Consequences of Rationalized Space and the Potential in Transitory Lived Space as Recovery from Work

ULF ERICSSON & PÄR PETTERSSON

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Ulf Ericsson and Pär Pettersson

Faculty of Business, Kristianstad Univesity

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Abstract

Does the in-between exist? And if so, does it have any significance for our wellbeing? This article takes on the vital process of recovery from work, and we argue that to understand that process there is a great potential in what we define as spaces in-between. The type of stressors we are exposed to in working life, or due to conflicts between work and other roles in life, mostly have the character of everyday often recurring strain and irritation. This form of low-intense stress can lead to mental deterioration. When resources are consumed we need time to reboot and recreate energy. We need time for recovery, which ought to take place somewhere. Depending on organizing processes in our working life, these "whereabouts" are more or less accessible. We argue that the way space is controlled, managed, experienced and constructed affects its potential of being a place for recovery. Through these avenues and with the help of a fictional story, we show how an increase in surveillance, control and transparency rationalize and streamlines the spaces in-between "turning them" in to formal and corporate space. However, we also uncover the potential in the space in-between and illustrate when these spaces are successfully constructed and made use of as recovery from work. This potential is associated with the process of re-constructing these particular spaces to humanized meaningful places.

Content

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The concept of recovery from work has recently become more and more significant for research on work-related stress and health. The lack of opportunity for recovery increases the wear and tear on the physiological system (Aronsson et al. 2019). This paper approaches recovery from a spatial perspective. By this, we mean that recovery takes place somewhere (both during working hours and after)[1]. Depending on organizing processes in our working life, these "whereabouts" are more or less accessible. We argue that there is a great potential in what we refer to as spaces in-between (Shortt 2015; Turner 1982) for the processes of recovery, specifically when these spaces in-between also are made meaningful by those who frequent them (Shortt 2015). However, the increase of control and transparency streamlines and rationalizes space with negligible leftovers. By integrating theories on work-related health and the field of organization studies, this paper aims to contribute with knowledge about the relationship between recovery processes and space.

Recovery from work

Our work life has gone through major changes in recent decades, due to the transition from an advanced industrial society into a post-industrial, service-oriented, global economy. Work today[2] can in many ways be experienced as more unbound and fragmented than in the well-structured industrial and manufacturing-based era. Unspecific demands and expectations together with loosened boundaries between work and free time have made it difficult for the individual to restore invested energy (Aronsson et al. 2012).

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1   Although our main focus will be on recovery and space during working hours, we will to a certain extent also consider the relation between work and home.

2   This does of course not include all occupational categories. It is most explicitly emphasized in service industry

Crucial for handling these demands is the process of recovery. Recovery is often understood as the "second phase" of the stress process when the exposure of the stressor ceases (due to successful strategies to cope with the stressor) and the phase of recovery enters. A very basic definition of recovery would be "a process that restores the individual's energy and mental resources" (Sonnentag and Ziljstra 2006). Although stress research has largely focused on consequences of reactivity, scholars have in recent years more and more moved towards the understanding of recovery (Rydstedt et al. 2009).

In this paper, we consider recovery as a constant process of dynamic regulation and adaptation between the level of activity and the demands and prerequisites of the social context (Ericsson et al. 2016; Ziljstra et al. 2014). The type of stressors we are exposed to in working life, or due to conflicts between work and other roles in life, mostly have the character of everyday often recurring strain and irritation, i.e. daily hassles (Larsson et al. 2016; Stefanek et al. 2012). Research has shown that this form of low-intense stress, however continuous, can lead to mental and physical deterioration. Earlier studies (Aronsson et al. 2019; Ericsson et al. 2016) have shown that the structure of boundaries between work and home and the individual experience of degrees of freedom in work affect prerequisites and strategies for recovery.

When resources are consumed we need time for recovery, time to reboot and recreate energy, which ought to take place somewhere. Recent research in the field of recovery from work has started to visualize these whereabouts through the categorization into internal and external recovery (from work). Internal recovery implies micro breaks during the actual work process or work day, while external recovery refers to processes during non-work time, i.e. at home, at night when we sleep, during weekends and vacations. The focus of research has increasingly changed from external to internal recovery. Internal recovery in the form of micro-breaks tends to direct our attention to coffee or lunch breaks, perhaps including a stroll in the park (see for example Kinnunen 2011; Zoupanou et al. 2019). Supplementing this with a spatial perspective will increase the complexity of our understanding for internal recovery and maybe lead to adopting a more complete notion of the phenomena.

A Spatial turn on recovery

By approaching internal and external recovery through a spatial lens, a much richer understanding would be conceivable, not least by making sense of what space does to us and how it is enacted. The spirit of this paper is inspired by the endeavor of Olga Tokarczuk, the Nobel Prize winner, and her seminal work Flights. She asks the interesting question whether there may exist an in-between and furthermore gives significance and meaning to the liminal spaces in everyday life: "Whenever I set off on any sort of journey I fall off the radar. No one knows where I am. At the point I departed

from? Or at the point I'm headed to? Can there be an in-between?" (Tokarczuk, 2017 p. 52).

Turner (1982 p. 27) gives us a sense of the potential of the in-between in relation to recovery from work when arguing that people finding themselves in between, in a liminal phase, are "temporarily undefined, beyond the normative social structure. This weakens them, since they have no rights over others. But also liberates them from structural obligations." By highlighting the significance of the in-between, Harriet Shortt (2015) reframes these spaces from "liminal phases" to transitory dwelling places by those who frequent them. With this in mind, we have tried to connect the field of recovery from work (Aronsson et al., 2019; Sonnentag and Ziljstra, 2006; Rydstedt et al. 2009) with the "spatial turn" (Clegg and Kornberger, 2004; Taylor and Spicer 2007) in organization studies. Although our endeavor is partly explorative in character, we assert that the spaces in-between are necessary and of significant importance for our recovery processes (Ericsson et al., 2016). Furthermore, we claim that these particular spaces are being rationalized and regarded as an obstacle in our underway process. In this paper, special attention will be given to this reduction process of the spaces in-between. We build our argument on empirical material from a Swedish insurance company that we have interpreted and transformed to the fictional story "Strike a Pose".

Different spaces

In recent decades, social science and organization theory have tried to revitalize the concept of space. "The spatial turn" is an expression introduced to emphasize this (Clegg and Kornberger 2004; Taylor and Spicer 2007). In a broad sense space has more or less become a self-evident part in studies on work or organizations, not least in research on work-life balance (and/or integration). The predominant focus has been on the formal arenas of work, on the way these are designed (and managed) and how this affects social relations and actions, office landscapes (Berthelsen et al. 2017), meeting rooms (Schwartsman 1989), hospital wards (Ericsson 2010) and other persons' private homes as a work-place (Ericsson et al. 2014). Space and demarcations between different spaces have been crucial to understanding the relation between work and home (Nippert-Eng 1996). Work life with or without boundaries directs attention to different kinds of space and how these overlap and thus change traditional notions of what work-life domain belongs to what specific space.

Although space was a significant feature in the early 20th century, particularly in the practice of Scientific Management "by dividing space into individual cells, so that every single activity had to take place within its own space (cell)" (Kornberger and Clegg 2004 p. 1096)[3], the perspective has changed somewhat. From the outset of Scientific Management, the objective was to manage the task and the individual interaction with

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3   One comprehensive description of this Tayloristic spatial rearrangement can be found in the seminal work of Eric Trist and Kenneth Bamforth (1951).

the task through confining the space of action. If Scientific Management tried to reduce the influence of the whole human being, a more contemporary discourse welcomes and incorporates the whole person and, by doing so, making that whole person feel more responsible, as well as being more visual. Hence, such a discourse has pointed to a spatial makeover and strengthened the importance of space as a strategic factor suitable for the 21st century (Gabriel 2005; Ybema and Horvers 2017). Viewed through a power lens, space has gone from power of the body to preferably involving power of the mind and heart (Foucault 1995).

Erving Goffman argued that, as social actors, we perform in different ways in certain socially determined spaces (Goffman 2009/1959). Some organizational spaces are more visibly controlled and managed than others. Goffman talked about front- and back-stage, public and more private scenes, and how these different locations and expectations affect our actions. Several later scholars have drawn on this line of thought to explore how these spaces regulate human action and emotions (Collinson 2003; Fineman 1993; Hochschild 1982; Scheff 2014; Visser et al. 2018) but also how people attempt to create "new", less or even un-managed spaces (Gabriel 1999; Ybema and Horvers 2017).

Less attention has, however, been devoted to space in-between (Hulme and Truch 2006). Some scholars have viewed this as just a transit zone or liminal space, while others have highlighted that these spaces hold more significance and meaning than being viewed as a simple transit between two dominant spaces (Hulme and Truch 2006; Shortt 2015). Harriet Shortt, however, in showing how hairdressers construct meaning to different liminal spaces at work, recognizes that, as these spaces are " lived' and re-constructed as dwellings by those who frequent them, we might better describe such spaces as transitory dwelling places". (Shortt 2015 p. 655).

In our pursuit to understand internal and external recovery from work, we believe that this could be facilitated by looking into the world of space. We would argue that the way space is controlled, managed, experienced and constructed affects its potential of being a place for recovery. Following Shortt (2015), Turner (1982), Porsfelt (2001) and, of course, Tokarczuk (2017), it is a plausible thesis to view the space in-between (when made meaningful) as a place with potentiality for recovery. Through space, we intend to approach internal and external recovery, contextualized in a post-industrial service-oriented working life.

This paper should be seen as a supplement to traditional research within the field of stress and recovery in work organizations. We are not interested in redefining the concept of recovery but want to look for the existence or lack of it in everyday and working life through a different lens. We are intrigued about how these lines of thought (spatial turn) could improve our understanding of contemporary working life and what the prerequisites could be for the individual to restore invested energy. Hence, in this particular paper we want to explore the relation between space and recovery from work. This pursuit will also include the dynamic relation between work and non-work (home/ family etc.).

The remainder of this paper will proceed as follows. First, we introduce our research design, its empirical context and how we will re-present the field. Next, we present "Strike a Pose", our story of the field, following a narrative tradition where events from an actual field have been interpreted, translated and assembled into fiction. We then align that story with theory, merging theories about space and recovery with "Strike a Pose" as a backdrop. We conclude by considering the implications of the findings for theories on work and recovery as well as for practice.

Collection of material, analysis and presentation

The study was conducted at one of Sweden's biggest insurance companies, more precisely at two of the company's offices in the south of Sweden. These two offices held approximately 106 employees, 59 women and 47 men, with the following age distribution: 18-30 (n=6); 31-40 (n=29); 41-50 (n=37); 51-60 (n=27); 61- (n=7).

Thirty employees, all working at different levels in the company, participated in this qualitatively designed study. All departments as well as the board of directors were represented in the study with one exception: the evening call-center staff. Together with our contact person we outlined five groups that would be of interest for the study. Employees were then contacted by e-mail and asked if they wanted to participate. The e-mail contained a letter of information about the study, its purpose, and what they could expect from the group interview. A total of 30 employees finally consented to take part. Five group interviews were conducted initially, followed by a diary study. Eleven participants who were asked to write a diary for seven days from Monday to Sunday all agreed and completed the study. The diaries are based on the collected material from the group interviews. The structure and layout of the diary is inspired from Bergman et al. (2017).

The Group interviews

When it was time for the actual group interview, the participants in every group were reminded of the purpose of the study and reinformed that the interviews were not compulsory. They were then asked to tell us about an "ordinary" day, from getting up in the morning to going to bed. Every interview was initially shaped the same way: the participants took turns in telling the group about their day, followed by comments and

questions from the other participants and from the researchers. Each story was linked to the first for the purpose of showing differences or similarities. Our job was to make sure that all participants were given the opportunity to tell their story or at least make a supplementary input. Both researchers conducted and participated in all the interviews.

We used a simple guide containing only a few themes that we wanted the participants to elucidate, our initial line of thought being that a day consists of three distinct elements: sleep, work and leisure (for lack of a better word) and that activities during the day could be related to one of the following cognitive and emotional phases: mobilization, performance or recovery. We also encouraged the participants to identify different situations when they considered themselves engaged in a recovery activity. Although we had a guide containing a few themes, the group's internal dynamics seldom necessitated referring to that. Instead we could focus on our role to facilitate the dialogue and ask different follow-up questions to make the participants elaborate on different themes and achieve greater depth and richness. This was often the case when the participants said something that was self-evident to them but actually required further explanation for us. In addition to this, we also asked them for clarifications and concrete examples, primarily when their descriptions seemed too abstract. Each interview lasted for the scheduled 1.5 hours or a couple of minutes longer. All the interviews were recorded digitally and were later transcribed verbatim.

Approach, analysis and re-presentation

The different worlds of interest (Czarniawska 2005) to this study were those of the employees, the way they interpreted and made sense of their work, how work and leisure (home) were related, how they experienced the possibility for recovery in everyday life, and how different aspects of space could be understood in relation to all this. The analysis started with a careful initial reading of the whole empirical material. The material from each group interview was then read several times in order to acquire an appropriate sense of what the participants were talking about. After this, the material was coded, first in units of identified meaning expressed by a word, statement or paragraph. This was then followed by an abstraction process of aggregating the fragments into workable labels.

Five comprehensive labels were identified: Transparency and resistance, Front-stage and hidden audience, Surveillance and speed, The third shift, Transitory Space with meaning. On the basis of the aggregated labels we then went back to the transcribed material to make sense of the different stories found in the interviews. Next, the diaries were interpreted as well with support from the five labels. This was followed

by a modest sketching of the different stories from the field. Theoretical support and explanations (in a generic sense) helped us to see the material as "something" (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1997). Although what was said and how it was said could be largely identified by limiting the study to the empirical material (Czarniawska, 2008), theory helped us in framing and directing this interpretation.4

This analyzed and interpreted material was then transformed into the fictional story "Strike a Pose". Drawing on ideas from fiction-based research (Leavy 2013; Vickers 2010), the objective of using a fictional presentation was to capture the complexity of lived experiences. We want to emphasize that neither the Pellucid company as presented in the story nor the characters in the story exist. They are used as tools to unveil how space can help us to understand the mechanisms of recovery processes and the dynamic relation between work and life and to better convey this to the reader.

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4   To answer the question of why something was said, more theory is needed.

Strike a pose (fiction)

Tuesday 9 October

Usually everything went fast and smooth in Athens. Most of the time he was not done signing in before someone came and picked him up. However, this time the reception was empty. He had already been waiting for thirty minutes, but the room was silent. Abandoned. He stood up and walked towards the desk. With an owl-like head movement he tried to look through the frosty boat window. No use. He put his hand on the half-filled coffee cup right next to the computer. It was cold, didn't really smell anything like coffee anymore and had an oily surface. This was atypical of the Harriet he had gotten to know. Her desk was always spotless. He liked their unbothered small talk while he was waiting for someone to pick him up. Even though he did not know her, their short moments of chitchat never started all over, but every new time was neatly coupled with the last.

He went back to the sofa, picked up a magazine and looked at the door while leafing through it. His eyes caught a glimpse of an advertisement for the Pellucid company in the magazine with the headline "The Spirit of Pellucid". He only registered it, kept on leafing through it, and then put it down on the table. He waited for some more minutes, then again walked up to the desk. Looked over at the door. Looked at the handle. Turned around and walked out.

He probably should have called someone. Annoyance would probably be an appropriate reaction. However, he often had a deeply buried wish of planned events being cancelled. Just like that. It could be about anything - a meeting, a gathering with friends, an interview, a lecture for his students at the university, anything. Remedy by chance when chance creates a small gap in the tightly coupled chain of events. A gap no one knew about, but him. A loophole for catching up.

Outside of Athens he looked at the empty parking lot while re-reading the confirmation e-mail from Donna. Tomorrow morning he had an interview with her at the Pellucid insurance company. This was for another project, since the fieldwork at Pellucid was almost done, but he had this last interview with one of the team leaders, and a handful of employees were to fill out a diary this up-coming week. The project was

about understanding how people try to recover mentally after cognitive and emotional phases of mobilization and actual performance. He was interested in people's daily lives, their full daily rhythms. What was earlier understood as two clearly separated domains (work and home) was today viewed more as an integrated dynamism. By just looking at how people define themselves in contemporary society, it seems as if the old divided view that the one – work – exists only to enable the other – leisure – was long gone.

He ought to have taken advantage of the unexpectedly created opening. It was a sunny day and he did not even need to button his jacket. He hesitated for a second, looked at his watch and decided to hurry up to catch the next bus.

Spacing: Wednesday 10 October

The next morning he took the bus to M-town, because he had an early interview with one of the team leaders at the Pellucid insurance company. M-town lay approximately 80 kilometers from his home, and the bus stopped conveniently within walking distance from Pellucid. The car would of course have gotten him there faster, but he always felt a bit restricted in the car. Not being able to work or read, only listen to music or perhaps an audiobook. He sat in the same place as always, in the middle of the bus to the right (in the direction of travel), and next to a window. He formed his jacket into a pillow and put it between his head and the window. He picked up his phone, opened one of the news sites and went through the headlines. Nothing particularly salient, so when he had come to the end of the news site he had not clicked on anything.

Just as he opened his e-mail, the bus stopped. He looked up and saw that they were on the middle of the freeway. They had come to a full stop in the left lane, and cars were passing them to the right. He was expecting some kind of announcement from the driver, but none came. After a couple of minutes, still no information. People started to lean into the aisle, trying to catch a glimpse of what was going on in the front. It looked from where he was sitting as if the driver was on the phone. A woman a couple of seats in front of him got up from her seat and out in the aisle. She was rather short, all dressed in black. Her long scarf reached all the way down to the floor. She did not get far until she stepped on it so that it curled around the neck down her back and fell to the floor. Her verbal attack that had started a second earlier came to a halt. She picked up the scarf and in the motion of getting up and turning around, she started again, in a loud voice: "What's going on, people will be late for work. I will be late for work."

He was unable to catch what the driver said, but she started to talk even louder in response. "At least open the doors, my husband can pick me up, I don't have time for this."

After a couple of seconds, she turned around and walked back to her seat. "Idiot", she said to herself, loudly enough so that most of the passengers, and the driver, would hear her. Although it was a salient cue in the flow of events that he could not avoid (to say the least), he also kept an eye on a woman sitting behind the driver with her

back against the window. She wore a long orange coat and a mustard yellow beret. She looked so at ease when she followed the scene taking place at just an arm's length from her with a steady smile on her face.

A dark and calm voice from the speakers broke the temporary silence: "We are having some minor problems, I've called for assistance and they will come and fix it in within fifteen minutes, please be calm and stay seated, there is nothing we can do before help has arrived. Thank you for your patience"

He took his eyes from the speakers and glanced at the woman with the long scarf, who was now on the phone with someone, and then at the woman with the mustard yellow beret, who was reading something. He opened his phone again and started to scroll down the same news site as before.

Another Cancellation and the Spirit of Pellucid

Pellucid was one of Sweden's oldest insurance companies. It had offices all over Sweden, no central Head Quarters, but locally governed and customer-owned organizations. Pellucid had expanded its business to the field of real estates and, like most insurance companies, also to banking. However, they made an explicit point of not looking like one of the older banks. No fancy entrance with marble pillars, nothing lavish or conspicuous in arts or architecture. The surplus went back to the owners, the customers. After checking his e-mails, he turned off the sound on the phone and walked to the counter. The young man behind the counter was new. He had never seen him before.

"Hi, I'm Eric from the U University; I have a schedule appointment with Donna."

"Hello, and welcome to Pellucid- Donna, just a sec", he said in an over-cheerful voice.

The receptionist kept repeating her name as he was searching the computer. "Donna, Donna, Donna, Dooona. No. She is not in today; she is at the other office in L-town."

"But we have an appointment. We have booked the small room: Waterfalls", Eric replied.

"Waterfalls? Let me check. You are actually right, it is booked and it says University. Strange. Anyway, Donna is not here. She was here yesterday, and I think will be tomorrow, but not today, I am very sorry. Do you still need the room or is there anything else I can do for you?" he said, still in a cheerful voice and now with an added smile and a nod that indicating that the conversation was over.

"No, that's all right".

Trying to conceal his irritation, Eric turned around and headed for the two-seated sofa by the window when someone laid a hand on his shoulder.

"The Shadow, I didn't know you were coming today."

"Well, I was supposed to meet Donna for..."

"Okay, now that you're already here, you can join us at our meeting. I've been feeling a little bad that I've forgotten to tell you about it. It's as they say; you have to turn around fast to see your own 'Shadow'. I am useless in that sense, I never look back, already elsewhere. However, you know all about that. On the agenda today is the 'Spirit of Pellucid' – you know values, organizational culture and stuff. Right up your alley, eh? I'm going to let you in, and we can meet outside of Forest at 10.30."

John swiped his card and opened the door. Behind the door was an open landscape with ergonomic desks, computers, headsets and a big whiteboard. On the whiteboard, someone had drawn a big blue pyramid that contained three levels. The three names from yesterday evening were still there, ranked and written in gold.

"Look, Nancy was number one yesterday. She has never been worse than second the whole year, what a performance, don't you say?"

"Yeah, that is quite impressive", Eric said, looking back at the twenty-five desks and then at the whiteboard again with the three names.

Between the call center and the "nine-to-five offices" lay the personnel room. A big atrium. Round café tables to the left and right sides of the room. Right in the middle there was a kitchen island loaded with fruit, juice, coffee, buns with different toppings.

"I love the smell of… well, coffee in the morning. Breakfast starts in ten minutes", John said.

Eric acknowledged him with a simple nod, excused himself and went quickly through the atrium and into the part of the building with all the offices. On his way to the restroom, he passed the office of Zahra, the HR director. She was sitting in an armchair on the opposite side of her desk with her eyes closed, mumbling something. He could not hear what she was saying, only saw her lips moving. Although the glass door and glass walls created a visualized experience of a boundary-free environment, the sound was nevertheless (in this situation) still bound to a particular space. He did not knock or try to get her attention, because she seemed to have her mind somewhere else and he was in urgent need of a bathroom break. He just hurried on towards the restroom. He stayed longer then he needed, picked up his phone and started to go back and forth between his e-mails, Facebook and a news site. At the same time, he was trying to decide what he felt about the nickname 'The shadow'. It sounded a bit stupid and somewhat condescending. On the other hand, the management team had that jargon, and in some way, it narrowed down his actions and existence at Pellucid. That was a big part of his job, to shadow. He went out and saw Zahra coming out from the printing room. Her neck was all red and she tried to get someone's attention.

"What is wrong with the printer? Both printers! How could both printers be out of order? It happens all too often, what's wrong with this place?"

She greeted Eric by lifting her eyebrows and signaling indifference with her mouth. She continued down the corridor and Eric went into the printing room. The whole machine was dead. He pushed a couple of buttons, but without any response. Dead. Zahra came back together with Patricia who had her office next to Zahra.

"It's got to be the cleaning staff, this happens from time to time", Patricia said.

She moved the printer a little bit, bent down, replacing the cord into the socket.

"This is the recurring problem, the cord. Now it will take some time before it is warmed up, so if I were you I would run up to the second floor and use that printer instead"

Zahra looked at the machine and then turned around and walked back to her office. Eric and Patricia stayed long enough for the printer to work again and Zahra's copies started to come out. It was a handout, probably for the meeting John had mentioned. The Spirit of Pellucid was written in big letters on the frame of the first page. The following frames were filled with bullets and written text.   "It's going to be a long meeting", Eric thought to himself.

Patricia collected the handouts and went out of the room and back towards her office. As she passed Zahra's office she put the handouts in her pigeonhole and then continued back into her own.

Eric had some time left to grab breakfast, so he went back to the personnel room. He recognized some of the persons who were still in the atrium. He was not in the mood to take a seat with anyone right know, but he also knew how it could be interpreted if he chose an empty table. Accordingly, he looked around and identified one table where it looked as if they were almost done. After a brief presentation he asked if he could join them and, just as he thought, they responded that it was alright, but they were almost ready and would soon be leaving. After a couple of polite phrases, Eric took a sip from his coffee, putting the cup down and simultaneously asking the other three around the table about their view of the Spirit of Pellucid.

"When I compare with other businesses, I think it's better here. Much better, we do our 40 hours' work week and can let go of work when we leave the premises. I have been to other places where the norm was to work 60-70 hours a week", Doris said.

"Maybe that's because you come from another company, but I would say it's lost. The thing we used to call the spirit of Pellucid is gone. And we do everything twice. First, we do it for real, and then we do it a second time on paper. It feels like the second time is more important than the one with the customer", Carl replied.

As if he caught himself saying something that he shouldn't have said, he warmed his lips on the coffee cup and looked down and mumbled: "That's what I think, anyway."

"I agree. When I started working here, almost ten years ago, back then the spirit was very tangible. Everyone cared; people took care of you, which felt good. Despite rank or whatever, everyone was anxious about how I felt, wondering if I had all I needed to do my job. However, that kind of fellowship has snuck out and is now long gone. Today, it's much more about everybody's individual performance, 'I don't care about you. I only care about my numbers'. Maybe I am exaggerating, I don't know", said Anna.

Doris did not comment on Anna's report. She just looked at her watch and said that it was time for them to leave. Everyone got up and took their plates and cup with them. They said good bye to Eric, who wasn't ready to leave yet.

"Don't want to be away from the headset when they start to count the minutes. We have one minute until 'away-from headset time'", Anna said chuckling.

"Really? Eric asked

"Really", Anna replied.

Eric picked up his phone and checked his e-mail; he started to read a mail from his son's kindergarten, but it was too long, so he closed it. Something about a field trip on Friday and the necessity of a homemade lunch pack. It is only Wednesday, he said to himself while walking out from the atrium, still twenty minutes until the meeting in Forest.

Forest was the conference room generally used by the managerial team when they had their meetings. It was the only room at Pellucid that did not have any glass walls or glass doors. The door was slightly open when he arrived. He overheard a conversation about Donna, so he stopped outside.

"She is not quite herself anymore. She seems distracted. It has been going on for a while. Even I have noticed it, and I don't even work close to her. It's your department, what do you think?"

"True, I've felt it too, but I haven't asked her about it, or anyone else for that matter. I will take her pulse at our next monthly meeting"

He did not see who was talking, nor could he derive it through their voices. He hesitated to walk in, so instead he turned around and walked straight to the restroom and closed the door, waited for a little while, and then walked back to Forest and went straight in. Every seat around the table was taken.

"Shadow! Grab a chair and join us, there is one in the corner. Everyone knows the Shadow, or *of* him perhaps. I invited him, I hope that was alright", said John.

"Eric", Eric said, laying his hand on his chest.

"Take a seat please, we are about to start", Zahra said without looking up from her computer screen.

She was scrolling her e-mails, unaware that her mailbox was on display on the big white canvas.

"Are you using company time and e-mails to order things on Amazon? And look there is something from Craigslist too?" John said in a strict voice.

"Eh, that was, it was just something really impor.. it was once", Zahra said turning all red and switching to the Power Point.

"Relax, I'm just kidding. I know you'll make up for it somehow. If you don't already have it on your slideshow enter 'Trust', that is important", John said and then he started to chuckle.

The whole table started to chuckle in unison, or so it seemed. Zahra changed her voice to a more formal tone, indicating that the meeting had started. Eric immediately noticed that she had altered her strategy in the very last minute. The first slide was the same as the one from the copy room: The Spirit of Pellucid. The second slide, with all the text, was replaced by a picture of a hand holding a peach. She was silent for a short while and then she clicked on the computer, the hand and the peach core were

still there, now together with a headline. A question: "What are our core values?" She looked at everyone around the table and asked them the same question.

"What do you think are our most important core values at Pellucid; can we define our culture? I would like you all to reflect on this for a couple of minutes and then write down some meaningful bullets that could be representative of our culture. Okay, are you game?"

Ten minutes later Zahra had shut down her computer and she started to fill the whiteboard with words coming from the table. Family. Customer focus. Compassion. Long-term approach. Fellowship. Availability. Trust.

"What about you, what do you think? said Zahra and pointed at…

"Well, everything has already been mentioned, but I was thinking about Work-Life Balance."

"That is perhaps not a value, how do you mean?" Zahra replied.

"No, but we highlight these things and that represents something, I don't know. How about caring?"

Eric thought there was something familiar with the voice, but he could not really identify it. Zahra wrote down the word 'caring' on the whiteboard. Without turning, she asked if there was anyone else that could come up with something of relevance.

"Does the famous Spirit of Pellucid really still exist? Don't misunderstand me, but isn't it just a romantic memory about how things used to be?" John said in a non-provocative voice.

"Good! Now we are getting somewhere ", Zahra said, as she wrote the Spirit of Pellucid with a question mark in the bottom right hand corner of the whiteboard.

The managerial team actually never got back to the question mark, instead they focused on some of the written down words, and just before the meeting was to end, Zahra – with the help of John and a third person (a woman Eric never had seen before) summed up the meeting. Zahra circled the sentence "The business of you" on the whiteboard.

"Okay, I liked this and I really liked our discussion about our culture having some kind of purpose. So this is the purpose of our 'Gemeinschaft'", she said, first pointing at the sentence and then at the different clusters of words that were supposed to represent the company's values.

"We should replace our old slogan with that. This is much more up to date, don't you think? John said, playing with his pencil between his fingers and looking around the table.

Peopled nodded and some picked up their phone and took a photograph of the whiteboard. Zahra ended the meeting and explained that she would e-mail a summary of the meeting to everyone.

The parking lot

Eric pulled out his keys, and the radio stopped immediately. His eyes caught a yellow stain in the ceiling. How did it get there?, he asked himself. He turned his head and saw the same type of stain on the headrest of one of the child seats. He looked at his watch and it was five to five. Just as he grabbed the handle, his telephone started to ring. The caller was unknown. He answered and at the other end he heard an apologetic voice:

"Hi, this is Donna. Donna from Pellucid. I got your number from Patricia. I just wanted to call and apologize for this morning. I had mixed up the days and, well, I don't know what to say. Can we reschedule and do the interview another day? I can't talk for long as I am on my way to picking up the kids. They have this phone-free zone at kindergarten, you know. Maybe you can send me some suggestions and I will get back to you. What do you think?"

"Eh, no problem, John invited me to a meeting with the managerial team. No harm done. Maybe we could…"

She interrupted him, but he instantly realized she was talking to someone else.

"Yes of course, I will. Sorry. Just give me one second", she said and changed to Eric. "Need to go, phone-free environment you know. Next week, let's do this next week. Send me an e-mail. Great"

She hung up. He stayed in the car watching a parent with her child pass right in front of him. Before leaving the car, he picked up his telephone and e-mailed Donna a couple of suggestions for a new interview.

No Corners: Wednesday 17 October

The architecture of the first floor was quite interesting. First a small corridor with offices on both sides. The corridor then turned into something best described as a roundabout, with offices to the right and left and then a new corridor following the roundabout. That corridor contained the copy room, the restrooms and the Forest venue. Everything but the last corridor was glassed. The roundabout contained a couple of chairs, a coffee table, a coffee machine and a water cooler. He took a seat in one of the chairs in the middle, waiting for Donna. She had her monthly meeting with her department manager. Every employee had an individual meeting once a month with their closest manager. The meeting focused on the different measures they were subjected to, such as customer evaluations, time away from phone, staff evaluation (for the managers), how many units sold, if they had achieved their monthly goals, and whether there were any deviations in the random spot checks that were made on everyone's work. If there was any time left at the monthly meeting, they were encouraged to talk about their life situation, general wellbeing and health promotion.

At Pellucid they called the roundabout The Agora, after the ancient Greek word for a public square. While he was pouring himself a glass of water, he thought of how the whole thing reminded him of the old church in his hometown. Legend has it that the circular architecture of the church was aimed at keeping away the devil. With no corners, there was simply no place for him to hide. Anna, who came rushing, interrupted his line of thought.

"Water, fast! Complaining customers make me thirsty. Do you think I can take the whole cooler with me?" Anna said smiling.

"Go ahead", Eric said.

"I'm so tired of those two printers. They are both broken again", Anna continued.

"See if the cord is still attached to the socket", Eric replied.

"Funny, very funny", Anna said, slightly lifting her eyebrows as she turned around with her cup and went back through the corridor that held the restrooms, copy room and the Forest venue.

Eric did not get around to taking a seat before he heard Anna's laugh and her voice.

"My God, you were right about the cord!"

Eric was still smiling after Anna's reaction when he noticed that Donna came out from one of the offices. At first it looked as if she was about to avoid him. However, the roundabout was too small and the space too open. There was no escape. There were no corners for lurking devils. Almost unnoticeably, she changed her direction and walked towards him. Her black turtleneck looked a little too warm to wear today. He saw that she was holding a piece of paper in her left hand. The paper had been squeezed into a ball. She gave him a forced smile and told him that she could not do the interview today. One of her kids had turned ill and she had to pick him up at kindergarten. Her eyes were watery. She squeezed the paper harder, making it into a ball, while waiting for his response. When Eric said that he understood and encouraged her to hurry, she did not respond. She turned around and started to walk away and, in the same motion, she threw the paper ball at the bin right next to Eric. She already had her back to Eric and the bin, when it missed. It opened just a little as it fell to the floor. Eric picked it up and unfurled it a little. Someone had drawn a cross, a small X and there were also some words. On the vertical line it said NOT ILL (on top) and ILL (at the bottom), and on the horizontal line it said FEELING WELL (on the right-hand side) and FEELING SICK (on the left-hand side). The X was exactly in the middle of the box NOT ILL and FEELING WELL. He furled the paper and put it into the bin.

The Pick up: Thursday 25 October

The e-mail was sent at 22.40 that same day. However, he did not see it until the next day. A week later he sat in the same seat as always on the bus to M-Town. The woman with the yellow beret was also sitting at the same seat as last time, reading a book, but no beret this time. The one who screamed at the driver was also sitting in the same

spot. As she had gotten on the bus, he noticed that she wore a much shorter scarf than last time. Just to be sure that he had not mixed up the days, he re-read the mail from Donna.

"Hi Eric,

I am very sorry for today. I know you travel a long way to get to Pellucid, and I have now made you come twice for no reason. I do not know what to say, more than I am sorry and that there are certain things in life you cannot control. Too bad that the unpredictable things in my life affect you as well (and twice…). On Thursday (next week) I have a one-hour slot right before lunch. I'll book Waterfalls and meet you down at the reception at 11 o'clock. Please let me know if this does not suit you.

Yours sincerely
Donna"

The new face in the reception greeted Eric with a big smile.

"Welcome to Pellucid, what can I do for you?" he asked, in no way indicating that they might have met before. He either suffered from visual agnosia or was a pretty good actor. Eric played along and did not ruin this greeting ritual between them.

"I am here to see Donna. I am a little early, she is supposed to fetch me in about twenty minutes", Eric said.

It struck him that he had never seen the receptionist without a smile. For the first time he looked like a real person.

"Donna is sick. She will not be back for a long time. Hasn't anyone told you? It happened this Tuesday, right here at work. She just fainted and fell to the floor. We had to call for an ambulance. I'm not sure, no one tells me anything around here, but it was probably the heart, or maybe an aneurism", he said in a confidential tone, leaning a little bit towards him.

"That's sounds horrible… I don't know…"

"Eric!"

Patricia, who stood in the door, interrupted him.

"I figured you were here. I saw that Donna had booked Waterfalls at eleven o'clock. Did the receptionist tell you what happened?" Patricia asked.

"Only briefly. She is sick and it was something about her heart, or an aneurism."

"What? No, well, she is sick, but it was no aneurism, it was stress. From what I've heard, these things will take time, and she will probably not be back for a long while. I don't just want to leave you like this, but I have a meeting in a couple of minutes. John told me to hand over the diaries to you. I've got them in my office. Stay here, have a cup of coffee and there are probably bread rolls and some spread left since breakfast. I'll be back in a flash", Patricia said.

He poured himself a cup and took a seat. He picked up his phone and without really looking at them properly, he liked a couple of pictures on Instagram, and then opened his mail. Only one new message and it was from the kids' kindergarten. Due to work force shortage, they asked parents to pick up early today. He looked at his watch and heard the door open.

"Here they are. And you know what, when I passed Donna's office I saw this on her desk. I don't know if she has written anything in it. But maybe you want it anyway", Patricia said.

In an organic canvas bag, she had collected all the diaries. In green letters, the bag said: *Pellucid – It is all about us.* In her left hand, she held Donna's diary. It had an almost complete coffee circle on it. She gave him the bag and the diary. He put it into the bag.

"Thank you", he said.

"The meeting has already started, so I need to run. John said that he would contact you some time next week. I hope everything is in order with the diaries and I'm sorry about the inconvenience. You can stay and drink your coffee, take the time you need", Patricia said and started to walk back to the offices.

He did not stay for long. He just waited long enough so as not to have to stand too long outside, waiting for the bus. He entered the bus, it was empty. Walked down the aisle, until he came to the middle of the bus, sat down and put the canvas bag firmly down on the seat next to him. He looked at the canvas bag, pulled out a diary, and started to leaf through it. He could not stop looking at the bag. He put the diary back into it and pulled up the one with the circled coffee stain. He opened it and started to read about Donna's week.

Day 1: Monday 15 October

If last week was a real mess, today was actually a good day. Maybe because I was working a couple of hours before going to bed yesterday, taking care of all the e-mails. It gave me some room the first hours this morning. Leaving the kids this morning and picking them up was smooth. No hassle from Jack and Hannah, for once ☺

I had one meeting in L-Town today. I like the days when I am at both places. I really enjoy the twenty-five minutes' drive from office to office. I cannot do anything else but sit listening to the radio or Spotify and my Facepalm playlist. This is my me-time.

Although this was a good day, the sensation still hit me like a big wave, and in the background there is a ceaseless pulse inside me that just won't go away. The same pulsation you feel when you have cut yourself. But, imagine feeling it through the whole body. Before, I used to be able to "run" away from it, by speeding up things I would simply forget about it. Speed creates distraction, and I really need distraction. But lately that hasn't worked either. Maybe I just need to learn how to do absolutely nothing. Or be able to just watch television and nothing else. There is some light at the end of the tunnel; I think this period of work

load will be over in a couple of weeks. Some projects will end in early December and then there are only a couple of weeks left to Christmas. Already Christmas… ☺

Day 2: Tuesday 16 October

I really love my husband. He is fantastic in many ways, but sometimes I get so frustrated. We split just about everything fifty-fifty; we do have an equal marriage. The kids don't come running only to me, they come to both of us if they need something, or just want to snuggle. It's not that, and maybe this is unfair, I don't know, but if we split the activities, he is "only" executing them. He doesn't plan at all, he doesn't keep track on things, field trips, lunch packs, clothes when the seasons change (really! Snow=mittens). How difficult could it be to look outside or look up the weather forecast on the phone? Today he forgot to bring Jack his lunch pack for the field trip. He fixed it, I will give him that (after we talked); he drove to the museum and gave Jack his lunch. No harm done. But he can be so oblivious of things, and that takes a lot of energy.

If I am going to tell anyone about this, who would be better than a researcher? When you presented the idea about the diary to us, you talked about confidentiality and that we were going to be anonymous. So here it is: It is not the cleaner that messes with the printer, I'm the one who unplugs the cord every now and then. I have a rational explanation for this. We have two printers on our floor and if they don't work we have to go up to the second floor. Sometimes I just need that extra time (without anyone asking why I am not doing anything or knowing exactly where I am). It is silly I know. But it gives me time to breathe. I tried to explain this feeling to my husband, and I couldn't come up with anything better than what sometimes happens to us on Friday nights. After dinner, we usually put on music (very loud) and all four of us dance with each other, it is not beautiful that's for sure. However, that is the point, just to have fun without thinking. But every now and then, (my husband has had the same experience), I have the funny feeling that the neighbors across the street are watching us (we have a big front window). I go on dancing but now in a controlled manner. Posing. I am suddenly aware of my every move. If you have ever seen fathers at "Baby Rhythmic" for the first time, you know what I mean. When I escape to the printer on the second floor, it is that same feeling but in reverse.

This evening I tried one of Doris' suggestions. I watched some Korean program on Netflix. It actually worked; I had to focus on the TV and the subtitles just to keep up. I didn't touch the phone for almost two whole 25-minute episodes. You must think I am crazy!

Day 3: Wednesday 17 October

I cancelled the meeting with a certain somebody today. Sorry. And I had my monthly meeting with my boss. She is considerate, but still these meetings are all about correction and regulation. We looked at different deviations from my individual goals and other fun

stuff. I have not had a great month, to say the least. She said she was concerned, because there was an upcoming career opportunity, maybe something for me, she said. Now she didn't really know anymore. I do not know, we could use the money, but it would be longer hours and more responsibility. I cannot really think about that right now. The due date was in the middle of the December, so I have some time to digest it. Then I lied to her. She asked me to put an X somewhere on the "health cross", indicating my health status. I wasn't really truthful, to say the least. If I hadn't worn the turtleneck, she would have seen all the rashes on my neck. I have had the rashes before and it will go down eventually, I just need a little space… or sleep.

Eric turned the page to Thursday the 18th where Donna had started to write something but had crossed over the two sentences. Then nothing. Nothing on Friday either. While he was reading, he had not noticed that the bus had picked up a second passenger.

"Is this seat taken?" the voice said.

Eric looked up and saw the yellow mustard beret woman standing in the aisle right next to him. He looked at her and then at the seat with the canvas bag.

"I just wondered if the seat was taken. What are you reading?" she continued.

"Eh, this? It's a diary", Eric said without thinking.

"Not someone else's I hope", she replied chuckling.

"No, of course not", Eric said while putting back Donnas diary in the canvas bag.

"I didn't think people wrote diaries anymore. I thought everything was for everyone these days", she said while looking at the bag and reading the Pellucid slogan. Before Eric had the chance to respond she added, "very inclusive".

"I am sorry, please have a seat. What are you reading?" he asked nodding at the book she was holding.

"Travel literature. It doesn't matter. Something to keep me company and make the void between A and B a little bit more meaningful. I travel, you see", she said and sat down.

"Or just commute", Eric said with some sarcasm.

"Barbarians… they don't travel, they just target the goal. Something I picked up from this one, and, for my part, I like to travel", she said tapping the book and lifting her head almost unnoticeably.

<center>***</center>

A couple of weeks after Christmas he still had not heard anything from Donna. However, he was not expecting that she would contact him, and he knew that she was still on sick leave. He continued to have some contact with the people at Pellucid, but his major concern right now was the multitude of material and the variegated voices that he had transformed into letters on white paper. What to do?

Informing Strike a Pose

A well-established outset when discussing recovery is to view the individual's process through the phases of mobilization, performance and recovery (Meijman and Mulder, 1998). Perhaps this is a workable outlook if we isolate a specific task or are able to clearly define demarcations between people's different worlds or spheres. In this study, we have had difficulties identifying these phases in such an ideal manifestation. Tasks, assignments, action and events are much too imbricated and interwoven in an intricate way to make that kind of assumption. On different levels, directed towards different spheres and responsibilities, people seem to be ceaselessly engaged in mobilization and performing. As a consequence, recovery appears to be the phase that is inhibited.

With theoretical support, this section of the paper will substantiate our assumptions and claims made so far. This is important, i.e. the field story is a fictive story, neatly assembled and composed by the authors of this paper. Four of the five themes from the method section will re-appear in this section as headlines (*Transparency and resistance*, *Front-stage and hidden audience*, *Surveillance and speed*, *Transitory Space with meaning*). Reflecting upon the fifth theme, *The third shift*, will be this section's point of departure[5]. Although we make references to the "Strike a Pose" story, we will try not to repeat ourselves and instead expect that the reader will interpret our theoretical framing with "Strike a Pose" and Pellucid as a backdrop.

One of the main points of the story about Pellucid is to force us to ask - not what space is – but: *what it does* and *how it is enacted*. We encounter different materials, technologies, events, persons and actions that form and confine action, as well as action that confirms, consolidates and re-constructs these spaces and their regulative aspects. The different spaces are not cold or dead but are filled with expectations, emotions and feelings, manifesting power relations and different symbolic contents (Lefebvre 1991).

Space, Mobilization and Performance

In the story, with the help of Donnas' diary in particular, we present an interdependent work- and non-work life with two spheres that are highly affected by one another. When

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5   See Ericsson et al. (2019) for a more comprehensive discussion about the "Third Shift" and its effects on recovery from work.

trying to understand something as complex as (someone's) health and well-being, both spheres must of course be taken into account. Although we never use the concept of daily hassles (Larsson et al. 2016; Stefanek et al. 2012) in the story, this is what is being illustrated through the frequent emphasis on stressors that have the character of everyday recurring strain and irritation.

Later in this last section of the paper, we will devote our attention to internal recovery (see for example Kinnunen 2011; Zoupanou et al. 2019). Using the story as a point of departure, we will start with a short reflection on external recovery (Geurts and Sonnentag 2004) and link it to one of our themes (see the Method section): *The third shift*.

By referring to a third shift, we highlight something that goes beyond the traditional relationship between the first shift (work) and the second shift (non-paid work at home). We highlight the consuming role of being responsible for the planning and organizing of the second shift. Earlier studies like Frankenhaeuser's in the late 1980s and early 90s showed that the stress hormone would increase for women when leaving the first shift, heading home to the second shift, while the opposite was true for men. Recent studies have identified an increased, but still uneven, equality in how much time is being devoted to the second shift (SCB, 2012). Following theories on work, it is not necessarily the amount of time devoted to one's work or to specific tasks that is problematic. It is rather the characteristic of work that is crucial (Aronsson et al. 2019). Thus, a more delicate interpretation of what we are doing is needed. We claim that the same is true for the non-work sphere. We would argue that we need to go beyond the amount of hours spent and take into account the characteristic of the work being carried out at home, i.e. its *intensity*. In her seminal work *The Time Bind*, Arlie Hochschild introduces a third shift, i.e. the emotional work at home. Smeby (2017) and Ericsson et al. (2019), elaborate on this and divide the second shift into two: work (execution), on the one hand, and planning/organizing, on the other. The responsibility for and the actual work done in the third shift, mostly carried out by women, are highly energy-consuming (Ericsson et al. 2019; Smeby 2017). Thus, if we are to understand the consequences of work, the contextualization has to be done within the same frame as the second and third shift. As we tried to argue through the story, being alone with the third shift creates limitations for external recovery.

The third shift seems to be smeared out to every corner of the non-work sphere (and perhaps the work sphere as well). To have the "unaccompanied" responsibility for the third shift could be considered as an infinite phase of mobilization towards the spaces belonging to the formal organization of the home: one steady stream of daily hassles without any obvious opening for any liminal phase that Turner (1982 p. 27) defined as having the potential to become … *liberations from structural obligations*.

Unplug please: Transparency and Resistance

One of the more salient features of the "Strike a Pose" story is the different contexts of where the performances take place and how the characters "interpret" these contexts. The name Pellucid gives more than a hint of how to interpret the authors' (our) intention.[6] Together with the company name, there are two fragments in the story that particularly emphasize this transparent nature of spaces in everyday performance. The first of these is when The Shadow (Eric) compares the architectural design of the first floor of Pellucid with the church in his hometown. The main chancel of the church was built like a circle to prevent the devil from hiding in the corners. The space forces all who want to hide their whereabouts into the open, on display for others to watch. The other section comes from Donna's diary, when she admits to the Shadow that it is she who has unplugged the cords. This is later explicated through a comparison between the feelings she wants to get away from, when she dances alone with her family in a relaxed manner, as well as when she does the same believing someone is watching. The latter involves a kind of impression management. The unconcerned dancer turns into a troubled one, an amateur aware of all her flaws and every bodily move, posing for an unknown audience.

This is something else than how we usually explain work, control and governance in a traditional bureaucratic sense. However, Donna does not refer to monotony or boredom (as would be expected in a bureaucratic setting) but to something more subtle. This is also reflected in the subtle resistance by unplugging the cords. More than a traditional bureaucratic understanding of the organization, our argument is in line with how Gabriel defines a transition in working life:

"… traditional rational/bureaucratic controls are being replaced by an array of controls operating through language, emotion, space and exposure. Forms of resistance have correspondingly changed from overt challenges to more subtle and nuanced acts of disobedience and defiance, an ongoing attempt to create spaces that are sheltered from continuous exposure or, at least, are only semi-visible from vantage of power." (Gabriel 2005 p. 18)

What is being controlled is a specific view of performance. You are expected to account for every little detail of what you do and mostly for *how much more or less you do this*. This way of focusing on what is quantifiable and measurable (although some things may not be possible to actually quantify in such a sense) creates an ongoing feeling of visibility. These images of visibility and surveillance are among the more important pieces in trying to understand the formal space of work in our contemporary working life. Here, technology (especially in the form of digitalization) is one of the more crucial enforcers in the rationalization process of space (Brivot and Gendron 2011). Although the point of transparency is, of course, visibility (and there are good arguments in certain cases for an increase in visibility about what is actually going on in organizations), what we want to add to this is the unintended consequences

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6   The use of "The Shadow" is something else that could be interpreted in the same way.

arising from transparency (Ringel 2019). We assert that there are concrete (negative) consequences for the individual if there is no possibility of hiding for a short period of time from a judging audience, or with a lack of existence of "back-stage" spaces or spaces in-between[7] (Shortt 2015).

Front-stage and the Hidden audience

"… with an audience looking at a performance on stage, its watching eyes constitute surveillance, one that continuously informs the performer's performance." (Visser et al. 2018 p. 706).

Visser et al. (2018) relate their study of professionals and the increase in everyday surveillance to the metaphor of the theatre. On a stage, everyone can see us, everything is on display, and we have to account for every mistake and every success. Like most scholars who draw on theatre or drama metaphors, the point of departure is Erving Goffman and his work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Goffman talks about front-stage and back-stage performances. While performing back stage, the person can feel somewhat more at ease, with no real audience judging the performance. When (or if) an audience steps beyond the border and "enters the backstage, the intruder is likely to catch those present *flagrante delicto*." (Goffman 1959 p. 209). Although back-stage situations, naturally, occur in the story, most of the performing takes place on what Goffman calls front stage. Front stage literally means standing in front of an audience while being perfectly aware of this. There is, however, one small catch. There exist a great many everyday situations in working life that could seem as if they were performed on a stage, situations whose actions are on instant display and where you can interact with the audience and calibrate your actions to fit the re-actions. Many situations are, in our interpretation, front-stage even though they lack an actually present physical audience. When Goffman referred to front stage, he had in mind a face-to-face relationship. As mentioned before, more recent studies illustrate how technology has made it possible to increase monitoring without involving human eyes (Brivot and Gendron 2011). However, one big difference from the real theatre is that a performer on such a stage will immediately receive confirmation of different kinds from real people, regulating actions, emotions and feelings. Consider the difference for the stand-up comedian performing her act for the first time with an audience, or performing that same act asynchronously, without an audience. Technology at Pellucid (and in general) creates the opportunity for the audience to show up in hindsight, evaluating and giving feedback. What we can, and actually often, do (just like Donna and her colleagues), is imagining the point-of-view of others, even though no one is present, with no other reflection than your own judgements. This is one important aspect that we try to illustrate in the story, i.e. different situations that seem to facilitate

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7   This does not have to mean that people will do nothing. On the contrary, it could mean a possibility to perform "back-stage" or given increased degrees of freedom due to more spaces in-between (re-vitalize opportunities).

a self-regulation asking for more and better. When this is the case, who acknowledges our work and existence? Who are pleased? Who says "This is enough"? At the same time, actions in a post-industrial service economy are directed to fulfil the need of someone else, although there is no explicit explanation of what these needs are. This vagueness and lack of an everyday anchor (Sennett 2007) seem to apply especially to work but may in a way also be true for non-work.

Some of the performances we are referring to would probably earlier have been seen as taking place back-stage. Our case is an insurance company where talking, for example, with a customer while providing services over the phone has earlier been more related to a back-stage activity. This earlier back-stage activity or performance has moved to the front stage, due to (a) the instant evaluative opportunity for the customer and (b) the fact that the actual correspondence is being recorded together with tracking the time the individual is not on the phone with customers.

In line with other scholars (Visser et al. 2018; Ringel 2019), we see that different sets of regulation are emerging. What is most important is perhaps, as mentioned above, the self-regulatory processes, but there are also other external "pointers" that regulate the performances. Revisiting our transcribed material (and diaries), we see that most of the overt regulations come in the form of complaisant feedback. They come in the form of an automatic phone call that customers receive with a request to evaluate the services they have got from the person on the other side. The monthly meeting is a feedback session whose explicit purpose is to make employees come up with ways of obtaining higher ratings and better quantitative outcomes. Although measurement is the principal (external) regulator (see also Bornemark 2017), we can also find that the use of language, as Gabriel (2004) stresses, forms an important control mechanism in the post-bureaucratic organization. This is demonstrated in the story through the writings in Donna's diary, where a subtle correction from her manager is described, when they were discussing her chances of advancing on the corporate ladder.

Surveillance and Speed

This visibility also aids the framing of space, i.e. how it is interpreted. Instead of open spaces and transparency becoming symbols of openness and community, space becomes yet another salient cue representing surveillance and control. Although space is not a subject in itself, it is observed and comes alive through the way it is interpreted and enacted (Lefebvre 1991; Shortt 2015). These symbolic representations could then represent the prying eyes of others (Visser et al. 2018). By connecting his line of thought to the work of Richard Sennett, Yiannis Gabriel zooms out and reflects on this in a more overarching way, suggesting that late modernity contains some tangible characteristics in working life:

"Exposed to intrusive monitoring of performance, employees feel constantly on trial, yet they are never sure of the goals at which they are aiming. There are no objective measures of what it means to do a good job, and those celebrated for achievements one day may easily find themselves on the receiving end of redundancy packages the next. Showing eagerness, being willing to play any game by any rules, looking attractive and involved, while at the same time maintaining a psychological distance and looking for better prospects elsewhere – these are the chameleon-like qualities of the new economy. Above all, the opportunism of the new economy means being constantly on the look-out for new opportunities and never being satisfied with what one has. The missed opportunity represents the ultimate failure in this state of affairs." (Gabriel 2005 p. 15-16)

Leaning towards this interpretation by Gabriel (and Richard Sennett) and similarly looking at this through a spatial lens, there seem to be two parallel processes that consociate: the surveillance and monitoring of performances, on the one hand, and the speed of actions from the individual together with receptivity and lookout for new opportunities, on the other. One way of interpreting why these processes seem to "work well" together would be that, as a result of these processes, some spaces are being closed down. Performances back-stage have become, as has been mentioned earlier, a rarity (Visser 2018). Following the argument of these researchers (Shortt 2015; Visser 2018), space in-between is being "streamlined" to a mere liminal space, only imagined as distance and movement, an obstacle in our underway progress. What is left is formal space and this is being manifested front stage.

Transitory Space with Meaning

In the introduction, we referred to Olga Tokarczuk and her book *Flights*. For us, it was primarily *Flights* that highlighted the quest for the space in-between. As we argue through the story, as previously mentioned, is that the spaces in-between (that have/ or are given meaning) are rather difficult to spot in a late modern work organization. The formal space has increased its advantage with negligible leftovers. In our view, these processes raise important concerns about the potential for internal recovery. More explicitly, they thwart the potential for internal recovery. On the other hand, the spaces in-between still exist and must be given more significance, both in practice and in theory.

Harriet Shortt (2015) argues that, by only focusing on formal and dominant space, organization studies have missed what happens in-between. Space in-between is in research often reduced to liminal space, and by not giving this space more value, the consequence of closing down spaces in-between in working life practice will be viewed as of less importance. In what respect do they contribute, if they are only gaps of

transportation? Where speed is a virtue, liminal space is only in the way[8]. Harriet Shortt claims, on the other hand, that these "in-betweens" are actually of great significance, especially if these spaces are given meaning and thus becoming more humanized. We agree with her. She tries to go beyond the view of the liminal spaces to uncover what she refers to as transitory "dwelling places". Similar places have been discussed in recent studies (Ericsson et al. 2016; Ericsson et al. 2019). However, in these cases, the spaces in-between are most often recognized in the non-work sphere. In the non-work sphere, the places are related to Bachelard's (1994) "corners", i.e. places that are intimate, secluded and where we find solitude and tranquility. If Bachelard gave these spaces a poetic quality, Kaplan (1983) and Korpela (1989) extract, in their different studies, certain emotions to favorite places. Both these scholars assert that the physical environment can offer support for self-regulation and self-conceptions. Korpela uses the concept of place identity when defining places that can work as restorative environments that are "intrinsically enjoyable, give a sense of being away from the constraints of the everyday environment…" (Korpela, 1989 p. 244). Although this bears some resemblance to Turner's descriptions of "liberations from structural obligations" or Bachelard's corners, Korpela (1989) is much more attached to the physical setting than to the social production of these places. Furthermore, the restorative environments (Kaplan 1983; Korpela 1989) become a function of their own and are not explicitly considered as a space that develops in relation to other spaces (cf. liminal spaces or transitional dwelling places). Nevertheless, the ideas of restorative environments and place identity as something supporting "reflection – or contemplation processes – permitting one to organize thoughts and feelings…" (Korpela 1989 p. 244) are useful in understanding not only external recovery (vacations, the wilderness, the beach and so forth) but also internal recovery from work. We claim that these places could be identified (and are being constructed) somewhere in-between. We tried to illustrate the need for these spaces by referring to Donna's resistance by unplugging the cords. However, in line with the rest of the story, this fails to produce enough space or time for it to be significant for her. It is more of a desperate move, caused by the formal spatial takeover. Although spaces in-between are being rationalized as well as more difficult to spot, we still encountered these spaces in our study. At first sight they were transient, and seemingly not even explicitly noticeable for the "user".   However, some actually re-constructed these spaces into something more meaningful. In our story, we have tried to frame these transient spaces (that turned into something more meaningful) with restroom examples, the parking lot, the reception, digital space (the use of smartphone) and especially the different bus scenes. Sometimes they appear through an intentional action and sometimes just by chance (like a cancellation). Although we do see a great potential, more research is required on how these in-betweens relate to recovery, particularly if this also is associated to the process of space being re-constructed to a place.

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8   What seems to happen is that these liminal spaces only serve the physical person, while mentally that same person is occupied with another space, digital space – as a distractor for the movement between A and B.

We believe that external and internal recovery from work can be more profoundly understood with the help of a spatial perspective. For example, internal recovery is often not problematized beyond simply consisting of coffee breaks, lunches or perhaps a stroll in the park during lunch breaks (see for example Kinnunen 2011; Zoupanou et al. 2019). By considering space in-between, liminal spaces or perhaps even transitory lived space, we may perhaps adopt a more extensive notion about internal as well as external recovery.

Summary and conclusion

This paper carries three main contributions. First, it is directed towards both practice and theory in exploring how to understand processes that restrict external and, primarily, internal recovery. However, by uncovering these restrictions, the paper also presents where to look for the possibilities for recovery from work. Secondly, directed specifically towards theory, this paper integrates research on work-related stress and health and the field of organization studies. By looking at recovery from work through a spatial lens, we contribute with a supplementary understanding of how to theoretically access recovery processes and the way these processes are being affected by organizing processes. Third, by using a fictional story, (still being true to rigorous coding and analysis), we illustrate opportunities for how to convey the complexity of social reality through writing.

In our introduction we stated that the stress process could be understood as two phases. The first phase of this process is the actual exposure to the stressor, the reactivity. Most research has been focusing on this phase, or rather on the consequences of the reactivity (Zijlastra et al. 2014). However, focusing on the amplitude of the reactivity actually says very little about the resilience of the individual (Obradovic 2016). For example, if the stress reaction of person A is more forceful than that of person B, but person B returns to her or his baseline faster, this would say more about a person's resilience than only looking at the reactivity phase. From the outset of the health and well-being of the individual, the problem is not that of being exposed to stressors or the experience of stress, but the problem and danger is whether this is extended over a lengthy period of time. Hence, research has twirled the focus to grasp this second part. There has been an increase in this second phase in stress research, i.e. recovery. The interesting factors for these researchers are thus successful strategies for coping and speed (Obradovic 2016; Zijlstra et al. 2014), i.e. how fast an individual recovers from the actual exposure and comes back to his or her own "baseline value". Accordingly, in this article our main interest is on the recovery part: the process that restores the individual's energy and mental resources (Sonnentag and Zijlstra 2006).

As we emphasized before, we view recovery as a constant dynamic regulation and adaptation between level of activity and the demands and pre-requisites of the social context (Ericsson et al. 2016; Zijlstra et al. 2014). Perhaps this would not be as emphasized as it has been during the last decade if there had been a clear division

between home and work, and if tasks, assignments and occupational roles were clear and easily understood. Everyday anchors as such seem to have disappeared in contemporary work life (see for example Sennett 2007).

Contemporary work life has instead been portrayed as more unbound and fragmented (Sennett 2007). The demands have become more unspecific while having at the same times increased. The type of stressors we are exposed to in our daily work and non-work life cannot only be explained by the amount of work but often by our difficulties in interpreting what is expected from us. We have been referring to the concept of daily hassles, meaning a stream of low intense stressors in modern human life. When exposed to a concrete threat and this threat ceases to exist due to successful strategies of coping, the stress reaction is not considered as something dangerous. It is instead in more subtle low intense situations, or if the stressors imbricate each other and there is no real time for recovery, that we will find the hazardous circumstances.

To unveil all of this, we have been considering space in different ways. The "Strike a Pose" story gives various examples of how space regulates action and emotions, constrains us, gives us room to breathe and empowers us. From an organizational outset, "Strike a Pose" emphasizes an ongoing change, where space has become an important tool, documented and discussed by other scholars (Kornberger and Clegg 2004). Space is today an active part in the discourse of breaking with the rigid bureaucratic division of labor. Processes and networks that are supposed to replace structure, hierarchy and bureaucracy are obstructed by confinement, routine, isolation and demarcations. Thus, there is a quest for qualities like being agile, open, customer-oriented and creative (Kornberger and Clegg 2004). To achieve this, space has become a vital factor. This has called for questions like: How can we design the workplace to achieve a post-bureaucratic way of organizing?

Hence, today it would not be controversial to suggest that organizations should have strategies about the intended function of space. Neither would it be controversial to argue that space has an impact on people and action. Various spaces affect us differently, as we assign certain symbols and emotions to specific spaces. Space is, on the one hand, physical, but, according to this, primarily social (Lefebvre 1991).

We see a process (or a risk) in our contemporary work life, as we try to convey through the story that almost everything is turning into formal space. Different spaces in-between are ceasing to exist, while back-stage performances are pushed forward to become *front-stage* performances. By rationalizing all "known" space, time for internal recovery ceases to exist, and this becomes quite explicit through the emergence of transparency and thus of surveillance and experienced prying eyes. Donna tried to resist by unplugging the cords. Although she tried, she never managed to produce a space in-between that turned into her place, a place that would work as a space for internal recovery. In Donna's case she was unable to replace the lack of internal by external recovery, and the second and third shifts became yet another layer increasing the "allostatic load" - the wear and tear on the biological system.

As a final remark, we want to emphasis the glimpses of the potential of the in-betweens, and with some help from Shortt (2015) and Tokarczuk (2017), we see that this potential is associated with the process of re-constructing these particular spaces (in-between) to humanized meaningful places.

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CONSEQUENCES OF RATIONALIZED SPACE AND THE POTENTIAL IN TRANSITORY LIVED SPACE AS RECOVERY FROM WORK

DOES THE IN-BETWEEN EXIST? AND IF SO, DOES IT HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANCE FOR OUR WELLBEING? THIS ARTICLE TAKES ON THE VITAL PROCESS OF RECOVERY FROM WORK, AND WE ARGUE THAT TO UNDERSTAND THAT PROCESS THERE IS A GREAT POTENTIAL IN WHAT WE DEFINE AS SPACES IN-BETWEEN. THE TYPE OF STRESSORS WE ARE EXPOSED TO IN WORKING LIFE, OR DUE TO CONFLICTS BETWEEN WORK AND OTHER ROLES IN LIFE, MOSTLY HAVE THE CHARACTER OF EVERYDAY OFTEN RECURRING STRAIN AND IRRITATION. THIS FORM OF LOW-INTENSE STRESS CAN LEAD TO MENTAL DETERIORATION. WHEN RESOURCES ARE CONSUMED WE NEED TIME TO REBOOT AND RECREATE ENERGY. WE NEED TIME FOR RECOVERY, WHICH OUGHT TO TAKE PLACE SOMEWHERE. DEPENDING ON ORGANIZING PROCESSES IN OUR WORKING LIFE, THESE "WHEREABOUTS" ARE MORE OR LESS ACCESSIBLE. WE ARGUE THAT THE WAY SPACE IS CONTROLLED, MANAGED, EXPERIENCED AND CONSTRUCTED AFFECTS ITS POTENTIAL OF BEING A PLACE FOR RECOVERY. THROUGH THESE AVENUES AND WITH THE HELP OF A FICTIONAL STORY, WE SHOW HOW AN INCREASE IN SURVEILLANCE, CONTROL AND TRANSPARENCY RATIONALIZE AND STREAMLINES THE SPACES IN-BETWEEN "TURNING THEM" IN TO FORMAL AND CORPORATE SPACE. HOWEVER, WE ALSO UNCOVER THE POTENTIAL IN THE SPACE IN-BETWEEN AND ILLUSTRATE WHEN THESE SPACES ARE SUCCESSFULLY CONSTRUCTED AND MADE USE OF AS RECOVERY FROM WORK. THIS POTENTIAL IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROCESS OF RE-CONSTRUCTING THESE PARTICULAR SPACES TO HUMANIZED MEANINGFUL PLACES.