Article

Frictional rhythms of climate work in city governance

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Abstract
Cities are crucially but problematically positioned to take on the climate crisis. Although local governance seems an appropriate scale for adaptation and mitigation measures, numerous barriers to implementing them effectively have been diagnosed. We argue that a focus on pinpointable barriers neglects the intrinsic organisational dynamics that often impede effective climate action. Drawing on interviews with climate specialists in Finnish municipalities, we engage with local governance practices and study how the interviewees experience and negotiate the complexities of climate work. Using Henri Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis, we find that municipalities treat climate issues as auxiliary concerns and subsume them as separate, precarious projects. The various and conflicting rhythms that constitute the relations of organisational practices leave climate and environmental experts in a contentious state. They must not only endure constant sidelining by the core functions of their organisations but also devise strategies to keep climate issues on the agenda. We suggest that organisational practices are constituted by diverging and often conflictual rhythms. Analysing their expressions in everyday climate work, we show how a composed functioning of municipal organisations serves to persistently defer a change of pace towards achieving ambitious climate goals.

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Introduction

The vast research output in the physical sciences supports efforts to mitigate and adapt to the adverse ramifications of climate change for societies worldwide, and the urgency of necessary policy implementations has been validated and advocated in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for decades (IPCC, 2014). Cities and municipalities have assumed a central role in this action in both policy and research as they have less complex governance structures than regional, national, or transnational bodies (e.g. Hunt & Watkiss, 2011; Rosenzweig et al., 2010). Indeed, local public authorities are key in 'climate-proofing' cities (Mees, 2017). That said, cities and municipalities face considerable challenges in planning and implementing climate adaptation and mitigation measures. Recent climate adaptation research tends to frame the problem in terms of *barriers* to planning, action and management (Amundsen et al., 2010; Eisenack et al., 2014; Moser & Ekstrom, 2010). With this framing, however, the field has arguably run into an impasse in how to translate the abundant diagnoses of barriers into effective climate governance in practice (Biesbroek et al., 2015). In this article, we attempt to reorient this outlook towards a sociological analysis. With a focus on the everyday practices of local climate governance, we study how municipal environmental specialists encounter, negotiate and experience the complexities of the climate work of adaptation and mitigation.[1]

No consensus on what constitutes a barrier has been reached. Based on their extensive review, Biesbroek and colleagues (2013) suggest a comprehensive definition: a barrier is recognised by relevant actors as 'sequentially or simultaneously operating factors and conditions that emerge from the actor, the governance system, or the system of concern' (p. 1127). Further, they are mutable and contingent on knowledge, ethics and social and political contexts and can be overcome through concerted efforts of understanding, planning and managing (e.g. Adger et al., 2009; Moser & Ekstrom, 2010). Yet barriers often appear as clear-cut objects of *lack* to be remedied, such as lacks of knowledge, capacities, resources, coordination, incentives, priorities, leadership, or political resolve (e.g. Lehmann et al., 2015; Simonet & Leseur, 2019). Such a 'problem-solving lens' runs the risk of glossing over the complexity of governance and policy practices and results in barren 'barrier thinking' (Biesbroek et al., 2014, 2015). What is missing are approaches that would go 'beyond the inductive and explorative assumptions of barriers' (Biesbroek et al., 2013, pp. 1125, 1128) and begin to understand their provenance. The task, then, remains to analyse the practical and institutional dynamics that are thought to induce barriers (Eisenack et al., 2014, p. 870) – without resorting to the analytical shortcut of pinpointing, naming and listing them that is too often taken in adaptation governance literature (Biesbroek et al., 2015). It is questions of 'why' and 'how' barriers persist that should compel future research, rather than inventories of 'if' and 'what kinds of' barriers exist (Biesbroek et al., 2013).

Here we arrive at an opening for a sociologically engaged analysis of environmental and climate governance.[2] The conception of barriers as lacks in institutional practices of

governance resonates with the influential account of the dynamics of power in policy processes by Steven Lukes (1974). More specifically, it is Lukes' (1974) description of the occlusion of potential issues in the practices of doing policy 'through the operation of social forces or institutional practices' (p. 24) that we find manifest in diagnoses of lack. If the prerequisites of effective climate governance are in fact something that is missing, how are we to 'study, let alone explain, what does not happen' (Lukes, 1974, p. 38)? This dilemma is an excellent target for a sociological approach. In our examination of how Finnish municipal climate and environmental specialists encounter, negotiate and experience their everyday work of facilitating climate goals and measures, we focus on the quotidian practices in which institutional structures, and the peculiar lacks within them, are produced, maintained and potentially changed.

What we find in the accounts of Finnish municipal environmental experts are recurrent grievances: 'undirected complaint[s] arising out of everyday experience' brought on by political and governance systems that prevent 'demands from becoming political issues or even from being made' (Lukes, 1974, pp. 24, 38). Even though it is richly described, the frustration in the face of rooting climate concerns in municipal processes and agendas never quite finds a definite articulation or origin, let alone a resolution. Instead, a sense of repetition prevails. The experts expounded on constantly having to return to square one when trying to implement climate measures and environmental concerns, all while watching the rest of the organisation carry on unperturbed. Repetition as the crux of the interviewees' struggles prompts us to study the practices of environmental and climate expertise through the notion of rhythms by appropriating Henri Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre, 2004; Lefebvre & Régulier, 2004a, 2004b). We argue that such an approach enables understanding of how the intervolving and conflictual rhythmics between practices in local governance organisations result in sidelining climate expertise, work and goals.

In the sections that follow, we first describe the context, material and how our research process drew us to consider rhythms as an analytical key. Next, we position our use of rhythmanalysis within the vast array of practice-focused approaches to time, rhythms, organisations and institutionalisation. Our analysis proceeds in three thematic sections to describe the rhythmic expressions of the frictions between organisational practices when dealing with climate and environmental concerns. We conclude with a discussion of how the rhythmanalytical outlook could help understand both the obstacles to and possibilities for change in climate work in municipalities.

Context and materials

Finnish municipalities have significant autonomy in sectors that are crucial for climate change policy, such as land use, energy production, district heating (Vadén et al., 2019), zoning and planning. They also amass considerable tax revenue. The literature on adaptation and mitigation has, however, decisively concluded that climate measures, expertise and knowledge have yet to institutionalise themselves as governance processes (Clar & Steurer, 2019; Eisenack & Stecker, 2012; Moser & Ekstrom, 2010; Oberlack, 2017) and are, in Finland, predominantly adopted solely by the environmental administration sector (e.g. Klein et al., 2016; Mattsson & Lonkila, 2012). Multiple factors have been

identified as barriers in the seams between governance scales and organisations, such as issues with fostering communication and cooperation in stakeholder networks (Klein et al., 2016), imbalances between mitigation and adaptation policies (Landauer et al., 2019), and the general absence of a shared understanding of societal change (Berg et al., 2020).

In addition, the scant attention paid to climate and environmental issues in Finnish national risk assessments (Ministry of the Interior, 2016, 2019), societal security strategies (Finnish Government, 2017) and policies on environmental security (Hakala et al., 2019) directed the framing of our area of enquiry and the selection of interviewees. Our initial working hypothesis was that there might be cross-cutting issues or gaps between municipal organisations or the national and municipal scales of climate and environmental governance (Clar, 2019; Moser & Ekstrom, 2010). Interviewing environmental and preparedness experts in different cities could allow us to understand these discrepancies.

Our data consist of 21 interviews of 52–90 minutes with people working in different sectors in five Finnish municipalities. Nine interviewees worked as climate change or environmental specialists, both in permanent positions and as project workers, and 12 as risk management and preparedness experts. The interviews were carried out over a seven-month period in 2018 and on-site at the interviewees' offices. The interviews shared recurring questions and themes: climate and environmental threats and preparations to address them, knowledge, technology and communication. All interviewees were also asked to reflect on their own expertise, tasks and responsibilities and describe an ordinary day at work. As it turned out, it was these warm-up questions that started to unravel the discordances between organisational practices.

The analysis proceeded in two stages: the findings from the first round of data-driven analysis were interpreted theoretically with rhythmanalysis. All authors brought the insights of their initial individual analyses to a joint session to discuss what the interviewees saw as enabling and obstructing their work and what they perceived as possible gaps in climate change preparedness. The environmental and climate experts in particular recounted recurrent, mundane grievances of not quite being in the right place at the right time and of precarious experiences of not finding resonance for their expertise and concerns in the organisation. What concerned the preparedness experts were not so much climate issues but operative procedures in short-term crisis situations, for which they considered themselves amply prepared. By contrast, the environmental experts encountered various impediments to engaging in climate action in municipalities. Thus, to understand 'barriers', our primary interest lies in the experiences and practices of this latter group, and we concentrate on them below.

The divergence compelled us to focus on the interviews with environmental and climate specialists and to understand what was obstructing their work and making it so markedly cumbersome (see also Virtanen et al., 2022). They recounted constantly returning to square one with each new climate project, having to explain things to colleagues in other branches over and over again, and, eventually, of coming to the organisations' proceedings too late in the game to have any effect. To all appearances, we were dealing with rhythms.

A rhythmanalytical approach to everyday climate change expertise

Notions of time and rhythms have been adapted to the study of organisations and institutionalisation, and Lefebvre's oeuvre figures in such approaches (see Kingma et al., 2018). A further focus on the everyday comes with a definitive outlook on practices that require methodological qualification. An analysis that targets practices fixates neither on subjective and micro-level experience nor on objective, structural or macro-level phenomena, but instead on the ways both become stabilised and change. As to time, practice-oriented organisation studies conceive the locus of analysis as something 'experienced through the temporal structures people enact in their recurrent practices' (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002, p. 689). Institutionalisation has a similar temporal bent towards practices in how they 'become connected in more densely entrenched and complexly connected configurations' (Blue, 2019, pp. 923–924).

Similar distinctions lie, of course, deep in sociological theory. They look for a space between early-Durkheimian 'social facts' or Parsonian functional structures as ontologically distinct from actions, on the one hand, and interactionist or ethnomethodological dispositions on the primacy of studying the formation of the situational, actual practices of informants without any preconceived notions of imposing structures, on the other. Lefebvre's work, including rhythmanalysis, mediates these two strands in its preoccupation with lived, everyday practices and the way they accumulate, produce and express societal and power structures beyond local actualities (Blue, 2019; Borch et al., 2015, pp. 1081–1083; Kingma et al., 2018, p. 13; Shove & Pantzar, 2010).

The grievances that our interviewees described in their day-to-day work fall into this space, where there is pronounced friction between subjective experiences and organisational structures and difficulties in introducing new issues and concerns into long-established practices. The 'institutional work' of such waxing and waning refuses to be reduced to intentional action or hierarchical domination alone but comprises the ways in which practices relate to and condition one another despite explicit intentions (Patterson & Beunen, 2019). The persistent 'institutional inertia' (e.g. Munck af Rosenschöld et al., 2014) of climate issues and expertise on which the interviewees expound – the dilemma of what does not happen (Lukes, 1974) – appears to have a temporal, rhythmic expression of not being in sync with the surrounding organisation. It is to help understand how rhythmics are a constitutive dimension to practices (see also Blue, 2019) that we position Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis as a methodological key.

According to Lefebvre (2004, p. 15), wherever there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm. Hence, phenomena can be studied by paying attention to the following features: repetition (of movements, gestures, action, situations, differences); interferences of linear processes and cyclical processes; and birth, growth, peak, decline and end (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 15). The foremost locus of rhythms and the analysis of their presence is the body, with its tempos and repetitions of incessant functioning. These rhythms of the self must be connected to outside rhythms, to the rhythms of the other (Lefebvre, 2004, pp. 19–20). However, an 'enigma' of practical and social life remains: how are these rhythms and their relations determined,

orientated and distributed (Lefebvre & Régulier, 2004a, p. 99)? The analysis of rhythms is not simply a first-order effort, even though they can be directly felt and perceived (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 15). When rhythms are lived, they cannot be analysed; it is necessary to get outside them, but not completely (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 27; Lefebvre & Régulier, 2004a,p. 88).

Methodologically, Lefebvre provides only rough guidelines on how to become experientially grasped by rhythms within the self and in the environment. Rhythms are not mere objects of research but an entire mode of analysis (Elden, 2004, p. xii). Contemporary rhythmanalyses in organisational sociology place the experiences and in situ observations of the rhythmanalysts themselves as the locus of observation (e.g. Lyon, 2016; Nash, 2020). However, rhythmanalysis is not tied exclusively to first-hand accounts of the experiencing analyst but can make use of interviews, ethnography, physiological measurements, fiction, and assemblages of all these (e.g. Borch et al., 2015; Oppermann et al., 2020). For making sense of the rhythmics in the lived and felt social world, Lefebvre (2004, pp. 16, 67–68) provides the following modes: *polyrhythmia*, the co-existence of two or more rhythms that relate to each other either in *eurhythmia*, a constructive interaction between or association of different rhythms in a state of health and normal everydayness, or in *arrhythmia*, a conflict or discordance of rhythms, a suffering, a pathology.

We operationalised these notions to study the everyday experiences of our interviewees and multiple relations of rhythms in their accounts. Climate governance in their work took its tempo from various aspects of the municipalities: work conditions and tasks, schedules and meetings, projects, responsibilities of care and life outside work, and the requirements of infrastructural planning and maintenance. To elaborate our question of how climate change and environmental specialists encounter, negotiate and experience the complexities of climate work, we explore how these apprehensions are rhythmically expressed.

By reading the interviewees' accounts through the relational notion of polyrhythmia and the frictions between linear and cyclical rhythmic processes, we can articulate anew the provenance of barriers to climate action in municipal governance. Rather than conceive of the obstructions in their work in terms of problems and solutions – as a kind of 'barrier thinking' of their own – the experts talked not only of frustrating repetition but also of resolve and cunning. They spoke of contrasting rhythms and the ways to adjust to them.

Analysis

Climate and environmental experts may have any or all these responsibilities in municipalities:

- following, measuring and mapping the city's emissions,
- consulting on issues of energy, the environment and sustainability,
- taking part in city planning,

- carrying out (at least partially) externally funded projects, applying for funding and writing project reports,

- composing reports on emission targets, the environmental impacts of policies, or zoning and infrastructure projects,

- attending meetings,

- answering questions from citizens, and

- education and training at venues like schools and workplaces.

We analyse the variations in our interviewees' everyday work through rhythms under three themes: mediating the cycles of nature, life and the organisation; frictions of pacing; and projects or 'working a field that doesn't exist'.

Mediating the cycles of nature, life and the organisation

> My work depends a lot on the seasons. I'm out there in the wild a great deal in the summer months when there is a lot going on in nature. But on the other hand, I write nature reports, or I visit protected sites to see what's going on there and observe at-risk species and such, like the work of an ordinary conservation biologist. And when that season is over [. . .] I analyse what I've observed in the summer. (Environmental specialist)

This interviewee expressed an almost pastoral attunement to nature's cycles, at both the global scale of seasonal changes and the hands-on scale of the local environment. However, she also described routinely being hurried due to the different organisational rhythms of the municipality. In Lefebvre's terminology, she mediated the natural polyrhythmia of her working environs and occasionally even achieved a pronounced experience of being in eurhythmia with nature.

To successfully include what she terms natural values into the city's ventures, she had had to present her case to the right people, with the right arguments, at the right point during the right meeting, and with the right kind of preparation. Barely skipping a beat, she added:

> But a lot of my time goes into answering questions from other branches of the city bureaucracy. A town planner will call to ask whether there is a question of conserving a path for a flying squirrel [a protected species in Finland] and what that would mean in practice. [. . .] And then I will get an email from forestry; someone telling me that they're planning some clearings there and wanting to know if there are some environmental values they ought to think about. Consultations like these take a lot of time. Citizens also contact me about things they're worried about. [. . .] Say a wood near their home is about to change a little bit; then they call and ask whether I could somehow find flying squirrels there [laughter]. (Environmental specialist)

In addition to rhythms and an understanding of proper times and places, her work displayed a clear perception of pace. Others' rhythms were not in sync with the requirements of climate change and extinction mitigation, the issues for which she represents

the highest level of knowledge in the organisation. Instead, while other branches in the municipality worked at their usual pace, the environmental specialist had to adjust her work according not only to frequent – and in her view often erratic – incoming requests and tasks, but also to the normal everyday work practices in the organisation that imposed requirements on her and not so much the other way around. The pastoral eurythmics were interfered with by having to address an array of requirements with urgencies of their own. Negotiating between the two made up a significant part of the specialist's job; doing climate work in the municipality entailed getting caught up in intervolving rhythms. Finding a manageable equilibrium was, however, incumbent on her rather than on the other branches of the organisation.

The relation between life outside work and the organisation's requirements marked another key disparity. A planner in sustainable development kept coming back to being 'pretty wound up' over working only four days a week as a parent of a young child. The arrangement did not allow for maintaining personal expertise, and a recently spent year on parental leave meant that plans for climate change trainings and working groups in the organisation had also dissolved. She recalled having 'passionately endeavoured to make us think about sustainability' and had struggled 'tooth and nail to keep climate issues on the agenda'.

Work practices related to sustainability turned out to be personified: while the interviewee was away, plans were scrapped and forgotten. What appeared indispensable for the organisation's operation were its familiar modes of working, which seemed to run perfectly smoothly without the pressure of extraneous input. The relation was pronouncedly arrhythmic: given a chance, the organisation cut out the offbeats that were looking for a way to include themselves in the ongoing cycles of work. In addition, the routines and responsibilities of caring for children wrote off a substantial professional progression for the interviewee.

Frictions of pacing: Enduring repetition, slowness and frustration

The interviewees shared recurring difficulties in having their voices heard and making a difference, of having to reiterate their basic message. While sometimes talking about experiencing their lives as frustrating, the interviewees perceived themselves as adroit at and knowledgeable in their own fields, which they regarded as meaningful to the city. A planner in sustainable development referred to a visceral synchrony with the city by saying, 'I basically live and breathe this city.' Yet this kind of sensitivity chafed against the wider organisation. Another interviewee described incongruities in the willingness to advance adaptation measures: 'One branch can be very interested in it, and then some other branch, one that I'd think is really central for all this, can never really seem to commit to anything, and maybe blames a lack of time or resources or both.' The legwork and astuteness that was required to instil climate concerns in other branches' operations found expression through an affliction of repetition:

> I've been working with the city planning people for years now, in many projects, and then out of nowhere someone there may say that 'Yeah, we talked about this, but we can't really help with any emission reductions, you know, because there will always be some emissions when

there's new zoning.' And I'm like 'What just happened? Did we just get back to square one? Again?' (Energy and climate specialist)

Much to their chagrin, the interviewees expounded on having to hear the same excuses time after time, of 'always finding a reason why they don't have to do anything just now'. We see this as a persistent conflict between the cycles of deeply ingrained organisational rhythms and the new beats of the intrusive requirements of climate measures and expertise. The latter appear as urgent injections of action but also fade easily into the background humdrum of everyday life in city governance. The rotation of business as usual is too saturated to do 'anything extra': 'The problem is that these are really slow processes and at the same time something should get done.' Thus, although the interviewees expressed disappointment with the slow pace of climate efforts and the reappearance of old excuses for inaction, they also insisted that they could empathise with others' viewpoints. They understood why 'it's not easy to deal with' the multiplicity of climate issues.

When measures were indeed enforced, the interviewees saw the organisation treating them as quick fixes to issues that would actually require long-term commitment and compounding follow-up actions. One city's recent decision to increase public transport and reduce private car traffic had made leading local government employees conclude that the city had now done its share. 'There's this attitude that when we do something, one single thing, then we can say that actually, we've taken climate change into account, check; we've accomplished a climate mitigation measure', as the city's environmental specialist put it with pronounced sarcasm.

An energy and climate specialist identified problematic overlaps between different paces and rhythms within municipal governance:

It's not enough that we have these roadmaps and plans; these actions must happen. And the process is usually such that you have to go through the same things over and over again, or actually it varies. Let's say that the problem with these processes on all levels is that what comes from above is never concrete enough. (Energy and climate specialist)

By 'what comes from above', the interviewee referred to policies and legislation enforced by the national government or by international bodies like the EU. The difficulties of coordinating these policy missives from different scales (cf. Clar, 2019) into local measures on the ground manifested themselves in this interviewee's work as every scale operating at a different pace. Executing the balancing act between them was left to the climate specialist.

Our reading thus far illustrates the constant emergence and coexistence of polyrhythmia in different situations. In fact, the very notion of rhythms invites making distinctions and connections between seemingly disparate things: personal careers, seasonal variations, work agendas and schedules, care responsibilities, time spans of climatic changes and city policies, and communication across sectoral divides and governance levels. In municipal organisations, the multiplicity of rhythms can be perceived as an ebb and flow between absorbing arrhythmias and the always new frictions brought about by order-inducing, institutionalising repetition (cf. Blue, 2019). As we have seen, the appearance

of and grievances brought on by arrhythmias do not necessarily mean that the relations of rhythmic patterns break off completely; rather, they signal a shift in those relations. In other words, arrhythmia need not mean a misconnection between nature conservation and administrative demands, for example. Processes of institutionalisation in an organisation rather become apparent through rhythms in how and to what extent they accommodate certain patterns and ignore others.

Here we find useful the suggestion by Oppermann and colleagues (2020, p. 283) to add the term *dysrhythmia* to the Lefebvrian repertoire to capture situations that display arrhythmic relations but do not necessarily dissolve entire assemblages of rhythms. The persistence of our interviewees in pushing their expertise into the operations of their organisations certainly evinces dysrhythmia. The interviewees do not give in but manoeuvre to get the municipality to gradually accept climate issues in some form. In so doing, climate specialists cultivate a capacity for what Lorraine Code (2006) has called 'ecological thinking'. They display a sensitivity for differences of epistemic locations, an attunement to and responsibility for one's own epistemic limits and those of others (Parviainen & Lahikainen, 2021). Still, for our interviewees, this means taking in their stride the constant 'jumping back to square one' and bearing the brunt of the dysrhythmias and arrhythmias of their work and of life outside it.

While the interviewees experienced difficulties in getting their points across in their work as a case of conflicting rhythms, they described colleagues from other branches as actively ignoring the need for change. For these people, different rhythms seemed to coexist in an assured polyrhythmia; that is, without conflict. The environmental specialists saw how municipal budgets, strategies and roadmaps were made and how things moved forward and got done in a hurry; however, fundamental changes remained wanting in precisely those practices that were the most essential for advancing climate measures and environmental concerns. From the other actors' polyrhythmic perspective, climate change appeared to be just another topic among many that need and should not disturb accustomed ways of working. In this regard, 'projectification' (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005) is a key rhythmic measure for municipal organisations to adopt new processes while keeping them at arm's length.

Projects, or 'working a field that doesn't exist'

Some of our interviewees were employed as project workers, while others held permanent posts; they thus had structurally different temporal career horizons in their organisations. All, however, were familiar with and had experienced 'projectification'. Whatever the degree of permanence of their contracts, their work was structured around projects, and those projects exhibited rhythms of their own.

The cycles of city budgets tend to be beyond the reach of climate experts. However, it is possible to obtain funding for projects from external bodies such as the EU or the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. Applying for funding begins the dramatic arc of a project; the middle is occupied by the work itself, while reporting and assessment bring a project to an end (cf. Lefebvre, 2004, p. 15). These steps are well known and institutionalised, but our analysis suggests that projects also have lives and rhythms that do not coincide with the proceedings of the rest of the organisation. Rather,

the measures of different rhythms – of projects and established core processes – may grate or even be disconnected altogether.

An energy and climate specialist spoke of a 'fortunate' concurrence of four projects in the past 10 years which meant that working on climate change had 'grown some roots in the city'. Project workers had to be active, however, in maintaining their operation in the organisation. Although the specialist felt a change of practices would have been of utmost priority for the organisation's development, she could not count on the permanence of the functions established by her project:

> I'm now working in a project about circular economy, and it's kind of a new thing, so if we are not able to keep this theme up after this current first run, there could be problems. I really feel that everybody is just so busy that if you add more [to anyone's plate] in terms of effort or tasks, it will be really difficult to make it work. (Energy and climate specialist)

The introduction of a new, auxiliary project dealing with climate goals ran up against the pacing and work cycles of the rest of the organisation. This project operated on the outskirts of the organisation, with time rarely allotted to it. Consequently, it fell upon the climate experts to create continuities by mediating different sectors and management. Putting their expertise into practice entailed meetings and discussions on 'what it means with the management groups of different units' to implement climate roadmaps and plans.

Assigning dedicated projects for climate goals and programmes appears to be a means for municipal organisations to keep such concerns in check and in their 'proper' place. In Lefebvre's (2004) words, the organisation imposes a 'measure', a 'calculated and expected obligation, a project', on intruding rhythms (p. 8). The burden of instantiating the measure is for each project to bear; it is not for the organisation to transform its whole self in the face of climate goals. Another climate specialist elaborated on this responsibility by stressing the importance of being in the right place at the right time and knowing the right connections for different purposes in the city administration. Important decisions were often prepared in meetings where different interests were gathered. A pre-selection already takes place in the choice of who 'gets a seat at the table', as she put it while recounting a frustrating experience of trying to ensure that a mitigation perspective was incorporated into the city's procurement plans. We quote her at length to illustrate how the felt presence of repetitive rhythms brings together different practices into 'an ensemble full of meaning' (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 23):

> I went to see the head of procurement and asked whether I could join the committee, since anyway people in the executive council had said that I should see the plans and bring some environmental perspective to it. But I never got to see the plans. So, I went and asked what the situation is. And he says, 'Oh yeah, there's this committee'. Can I join the committee? Complete silence. Then I asked my friend who's got a permanent post whether she could play dumb and ask about the situation, so she does. And gets one reply. And then nothing. So, the next step is I go to see our branch [Environment and Sustainability] director and tell him, 'Here's the thing and I think we need to be on this committee, but we're not getting any answers, and it's like maybe some people just don't want too many people in so things don't get too complicated and messy and too time-consuming so they can't get the plan ready for the city council.' The branch

director then has to go and play dumb and say, 'Hey, I just heard there's this committee and could we possibly get on it?' [. . .] Finally, I get on the committee, but of course at that point it's June and they've been working on the plan since January. In the end, I gave them the comments I had, but I'm not sure whether they can do anything about them because there's a lot of pressure to get the plan finalised. It's all a bit problematic. The people that get invited into meetings usually have permanent positions, which of course makes sense in terms of continuity, because projects end, and project people come and go. (Climate specialist)

Rhythms certainly express relations of power in the organisation. A precarious project worker would have offered crucial expertise for incorporating climate and environmental plans and actions into the procurement plan. Once she finally managed to wade through the cold shoulders and gain access, she found herself hopelessly behind the committee's working pace. The interviewee's grievance reads as an exemplary manifestation of a non-happening (Lukes, 1974), a subtle power of occlusion (Jenkins & Lukes, 2017): What for the climate specialist appeared a wearisome battle against silences and closed doors fails to be an issue at all to the committee running the procurement agenda. Articulating such disparate positions becomes possible precisely through the experienced rhythms and their disconnections, which still manage to live on by virtue of the persistence of the aggrieved. As with the dysrhythmias of constantly returning to square one described in the previous section, projectified climate work evinces frictions in how institutional power is surreptitiously wielded in municipal organisations. A focus on rhythms can make further sense of the relations and the means of dominance, where nothing explicitly untoward is going on but merely the normal cycles of operation working to retain their consistency. Crucially, both the cycles and the linear injections come with distinct rhythmic expressions through which to analytically detail how different organisational practices become positioned relative to each other.

Lefebvre (2004, p. 8) sees cyclical processes as predominantly natural and oblivious to social phenomena, such as the sun rising and setting, seasons changing, and tides flowing and ebbing. There is also a more metaphorical interpretation of cyclical rhythms as stable and long background intervals interspersed with and survived by short, linear rhythms, much like a neighbourhood repeating the same patterns of actions day in and day out while also enabling chance encounters and individual modulations (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 30). The specialist is indeed caught up in the friction of a linear project trying to ease into the cyclical rhythms of the unrelenting workings of the organisation. The 'daily grind' of climate work struggles to match the cyclical rhythm that is the 'social organisation manifesting itself' (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 30). Firmly institutionalised, the cyclical rhythm of the procurement branch can exclude intrusive interests from its planning tables without batting an eyelid. The 'interminable struggle' between cyclical and linear rhythms ends either in compromise or dissolution (Lefebvre & Régulier, 2004b, p. 76), and the former is vivid in the ways the interviewees have had to learn to endure and maintain dysrhythmias in negotiating their way around in their organisations.

That it 'of course makes sense' for the specialist – in the last sentence of the passage above – that people with permanent positions rather than project specialists are the ones invited to key meetings is a rhythmic expression of power relations as well. The specialist had become 'entrained' to the naturalised rhythms in the organisation: the repeating

cycles of one activity had compelled and conditioned another to adjust and find synchrony with its own (Ancona & Chong, 1996; see also Parkes & Thrift, 1979). To qualify such entrainment further, we find Warnes' (2018) 'organisational dressage' coinage useful for capturing the way power is presented as the 'complexity of managing and reconciling' contentious rhythms (p. 156). The way the organisation was supposed to function was exhibited as a form of dressage, of being 'broken in' to the dominant rhythms of the social environment (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 39).

Our interviews display this very kind of 'bending to' (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 39) the normative ways of the municipal administration and the frustration and exhaustion experienced by the specialists who tried to break into the core from the outer edges with the linear rhythms of their expertise. An environmental planner who at the time of the interview had assumed a position in the municipality only six months earlier described being acutely savvy about the prevailing dressage required in a job description that was unprecedented in the city:

> During the first months I noticed that in meetings I didn't even have to say anything; my presence was already provocative enough. All I had to do was introduce myself and say I'm here to work with environmental protection to get them all worked up, like 'Now we have to start paying attention to this natural values stuff and soon we won't be able to do anything anymore.' So, I've had to take a very cautious approach. [. . .] Because if I went straight for what I really think, I would wreck any chances I'd have to work at all in a municipal organisation like this, where so much of getting things done is based on personal chemistry and whether I'm seen as 'a good guy'. If I barge in like an activist from day one, I'll never achieve anything. [. . .] I've had to bide my time and think how to make good things happen in the long run, instead of trying to solve all of world's problems at once and amounting to nothing. (Environmental planner)

Here, adopting the appropriate dressage entailed not only adjusting and rationing the planner's tone and agenda but also carefully and strategically assessing the right timing and apportioning the introduction of climate concerns, working them in 'by stealth' (cf. Knox, 2020, p. 84). The planner presented a refined sense of how the organisation operates and how to effectively work through different practices within it, a kind of 'precarious everyday agency' (Jokinen, 2016). While obviously personally useful, this kind of dressage also suggests a potentially transformative understanding and description of the organisation itself.

As a planner in sustainability evocatively put it, she was 'working a field that doesn't exist'. Formally, there was nothing that she could fall back on in terms of a clear job description. Instead, her expertise was a bricolage of multiple tasks that were in the process of being created, as 'traditionally there has been nothing like this'. It was up to her to cultivate the necessary communication skills to find and persuade people who specialised in other fields and for whom the issues she promoted were new or unpalatable. She continued with an example from the day before the interview. She had told a colleague how two national-scale issues, producer responsibility and waste management, were in fact well taken care of in their municipality. They were 'great things' as climate measures, and the city 'could showcase them':

We [the municipality] could construe it a bit differently so that people can see that 'Hey wow, we're already doing this'. So, all things considered, we could at least understand that this is what we're doing, that we're a part of this big issue, and what more we could do. (Climate specialist)

She recognised a disregard for what the municipality was doing as a 'we' about piecemeal climate issues. Their articulation depended on the expertise of the climate specialist: making climate measures meaningful appeared as an extraneous skill that was still becoming, or being made, influential. At least for the time being, it is the climate experts who must bend to the ways and rhythms of the organisation in trying to reform it. Yet, the new role that municipalities must eventually assume in the face of impending climate threats is clearly taking shape in the resilient manoeuvres in the everyday worlds of our interviewees. They are peculiarly positioned not so much in terms of formal organisational hierarchies but in how they both become subjected to entraining practices and manage to develop guile tactics to perform a dressage that retains climate concerns on the organisation's agendas. Through such a standpoint, climate and environmental experts show discernment of the differing frictional rhythms of organisational practices – and with it present the organisation as subject to change.

Conclusions

We have applied a rhythmanalytical approach to explore how climate and environmental specialists in five Finnish municipalities encounter, negotiate and experience the complexities of climate work in adaptation and mitigation. We have seen the grievances in our interviewees' everyday work of finding an impetus for climate issues to stem from the various frictions of rhythms between organisational practices. First, what appears to be an innate attunement to the natural environment for our interviewees is interrupted by the requirements imposed by other functions in the organisations. They accommodate the rhythms of the interviewees' work only so far and, in cases of arrhythmia, it is the climate specialists who yield and find themselves and their input dispensable and overridden by more deeply institutionalised practices.

Second, climate work entails enduring the dysrhythmias of having to constantly start over when introducing climate measures to other branches in an organisation. By treating the new linear rhythms of the interviewees as always 'something extra' that would tip the boat if adopted in earnest, the municipal organisation accommodates the resulting dysrhythmias into the cyclical rhythms of its ingrained practices and mostly carries on undisturbed.

Third, the climate specialists' work is often tied to concurrent projects that lead to further dysrhythmias. The interviewees are compelled to devise strategies for effectively mediating the established workings of other branches. It falls on the climate specialists to 'work a field that doesn't exist' while figuring out and bending to the appropriate organisational dressage.

Our results show that barriers that come in multiple guises of lacks – of things that do not happen (Lukes, 1974) in municipal governance – do not fall neatly into the dichotomous categories of actors and their intentions and capacities or imposing hierarchies of

power. Instead, we see interplays of practices with frictions and grievances between them arising from rhythmic discordances. Scrutiny of different kinds of organisational rhythmics has helped to discern the dynamics between established and emergent practices, in their often arrhythmic or dysrhythmic expressions.

Here also lies the distinct benefit of our approach. Rhythmanalysis provides insight into the inconspicuous provenance of issues thus far commonly treated in climate governance and adaptation research as definitive and pinpointable barriers derived either from human or actor-centred factors or from the institutional environment (Biesbroek et al., 2013; Eisenack et al., 2014; Lehmann et al., 2015; Simonet & Leseur, 2019). By positioning our analysis instead in-between individual action and institutionalised structures, in the everyday practices and the rhythmics of their constitution, we have shown how both extremes of the social plenum are mutually implied. The rhythmic frictions we have described are not barriers to a composed and effective functioning of municipal organisations, but intrinsic to it. A rhythmanalytical sensibility unpacks what diagnoses of barriers neglect: discordances between organisational practices amount to divergent strains of institutionalisation, whether of further congealing ingrained sectoral hierarchies and boundaries or of manoeuvres to sow the seeds of emergent forms of climate expertise and action. As our analysis demonstrates, both tendencies and their connections are expressed in the felt and perceived rhythms of everyday work. Repeatedly being excluded from over-saturated agendas set elsewhere, constantly crafting new tactics to worm climate issues into other sectors, while still remaining an auxiliary function at best – all such persistent dilemmas that our analysis details carry in their constitution a rhythmic dimension that would otherwise risk remaining unarticulated. Rhythmanalysis as we have purposed it may not exhaustively explain why certain organisational configurations ultimately prove more durable than others but rather provides an interpretative resource for understanding how these configurations are shaped in practices.

Described and understood in terms of rhythms, what would initially seem like formally inclusive and effectively functioning municipal governance practices begin to show signs of differential treatment, of subtle occlusion and deferral of climate and environmental concerns and expertise. Disregarding or even upholding arrhythmic and dysrhythmic relations between climate expertise and other practices in the organisations appears to be a means for municipalities to avoid disruptions and transformation.

Such conclusions leave municipal organisations in a conflicting position in terms of how to go about adjusting institutional rhythmic patterns. The sweeping trend of new public management and projectification, for example, has realigned the operations of public administration in recent decades. Since climate action simply cannot wait for such a grand change of pace, and with global agreements yielding lacklustre results, the seeds of transformation must be found elsewhere. What a sociology of everyday practices and rhythms can do in this respect is to implicate where and how the rhythmic configurations are contentious and thus subject to change in an organisation. Inasmuch as these arrhythmias and dysrhythmias are intrinsic to the organisations' functioning, they are not merely problems, barriers, or lacks with which to do away but indicative of frictions that compel the organisation to explicit actions, be they of occlusion or incorporation. Precisely how such momentum for doing things differently will resolve remains a pertinent empirical and practical question for the effectiveness of climate work in municipal governance.

Funding

Notes

1. The contested boundaries of mitigation and adaptation blur as the pace of climate change escapes our control. Measures to mitigate climate change increasingly need to be treated as adaptation or at least executed with the foresight of not hampering adaptive capacities in the future. We recognise that not only the climate policy research community but also the policy and planning sectors have been markedly split between the study and implementation of mitigation and adaptation as separate issues (e.g. Landauer et al., 2019). In this article, we do not make a substantial differentiation between the two but instead study 'climate work' that can comprise either or both. The work of our interviewees pertains to a wide variety of plans and actions taken to reduce and cope with the detrimental consequences of climate and environmental change.
2. Social scientific and sociological research still make up a tiny fraction of our collective understanding of the implications of climate and environmental change, both theoretically and substantially (e.g. Jasanoff, 2010; Shove, 2010) and in terms of funding (Overland & Sovacool, 2020).

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