

**Making a place out of space:
the social imaginaries and realities of a Business School as a designed space**

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Abstract:

We chart the socio-material imaginaries and realities of a new Frank Gehry designed University of Technology Sydney Business School as both a space and a place. We review the broad sociological literature on space, considering its philosophical and conceptual parameters. Lefebvre's work is central to such discussion, a centrality that we do not so much question as extend by turning attention from a macro-historical conception of space to consider the specificity of place and placemaking, contributing our 'place in space' heuristic model. We apply the model empirically through analysis of the design and occupancy of the business school, highlighting elements that concurrently produce the phenomenology of space and place. Our findings suggest that while organizational space ensconces power and the production of relationships, the translation of these into an identity ordering place is not a linear process. 'Spatial narratives' characterizing the imagined functions of the building have been inconsistently materialized and different actors have re-inscribed alternative functions and meanings in this new place. Theoretically, the paper moves debate beyond the frame bequeathed by Lefebvre while building on it, proposing an analysis that affords equal emphasis to material elements (architectural features, furniture, policies) as to discursive elements (symbols, interpretations, narratives).

Keywords: space, space politics, placemaking, business schools, materiality, architecture

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Introduction

Management Learning articles on learning ‘spaces’, describe space variously as: (1) a topographical arrangement of objects and bodies, considering the political effects of an architectural container (Lancione & Clegg 2015), which implicitly includes or excludes actors (Fahy, Easterby-Smith & Lervik 2014); (2) material settings and artefacts functioning as a stage for creative social interactions (Beyes & Michels 2011); (3) a process emerging from the interaction of symbolic textual inscriptions and embodied actions, producing specific learning effects (Edenius & Yakhlef 2007); (4) a combination of material, cognitive and performative elements that define possibilities for learning and reflection (Vince 2011); (5) an attribute of organizing devices (academic curricula); and (6) a measure of temporal or social density and crowdedness (Blasco 2016). This list demonstrates both the conceptual richness and the problematical plasticity of the concept of space. In this paper we add to the richness by being specifically concerned with management learning spaces as identity inscribing *places*; in addition, we produce a schema that helps with navigating multiple connotations of spatiality.

Investment in iconic buildings to enhance prestige and branding is of increasing significance in the field of management learning (Boys 2014; Lancione & Clegg 2015). The recent relocation of the University of Technology Sydney Business School (UTSB) to the A\$180 million “Dr Chau Chak Wing Building” (CCWB), designed by acclaimed architect Frank Gehry, exemplifies this global trend (Burns 2014; Gilmore 2014). Architecture was explicitly promoted as a tool for “encounter management” (Temple 2009, p. 213) that would inspire increased collaboration and engagement between academics, students, industry and the public, ultimately turning a “university space into a place” (Temple 2009, p. 218) with a desired culture and sense of community. The notion of place is meant to evoke somewhere

remarkable, fusing material form and interpretive experience, manifesting distinctive economics of attention. Such places compete for resources (van Krieken 2012) that flow from ‘attention capital’ (Gieryn 2000). The CCWB overtly displays attention capital to promote the visibility and enhance the prestige of the institution it houses, offering an exemplary opportunity to study strategic placemaking .

Sociomateriality (Orlikowski & Scott 2008), a theory concerned with the entanglement of material technologies and objects, human bodies, performances and intentions and interpersonal relations and communications in constituting organizational reality (Orlikowski 2007), is the conceptual lens we use to investigate how organizational spaces are reshaped as identity-informing places. We structure our analysis by initially reviewing the philosophical debate on space and spatiality, highlighting the heterogeneity of conceptualizations. We then reflect on the pivotal contribution offered by Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial triad. Lefebvre’s analysis of macro-histories of ideas, relations of productions and social routines does not differentiate between space and place, a distinction that entails a ‘micro’ focus on specific sites. The spatial triad is therefore not ideally suited to investigating the contested process through which a space becomes a place imbued with unique meaning and identity. To facilitate examination of the placemaking process we propose a complementary ‘place of space’ model that considers separate but interplaying dimensions of *materiality*, *discursivity*, *ostensivity* and *performativity*. We deploy the model in organizing empirical evidence collected from our case study. Our findings challenge the notion that spatial design can engineer human interactions or directly shape professional identities; instead, we suggest the transformation of a space into a meaningful place is not a linear series of planned actions but an emergent and contingent accomplishment, enacted through processes of sociomaterial dialectics. Our conceptual framework is intended as a tool to represent and document this contested placemaking process.

Conceptualizations of space

The term, 'space', is used variously to designate an area, a distance, or a temporal expanse (Augé 1995, pp. 82-3). The object(s) of spatial analysis in organization studies are equally as varied: "space, place, region, surroundings, locale, built environment, workspace, 'environments' (fixed, semi-fixed, ambient), private/public space, building, territory and proximate space". Taylor & Spicer (2007) distinguish space as distance (i.e. a measurable relation between points); as a materialization of power relationship, and as a lived experience reproduced through social performances and interpretations. The history of philosophical discussions on space explains this conceptual ambiguity: the 'distance' view corresponds to a Cartesian understanding of space as a neutral container, the 'political' one to a Marxist perspective which has its roots in a Kantian/Hegelian idealism, and the 'lived' perspective derives from the phenomenological philosophies of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Mukherjee & Clegg 2016; Mukherjee 2017).

Transcending the tension between realist and idealist understanding of space will not exhaust dissonances in theories of space. Perspectives that consider space either as *context* or as *text*, despite these approaches being difficult to reconcile, can each be presented as realist approaches. The former view, typical (but not exclusive) of the Cartesian 'space as distance' theorizations, tends to focus on space as a container, or sets of material constraints (e.g. of proximity), that enable specific forms of organization. Deterministic and functionalist theories, for instance human factor ergonomics (see Hollnagel 2014 for a review), which seldom recognize social and institutional presence (Hofbauer 2000), are manifestations of this approach. In the same vein, research on the impacts of physical environments in organizational work (see Elsbach & Pratt 2007 for a review) tend to consider spatial components as modes of indirect people management. Such perspectives emphasise that

“physical environments play a major role in facilitating and constraining organizational action” (Elsbach & Pratt 2007, p. 182); hence, the role of spatial confinement and surveillance in making organizations such as prisons, barracks and other institutions ‘total’ (Goffman 1961). Properties such as high walls, bars, razor wire, restricted ingress and egress, define by direct demonstration the ostensive dimension of space, conveying meanings that influence users sensemaking and sensual experiences. Hillier and Hanson’s (1984) “space syntax analysis” denotes different pathways that ‘inhabitants’ and ‘visitors’ use to traverse built space, uncovering “deep socio-spatial structures (...) with syntactic rules of sequence and adjacency” (Dovey 1999, p. 21).

The central position of power relations reproduced and embedded by modes of spatial organization is a centrepiece of post-Foucauldian analysis. Foucault’s (1979, 1980) analysis of the panopticon specifically emphasizes architecture’s role in enabling micro-practices of modern power relations premised on surveillance and normalization of the body. Dale and Burrell (2008) articulate three power effects of spatial organization: (1) *emplacement* (seeking to assert control through fixing, including or excluding actors and actions from certain spaces); (2) *enchantment* (as with the awe produced by a monumental building, collapsing matter and meaning); and (3) *enactment* (the lived experience of social space, involving habitus and social identity). These material, discursive and performative components interact, as space is neither fixed nor immobile but has a dialectical dimension (Foucault 1980, p. 70), incorporating designs, symbols, materiality and performances.

Recognition of the *textual* dimensions of space highlights the fragility of ‘hard’ space-as-*context* views: space is more than a “container waiting to be filled” (Clegg & Kornberger 2006, p. 12). Spatial artefacts ‘come to life’ through social engagement: “space is not something that faces man (sic). It is neither an external object nor an inner experience”

(Heidegger 1993 [1951]). A dialectical view overcomes functional determinism, emphasising the relationship between material objects and actors' actions, going beyond materiality to additionally consider the cultural and discursive conditions wherein materiality is situated.

Interpretation of a given space is subject to the sensibility of multi-sensorial forms of aesthetics deployed to make sense of spatial experience (Strati 1992, 1999, 2010). Aesthetics inform appreciation of not only architectural and urban features but also non-architectural material elements (such as mobile work devices) that further frame spatial performances. The aesthetic dimension of spatial experience is not, however, merely based on associating perceptions with standard templates. It can additionally operate by producing a sense of estrangement that breaks the taken-for-granted nature of otherwise 'familiar' places, thereby revealing the intertwinement between the affective, the spatial and the embodied (Beyes & Steyaert 2013).

Considering space as an emergent assemblage of artefacts and human agencies collapses the distinction between context (space as a container for social interaction) and text (space as a sets of dialectical dimensions). Analysis of space must consider the "material, embodied, affective, and multiple sides and sites of organizing" (Beyes & Steyaert 2012, p. 53), affording the same relevance to the disposition of physical objects as to performances, signs, forms *and* functions. It also demands recognising that interactions have historical dimensions, legacies that affect and inform organizational legitimacy (De Vaujany & Vaast 2013), making space "a product, [which] results from the relations of production" (Lefebvre 1970, cited in Elden 2004, p. 185). Henri Lefebvre's (1991) highly influential model, proposing a triad of dimensions through which space 'emerges', fits these requirements for spatial analysis.

Lefebvre's (1991) account views space as: (1) *represented* or *conceived* (*conçu*), that is, conceptualized by architects and managers deliberately designing it to accommodate specific organizational outcomes (Dale & Burrell 2008); (2) *perceived* (*perçu*) by social actors who categorize it by comparing it with 'appropriate' discursively naturalized practices and settings; and (3) *lived* (*vécu*) through a practical and embodied dimension that entangles symbolic and functional aspects in phenomenological experiences and deployed in the interpretations, unconscious associations and subjective experiences of those experiencing a given space. Stated differently, space has three aspects: (1) a physical form that is generated and used; (2) a mental representation; and (3) a lived dimension that is simultaneously both a material and a mental construct. Through dialectics between these elements, space is "produced and modified over time and through its use" (Elden 2004, p. 190).

Lefebvre's dimensions do not readily accommodate neat classification: phenomenologically they interact, overlap and struggle. Translating Lefebvre into organizational studies has been problematic: space has been reified, considered an entity or natural backdrop to action, rather than a process of becoming (Beyes & Michels 2011; Beyes & Steyaert 2012). The "perceived-conceived-lived triad (...) loses all force if it is treated as an abstract 'model'" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 40), for it does not refer to different 'parcels' of spatial phenomena (Beyes & Steyaert 2012). Rather, it explicates the (re)production of space as a recursive relational process (Hernes, Bakken & Olsen 2006, p. 232), where space is not just experienced but enacted by 'space-makers' (Lefebvre 1991).

Lefebvre's triad bridges the gap between the physical aspect of space and its cultural meaning, mediated by practical, lived experience, thus helping to reconcile the idealist-Kantian and the realist-Cartesian views of space. Since his intent was to examine how spatial organization re-produces capitalist hegemony (Lefebvre 1991, p. 10), he shows limited

interest in examining the emergence of power effects in a specific site. Lefebvre is clearly interested in a ‘macro’ historiography, not just of space but of representations, ideology, social connection, modes of production (Lefebvre 1991, p. 42). For Lefebvre, buildings, monuments and works of art represent relations of production and of power (1991, p. 33). His study of the May 1968 student uprising in Paris compares two university campuses in exhibiting and sustaining different mechanisms of power (see Elden 2004, pp. 155-56). He appears more interested in the consequences of existing spaces rather than the ontogenesis of place. Hence, his conceptualization is necessary but not sufficient as a heuristic tool for examining how a specific space gets infused with values, meanings and identity, to become a *place*. In the following section, we build on Lefebvre to explore the relationship between space and place.

Making space for *place*

Place is a less abstract concept than space (Cresswell 2004, p. 8), conveying at least two contrasting meanings: (1) place as an abstract, albeit specific, dimensional reference to a spatial location; and (2) place as a locale or abode wherein someone or something resides, thus a tangible and body-related entity (Malpas 1999). Distinction in the relation between space and place can be drawn from the ancient Greek philosophical notions of *Kenon* (‘void’) and *Topos* (‘place’), wherein the latter is seen as ‘carved out’ of the former (Mukherjee 2017, p. 22). We develop this distinction, considering place as having a material manifestation, infused with values and meaning, set in a specific location (Gieryn 2000).

While the term place can also designate a subjective position in relation to space (Dale & Burrell 2008, p. 5), places can be further considered as “centres of meaning constructed out of lived experience” (Dovey 1999, p. 40), due to having attributes of being “relational, historical and concerned with identity” (Augé 1995, p. 77). Places are accordingly a “spatial

text” (Dovey 1999, p. 1), often authored by placemaking professionals such as architects (Gieryn 2000) but eventually and most significantly co-authored by their users.

If places are those spaces infused with meanings, then not all locations in space will be places. Augé describes spaces “formed in relation to certain ends” (1995, p. 94) as interchangeable “non-places”, examples of which would be motorways and airports. Users moving through such sites are provided with temporary, anonymous identities. Non-places might lack meaning but have a purpose similar to the “functional sites” (e.g. prisons, hospitals, factories) described by Foucault (1979, pp. 143-4), disciplining and organizing the subjectivities flowing through them.

Placemaking situates spaces in particular meanings. A “place is ... a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world” (Cresswell 2004, p. 11); thus, creating a place is a means of situating occupants’ identities. In placemaking, power is explicitly exercised, since “placemaking is fundamentally about the invention and construction of the future” (Dovey 1999, p. 50). At the same time, place cannot be fully designed but emerges from performances: ‘Like words, places are articulated by a thousand usages’ (de Certeau 1985, p.131, cit in Dovey 1999, p. 47). We are interested in the contested sociomaterial processes through which a designed space can become a place.

A heuristic device

Analysis of the sociomaterial placemaking processes necessitates a new heuristic that affords equal relevance to material objects as to social practices. Seeking to avoid extremes of material *and* discursive determinism, or of trivializing the complexity of Lefebvre’s theoretical dimensions, we use his ‘spatial triad’ as an inspirational springboard for proposing our ‘place of space’ model (Figure 1). The ‘model’ does not ‘represent’ reality but rather

serves as a heuristic for artificially discriminating among aspects of a life world where “the social and the material are constitutively entangled” (Orlikowski 2007, p. 1437).

Insert Figure 1 About Here

The bottom of the diagram (the square) details the analytic foci used to examine spatial interaction and construction, highlighting elements that concurrently produce the phenomenology of space and place. The metaphorical edifice affords equal emphasis to material elements (architectural features, furniture, policies, schedules etc.) as to discursive elements (symbols, interpretations, narratives etc.). The latter may be thought of in terms of social imaginaries. places possess not only ostensive (ideal, conjectural, notional) but also performative (producing action, thinking, and feeling) dimensions (Latour 1986) that do not necessarily cohere as anticipated in design.

Carefully designed spaces can create a sense of awe and a display power (Foucault 1980; Dale & Burrell 2008) seeking to project legitimacy (Proffitt & Zahn 2006), so essential to the ‘making’ of organization (Clegg & Kornberger 2006). Practices share the same dual nature of both projecting meaning and doing things (Feldman 2000, p. 622). An ostensive/performative dyad therefore applies to all elements implied in the social construction of space as place. Even what is omitted at a sensorial level, for instance, that a space is sterile or austere, conveys meaning as “ostensive asketis” (Hofbauer 2000, p. 174) in which blandness disciplines (Connellan 2013). Spatial practices embody not just the outcome of adaptation to physical environments but also values (Schein 1985 [2004]; Gagliardi 1990); they reproduce

social and discursive orders (Lefebvre 1991) and produce power effects (Dovey 1999; Clegg & Kornberger 2006; Dale & Burrell 2008), making of space, a place.

The four corners of the model draw attention to different aspects that never operate in isolation. There is a dialectic interplay between each of these four dimensions with six possible permutations, which can be further declined into 12 modes of interactions, depending on the causal direction of interaction (Table 1).

Insert Table 1 About Here

Lefebvre's triad is incorporated in the upper part of the diagram (Fig.1), acknowledging its value in accounting for the mutual constitution of social space as place through the interaction of practices, conceptions, and representations. Hence it operates as a metaphorical roof, giving coherence and strength to the conceptual building (a roofless edifice is less stable/durable), sheltering it from opposing reductionist tendencies of material determinism and discursive determinism. We demonstrate the usefulness of this heuristic by deploying it in analysing data from the CCWB.

The case study

The CCWB provides an ideal case study for illustrating the applied utility of our proposed model as it exemplifies the complex relationship between intent, design, and practice, demonstrating the potential conservative/disciplinary and creative/disruptive ambiguities of architectural design of space and its emergence as place. Our study builds on and

complements related research (Lancione & Clegg 2013; Berti 2014; Lancione & Clegg 2015), some of which has been published in this journal.

The CCWB was designed in the context of a leadership-led transformation of the Business School. The previous premises, a 19th century fruit and vegetable market façade with a 1960s construction behind, was considered unfit for purpose by the incoming (first) externally hired Dean – one who did not take the extant place for granted: “we work in this labyrinth (...) you can’t see from one end to the other and no one knows where to find anyone. Everyone gets lost” (Interview with the Dean, 22/6/2011).

The design of the building was also a response to debates, intensified by the Global Financial Crisis (Currie, Knights & Starkey 2010), questioning the social role of the business school (Navarro 2008), the capacity of executive education to produce a return on investment (Pfeffer & Fong 2004; Dunne & Martin 2006), and the relevance of its knowledge for organizational practice (Datar, Garvin & Cullen 2010). In reply, the Dean sought to shift the focus of management education from ‘telling students what to think’ to equipping them for tackling “wicked problems” (Green 2014, p. 77), using creative-critical tools such as Design Thinking, rather than relying on ready-made solutions (Hall, Agarwal & Green 2013). The nature of research publication was also expected to be broadened from academics formulating narrow abstract scientific theories for publication in discipline specific journals (Bennis & O’Toole 2005) to include also practitioner oriented, design-inspired, creative problem solving research, developed through cross disciplinary collaboration and industry engagement. To embed these changes, the Dean argued the Business School needed a new building.

Serendipitously, a member of the Business School advisory board had a direct connection with Frank Gehry, the architect whose work inspired the “managing by design” movement (Boland et al. 2008). Gehry accepted a commission to create a new home for the School that

would reinforce the new educational and research ethos centred on ‘flipped learning’ (O’Flaherty & Phillips 2015), collaboration, creativity and engagement. Accordingly it would be designed with small offices forcing academics out into the copious open collaborative spaces, customizable with movable furniture, with whiteboards and projection screens visible from different angles in the room (Green 2015). The translation of UTS’ rhetoric into a A\$180 million dollar structure contrasts with investing in brick-and-mortar architectural manifestations simply as a statement of significance (Palin 2014). “Gehry’s UTS building” (Green 2015) was to act as a powerful discursive device, reinterpreting past, present and future in light of a new destiny: becoming a world class school through, in the words of the Dean “linking creativity, technology and innovation” (Lancione & Clegg 2013, p. 131).

Methods

We used a mixed research methodology (see Table 2 for a description of all types of data collected). Surveys were administered a month before and nine months after the relocation of the Business School (with additional questions in the second survey generated from focus group discussions), facilitating comparison of pre and post-relocation responses. Focus groups were privileged over one-on-one interviews to facilitate investigation into collective sensemaking concerning the new workspace. Starting with an open question about perceptions of the building, we developed themes inductively and sought to clarify and stimulate reflection. A third data source was participant observations of academic practices in the new building (e.g. observations of office space personalization), together with reflections on the authors’ experiences as building occupants. To validate initial impressionistic observations we also obtained the ‘transaction logs’ collected by the security system, recording the opening of the doors leading to staff areas (which are operated using magnetic staff ID cards), with the transactions de-identified for privacy.

The research team comprised three UTSB academic staff, offering research advantages and disadvantages. Advantages included ease of access to a range of data sources, not least to colleagues as survey respondents and focus group. The potential disadvantage is the research team's trading on tacit knowledge known through personal interests and over-familiarity with the context. To address this concern we engaged reflexively with the data, maintaining a balance between immersing ourselves in and distancing from the context (Ybema & Kamsteeg 2009). Additionally, incorporating an "observant participation" model (Moeran 2009), we focused on representing respondent's perspectives, allowing theory to lead the analysis, discussion and conclusions. At three different stages, versions of the paper were reflected on in discussion groups with UTSB staff, with an average of eight people per session, wherein colleagues provided critical responses on our findings, analysis and conclusions.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Initially, we conducted a first level of analysis through line by line coding, to identify similar concepts (Corbin & Strauss 1998). By synthesising our first level codes we were able to aggregate the data according to the four higher order dimensional relations framed by the 'place of space' model that we constructed through familiarity with the literature on space and place, lived experience of the building and the deeply embedded research that we conducted. Further classification followed by categorizing our data in terms of 12 directional flows of influence: (i.e. ostensive to discursive, discursive to ostensive, ostensive to material, etc.). Analysis of the data through each of these heuristic lenses provided new insight about

the CCWB as space and place that otherwise would not have emerged. We accordingly arrange our findings using the dialectical structure of the heuristic model.

Findings

Ostensive to material directionality stresses how symbolic and rhetorical intents induce specific material forms and arrangements. Prior to moving, trust in the building's capacity to change work habits and increase collaboration was moderate, especially among academics as compared with administrative staff. Younger academics felt the new facility implied increased work expectations. Most were critical of functional aspects, such as the limited size of the offices, but identified the unique aesthetic of the building as a powerful attractor. Since the move, these expectations have been supported: events have attracted significant external attendance; industry members participate more enthusiastically in business school initiatives; the public wanders around the buildings 'open' areas, with a constant stream of passers-by taking photos¹. Decision-makers harness the building's aesthetic assets by featuring its unmistakable architectural lines in student recruitment campaigns and using slogans such as "Think here", which position the School as a centre for creative, innovative, thinking.

In terms of *material to ostensive* directionality, specific meanings in space and design are conveyed through non-verbal communication. The design privileged common spaces (intended to foster cross-disciplinary collaboration) over modestly proportioned, private offices. The building's public, rather than private, spaces communicated the sense of the building as a place. In making sense of these divisions the academic's responses were influenced more by the appearance and significations of the building's design rather than by considerations of collaboration and workflow that had rendered the private spaces as, in many

¹ Although there are also those who have openly criticized the aesthetic of the building, comparing it to a crumpled 'brown bag' (Farrelly 2015)

cases, smaller than past accommodation in the old building. Not all private spaces were equal: hierarchy quickly became apparent in their distribution. Professors and senior administrators claimed 'external' offices with windows while junior academics were relegated to 'internal' offices without windows or views, while research students and support staff received open workspaces. Those without private offices tended to express more critical views of the building.

Symbolic aspects of space are (re)produced in organizational discourses and culture in terms of linking *ostensive features to discursive tropes* that were widely circulated. The building's aesthetic extraordinariness became the key signifying feature of the organization's ambitions to become "unambiguously recognized as a top three Australian business school" (Dean's message to the Faculty, 27/2/15). Gehry's design signalled a challenging institutional presence: public speeches exhorted academics to "live up to the expectations" (Dean's address at Faculty Forum, 12/6/15) created by the building. Unsurprisingly a majority of respondents anticipated that association with a 'monumental' space would increase performance expectations. Distribution of this effect, however, seemed dependent on the respondent's own level of security in their academic accomplishment and identity. Accomplished academics, with more international connections and a 'cosmopolitan' attitude towards their academic identity (Bourdieu 1988) appeared less influenced by the building's spatial arrangements. Junior academics, typically more insecure, especially those with a 'local' institutionally based identity (Gouldner 1957, 1958), conversely, tended to feel proud to be working in an iconic space but were strongly aware that their career prospects depended on producing quality publication outputs and high student feedback ratings, rather than just 'being there'. There was a realization that the prestige and legitimacy implied by the building had performative demands associated with it, an insight intensified by a wave of voluntary

redundancies, offered only to the least performatively cosmopolitan, that followed occupancy of the building.

The relation of *discursive to ostensive* directionality is one that sees discourses as influencing the design of space and the symbolic practices of its users. Rather than designing the building in accord with observations of how academic teaching and research is presently practised, the administration idealized how academic work should be in future, with the design delivering on articulated desire. One such idealized condition was to use a blended learning pedagogy in teaching, where students, motivated to engage in pre-class self-study, used both self-discovered and lecturer-provided online resources, attending classes prepared to apply their learning in practical collaborative problem-solving activities. To facilitate this type of collaborative peer-to-peer learning, the building was designed with numerous open study spaces and breakout rooms. Increased opportunities for serendipitous encounters, inspiring new insights and collaborative initiatives, were anticipated. Another discursive desire prefiguring the design was for greater academic-to-academic interactivity and collaboration, including boundary-spanning cross-disciplinary research. Common breakout lounge spaces and bookable formal meeting rooms were scattered through the building augmenting the small private spaces in which only intimate meetings could occur.

Characteristics of space (affordances/spatial syntaxes) influence actions in a *material to performative* relation. Performatively, the future was to be collaborative, with the building fostering collaborative relations. Despite material constraints expressed in the design of the building as a change actant, academic performativity remains much the same. However, there are also contexts where the direction of influence flew in the opposite direction. Some of the very features designed to facilitate greater interaction cause dysfunction, such as interruptions to academic work. A junior academic complained: “A workstation, it’s much smaller. (...) It

doesn't allow you to work like an academic needs to work. There are lots of conversations and interruptions happening”. Few academics circulate between floors, so there is a labyrinthine sense of the space on the floors: “since each floor is different there is no sense of familiarity once you are out of yours – you feel in foreign land”. Physical proximity has not translated into a desire to meet ‘strangers’.

Performative to material directionality focuses on how performances alter and translate material features of space. Individuals personalize the building to symbolically communicate identity and place (Byron & Laurence 2015). The vast majority of the offices displaying a higher degree of personalization—with more personal touches, including diplomas, photos or memorabilia—are the more attractive ones (with external windows). To a lesser extent, contracted academics and professional staff located in open office spaces also personalize their work areas with family photos, achievement awards and occasional potted plants to mark space; however, the level of personalization of place is not correlated with actual workplace attendance. The apparent lack of correlation between the ‘quality’ of an office and amount of time spent within the office suggests that the symbolic value of spatial occupancy trumps functional use. The placemaking opportunities of occupying and marking a personal place appear more relevant than the functionality of the office.

Performative to discursive directionality sees spatial practices reproduce and embed discourse(s). Despite the discursive intent of the many liminal spaces in the CCWB design (including internal stairs connecting different discipline groups, open terraces, and a large common staff room on the eighth floor), the building has largely been unsuccessful in inducing movement outside of disciplinary domains. While most academics appreciate the design of the interactive features, they clash with the performativity of academic territorial turf: the floors are organized according to disciplinary schools, such as Accounting,

Management, Marketing etc. For all practical purposes, the lift appears to be the main site of serendipitous encounters. Performatively, implementation of flipped or blended learning has also been challenging. Most students still expect to be taught rather than facilitated in applying their rarely completed pre-class learning, with many interviewees viewing the requirements to make their subject 'Learning Futures' compliant as a box-ticking exercise.²

The prevalent discourses shaping practices express the relation linking the *discursive to the performative*. The disconnection between the openness presented by the radical curves of its architecture (Lancione & Clegg 2013) contrasts with the rigidity of university organizational practices. The inherently 'bureaucratic' nature of the organization is evoked as an inescapable element that, although intangible, has more sway than tangible spaces. For instance, the possibility of organizing spontaneous meetings is constrained by the way spaces are managed centrally, rather than by the design of the spaces. In the words of one participant, "We have this amazing, new building (...) but there's clearly a disconnect with how we get to use the workspaces." In keeping with the openness of the building UTSB leadership adopts a *laissez-faire* attitude regarding how academics use space, as long as they consistently deliver positive student feedback scores and high research output. Performative productivity is central to the all-important objective of enhancing publication output and international rankings. As noted, some longstanding academics were encouraged to accept voluntary redundancies after the move: as a corollary, new academics with greater publication potential were recruited. Performance pressures might provide another reason for underuse of the common collaborative spaces.

How prevalent discourses produce material effects embedded in specific spatial and temporal morphologies is expressed in the relation of *discursive to material* realities. Student areas feel

² Analysis of the impact of the new setting on teacher-student interactions is the object of a separate, still ongoing, study.

lively and vibrant: they have a distinctive ‘buzz’; by contrast the areas around the fulltime academic offices seem sterile, austere, almost monastic. That the academics’ offices are soundproofed explains part of the difference; also, the presence of academics on campus is sparse, which contributes to a general sensorial experience of a pleasant but stark and minimalist space, an impression confirmed by access data recorded by the security system in a typical teaching period (second half of April 2015). Despite it being one of the ‘busiest’ periods (during non-teaching periods many academics attend conferences, conduct field work or work from home), the data reveal that academics spend less than half of their working time in their offices, not surprisingly, as academic work includes not just sedentary office work but also fieldwork, teaching and community/industry engagement that happens offsite.

Artefacts contribute to the (re)production of discourses and maintenance of social orderings, in terms of the relation of *material to discursive* realities. Materially, the interior aesthetic of the building is characterized by a limited colour palette (walls are mostly white, carpets are grey, fittings mostly white or light coloured wood), a ‘whiteness’ that conveys an “illusion of spatial order” (Connellan 2013, p. 1529). Spatial order is manifest in the allocation of space as a tangible representation of hierarchy, with the Dean’s administrative unit positioned on the highest level, 12, where the Boardroom is also situated, with sweeping city views, other administrative units on level 11, faculty levels between 10 and 5, with student classrooms, lecture theatres and cafés situated on half of level 5 and levels 4 to 2 (Level 1 is a garage/basement). Teaching spaces are reserved for post-graduate studies, excluding thousands of undergraduate students. Clear spatial stratification is evident in occupancy of private offices, especially those with windows, as opposed to the use of open-space workstations. Office allocation has seen episodes of political manoeuvring to obtain better space (e.g., individuals ‘pulling rank’). A senior academic candidly reports: “I exerted finally my own little authority because I was put in a little box (...) away from the windows. (...) I

was really insulted and furious”. When asked in our follow-up survey who were the greatest beneficiaries of the new building, just under half the respondents nominated the business school’s administrative executives.

Symbolic elements affect social actions and practices, expressed in the relation of *ostensive to performative* features. According to the post-relocation survey, reactions to the building’s appearance became less polarized: a proportion of those who disliked the aesthetics warmed to the design, while those who initially loved it became less enthusiastic afterwards. While there was also a slight increase in appreciation of the building’s functionality and ambience, overall a greater percentage of respondents expressed dislike. These mixed responses reinforce the building’s symbolic potential as a promotional tool but also its limitations as a mechanism for changing academic work practices. Focus group discussion saw different micro-discourses emerge, stressing the inspiring effect of the building’s contours and the positive feeling evoked by the workspace’s aesthetic aspects (the quality of light, acoustics, finishing touches, furniture). Enthusiasm was also connected to notions of novelty of form and the building as an unexplored cache of possibilities: “I had (...) an architect show me fixtures that I hadn’t noticed. I think one of the worst things you can do would be to take [the building] for granted.”

Performative to ostensive directionality focuses on the symbolic impact of social actions and practices. Even at the conceptual stage, a Chinese-Australian businessman with alleged links to the Chinese Communist Party, recently named in the media as a major donor to both sides of Australian politics (Trigger 2017), donated \$20 million towards the project, purchasing the privilege of having the structure named after him (Matthews, Bucolo & Wrigley 2011). Once built, respondents were enthusiastic about the capacity of such an ‘iconic’ building to attract attention, generate goodwill and promote pride. In the words of one academic: “There are

people who are taking pictures. There are artists doing drawings of the school. There would be a dozen people around taking notice of the School. When you say to them: ‘Would you like to come and have a look?’ their eyes light up (...) I love that.” The signalling opportunity offered by the building has not been lost on stakeholders and UTSB capitalizes on the attention the building attracts by involving industry representatives in advisory roles, guest lectures, industry event sponsorships, and executive education programs. Frequency of such events has increased since moving into the new building. The micro-discourse on enhanced external engagement is nicely encapsulated in the words of a focus group participant: “I feel the building is very externally focused, which I think is great. I don't know whether it's bringing us together, as much as helping us be out there”.

Discussion

Analysis of the CCWB data using our ‘place of space’ model reveals the conflicted sociomaterial process of placemaking as a process that cannot be reduced to the instrumental re-ordering of predictable routines towards a desired state according to a linear causal model. A distinctive ‘place’ is indeed emerging but it is doing so as the outcome of the interaction between materiality, discursive practices, and the actions of “nontrivial agent(s) who, while inevitably shaped by the discursive practices...shape them back...through undertaking purposive action that is relatively opaque in its consequences, variably clear in its motives and desires, and contextually situated” (Tsoukas 2017, p. 148). Place is an ongoing accomplishment rather than the mechanical consequence of a managerial change initiative. A building can empower a shift in organizational identity but these effects are deployed indirectly through the interpellation of power relations expressed as discourses that voice certain affordances and silence others. To articulate these ideas and to explicate their

relevance and generalizability to the broader context of the transformation of business education, we can first return to Lefebvre's triad, incorporating our model into its discussion.

Conceived space: visibility and identityscapes

The CCWB design had a clear strategic intent: the construction of a new physical (and symbolic) space expressing and enabling organizational ambitions. The building constitutes a statement of presence, aimed at enhancing credibility through association with a prestigious 'starchitect'. Organizational narcissism may be inferred in this branding: "organizations spend vast amounts of resources on stylish buildings (...) in an attempt to express their uniqueness and, inadvertently, their vanity" (Brown 1997, p. 660).

The space was additionally intended to function as an "identityscape" (Hancock & Spicer 2011), producing a desired identity for occupants and users. Traditionally, specific workspaces, such as the factory or office (Chanlat 2006), have transcribed the social identities of employees in bureaucratic organizations while academic work is characterized by spatio-temporal discontinuities at the international, organizational and work levels (Zanoni & Janssens 2006). Academics increasingly inhabit space as a "hybrid between a human being and a machine" (Czarniawska 2012, p. 38), electronically linking them globally. The regulative impact of architecture on employees is accordingly limited by other performative aspects of practice (Alvesson & Willmott 1992), including perceived space.

Perceived space: between placemaking and invisibility

Management sometimes seeks to supervise work through indirect modes of identity regulation, intending spatial design as an explicit instrument of integration. Both identity regulation and the self-proclaiming dimensions of conceived space can be expressed in the tangible 'fullness' and prominence of the edifice. Rhetorical injunctions (such as to "Be

innovative!’ ‘Be exceptional!’ ‘Be integrated!’), cannot operate in isolation, however, due to the mutually constructed nature of organizational space, requiring consideration of ‘perceived space’. The physical workspace in its contingent manifestation of the on-going interplay between material affordances, discursive interpellations and individual performances operates as an arena of identity negotiation.

Place embodies implications emerging from daily experience as it becomes imbued with emotions, values and memories. As place, space becomes, “a unique spot in the universe” (Gieryn 2000, p. 464) and it is “strongly linked to the constructions of identity” (Dovey 1999, p. 43). Private academic offices are not merely functional workspaces but convey a sense of “ontological security” (Giddens 1990, p. 92) to their occupants and promote “confidence (...) in the continuity of their self-identity”. The struggle for ‘a place in the sun’ therefore is more than just a way to confirm ranking but constitutes a form of psychological anchoring of academic selves made fragile by increasing scrutiny (Knights & Clarke 2014). Dependency on an individual place for identity-security creates a paradoxical tension with the discursive ideology promoted and embedded in the building as a “porous space” (UTS, 2015). The more they are challenged to engage with the external world in producing tangible impacts, the more academics will need a safe place to assuage the stress of performative demands.

The ostensive promise that just being present in a building will increase quality publications, industry engagement and higher student feedback scores (Knights & Clarke 2013) holds great appeal. Scholarly work is becoming increasingly reified and commoditized in a field in which individual accountability for quantifiable outputs is taken to mark individual and institutional success (Sturdy & Gabriel 2000; Radder 2010; Parker 2014). The anxieties of academics’ insecurity about the meaning, purpose and value of their work (Knights & Clarke 2013) are hardly likely to be assuaged by the seductive appeal of the building.

Absence also contributes to social construction. A perception of absence contrasts with the plenum of the building's conceived space. Contemporary workspaces can be intrinsically ambiguous and characterized by blandness and absent-presences, wherein light and whiteness are instrumental in disguising structures of power (Connellan 2013). Whiteness (both literal and metaphorical) becomes a "force appropriated by institutions to uphold synchrony (...) strip[ping] faculties of a potentially untidy identity" (Connellan 2013, p. 1547). Sleek spaces, signalling openness and friendliness (Elsbach & Pratt 2007), do not accord with the intrinsic 'messiness' and incompleteness characterizing creativity (Vohs, Redden & Rahinel 2013). While the building embodies ostensive aspects of design thinking (the positive qualities attached to the final product of architectural design), its current use does not fully reflect the performative dimension of design thinking as an iterative-abductive learning process (Martin 2009; Kimbell 2011): there is limited opportunity for experimenting and playing with space.

Lived space: building identity

The original promise was of a "porous space" (UTS 2015) facilitating enhanced interactions among academia, students, society and industry. The building's attractiveness highlights its permeability as people photograph it, admire its forms and wander in its open areas. Industry partners are eager to visit the building to discuss collaborations, participate in events and give guest lectures, suggestive of the benign image of a 'generative' building opening possibilities rather than delimiting correct behaviours (Hillier & Hanson 1984; Kornberger & Clegg 2004).

The business academic's emerging identity is that of an educator, project leader, networker, self-entrepreneur competing in the academic publishing market, establish a strong brand, and demonstrate a significant 'impact' (Alvesson & Kärreman 2017). Being a business academic requires participating in a political economy based on unpaid contributions of largely

privatized authoring, editing, reviewing but also more collaborative conference organizing, industry partnering and consulting (Gabriel 2010). Such public ‘identity work’ is greatly supported by the new CCWB. The building projects not only an aesthetic sensibility but also one that is accessible, adventurous, open and engaging.

‘Representation’ of originality, openness, and seduction has a potential dark side. Beautiful architectural forms may seduce commitment and identification (Dovey 1999, p. 16) but also send a strong disciplinary message. Occupying a ‘world-class’ building projects heightened expectations, sometimes expressed in terms of the ‘moral responsibility’ associated with occupying an icon. Yet visions encouraged by aesthetics, marketing and entrepreneurial agility, can have negative side effects. Increasing engagement with industry can yoke independent research in pursuit of financial contributions, where the pursuit of status and recognition is emphasised over the advancement of knowledge (Klein 2000). Consequently, aesthetics may boost academic identity but not secure integrity to noble ideals.

The ‘practical’ conjunction of conceived, perceived and lived space

Conceiving space/place as a constant process of becoming (Clegg, Kornberger & Rhodes 2005) and acknowledging that knowing and doing are interwoven (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2011), helps overcome the notional separateness of conceived-perceived-lived space, highlighting the role of practices in the (re)production of place. Practices are not limited to local routines and embodied experiences but incorporate institutional influences and discourses (Gherardi 2000, 2012). Moreover, they include ‘nomadic’ activities (Kivinen 2006) more influenced by ostensive or symbolic rather than performative-functional aspects of a building. Practices comprise affective, emotional components (Strati 2007; Gherardi 2012) and a building’s aesthetic aspects (both ostensive and performative) exert a subtle influence. Buildings are sociomaterial entities: a fusion of material artefacts and social

constructions made up not only of social imaginaries but also experiential realities. Positive reactions by external visitors (e.g. visiting academics) provide constant reminders of the uniqueness of a space as place, reinforcing its meaning and, by transitivity, the identity of an organization and its members. What emerges is a complex, even contradictory, view of space/place, both designed and in some ways 'un-designable'. This conclusion appears at odds with reductionist, disjunctive theorizations but fits well with theorizing that recognizes the intrinsic complexity of social reality (Tsoukas 2017).

Conclusions

The sociomaterial 'place of space' heuristic we propose helps analyse the interplay between materiality, cognition, symbols and action involved in the production of a place, as an identity projecting device. Our findings suggest that, while organizational space ensconces power and the production of relationships, the translation of these into a place with identity ordering effects is not a linear process. In the CCWB case the 'spatial narrative' characterizing its imagined functions has been inconsistently materialized in socially differentiated ways. Spatial design may affect practices but does not deterministically transform them; multiple influences flow in numerous directions. By affording equal importance to symbolic and material, ostensive and discursive dimensions, we offer an interpretation of social spatial dynamics with practical implications for place formation. The case study demonstrates that the conception of place within space is a contested field in which both the views of designers and those of users play significant roles. Social imaginaries do not necessarily lead to ideal social realities. The spatial disposition of offices, furniture, bodies, books and other materials in the CCWB were in themselves insufficient for creating the place envisaged; what arose was the consequence of multiple processes and practices, enhancing and inhibiting the potential capabilities of those using the space. We

argue that, in absence of such ‘push and pull’ between various sociomaterial dimensions, a space cannot become an identity informing place.

As is always the case, there are opportunities for further research. First, this study mainly addresses the views of academics: the perspectives of other stakeholders such as professional staff, management and, critically, students are absent. Further research will remedy this. Second, given its historical novelty, limited attention has been paid to temporal aspects of the building shaping the relations between discursive, ostensive, material and performative forces. Finally, in establishing the usefulness of our ‘place of space’ model for analysing multiple local and global forces articulating the meaning and materiality of space and place, we have only applied it to a single case study. Future research can extend the use of the tool to other contexts that enable taking stock of the complexity of the ‘workplace experience’ as the interactive product of multiple elements (Gruber et al. 2015).

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Figure 1: 'Place in space' model

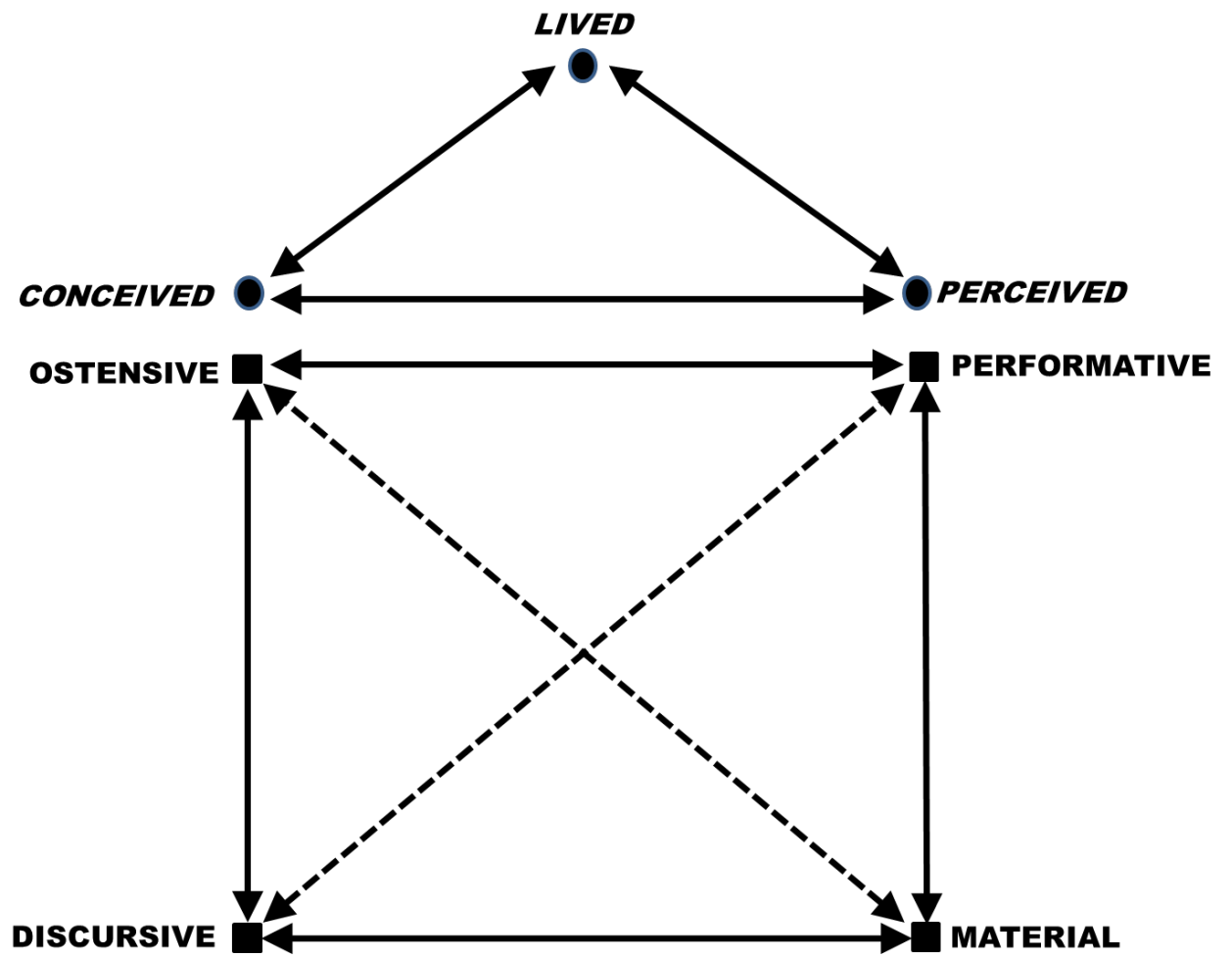


Table 1: A diagram to analyse space as an imbrication of artefacts, practices and discourse

<i>Dimensional Relations</i>	<i>Direction of Influence</i>	<i>Categorical Definition</i>
Ostensive-Discursive	O⇒D	Symbolic aspects of space convey and reproduce discourses and organizational culture
	D⇒O	Dominant discourses influence aesthetical features of spaces and the symbolic practices of their users
Ostensive-Material	O⇒M	Symbolic and rhetoric intents induce the creation of specific material forms and arrangements
	M⇒O	Material elements convey specific meanings, embodying messages: space and design as non-verbal communication
Performative-Material	P⇒M	Practices and performances alter and translate material features of space
	M⇒P	Characteristics of space (affordances/spatial syntaxes) and actants' actions influence actors' social practices
Performative-Discursive	P⇒D	Spatial practices reproduce and embed discourse(s)
	D⇒P	Prevalent discourses shape social practices
Discursive-Material	D⇒M	Prevalent discourses produce material effects (e.g. are embedded in particular spatial and temporal morphologies)
	M⇒D	Artefacts contribute to the (re)production of discourses and the maintenance of social orderings
Ostensive-Performative	O⇒P	Symbolic elements affect social practices
	P⇒O	Social practices have a symbolic impact (convey meanings)

Table 2: Types of data collected

<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Type of data collected</i>
Survey 1	Online staff survey administered before the move into the new building (November 2014)	51 responses (38 academics, 8 professional staff, 5 n.d.)
Survey 2	Online staff survey administered to 202 staff nine months after the move (September 2015)	54 responses (26.7%) (all academic staff)
Focus groups	Focus groups with academic staff (March-April 2015)	Two focus groups with 14 academic staff (8 ongoing, 6 fixed contract/casuals)
Access data	Access data recorded by the security access system (April 2015)	A total of 12,133 accesses to secure parts of the building by 457 individual academic staff members between 17/4 and 1/5/15
Ethnographic Observations	Participant observation of the buildings use between January and December 2015	Observation notes, video of inauguration event, official texts describing the building