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Tracking the sociomaterial traces of affect at the crossroads of affect and practice theories

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Abstract

Purpose – Affect is relevant for organization studies mainly for its potential to reveal the intensities and forces of everyday organizational experiences that may pass unnoticed or pass in silence because they have been discarded from the orthodoxy of doing research "as usual." The paper is constructed around two questions: what does affect "do" in a situated practice, and what does the study of affect contribute to practice-based studies. This paper aims to discuss these issues.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors chose a situated practice – interviewing – focusing on the dynamic character of the intra-actions among its heterogeneous elements. What happens to us, as persons and researchers, when we put ourselves inside the practices we study? The authors tracked the sociomaterial traces left by affect in the transcript of the interviews, in the sounds of the voices, in the body of the interviewers, and in the collective memories, separating and mixing them like in a mixing console.

Findings – The reconstruction, in a non-representational text, of two episodes related to a work accident makes visible and communicable how affect circulates within a situated practice, and how it stiches all the practice elements together. The two episodes point to different aspects of the agency of affect: the first performs the resonance of boundaryless bodies, and the second performs the transformative power of affect in changing a situation.

Originality/value – The turn to affect and the turn to practice have in a common interest in the body, and together they contribute to re-opening the discussion on embodiment, embodied knowledge, and epistemic practices. Moreover, we suggest an inventive methodology for studying and writing affect in organization studies.

Keywords Embodiment, Affect, Resonance, Sociomateriality, Posthumanist practice theory

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The turn to affect and the turn to practice have a common interest in the body, and both contribute to re-opening the discussion on embodiment, embodied knowledge, and epistemic practices. We position the present paper at the crossroads between two literatures whose dialogue is just beginning. The practice approach addresses the attention to embodied knowing and sociomateriality; the affect approach transcends the view of the body as an object and instead emphasizes the temporality of embodiment. Taken together, these two issues prompt inquiry into our epistemic practices: how do we engage in a form of knowing that is situated, partial, provisional, and affective? Can we study somebody else's knowledgeable working practices and at the same time our own (working) practices when we, as embodied beings, encounter other bodies? What does affect "do" to us and to our research practices? What happens to us, as persons and researchers, when we put ourselves inside the practices we study?

In seeking persuasive answers to such questions, we first explore the encounter between practice and affect theories. We then argue in favor of the concepts of inter- and trans-corporeality for positioning bodies (of both the researchers and all the other human

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and more-than-human entities) in the "in-between-ness" of inter-acting and intra-acting bodies. While "interaction" assumes that separate individual elements (bodies) precede their interaction, the concept of "intra-action" recognizes that distinct elements (bodies) do not precede their interaction, rather emerge through their intra-action.

This argument enables us to open the third section of the paper, wondering about the intra-actions among data and researchers: what do we "do" to our "data" and what "data" do to us? In answering this question, we argue for the empirical study of affect through an experimental and innovative methodology. We illustrate it in the fourth section – following the sociomaterial traces left by affect in our own research practices – with two episodes extracted from a qualitative study on vulnerable bodies, bodies injured at work. The two episodes have been chosen for their intensity and are not intended to "make sense"; rather they are proposed because they are full of senses and bodies. Their aim is to invite the readers to imagine themselves in the situation and feel how several bodies (situated in different practices, present and absent, written and recorded) affect each other and are, in their turn, affected. In the two episodes we track the sociomaterial traces left by affect on different supports: paper, sounds, memories, bodies, and discourses. We conclude by stating that affect theory makes a valuable contribution to practice theory by enriching and complicating the issue of temporality, spatiality and affectivity in a situated practice, and especially, by changing the conception of body, embodiment and embodied epistemic practices.

The encounter between the turn to practice and the turn to affect

The field of practice-based studies has grown so fast in recent years (Schatzki *et al.*, 2001; Shove *et al.*, 2012; Nicolini, 2012; Gherardi, 2012; Hui *et al.*, 2017) that is difficult to provide an exhaustive map of it. Nevertheless, we can refer to the distinctions drawn by Feldman and Orlikowski (2011, p. 1240) among different ways of engaging in practice research: "An empirical focus on how people act in organizational contexts, a theoretical focus on understanding relations between the actions people take and the structures of organizational life, and a philosophical focus on the constitutive role of practices in producing organizational reality." Our work is positioned within the third way of engaging in practice as epistemology. Moreover, we take a "posthumanist" approach to practice (Gherardi, 2015) in which relational materialism[1] is the assumed epistemology that differentiates it from human-centered practice theories (for a specification of the difference, see Monteiro and Nicolini, 2015).

A posthumanist practice theory has its roots in the sociology of translation (Latour, 1992, 2005), in the principle of symmetry between humans and non-humans, in a relational epistemology (Law, 1994; Law and Hassard, 1999), in the reconfiguration of agency as a capacity realized through the intra-action (Barad, 2007) of humans and materiality, and in a notion of discourse and communication (Kuhn *et al.*, 2017) that neither constructs "reality" nor simply functions as its mirroring effect but rather causes discourse and materiality to co-emerge (Iedema, 2007).

One of the reasons for a turn to posthumanist practice theory is to de-center the human subject as the center seat of agency, and to move beyond problematic dualisms such as mind/body, nature/culture, social/material. The concept of sociomaterial practices implies not only that the social and the material are co-constituted, but also that nature and culture are entangled. A central aspect of entanglement is that materiality is in itself performed and knowing emerges from the interactions between material phenomena, the material arrangements for knowing about these phenomena, and epistemic practices. It has a methodological corollary that entails studying how, within a practice, bodies, matter, and discourses are expressions of the same sociomaterial world. Moreover, the term "embodiment" expresses how the nature/culture divide is blurred in the materiality of bodies encountering a material-semiotic environment.

The term "sociomateriality," in reference to the feminist onto-epistemology of Barad (2003), has been introduced into organization studies by Orlikowski and Scott (2008). Also, the term "entanglement" or "generative entanglement" is present in their work together with a relational ontology and an acknowledgment of relational materialism. These terms refer to the fact that within a practice meaning and matter, the social and the technological are inseparable and they do not have inherently determinate boundaries and properties; rather, they are constituted as an "agencement."

In fact, recently the French term "agencement" has been proposed instead of its unsatisfactory translation into English as "assemblage" (Callon, 2013; Gherardi, 2017b). Agencement has been used as a philosophical term by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) with the sense of "in connection with." Thus, we propose to look at a situated practice – interviewing – focusing on the dynamic character of the intra-actions among its heterogeneous elements – the humans participating in the encounter, nonhuman (technologies of recording, place of the encounter), other material, discursive, and communicational elements – pointing to the agencement of heterogeneous elements that achieve agency in their interconnections. In the empirical part of the paper, we shall make "visible" two different agencement in the same practice of interviewing. Our aim is to make visible and communicable how affect circulates within a practice, and how it stiches different practice elements together, since this is the point of connection between the turn to practice and the turn to affect.

Contemporaneous with the turn to practice has been the turn to affect. Affect theory is a current theoretical challenge across a range of social sciences and humanities (Blackman and Venn, 2010; Clough and Halley, 2007; Gregg and Seigworth, 2010; Massumi, 2002; Thrift, 2010). It began in the mid-1990s, when critical theorists and cultural critics urged a turn to affect (Massumi, 1995; Sedgwick and Frank, 1995) and proposed a substantive ontological and epistemological shift. But the attention to affect within organization studies was sporadic (Beyes and Steyaert, 2013; Borch, 2010; Fotaki *et al.*, 2012; Iedema and Carroll, 2015; Katila *et al.*, 2018; Kenny, 2012; Kenny *et al.*, 2011; Vachhani, 2013) until the publication of two recent special issues on the topic (Fotaki *et al.*, 2017; Karppi *et al.*, 2016). Like the literature on practice, that on affect has grown rapidly and in many different directions. Thus, it is necessary to make explicit – at the cost of oversimplifying the debate – the background against which we understand affect in relation to a posthumanist practice approach.

We follow the Spinozian–Deleuzian sense of affect as non-subjective and anti-representationalist, operating across the boundary between the organic and the non-organic. This tradition has been continued mainly by Brian Massumi (who translated Deleuze into English), who proposes keeping affect distinct from emotion: "The reason to say "affect" rather than "emotion" is that affect carries a bodily connotation. Affect, coming out of Spinoza, is defined very basically as the ability to affect and be affected. But you have to think of the affect and being affected together as a complex, as two sides of the same phenomenon that cuts across subject positions" (Massumi, 2017, p. 109).

When Massumi (2002, p. 1) asks what a body does "to earn that name, two things stand out. It moves. It feels. In fact, it does both at the same time. It moves as it feels and it feels itself moving." He relies on Spinoza's definition of the body in terms of "relations of movement and rest," the body's capacity (or power or "potential") to affect or be affected, and the variation in intensity as bodily felt. A similar conception – that stresses affect as intensity – is in Anderson (2010, p. 161): "Affects are understood as impersonal intensities that do not belong to a subject or an object, nor do they reside in the mediating space between a subject or an object." Therefore, affect offers a way to think about feelings, emotion, and other things that are taken to be interior and subjective, in terms of activity and movements within a situated practice. It is in the circulation of affect, that keeps all the practice elements together, that we can locate the dynamics of being affected and to affect. The concept "transmission of affect" (Brennan, 2004) captures a circulation process that is social in origin but biological and physical in its effects.

With few exceptions (Gherardi, 2017a, b; Reckwitz, 2012, 2017), the turn to affect has rarely been discussed in relation to the turn to practice. Reckwitz wonders about the particularity of a practice theory perspective on affects (in the plural). When he uses the plural, he underlines three principles: affects are not subjective, but social; affects are not properties, but activities; and affects are states of physical arousal, of pleasure or displeasure, directed at some definite person, object, or idea. When he distinguishes affect from emotion, he considers affect to be an ingredient of practice, as the property of the specific attunement or mood of the respective practice (e.g. falling in love). In his discussion of the place of affect in practice theory, he stresses the role of artifacts as affect generators. In particular, two artifacts – spatial atmospheres, and symbolic or imaginary artifacts – function as affect generators.

Looking for commonalities in the literature on the turn to affect and the turn to practice, the three following elements have been proposed (Gherardi, 2017a): the post-epistemological shift toward a "becoming" epistemology; the central place attributed to the body and esthetic-embodied knowledge; and sociomateriality.

In the following sections, we focus on the second and third common element. First, we discuss embodiment in relation to affect as "in-between-ness" and feeling of bodily intensity situated in a single practice agencement where we researchers, as embodied beings, encounter other human and more-than-human beings, other materialities and discourses. Later, in the methodological section, we focus on sociomateriality, discussing how to do empirical research on affect (i.e. how to follow the sociomaterial traces left by affect), and how to experiment with a text aimed at re-producing (not re-presenting) affect within our own writing.

The in-between-ness of bodies and trans-corporeality

The dual movement between being affected and affect is also a movement between the voluntary and the involuntary implicated by affect. Latour (2004, p. 205) writes: "To have a body *is to learn to be affected*, meaning 'effectuated,' moved, put into motion by other entities, humans or non-humans. If you are not engaged in this learning you become insensitive, dumb, you drop dead." Similarly, Seigworth and Gregg (2010, p. 1) write that "affect arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*: in the capacity to act and be acted upon." The concept of in-between-ness resonates both with the phenomenological concept of intercorporeality and with the posthumanist elaboration of intra-action.

To provide a vivid image of in-between-ness, we can recall Merleau-Ponty's (2002, pp. 26-27) example of "being a body" encountering honey and feeling the sensation of the "honeyed" (*mielleux*). The hand touching the "honeyed" and being touched by it has been portrayed as prototypical of sensible knowledge:

> Honey is fluid, but has some consistency and is viscous. Whenever it is touched, it 'touches' in its turn. The non-human element – in our terms – shows an ability to be active and a certain autonomy in its relationship with the human being, since it takes the initiative of spattering his or her fingers with mud, or colouring and perfuming them, or dirtying them (Strati, 2007, p. 63).

Bodies encounter other bodies and other materialities sensed via touch, hearing, smell, sight, taste, which reveal their active intercorporeal involvement in the process of producing sensible knowledge. Nevertheless, in elaborating the notion of in-between-ness it is important to note that there is a difference between Merleau-Ponty's (1968, 2012) use of the term "intercorporeality" and "trans-corporeality" in posthumanist and feminist materialist epistemologies. Nevertheless, between the two terms there is no opposition, rather a complementarity that we shall explore.

In phenomenological approaches, intercorporeality is conceived as the basis of embodied knowledge as an alternative source of social cognition focusing on the experience of one's own body and that of the other. In this tradition, nevertheless, embodiment is irreducibly

both corporeal and social, since the "body" and the "mind" are not dichotomized but entwined (Crossley, 2007; Dale, 2005; Küpers, 2013; Sandberg and Dall'Alba, 2009). Thus, the reversible in-between-ness is conceptualized as inter-relationality of pre-personal, personal, and interpersonal dimensions of sense-making.

Moreover, intercorporeality has been important in redefining intersubjectivity, since describing embodiment as intercorporeal is to emphasize that the experience of being embodied is never a private affair. As Csordas (2008) noted, describing intersubjectivity as intercorporeality, averts the temptation to conceive intersubjectivity as an abstract relation between two abstract mental entities. Since bodies are already situated in relation to one another, intersubjectivity becomes primary; it becomes the opportunity for subjectivity to emerge. For example, Simpson (2015, p. 65) draws on the work of Jean-Luc Nancy (2000) to develop an understanding of the socio-spatial constitution of subjectivity/intersubjectivity in terms of movements of presencing: "The body-subject is always in approach to itself and others, but neither is actually reached, never (self) present, always already receding: a spacing at the heart of any relation."

When we turn to Stacey Alaimo's (2012, p. 476) definition: "Trans-corporeality is a new materialist and posthumanist sense of the human as substantially and perpetually interconnected with the flow of substances and the agencies of the environments." This definition adds an element to intercorporeality, since it recognizes that "the knower's embodiment is not only about her/his individual body in a bounded sense, *but* about an unbounded bodily embeddedness in the material, earthly "environment" – which we, moreover, should not talk about as "environment" because this term keeps up the illusion of something separate from "us" (= humans)" (Lykke, 2009, p. 38). Thus, apparent is a close epistemological similarity between such conception of trans-corporeality and practice as agencement of living and non-living elements.

According to Alaimo (2010, p. 2), trans-corporeality includes "movement across bodies," "interchanges and interconnections between various bodily natures," "material interconnections of human corporeality with the more-than-human world." Her main argument centers on recognition that the often-invisible flows of substances among people, places, and economic/political systems necessitate more capacious scientific, sociological, and textual knowledge practices. This is the challenge that organization studies address with the idea of affect as a transindividual force in organizing, i.e. within a situated practice (Michels and Steyaert, 2017; Pullen and Rhodes, 2015; Thanem and Wallenberg, 2015).

After this brief positioning of the overlapping interests of affect and practice theory and clarification of the definition of "bodies in the world" within a posthumanist[2] framework that de-centers the human subject, we put forward a view of affect as intrinsically embodied, subjects and objects as embodied subjects/objects, and bodies situated in a practice as "neither brute nor passive" (Grosz, 1994, p. 18) but as "agential intra-activity in its becoming" (Barad, 2003, p. 818).

We aim to insert other embodiments – and our own embodiment as researchers – into our theorizing on affect and practice as empirical phenomena. Affect, beyond embodiment, intercorporality, intersubjectivity, and trans-corporeality, operates as a "shadow organizing" force (Gherardi *et al.*, 2017) showing the intensity of its transmission within and in-between bodies that affect and are affected. In what follows we shall pose the methodological problem of how to attend to such a pervasive and slippery concept as the transmission of affect in a situated practice and for producing a situated knowing of it.

Affect and empirical research: a methodological note
Can we think of "data" as "honeyed"? We – as five different authors – experienced the stickiness of "data," and this paper is a reflection on the intensity of affect – as our being affected by the interviews we were conducting, and our power to affect the participants we

met and who accepted to narrate their experience of vulnerability in being women, immigrant, working in industrial sectors (hotel, catering and tourism; personal care service) with low legal protections (temporary work contracts) and having suffered an accident at work.

The project SICURTEMP: Sicurezza e Benessere Lavorativo tra Vecchi e Nuovi Contratti Temporanei (Workplace safety and well-being between old and new temporary contracts) was conducted in the province of Trento, in northeastern Italy, from January 2012 to April 2014. In the Sicurtemp research project, four of the five authors engaged in the fieldwork, meeting 40 immigrant women who had suffered a work-related accident and who accepted the encounter. Affect was not a topic anticipated in the original research design, and we did not set out to collect manifestations of it through coding interviews. It was a sort of "awkward encounter" (Koning and Ooi, 2013) that announced itself gradually as the research team gathered for the research project during the two years of fieldwork and began to notice recurrent comments on a gut feeling, difficult to name, that was present during or after our interviews. All the researchers were professionally trained in interviewing on sensitive topics; therefore, that bodily feeling of uneasiness came as a "wonder" and affect imposed its presence.

Maggie MacLure (2013a, p. 228) writes about wonder as "as an untapped potential in qualitative research." She advocates "more wonder in qualitative research, and especially in our engagements with data, as a counterpart to the exercise of reason through interpretation, classification, and representation." Wonder directed our attention to our engagement with "data" and to the entanglement of data and researchers. The question of what counts as "data" after the critique of conventional humanist qualitative research (St Pierre, 2011; Somerville, 2016), the de-centering of the subject, and the dissolution of the distinction subject/object is an open-ended question calling for experimentation with posthumanist methodologies[3]. Our engagement with affective methodologies is prompted by the desire to account for the presence of affect and the challenges we face in conducting an empirical investigation of affect. This is where experimenting begins!

In fact, some caution is necessary in constructing "affect" as a research object. Lisa Blackman (2015) poses the question of what might count as "empirical" within studies of affect:

> It is not a method that proves or provides evidence for what affect is, as I do not believe that affect is an entity that can be captured as an *it* or a thing. Affect, for me at least, refers to entangled processes, which are not easily seen, and which extend across time and space, and confound many of our inherited disposition (p. 40).

Like Blackman, we are not arguing for a study of affect as a content, rather we aim at tracking the sociomaterial traces of affect and inventing a methodology for doing it. We took seriously the challenges for an empirical study of affect that have been outlined by Knudsen and Stage (2015, p. 3) as asking research questions about affect, generating "embodied data" for qualitative affect research, and identifying affective traces of processes in empirical material.

Regarding the first challenge (asking questions and developing starting points), the authors argue that: "Research questions about affect become increasingly more answerable if they are concretely linked to specific bodies (for instance, the researcher's own body) in specific (and empirically approachable) social contexts, as this makes it more likely that the researcher can actually collect/produce material that allows for empirically based argumentation" (Knudsen and Stage, 2015, p. 5). Our strategy was, therefore, to use our own bodies as living records of both the sociomaterial traces left by affect as experienced during the encounters with the research participants and recorded by our own bodies, the traces kept in our memory, the annotations in the logbook, and the traces enacted during our group discussion. Moreover, for asking questions with a strong situational specificity, we focus on a single practice – interviewing – in which all human participants, artifacts (as the recorder), the physical environment of the interview (the participant's home or a bar), the

communication process, and the events of the past and those prefigured in the future were all affectively entangled. A situated practice is a site where knowing and doing are not separated and as Haraway (1988) argues focusing on localized and "situated knowledge" provides a way to acknowledge the researchers' entanglement with the knowledge produced and the dimensions of the situation that are outside the researchers control. The empirical question that was generated was therefore: what affect does to research data and what data do to us in a situated and embodied practice.

The second challenge – as Knudsen and Stage (2015, p. 7) formulate it – concerns the production of embodied data and how to analytically approach them via concepts that may be used to identify the presence and cultural meaning of affective forces. Our strategy was to look systematically for "data that glow." The expression "data that glow" has been used by MacLure (2013b) to condense the affective dimension in-between the "data" and a team of researchers who get energized in the encounter and in the engagement with data, with the materialities where they glow, with the mutual process of engaging in something not experienced before. The glow evokes the emergence of sense, that "something abstract or intangible that exceeds propositional meaning, but also has a decidedly embodied aspect" (MacLure, 2013b, p. 661). The glow is described as singular, but not (yet) attached to specific instances, and it is reminiscent of Deleuze's (2004) material-linguistic status of sense, resonating in the body as well as in the brain.

The first glimmer of affect in our team was produced by the comments on the effects of the interviews on the bodies of the interviewers. Not only did we discuss the respective experiences at length, but we returned to the field notes that the researchers wrote once the single encounter was over. It was in this process that we noted how in talking about the most intense experiences of "difficult" interviews the researcher used her or his body's gestures to mimic the body and gestures of the interviewee or indicate some other things present in the room where the interview was taking place (like the recorder or a strong light) which were re-created in the conversation. It was in this process that we focused on the idea of affective resonance and started to think in terms of transmission of affect. To follow this first glimmer, we went further into the transcripts of more "difficult" interviews and their registration looking for words and sounds able to lead us further toward what we could feel but not yet name. The feeling that there is much more of what can be expressed in words or gestures, that much is evoked and transmitted beyond the visible, the audible, the olfactory, and what is present and re-created in the conversation is what we thought of in terms of intensity.

The third challenge – in Knudsen and Stage's (2015, p. 7) words – is how "to approach material in ways that are sensible to the affective processes leading to, traced or motivated by the empirical material." Our strategy here has been to experiment with writing and textualities, using the material where we pinpointed the sociomaterial traces of affect and elaborating a more-than-representational text around two episodes. Non-representational theory (Thrift, 2003) or better more-than-representational (Lorimer, 2005) seeks to escape the "reading techniques on which the social sciences are founded" to "inject a note of wonder back into a social science which, too often, assumes that it must explain everything" (Thrift, 2007, p. 12). A more-than-representational text focuses "on how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions" (Lorimer, 2005, p. 84).

Therefore, we do not propose an analytic text to show "where affect is" and "what it does," rather we track the sociomaterial traces of affect: in communication, through the choice of words, the pitch of the voices, the *crescendo* in the verbal interactions, the mimicking of other (absent) voices, the broken language and the rhetorical figures of speech. The sociomaterial traces of affect in communication were left in the audio recordings, where the voices (and the silences) could be heard and the rhythm of their alternation could be

followed. In the transcript of the interviews the voices disappeared but the words came at the front stage. The non-verbal and the gestures left a material trace in the memory of the interviewers and in the discussion in the research group. The energy (and its fall or absence) was a trace embodied in the way that the bodies resonate in reflecting on how to make affect accountable for somebody who was not a part of the process.

To enable the readers to follow how we reconstructed the sociomaterial traces left by affect and how we construct for the readers a non-representational text, we propose them to imagine standing in front of a mixing console. For those who are unfamiliar with this sound recording and reproduction instrument, a mixer combines sounds of many different audio signals (microphones by singers, acoustic instruments, signals from electric or electronic instruments, recorded music) and the modified signals are summed to produce a combined output, which can then be broadcast, amplified through a sound reinforcement system or recorded. In a mixer there are several channels that control the sounds coming from different positions and that can be used to buffer the signal from the external device and to control the amount of amplification (boosting) or attenuation (turning down of gain). Each channel on a mixer has a volume control that allows adjustment of the level of that channel. The readers may imagine operating different channels that convey specific tracks of affect that can be played, either in isolation or in a collective sound. The imagined combined output should result in a so-called "acoustic" reproduction of the work of affect in the research practices of interviewing and writing.

Therefore, in writing the two episodes that follows we aim at experimenting with what Lury and Wakeford (2012, p. 17) define as inventive methods, i.e. methods that "enable *the happening* of the social world – its ongoingness, relationality, contingency and sensuousness – to be investigated" (emphasis in original). Writing is, therefore, another research practice, that is an affect-laden process, dialoguing with the body of the author/reader, the attunement within bodies, and the resonance thus produced when the text finds the particular form adequate to what it describes. To write differently in organization studies responds to an emerging need to acknowledge proximity with the persons and the events in the fieldwork, and to write the stories in a way that is intended to bring them to life (Gibbs, 2015; Rivera and Tracy, 2014; Stewart, 2007; Sergi and Hallin, 2011).

First episode: resonance of boundaryless bodies

One of the authors, Elisa, went to meet a young woman of Moroccan origin (we name her Fatima), who had a serious work accident. Both Elisa and Fatima are around 30 years old.

At the core of this episode is the unfolding of an affective state taking place in a crescendo during an encounter in which the pain at having lost a part of the body is narrated and the absent part is entangled with the body of the narrator to that of the listener, to the place of their encounter and to the economic and political context surrounding them. In what follows the reader may imagine to stand in front of a mixing console and, in maneuvering different channels, may combine the story of this encounter tracking the sociomaterial traces left by affect on different material supports: channels 1 and 2 have recorded the experience through the traces left on paper, channel 3 reproduces the affect in the recorded sounds of voices, and channel 4 puts together the traces of affect left in the team's memory, partly in the recorded reflection and discussion in the team.

Channel 1: traces of affect left on the paper support of a transcript

Fatima: When I went back [to work after her absence for injury] everyone had a different face; everyone was on his [the employer's] side, even the cook. He [the employer] started a war against me. He went and told the cook to treat me badly, and from that day on everyone treated me badly. The employer came into the kitchen and talked to the cook […].

Elisa: You heard?

Fatima: No, but I understood. Before [the cook] didn't treat me badly and we worked calmly together. It all started when my employer came in because of the complaint.

Elisa: What did the cook do?

Fatima: He banged the dishes. He said: "Do this! Come here!" He yelled at me, lots of things.

Elisa: With that tone of voice?

Fatima: Yes. They treated me badly because they wanted me to quit, but I didn't leave.

Fatima: After the accident I was at home for a month and a half. They'd left this part of my finger open so they could remove the nail. But the wound was still open. Maybe it was too early […] It hurts. I really suffered. […] They found an infection and they operated on me again to remove the phalange. […] Since I got injured, many things have changed, I've become another person. […] Because of anxiety, because of the bad memories, because of the operation that I had. […] It changed everything. When every day you see a hand, a finger, that's not normal […] There are people who ask me what happened. Sometimes I tell them the truth, and sometimes I say that I was injured as a child. I can't even put nail polish […].

Fatima: Now I'm not married or engaged. Sometimes when I'm with a man I keep my hand closed. When it's cold I still feel bad, very bad. I feel something here [her finger] because a piece is missing, I feel that there's something different.

Channel 2: traces of affect left on Elisa's logbook
This narration was an opportunity for Fatima to relive what had happened to her, and thereby reactivate the trauma narrated not only in relation to the work accident but also in the climate of intimidation, aggression, and violence that accompanied it. But it was not a relief for me! I was overcome by a sense of fatigue which grew more and more intense. A mental fatigue that was emotional but also physical (tiredness, weakness). I have a certain perception that this fatigue was due to the emotional impact of the situation, to the state that Fatima transmitted to me, but also to management of a series of impulses (control of verbal and facial expressions, posture, so that my emotionality did not overflow). Looking back on what happened, I notice what, in the flow of the encounter, was a feeling that remained beyond the discourse as distress that I felt in my body. The fatigue generated by my self-control was not due to enactment of professional detachment but, conversely, to management of the affective state being generated in the space of the encounter. In fact, I had to exercise control over myself in order not to obstruct what I was noticing – not thinking, not observing, but noticing – flowing in-between us. I have in my eyes how she clenches her hand into a fist and looks at it.

Channel 3: the traces of affect left on the audio support
When Fatima says: "He [the cook] banged the dishes." She reproduces in an onomatopoeic form the sound of the beaten dishes, evoking a kitchen environment that makes the sound threatening. And when she reports how the cook said "Do this! Come here!" She mimics the cook's harsh scolding voice, changing her voice in a masculine and unpleasant voice. An absent kitchen and an absent cook are the sociomaterial traces of affect evoked and reproduced in sounds.

The pitches of Elisa and Fatima voices mark the rhythm of the conversation, but the silences that follow each other, along with the voices that become softer, anchor the track produced by the affection more effectively:

Maybe it was too early […] short silence] It hurts. I really suffered. […] They found an infection and they operated on me again to remove the phalange. […] Since I got injured, many things have

changed, I've become another person. […] Because of anxiety, because of the bad memories, because of the operation that I had. […] It changed everything. When every day you see a hand, a finger, that's not normal […] There are people who ask me what happened. Sometimes I tell them the truth, and sometimes I say that I was injured as a child. I can't even put nail polish […] […] [a long silence].

Channel 4: the traces of affect left in the memory and in the team reflection
On the table in front of us we had the sheets of paper where the words of Fatima had become signs, the tape that gave us the tone and the pitch of her voice and that of Elisa, as well as other voices that were imitated, the notebook where Elisa had noted her warm thoughts immediately after the interview and this was the setting of our track and target reflection activity. As we were going back and forth from one trace to the other, we could sense that there were unsayable elements lying beyond the verbalization of the experience. We began to discuss how to translate in "sayble elements" what was not said, and how to write about them. Were we allowed to put words in empty spaces? But the emptiness was full of the noise of silence. The sense, the atmosphere, and the trauma of a suddenly intimidating work environment was also made present through the imitation of the voices of absent others, and the narration of the story with an anguished tone of voice. There is also the dimension of allusion: that is, what Fatima understood without actually hearing what was said. It was her tone of voice that was central in conveying the affective and affecting violence through imitation of vocal aggression, giving evocative power to what was narrated.

The category of "affective resonance" became the linguistic artifact that was materialized in the moment when we put together the different traces of affect and the "data that glow" were the way we were noticing how the body of Elisa was reproducing for us the gestures of the body of Fatima, weeks after the experience took place. The feeling of resonating with Fatima's body was rehearsed by Elisa beyond her awareness, when in narrating to the research team what was going on during the encounter Elisa mimicked Fatima's gestures in hiding her hand and showing how her co-workers scolded her. Since we recorded the team discussions as well about how to trace affect in our own practice, we have Elisa's narration about her feelings at that moment of the interview:

The moment when Fatima told me about the pain and the shame that she felt because of the amputation of her finger was a complex one. I sensed her difficulties and her need to talk about them, and that my ability to respond actively was crucial. Something was happening, and I was somehow part of it. It was a balance, a mixture of closeness and distance, poised on the ability to feel what the other person felt – also physically – but at the same time it was necessary to leave space, not to invade the irreducibility of that experience. The exchange also became very physical: Fatima often sought my gaze. It was if her eyes wanted to express something that words could not fully convey. Italian is not Fatima's mother tongue, and I wondered what this might mean and imply. But this question did not receive an answer, except in my heightened attention to everything that was non-verbal. Also, her gestures were important: she indicated her hand and looked at it, also directing my attention to it. I tried to respond actively: I responded to her glances and leaned towards her (we were talking with our chairs side by side; we were already close, but we drew even closer) to create a kind of nucleus; I let her shift my eyes to where I understood that she wanted to direct them.

It was Fatima's apparently flippant comment about a minor detail like nail polish that summarized her story. The trauma, which could never be said completely, was condensed through reference to a small, apparently incongruous, detail. Nail polish became a synecdoche – a part representing the whole of her story – and, in fact, this reference triggered a series of further connections.

The nail polish that Fatima could not apply is the affective-discursive trace of more deeply embodied anxieties: the boundary between the sayable and unsayable, the expression which condensed and separated what could be and what was no longer, the before and the after.

Thus, expressed were other anxieties concerning sexuality, the intimacy of an encounter with another body, mourning the loss of a part of the body, and the threat to subjectivity thus redefined. Moreover, the affective ineffability of the missing finger was projection of the body into the social dimension of seduction (dating a man, polishing one's nails). Activated through a process of affective resonance was the expression of anxieties that could be communicated because the listener and the narrator shared a sense of "womanhood." Fatima was recounting her story to another young woman, someone whom she perceived as similar to her, close to her, and able to imagine what she felt by projecting it onto herself. At the same time Fatima's narrative was performing the entanglement of work accident, class, ethnicity, age, and gender of a labor market using migrants and affecting precarious lives.

The affective resonance in-between physically present bodies and evoked ones was persistent, ramified, and continuous, and traversed different temporal and projective planes. For Fatima, temporality was the space of projection of the self: what was before, what was after the injury, and what could or could not be a future love encounter were constantly reinterpreted in light of the trauma, in an attempt to re-assemble everything that had been disintegrated both by the experience of migration and the work accident. Moreover, ramification of the affective state within different time-frames is also crucial in the situated practice of interviewing. In fact, during the interview whilst Elisa had only liminal awareness of what was happening (because the process was flowing while she was immersed in it), thereafter the experience returned to her memory and later on it was collectively re-elaborated in its intensity and physicality.

Second episode: the transformative power of affect
In the following episode, we track the traces of affect as affective resonance that not concern only the pre-verbal transmission of affect among bodies, but also the entire context of discursive and non-discursive intra-actions. The focus, in the second episode, is placed more explicitly on the transformative power of affect.

We provide a brief description of the circumstances in which Annalisa met Vika. One of the sectors being explored in our research was personal care services and, to contact workers, we benefited from the assistance of various local associations. One afternoon Annalisa received a telephone call from the president of the Moldovan women's association, who told her that a woman absolutely wanted to be interviewed (we name her Vika), because, despite having suffered an accident at work, she believed that her story was "positive." She wanted to recount her story because she thought it would be different from those of the other family assistants. When Annalisa rang her a few hours later, she reiterated why she wanted to be interviewed: apart from the episode of her injury, she said, hers was a positive experience, "unlike those of the majority of my co-nationals." An appointment was fixed for a few days later.

The reader may imagine to operate the channels in his/her mixing console to combine the sociomaterial traces left by affect on different supports and construe the intensity of the story.

Channel 1: the traces of affect in Annalisa's logbook
I arrived at Vika's home (she had chosen the venue for the interview), and she immediately told me how proud she was to have a rented flat and not live in the home of the care recipient. It was in fact the first time that I had interviewed a domestic worker who lived on her own. I noticed that she was carefully made up and elegantly dressed. The flat was in perfect order, and she showed me its two rooms. Then we sat down and started to talk about the research. I asked if I could record the conversation, but we were interrupted by a telephone call. I told her to go ahead and answer and that I would wait. But she said that it was not a problem: the person would call again later. I saw that she was embarrassed. In a low voice she told me that it was a man that she was dating. But then she stopped. She grew more embarrassed and said,

"But I'm not loose, like they often say women from Eastern Europe are," and that it was the first time in many years that she had gone out with a man in Italy. Forgetting my role as interviewer, I sarcastically retorted: "Well, as it happens, I've never heard it said that men are loose. It's always and only said about women." There was a moment of silence. I realized that she had not expected my comment. I thought that I had probably been rude or perhaps intrusive and non "professional." But a few seconds later that vacillating interrogative space was filled with laughter, as pleasant as it was unexpected. The atmosphere had changed radically. After a while, almost as if she was trying to bring the situation back to the purpose of our meeting she told me to turn on the recorder.

Channel 2: the traces of affect in memory and team reflection
Something in the conversation slipped out of the control of both parties: on the one hand, an unexpected telephone call forced Vika to reveal something about her personal life; on the other, an ironic comment made Annalisa fear that she had somehow gone too far. We can learn a lot from laughter in doing research and in fact, on both sides, the stiffness of the performance relaxed and space was created for the unexpected. Vika discarded the role of the successful personal carer; Annalisa stopped playing the role of the detached, "neutral" professional interviewer. It was the onset of a shared complicity, a reciprocity between two women critical of gender stereotypes, which was the turning point in the situation and marked the "real" beginning of the interview. A sense of complicity developed through affective resonance, and here we trace the transformative power of affect that loosened identitarian boundaries and opened unexpected spaces for sharing a story that otherwise would not have come to light. We quote from Annalisa's discussion in the research team:

> The arrival of the telephone call was crucial for everything that happened subsequently. Initially, I had the sensation that I was dealing with someone reluctant to describe her work and her accident. I felt ill at ease, a bit worried, and tense. It seemed to me that the situation was going awry, but I had no idea of how to unblock it. After the telephone call, I blurted out my remark about loose women. My remark was due to my dislike of clichés and stereotypes which I myself, in my own way, have experienced. I realized that I had surprised the interviewee with a spontaneous reaction. I was worried, thinking that I had caused a further problem. Instead, unexpectedly, my remark created a new situation. From then on, the atmosphere was relaxed, we continued to make small talk, and Vika got up to fetch me something to drink from the fridge. An unexpected complicity had been established, an understanding based on our experience as women and that, despite our differences, had created a sort of bridge between us. We started to chat about this and that in a completely different way, freer from formalities and roles, with an ease that was not there before.

We began to discuss how, in the emergence of an affective state, also nonhuman elements are entangled in a sociomaterial web. The recorder, for example, that usually acts as an awkward object that participants seek somehow to ignore, in this case was even center stage. It was Vika herself, in fact, who asked for it to be switched on. Furthermore, the fact that it was turned on did not mark the extinguishing of resonance among embodied beings; rather, its progress from behind the scenes to the forefront.

Channel 3: the traces of affect left on the audio support

> Annalisa: Yes, as I said, we're trying to understand the situations of risk in domestic work. I'd ask you to start telling me about your work history.
>
> Vika: I often say that perhaps I was a bit luckier than the others, then I often ask myself the question and I say, "But really?", because, I mean [short silence […] it's not that I'm just someone lucky who feels fine. No, I think I was really lucky, perhaps, with much lower pay than the others, but with a serenity, a tranquility, that I tried to put in the foreground. It went well until [here a long sigh of hesitation is heard].

Channel 4: the traces of affect left on the support of transcript
What had been announced as the story of an immigrant worker who regarded herself as
"lucky" was transformed after the above-described turning point into a conversation about
a vulnerable body, an abused body. We chose to skip the details of the transcript to respect
the intimacy of the situation created between Vika and Annalisa.

Vika was narrating that for a long time she was taking care of a woman with a terminal
disease, and, after the woman's death, she continued to work for the same family, which
subjected her to numerous abuses and acts of violence. In fact, the husband of the woman
that she was taking care for, assaulted her, causing what she recognized as a work-related
injury. But this was only one of the many episodes of aggression that she experienced.

In a moment of particular emphasis in the story about that experience, Vika commented:
"These things happen. They hit on women. Then it's easy to say that women are loose and
men get carried away. No, it's men who hit on women."

Channel 5: the traces of affect in memory and team reflection
We were discussing the transformative power of affect in eliciting a story that otherwise would
not have been told and noticing how the two young women were no longer rigidly divided by
roles and scripts – the fortunate personal carer and the professional interviewer – rather they
resonated as embodied beings in the face of a discourse representing the absent men as
persons "who hit on women."

While the research team was listening to the recorded voice of Vika and noticing how she was
careful in choosing her words, implying more than telling, Annalisa interrupted with her story:

> While Vika told me about her experience, I felt that the moment of irony that had changed the
> atmosphere was continuing to impact on the situation. Vika was telling me about what had
> happened to her because the distance between us had been removed, because there was something
> that united us without it being fully expressed. Because her anger and bitterness were, albeit
> different, mine as well, and this made me a trustworthy interlocutor because I could not turn her
> into a victim. We were different but also the same, or at least similar.

The shared feeling of complicity, the discursive intersubjectivity as women, emerged in a
relational dynamic and in an unexpected experience in which the affective resonance left a
sociomaterial trace in the way that affect transformed the "sayable story." The same story
would not be told to a man, and probably neither to Annalisa if the situation were not one of
intense engagement such that supposedly fixed boundaries of different subjectivities did
not become more permeable. At the same time, the boundaries of what was shared in this
"shared subjectivity" marked a difference that became significant. In the process of entering
into an affective resonance with another young woman, Vika allowed herself to voice the
experience of a young immigrant woman subject to continuous abuses because of her
vulnerability in the labor market. It was a narrative at the same time personal and social
because she was representing, in words, a condition of immigrant women easily portrayed
as "loose women" and of (Italian) men who always "hit on women." At the same time, her
willingness to inscribe herself in a sociomaterial narrative of relative lucky communicated
the social situation of other "less lucky women" for whom there is no separation between
home and work, care (for others) and abuse (for themselves).

Discussion
The two episodes constitute an experimentation with a more-than-representational
approach to writing a text that situates the empirical study of affect in a situated practice.
The two episodes point to different aspects of the agency of affect: the first performs the
resonance of boundaryless bodies, and the second performs the transformative power of affect
in changing a situation.

Strictly speaking a more-than-representational text is to be felt and not discussed. Affective resonance can be felt, not proven. As Massumi (1987, p. xv) puts it in his preface to the translation of Deleuze and Guattari's, *A Thousand Plateaus:* "The question is not: is it true? But: does it work?"

Therefore, the section "discussion" does not intend to prove the intensity of affect in the two episodes, but rather to point to the sociomaterial traces left by affect and to pave the way to answer the question: what does affect "do" in a situated research practice?

We start by noting that a first sociomaterial trace of affect is enacted as affective resonance emerging within bodies that meet. The "effects" of affect are situated in the senses, as sensible knowing taking place in the bodily encounter with the world through the senses, in the intercorporeality and intersubjectivity of inter-acting and intra-acting bodies, in the kinesthesia of movements, rhythms and vibration and by entrainment. In the practice of interviewing one of the main effects of considering affect in the agencement of bodies, materialities, and discourses consists in reframing embodiment and the body as not finishing with the skin. In considering the body as always more than one, "more assemblage than form, more associated milieu than being" (Manning, 2010, p. 118) we can see how affective resonance "works" in relation to human and more-than-human bodies. Thus, a trace of affect in a situated practice is to be found in embodiment and it operates as a condition for disentangling embodied experiences from a singular, bounded, and distinctly human body, and relocates the experiences in trans-corporeality.

A second sociomaterial trace is enacted in communication. Narrating a trauma creates an affective state between the narrator and the listener in which the bodies resonate as in a liminal space aptly described by Ettinger (2006) as "matrixial trans-subjectivity," with reference to the pregnant body and to the permeable membrane between the body of the mother and that of the baby. The concept of matrixial space as a space of non-separation and non-distinction has been discussed by Kenny and Fotaki (2015) in relation to corporeal ethics, and Walkerdine (2010, p. 110) relates it to trauma and its affective transmission, defining it as an encounter in which separation-in-jointness and distance-in-proximity create matrixial effects which hold, transmit, and metamorphose trauma. A sociomaterial trace of affect is therefore anchored in the communication of trauma. Language, in the form of words, silences, sounds, gestures, and their physical supports (paper, tape, objects) is another "stuff" that engages and transfers intensity and energy.

A third sociomaterial trace is enacted in memories and other sociomaterial "stuff" in which affect is made visible, since memories are the materialization of the way in which past relations keep materializing themselves to us. As Barad (2007, p. ix) aptly expresses: "Memory does not reside in the folds of individual brains; rather, memory is the enfoldings of space-time-matter written into the universe, or better, the enfolded articulations of the universe in its mattering. [...] And remembering is not a replay of a string of moments, but an enlivening and reconfiguring of past and future that is larger than any individual."

We have tracked the traces of affect in its sociomaterial signs left on embodiment, communication, memories; moreover, the image of a matrixial space is an opportunity to re-think the temporal boundaries of what counts as "a" practice and to re-examine it as an emerging and affective process, so that the injury event is positioned not only in the space in-between opening and closing the recorder for the activity of recording a personal story (a reductionist understanding of "interview"), but it is viewed in light of the trans-corporeality of embodiment and the affective resonance that propagated and reverberated also among the research team after the encounter and in the activity of looking for the sociomaterial traces of affect.

Hence looking for the traces of affect was not only a new activity in the practice of interviewing, it was also a collective experience which was problematized and re-worked through discussion within the group, since it continued to rebound between levels both

temporal (the before and the after of the traumatic event, the before, during, and after the interview) and spatial (at the place of the interview, the place where a logbook was noted down, and at the place of our collective elaboration). In fact, affective resonance happens in a practice situated in time and space as a unique encounter within delimited spatiotemporalities, but it is not limited by them.

Affective resonance is re-enacted in memories, in other places and other times and it may be transmitted to other people, encounters, places, and times as in writing a non-representational text. The transmitted affect is social in the sense that affects do not only arise within a particular person but also come from without, as shown by several studies focused mainly on affect produced by music in a dancehall (Henriques, 2010) or by street performance (Michels and Steyaert, 2017; Simpson, 2011; Aslan, 2017) or by rhythms in social practices (Blue, 2017; Pantzar and Shove, 2010). It comes via an interaction and intra-action with other people, and materialities as in identity work that Aslan (2017) describes in the case of a live statue that enacts her identity in the street process within situated interactions and material arrangements that have both active and passive aspects, and which emerge from the process of affecting and being affected. In the case of start-up entrepreneurs, Katila *et al.* (2018 forthcoming) highlight the sociomaterial and affective nature of identity construction that reinforce the link between entrepreneurship and masculinity. Their study presents the characteristics of sociomaterial agency that strengthen identification with the institution of start-up entrepreneurship: multisensory, temporal multidimensionality, and the dynamics of equality and exceptionality building.

The transmission of affect, beyond local enactment, questions the boundaries of a practice and its embeddedness in other temporalities and other spatialities. When and where does the practice of interviewing begin and end; what places and actors are present in the interview as agencement of elements? How does this situated practice connect to other research practices within a texture of practices, and how does it sustain the temporal order of a society? In methodological terms, the situated practice of interviewing has a defined position in time and space, a clear beginning and an end, but the interview was an artifact present in multiple practices: as a recorded and later written artifact within the situated practice of manipulating research "data," while the very same artifact was a memory object for the interviewer within another practice and it was a knowledge object for the research team. Moreover, it is present here, in this text, as a sociomaterial object enacted in the space and time in-between the reader and its authors. It is a sociomaterial object that inscribes in a text the temporalities, spatialities, and transformation of the object of the interviewing practice.

The above questions have an empirical relevance since we are pointing to affect as a theoretical concept that "does" something in how we produce knowledge. Resonance is a physical metaphor that refers to a phenomenon that occurs when a given system is driven by another vibrating system or external force to oscillate with a given amplitude and frequency. Resonance occurs with all types of vibration – mechanical, acoustic, molecular – and waves. The image of waves conveys the image of affect transmission within a texture of practices. Thus, we may say that another thing that affect "does" is dismantle boundaries, those of subject/object, nature/culture, time/space, and other divisions wrought by dichotomist thought.

Conclusion

Affect is relevant for organization studies mainly for its potential to reveal the intensities and forces of everyday organizational experiences that may pass unnoticed or pass in silence because they have been discarded from the orthodoxy of doing research "as usual." Through an empirical study of affect, focused on the sociomaterial traces left by affect, and an inventive methodology, we stress the importance of noticing affect as sociomaterially situated in a practice rather than as an individual and depoliticized state of being.

The paper is constructed around two questions: what does affect "do" in a situated practice, and what does the study of affect contribute to practice-based studies. We answered the first question in discussing two situated episodes within "a" practice, and in concluding we argue that the turn to affect contributes to a posthumanist practice theory by enlarging the current conceptions of: what counts as "a body", embodiment as relationality, and embodiment in relation to researchers' epistemic practices.

Embodiment and embodied knowledge have been among the main reasons for the turn to practice around the year 2000 (Miettinen *et al.*, 2009). Although the body, the gendered body, and embodied knowing are central in practice-based theorizing (Yakhlef, 2010), the turn to affect problematizes "what counts as a body," noting that the word "body" refers not only to human, individual bodies but also to any other living and non-living ones. The relations between body and affect have been depicted (Seyfert, 2012) in the following three ways: affect is located within an individual body; affects are collective and atmospheric forces operating externally to the body; and affects are the effects of interactions among individual bodies. Our contribution illustrates a fourth position in which bodies are "more than one" and affect is positioned as the effect of intra-actions within all the different bodies (human and more than human) that are connected within a practice and which, by being connected, acquire agency. Bodies are therefore the effects of intra-connecting activities, rather than being pre-existent to their relationships, and the way they are intra-connected produces at times an individual body, at times a collective or an inter-acting body. Embodiment is thus multiple, embodiment is trans-corporeal, and embodied knowledge has a multi-sited positioning, at the same time in individual bodies and their senses, but also in materialities and discourses. Knowledge situated in a practice is embedded and embodied but the researchers' bodies are not external producers of a knowledge "from no-where" (Haraway, 1988).

In cultural studies, affect has been discussed mainly through theoretical and abstract concepts that hide its sociomateriality, on the contrary the empirical study of affect in situated practices illustrates those forms of feelings that are pre-reflexively experienced through the body. Thus, organizational and working practices may be considered as the locus of knowledge production, circulation, and transformation and tacit knowing, sensible knowledge, and the knowing body may be considered as the main elements for approaching practices as the affective containers of knowing subjects/known objects. From this perspective, the researchers' embodied knowledge and embodied knowing illustrate how they inhabit a particular practice in space and time through their affective and sensory experience of it. The embodied nature of affective experience, the intercorporeal and transcorporeal transmission of affect in organizations re-inscribe embodiment in the accounts of organizational life.

This final consideration leads us to consider affect in embodied epistemic practices. We purposely chose to discuss a situated working practice – i.e. interviewing in qualitative studies – that engages ourselves as embodied researchers to be sure that we put ourselves in the picture, and became obligated to discuss our own "being there." Embodiment in the epistemic practices of doing fieldwork implies that we are there with our bodies and our bodies may know things that we are not aware of. In the field, we enter into an affective resonance with all the materialities that we meet, and our bodies are part of the epistemic practices that we enact with and through affective transmission.

This consideration of embodied epistemic practices leads to a reflection on power and ethics made possible by considering affect as the simultaneous capacity to affect and be affected. The two episodes that we discussed illustrate both the material power of affect in maintaining gendered, sexualized, racialized, and classed relations of power and its transformative power in shaping a situated relationality. In constructing a non-representational text in which a work accident reveals organizational life for young precarious, low-wage immigrant women in the Italian labor market, we illustrate what affect "does" in inscribing a corporeal ethics of

relationality in research practices. Through the researcher capacity of affective resonance with the situations, unexpected relations emerged that indicate the potential for affect to transform the lived situation, but at the same time do not hide how affect maintains and strengthens a problematic social order.

The turn to affect suggests new approaches to the ways in which we conduct practice-based studies of working and organizing, in which we can communicate experiences of affective and ethical existence, rather than trapping such experiences within a codified discourse that masks a range of issues relating to ethics in research practices, including the materiality of the bodies and relations of care in society.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. We keep the term "relational materialism" to name more broadly the onto-epistemologies that accommodate a multiplicity of approaches presently assembled as feminist new materialism, actor network theory, affect theories, economic performativity, animal studies, and new empiricism (Fox and Alldred, 2016; Kuhn *et al.*, 2017). To give an initial idea of the theme that runs in parallel through many elaborations, we point to a common project that is the effort to displace the human subject as the center seat of agency, the one in control of the world, the one from whom intentional actions emanate.

2. De-centering the subject does not mean removing it, but placing subjects, objects and instruments in an agential and material-discursive environment.

3. Several special issues on post-qualitative methodologies and posthumanist approaches have appeared in recent years, such as Davies (2017), Koro-Ljungberg *et al.* (2013), Koro-Ljungberg *et al.* (2012), Lather and St Pierre (2013), St Pierre and Jackson (2014), St Pierre *et al.* (2016).

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