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Affect, Stimmung and Governing Young Drug Users: An Affirmative Critique of a Danish Drug User Treatment Programme

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Affect, Stimmung and Governing Young Drug Users: An Affirmative Critique of a Danish Drug User Treatment Programme

Abstract

This article has two key contributions. The first is empirical, and looks at how a Danish drug treatment agency, inspired by critical and post-modern approaches to psychology, has developed methods of overcoming problems of participation and stigmatization, and of empowering young people with a known history of illegal substance use. I will analyze how, in collaboration with social workers, young users can utilize media technologies to produce stories about new ways of being, feeling and acting, and how these are used to change the social dynamics around such young people and open for the becoming of new relational subjectivities.

Using Governmentality studies as a foundation, the second contribution is analytical and theoretical, and proposes Heidegger's concept of 'Stimmung', [attunement, mood, atmosphere] as a concept that makes it possible to analyze how discursive and affective strategies intra-act and how we can adequately theorize the role of affect in subjectification processes.

Keywords: Governmentality, affect, attunement, Heidegger, social work, drug treatment

Introduction

Ways in which to approach, understand and treat drug users are often sensitive and controversial (Alexander, 2000; Keane, 2002). Since drugs became widely available in the global north as part of the “counter-culture”, there has been a range of co-existing different treatment-practices, and scientific and moral discourse on drugs, drug users and drug problems. No specific kind of treatment stands out as best practice, and across practices it is commonly recognized that there have been difficulties with creating enduring change and getting users to adhere to treatment plans (McLellan, McKay, Forman, Cacciola, & Kemp, 2005). However, when professionals and researchers try to understand these difficulties, clear tensions appear between different discourses and epistemologies. The current situation – in Denmark at least – mirrors these debates, positions and epistemologies across psychology, treatment and healthcare practices.

There are a range of practices that can be said to draw on predominantly essentialist epistemologies on addiction and subjectivity. This applies to many healthcare institutions, and to some extent to self-help groups like AA and NA, and private treatment facilities that are often inspired by similar 12-step approaches. In these practices, it is common that difficulties with drugs and treatment are attributed to individual biological or psychological factors that include addiction, lack of motivation, personality structure and psychiatric diagnoses etc.

Such approaches have been criticized by professionals and scholars, particularly by those who are informed by constructivist and post-structuralist epistemologies. One frequent criticism is that through their epistemologies and technologies these practices tend to individualize (social) problems, for instance by articulating (drug)problems as individual *psychological* problems (Keane, 2002; Rose, 1998). As a consequence, drug users become stigmatized and marginalized, because the reasons for their predicament are being individualized, and the social and political context become invisible (Foucault, 1977).

Such critiques have contributed to the ongoing development of practices that are informed by cultural, processual or constructivist epistemologies, particularly those disseminated via post-modern therapeutic traditions like systemic-therapy (H. Anderson & Goolishian, 2004), narrative-therapy (White, 2007), and solution focused-therapy (De Shazer, 2005). Our research group have long-standing research collaborations with Danish drug agencies that are inspired by these latter traditions. Our research group has published on how these cutting-edge social work practices can develop non-stigmatizing and empowering ways of working with young people, their relatives and communities. (Bank, 2016; Bank & Nissen, 2018; Nissen, 2018; Nissen & Barington, 2017; Nissen & Sørensen, 2017).

As these practices are heavily influenced by post-structuralist thinking and post-modern therapeutic traditions, the dominant epistemology or ‘style of thought’ is concerned with how development, subjectivity, normality and deviance are produced through language and discourse. Although the development of non-essentialist and productive language is important in getting users to adhere to treatment and to enabling durable change, there is evidence that merely changing the discourse is

not enough. In order to contribute to our understanding, I will analyze and theorize about how we might understand the role of affective processes in such treatment practices. There are several reasons for this focus. Through the research process, it became clear that affective phenomena that can be described as ‘atmosphere’, ‘mood’ or ‘energy’ play a central role in creating motivation, development and change. However, this is infrequently articulated by professionals, or in the literature on social work, drug treatment and post-modern therapies.

Empirically, this paper focuses on how young users in collaboration with social workers try to overcome stigmatization and open for new ways of being and relating. I will use discursive and affective analytical strategies, to show how a specific event, where young drug users display ‘preferred stories’ about their identities to their relatives, can facilitate the *becoming* of new relational subjectivities. The material stems from the research project ‘User-driven standards in social work’ where our research team undertook ethnographic fieldwork in two Danish drug agencies working with young people aged 15 to 25.

The theoretical contribution is to propose Heidegger’s (1962, 1995) concept of *Stimmung* [attunement/mood/atmosphere] as a concept for analyzing how affective and discursive processes are intertwined and contribute to subjectification. The article is thus a contribution to longstanding discussions in post-structuralism and affect studies about the relation between affect and change and about the relation between affect and discourse (Massumi, 2002; Wetherell, 2012). As I will discuss more in detail throughout the article, there is a range of interesting concepts for analyzing and theorizing affect. As I will argue, *Stimmung* has significant advantages when the intention is to conduct an analysis that is both phenomenologically adequate and compatible with the analytical strategies developed in Governmentality studies.

Initially, I will review the analytical strategies in Governmentality studies and show how they tend to analyze subjectification through ‘processes of ordering’. I will then consider how affect studies can supplement such strategies by adding affect, movement, and *becoming* to the picture. In the first analytical section, I will show how social workers, use ideas from the linguistic turn to develop ‘counter-language’ and practices that empower users. I will then engage with Heidegger’s concept of *Stimmung* and propose this as a concept to analyze the role of affect and affective technologies in such practices. I will then use *Stimmung* to add an affective layer to the analysis and show how users, relatives, and professionals are changed through intertwined discursive and affective processes. Finally, I will reflect on the role of affect in treatment practices and the implications of using *Stimmung* as an analytical concept in Governmentality studies

Methodology: Affirmative and affective analytical strategies.

A major strand of Governmentality studies is interested in how subjects and subjectivity are governed in ‘psy-practices’ (Dean, 2010; Donzelot, 1979; Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1998) such as education (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Staunæs, 2011), leadership (Raffnsøe & Staunæs, 2014), workplaces, psychological practices (Rose, 1990), social work (Donzelot, 1979; Villadsen, 2008), alcohol (Valverde, 1998) and addiction (Keane, 2002).

In order to analyze the relations among discourse, knowledge, power and subjectification a range of analytical strategies and concepts have been developed, such as positioning, subject positions (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harre, 2005), institutional categories (Varenne & McDermott, 1998), social categories (Davies & Hunt, 1994), racialized ethnicity (Staunæs, 2004), gender (Butler, 2006), and psychiatric categories (Hacking, 1995). These discursively oriented concepts have been supplemented by an attention to more ‘material’ and ‘technical’ aspects such as architecture (Foucault, 1977), artifacts (T. Jensen, 2011; Juelskjær, Staunæs, & Ratner, 2013) dialogue (Villadsen, 2008), writing (Foucault, 2000), and bodily exercises (Foucault, 1980; Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Through these concepts and analytical strategies, the field of Governmentality studies has excelled in teasing apart the intimate links between how subjectivity is governed through discourses, materialities, techniques and technologies and how this produces reflexivity, identity, emotions and normative relations to oneself and others (Bjerg & Staunæs, 2011; Davies & Hunt, 1994; Foucault, 1977, 1982, 1988; Laws & Davies, 2000; Rose, 1998; Staunæs, 2005). In broader terms the pastoral, disciplinary and (neo)liberal strategies, identified by Foucault (1977, 2009, 2010) have largely focused on how subjectivity is governed by being appropriated, positioned, stabilized but also changed through discourse.

From the field of affect studies, there have been a range of critiques of how Governmentality studies and post-structuralist theory have been preoccupied with epistemology and how subjectivity is stabilized or ‘ordered’ through discourse and knowledge (Kim, Bianco, Clough, & Halley, 2007; Koivunen, 2010; Wetherell, 2012). This has resulted in developing concepts, strategies, and methods for analyzing how affect might be central to the emergence of novelty and processes of becoming (B. Anderson, 2006; Hemmings, 2005; Stewart, 2007; Wetherell, 2012). Although the critiques of Governmentality studies might be overstated, (Wetherell, 2012) the attention to how affect is transmitted and circulated (B. Anderson, 2009; Blackman, 2012; Stewart, 2007) and how it can facilitate new ways of being and relating is recognized as an important development (Massumi, 2002; Wetherell, 2012).

Our research with ‘critical’ drug treatment practices informed by post-structuralist thinking (White, 2007) has proven to be a fertile field in which to situate and empirically unfold these discussions, as questions about subjectivity, free will, normality and deviance, are precarious and constantly debated (Keane, 2002; Valverde, 1998). At the same time, the tension between affect and discourse is present on a practical level, as it is recognized by professionals that there is a (theoretical) lack of understanding of the ‘affective practices’ professionals and users engage in.

In the article I will propose Heidegger’s (1962,1995) concept of *Stimmung* [mood/attunement/atmospheres] as a psychological, analytical and theoretical concept for analyzing affective processes. As I shall argue, *Stimmung* has a range of advantages when it comes to analyzing and theorizing what Wetherell (2012) terms ‘affective practices’. It has a tactical polyvalence, as it can be used both to phenomenologically describe psychosocial affective

experiences, and it can contribute to Governmentality studies by making it possible to analyze how subjectivity is governed through pastoral, disciplinary, liberal and *affective* strategies.

Ethics and research-collaboration

One of the overarching purposes of my research is to contribute to the understanding and development of non-stigmatizing and empowering ways of working with young people in fields such as social work and drug treatment.

One central problem in this is how we as (qualitative) researchers can both meet scientific standards and be directly relevant to practice, what Argyris and Schön (1974) term ‘the dilemma between rigor and relevance’. In order to work with this dilemma, the research was organized as participatory action research (Noffke & Somekh, 2005). This meant that we engaged with professionals and the young ‘users’ in ongoing dialogues about potentials and difficulties in ‘treatment’. Through these dialogues we collaboratively developed more specific research questions and agendas, while agreeing that all the involved could propose and pursue issues that they saw as interesting, promising or problematic.

The direct contribution to and relevance for practice thus consists in the ongoing dialogue with professionals and the theoretical and analytical work, where we offer new concepts – such as *Stimmung* – that professionals can use in order to understand and develop their practices. These analyses and concepts are also discussed and reflected scientifically in theoretical papers such as this one, where they invite to critical discussions and the possibility that some ideas can be transferred to other contexts.

In this article, I will engage in what we term *affirmative critique* (Foucault, 1997; Raffnsøe, Staunæs, & Bank, in press) of how professionals and young drug users collaborate to facilitate the *becoming* of new relational subjectivities. Conducting affirmative critique means to positively articulate how we *could* productively understand and analyze such practices and what the *potentials might* be if we think from within and beyond. For some readers, this might at first seem to lack critical distance, but the analysis is not outside or beyond power, nor does it aim to legitimize, normatively judge practices or to claim a certain effect. Affirmative critique is not limited to the actual, but seeks to affirm the virtual potentials immanent in practices, in order to propose new ways of thinking and acting. By affirmatively analyzing different forms of what I previously termed *affective subjectification* (Bank, 2016), the intention is to propose a strategy for analyzing how discursive and affective processes contribute to subjectification and thereby expand the understanding of how critical drug treatment practices try to overcome marginalization and stigmatization. These practices and strategies can then in turn be discussed both affirmatively and (more) critically, which is beyond the scope of the present paper.

Critical approaches in social work: The Day-team

The empirical data for, and backdrop to, this article stem from long-term research collaborations with two Danish agencies working with young drug users; *U-turn* in Copenhagen and *Helsingung* in Elsinore. The material for this article was taken from the research project User-driven standards in social work, where our research team undertook ethnographic fieldwork in 2012-2014 that focused primarily on developing and disseminating methods, and on the voluntary ‘outpatient’ group-treatment for young people aged 15 to 18.

These institutions work with young people from 15 to 25 who are not participating in the normal education system, have a history of illegal drug use, and are perceived as problematic - either by the young people themselves, or more often by relatives and welfare state professionals. The treatment is ‘voluntary’. This means that the young person has to wish for some sort of change in their life and commit themselves to the treatment regime. However, most of the young people do not necessarily want to quit their drug use, and feel pressured to participate (U-Turn, 2011). Being a municipal institution that specializes in drug problems with clients who do not see themselves as having problems with drugs and are thus unmotivated about treatment or quitting their drug use, obviously carries a lot of tension, paradoxes and difficulties. These difficulties can be said to be prototypical for social work in general (Philp, 1979).

In order to handle these difficulties *U-turn* and *Helsingung* experiment with developing new methods and practices, inspired by post-modern therapeutic traditions such as systemic (H. Anderson & Goolishian, 2004), narrative (White, 2007), and solution-focused therapy (De Shazer, 2005). These therapeutic traditions, are also explicitly influenced by constructivist and post-structuralist epistemologies, and by the view that subjectivity and problems are not to be understood through (personal) essences or diagnostic categories, but should rather be understood as contextually and discursively produced (Bateson, 1977; Foucault, 1977; Wittgenstein, 2010). These therapeutic traditions have, in both continuing and disrupting Freud’s ‘talking cure’, primarily focused on critical and novel approaches to how language can subjectify. Professionals inspired by these approaches have gone on to develop a critical awareness of how discourse, language, institutional regimes, diagnostic categories and practices can potentially stigmatize, marginalize and produce counter-productive self-relations and identities for subjects deemed deviant. Given this theoretical backdrop, it is not surprising that the most developed and articulated strategy for developing more helpful and enabling treatment practices is through the use of empowering and non-stigmatizing language. This practice can be heard (and seen) in the fact that the names of the institutions are relatively neutral and have no connotations with drug use or addiction, and more especially in the fact that clients are consistently referred to and positioned as *young people* rather than as addicts or users.

The empirical material in this article is taken from Helsingung’s “Day team”, for the youngest users (15-18 years). Here, the strategy for overcoming the aforementioned difficulties is to make the “Day team” relatively attractive and close to the young people’s normal lives. This means that typically,

they participate in group activities including school, physical education, cultural activities, group meals and ‘group-talk’ sessions for four days a week for between six and nine months. In addition to these group activities, the young people also have individual therapy sessions with their social workers on a weekly basis. As we shall see, the institution also tries to counter individualizing and pathologizing tendencies by working with the context and relations surrounding the youth, and by addressing their friends, partners, families, professionals and the wider community.

Working with technologies and the objectification of self.

During fieldwork, the young people in the “Day team” worked with so-called ‘pocket movies’ as a part of their Danish classes. A pocket movie is a short 1-3-minute low-tech movie or series of pictures, sometimes with a voice-over or background music, that the young people make about themselves in cooperation with their peers and social workers. Apart from giving them the experience of working with media technologies, a guiding idea in working with pocket movies is that young people get an opportunity to produce ‘preferred stories’ about what they find important and who they are, and these can counter some of the many ‘problem-saturated stories’ that circulate among themselves, their peers, relatives, teachers and caseworkers. This idea has been developed and inspired by narrative therapy, where White (2007) takes Foucauldian analysis of subjectification in institutional settings as a departure for developing alternative documentation practices, and where letters and therapeutic documents are used productively as a means of objectifying and recognizing clients’ perspectives, understandings and preferred identities, and engaging in productive technologies of the self (Foucault, 2000).

The initial plan was for the young people to individually show their pocket movies to their friends and family. During the last weeks of the project, they gradually transformed this into the idea that they should have a ‘gala-premiere’ or a release party, where the movies would be presented to a larger audience of people that the young people had invited, including parents, siblings, relatives and caseworkers. The following excerpt is from the author’s field notes from the ‘gala-premiere’. When reading the excerpt, the reader should try to pay attention to and *sense* how affective aspects, moods, attunements, intensities, energies or atmospheres unfold in this event.

The ‘gala-premiere’ – adapted from field notes

“It is a dark, cold, late afternoon in November. I am walking the short distance from the train station to the institution. The institution is located in an old villa, and as I turn into the front yard, I am surprised by the cozy atmosphere. The worn-down concrete stairs that lead up to the front door are covered by a red carpet; some purple balloons are attached to the banister, and a garden torch lights up the dark. I experience this as a cozy Christmas-like atmosphere that makes a pleasant contrast to the dark, cold November afternoon.”

I enter the house and walk into what normally serves as the dining room. The dining room is decorated with balloons and candles, and it is almost filled up with chairs set in rows facing a big screen. Around the kitchen table, three social workers are preparing and decorating non-alcoholic cocktails in tall champagne glasses.

There are bowls of candy and chips on the kitchen table, and I can hear and smell the popping of popcorn from the microwave oven. The social workers have made an effort to dress up today.

There are ten minutes until the event is supposed to start. Only the social workers are present. None of the young people or their relatives have arrived yet. One of the social workers is looking at the clock on the wall, and asks out of the blue - half-jokingly, half seriously[?] “I wonder if anyone will show up?”

There is an atmosphere of preparation. It reminds me of the preparations for a party with family or friends. There is the same kind of upbeat, excited and a little nervous, unresolved mood or atmosphere.

At four o'clock, the young people and their relatives begin to arrive; they circulate, shake hands and introduce themselves to each other. Most of them are dressed up, especially some of the girls with cocktail dresses in glittery fabric. This supports the idea that this is a gala-premiere.

In comparison to what we are used to in this institution, people act rather more formally and at the same time are more friendly. People are shaking hands and are engaging in small talk in groups.

The atmosphere reminds me of what it is like to arrive at a party where you do not know the other guests so well.

Didda, one of the social workers, stands up in front of the screen and welcomes everyone. She tells us about the background of the work with movies. One element is that we ‘become’ through the stories other people tell about us. These young people are so used to so many different stories about themselves, that sometimes it can be nice for them to be able to tell their own stories. Here, movies can be a valuable tool.

She highlights the great work they have put into the movies and how they've been helpful and supportive to each other in the process.”

Governmentality 2.0 – critical and affirmative readings.

Let us start in a well-known landscape and briefly outline how governmentality studies and the therapeutic traditions it influences may help to understand what is going on. It is first important to

put this into context. We work in a municipal treatment facility to which young people are referred because they are having difficulties in their lives. Most visible to parents, caseworkers and ‘the system’, is the fact that the adolescents are not part of the normal - or even specialized - education system, and that they are known to consume illegal drugs. The parents often have a long history of being worried about their children’s behavior and well-being, and these worries are often exacerbated by the fact that they smoke hash. The parents are often troubled and embarrassed by this, and this predisposes them to have a strained, troubled or ambivalent relationship to their children and their drug use. A sentence such as ‘if only they just would stop smoking hash and do what other normal young people do’, would be typical of how parents view both the problem and solution. As a result of their children’s ‘deviance’, parents often also feel insecure about their abilities as parents and thus feel a corresponding sense of incompetence or personal failure (White, 2002).

The critical analysis: How post-structuralism informs practices

According to a governmentality analysis, these experiences and subjectivities can be understood as an effect of how disciplinary, pastoral and neo-liberal strategies instill certain dispositions in schools, families and other institutions regarding health and deviance (Donzelot, 1979; Foucault, 1977). Welfare institutions rely largely on disciplinary strategies. This means that behaviors such as drug use, school truancy or non-attendance, and crimes are likely to be made more visible and knowable as individual deviances and explained as psychological, psychiatric or neurological difficulties (Rose, 1990, 2018; Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013).

Tracing processes of subjectification, a traditional governmentality analysis can show how young people’s difficulties and social problems are likely to become individualized across institutional practices. When this tendency is modulated through neo-liberal discourse, the result may be that responsibility for, and perhaps the solution to, these problems are to be found in the individuals - or in their families. This means that these young people may become increasingly problematized, stigmatized and marginalized. As a consequence, they often resort to (further) drug use, both to cope with problems, and as social-glue when engaging with peers in similar situations. This in turn contributes to further tension, conflict, and alienation between young people, their parents and the representatives of the welfare state.

Against this background, it is no great surprise that many young people and their parents are disinclined to cooperate with welfare state professionals. There are potentially many vicious circles in play here. These kinds of critiques are familiar to governmentality studies and post-modern therapeutic traditions (e.g. White, 2007). They are also familiar to our social workers, who think that many caseworkers, psychiatrists, teachers, and institutions perpetuate or even amplify the young people’s problems by focusing on their difficulties and drug use.

In this light, the practices at Helsingung can be seen as a ‘solution’ to these problems. A brief critical and affirmative analysis of these practices would be as follows.

In Helsingung, staff are aware of the negative consequences of power, and part of their intervention is to make alternative categories, discourses and subject positions available to parents and young

people. This is done through a discursive and material framing, in which the institution is not presented as a ‘drug treatment facility’ that is part of ‘the system’, but rather, as a relatively normal institution, where young people can finish elementary school, do social activities *and* engage in conversations with peers and professionals about both their problems and their wishes for the future (to see how this is done materially and architecturally, see Bank and Nissen (2018)). This framing is substantiated by events, such as the gala-premiere. Here relatives are invited into something that is quite different from their previous experiences with ‘the system’.

The gala premiere: Critical and affirmative readings

When the young people and social workers *invite* the relatives as *guests* to a gala-premiere, they establish a ‘host-guest’ relationship, which temporarily destabilizes and re-configures the asymmetrical relationships and subject positions between professional experts, relatives and users. The social workers are no longer just in a ‘safe’ expert position but are putting themselves in the position of ‘hosts’ by having dressed up and depending on the parents and the young people showing up and playing their parts. The parents and relatives are, on the other hand, invited as guests and in this way have a social responsibility to actively participate and co-create the event.

In an affirmative reading, therefore, an event such as the gala-premiere destabilizes the dominant discourses and invites parents and youths into subject positions where they both have more power and control, and greater responsibility. A more critical reading is that the host-guest relationship is not innocent. When parents are invited into subject positions and norms of ‘guests’ and ‘good parents’, it re-affirms the hosts’ position of power and defines the possibilities for the guests (Derrida, 2000). Simultaneously this makes it harder to discern and criticize power. In this way, we see how the framing re-configures how liberal and disciplinary strategies are at play and how new forms of power emerge. The critical and affirmative reading are in a sense both correct, however, as I shall argue, if I analyze this affectively, we may be able to see something different, something interesting, something more.

Affect in social work.

In the excerpt quoted above, we saw how I as a researcher experienced and described affective phenomena like ‘cozy’, ‘mood’, and ‘atmosphere’ and how I was affected by this. This sparked and re-invigorated my interest in the affective phenomena that kept reappearing in my research and dialogue with practitioners. This led me to closely re-read the 24-page ‘model-description’ of the institutions ‘treatment approach’. This report mentioned that it should be “invigorating and fun”, be in an “invigorating and exiting environment”, and be “deliberately establishing cozy spaces” with a “friendly, relaxed and accommodating atmosphere” (U-Turn, 2010). These descriptions mainly focus on material or architectural arrangements, that I have analyzed previously (cf. Bank and Nissen (2018)). But from conversations with the social workers, I learned that it is also essential to create and modulate on ‘intensities’, ‘energy’, and ‘atmospheres’, to get things going in, for instance, group ‘therapeutic’ conversations (Bank, 2010). I will now introduce Heidegger’s concept

of Stimmung and discuss it in relation to analytical strategies and concepts from affect studies. Subsequently I will use Stimmung to analyze and theorize these affective phenomena.

The concept of Stimmung

The German word Stimmung is difficult to translate and has no equivalent in most European languages, but has similar usage and meaning in Danish, Norwegian, (stemming) and Swedish (stämning) (L. Jensen, 2010). Heidegger's concept of Stimmung (Heidegger, 1962, 1977) is typically translated into English as "attunement" and/or "mood" (Ash, 2013; Heidegger, 1962, 1995; Stewart, 2011). However, these translations do not convey the richness, complexity, multiple connotations and bodily experiences that are implied in Stimmung as a word (Wellbery, 2010) or a Heideggerian (2004) concept.

In German, Stimmung, originates from a substantiation of using your voice [Stimme], meaning the use of voice, and to vote and have an opinion. From the 17th century, *Stimmung* was used for tuning an instrument and about how instruments are tuned, and this meaning was extended in the 18th century to describe psychological experiences. Later on, in the 19th century, its meaning was again extended into the realm of aesthetics to describe the ambiance, aura and atmosphere of art and landscapes (Wellbery, 2010).

According to L. Jensen (2010), there are five general, overlapping meanings and connotations: 1) the tuning of musical instruments and voices, both in terms of actions and capacities; 2) to vote, to state one's opinion; 3) stance, political atmosphere, public opinion; 4) mood - subjective experiences or ways of being; 5) the ambiance, aura and atmosphere of art, landscapes, and further extending to spaces, places, architecture, and literature (Borch, Böhme, Eliasson, & Pallasmaa, 2014; Gumbrecht, 2012). In addition to this, *Stimmung* also can mean something that balances or 'fits', as in balancing an account (Stimmt).

For this particular study, I am interested in analyzing how Stimmung is experienced and modulated in drug treatment institutions. To give an example, when I interviewed one of the young people in Helsingung about having therapeutic conversations in different places, she told me how she found it much easier in one particular room. After I inquired further, she said, "Well, how can I explain it? Well I... it is just a totally different Stimmung"" [danish Stemning: close to the meaning of atmosphere].

In order to understand this theoretically, we must turn to Heidegger's way of theorizing subjectivity, that has inspired post-structuralist thinking and shares many similarities with affect studies (Foucault, 1984; Wetherell, 2013). One shared point of departure is a critique of how mainstream psychology split apart subject and world, mind and body, and thinking, willing, and feeling. The consequence is that privilege's consciousness and thinking are privileged affective phenomena are designated to an inferior subordinate position (Heidegger, 1995, p. 64) A common "project" for Heidegger and affect scholars is to remedy this lack of understanding and attune us to more

affective and embodied modes of experiencing, knowing, feeling, being, and becoming (Blackman, 2012; Heidegger, 1995; Henriques, 2011).

A Heideggerian understanding of why affect has been neglected is, that when Descartes separate the mind from the body, consciousness becomes disembodied and as a consequence, the visual becomes the dominating metaphor for knowledge and consciousness. The privileging of the *visual* metaphor in Western metaphysics and epistemology since *en-light-enment*, means that knowledge becomes something which is obtained through an objective rational *gaze*. In the *dark* past, our *perspective* was *obscured* by passions and ignorance, but now we *see clearly* and *gain insight*. Heidegger clearly sees [pun intended] the *significance* [sign, see] of the visual metaphor for knowledge [wissen] which can be seen in his discussion of how Da-sein is an openness, a clearing [Lichtung] that enables light [licht] to enter and let being come to light (Kleinberg-Levin, 2019).

The problem with the visual metaphor for Heidegger is that it has become hegemonic and excludes the more embodied and affective modes of being and knowing. In order to transgress these problems, Heidegger asks us to open ourselves phenomenologically to the being of (the human) Being and to pose the question of (the human) Being anew, instead of the question of *the* being (of things). These questions reveal that the human Being is corporeal and situated (always-already) in-the-world, which is conceptualized as ‘Da-sein’ literally ‘Being-there’(Heidegger, 1962, 1995). In my reading, this leads to relational ontology where subject and world are inseparable, and where fundamental questions become not *what* Da-sein is, but *how* Da-sein is in-the-world. According to Heidegger, Da-sein's being-in-the world [in-der-welt-sein] is characterized by two equally fundamental modes in which we are relationally in-the-world and with one-another. These modes of Being are; understanding (verstehen) that builds on visual metaphor and attunement (Stimmung) that builds on a musical metaphor.

As a consequence of privileging of the visual metaphor, the affective ways which we are in-the-world can be difficult to grasp by consciousness or to describe linguistically, but they are nevertheless fundamental to understanding how we are-in-the-world. Part of Heidegger’s project is thus to re-instate the affective modes of being and knowing —which the Greeks referred to as Pathos — that have been neglected by psychology and the Western philosophical tradition, in their proper place, equal to more cognitive ways of knowing and being.

In this way, Heidegger’s deconstruction of the hegemony of rationalistic Western metaphysics is aligned with debates about the status of rationality and knowledge and the relation between affect and discourse in post-structuralism and affect studies (Foucault, 1978; Massumi, 2002; Wetherell, 2012). Especially striking is the parallel to how affect scholars have criticized post-structuralism for being preoccupied with knowledge and epistemology (Kim et al., 2007; Koivunen, 2010). My intention is that the concept of Stimmung can contribute to these discussions and help us analyze how affect and discourse are involved in governing subjectivity and producing different modes of being.

Heidegger's concept 'Stimmung'

When Heidegger uses the concept *Stimmung*, he draws on a musical metaphor, in order to phenomenologically describe how *Da-sein's* being-in-the-world is always fundamentally *Stimt* [attuned, tuned], and how our Being at a fundamental level, is an affective processual dynamic relation with-the-world.

Stimmungs “are the fundamental ways in which we find ourselves *disposed* in such and such a way. Attunements (*Stimmungs*) are the ‘*how*’ [Wie] according to which one is in such and such a way.[...] And yet this ‘one is in such and such a way’ is not – is never – simply a consequence or side effect of our thinking doing and acting” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 67)ⁱ

On this note, I would encourage readers to try to sense *Stimmung*; and this is not meant metaphorically. Try to pronounce the word slowly. I realize that non-German speakers may find the pronunciation difficult, but the experience might be rather like pronouncing the word ‘*moodish*’ slowly. Try to let *Stimmung* resonate in/with the body. Experience it not merely as a concept or sign, but also as a resonance that pervades your being. One could think of/listen to/tune into Muddy Waters singing the Blues, or the sound and resonance of a Tibetan singing bowl, and the associated *Stimmungs* [atmospheres, attunements, moods, feelings, and emotions], bodily movements and resonances. Perhaps ‘the Blues’ for some can be experienced as a culturally recognizable example of how a *Stimmung* [mood] can be produced, shared and circulated, but without it being fixed, or appropriated as an individualized emotion. It is this experience that might serve as model for our being-in-the-world is fundamentally *Stimt*, as a ‘color’ that sets the “tone for such being, ... and determines the manner and way of his being.” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 67).

According to Heidegger, *Stimmung* “is not some being that appears in the soul as an experience, but a way of our being there with one another”. They “are the fundamental ways in which we find ourselves disposed in such and such a way. Attunements (*Stimmungs*) are the ‘*how*’ [Wie] according to which one is in such and such a way.[...] And yet this ‘one is in such and such a way’ is not – is never – simply a consequence or side effect of our thinking doing and acting” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 67)ⁱⁱ.

Stimmung is an affective mode of being and knowing, and Heidegger stresses that such phenomena should not be delegated to a subordinate position, as “*They themselves are precisely a fundamental manner and a fundamental way of being, indeed of being there [Da-sein], and this always directly includes being with one another*” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 67).

If we follow the connotations from the musical metaphor of *Stimmung*, this draws attention to how our affective ways of being with one another are characterized by a resonance, as indicated in the English translation of *Stimmung* to attunement. There is a famous jazz standard by Ellington/Mills entitled “It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)”. In a Heideggerian understanding, this speaks to how our relation is *Stimt*, and when we feel really connected, we do not only —or primarily — understand each other (as in being on the same page), but we swing [swingen] resonate, are in tune and feel the good vibrations, which is a basic way of being-with.

When we use *Stimmung* to describe a certain mode of being, we attune ourselves to situated, bodily, and relational ways of being with that (often) imply a (physical) closeness and an openness for being moved and “gestimt” by one another. This implies hearing [hören], listening [zuhören], belonging [gehören], and belonging together [Zugehörigkeit] (Wilberg, 2013). Instead of a more cognitive and detached model of subjectivity that the visual metaphor invites us into, the sonic or musical connotations in *Stimmung*, *stimt* [attune] us to more social, collective, and affective ways of being-with.

When Heidegger (1995, p. 67) states that *Stimmung* “determines the manner and way of his [or her] being” he suggests *Stimmung* as a basic form of subjectivity, or a fundamental way of being that affects our whole being, including thoughts, emotions and actions. *Stimmung* is experienced by the subject as ‘our’ *Stimmung* [mood, attunement], and is a consequence of how we resonate with, and are connected affectively, with the *Stimmungs* [atmosphere, ambience] of the ‘environment’ in a very broad sense. Depression, melancholia or euphoria are examples of how *Stimmung* pervades the being of subjects, social settings and whole societies (e.g. Revolutionary atmosphere B. Anderson, 2009; The great depression Andrews, 2013) and shapes and gives rise to particular cognitions, emotions, ways of relating and being-in-the-world. Heidegger emphasizes that extreme cases such as grief or depression tend to disguise the fact that less intense *Stimmungs* are everyday phenomena, and are ones that are fundamental for an understanding of the modes or ways in which we are-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1995).

Stimmungs are not only sensual, or bodily; they are a basic form of *understanding*, embedded with meaning and significance that is distributed across the whole relational field and across time. This means that *Stimmung* is a form of understanding that in a way is ‘deeper’ ‘wiser’ or more ‘extensive’ than appropriated reason, cognition or emotion. Different *Stimmungs* can in this way modulate and open or close potentials, possibilities, ‘horizons of understanding’ (Gadamer, 1989), and relational ways of being and relating. With different *Stimmungs* one is connected-rationally-to-the-world in ways that can be more or less restrictive or expansive, and that enable the becoming of different ways of being. This is the phenomenological experience we express in everyday language as being more or less ‘open’ towards someone or something, and it is this openness that is a *Stimmt* relation with-the-world. Take a breath and try to experience this in relation to the text you are reading now and to the wider *Lebenswelt* [lifeworld] in which you are.

Stimmungs are a part of a non-dualistic ontology and way of thinking, and although the linguistics of Heideggerian *being-in-the world* could lead one astray, we are not *in* the world or *in* our bodies as in Euclidian containers. Rather, *Stimmungs* are relational - not *in* the subject or *in* the environment, but a basic aspect of how subjectivity-environment re(a)sonates and unfold ‘in’ time. I will now continue the discussion on how the concept of *Stimmung* can contribute to affect studies.

Stimmung and affect studies

Heidegger and many affects theorists share a critique of the hegemony of cognitivism and rationalism, and they urge us to attune ourselves to more affective and embodied ways of knowing, feeling, and becoming (Blackman, 2012; Henriques, 2011). The affective concepts, such as affect, atmosphere, affective-attunement, and Stimmung share in a certain way the ambition of being able to understand and analyze the same “group of phenomena”, but come in different theoretical configurations and have different advantages. It is not possible to discuss these in any length here, so my intention is to situate the debate by drawing out some similarities and differences in order to argue that Stimmung has important analytical advantages for the present study.

One aspect that has gained interest is the role of affect in bringing about change and novelty, (Massumi, 2002; Wetherell, 2012) but also in closing down hope and becoming (Berlant, 2011; Blackman, 2012). The concept of affect as “the capacity to affect and be affected” in the Deleuzian tradition describes the capacity or potential for change (Deleuze, 1988; Deleuze, 1990; Massumi, 1992, p. 10). In my view, the concept of Stimmung offers a phenomenological way of describing and analyzing how everyday affective relation with-the-world is experienced as Stimmt [attuned] and how socially mediated Stimmungs [affects, atmospheres] can contribute to “opening” or “closing down” ways of being-with and make us more or less “open” towards change.

Heidegger understands Stimmung “*as not some being the appears in the soul as an experience, but at way of our being there with one another*”(Heidegger, 1995, p. 66). In some respects, this fits with Massumi (2002) and other affect scholars’ insistence that affects are collective, “transindividual” processes that do not reside in the individual and cannot be reduced to, or be appropriated as specific individual emotions, feelings or cognitions, although they can give rise to these (Brennan, 2004). Stimmungs are relational processual phenomena that are modulated by the Stimmung of ourselves, others and the environment. Stimmung, however, avoids the separation of affect from discourse, significance and meaning-making that scholars such as Massumi proposes. In this respect, Stimmung is aligned with affect scholars who insist that affective phenomena are not entirely outside conscious experience or separated from discourse (Blackman, 2012; Hemmings, 2005; Wetherell, 2012).

This point is crucial for the present paper, as the aim is to develop an strategy for analyzing how affective and discursive strategies for governing are intertwined and modulate each other in what Wetherell (2012) term *affective practices*. Wetherell suggests that subjects engage in joint, coordinated, relational affective practices; they co-create an *affective pattern* that is situated, related to, and resonant with other practices, emotions, language, discourse, and meaning. I share Wetherell’s (2012) analytical ambition but find the metaphor of “pattern” is too structuralist, as the term pattern to me proposes something repetitive, “of the same sort”, that is repeated, seen visually, and perhaps recognized. In my view, the uncertain, disordered, shifting, and contingent aspect of collective affects are not entirely captured by the term pattern. As I will show in the analysis, the musical connotation of Stimmung as “a melody that [...] sets the *tone* for such being” seems to be a better description of we are often Stimmt and recruited by Stimmungs, because they are similar, but not identical to others. For instance, when we encounter a Stimmung of homeliness, although it is not home, what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) might call a refrain, a repetition with a difference. And

Stimmung conveys a understanding of the processual, relational, elusive affective phenomena we experience when we “swing” and feel a rhythm and a resonance that are not easily articulated or fully appropriated by language.

Stimmung, Affect and Atmosphere

Lastly, I will discuss Stimmung in relation to the concept of atmosphere, in particular Anderson (2009) concept Affective atmospheres, that draws on a spheric or climatic metaphor. Affective atmospheres has an indeterminate quality and ambiguity, they “never quite achieves the stability or form” (Anderson 2009:78) as they are “between presence and absence, between subject and object/subject and between the definite and the indefinite” (Anderson 2009:77)

Anderson highlights the processual character of affective atmospheres as something that “are perpetually forming and deforming, appearing and disappearing as bodies enter into relation with one another”, always in the process of emerging and transforming. This processual understanding of affect as elusive, uncertain, shifting, and contingent is characteristic for most concepts of affect. (Massumi, 2002; Wetherell, 2012). The concept Stimmung and affective atmospheres share an attention to how affective phenomena that resonate in and between human bodies, discursive bodies and non-human bodies (B. Anderson, 2009; Blackman, 2012; Stewart, 2007), and both concepts makes it possible to analyze how shared collective affects, *can “become elements within sense experience”* (B. Anderson, 2009, p. 79). When we enter a social situation, a certain Stimmung or atmosphere can modulate “our” sense experience and give rise to specific emotions, thoughts and actions.

Both Anderson (2009) and Böhme (1993) describe how atmospheres envelop us, which have quite some similarities with Stimmung. When Heidegger describes how Stimmungs “determine our being with one another”, he explains it by saying “like an atmosphere”. There are, however, subtle but important differences, and Stimmung is, in my view, a more adequate and fruitful concept for describing and analyzing how psychological experiences [Stimmung, tone, mood] and social affects [Stimmung, atmosphere] are always already connected, without losing sight of the experiencing subject and how the subject’s Stimmung can contribute to and co-create the social Stimmung. In this way, Stimmung gives us a better view of co-constitution of subjectivity and collective affects, human agency, and how Stimmungs “are precisely a fundamental manner and fundamental way of being, indeed of being-there [Da-sein], and this always directly includes being with one another” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 67)

The concept of Stimmung has, in my view a tactical polyvalence and ontological compatibility that have considerable practical, analytical and theoretical advantages. Firstly, it is used in everyday language to describe affective phenomenological experiences, for instance by ‘our’ social workers and the young people with whom they work.

Secondly, it points to how we are affectively and relationally in-the-world, in a way that disrupt distinctions between subject and object, and between the psychological and the social. Stimmungs are not solely in the subject or the environment; rather, they are relational affective qualities of

being-with, in-the-world. Thirdly, Stimmung is in my view a very promising approach to being able to combine an analysis of affective experiences with governmentality studies, in order to analyze how pastoral, disciplinary, liberal and *affective* strategies and forms of subjectification are intertwined.

Finally, engaging with Stimmung can also be seen as a correction of the hegemony of how Western epistemology since the Enlightenment has privileged a rational gaze and knowledge such as discourse, signs, essence, and structure. Instead, Stimmung opens us towards experiments with sonic metaphors; sound-waves, resonances, rhythms and vibrations that move in and between bodies and carry both intensities and meanings, and use them to attune us to more affective and embodied ways of knowing, feeling and becoming (Blackman, 2012; Henriques, 2011).

Some authors have noted the difficulties in translating and specifying Stimmung analytically (Gumbrecht, 2012; Wellbery, 2010). In this article I would refrain from judging Stimmung in relation to its precision, representation or extension, but instead, pay attention to what it can do, when plugged into or assembled with other concepts, texts, theories and social practices (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). I would now add a further affective layer to the previous analysis and look at how the modulation of Stimmung makes it possible for parents, young people, and social workers to engage in other ways of being-with.

In the remainder of this article, I will experiment with using Stimmung as an analytical and theoretical concept and try to guide the reader by offering some of the possible English translations and connotations in parentheses. This will also offer what Brecht (1964) terms as a ‘Verfremdungseffekt’ [distancing effect] that might disrupt the general reliance on English as the hegemonic academic language; create tension and distance to language and discourse; and may also perhaps enable us to engage in more embodied approaches to analyzing affective experiences (B. Anderson, 2009; Henriques, 2011).

Modulation of Stimmung at the gala-premiere

When I arrived at the institution that afternoon in November, I turned the corner and saw the entrance with a red carpet, balloons and a torch. This was something different to what I had anticipated, and there was a change in my Stimmung [mood/affective register]. I was *Stimt* [phenomenologically affected by/attuned to] by the cozy Christmas-like Stimmung [atmosphere]. This changed my way of being relationally in-the-world. I became more receptive, and this opened my ‘horizon of understanding’ and the possibilities for experience. I think it is plausible to assume that when the relatives and young people arrived 10 minutes later, they were also in different ways *Stimt* [affected/attuned] by this *Stimmung* [atmosphere]. I then entered the kitchen/living room, where the social workers were preparing the last details. It was interesting that there was an “*excited and a little nervous, unresolved mood or atmosphere*” [Stimmung] among them. The social workers are professionals at work, but even before the ‘guests’ arrived, this Stimmung [atmosphere] resonated in the room and in and between subjects and bodies. In my interpretation, this was expressed in the social worker’s statement: “*I wonder if anyone will show up*”.

At four o'clock, the young people and their relatives begin to arrive; they circulate, shake hands, and introduce themselves to each other. [...] In comparison to what we are used to in this institution, people act rather more formally, but at the same time are friendlier. People are shaking hands and are making small talk in groups.

The Stimmung [atmosphere] reminds me of what it is like to arrive at a party where you do not know the other guests so well.

The gala-premiere is of course an ‘artificially’ produced and discursively indexed event, as most social events are. However, what matters for this analysis is how the event, through joint, coordinated, and relational activity, became “affectively real”, as it changed the Stimmung and subjects where affected (*cf. Wetherell, 2012, p. 83*). When the young people and their relatives arrived, they were *Stimt* [affected] by the Stimmung [atmosphere] which again modulate the affective ways which the young people and their relatives are with one-another. The point here is that affective (modulation of Stimmung) and discursive processes are intertwined and contribute to unsettling and destabilizing the negative subject positions and categories normally associated with treatment. This allows for the social workers to “become hosts”, for the young people and parents to “become guests” and for new ways of being and relating to emerge.

This Stimmung [atmosphere/affective “patterning”] did not just appear out of nowhere; it had a history. In the language of Governmentality studies, we see how liberal, disciplinary, pastoral, and affective strategies are intertwined, interact and develop over time. The friendly social workers and the non-stigmatizing approach in the institution made it possible for the young people to feel welcome and normal. The Stimmung and the non-stigmatizing discourse did in turn make it possible for the professionals to listen and for the young people to articulate (pastoral) wishes, choices (liberal), and preferred ways of being. These processes made it possible for the young people in collaboration with the social workers to suggest and plan the gala premiere that is composed of a range of subjects (young people, families, professionals), discourses, institutions, and material actants (Latour, 2005), from the building itself to the snacks, candles, balloons, and outfits, which again borrow from wider cultural discourses and affective experiences. All of these elements contributed to the gala premiere and to the Stimmung and the subjectivities that could emerge.

Stimmung has, in my view, considerable advantages when we wish to analyze such processes. The musical root metaphor draws attention to how these affective processes are temporal. There are always tones, tunes and Stimmungen that we move on from, and that lay the path for other gestures, actions, thoughts, emotions and Stimmungen to emerge. This again changes – or continues - the meaning and *Stimmung* of what preceded it. Events, memories and experiences unfold dynamically through time-space-matter-meanings. The past is folded into the present, as is the future (Heidegger, 1995). The expectation of the future and of the next tone is also a part of this dynamic unfolding of the event. This means that if the relatives are *Stimt* in certain (e.g. disciplinary) ways before the event, it can be very difficult for something new to emerge. Here Stimmung as an analytical strategy points to a dynamic unfolding and modulation of Stimmung as a ‘melodic line of

continuous variation' (Deleuze, 1978) that enables different relational forms of subjectivity to unfold, including more appropriated subjective meanings and emotions that flow together in the event and make up the social experience (Middleton & Brown, 2005). Let us now return to the empirical description.

"We are in the living room of Helsingung: The young people, relatives, and social workers are slowly getting seated. There are candles in the windows and a projector is displaying the computer's welcome screen on the 2x2 meter screen. We are waiting. Something is about to begin, but we are unsure what.

Didda, one of the social workers, stands up in front of the screen, and gives an introduction to the young people's work with 'pocket movies'.

She says, "One element is that we 'become' through the stories other people tell about us. These young people are used to many different stories about themselves, so sometimes it can be nice for them to be able to tell their own stories. And here, movies can be a good weapon.

She highlights the great work they have put into the movies and how they have been helpful and supportive to each other in the process, and how the movie project has become a part of the school.

Didda says that there are some different results. Some decided to make a movie about something that matters to them, some chose a photo series, and some chose to tell a story about the development they have been through while being in Helsingung."

In the short break while the social worker is struggling with getting the projector and pc to work, we were left with the impression that this was something important. This was not *just* about a school project. I felt an increasing sense of suspense. Again, Stimmungs were modulated, shifting towards seriousness, resonating with the Stimmung of a ceremony, where something new is on the brink of being disclosed.

The first movie is projected on the screen. We see Benjaminⁱⁱⁱ, one of the young people from the Day-team, moving towards the camera and squeezing through a hole in a wire fence surrounding a football pitch. The grass on the pitch is a radiant green, and the picture almost illuminates the dark room. We now see Benjamin juggling with a football, accompanied by the song "uartig" [naughty] by the popular Danish dance-hall artist Wafande.

Now try to listen <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7kZTtVvG-I> time 1.23 – 2.10

It is an upbeat and happy song, about partying, sex and having a good time. As we hear this, we see some fast sequences of Benjamin shooting goals from different angles. He appears to be a fast, competent football player. Then we see him leaving through the hole in the fence again, accompanied by the final lyrics from Wafande,

“come on in, you only get smiles, good karma and only good style/attitude” ending on a high note.

The movie lasts 47 seconds and we do not see anything apart from Benjamin playing football, but it definitely does something. The multimodal signs and soundwaves resonate and affect the audience, and create a more loose, happy and relaxed Stimmung. Some of the relatives and social workers are making small movements to the music. In addition, the relatives seem happy, maybe relieved that nothing embarrassing happened. There is a more intense or energetic Stimmung in the room now.

The next ‘movie’ is made by Jill. She has chosen a series of pictures where we see her in the classroom, doing homework, having a good time, hugging and hanging out with the other young people.

For those of us who know her background, this is in stark contrast to the many negative stories and stigmatizing classifications - a bad pupil, a troublesome person with a low IQ - that had circulated among social workers, teachers and psychiatrists. In just these 7-8 pictures, she is deliberately showing her preferred story about who she is. An almost ordinary school pupil who works hard in school and has fun with her good friends. The message that struck me and the social workers was “I am happy here” and, “Yes I can”^{iv}.

In the event five small movies or picture series like these, lasting between 0.47 and 3.16 minutes, are shown. After each movie, everybody is clapping. And at the end, the young people are called up individually in front of the screen to receive flowers, and everyone claps again. Some of the parents start taking photos, and this prompts one of the young people to ask why they are not taking a class photo. More cameras are fetched, and the young people pose for the cameras with their arms around each other. We thus now have a Stimmung of ‘graduation’ or of the last day in school. Everybody seems happy and relaxed.

There is no more on the program. One of the social workers says there are more pizzas and snacks. The young people and many of the adults go outside to smoke, but they return and socialize and seem to be in no hurry to leave.

This final section will recapitulate in more general terms the ‘problems’ that this kind of post-modern social work aims to be a ‘solution’ to.

Starting with a traditional governmentality analysis, there are both ethical and ‘functional’ weaknesses in pastoral, disciplinary and liberal ‘strategies of ordering’, as the pervasive ‘lines of light’ and ‘lines of enunciation’ make subjectivity, problems and deviance visible as objects of knowledge in ways that appropriate, confine and thus close down movement and becoming (Deleuze, 1992). In these situations, young people are like deer caught in the headlight of the panopticon. The light is too bright, there is no escape, no residual power and the young people feel useless, out of place, queer, and marginalized. In response their bodies freeze, words dry up, and their forms of resistance - indifference, drug use, passivity, dropping out and silent protest - render traditional forms of governing counter-productive.

To be able to *help and govern* these young people, it is necessary to develop new social work practices and technologies. Here post-modern therapeutic traditions draw attention to not only focusing on the identified problems, but also to the wider context, where one important site of intervention can be the family. We know from interviews with parents and social workers that parents of young drug users tend to get caught up in normalizing discourses about education, drugs and treatment, and in many cases experience despair, hopelessness, frustration, depression, isolation. This contributes to a negative Stimmung, which affects the whole family as well as the parents' affective ways of being with their children. There are vicious circles at play here. Because certain Stimmungs predispose parents to feel, think, and act in certain ways, this can "close down" their "horizon of understanding", and it becomes difficult to recognize the positive steps the young people are *also* taking in their lives, and move from scolding, shame, and guilt towards more positive ways of being-with.

So, the gradual transformation of Stimmung that I sensed at the gala-premiere can in a Heideggerian understanding, be seen as a very fundamental intervention, as the Stimmung that is produced "determines our being with one another" and constitutes an affective modulation of the parents' Stimmung and their (affective) ways of being-with their kids. It is exactly the Stimmung that makes it possible for the young people to become different, as the Stimmung opens the parents' ability to hear and listen to the young people's stories about preferred identities. This is not just a cognitive change, but a new way of being-with, allowing the young people to be seen, felt, and understood in new ways, not as just problematic unreliable drug users, but as "normal" young people with competences, capabilities, hopes, and dreams, and as young people who are trying to develop their own approaches to handling their problems, challenges and drug use when the time is right for them (Bank, 2016). And, as Heidegger reminds us, to hear [hören], to listen closely [zuhören] is also associated with belonging [gehören] and belonging-together [Zugehörigkeit] (Wilberg, 2013)

The preferred identities that are displayed in the movies are not 'just' a story or narrative, but a multi-modal resonance that modulates the parents' Stimmung. Drawing on Baudrillard (1994), these short movies can be seen as hyper-real signs, used as 'affective weapons' in a multimodal production of identity and increased affective intensity (Blackman, 2012, p. 70) that produces a Stimmung that allows for a break with the 'existing code of signification' and opens up new understandings and new ways of relating and becoming. Following the work of Chaput (2010) on reality-TV, the lucidity and brightness of film and the pervasiveness of sound can produce "*energy levels [that] seep into our home spaces and inhabit the embodied experience of viewers, compelling us toward new modalities of belonging.*" (Chaput, 2010, p. 9). This creates loops of Stimmungs, understandings, cognitions, emotions and subjectivities, which are mediated by artifacts and technologies and modulate and change each other.

Conclusion

Governmentality studies have analyzed how subjects and subjectivity are governed through relations of knowledge and power, in 'psy-practices' (Dean, 2010; Donzelot, 1979; Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1998).

In this paper I have engaged in an affirmative critique of how social workers and young people collaborate and deploy “affective technologies” to modify hegemonic narratives on subjectivity and drug use and affectively distribute new “signs of experience” that are more in accordance with the young people’s values. One of the aims of this was to contribute to the development of more critical, democratic, and enabling practices (White, 2007).

As a part of my analytical strategy, I have argued for using Heidegger’s concept of *Stimmung*, as this makes it possible to analyze and theorize how affect and discourse are entangled, and how disciplinary, pastoral, liberal, and affective strategies are intertwined and constantly modify each other.

The analysis asks us to reflect on the role of affect in subjectification in and beyond social work. Even though disciplinary, pastoral, and neo-liberal technologies still play a key role, we should perhaps pay more attention to how these are supplemented and modulated by affective strategies and how affective processes have the potential to change the dynamics, social technologies, and positions that subjects find themselves entrenched in. In our research we have, for instance, analyzed how *Stimmung* and affect are governed through architectural and spatial configurations (Bank & Nissen, 2018), and how social workers use their own contagious energy, body movements, enthusiasm, pitch, and modulation of voice [*Stimme*] in their contact with the young people (Bank, 2016).

The analytical strategies and concepts I have used in this paper may have a broader relevance. They could perhaps be re-applied in studies of disciplinary institutions (Foucault, 1977). The bell that rings, the door that slams, the lock that clicks, and the watch that ticks in schools, factories, and prisons, can all be analyzed as small techniques that modulate *Stimmung* [intensities, atmospheres or affective registers] and are embedded with meaning and cultural significance.

Governmentality studies and post-structuralism can be said to have excelled in “negative” critiques of power, for instance in how discourses and institutions marginalize and stigmatize. These critiques are important, and in similar way we must critically analyze the production and circulation of affects and affective forms of subjectification. Affects are not necessarily liberating, but can also play a dangerous role in populism, totalitarianism, practices of Othering, and the administration of fear (Virilio & Richard, 2012).

However, if the goal is social change, we might sometimes accomplish more by engaging in more affirmative forms of critique (Bank, Staunæs, & Raffnsøe, 2020) Here, the concept of *Stimmung* offers an opportunity to analyze how discourse and affectivity interact, and how new discourses must be substantiated or modulated by affective strategies. These analyses could lead us towards thinking that subjectification in post-disciplinary societies do not primarily rely on knowledge, articulation and appropriation. Rather, if we think through a diagram of movement and affect, we could follow (Staunæs, 2011) and talk about affective modulating of the potentials of life or we could take an affective turn on Davies (1991) and be interested in the affective production of agency, where affect amplifies or prolongs the force of the youths’ own actions and thoughts and enables them to become enthusiastic about their own lives. This could also be conceptualized as

new way of working with motivation. The affective strategies are affecting the youth's possibilities and probabilities to develop their own preferred ways of being - ways that only secondarily become objectified and distributed as signs, texts, dreams and stories.

My modest hope is that the affective strategy I have proposed has a productive critical potential and will help us to see and imagine how a range of practices could develop more vital, productive and empowering forms of subjectification, and how analytical efforts can contribute to “.....a kind of criticism that would ... [...] multiply not judgments but signs of existence: it would summon them, drag them from their sleep. Perhaps it would invent them sometimes – all the better. All the better.” (Foucault, 1997, p. 323)

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ⁱ (Square brackets in English original, I have added italics and concepts in round brackets from the German original (Heidegger, 2004, p. 100) The translator's note (1) brings attention to that "wiese" means "manner" and "way of doing something", but also has the more literary meaning of "tune" or "melody")

ⁱⁱⁱ The names of the young people have been changed, and the names of the social workers are real in accordance with their own wishes.

^{iv} This "yes I can" impression was discussed subsequently with the social workers, and connotes the optimism surrounding Barack Obama's first election as President at that time. In this way, this cultural *Stimmung* [atmosphere] became a resource for understanding and articulating subjectivity.