

Alternative enterprises, rhythms and (post)capitalism: Mapping spatio-temporal practices of reproduction, escape and intervention

Abstract

The growing discomfort about contemporary capitalism has rekindled interest in alternative forms of entrepreneurship. Broadly conceived as pre-eminent social change agents, alternative enterprises – variously referred to as public, social, sustainable, eco- or transformative enterprises – are increasingly seen as holding the promise of a type of commercial endeavor capable of transcending the blatant excesses of capitalism. This debate, albeit important, lacks theoretical depth and critical grounding. To address this situation, we draw on Henri Lefebvre's work on capitalism, rhythms and everyday life to develop a conceptual vocabulary attentive to the controversial and shifting relationship between alternative enterprises and capitalism. Specifically, based on Lefebvre's tripartite framework of rhythms (*isorhythmia*, *eurhythmia* and *arrhythmia*), we offer a conceptual reading that aspires to map how three alternative enterprises (work integration social enterprises, urban recovery enterprises and entrepreneurial squats) variously reproduce, escape or intervene in the regular unfolding of the rhythms of capitalism. Pinpointing that the relationship between alternative enterprises and capitalism is more controversial than both celebratory and alarmist studies would suggest, the main contribution this article makes is to raise awareness that alternative enterprises intermingle reactionary and disruptive tendencies in often-unexpected ways. We conclude by calling for prospective research using rhythmanalysis as a corporeal mode of analysis that sets out to sense moments of reproduction and breakthrough which alternative enterprises' enactment of different rhythms entail.

Keywords

Alternative enterprises, space, time, rhythm and rhythmanalysis, Henri Lefebvre

Introduction

In light of the perpetual failure of capitalism to create universal prosperity, well-being and equality, how can entrepreneurship become a vehicle for instigating alternative ways forward? Responding to this question, the last decade has seen a proliferation of Management and Organization research exploring alternative enterprises.¹ Various referred to as public (Hjorth, 2013), social (Nicholls, 2010), sustainable (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011), values-led (Tenannt, 2010), for-benefit (Sabeti, 2011) or transformative enterprises (Tobias et al., 2013), ‘enterprise’ has been re-interpreted as a wellspring of positive social and ecological change (not profit maximization) based on the ability to strike a balance between financial, social and environmental outcomes (Calas et al., 2009; McMullen & Warnick, 2016; Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2011; Steyaert & Hjorth, 2007). While elated to a wide range of social and ecological problems (Bruton, Ketchen & Ireland, 2013), scholarship has veered toward the conviction that alternative enterprises are predisposed to liberate society from dire conditions of oppression, to dissolve societal exclusion, or to foster conditions conducive to freedom and peace (Goss et al., 2009; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006; Rindova, Barry & Ketchen, 2009).

Alternative enterprises and (post-)capitalism: Celebratory and alarmist accounts

Amidst the steady swell of interest in ‘alternatives’, scholars have come to devote themselves to whether and how alternative enterprises can mitigate, and possibly overcome, the ills and excesses of capitalism, thus paving the way for the enactment of alternative economic practices ‘beyond capitalism’ (Driver, 2012; Nicolopoulou et al., 2015; Shaw & de Bruin, 2012). Without pretending to do justice to this growing body of work, two vastly different takes on this theme can be identified. First, there are *celebratory* approaches which entrust

¹ The term alternative enterprises delineates enterprises whose orientation is ‘for-benefit’ and that primarily seek to create value for society, thus conceiving profit mainly as a means toward that end (and not as an end in itself).

alternative enterprises with the ability to transcend the neoliberal market hegemony, and all gravitational forces holding it in place (Tennant, 2015). Celebratory research promulgates that alternative enterprises are able to engender a parsimonious future capitalism by creating economic value alongside social value (Yunus, 2008). Harvard Professor Michael Porter's recent comments on social entrepreneurship are instructive here (Driver, 2012). Based on his infamous shared-value proposition (Porter & Kramer, 2011), Porter delineates enterprises as having the power to create a more humane form of capitalism in which social value creation becomes the essence, and not solely a by-product, of entrepreneurial conduct. Interestingly – but not too surprisingly – Porter's key assertion is that changing the course of capitalism is not “about doing good and not about charity. [...] it is about business” (Driver, 2012, p. 423). Putting faith in the curative qualities of alternative enterprises, Porter's basic thinking is that a hybridization of entrepreneurial outcomes will unleash win-win situations where social change emerges *ipso facto* from the entrepreneurial drive for profit. Apart from Porter, who advances a disarmingly utopian (read naïve) view of social change, we find institutional research offering rigorously textured and minute analyses of how alternative enterprises precipitate positive social change by striking a balance between incompatible demands or ‘logics’ (e.g. Battilana & Doroda, 2010; Doherty et al., 2014; Smith, et al., 2013). Despite its undeniable merit and sophistication, institutional research is haunted by at least two limitations. The first limitation inheres from an exclusive focus on the intra-organizational activities of alternative enterprises, notably the tensions that arise from pursuing potentially competing goals. Such an inward-looking focus inevitably turns a blind eye toward the broader socio-economic context and effects of alternative enterprises (Stephan et al., 2016). The second limitation pertains to institutional theory's inherent conservatism (Willmott, 2015), which is evident in research on alternative enterprises from how institutional scholars either completely ignore capitalism, or else treat the capitalist economy as a “neutral and universal backdrop” (Jones & Murtola, 2012, p. 127) against which alternative enterprises

operate. Taken together, celebratory accounts presume that alternative enterprises are able to get the pernicious effects of capitalism under control, thus putting capitalism back on the right track. However, positing that alternative enterprises are capable of instigating a shift from *capitalism-as-problem* to *capitalism-as-possibility* remains defeasible in so far as the existence of a few alternative enterprises that are practiced with ‘good’ intentions does not in any way guarantee that the predatory elements of capitalism will cease to exist.

The second view is *alarmist* in its orientation. Diametrically opposed to the celebratory view, alarmist accounts dismiss alternative enterprises as mere symbolic improvements of market dogmatism. Alarmist accounts are skeptical of unbridled market capitalism (Sandberg, 2016), suggesting that alternative enterprises fail to create post-capitalist conditions of possibility, often even bringing grist to the capitalist mill. Skeptical commentators have taken issue with how entrapments in the attribute ‘alternative’ might overestimate the actual change effects of purportedly alternative enterprises (Blackburn & Ram, 2006), thus potentially obfuscating that alternative enterprises cannot possibly countermand the contradictions of crisis-prone capitalism (Jones & Murtola, 2012). Further, some have suggested that alternative enterprises normalize the problematic view that solving socio-ecological problems is mainly a matter of ‘good management’ (Calas et al., 2009) and of entrepreneurial ‘innovativeness’ (Hjorth, 2013). In a similar vein, existing studies aver that alternative enterprises have shifted into a subservient position to capitalism where they mainly treat symptoms of the economy rather than its root causes (Cho, 2008). Arguably one of the stingiest criticisms of alternative enterprises is that they tend to reproduce, if inadvertently, existing conditions of inequality and domination (Amin et al., 2003). To put it metaphorically, alternative enterprises might win a battle, but eventually lose the war. Consider, as an example, Campanella’s (2015) investigation of celebrity societal entrepreneurship which unveils how celebrities engaging with social issues “lay bare social imbalances created by neoliberalism”, but at the same time advance a model of change “based on consumerism,

lifestyle, and entertainment, which not only is incapable of changing the structure that create social inequality but also actually reinforce them” (p. 205). Reminiscent of the ‘reproduction model’ (Mumby, 2005), which purports that emancipatory endeavors are often complicit with the preservation of the status quo, alarmist accounts caution that we must not be too easily seduced into believing that changes at a more local level will necessarily lead to far-ranging changes of the capitalist edifice. To put it bluntly, the alarmist view encourages the conclusion that alternative enterprises form an empty gesture. But for all that, it remains arguable that alarmist accounts attribute too much power to capitalism by denying alternative enterprises any potential whatsoever in changing its very course. Perhaps the main reason behind this deterministic rendition of capitalism is that alarmist accounts have adopted a purely top-down, structuralist style of analysis (Roy, 2015). Thus, by uncritically assuming capitalism’s omnipotence, alarmist accounts fail to take note of how alternative enterprises actualize states of affairs which differ from the present.

The need for an alternative approach

Even if we applaud attempts that reflect alternative enterprises from the vantage point of their post-capitalist potential, we claim that the nexus between alternative enterprises and capitalism remains poorly understood. Both celebratory and alarmist views tend to assume either a negative or positive relationship between alternative enterprises and capitalism without, however, making allowance for the controversial dimension of this relationship. By implication, the truth that is going unaddressed in extant research is that alternative enterprises’ reactionary and reformist dynamics are not diametrically opposed, but intertwined in complex and shifting ways.

Identifying a need to explore new ways of theorizing, we turn to Henri Lefebvre’s work on rhythms which deals with the interrelation of time, space and everyday life under contemporary capitalism. Lefebvre’s work forms a way of opening up new opportunities for

re-imagining how alternative enterprises variously relate to, and thereby either reproduce, (temporarily) escape or intervene in the regular unfolding of the rhythms of capitalism. Homing in on how three alternative enterprises – i.e., work integration social enterprises, urban recovery enterprises and entrepreneurial squats – intermingle spatio-temporal rhythms, we add critical grounding to nascent debates about the post-capitalist thrust of alternative enterprises which are important, but as yet inadequate.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. The first section offers a general overview of Lefebvre's work on capitalism, rhythms and everyday life. The second section outlines Lefebvre's triad of *isorhythmia*, *eurhythmia*, and *arrhythmia* which will be used as an analytic prism for analyzing alternative enterprises. The third section discusses the case selection and analytic procedure. This is followed, fourth, by our conceptual reading which draws on Lefebvre's tripartite framework of rhythms to unpack the reactionary and disruptive tendencies of three alternative enterprises. The article concludes with a discussion of the main insights and contributions of our conceptual reading, and singles out two possible areas for future research.

Henri Lefebvre: Capitalism, rhythms and everyday life

Capitalism and the colonization of everyday life

Despite defying easy definition, it is accepted wisdom that capitalism is an economic system where “the invisible hand of the pricing mechanism coordinates supply and demand in markets in a way that is automatically in the best interests of society” (Scott, 2006). In a similar vein, capitalism is commonly seen as a functionally differentiated system (the economy), which is distinguishable from non-economic function systems such as the state and civil society (Roth, 2015). This view, even if analytically convenient, pays insufficient attention to the pernicious dimensions of capitalism (Banerjee, 2008). What we mean by this is that capitalism secures its own survival by relentlessly expanding into non-capitalist areas,

e.g., establishing markets and creating investment opportunities outside of the capitalist economic sphere (Luxembourg, 1951). Every time capitalism faces a crisis, new forms of accumulation and regulation evolve (Rossi, 2012) which secure capitalism's reproduction through an interconnected net of economic as well as non-economic strategies, such as labor-saving technological change, the global roll-back of labor unions, or the commodification of non-economic spheres based on the reconfiguration of public goods and services into new markets ripe for profiteering (Harvey, 2011). Any attempt at understanding capitalism, we argue, is incomplete if refusing to acknowledge that there is a predatory element to capitalism which pertains to its underpinning growth imperative (Binswanger, 2015). A second point worth mentioning relates to how capitalism is consigned to the economic sphere, thus conceived as standing in a position of exteriority to non-economic realms such as civil society or the public sector. This view is myopic in the sense that it overlooks that capitalism is not just an economic system based on private ownership of the means of production, but a transversal process which encroaches on non-economic spheres of life by enforcing their total integration into the circuits of capital. Responding to both these issues, this article conceives of capitalism as an uneven, but relentlessly expanding totality of social relations (Rossi, 2012) geared toward penetrating every nook and cranny of everyday life (Gray et al., 2015). This is not to deny that capitalism has been unfolding unevenly around the world (Becker, 2009). We are also not suggesting that capitalism is a fixed force (Thrift, 2006), or that capitalist encroachment is irreversible (Williams, 2014), since it is a widely accepted assumption that capitalism is rife with tensions that jeopardize the accumulation process, and that resistance to capitalism is ubiquitous. Instead, the basic contention this article makes is that capitalism is highly effective in finding ways to reproduce itself by subsuming everyday life under its different modes of accumulation and production (Lazzarato, 2004).

It is at this crucial point of our argument that we shift toward Henri Lefebvre (2002, 2004, 2008, 2009), whose work forms an apt point of origin for a critical interpretation of

capitalism. Still relatively little known in Management and Organization Theory (e.g., Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Verduyn, 2015; Wasserman, 2011), Lefebvre's interest in space-time in the capitalist conjuncture pervades all of his writing. Inspired by, whilst largely moving beyond, Marx's political economy (Elden, 2007), what is crucially at stake in Lefebvre's work is that capitalism's incessant need to find profitable terrains for surplus production and absorption is not consigned to the sphere of production, but finds its expression in the control of people's everyday lives. While everyday life forms the fulcrum of his work, the primary target of Lefebvre is to shed light on how capitalism as a field of influence extends itself both spatially and temporally to secure its viability. In a nutshell, the basic idea is that capitalism, supported by new technologies and based on a life style of mass consumption, is expanding its influence by 'colonizing' people's everyday life – consisting of myriad of habits and routines – to the demands of commerce. Lefebvre brilliantly explores how specific practices related to, for instance, culture, leisure and the most intimate private moments are "functionalised and linked to marked conditions" (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 43). By way of example, one way in which the everyday is instrumentalized by commercial interests can be found in how advertising companies use outdoor billboards to pitch products and services to commuters who spend a significant amount of their time waiting or queuing (Cronin, 2006). Succinctly, people's 'dwell time' becomes the time of markets.

Linear versus cyclical rhythms

Of particular relevance for the present article is Lefebvre's (2004; Lefebvre & Régulier, 2003) work on rhythms. In line with his previous critique of everyday life, Lefebvre argues that capitalism secures production and accumulation by ordering, channeling and negotiating people's needs and behavior according to the normative rhythms of commercial life (Edensor, 2010; Edensor & Holloway, 2008). Lefebvre thus draws a distinction between the cyclical rhythms of nature, the body and the cosmos, and the linear rhythms characteristic of

mechanic, rational and calculative repetitions as they are both called for and produced by private enterprises. The function of linear rhythms, in Lefebvre's view, is to distribute, concentrate and regulate people's everyday in such a way as to compose a productive force within the commercial dimensions of space-time (Edensor, 2010).

Linear rhythms according to Lefebvre are an *imposition*, an attempt to adapt everyday life to the desideratum of capitalism by controlling the "possible human development [...] of all those serving it" (Meyer, 2008, p. 151). The rhythms of capitalism try to "pervade the everyday, commodifying previously untapped areas of quotidian experience" (Edensor, 2010, p. 13). In that sense, "the linear and its rhythms have a tendency to oppose that which becomes" (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 90) by modeling all facets of everyday life – e.g., "the hours of sleep and waking, meal-times and the hours of private life, the relations of adults with their children, entertainment and hobbies, relations to the place of dwelling" (ibid., p. 82) – on calculative time, e.g., work schedules, timetables, and deadlines as a way of enforcing people's compliance. In this spirit, capitalism's attempt to synchronize everyday life with commercial life by manipulating "time, dates, time-tables" (ibid., p. 78) subordinates people "to the organization of work in space other aspects of the everyday: the hours of sleep and waking, meal-times and the hours of private life, the relations of adults with their children, entertainment and hobbies, relations to the place of dwelling" (ibid., p. 82).

Lefebvre's work on rhythms dates back to the 1980s, and was only published in French as *Éléments de Rythmanalyse* (1992) after his death. Despite being somewhat 'dated', his work is still valid for thinking about how capitalism produces time-spaces conducive to the accumulation of capital. What needs to be taken into account, though, is that capitalism has undergone profound transformations with regard to its regimes of production and accumulation. For instance, a pervasive feature of what is commonly referred to as immaterialization (i.e. capitalism's shift toward a knowledge- and service-oriented economy), is that capitalism is increasingly based on spatio-temporal arrangements which have made

everyday life more and more ‘work-centered’ (Jarvis, 2005). This shift from capital-labor to capital-life (Lazzarato, 2004) is *inter alia* epitomized in how everyday life is increasingly enmeshed in, and dictated by, the rhythms of “interest payments, short-term and long term investments, cycles of innovation [...], rent payment, share fluctuations, product cycles and fashions” (Edensor, 2010, pp. 11-12). Digital technologies have played a pivotal role in enabling immaterial modes of accumulation, e.g., by establishing new forms of work such as just-in-time production, home working or part-time work. At the same time, digital technologies have offered the means by which capitalism erects itself upon people’s leisure space-time by codifying the rhythms associated with sports, meditation or healthy dieting as a way of securing the individual’s ‘productive rhythms’ (Hall, 2010). Thus, even if the flexibilization of labor offers individuals greater autonomy with regard to when, at what speed and where particular tasks are performed (Adam, 1995), the imperative of conformity remains intact. As Berardi (2011) reminds us in this regard, immaterial capitalism exerts control over everyday life by mediating people’s comprehensive outlook on life in such a way as to ensure that the entire ‘psychosphere’ becomes attuned to the movement of capital. This brings into focus ‘flexible’ capitalism’s ability to mobilize people’s creative capacities by molding their subjectivity in line with processes of economic valorization (Ronneberger, 2008). Nudging people to be “always on”, and to organize life according to ideals of maximum performance and constant availability (Smith & Hall, 2013), immaterial regimes of accumulation extend capitalism both spatially as well as temporarily by making everyday life the central locus of psychic investment (Lazzarato, 2004). That contemporary accumulation strategies increasingly rely on the ability to capture value produced outside of private enterprises is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the so-called Google Model of Production which points toward how enterprises have increasingly shifted from creating value themselves to finding ‘innovative’ ways of capturing value produced by people (who are not paid for their labor) outside of the enterprise (Hanlon, 2014). This being said, it should be borne in mind that

immaterial regimes of accumulation do not simply replace older accumulation regimes, but rather blend into a complexly interwoven spatio-temporal configuration with heterogeneous tendencies of commodification and accumulation (Thrift, 2006).

Resisting the colonization of everyday life

A recurring theme in Lefebvre's work is that capitalist expansion will only be partial since there always remains something that escapes the economic imperatives that try to colonize everyday life (Edensor, 2010). Resistance to dominant rhythms, according to Lefebvre, is deemed desirable, since paving the way for alternative forms of life which remain "open to becoming, to encounters (both fearful and pleasurable), and to the perpetual pursuit of unknowable novelty" (Harvey, 2012, p. x). These alternatives do not arise from a centrally orchestrated (revolutionary) plan, but from "what people do, feel, sense, and come to articulate as they seek meaning in their daily lives" (ibid, p. xvii). Resistance to rational and calculative rhythms thus entails the 'becoming irregular' of the continuity of capitalism's rhythmic unfolding. According to Lefebvre (2004), "all becoming irregular [...] of rhythms produces antagonistic effects. It throws out of order and disrupts" (p. 44). Resistance *qua* becoming irregular can play out in quite different ways, such as in subtle slow-downs and slippages or in downright confrontational practices such as protests and insurrections. Resistance to dominating rhythms is positively connoted in Lefebvre's work (Verduyn, 2015), the basic thinking being that to effectively change capitalism is to resist and change its underpinning rhythms. In Lefebvre's (2004) own words: "a social group, a class or a caste must *intervene by imprinting a rhythm* on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner" (p. 14; emphasis added).

To summarize, capitalism is a predatory formation of social relations which relates to its 'outside' in such a way as to create conformity with the demands of commercial life. Conformity is chiefly accomplished by making everyday life amenable to accumulation and

production. Resistance in turn involves spatio-temporal practices that oppose and disrupt the strict dominating rhythms with the aim of increasing possibilities for alternative rhythms to occur.

Three forms of rhythmic interaction: Isorhythmia, eurhythmia, arrhythmia

Rhythms never occur in isolation, but always interact with other rhythms. The focal attention of Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis is precisely to investigate how different rhythms relate to one another (Borch et al., 2015). Such rhythmic interaction, or what Lefebvre refers to as polyrhythmia, can take different forms as the ordering of time-space through the capitalist process is at times conformed, while at other times sidelined, escaped or disrupted. We in this article hark back to Lefebvre's conceptual triad of rhythmic interaction – *isorhythmia*, *eurhythmia* and *arrhythmia* – which is slightly modified in line with the specific objective of this article.

The first form of interaction, *isorhythmia*, represents a collection of hierarchically coordinated rhythms. Isorhythmia is synchronized from above as existing rhythms are brought into concurrence by an external impulse-giver (Lefebvre, 1996). As Edensor (2010) explains in regard to private corporations: "The imperative to maximize commercial interests means that business may tend to turn polyrhythmic landscapes into isorhythmic ones, through which other rhythms are orchestrated to coincide with the rhythms of shopping" (p. 13). Transposed to the present context, isorhythmia denotes the situation where alternative enterprises are externally constituted, that is, synchronized with the rhythms of commercial life. Alternative enterprises based on isorhythmia thus tend to reproduce the foundational norms and practices of capitalism.

The second form of interaction is *eurhythmia* where different rhythms "unite with one another in a state of health, in normal (which is to say normed!) everydayness" (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 16). Under conditions of eurhythmia, so Lefebvre, rhythms are in a harmonious state

as they do not produce any frictions. We in this article conceive of *eurhythmia* as situations where alternative enterprises work in their own tempo, that is, unaffected by the dominant ‘beat’ imposed by major activities pertaining to work and consumption (Edensor, 2010). Harmony thus results from how alternative enterprises create spatio-temporal respites from the logic of production and accumulation.

Finally, *arrhythmia* relates to conflict and dissonance between two or more rhythms. More specifically, arrhythmia signifies a negative disturbance in the rhythmic flow. Arrhythmia is most palpable in cases of disease where the body enters a ‘pathological state’ where “rhythms break apart, alter and bypass *synchronization*” (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 78; emphasis in original). We in this article conceive of arrhythmia as the agonistic spatio-temporal practices which actively intervene in, and thereby disrupt, the smooth unfolding of the rhythms of capitalist reproduction (Spinney, 2010). Before discussing the results of our rhythmanalysis, a few comments on our case selection and analytic procedure are in order.

Case selection and analytic procedure

Case selection

Three alternative enterprises were selected for analysis based on the criterion of maximum difference (Seawright & Gerring, 2008): work integration social enterprises, urban recovery enterprises and entrepreneurial squats (described more fully in the next section). Even if the three enterprises in question do not comprise a self-contained core which makes them singular and unique, we argue that they are characterized by a specific pattern of rhythms. Our in-depth familiarity of the broader field of alternative enterprises helped us make sure that the selected cases were diverse with regard to the topic of interest: the spatio-temporal practices of alternative enterprises.

Rhythmanalysis

Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis, despite hardly offering any methodological guidance (Borch et al., 2015), lends itself to adaptations and, hence, novel usages. In this spirit, rhythmanalysis is used here not so much in the way it has been employed by Lefebvre (i.e., as a corporeal mode of inquiry that uses the body as an analytic 'sounding board'), but as a general sensitivity for the complex entwinement of various rhythms. The preeminent goal of our rhythmanalysis is thus to tease out – based on the three concepts *isorhythmia*, *eurhythmia*, *arrhythmia* – how the spatio-temporal practices of the three alternative enterprises are aligned with the broader demands of commercial production and capital accumulation, and, contrariwise, how alternative enterprises reproduce, escape or intervene in the unproblematic attunement of everyday life to the dominating rhythms of capitalism. Our rhythmanalytic reading is not 'analytic' in a positivist sense (Highmore, 2005), but revelatory in the sense of offering original insights into a phenomenon which has hitherto escaped academic scrutiny. Three bodies of literature inform the ensuing rhythmanalysis: extant research on alternative enterprises, Lefebvre's work on capitalism, rhythms and everyday life, and empirical and theoretical investigations taking their cues from Lefebvre.

Rhythmanalyzing alternative enterprises

Work integration social enterprises

The recent recession, in combination with increasing levels of welfare state retrenchment, has created a situation where unemployment in many countries is no longer seen as a government duty, but as a business opportunity for enterprising civil society organizations (Sievers, 2016). As part of this post-welfarist shift toward community-led social service provision, *work integration social enterprises* (WISE) have emerged as a sub-political model of occupational and social integration of (long-term) unemployed people by means of commercial activity. Representing a heterogeneous group consisting of different legal and organizational forms,

types of jobs created, mission or target group (O'Connor & Meinhard, 2014), WISE mostly use a mix of productive activity and vocational training (including job-specific training as well as more generic forms of coaching and support such as job application or language courses) to help economically and socially at risk people to integrate into the formal labor market (and not the passive labor market).

Unsurprisingly, WISE have become an integral part of government-led active labor market policies in many advanced liberal societies (Nyssens, 2006). The WISE most integrated into government policy are often large-scale organizations that provide part-time or full-time jobs with the aim of moving formerly unemployed individuals into jobs in the mainstream labor market (Aiken & Spear, 2005). Widespread in many European countries, these WISE, also coined intermediate labor market organizations (Spear, 2002), differ from other employment initiatives, such as welfare-to-work programs, in the relative significance appointed to the objective of ensuring “that employed disadvantaged people earn income comparable with that of other workers” (Borzaga & Defourny, 2001, p. 351). These WISE thus cover the “cost of work integration [...] by the income deriving from its productive activities” (European Union Progress Programme, 2012, p. 6). Work integration-oriented activities chiefly comprise the provision of vocational or basic skills training (O'Connor & Meinhard, 2014). Productive activities on the other hand include a variety of activities such as recycling IT, landscape gardening, and childcare (Spear 2002). While most WISE make financial self-sufficiency (i.e., limited dependence on public funds) a priority, a conspicuous feature of WISE geared toward full economic integration is that a significant amount of their funding stems from government. The UK offers a case in point here as 60% of large-scale WISE' funding stems from government (and EU) employment programs (Spear, 2002).

It is immediately apparent that these WISE form an effective means for offering people various economic (e.g., earned income) and social (e.g., well-being) opportunities (Ho & Chan, 2010) which in turn protect them from the risk of “entering a downward spiral of

isolation, overindebtedness, and substance abuse that would make it extremely difficult or them to re-enter the job market” (Battilana et al., 2015, p. 1660). WISE differ markedly from other employment initiatives, notably sheltered employment workshops. Whereas the latter aspire to decommodify labor through make-work jobs that cater to the particular needs of individuals (with physical or mental disabilities), the primary goal of WISE is precisely to commodify individuals by molding their subjectivity according to existing norms of employability (OECD, 1999) or ‘use value’. The commodifying tendency of WISE is hardly surprising given their historical role of remedying the decline of national economic growth since the late 1970s. However, the point to note here is that WISE deliberately try to eclipse unemployed individuals’ ‘outsider’ position by converting them into wage-based workers. This is not to denigrate the significance of WISE, for this would mean to ignore their potential to produce identity and a wider sense of purpose. It is important nevertheless to stress that WISE encroach into people’s everyday lives by bringing their rhythms in line with the broader demands of accumulation and production. WISE’s focal attention is placed squarely on the ‘rhythm of producing’ (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 55), for their principle objective is to break “the slow pace of unemployment” by “training the body to perform and condition it to accede to particular rhythms” (Edensor, 2010, pp. 4-5). Hence, even if WISE increase people’s self-esteem and sense of belonging, the point to note is that their ultimate goal is not people’s wellbeing but their reintegration into a capitalist employment relationship (Blake, 2010). By implication, rather than forming some putatively post-capitalist ‘outside’, WISE rather create safe spaces where unemployed people are re-accustomed to the quotidian routine of commercial work, and the “daily grind, the routine” that comes with it (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 30).

This spatio-temporal synchronization of people and commercial life has an ideological dimension to it as WISE inculcate people to experience work as the sphere of life most conducive to the realization of their authentic being and creative potentials. In this way, the

training and coaching offered by WISE enact a view of proper citizenship based on wage-based employment. The only pertinent way forward in this logic is to find a job in the formal labor market. Manipulating people's psychosphere by consigning legitimate subjectivity to wage-based labor, and training the individual to increase his/her chances of finding a job, it goes without saying that WISE are deeply implicated in the perpetuation of contemporary capitalism. It is by identifying the individual as its sole locus of intervention that WISE tend to change the place of the subject within the economy (i.e., transforming the jobless subject into a full-fledged wage-based citizen), but not the economy itself. What this suggests is that WISE are homologous to the logic of capital: by ignoring broader causes of (structural) unemployment such as, for instance, deindustrialization, automation, or the crowding out of the elder workforce (ageism), WISE support existing dynamics of commodification as well as associated relations of exclusion and marginalization. It is by not infringing on the spatio-temporal conditions under which surplus is produced that WISE "free capital from the responsibility of bearing the cost of unemployment" (Harvey, 2011, p. 269).

Urban recovery enterprises

Global cities have become sites where capitalist accumulation finds its most extreme expression. According to Harvey (2012), cities have been absorbing a great deal of surplus capital through residential building, infrastructure (sub-ways, railways, streets), and the construction of office spaces. Together, such capital-driven urban restructuring often resulted in an increased speed of transportation and production as well as a general acceleration of the flow of commuting, trading and idling bodies (Harvey, 1990). This process of urbanization has remained uneven, though. Amid the plethora of urbanized cities like London, New York, or Singapore, many examples of failed cities can be cited. Think about Detroit, the Motor City, which has fallen behind in the economic competition between cities, and at some point was even at risk of being taken over by the state due to fiscal bottlenecks. Detroit thus

exemplifies how the cascade of collapsing infrastructure, cuts of public services and decline of economic growth renders failed cities literally ungoverned. Instead of reaching the kind of speeding-up of rhythms one finds in the entrepreneurial city (Edensor, 2010), failed cities are subject to a vicious cycle of slow-downs and standstills resulting in deprived communities with a new class of urban outcasts: “residents facing home foreclosure, migrants losing their jobs, public-sector employees being made redundant, casualized workers losing social-security benefits” (Rossi & Vanolo, 2012, p. 180).

On the other hand, failed cities (since inexpensive) have spawned variegated bottom-up regeneration activities experimenting with new spatio-temporal possibilities. Amongst these are *urban recovery enterprises* (URE) which fight the symptoms and causes of urban deprivation such as crime, unemployment, or substance abuse. Working ‘from the bottom up’, Operating on different scales and based on different approaches, URE are united by a desire to change the ways in which people relate to and, thus, experience their neighborhood. When successful, URE enliven deprived urban space by increasing opportunities for public participation and collaboration where people from different backgrounds are brought together in an atmosphere of trust and solidarity (Carr et al., 1993). For example, the URE QuartiersAgentur Marzahn NordWest, which operates in a distressed neighborhood of Berlin, builds awareness of, while stimulating critical engagement from German resettlers from the Soviet Union. The organization has a proven record of including resettlers – who were “generally less well integrated into German society because of high unemployment, limited opportunities for newcomers on the labour market, and less developed German language skills” (SINGOCOM, 2005) – in the governance structures of neighborhood management, thus equipping resettlers with the requisite resources to establish links with their communities and to successfully tackle their needs (Mouleart et al., 2005). As this cursory illustration demonstrates, URE stimulate civil engagement by cultivating experiences and forms of relating that effectively thwart social isolation, fragmentation and precariousness. Similarly,

URE create a heightened sense of belonging to citizens' place of residence by nudging them into active rhythmic practices which mobilize bodily movement while creating relationships between people, place and history (Bennett, 2015). In this way, URE render possible a collective experience of urban time-space that enables individuals to be transformed through their rhythmic exchanges and performative engagements with others. Unlike WISE, which are fully attuned to the rhythms of commercial life, URE are known for creating space-time constellations that escape a mercantile logic. Specifically, they catalyze the production of social enclaves that strengthen urban resilience by sparking spatio-temporal vibrancy and social bustle. Indeed, fostering exchanges and public deliberation, and attending to the solidarity-, health- and well-being-promoting attributes of space (Hall et al., 2010), such enclaves empower marginalized and under-represented segments of society by equipping them with the requisite capability to own and take care of their local concerns.

And yet, URE by no means insulate social time-space from capitalist encroachments. For one, many URE do not operate outside of the market, but rather engage in commercial activities to increase economic activity (e.g. more jobs, sales and public revenue) (Phillips, 2004). This is arguably one of the main reasons why in particular 'economically valuable' URE won favor with governments that promote them as part of their 'entrepreneurial urbanism' policies (Su, 2015). Be that as it may, the point which bears emphasizing here is that URE, regardless of their specific approach, might become complicit in the commodification of urban space-time by supporting the process of rendering deprived neighborhoods eligible investments. This is particularly likely in those cases where URE resuscitate deprived neighborhoods as sites for capital accumulation (Wilson, 2004): financial actors and real estate brokers might take advantage of the rejuvenated space-time instigated by URE by valorizing and then harnessing it for profit. Thus, despite empowering communities and fostering a wider sense of belonging to a particular locality, URE are implicated in capitalist accumulation by subjecting urban space to a process of 'commodity-

formation’ where its use value is transformed into exchange/abstract value (Lindner & Meissner, 2015). What comes to the surface here is URE’s ambivalent operation: while ‘solving’ the deprivation of urban space by counter-acting the deceleration of failed cities through productive counter-rhythms, URE entail the parallel risk of making city-space attractive for affluent residents (Latham et al., 2009), thus advancing processes of gentrification and the spatial displacement of working as well as middle class residents (Beyes, 2015). Despite the best of intentions, URE might expedite “a deepening of capitalist disciplinary logics into the social fabric” (Dowling & Harvie, 2014, p. 869), thus producing resentment among citizens who experience first-hand how the ‘value’ of their neighborhood initiatives and collaborations are converted into investment opportunities, and hence exploited for the economic benefit of commercial actors.

Entrepreneurial squats

The concept *entrepreneurial squats* (ES) denominates the appropriation of space without permission with the overarching aim of creating exiting, yet informal, possibilities for collaboration and work. A prime example of ES are squatters’ bars that provide opportunities to “raise money for actions and charity projects, artists’ work spaces, practice facilities for bands, women’s houses, restaurants, print shops, theatres and movie houses, tool-lending services, alternative schools, daycare centres, party spaces, art galleries” (Pruijt, 2013, p. 32). In many cases, ES represent the means of ‘last resort’ as people who are without formal employment illegally occupy idle facilities to escape impending deprivation and impoverishment. ES was commonplace in Argentina during the turn of the century. After two decades of neoliberal rule under then-president Carlos Menem, Argentina’s political-economic-legal system (depreciatively called *el modelo*) had put in place an investor-friendly environment for global capital (Grugel & Riggirozzi, 2007) which led to all-time highs of unemployment and poverty. Its exclusive focus on the sectional interest of the Argentine

business elite had caused a systematic depletion of society based on the curbing of welfare expenditures, the privatization of public services and utilities, and the introduction of new labor laws geared toward enhancing the productivity of big enterprises by employing workers outside of collective bargaining agreements (Ranis 1999).

After thousands of factories were closed down, a small group of workers refused to accept the avowed death of their factories, and re-opened the abandoned premises to restart production.ⁱ This resonates with what has been said before about WISE which too aim to deliver possibilities of work for individuals who are not part of the formal labor market. However, what strikes us as interesting here is that ES are chiefly about disrupting the smooth unfolding of the circuits of capital. Indeed, a conspicuous aspect of ES is that its modus operandi is built on arrhythmia, which in the Argentine case can be broken down into the following two forms: first, the blockage of property rights and, second, the radical appropriation of factory space-time. What needs to be singled out with regard to the former is that property rights mark a key pillar of capitalism (Centena & Cohen, 2010). While property rights grant owners the possibility to own and use their factories and to determine how they receive returns, blocking these rights signifies a radical disruption of the capitalist model of ownership (O’Neil, 2015), an intervention which prevents capital from being profitably reinvested (Harvey, 2012). On the other hand, blocking property rights also renders possible a shift from the right of exclusion to the right of collaboration. So conceived, blockages of property rights grant occupants the necessary ‘liberty’ to use the factories in entirely different ways and for entirely different ends (Campbell & Lindberg, 1990). In Lefebvrian terms, such re-uses of dominant factory space-time represent creative acts of appropriation. Lefebvre (2008) himself discussed appropriation in conjunction with the wholesale produce market (*Halles Centrales*) in Paris which was temporarily transformed from a space designed to sell food into a public meeting and festival space, “in short, into a centre of play rather than of work” (p. 167). In the Argentine ES, as elsewhere, appropriation consisted of an epochal

reshaping of the labor process in line with worker-owned and self-governed business models inherited from the cooperative sector. Inspired by the Rochdale principles stipulated in England in 1844, all workers were paid the same wage. This moves against capitalist codings of work which prevent employees from capturing the full exchange value of their work. Moreover, ES' basic management decisions were taken democratically by a worker assembly, and leaders were elected by the workers (one worker, one vote). Additionally, ES became worker self-managed production sites, or spaces of *autogestion* (Lefebvre (2003)), which transcend short-term thinking and hierarchical decision-making by adopting slower rhythms of democratic governance and participatory planning (O'Neil, 2015).

What one is bound to see here is that the appropriation of factory space-time allowed workers to regain control over their own living time and psychic energy (Vercellone, 2015). By proffering rhythms of production which challenge hierarchical renditions of space-time that was prevalent in many factories, ES offer possibilities of decommodified labor whereby people experience themselves as agentic and agitational beings capable of voicing and defending their interests and perspectives (Monteagudo, 2008). So conceived, ES precipitate exuberant spaces of emancipatory self-actualization which empowered workers to get their own 'rhythms going' (Cassegård, 2016), and to connect to their co-workers through a bond of solidarity (Lavaca Collective, 2007).

Crucially, appropriation is not consigned to creative re-uses of factory space-time, but also pertains to the re-shaping of business-society relationships (Fyke et al., 2016). In sharp contrast to the former factory bosses who had strongly benefitted from government support (e.g., subsidies, tax breaks) without giving anything back to society in return (Hille, 2009), many ES reached out to their communities to support them during those difficult times (Cole 2007). This includes ES responding to community needs by opening their factory space to set up health clinics and learning centres, or to create sites of pedagogical, cultural and artistic production (Ranis 2005). Turning factories into spaces for public use and deliberation, ES

convey the experience of a ‘common people’ comprising subjects who hitherto had no place in the dominant order (Palomino, 2003).

For all its arrhythmic radicalness, ES often do not stand in a position of externality to the rhythms of capitalism. This is evident from how ES compete with traditional market actors, or how they sub-contract partners and suppliers under capitalist labor conditions (Pruijt, 2013). Furthermore, ES might be reintegrated into the circuits of capital through the use of force. The paradigmatic example in this regard are eviction attempts by the police whereby the former bosses try to regain control over their factories by evicting the occupants from their premises. Interestingly, the re-appropriation of factory space sometimes reflects squatters’ own choice. The Argentine case is very telling in this regard: more than sixty occupied factories signed a letter to the Argentinean Congress demanding the establishment of a national law allowing the state expropriation of self-managed factories from their former owners (International Socialist Review, 2007). State expropriations meant that factories became nationalized property (North & Huber, 2004), and that self-employed workers became public sector employees (Ranis, 2006). On a positive note, state expropriations rendered factories ‘sheltered’ spaces which were approved by mainstream society, and which granted workers the right to continue to run the factories (Cole, 2007). More critically, the nationalization of ES remained a double-edged sword as it offered workers protection from being evicted while at the same time erasing their disruptive (arrhythmic) edge: democratic governance, member ownership and the re-use of factories as public spaces as means to act against capitalist overcodings of commercial space-time.

Concluding discussion

During a time where alternative enterprises are quickly moving from the margins to the mainstream of Management and Organization research (McMullan & Warnick, 2016; Stephan et al., 2016), this article has taken issue with the dualism of believers and critics who either

aggrandize or nullify the potential of these new forms of enterprise. Despite acknowledging the indubitable importance of ‘alternative’ enterprises, our starting point has been that existing research has been ill equipped (or simply unwilling) to explain the pervasiveness and predatory elements of capitalism, and the variegated roles alternative enterprises play therein. To address this situation, we have summoned Lefebvre’s work on capitalism, rhythms and everyday life to infuse scholarship with fresh ways of thinking about the intricate relationship between alternative enterprises and the capitalist process of accumulation and production. Different as work integration social enterprises (WISE), urban recovery enterprises (URE) and entrepreneurial squats (ES) are, they have put us in a better position to appreciate the shifting rhythmic interactions through which alternative enterprises operate.

We would like to use the remainder of this article to accentuate the main insights and specific contributions of this article, and conclude with a brief outlook on potential avenues for future research. To begin with, a first contribution our rhythmanalysis makes is to throw light on the *controversial ‘nature’ of alternatives enterprises*. By revealing the specific ways in which alternative enterprises enact different rhythms, and how this rhythmicity creates various points of conformity and contestation with extant processes of production and capital accumulation, our investigation has allowed us to *implode the duality of celebratory and alarmist accounts* by creating awareness of how reproductive and disruptive tendencies are often inextricably interlinked. URE are exemplary in this regard as they create, on the one hand, social enclaves conducive to non-mercantile forms of exchange and collaboration, while on the other hand creating the conditions of valorization whereby capital is enabled to transform social space into a profitable terrain. Thus, though URE at first glance might appear antithetical to capital accumulation, they potentially support capital’s search for profitable terrains by creating forms of urban time-space that attract new sources of capital investment. By a similar token, WISE are testament to how alternative enterprises work isorhythmically by re-aligning unemployed people with the rhythms of commercial life. In this way, WISE

participate in the wholesale instrumentalization of individuals by making them palatable and ‘useful’ for the economy. ES in turn reveals a different mode of time-space composition which engenders a possible rupture in the existing system. Based on arrhythmia, ES block one of the foundational principles of capital accumulation: private property of the means of production. The wider lesson of ES thus is that the neutralization of the capitalist value of private property creates the conditions conducive to alternative rhythms of production and ownership, and, importantly, to novel business-society relationships which synchronize commercial activities with the particular needs of communities. After all, ES too remain controversial as they are never far removed from being absorbed by dominating rhythms.

A second, and related, contribution this article makes is to intervene in on-going *debates about the attribute ‘alternative’* (Parker et al., 2014). Celebratory and alarmist accounts exemplify the problem of defining ‘alternative’ as respectively the capability or incapability of creating a delirious future perfect ‘beyond capitalism’. This absolute and reified understanding of ‘alternative’ is inadequate to the extent that alternative enterprises remain entangled – in either antagonistic or synergetic ways – with dominating commercial rhythms (Blake, 2010; Sievers, 2016). Thus, rhythmanalysis conveys the realization that alternative enterprises, instead of stepping entirely beyond capitalism, create ‘outsides’ “built through struggles” (Vercellone, 2015, p. 3). Indeed, the conceptual triad upon which this article was based reinvigorates a sense for how the controversial thrust of alternative enterprises is played out through local struggles. Whilst all three enterprises discussed before seethe with contingent possibilities, thus prefiguring ways of organizing and relationality that variously transcend capitalist orthodoxy, our rhythmanalysis indicates that alternative enterprises always remain fleeting, as the same enterprise which subverts dominating rhythms in one space might end up reproducing the rhythms of capitalist production and accumulation elsewhere. Having exposed the indefensibility of denoting ‘alternative’ as an absolute outside, our investigation commends thinking about ‘alternative’ in non-absolutist, relational terms

(Jonas, 2010). Viewed through this view, alternative enterprises can be productively thought of not so much as vessels for moving *beyond* capitalism, but as contingent endeavors which introduce various *struggles and tensions* into the capitalist fabric.

Third, a key contention of this article has been that research on alternative enterprises has devoted insufficient *attention to capitalism*, and notably to its predatory features. We have summoned Lefebvre, and other authors inspired by his work, to fill this gap. Whilst Lefebvre is certainly not the only option for this task, and even if some parts of his work are marked by shortcomings (Borch et al., 2015), rhythmanalysis offers a genuine opportunity to advance a critical understanding of capitalism as a totality of social relations that try to subject everyday life to its rhythms of production and accumulation. Such a critical take is urgently needed, since not being critical of capitalism, as Jones and Murtola (2012) remind us elsewhere, would mean to simply accept alternative enterprises' complicity with a pernicious system. Lefebvre's attentiveness to how capitalism feeds on everyday life to satisfy its incessant need for expansion, we argue, puts a unique opportunity in front of us to counter the widespread de-politicization of alternative enterprises (author reference). Indeed, close examination of how alternative enterprises variously align with, step outside of, or disrupt, the rhythms of capitalism creates a heightened sensitivity for alternative enterprises' distinct, but always bounded, political potentiality to change prevailing processes of capitalist production and accumulation. Given its inherently critical purpose, rhythmanalytic inquiries hold the promise of a nuanced analytic framework for revealing how capitalism seeks to instrumentalize alternative enterprises while on the other hand being challenged and altered by them in different ways. It is thus by bringing to the fore the interdependency of oppositional rhythms that rhythmanalysis opens up possibilities of critique by creating insights into the controversial, and oftentimes unintended effects alternative enterprises enact.

We like to conclude with two tentative suggestions for prospective research. First, our rhythmanalysis has yielded the key insight that the progressive (post-capitalist) thrust of alternative enterprises necessarily remains limited. This is hardly surprising as no alternative enterprise can reasonably carry the burden of the ‘anti-capitalist transition’ (Harvey, 2010) alone. One could of course conjecture, as some celebratory accounts have done, that alternative enterprises mutually reinforce each other to instigate, in aggregate, an epochal shift of how capitalism works (Vail, 2010). However, this is to deny that the existence of separate, often disparate, alternative enterprises, which have been around for centuries, will not automatically congeal into a wholesale transformation of capitalism. Consequently, a productive dimension for future research could be how individual alternative enterprises coordinate their struggles in ways that enable more collective forms of liberation and resistance to emerge. Shedding light on how multiple alternative enterprises collaborate by channeling and synchronizing their rhythms is important to advance understanding of how local struggles can be intensified into larger movements unleashing a more resolute push against the logic of capital. To be sure, collaborations between alternative enterprises are not per se anti-capitalist, but they might become so by deliberately trying to challenge “the reproduction of the capitalist class and the perpetuation of its power on the world stage” (Harvey, 2010, p. 250). Whether a unified anti-capitalist movement led by alternative enterprises will ever materialize remains beyond our grasp. Nevertheless, we believe that a focus on the interrelationship of alternative enterprises at minimum can sensitize us with regard to how collective efforts create transient openings whereby the possibility of an alternative socio-economic order can be sensed.

Finally, we see merit in prospective research on alternative enterprises which uses rhythmanalysis more in line with Lefebvre’s own understanding: a critical analytic practice that uses the body as a ‘tool’ for investigating social struggles over space and time. Ethnographic research seems particular well equipped for sensing instances of domination and

resistance which alternative enterprises' ongoing intermingling of different rhythms entail. Specific to both ethnography and rhythmanalysis is a focus on situated knowledge (Highmore, 2005, p. 157), as well as a close proximity to the subject of inquiry. By implication, a central concern for future research should be to actively participate in, and thus become part of, alternative enterprises so as to make sure that we are able to understand their specific rhythmicity by being grasped by them (Lefebvre, 2004). Ethnographic research carries weight since increasing the granularity of our understanding of alternative enterprises by studying their spatio-temporal practices not only conceptually, that is, through the head, but equally through "attentive eyes and ears, [...] and a heart" (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 45).

Notes

ⁱ It is important to note that workers saw the occupations as a legitimate act in defense of a public good, accusing factory owners of fraudulent bankruptcy by pointing out that they "took credit for credit, but never with the intention to invest into the company. [...] They wanted to get rid of their employees, their enterprise and build up a new one at a new place" (Hille, 2009, p. 241).

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