Article

Unfamiliar rhythms and the micro-politics of late-modernity: An ethnography of global Hong Kong

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Abstract
This article explores connection or disjuncture between everyday life and global culture. Efforts to de-essentialise or pluralise urban globalisation have focused on local negotiations of discourse or the macro effects of the world city, here rhythmanalysis is used to bridge these approaches. The analysis develops on the tension between the theoretically-based multiplicity and reflexivity of late-modernity, and the structured reality that has been documented. The global city is stratified through spatial and dispositional-embodied qualities that dramatically truncate the possibility of encountering unfamiliarity through everyday life. These stratifications lean on each other and replicate as 'small worlds' of co-constitutive, comfortable spaces. To explore this, Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis is used to explicate participant accounts of going to a nightlife district in Hong Kong for the first time. For some, the district is present in daily life, contributing to a fluent connection and orthodox visitation. Meanwhile, subjects who visit under less seamless conditions reflexively feel out of place and corporally distinct. This article contributes to understanding the micro-politics of late-modernity, the very real, yet transparent, spatial and embodied barriers which truncate individual flourishing in late-modern societies.

Keywords
everyday life, global city, globalization, late-modernity, reflexivity, rhythm

Introduction

Through an ethnography of nightlife consumption, this article uses rhythmanalysis to critically engage with late-modern theorisations of reflexivity and agency. While late-modern theory has had a transformational impact on understandings of societies, debate over the terms and scale of any changes remains far from settled. Highly charged and

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diversified by transnational flows, global cities are at the forefront of this debate. To further this, rhythmanalysis is used to explicate participant accounts of attending Hong Kong's premier nightlife district, Lan Kwai Fong (LKF). In visiting, Hong Kong locals and non-locals alike interact and navigate a global, Western, Hong Kongese and consumerist landscape. Their mode of entry and affect from the environment once there demonstrate the spatial and dispositional-embodied stratifications that reverberate throughout Hong Kong and the world. This leads to conceptualising 'small worlds' – the truncations and boundaries of everyday life. Identifying the role of rhythms and dispositions highlights micro-politics in a pluralised environment like LKF, where stratifications operate through a feel for the environment.

Is contemporary society late-modern?

To describe the apparent new conditions of the late-twentieth century, a raft of 'late-modern' theories emerged to express the terms of contemporary life. Society is portrayed as transformed by individualisation (Beck, 1992), deformation of structure (Bauman, 2000), reflexivity (Giddens, 1991) and time–space compression (Harvey, 1999). Late-modern theory has spoken to reflexivity and agency in compelling ways (Davis, 2016), but empirical application has been problematic. Rather than a liquid (Bauman, 2000) or reflexive (Giddens, 1991) modernity, empirical studies find a structured, unreflexive reality (Atkinson, 2010; Duncan, 2011). A tension exists between the *feeling* of multiplicity and choice, and the empirical reality of structured routes. For example, contrary to a realm of limitless possibilities, Atkinson (2010) found that reflexivity did not play a major role in occupational choice, showing the endurance of class. Leading from this debate, the application of individualisation and associated conceptualisations of agency in contemporary society has been strongly critiqued as an overzealous reading (Atkinson, 2008) or a 'black box' application (Benson & O'Reily, 2009; Coffey & Farrugia, 2014). Further empirical analysis, focused on the conditions that govern the above phenomena, is required to learn and analyse how late-modernity is neither uniformly reflexive nor structural, but rather falls upon individuals unevenly. To add substance to the above, the focus will be on one thread – a smaller and more mobile world (Harvey, 1999; Urry, 2007).

Scholars have stressed extending beyond utopian visions to see the inequalities inherent in globalisation processes (Madden, 2012; Trimikliniotis et al., 2016). Many of these changes, economic and cultural, have been focused in the global city, a fundamentally different experience, as Colic-Peisker (2014, p. 433) describes:

> Cultural diversity, a key marker of the global city and a consequence of human mobility and migration, is usually detected on the surface as a 'cosmopolitan feel': the global city's 'natives' encountering and engaging daily with a variety of immigrants and visitors.

The global city is shared. Travel writer Jonathan Raban (1974) describes the city as a manor, where other ways of living are heard through the walls (and one is constantly bothered by them). Different cultures and people living together mean that much of global cities is discursively shared, negotiated, or contested (Ye, 2016). Yeoh and Willis

(2005) apply 'contact zones' (Pratt, 1992) to the global city, where hitherto separated people and cultures come into contact. These spaces are multiplicious – evident in the heightened social negotiation of unknown norms – but still hold dominant and accepted practices. Contact zones are often seen through a migrant's perspective, Yeoh and Willis (2005), and similarly Leonard (2008), found nearly all encounters their participants had were a negotiation between themselves and the city's dominant ethnic discourse. Analysis of cultural negotiation in the global city needs a closer inspection of the motley intensity of culture and ethnic discourses, and the experience of local, largely immobile, people in the global city. For example, in 'global nightscapes', foreign characteristics may be a valuable form of capital (Farrer, 2011). Altogether, the global city is textured with contact zones of differing intensities and dominant discourses, and this article investigates the politics of entering and being accepted in these spaces.

Global cities house multiple globalisations that are stratified by place, interaction (Bayón & Saraví, 2018) and mobility (Datta, 2012). In London, Datta (2012) found the global city was absent for Polish migrants living in the city's periphery. Collins (2016) found similar stratifications among South-East Asian migrants in Seoul. Both studies, while exhibiting excellent analysis, put forth the economic core as the only globalisation that defines the entire city. While this elevation of the core is reflective of the participants' representations, Polish and South-East migrants are also global. In the labour-based analysis of this work, the texture of the global city as *multiple* globalisations of distinct small worlds is lost. While the economic inequalities are well-highlighted, the consequences for the culture of each group is inadequately captured, and thus the symbolic violence against these migrant worlds is neglected too.

To grasp these 'small worlds' that different populations live in, a discourse-agnostic theoretical lens that considers urban multiplicity in itself is necessary. In considering multiple globalisations neutrally, which in turn are discursively-loaded by participants, scholars can better investigate the inequalities and symbolic violence wrought amongst coexisting globalisations.

Rhythmanalysis

Rhythmanalysis – the isolation of repetition – enables a plural reading of Hong Kong and the global. Lefebvre (2004) developed and applied rhythmanalysis for urban everyday life. In rhythm, the city is considered directly; for example, the celestial, cultural and physiological rhythms of day and night. Academic analyses of the world often speak of rhythms, such as macroeconomic cycles. Rhythmanalysis however aims to study the rhythmic repetition of things directly, so a rhythm is not a representation, nor a model; rather, rhythm is immanent or in itself: 'Everywhere there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm.' (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 15). While everyone can naturally recognise a rhythm, thinking about them can be problematic for generating an incomplete representation,

> . . . what do you think when you speak of **rhythms**? Do reflections, discourses pertain to *thinking*, or simply to verbal commentary of concrete rhythms? . . . Thinking is a part, but does not claim to *be* the totality. (Lefebvre, 2004, pp. 16–17)

There is a distinction between *living by* and *thinking of* rhythms. As however we answer the question, 'What is rhythm?' is a representational device that is distinct from the lived sense that we naturally possess.

Concrete rhythms, then, are the city. For example, in the rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean towns, Lefebvre and Régulier (2004) focus upon the rhythms of political alliances and international trade as the sustaining influences. These distinct rhythms combine to form one city: 'The comparative analysis of urban rhythms only distinguishes between them in order to bring them closer together' (Lefebvre & Régulier, 2004, p. 96). Distinguishing the different parts of the city as separate and part of the whole is valuable to grasping the strands of the global city independently and in relation to each other. This structure is also the background of experience, and through the single vein of rhythm, rhythmanalysis draws attention to how everyday life is structured by the manner in which the city is shaped. Following this, much research (Goh, 2014; Hetherington, 2013; Lagerkvist, 2013; Paiva, 2016; Smith & Hall, 2013) has been founded on the city as a 'polyrhythmic ensemble' (Crang, 2001). In the ensemble, rhythms lean on each other, generating co-constitutive spaces, for example, the two coordinated rhythms of a bus and waiting passengers (Osman & Mulíček, 2017). While a city as a whole may be an ensemble, on smaller scales, contradictions and difficult social terrain may be common, particularly as demonstrated above, in the global city. The tensions and stratifications present may mean some rhythms have more affinity with others, co-constituting each other into networked, co-constituting areas.

People do not respond to every urban rhythm equally, rather they carry dispositions to each that shape the valence and type of affect (Vergunst, 2010). This breaks up the aforementioned singular polyrhythmic ensemble into a series of uniquely felt rhythms that coalesce, and are felt to be small worlds. As rhythms are felt, they are embodied, likened to habitus, as Edensor (2014, p. 164) eloquently describes:

> These successively enacted practices become sedimented in bodies, and an unreflexive practical and sensual apprehension of place emerges as individuals become habituated to scenes, textures, smells, sounds and a host of affordances, stopping points, bodily manoeuvres and social interactions.

The repetition of our everyday rhythms enters into who we are. As multiple physiological, technical and societal rhythms act upon us, the body is polyrhythmic too. We develop through repetition and gain a sense of the game (Bourdieu, 2012). To Lefebvre (2004, p. 16), this adaptation is a natural and healthy state with the environment, a harmony between our own rhythms and the rhythms of the world, which he calls eurhythmia – 'a normal (which is to say normed!) everydayness'. In every city, there are people who live in eurhythmia as their own and the city's rhythms operate in harmony. At the same time, the global city may break that eurhythmia as people encounter very different rhythms that may impact them negatively (Reid-Musson, 2018). Rhythmanalysis, applied to the global city, then allows for the study of the habitual embodiment of globalisation.

The city is often seen as a confrontation with the unfamiliar (Vergunst, 2010), and the global city raises the prospect of unfamiliar rhythms being a part of everyday life. A micro-politics ensues as we negotiate fitting and ill-fitting rhythms. While generally

ignored, unfamiliar rhythms could break eurhythmia, pushing people into the dishar-
mony of pathological arrhythmia (Lefebvre, 2004). Alternatively, they could engender
change or adaptations. While unfamiliar rhythms are cyclic in themselves, phenomeno-
logically they are a 'first beat' for the encountering individual, and so can begin a linear
transformation. The linear can shift the rhythmic, and so create potential for change and
growth (Bennett, 2015). Thus, instead of experiencing pathological arrhythmia, a linear
transformation suggests that a milder, or even positive, discordance between habitus and
an unfamiliar rhythm is possible. This depends, however, on the micro-politics that ensue
between an individual's embodied rhythms and the unfamiliar rhythm.

Rhythms structure the city and everyday life. The global city is a conglomeration of
far-flung rhythms – an encounter of classes, sexualities, ethnicities and ideologies (Datta,
2012; Farrer, 2011; Leonard, 2008; Yeoh & Willis, 2005) – but in focusing on discourse
or economics, the raw confrontation with unfamiliarity or the multiplicity of globalisa-
tion recedes. Rhythm in the structural, immanent sense, the rhythm that is the 'stuff' of
the world, is identifiable in the repetition of time, place and energy (Lefebvre, 2004). As
rhythms interact and generate new spaces, they 'muddy' the city's ensemble and generate
a patchwork of co-constitutive areas. Discourse and power enter the analysis as embod-
ied dispositions that encounter rhythm, the difference of which is navigated as micro-
politics. These properties lend rhythmanalysis to the analysis of the symbolic violence
operating in the global city, as the various strands are separated, a part of the whole, and
felt by individuals.

Methodological notes

This study was conducted in LKF, a nightlife district in Central District, Hong Kong.
The area's nightlife history began in December 1978, with the opening of *Disco Disco*,
one of Hong Kong's first dedicated discotheques (Fitzpatrick, 1993). *Disco Disco* was
successful in itself, but the whole area soon became popular as China's shift to capital-
ism transformed Hong Kong's economy and attracted a new generation of migrants.
Soon after, entrepreneurs from North America and Europe with commercial ambitions
opened venues around *Disco Disco*. A short walk from many financial firms' headquar-
ters, LKF – at the time dubbed 'trendy street' – became a destination for Western-style
dining, drinking and events like Halloween (Cheng, 2001). Throughout this early
period, LKF was not somewhere Chinese Hong Kong people might typically go, with
some restaurant menus not even including Chinese language (Fitzpatrick, 1993). Cheng
(2001, p. 237) notes that from the 1990s onwards, LKF became more diversified as
Hong Kong people returning from Europe began attending, and she describes the dis-
trict as an 'icon of cosmopolitan consumption' that mirrored Hong Kong's wider cos-
mopolitanism. Today, the area is popular with Chinese and non-Chinese locals, in
addition to being a major tourist destination for visitors from all countries. Thus, LKF
is emblematic of a contact zone and 'global nightscape' (Farrer, 2011).

The area's core is dense, with bars and nightclubs on multiple floors of buildings,
LKF then thins out East and West amongst retail shops and apartments, and South into
the shopping malls and amongst the office buildings of Central. Until the 1990s, the core
had an alternate and hippy influence (Cheng, 2001; Fitzpatrick, 1993). Over time,

however, doubling rents pushed these venues to the periphery. The area most associated with the LKF label measures roughly 500 m $\times$ 300 m, and is adjacent to Soho, another nightlife area. Purchasing and consuming alcohol in the area can be cheap or expensive; it ranges from buying a drink from a 7-11 convenience store, to booking a booth in a nightclub. The area is polyrhythmic. Tourists stream into the core ground-floor venues, while techno music fans go West to Oma and Social Room. There are also Hong Kong Chinese-style nightclubs with a modern equivalent of a cabaret show (Farrer & Field, 2015). Rhythms reverberate off each other as their very asynchrony establishes the area's carnivalesque atmosphere. These rhythms relate to each other, casting identity into new lights (Cheng, 2001; Jankowski, 2018).

The data presented in this article were collected using ethnographic methods. An ethnography afforded the opportunity to meet people in the setting. Thirty-one field site observations were conducted, with detailed field notes written afterwards. These observations involved meeting hundreds of people and having informal conversations. The sites focused on were a popular pub crawl, a couchsurfing meet-up, venues mentioned by interviewees, and two 'go-along' observations. In addition, 21 interviews with staff, volunteers and visitors were conducted. When sampling visitors, I aimed for a variety of capacities for, and experiences of, international travel. Interviews were conducted by the researcher after recruiting participants from the field site and contacts. Interviews were of 40–120 minutes' duration. Interview topics focused on migration history and journeys to LKF.

In ethnography, the researcher's own position brushes against the field site and informs the research; in nightlife, this particularly means gender and ethnicity. While LKF is a safe place to drink alcohol, being male nonetheless meant I did not experience the added layer of vulnerability and harassment that women may experience. Being male did bring its own insecurities: the expectation of a male 'proactive socialiser' role was made uncomfortable by my shyness, as was the requirement to 'break the ice' before social groups solidified for the evening. These factors meant I experienced LKF from an outwardly secure position, in that I could move around confidently, but an internally insecure position, lacking confidence with interaction. Ethnically, I am *gweilo* (white ghost), who are in some respects welcomed everywhere as 'curious idiots'. Meanwhile, if I divulged that I had lived in Hong Kong for years, I was treated as such: asked for travel tips by tourists or partially allowed 'in' to local Chinese circles. Nonetheless, I began this study largely as an outsider. While I had been to LKF before, it did not generally appeal to me, which made the fieldwork quite foreign. My positionality initially meant access and security, but at other times, restricted access or I felt insecure. Reflecting on my position had me consider: what are the structures of access and acceptance in these largely multi-ethnic, diverse spaces? This personal exposition shows the multifaceted positions that the participants were arriving to LKF with too.

The development of this article was in two stages. Analysis was conducted using memos (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001), one created of each interviewee, and memos of phenomena arising from the interview and fieldwork data. These memos were then synthesised, developed, and brought into discussion with relevant literature through writing. In a larger initial investigation, the undeveloped conclusion was reached that LKF is a 'mobile space' that is well connected to certain international flows. The present article began as a deeper investigation into the earlier identified global nature of LKF.

Encountering nightlife rhythms

The focus is on narratives of going to LKF for the first time, and the vibration of rhythms in sites other than where and when they pertain to. This is achieved by an examination of fluent and discordant connections to LKF.

Fluent

The rhythms of LKF extend out of the particular streets and venues where they are focused, and into sites all around Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, LKF can be pervasive, as somewhere to go, and something one must do. During my fieldwork, I met many migrants and other detached people who did not have a clear reason why they were there; it was simply a natural place to go. This is indicative of the presence the district has throughout Hong Kong. In homes, workplaces, educational institutions and public parks, however, LKF was more than just present. This presence was rhythm, and so it also had velocity; speed in a given direction. This section discusses the presence of LKF that is more than discourse, but rather, the active workings of nightlife consumption rhythms in themselves. In these cases, nightlife begins outside of LKF, fluently connecting spaces around the city with there.

Rhythms are not contained to the time and place their practice occurs. They also have a resonance that is present in and co-produces other sites (Osman & Mulíček, 2017; Stasik, 2017) as the rhythmic practices 'spill out'. LKF is perennially present and hence constructive of sites around Hong Kong. These rhythms may be unfamiliar, but they resonate with a practice and location to be moved towards. For those in the right places, and who are interested, the rhythms are like a stream that sweep them up. When I spoke to Christopher, originally from Russia, he was starting a new job in Hong Kong and was very familiar with LKF. Two years ago, however, when Christopher first came to Hong Kong on student exchange, he did not know LKF existed, yet was riding the rhythm towards it:

Krzysztof:	How did you first find out about LKF?
Christopher:	LKF, everybody was telling like –when, exchange students mainly, 50 or 60% of exchange student activity here is about going out, and having fun
Krzysztof:	yeah, but how did you first?
Christopher:	–It was just in the first days of Hong Kong when it was introduction week, everybody starts to mention LKF. LKF –let's go, let's have fun there, it's good, I've heard it's sick. And, that's all, I just got in there.

Charmaine grew up in Hong Kong, she has Indian ancestry and attended an international school. After studying at university in the United Kingdom, she returned to Hong Kong to work as a recruitment head-hunter. Charmaine goes to LKF or venues nearby nearly every weekend. Her first experience of going was through the educational setting she grew up in:

Krzysztof: Did you ever go to LKF as a teenager?
Charmaine: Yes [laughs], I think we started coming out when we were 14, maybe? [. . .] but I think the most famous place was just down the road here [in LKF] called Mad Dogs, which doesn't exist anymore, but everyone wanted to, all the international school kids wanted to go there
Krzysztof: How come?
Charmaine: I think it's just –everyone follows at that age right. But the music was really good, and that's where everyone went.

When I spoke to Fiona, she had lived in Hong Kong for four years. She came to Hong Kong through an internal corporate transfer from the United Kingdom. Upon arriving, she describes a multitude of invitations that all seemed to lead to getting a drink:

Fiona: . . .everyone's up for going out, I think that's the biggest thing, [. . .] like you can't, run away from, people going, 'aw come for a drink', and like, 'aw crap, I'm new, I should really go for a drink' yep, it's that kind of thing. Or someone invites you, like people are very inviting, oh I'll come out for dinner with my friends, and then that leads to going out, you're always getting invited to stuff when you first come out. And it's hard to say no to that.

Tourists can be similarly swept up. One very outgoing German man I met one pub crawl explained he was on holiday in Hong Kong, and had gone for a walk in the evening as his companions preferred to stay in their hotel room:

He was on holiday in Hong Kong and went to the IFC Mall Rooftop to get a photo and was dragged/convinced into the pub crawl by a staff member. He had no plans, so thought, why not?

In the ensemble of Hong Kong, LKF's consumption rhythms are present and co-constitutive of places all around the city. Nightlife rhythms begin in locations all across people's everyday life – the velocity of those rhythms leads to a location and practice. In this manner, LKF partially constitutes the sites mentioned above, and in carrying people and discourse to LKF, these rhythms also help construct LKF itself, too. This co-constitution weakens the threshold between where LKF is heard and LKF itself. In other words, the beginning location, for example an office, and LKF, inform each other discursively, and so moving from one to the other can be seamless. The mutual construction of LKF and the above spaces – student areas, high schools, offices, and tourist landmarks, combined with being receptive to visiting a nightlife district in Hong Kong – means that a fluent connection to the district is created.

LKF is far from omnipresent in Hong Kong – the rhythms extend to limited sites, contributing to the small world that each person lives in. In the cases of the above participants, the sites where LKF was first encountered were all associated with European and North American cultures – the exchange student period, a British company office and the IFC Mall rooftop. Amongst the many different lifestyles in Hong Kong, the

selective co-constitution of sites limits the city. When Christopher and Fiona moved to Hong Kong, they were in specific everyday settings co-constituting LKF. The diversity of connections means these are more than expatriate circuits (Butcher, 2010) of venues particular people prefer. These diverse patterns synchronise into one polyrhythm that is LKF. The separation of these networks adds another layer to contact zones (Pratt, 1992; Yeoh & Willis, 2005) and the global city, as the encounter is with an unknown but familiar discourse. A politics of similarity rather than difference operates, and these encounters, while reliant on holding the capital to access these spaces, occur as a result of spatial proximity.

While rhythms sweep people up, to do so nonetheless relies on the dispositions of the subject. The above passages focus on sites that LKF resonates in and the ongoing natural repetition, but there is also the meaning and affect of the rhythm. Past rhythms, sedimented in the habitus, shape dispositions to the myriad of rhythms encountered in the global city – of which most are habitually ignored. In the above accounts, there is a positive disposition towards the rhythm that ignites one to follow. The habitus designates 'a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 562, footnote 2) to ignoring, as much as carrying out, a practice. We internalise and habitually live rhythms (Edensor, 2014), giving us a fluent response to follow. Notably, these rhythms may be internalised in another country, making the phenomena transnational.

Through sedimented rhythms, people become knowledgeable and have a positive valence towards practices. The familiarity and fit of one's sedimented rhythms with LKF's produce eurhythmia, and so a fitting experience of the rhythm. There is the comfort in familiar rhythm, described by Edensor (2011), and many other expressions of positive affect. Navigating the foreignness of LKF is thus not always a difficult or silent negotiation of incompatible cultures in a contact zone (Yeoh & Willis, 2005), instead a fluent connection engenders eurhythmia and positive affect: familiarity, comfort, excitement and happiness:

Christopher:	But of course, LKF also, stays like, essential part of my one or two-week plan.
Krzysztof:	Yeah, why, essential?
Christopher:	It's [an] essential part of Hong Kong. Because LKF has a lot of characteristics which are similar to, which are just Hong Kong characteristics, like, vibe, flow of excitement, and a lot stuff like that.

Similar to Christopher, Lily first came to Hong Kong as an exchange student, but from the Netherlands. When I spoke to her, she had moved back to Hong Kong, working at a start-up. I asked her about her first visit to LKF as a student:

Krzysztof:	What was it like to first go? Can you remember your first time?
Lily:	. . .in general. What I felt, it's funny, LKF to me was really like going out in, –I've done– in Europe I've done three party holidays, I just went to Spain, Portugal, and Italy once, just go to like a beach town with a lot of like partying, and LKF is like really similar I mean everyone is outside, everything is really close to, everything is really

> close together. You bump into people a lot, especially when you've been there for a little bit.

For those with a fluent connection and a positive disposition, upon reaching the rhythm's enactment, these people are in eurhythmia as their own and the environment's poly-rhythm harmonise. LKF is co-constitutive of a specific selection of sites around Hong Kong, but to respond positively to being in such a place, there is a 'nightlife rhythm', as part of these people's habitus, preceding the encounter. In the above, we see an unreflex-ive practice as the rhythms of LKF are habitually followed. For migrants, this nonethe-less is embarking upon something novel in the global city (Jankowski, 2018; Walsh, 2007). Going to LKF is these people's first beat of a new rhythm; a linear movement. Thus, in global consumption culture, unreflexive and structured practice combines with the Debordian spectacular (Debord, 2012; Elsheshtawy, 2008) and a sense of personal change (Bauman, 2000).

Discordant

The discussion now turns to discordance in LKF – where one's internal rhythms do not harmonise with LKF's. LKF is so busy with different people – while the commuters waiting at bus stops to go home after work were clearly discordant with LKF, there are deliberate visitors among those working to harmonise:

> *I met a couple of local girls, Alice and Lin. Lin had just got back from a working holiday in Australia. When I asked why she came tonight, she simply nodded to Alice. Lin's English was not very good, but she could communicate fine. Alice had much better English. She had been on the crawl a number of times, and she obviously had an 'experienced' demeanour about her, she knew what was up, the pace of night, and how things were gonna go.*

Nightlife districts can be intimidating: they are loud, crowded with strangers, visibility is often obscured, and they can be navigationally confusing. It can take a lot of adaptation from one's daytime habits to feel comfortable. For Emily, who was born in Hong Kong and has Chinese ancestry, LKF is part of a lifestyle she learnt while studying law in London:

Emily: I still see a lot of people that I met in London, like my university friends, university acquaintances, I see them in LKF. I feel like that's because we're used to doing that during weekends, we're used to doing that as relaxation. But, I'm not sure if Hong Kong people –like local school– have that culture, in university.

LKF's affinities with foreign cultures means that becoming comfortable with the rhythms there, from within Hong Kong, can be difficult. John, a New Zealander and co-manager of a pub crawl, explains a similar sentiment about his untravelled customers:

John: For Hong Kong educated people, or Hong Kong-based Chinese that haven't got the wide experience travelling around Europe or America, sometimes they are a bit tentative at the start. Sometimes they are a bit,

'aw is this for me or not?' [. . .] So. . . for our local-born Chinese, I guess the more traditional Hong Kong born Chinese, a bit of a slow burn, but once they experience it, they like it.

In Hong Kong, there is a separation from LKF that goes beyond it being a busy nightlife district. Many people's small worlds of co-constitutive sites never reach the district. Their everyday life curves around LKF like contour lines around a mountain peak on a map. And so, similarly to fluent connections, not going to LKF is also unreflexive – the rhythms are a piece of the global city that is habitually ignored. If people do go there for the first time, they might find they are not conditioned to the environment.

On a pub crawl, I met Steve, a very chatty and outgoing Hong Kong Chinese man along by himself. He has never lived overseas. After high school, Steve studied a foundation course to gain university entrance, and attending university changed Steve's lifestyle and routine. Steve became a student buddy to visiting exchange students, and also began living in a university hall with Europeans, which put him in proximity of new rhythms. The hall was a contact zone (Pratt, 1992; Yeoh & Willis, 2005) of new cultures, but it was also an entry point, a rhythmic knot that facilitated Steve taking a fork, leaving his small world. On his first visit to LKF, Steve was guiding his European friends:

Steve:	Yeah I think, a year ago, is my first time [to] go [to] Lan Kwai Fong.
Krzysztof:	Who did you go with?
Steve:	I go with my buddy, they are from Germany, and I just show them Hong Kong, so of course Lan Kwai Fong is a tourist attraction, so I show [them] a couple of bars.
Krzysztof:	Why did you, feel like you had to show them LKF?
Steve:	Because they like beer. I think this a really Western area, so I need to show them. I should show them.

Steve visited LKF 'piggy-backing' on the rhythms of exchange students and the places they naturally go and are expected to visit. Steve had not ventured to LKF until he was put into spatial proximity of LKF rhythms at university, but also important is that he had the inclination to follow them. From Steve's perspective, the Europeans were exotic, and LKF remains in its traditional position as an exposition of Western culture. It was only when he was with European people that Steve stepped out of his eurhythmia and into the unfamiliar rhythms which led to LKF. In other words, Steve had been riding one river, and buddying with Europeans made him change rivers. This required the cultural capital to attend university, and Steve's explorative personality. Even with the capital that Steve acquired to reach the contact zone, however, he lacked the embodied familiarity with the slice of LKF he was in. That discontinuity is shown in his first visit:

Krzysztof:	What did you think of it [LKF] when you went?
Steve:	To me, I just think the place is quite international, in the first time, I feel a little bit uncomfortable because, you know the area –90% of the customer is, for western country, it's not [a] local place. [. . .] my English is not really good. I cannot, speak –I cannot show my

friendly, or talk to other people, talk to other stranger, or flirt a girl, so I feel a little bit uncomfortable. And, I can drink beer, but my maximum is two bottle[s] of beer. It means I can't drink a lot

The discontinuity between Steve's sense of local places and LKF is linked to dispositions and discordance: a lack of English language, sociality and alcohol consumption made him feel a bit uncomfortable about participating. Another local Hong Kong Chinese person I interviewed, Alisha, described already knowing LKF from television shows and movies, and was curious to go in person. She never did until she saw pictures of her friends in LKF on social media. This was her entry point to LKF, where familiar and unfamiliar rhythms knotted. Standing in LKF for the first time, Alisha felt she was wearing the wrong outfit. We spoke with the aid of a bi-lingual intermediary (Cantonese removed from excerpts):

Krzysztof:	Can you remember the first time that you went yourself?
Translator:	She remembers because she wore long sleeves and long trousers
Krzysztof:	Why did you wear that?
Alisha:	Very cold. And–
Translator:	She thought –like everyone was wearing summer clothes

Continuing Alisha's evening, after some drinks on the street, she and her friends went to a busy mainstream nightclub popular with Hong Kong and foreign people:

Krzysztof:	What did you think of the other people there?
Translator:	They're really happy, they enjoy the music. She didn't enjoy herself because she was too embarrassed to dance because it's weird in Hong Kong, she feels weird to let go in Hong Kong.

Similar to Steve, Alisha described concerns about belonging and participation. Alisha felt disconnected, not just because she felt she could not dance, but also the energy of the other visitors. She had gone with two other Hong Kong Chinese, but rather than LKF being somewhere she could embed and mix into, it was somewhere that emphasised her difference. Despite following rhythms there, neither Steve or Alisha were familiar with this place and so lacked the sedimented rhythms of this slice of LKF in their habitus. Sites in our small worlds are connected to different degrees, and for some people the connection to LKF is so weak that a threshold is crossed. Within the accounts above are descriptions of LKF not being part of Hong Kong. Arriving at LKF was discontinuous from other spaces, and the subsequent encounter with the rhythms of LKF was an experience to be overcome. These discordant circumstances bred reflexivity. On this evening, it is likely the only person that would have noticed Alisha's long sleeves and trousers was herself. The telling point is the heightened sense of self and presentation of the body, similar to Steve's innocuous inability to drink a lot.

Alisha satisfied her curiosity, and has subsequently visited a few more times, but LKF remains somewhere she will only visit for special events at the request of friends. Others adapt, like Lin from the start of this section:

> *Lin was very different tonight, I actually didn't recognise her, she was dressed up a lot in a skirt and lace top. She was a lot more forthcoming and social than the last time I met her. We spoke a bit and she was acting very 'in the mood', she was a lot more expressive.*

Steve adapted too, learning how to 'do' LKF, although riding a foreign rhythm. Despite the numerous Chinese people and Chinese nightclubs, and the many times he has now visited, Steve still felt he could not fit in:

> *I bumped into Steve, and spoke to him a little bit. He seemed to be a lot more 'in the flow' of the pub crawl now, he had the pub crawl shirt on, and was quite intoxicated. I remember asking him about LKF, and he said that LKF was my territory, because I am a westerner, and as a local, he was out of place.*

In these, we see different ends to discordance. Rhythms afford certain qualities in people, and we must take the roles available to our identity. Lin appeared to adapt significantly, and in taking a position as a desirable woman, she may have found eurhythmia. For Steve, finding a role in LKF was difficult. Without a position to take, there remained a divide and recognition of difference between him and LKF. As LKF has been generated in Western terms, and more recently in wealthy mainland Chinese terms, to Steve, he thinks he will never belong.

Our small worlds

The above analysis has only briefly touched upon economic and cultural capital, or axes of identity such as ethnicity, and focused rather upon proximity and dispositions to unfamiliar rhythms to investigate encountering global culture. Segregation operated through spatial proximity and the sense of the environment. The rhythms of the city lean on each to co-constitute places in everyday life, generating eurhythmic small worlds. Experiences outside Hong Kong led some people to a fluent and comfortable experience with the global consumption culture in LKF. Other participants however displayed a disconnection between their everyday life and LKF, leading to feeling uncomfortable.

Employing rhythmanalysis breaks up the monolithic global city into the pertinent spaces for people and the feeling of those spaces. Rather than focusing on one site being negotiated (Farrer, 2011), or more or less uniform discourses across a city's public spaces (Ye, 2016; Yeoh & Willis, 2005), rhythmanalysis illuminates the separate interconnected small worlds that people live in. Ordinarily, everyday life in the global city is structured and unreflexive as rhythms are followed and the different worlds around us ignored. Sometimes these small worlds knot together at contact zones that can act like a bridge. Many readings of the global city emphasise micro-acts of negotiation and boundary-making (Ye, 2016; Yeoh & Willis, 2005). While most often approached as negotiating discourses, the micro-politics of globalisation on display above are affective and often unreflexive. In LKF, it was only the discordant who were truly negotiating a foreign discourse. Those familiar with the style of nightlife were comfortable, and the encounter had different meanings in positive affect. Nonetheless, they were encountering the newness of LKF as a first beat. This asymmetrical relationship suggests that rather than one

negotiation between two groups of people, there are instead two separate encounters with LKF. Each party's negotiation with the other is mediated through that rhythm and how they are affected by it.

Hong Kong is a fast-changing context that has moved through pre-industrial, colonial, manufacturing and financial-global phases. There have been stark changes in influence, as British, mainland Chinese and Hong Kong People nationalities have shaped the territory, and this is reflected in LKF. Hong Kong's most recent shift to becoming a global hub in many ways made LKF possible. The politics of that shift are thus the same micro-politics of visiting LKF. The feelings of discordance, being uncomfortable, or not belonging felt by the local population in Hong Kong become entwined and framed through a constellation of transnational rhythms and understood in terms of ethnicity, localness and foreignness. That uncomfortable affect shows the symbolic violence wrought against local identities by global culture. Rhythms do not repeat perfectly, but rather mutate. As LKF is exported to other Chinese cities (Farrer & Field, 2015), and as mainland China increases its influence over Hong Kong, the rhythms of LKF are expected to reorient to there.

This discussion has wider implications for the impact of local and global on class. Transnational cultural affinities and exclusions cut across migrants and non-migrants, contributing to transnational class formation. Elliot and Urry (2010) identify elite 'globals', but here is evidence of a much more culturally-disperse and middling class of transnationals. A class with an affinity to global consumer culture like that in LKF does not necessarily presage great mobility. Of the excluded, numerous studies have documented the exclusion of migrants (Williamson, 2016; Ye, 2016), in this study I found local people could feel uncomfortable, and so be excluded. That migrants and non-migrants can be similarly displaced in the global city suggests an axis of stratification that works along the lines of hegemonic globalism. The excluded are marooned on the islands of their co-constitutive sites that struggle to penetrate into preferential global culture. Here then the position of sedimented dispositions of gender, ethnicity and class intersecting (Reid-Musson, 2018) with transnational or local rhythms should be scrutinised.

These findings develop around the tension between the multiplicious feeling of late-modernity and the more structured empirical reality, notably described by Atkinson (2010) in the realm of class, and Coffey and Farrugia (2014) critiquing the use of 'agency'. The spatiality and dispositional response to rhythms described throughout this article provide tools to approach this debate. Multiplicity is present, but almost as something that can never be attained. This reframes late-modernity not as an 'infinite collection of possibilities' (Bauman, 2000, p. 61), but rather an infinite collection of impossibilities. Our imagination and aspiration have agency, but practice remains structured in transparent manners that individuals may never realise. The possibility to engage with the other is truncated as opportunities are limited to our spatiality and sedimented dispositions.

Funding

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