion) and individual

everyday engagement in religion and spirituality (*tactical* religion). This resonates with work since

2000 by geographers to address the exercise of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices in

everyday life and spaces over institutional narratives (Holloway, 1998; 2003; Knott, 2005a; MacKian,

2011; Philo et al., 2011; 2015). *Tactical* religion manifests in the form of the mobile and informal,

transforming this-worldly objects into spaces for reflection and manifestation of religion and

spirituality (Woodhead, 2012a). This approach has informed much of the shift of focus in

geographies of religion from official to unofficial religion (Kong, 2001; 2010). Objects and spaces

that can be made by and for non-religious institutions have the capacity to be transformed through

individual creativity to mean something else to the user (de Certeau, 1988). For example, particular

informal spaces become the centre of unofficial memorialisation such as the site of a traffic accident

or mass-market products become modified and personalised by the 'user' (MacKian, 2012; Maddrell,

2011a). The *strategic* spaces of the everyday urban environment contain *tactical* expressions of

belief and traces of religion and spirituality (Brace, Bailey, Carter, Harvey, & Thomas, 2011;

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Woodhead, 2012a). *Tactical* religion is symptomatic of increasingly subjectivised understandings of the self in contemporary society and the experience of religion and spirituality in this context, which is discussed in the following section.

Geographies of religion and spirituality in contemporary society

In *The Spiritual Revolution,* Heelas and Woodhead (2005) frame the substantial growth in alternative and holistic spiritualities (the 'holistic milieu that incorporates practices and activities such as yoga, meditation and tai chi) since the 1960s as a consequence of 'the massive subjective turn of modern culture' (citing Taylor, 1991). This shift to subjectivity is illustrated with the rise of what Heelas and Woodhead call a culture of 'subjective well-being' (2005) that can be observed in formerly countercultural ideas and products become part of mainstream culture, media and patterns of consumption (MacKian, 2012). Mass availability of personalised products and the trend towards self-improvement and empowerment that is inherent within is, Heelas and Woodhead (2005) suggest, evidence of a priming of the individuals towards subjectivisation. Further examples can be found in the institutions and products that are tailored, at point of consumption, such as social media, self-help or 'life-hacking' books, dating websites or self-improvement courses that suggest that the consumer is to be empowered to take control of their life rather than be at the mercy of higher forces.

As society becomes increasingly subjectivised, that is relationships are orientated around the needs of the individual, in a Weberian turn the holistic milieu is able to offer rewards for the individual and explanations for life-problems (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; see also Stark & Iannaccone, 1994) such as stress and anxiety. The holistic milieu is refracted through consumptive practice: the 'leisure' activities; what people do when they are not being economically or socially active (Richards, 2003). The 'subjective turn of modern culture' also coincides with the succession of traditional proximity-based communities by those drawn together through common interest, attitudes and values (Davie, 2006; Sinha, Hillier, Cnaan, & McGrew, 2007; Turner, 2011; Urry, 2007). As religion has become

more personalised, focus has shifted to the practices that occur outside of the official, institutional spaces of religion where the body establishes sacred space (Brace et al., 2011; Holloway, 2003; Kong, 2001; MacKian, 2012; Philo et al., 2011; Philo et al., 2015).

Such geographies identified the creation and maintenance of sacred spaces through the use of ritual, gestures, behaviour and material elements (Holloway, 2003; Ivakhiv, 2001; Kiong & Kong, 2000). For instance, Holloway (2003) charts the body as a site of relations between the social and the sacred in the context of the New Age movement. Through the use of gestures (such as sitting positions) and materials (incense or other objects), Holloway argues, the body produces belief and sacred space. Additionally, Holloway's participants used material assemblages from jewellery to incense sticks that could be used to demarcate sacred space. Similarly, Maddrell and della Dora (2013) describe in the context of pilgrimage how engineering of the sensescape involving the regulation and stimulation of smell, lighting, sound and topography can construct a distinctively sacred space.

Philo, Cadman and Lea (2011; 2015) have examined the ways in which meditative and yogic practices were enmeshed and folded into everyday schedules of activity for inhabitants of Brighton, UK. Like Holloway, they found that public spaces without religious or spiritual codification could be modified through a network of beliefs, behaviours and materials. Participants could enact moments of stillness within the midst of busy urban environment through the use of pockets of calm spaces found in parks, pavilions and health and fitness centres. Practices such as mindfulness, meditation and yoga were deployed in order to counteract perceived stresses and pressures felt in the body. Philo, Cadman and Lea's participants would use the breathing and meditative exercises learnt from yoga and meditation centres to create these temporary pauses. The body was also the measurement of the efficacy of such practices when participants were able to observe the calming effects and even biological effects on hair and nail growth (Philo et al., 2011). Through place-making performances (Cresswell, 2015) such as introducing materials or behavioural gestures the yoga and

meditation practitioners, like Holloway's participants, are able to construct sacred spaces within otherwise secular, busy contemporary environments.

Sara Mackian also makes a significant contribution to this field with her book *Everyday Spirituality*, arguing that spirituality is not a quality or entity that the individual holds or gathers but a 'relationship has a tendency to spill out into the broader fabric of everyday life' (MacKian, 2012, p3). Such a relationship has deep influence throughout everyday life, from attributing meaning and significance to events that occur based on the individual's belief system to recognising enchantment of everyday phenomenon. Mackian's account develops a model of co-existing dimensions or worlds – the physical, the socio-cultural, the subjective and the spiritual – that enable a sense of security and social connectedness that she argues refutes claims that spiritualities are individualistic when compared to traditional forms of religion. 'Extra geographies of everyday spirituality' are embedded into personal geographies allow the individual to connect across these different worlds as they travel through their time-space paths. Like Mackian, Bennett (2001) explore ways in which the everyday can become enchanted for those, she argues, cultivate a sensitivity to the new colours, details and extraordinary sounds 'as familiar landscapes of sense sharpen and intensify' (Bennett, 2001, p5). Modes of enchantment can shape social relations as a way of connecting the this-worldly with the other-worldly can imply and stimulate particular ethical framing within the individual and their connections with others (Bennett, 2001; MacKian, 2012).

In these accounts, everyday landscapes of parks, the home and spaces for exercise become sites of contemplation, meditation and resources to cope with the pressures of modern socio-economic responsibilities and activities. Throughout this discussion enchantment has been defined broadly as an extra presence that in connecting the this-worldly with the other-worldly or spiritual, disrupts the experience and perception of everyday geographies of time, space and routine that provides a new framing for daily events and relationships. Notably, expressions of 'spirituality' (with broad definitions emphasising the individual) and the 'holistic milieu' have been privileged over traditional

forms of congregational worship in the response to Kong's earlier noted call for investigation of 'unofficial' and subjective forms of religion. Whilst these studies have highlighted the enmeshing of the religious and spiritual with everyday life, there is relatively little direct engagement with the flows of corporeal and virtual mobility that characterise contemporary society. In seeking to address this latter issue, the empirical data here will explore this enmeshing with mobilities in the context of the 'holistic milieu' but also to include participants who attend a congregational form of Christian worship. 'Spirituality' in this paper encompasses both holistic and congregational samples as the term emphasises the subjective experience of beliefs and practices.

Methods

In order to investigate spiritual practices within time-spaces of mobility, a three-phase methodology was designed as part of wider PhD project based at UWE Bristol, UK: participant-observation, questionnaires and diary-interviews. The data for this paper was drawn from the questionnaire and diary-interview phases from September 2013 to June 2014. Questionnaires were employed to provide a broader picture of possible practices ongoing in mobility and to recruit participants for the richer qualitative diary-interview phase of the research. Diary-interviews were designed to address the difficulties of registering tactical manifestations of religion and spirituality as it has been noticed, *tactics* leave few traces (Bailey & Bryson, 2006).

As the study was to investigate the subjective experience of spiritual practices in both the 'holistic milieu' and the 'congregational domain' (as mapped by Heelas and Woodhead (2005)), the sample was designed to enable a comparison between how such groups adapt and exist within contemporary secular social space. For this reason, a Baptist denomination of Christianity was selected as an example of the congregational domain whilst Buddhist meditation centres were selected as the holistic milieu. Many of the participants did identify themselves as 'Baptist Christians' and 'Buddhists' respectively, however this was not a requirement of the research. The

participants were selected as people who attended these sites whether or not they were affiliated with the broader religious movement.

The early part of the data generation phase administered a questionnaire distributed to 165 congregants attending church for a weekly Sunday service and a further 81 individuals attending Buddhist meditation centres during the week. These were mostly multiple-choice, closed questions with some options for more descriptive answers if the respondent wished to elaborate. The final question of the survey asked respondents if they wished to take part in further research by keeping a diary of their activities for one week and then discussing this in the context of an interview.

Diary-interviews have become an established method within geographical and sociological research, often for gathering quantitative data (for example Novák & Sýkora, 2007; Thornton, Williams, & Shaw, 1997). Geographers of religion (Holloway, 1998; 2003; Maddrell, 2011b; Philo et al., 2011) have also utilised this method for the purposes of mining rich qualitative data on the experiences and perceptions of the individual in and of their relationship with the surrounding environment. Developing on these works, this study designed a template that provided loose guidance to completion rather than requiring strict adherence to a particular, allowing participants the opportunity to improvise and negotiate the method. Additionally, participants were asked to record journeys, and the activities engaged on journeys, as well as place-based activities, developing an innovative mobilities lens in the research. There are some issues of participant conformity and the potentially intensive and time-consuming nature of keeping a diary which did impact upon the diversity of quality and quantity of the data. At the end of the week, some participants delivered a large cache of data with the longest diary being 31 pages in length whilst other participants returned very limited diaries, being only a few pages of sparsely written notes. Overall the majority of diaries returned were of a good standard both in data quality and quantity, often providing rich insights into the lived experience of the participants and illuminating activities or areas that even they did not expect. Even if the diary was not particularly long or detailed, the recorded log could still provide a

basic insight and enough data for initial thematic analysis and to investigate further in the following semi-structured interview to the participant.

The interviews that accompanied the diaries in this research were semi-structured, usually lasting around one hour in duration. Semi-structured interviews allowed for several basic themes to be followed across all interviews but were responsive to the individual characteristics of the participant. Questions for the diary-interview were devised in conjunction with initial analysis of the participant's diary and also during the interview as the format provided flexibility to follow new lines of interest as they arose (Cadman, Philo, & Lea, 2013; Zimmerman & Weider, 1977). The interview provides an opportunity to clarify activities and to increase the resolution of data from generic terms of 'walking' to 'walking to work, thinking about *x*, acting in this way because of *y*', deepening the diary data (Phipps & Vernon, 2009). Without the interviews, the diary risks becoming an atomised series of events without the human thread of consciousness that connects the quantitative, documentable microcosm to the qualitative macrocosm of lived experience (Cadman et al., 2013; Edensor, 2010b; Latham, 2003; Rose, 1993). Without the diaries, the interviews may lack the initial insight of which to inquire for further data with the participant.

Audio recordings of the interview were transcribed into a Word document. Along with the diaries, thorough thematic analysis was carried out on the participant's corresponding interview transcript. From a familiarisation process, notes were taken and codes generated for further analysis that could later be developed into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The data was then re-analysed to identify when and where these themes arose and the significance they accrued within each participant's dataset.

In total 16 sets of diaries and interview transcripts were collected, coded and analysed for themes emerging from their everyday journeys and spiritual practices. All participants have been assigned pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality (quotes from survey respondents remain unnamed). Church and meditation centre names have also been changed for this reason. Diary-interview

participant's and survey respondent's reported main mode of mobility, gender, age range and sample group are noted on their first appearance in the discussion.

Findings and discussion

The findings are presented here in three overlapping themes that explore how encounters within mobilities, the use of movement and slowing down can have transformative effects or be affected by the practice of religion and spirituality.

Encounters with strangers and dangers

Multiple different time-space paths converge in British cities and draw together thousands of diverse actors each with a personal background and culture which impresses upon and is impressed upon by other actors they meet or temporarily co-habit with en-route (Bauman, 2000). Wilson (2011) shares Massey's (2005) observation of public transport as involving as sense of 'throwntogetherness' with strangers but this can also be widened to other modes of mobility. Walking, cycling and even driving introduces the possibility of encounter and closer proximity amongst different and diverse people. Sensory impressions maybe be dulled due to the isolating environment of the car according to Sheller and Urry (2000), however as they suggest in a later paper (2006), the car shapes a different form of dwelling within place as the local is increasingly stretched across multiple landscapes and city neighbourhoods. In the process, drivers (and their passengers) have less intensive, more extensive encounters with a greater range of people, places and situations. The Self is brought into contact with the Other in mundane, banal and frequent situations within everyday mobilities and geographies. For many questionnaire respondents there were many moments of encounter on everyday journeys which stimulated responses and practices drawn from institutional religion and its practices:

> Sometimes pray - about what I'm about to do, or people I will see. I pray about people I
>
> might meet - lonely people, needy people, angry people etc & how God (through me in a

humble way) can help them - a smile or a reassuring word) (Q: Bus-user, female, Baptist, 65-69)

Will always pray if I see an ambulance/police car or fire engine on its way to an emergency. (Q: Bus-user, male, Baptist, 16-19)

If I see an emergency vehicle with blue lights I always pray about their destination/purpose (Q: Bus-user & walker, female, Baptist, 65-69)

These quotes reveal a prompt by the encounters that mobility brings, and a response directed and expressed through Christian faith. The first respondent directly engages with the people she encounters through her own physical displacement. Resisting the automated and sterile superficial relations that are deployed between strangers in public spaces of flow (Bauman, 2000; Bissell, 2009), the respondent finds a channel in which a human desire to help someone else is performed in a manner observing appropriate social etiquette. The meditation sample also revealed several similar responses, this time is framed through Buddhist practice:

Try to think of Metta when I see people (car-driver, walker & cyclist, F, Meditation centre, 35-44)

During journey from home & during my job I often try to practice patience & kindness to others. (car-driver, F, Meditation centre, 55-59)

Wishing well to those around me esp waiting for a bus or train metta bhavna. Meditation at airports often in chapel or quiet room. (walker, M, Meditation centre, 65-69)

To be as fully aware as possible in relationship to people I meet, whether I know them or not. (cyclist, M, Meditation centre, 65-69)

Metta bhavna or loving-kindness, is an action in which the practitioner wishes well-being to firstly themselves, friends or family and then to strangers. *Metta* was often practiced at the meditation centres during the participant-observation fieldwork. During her commute Penny (cyclist, 35-44), a healthcare professional who describes herself as a 'Buddhist-Quaker', deployed this practice on her drive to work (Figure 1).

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Like the use of prayer noted above, the deployment of *metta* in mobility time-spaces suggests that an impulse to recognise the interconnectedness of humanity (in Buddhist understanding) across the divisions from each other that heavily regulated and isolated time-spaces of mobility instil in public transport and the car. *Metta* is usually a silent act and so emulates the social etiquette expected in mobility time-spaces (Bissell, 2009) whilst allowing the practitioner to exercise their spirituality. Penny's journey and practice of *metta* is discussed in further detail in the next section.

As well as encounters with other people, the inherent risk of mobility may also prompt responses of spiritual practice which aim to maintain wellbeing:

Include prayer for safe journeys in my prayertime (car-passenger, F, Baptist, 65-69)

Praying for safety & apologising for angry outbursts (motorcyclist, M, Baptist, 45-54)

Cycling on Gloucester Rd is a practice of mindfulness and non-reactivity (cyclist, M, Meditation centre, 45-54)

As this perhaps tongue-in-cheek comment by the cyclist indicates, moving at different speeds across different transport modes generates new risks which increase with speed and power. Yet a driver also responds to this risk:

Consideration of the well being of cyclists (car-driver, M, Meditation centre, 55-59)

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Far from being uninvolving and sterile, for many people, time-spaces of mobility increase the chance of risk and this perceived likelihood of danger stimulates the emotions and cognition in contrast with the regulated spaces of health and safety that govern many static spaces (Jones, 2012). Along with the earlier quote from a female bus-user, the respondents commenting on motorised travel construct these spaces of mobility as a mix of risks, emotions and encounters with others, thereby injecting an element of instability and unpredictability into social experiences. Potential moments for danger are ruptures in an otherwise sanitised discourse of mobility time-spaces where issues of life and death are colonised, normalised and regulated through risk management in attempts to bring it under human control (Bauman, 1998; Evans, 2010; Jones, 2012). Danger signalled by sirens and flashing lights are interruptions within the stable organised flows of mobility that disrupt the narrative of seamlessness and safety reminding the individual of the instability of life, stimulating a human response. The quotes from both Baptist and Meditation centre respondents here further illustrate the shift towards subjective well-being in spirituality and wider society (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; MacKian, 2012). Their prayers, contemplative and mindfulness activities apply this concern for well-being to the everyday risks that are faced in contemporary societies characterised by mobilities.

The situation or the people, for whom the quoted Baptist church attendees pray, are represented in the flashing blue lights and sirens of the emergency vehicle, resonating with Auge's (2008) characterisation of 'non-place' where human communication is reduced to signs and symbols. The full spectrum of possible human emergencies and tragedies is reduced and represented by the flashing blue lights and sirens of the ambulance yet stimulate a spiritual response from the respondents here. The respondent and the person for whom the ambulance is intended are strangers but encounter each other for the briefest of moments as their time-space paths cross; an event without a past and unlikely to have a future (Bauman, 2000). Prayers then become methods of opening social relations between the strangers through a spiritual connection. Modern signs and symbols operate in the lexicon of 'non-places' (Augé, 2008), are re-appropriated through the frame

of faith stimulating a socially compassionate Christian and Buddhist responses that bypasses the disconnectedness between strangers in these spaces. As Mackian (2012) suggests, the spiritual world enables a mode of connection between individuals who may or may not know each other. Processes of disenchantment can quantify and make understandable 'risk' (Evans, 2010) yet danger possesses a non-rational quality that, as the responses in this section illustrate, can stimulate spiritual responses. From the use of prayer to a transcendent entity with the Baptist church respondents to the increased focus on this-worldly action such as consideration and mindfulness in the Meditation centre respondents, spiritual practices become a register of risk. Everyday journeys that incorporate a (hopefully trivial) level of risk that can encourage a connection amongst individuals to a wider spiritual and moral framework. Spiritual practices, whether from Baptist or Meditation Centre background become methods of extending the spiritual relationships of the participant.

Movement

Prayer and forms of meditation and mindfulness was reported by survey respondents and diary - interview participants including those who drove, used public transport, walked and cycled. There was some indication that greater familiarity with the journey aided such practices whilst moving. Teacher Sally (car-driver, Baptist, 45-54) cited that the familiarity with her drive to work allowed her to tune out and progress through a 'shopping list' of prayers for the day. This routine was often punctuated by occasional complex traffic issues that required to return her full attention back to driving. Echoing this but on utility and recreational trips, Eleanor (car-driver, Baptist, 35-44), on career break at time of research), reported that prayer and contemplation would most likely occur either on journeys that had become habitual or on motorways or major roads designed for predictability and an image of stability (Laurier, 2004).

Further evidence that familiarity of a regular route enabled personal routines and subjective spiritual geographies to develop was found in the diary-interviews of meditation practitioners and the wider

questionnaire sample stated that they used driving as an opportunity for mindfulness and meditation. Paul (car-driver, Meditation centre, 35-44), a senior manager, had developed a form of 'driving meditation' (with his eyes open) that involved techniques adapted from walking meditations.

> […] obviously if you're driving you can't do a breathing meditation because your eyes are closed! It would be a little bit hazardous! […] Theravada Buddhism uses walking meditation and obviously you need your eyes open for that. All you're doing is concentrating. So you're going left, right, left, right. Sounds horrifically boring doesn't it? But it has the same effect as the breathing meditation cos all you're doing is concentrating on the walking. If you start to think about other things you stop yourself. Taking your attention back to the walking so, I just adapted that to driving. Obviously there's more going on when you're driving but at least you can just focus on the road. Moving it forward on the road, turn it left, turn it right, that kind of thing so that's how that works (laughs). Not sure if anybody else does it! It's my made up one.

When asked if he waited for quieter stretches of the journey, Paul responded that he did not, instead he believed the two actions of driving and meditation complemented each other and traffic was therefore not a problem with safety or concentration. However, he did also reveal that due to the location of his home being in between his workplace and the city centre, he was usually travelling in the opposite direction of travel from city-bound traffic, enabling a less congested and therefore more predictable journey to work. As he states, Paul had developed this practice by himself, but there are also several videos on the YouTube video-sharing website, demonstrating forms of 'driving meditation'. That Paul develops this from adapting a walking practice to driving illustrates a creative tactical approach of using an everyday journey to benefit the self. He later adds:

It's not as good as breathing mediation cos it is just breathing but it's, you know, when

you're in a car it's the best you can do, isn't it? So, yeah.

Despite having only attending meditation class for less than two years, Paul practiced meditation

throughout the day at regular interval, often for two minutes when at work, suggesting the driving

meditation was an extension of his home-based spiritual routines. Paul would also use driving time

to listen to an audio version of the dharma book used on his course in order to maximise efficiency

and reduce 'wasted time':

[…] for me listening to something is a good way to learn it [dharma], so you know…to put

the time aside when we've got busy lives is difficult. When you've got to be in a car

anyway, […] I'm that kind of person who I like to sort of, use my time effectively, you

know what I mean? And so if I'm doing something where I feel it's kind of dead time, like

driving, I'll try and use it as effectively as I can.

Mindfulness and meditation was also discussed by other participants within this sample including

Penny who, as discussed earlier, used the frustrations of driving as an opportunity to practice *metta*

bhavna (loving kindness) meditation.

[…] say somebody drives in a way then I might…some harsh words or swear words might

come to mind but if I'm practising *metta* than it's much less likely to. And…erm…yeah so

say I'm practising loving kindness towards the driver in front of me…I start to see them as

a human being with their own struggles and joys…on their own journey to wherever. You

know and I start to see them as a person…that's part of life, connected with me and I start

to feel warmly towards them.

Later, when asked if this practice was extended to other road users, Penny added:

[…] there is a particular point of congestion caused by the zebra crossing where there's a

bit of a tailback. Because…er…in the rush hour there are lots of streams of pedestrians

and then there's no system to…erm…like traffic lights to allow the pedestrians to stop and

the traffic to go. So you sort of just wait for your opportunity of a break from pedestrians

and you go! So there…I found I was wishing metta to the pedestrians [laughs] cos they

were in front of me!

Through the practices of driving and these different forms of meditation, secular and spiritual

dimensions become fused and mutually supportive of each other. Moreover, a geography of these

spiritual practices is constructed with specific parts of the journey, such as the zebra crossing,

enabling or encouraging spiritual activity. Although both travelling through similar suburban routes,

Penny's journey differed from Paul, not only in the practice but in the focus of the practice as Penny

uses *metta* to cultivate social relations and Paul used meditation and mindfulness to develop the

meditation as habit. Despite these differences, both demonstrate how knowledge of the route and

its cognitive requirements is habitualised through repeated performances everyday, in the process

allowing the participant to find the most appropriate segments of the journey for spiritual practices.

From the Baptist church sample of diary-interview participants, Rita (cyclist, Baptist, 35-44), a

mother of a young family and administrator, when cycling to work would wait for a specific section

of her commute across Bristol in order to run through a sequence of prayer and bible recitations.

She would begin this by turning off the busy main road which comprised the first section of her

commute and into a park for the remainder of the journey. This sequence of prayer or as she

termed it, a 'cycle liturgy', was initially developed after speaking to a friend who performed a similar

practice when walking through a local journey. Since beginning this practice she had begun to

associate the steps within the sequence with particular visual references found within the park as

shown in Figure 2:

[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

The words recited by Rita at certain points on her journey through the park reframed the visual environment, inscribing these words of prayer into the landscape. Rita reported that she chose the park as the arena for this practice because of its sensory break from the surrounding section of her commute on the road. When interviewed, Rita added that her main thoughts during the road section were regarding the traffic and her behaviour, as a cyclist, within it. Rita uses different segments of her commute, such as the park which requires less concentration of safety due to lack of motorised traffic and slower changing environment, allowing her to focus more readily on her 'cycle liturgy'. A Taylorist approach to travel-time use (Jain & Lyons, 2008; also Laurier, 2004) is employed for prayer and liturgy that assigns spiritual and religious meaning to Rita's personal geography.

Later in the interview, Rita also reported a regular routine which involved shopping at the weekly city centre farmers' market would prompt a brief moment of song of praise and thanks at a particular set of traffic lights before Bristol Bridge. Again, she utilised visual metaphors present in the immediate surroundings:

> …I didn't know why it was uplifting and I would like sing this little song, praise him all
> creatures here below and I'd look at the people. Praise him above ye heavenly host and
> look up there's the seagulls flying and they become the heavenly host and it just kind of
> works…

As with Rita's commute through the park, the urban space she travels through here is re-imagined through the accompaniment of words and images to different parts of the landscape. After practicing this routine for a while Rita learnt that the history of the bridge involved sieges, murders and riots, 'ghosts' of the mundane landscape (Edensor, 2008). In Rita's reading, however, the bridge takes on more positive connotations as part of Rita's spiritual practice.

Another cyclist, Michelle (35-44) from the Buddhist meditation centre sample, also used her commute to integrate the mundane everyday landscape with her spiritual practices.

> Oh I go just up the road through the park and I, I, I elongate it so I take myself along the cycle path from the river cos I find it really relaxing and…erm…it's just more pleasant really. And again it's a bit more natural cos you're near the river and sometimes I stop and I do a little bit of mindfulness by the river. Either before or after work. And…er…yeah. I find it…I'm quite noise sensitive so cycling in traffic I don't like cos I get, I can see my mind…gets a lot more busy when there's more noise and so I like going on the cycle path cos there's hardly any noise and it calms me. It's calming for when I get into work. So I'm a bit better prepared when I get into work. I can feel the difference, yeah.

Like Rita, Michelle chooses a route to her work as a marketing professional that separates her from the mobile choreography and noise of commuting traffic and this allows her space in order to calm the mind before work. The nuisance of traffic is contrasted with the 'natural' landscape (within the urban environment), exemplified in the flowing water which she continues to talk of the connection with the spaces she cycles through:

> […] I just try and focus on my breath sometimes or just the natural surroundings. I try and look around, just see what's changed. What's really nice about going along the cycle path is seeing the change in the seasons. You know the flowers coming out and then winter and the temperature. And just noticing that really helps to bring you into the moment, yeah.

The daily embodied rhythm of Michelle's cycle-ride to work through the suburbs intersects with and makes visible the seasonal rhythms of the time-space from spring through to winter in an otherwise humanly constructed landscape. This enhanced perception of the natural rhythms imposes its own tempo and flow within the urban environment creating 'place-temporality' (Wunderlich, 2010; 2013)

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but also connecting the linear pace of Michelle's life to the circular rhythms of the cosmos through bringing her into the 'moment' in place.

Throughout this section I have outlined different *tactics* that participants have enacted in order to import official venue place-based practices of prayer, meditation and singing into unofficial spaces of the car and the cycle ride. It is also worth considering that pre-planned practices such as driving meditation or prayer-lists reported by the participants may also merge with de Certeau's notion of *strategy* in the participant's attempt to order and organise time-spaces. Whilst many of the participants reported that they engaged prayer and meditation or other practices within their workplace as well as leisure time, the commute to work offered a regular and regulated opportunity for practices. There has been a negotiation between the secular requirements of concentration, skill and regulation needed to move through spaces of mobility and the spiritual practices. Additionally, there were similarities in participant's approaches to using mobility for spiritual and religious purpose and differences often emerged across mode, rather than sample group. Whilst participants practice interacted with the time-spaces in which they traversed, for car-drivers this could be more mechanically based – the shift in focus from prayer to traffic in Sally's case or the slowing down for pedestrian crossings with Penny – if also embodied in speed differential and consequent feelings of frustration or anxiety. Rita and Michelle's cycle journeys drew more from the surrounding 'natural' spaces in which they travelled and incorporated features such as the running water of streams and rivers into their practices. These practices constitute an ordering of space and attributing of meaning to these spaces that develops and reinforces the relationship between the participant and their sense of place.

Slowing down

Sometimes, the local environment could provoke the participant into a response they interpreted though a framework of faith and spirituality. Often, these responses would be prompted by an assertion of the natural world into the otherwise concrete built environment of (sub)urban Bristol.

From their diaries, Rita found inspiration in the hues and light of a winter morning in an urban park in south Bristol; Eleanor reports experiencing a sense of awe in the intricate detail of an autumn leaf on an otherwise mundane pavement, transferring the micro-intricacy to the macro-detailing of the cosmos. Minor experiences perhaps, but also examples of 'enchantment' or the 'momentarily immobilizing encounter' (Bennett, 2001, p5; also MacKian, 2012). These moments rely on a degree of unexpectedness (Bennett, 2001) and for these participants are located within their daily (even walking) range of time-space.

Changes of speed often triggered these experiences. Elsewhere in the diaries, Eleanor talked of leaving the motorway during a journey to the outskirts of Bristol and feeling moved by the change in surroundings from grey monotone motorway to green spaces. A heavy bike loaded with groceries and a steep hill would compel Rita to dismount her bike after her weekly trip to the supermarket and she remarked that slower speed allowed for greater awareness of local surroundings and in her case the view over Bristol. A similar observation was made by Penny who noted a greater sense of presence whilst cycling than when driving, easing states of mindfulness. Additionally, there was a perception of time-stretching when walking resonating with Maddrell's (2011b) findings that the rhythms that infuse walking allow for alternating states of mindfulness and non-reflexivity as pilgrims find their own internal rhythm. Resultantly, questionnaire respondents commented:

> Walking gives you time to think about what you do, which should make you a better
> person and Christian. (car-driver, F, Baptist, 35-44)

> Trying to do walking meditation on my way to work. Being mindful. (walker, F,
> Meditation centre, 35-44)

At other times when walking was discussed, this mode was framed by words of meditation, social meetings or appreciation of nature as well as prayer suggesting these respondents found walking a more leisurely transport mode, requiring less concentration and therefore providing the mental

capacity to contemplate other subjects. This resonates with walking being viewed as a medium for

observation and immersion in the rhythms of the urban landscape that stimulate the sensory

patterns of the body (de Certeau, 1988; Lefebvre, 2004; Middleton, 2010). In these examples

walking is constructed, and often marginalised in popular discourse (Bonham, 2006), as time out

from the speed and intensity of other mobilities and responsibilities required from other aspects of

everyday life. Coupled with a lessening of bodily exertion required, the reduction in speed allows for

time for the individual to turn the mind away from everyday and immediate concerns to

transcendent and other-worldly matters.

> Walking in park to take children to school important connecting with nature very spiritual
>
> for me (walker & driver, T, Meditation centre, 45-54)

The respondent here explicitly links nature and the outside world to spirituality and this is

embedded in their daily routine of walking the children to school. Similarly, Heather (walker,

Baptist, 35-44) was prompted into thought by a crucifix statue that she observed whilst walking

through a local cemetery.   Religious symbolism within a space, the cemetery, set aside for

introspection and reflection reminds us that Christian institutions still have a powerful role within

death rites despite a decreasing influence in other life events of births and marriages (Davie, 2006;

Woodhead, 2012b). The respondent quoted above and Heather draw on different sources to

stimulate spiritual contemplation and renewal. Suburban space becomes a reminder of a non-

material reality and heritage through chance encounters with nature providing an aesthetic break in

otherwise grey surroundings, of enchantment within the material world (Bennett, 2001; Caputo,

2001; Eliade, 1957). Sometimes moments of spiritual practice can be inserted into time-spaces that

are usually perceived as negative.

> I often use waiting for buses as an opportunity to let go & practice acceptance & be
>
> present (!) I enjoy the space of journeys by bus & walking in particular to let myself be

present or to reflect. I feel my journeys are an important source of space in my life & very

part of my spiritual life (cyclist, F, Meditation centre, 35-44)

Waiting for a bus, often construed negatively as an unproductive and 'wasted' time from a

traditional transport economist discourse (Mackie et al, 1997 cited in Jain, 2009) is transformed by

this respondent into an active part of their spiritual life. The bus journey from waiting to riding and

walking are used as opportunities to be present as an important part of meditative practice. The

sensitivity of the new mobilities paradigm towards varying speeds of travel recognises here the

experiences of the participants that are rooted in a moment of slowing down either from driving to

cycling or cycling to walking or walking to stopping.

This section has examined the encounters and situations that slowing down in movement through

time-space can enable for the participant. There has been a recognition that despite the mundanity

of the time-spaces in which the participant dwells, there can also be found moments and spaces of

enchantment for the individual. These moments show continuity across both samples as

respondents and participants report that slowing down could often encourage reflection and

contemplation. For the Baptist church sample, this reflection was more likely to be directed towards

a transcendent entity while the Meditation centre sample tended to talk more of connection with

the immediate and the this-worldly. Participants in this research have some involvement in these

acts of reaching out beyond the Self to the Other, recognising enchantment entangled within

otherwise secular space (Bennett, 2001; Caputo, 2001; Eliade, 1957; MacKian, 2012) as part of a

subjective spiritual geography of meaning and place.

Conclusion

Everyday journeys are assembled and performed and, despite regularity and familiarity, no two trips

will be the same as variables of people, weather conditions, traffic, absent-presences of others and

other factors combine to create unique time-space paths. A tension is produced between the

familiarity of regular journeys and the lack of familiarity that variations can bring and this theme has been present throughout this paper. Repeating a trip regularly can bring knowledge of what parts of the journey can be used for specific activities – whether travel is undertaken by active, public or private motorised transport. Yet the unpredictable variables can also be significant to the journey, the different people encountered or the instances of 'enchantment' that causes the individual to momentarily contemplate a transcendent reality or even the wail of an ambulance siren that prompts a prayer for those in need.

The empirical data in this research demonstrates that everyday journeys, often taken for granted and neglected in many geographies of religion and spirituality, can be incorporated into regular spiritual routines and transformed through practices and beliefs. Journey time that may otherwise be 'wasted time' is transformed into time that is not only actively engaged with but, as some of these comments have alluded to, is valued and depended upon as an integral part of daily and spiritual life. Several respondents and participants even suggested that without everyday travel time, they may struggle to find the time and space to pray, reflect or otherwise engage. This data corresponds with Kong's call for geographers to investigate religion and spirituality beyond the official and with the body of literature that explore the sacred enmeshed within the profane as an unseparated part of everyday life. The paper contributes further to this work by revealing the practices and performances that occur between sites, that are mobile and fluid and that are planned but also flexible to the demands of the environment. In the latter point, it also calls attention to the blurring of *strategies* and *tactics* as individuals may pre-plan (and even be encouraged by their church or meditation centre) *strategies* of their spiritual practices yet the realisation of these activities can be *tactical* upon execution.

Everyday mobilities can, as explored in this paper, become enmeshed with personal practices and beliefs of religious and spiritual value for the individual. Not only to provide a time and (often private) space for individuals to pray, meditate or engage in other activities, mode of transport but

the journey can actively shape the activity in the engineering of the personal environment. This may be because the quiet, sheltered bubble of the car that allows private prayer or because of the direct interaction with nature that a bicycle journey can allow. The constraints, impedances and affordance specific to cars, buses, walking and bicycles encourage particular forms of activity that construct topographies where the individual is more likely to engage in spiritual practices at certain points of the journey than others. Rita, for example would wait until leaving the road and entering the park before commencing her personal 'cycling liturgy' that she had developed whilst Penny's practice of *metta* was prompted at certain points on her journey such as the zebra crossing where she transformed potential frustration at waiting for pedestrians to cross into wishing them wellbeing. There were key differences in what the two sample groups practiced, notably in the this-worldly focus of the Meditation centre participants and respondents. However, there were also significant continuities across the two groups, particularly in how the mode of mobility could shape the spiritual practice that the individual engaged with. It should be noted that there could also be a relationship between what practices of beliefs the individual engages with and their choice of mobility which may form a future avenue of exploration in this area.

As has been seen with examples from the qualitative research on the participant's everyday and familiar journeys, the time-space of the journey can be remade into an arena in which to spatially explore faith and spiritual practice. In this way, participants open up a critical space that through spiritual practice can challenge and critique popular hegemonies of secular discourse over space (de Certeau, 1988; Lefebvre, 1991). As they become familiar with their mobilities, participants thread together a network of interlocking segments into their everyday journeys; a series of time-spaces which form a subjective spiritual geography. As the person, rather than the place, becomes the centre of social relations (Urry, 2007), the body moving through space becomes central to the analysis of spiritual experience or '*tactical* religion' in everyday life (Knott, 2005a; Kong, 2010; Woodhead, 2012a). This is in reflection of a contemporary society where non-codified secular spaces are incorporated into spiritual geographies through individualist frameworks as part of the

'subjective turn'. However, the instability of mobility always present in the opportunities for encounters and relations with other people, objects, situations and non-materialities (MacKian, 2012). Through the opportunities present in mobility time-spaces for encounter and for spiritual practices, an everyday journey is transformed into a meaningful part of the individual's personal spirituality. A personal journey that is shaped by the rhythms and environments of the mobility that layers new meanings and significances with every iteration.

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