Beyond Spaces of Counselling

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Abstract

The article articulates experiments with spatial constructions in two Danish social work agencies, basing on a) a sketchy genealogical reconstruction of conceptualisations and uses of space in social work and counselling; b) a search for theoretical resources to articulate new spaces, and c) data from a long-standing collaboration with the social workers working with youth and drugs.

Beside a critical analysis of how disciplinary and pastoral spaces makes it difficult to engage in helpful conversations with young drug-users, we show howspaces of attunement, spaces of production, and public spaces are forms of spatialisations which might be taken as prototypical in attempts to develop social work and counselling.

Keywords: space, place, drugs, social work, youth work, affect

Preview

This is a screen shot [picture 1 near here] from a video recorded at *HelsingUng*, a small Danish municipal agency where social workers[1] help young people with social problems that include issues with drugs. We see: Two persons in conversation; the young person on the couch, legs drawn up, anonymised; the counsellor, wearing appropriate glasses and turtleneck, leaning forward. Add to this the presence of the paper sheets, and the fact itself of the photo, directing our clinical gaze – and we recognise a space of counselling, a therapeutic space.

This version is fairly up-to-date. Hollywood gives us images of the psychoanalyst sitting with his notebook behind the couch, or of the direct open-face encounter in more client-centered, humanistic approaches; but clinical and social work practices have moved on. Not long after the above picture was taken, Michael, the counsellor, wants to discuss how Emily, the client, is doing. Emily has been filling in the Outcome Rating Scale that lies in front of her, in this as in several previous sessions, and Michael has ascertained a declining curve [picture 2 near here]: Emily reports doing worse. He finds this worrisome, since statistics show that a declining ORS curve is correlated with likely dropout. Michael tries to intervene with standard techniques in 'solution-focused brief therapy' (the 'miracle question', and then 'scaling', performed verbally and with his body): [picture 3 near here]

Michael   *When that curve is broken* (showing with hand) *and starts to go up, or at least stops going down, what would, like, for you – I could have all sort of ideas, and your parents, and the rest – but for* **you**, *what would be the sign that, hey, now it kind of stopped', or, now it's either going up or more like* (hand horisontal) - *?*

Emily *(*looking down*) I don't know.* (silence)

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[1] Professional categories vary between countries, more than often realised. 'Social worker' is used here as a generic term for people working in the broad social field. They include, in the cases discussed here, psychologists and other (Ma) academics, secondary school teachers, case managers, pedagogues, and unskilled and/or self-taught (12 step) counsellors.

Michael   *How much do you believe in it? What are the chances the curve will break at some point?*

Emily *I really don't know*

Michael   *Just a guess – what do you think? What would be fair?*

Emily *But I don't know… like!*

Introduction and methodology

In this article we analyse how difficulties in working with young drug-users are connected to fundamental assumptions, standards and spatial configurations in treatment and social work practices. The article emerges from a long-term research collaboration with two agencies for young drug users, called 'U-turn' and 'HelsingUng'. On a grant from the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs, HelsingUng implemented the 'U-turn model', which was described as a new way of helping young people who use drugs. In our research projectcalled 'User-Driven Standards in Social Work' we investigated their practices. We focused on howstandards of youth life (with and without drugs) and standards of social work were reflected, modified, and created through user involvement and experimental activities.

Our contributions are to record, articulate, and problematize those practices. Our methodology is a version of participatory action- or practice research, where we, in ongoing dialogues with practitioners, attempt to develop both practices and theories in order to understand and handle problems in the field. This way of analysing and articulating social work is an exchange, transformation and translation of empirical and theoretical references, which are meant to serve as models, or prototypes for future practice (to this, Nissen, 2009, 2012). Accordingly, the main aim of this paper is to contribute to discussions in social work, psychotherapy and counselling, through analysis of data from practice, using theories of space and subjectivity. The hope is that our analysis can serve in a Hermes function (Serres, 1982), between what is often thought to be conceptually, methodologically distinct disciplines: therapy, social work, theoretical psychology, and cultural geography – and make these traditions intersect and reflect each other productively.

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Thus, one set of reasons for prototyping new ways of working with young people are the problems we saw Michael encounter in the preview. It is quite common for young clients to be extremely passive and reply in one syllable or with the impenetrable 'I don't know'. The problem is reported in the Danish clinical literature (Holmgren, 2006; Riber, 2005). The prevalent approach to the problem in the clinical community focuses on individualistic or therapeutic/technical explanations. Given that less than a fourth of the young people who have trouble with drugs attend such services (Pedersen & Frederiksen, 2012), these could suggest that the young clients are perhaps not sufficiently motivated for counselling, that the relation or therapeutic alliance between client and the counsellor/therapist/social worker is not good enough, or that the specific methods used are inadequate. But the social workers at HelsingUng and U-turn experiment with more radical ideas, which call into question some basic assumptions in counselling. One of the ways they do this is by modifying how counselling is *spatialised* – how counselling spaces are constructed and performed, and how social / youth work is performed, beyond spaces of counselling. For, although, as we saw in the preview, some quite 'traditionally' spatialized counselling is also going on, our collaborators work *experimentally* with this aspect. In this context, that does not mean that they seek to control settings tightly so that single factors can be isolated as causes through RCTs. They (and we) do not share the hope of cumulating relevant knowledge through such simplification, and the form of 'clinical control' implied would be itself counter-productive – as we shall see (cf. to this, also(Dehue, 2002). What experimenting means, here, is the deliberate creation and modification of spaces that break some basic rules and habits in the field, and the ongoing reflection and discussion of this aspect, involving professionals, clients, their friends and relatives, and researchers. Thus, 'space' is not at issue here just because we researchers have found inspiration in certain books. It is first of all something that arises in attempts to develop practices that better engage young drug users in fruitful dialogue.

Method

The research project have as mentioned been organized as a collaborative practice research, focusing initially on how standards of youth life (with and without drugs) and standards of social work were reflected, modified, and created through user involvement and experimental activities. Our research team made during 2011-2014 approximately 285 hours of participant observation

of both counseling and other activities that directly involved users, and meetings and supervision among socialworkers, researchers and other parties. The data collection was inspired by praxiological-ethnography (Mol, 2005), institutional ethnography (Smith, 2005) sociology of knowledge (Latour, 1987), Actor-network-theory (Latour, 2005) and etnography (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Spradley & McCurdy, 1988) using field notes, audio-recordings, supplemented by the collection of videos, pictures and various written materials. Social workers and to some extent users where recruited as co-researchers, and participated and influenced the research process and data collection by suggesting, identifying, discussing and participating in key sites, episodes and themes of interest. The data was coded thematically in Nvivo, and material of particular interest was transcribed. The findings, preliminary and final analyses were presented and discussed in our ongoing meetings in the research team and with social workers and users, in order to enhance trustworthiness and relevance. (Argyris & Schön, 1974)

By drawing on these different methodological and theoretical traditions, we seek to conduct an 'affirmative' critique. Since Kant, all genuine research is critical. But too often, critical theory is separated from practical involvement, dialogue and development, so that there appears to be a choice between useless academic critique and affirmative pragmatism. The 'hermeneutics of suspicion' that comes from a critical stance often tends toward irrelevance; it should be in the service of radical innovation. Our hope is to conduct a kind of 'affirmative' or 'immanent' critique that questions core aspects of practice, yet in ways that lead to articulating positive – that is, actual and relevant (and of course, in turn, criticisable) – aspects and potentials, rather than only deconstructing by negation (Raffnsøe, 2016).

The 'state of the art' from which we set off (in the sections that follow), then, is double. One is the history of spatialisations in therapy and social youth work – as a complex and contradictory tradition that our collaborators continue and disrupt. The other is the no less heterogeneous legacy of theoretical conceptualisations of space and place that can be referenced as resources for reflecting and prototyping spatial experiments.

In the following, we aim to analyse the spaces of our social worker partners as disciplinary – following a long tradition in social theory – but also, and more interestingly, as at least

sometimes different from disciplinary spaces; and, most to the point, we aim to understand those different spaces positively as what we will call affective spaces, spaces of hope, as workshops and public spaces. By conducting two analyses that in turn focus on what we might call *material* and *performative* aspects of space, spatialisation and counselling, respectively, these contrasts will make it possible for us to articulate our social worker partners' ideas of how some of the difficulties in producing self-reflexive speaking subjects in counselling and therapy are related to spatialisation, and how these problems can be worked with by transgressing some of the fundamental 'spatial dogmas' in therapy: the therapeutic setting as space of reflexivity, and psychological insight as the primary means for change. In this way this article will point toward what a post-therapeutic technology of the self might look like.

Spatiality in Counselling and Social Work

> *'Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power'* (Foucault, 1984, p. 252)

Spatiality have a long history of being used in governing and regulating subjectivity, health and deviance, in making subjects objects for knowledge and power. Indeed, the historical development of spatial dispersion of subjects in monastic cells, army units, hospitals (Foucault, 1977), asylums (Goffman, 1968; Prior, 1993), social work facilities (Donzelot, 1979) and counselling spaces, can be said to be a genealogy of the modern subject (Elden, 2002).

Drawing on Foucault, there are in particular two spatialised technologies of power that are relevant for our present inquiries: disciplinary and pastoral power. These forms of power are never found in pure form, but blend, modulate and transform into specific institutional practices and spaces by drawing on a plethora of different elements.

Exemplary fields of discipline are the armies, schools and hospitals, where spatial distribution of subjects is important to making individual subjects into objects of power and knowledge. The 'diagram' - the ideal, standard form - of disciplinary subjectification crucially includes individualisation through cellular dispersion. This makes policing, surveillance and regulation in detail possible, and it installs a permanent reflexivity, the internalisation of a normalising gaze so that subjects engage in self-surveillance and regulation of their behaviour in relation to norms

(Foucault, 1977). In Foucault's genealogy, discipline as a technology of power does not remain limited to particular institutions, but diffuses and proliferates as the modern states, subjects and institutions emerge from and produce each other, in what is termed 'the carceral', a generalised disciplinarisation and policing of society (ibid., 293 ff.). Pastoral power, prototypically found in catholic practices of confession, works through articulation of truth about inner mental states or actions. This establishes reflexivity and subjectifies, as the subject engages in a number of truth relations to the self (Foucault, 1982). These relations are mediated by an authority, either directly to God as in prayer, or to men of the church, as in confession, or in more contemporary pastoral relations to parents, school-teachers, employers, friends, therapists, etc. Here, the submission to certain moral or ethical standards is effected through dialogue and identification, rather than surveillance and allocation. Yet, of course, in many forms, pastoral power includes disciplinary elements and vice versa – as we shall see.

Pastoral technologies were to a large extent stabilised though spatial technologies within the modern disciplinary institutions. The cell, the confession booth, the interrogation room, the social workers' office, and designated spaces for therapy and counselling, are spatial technologies that seclude the subject from the world and the eyes and ears of other people. This makes articulation of intimate details both possible and required, and strengthens the relation between truth-telling and power. In this way, disciplinary and pastoral powers work by combining spatial arrangements and discursive procedures and categories in such a way that discourse and materiality are connected, expressed in and gain power from each other.

We might say that, in the Foucauldian analyses of relations between truth-telling, subjectivity and spatiality in disciplinary and pastoral power, subjectification occurs through a '*doubling of language, thought and knowledge, by practices, power relations, and material spatial environments'* (West-Pavlov, 2009, p. 120). Thus, the ubiquitous renderings of Foucauldian discourse analysis as exclusively focused on written and verbal language, in our view, miss important potentials in Foucault's texts. Obviously, this does not mean that these texts have no shortcomings. Some of these limitations become apparent when Foucault and his texts are read as resources for the creation of new prototypes for spatialising social work: The preoccupation with disciplinary and pastoral spaces rarely leads to viable alternatives, that is, positive characterisations of spaces that may be judged productive, beyond being 'Other-spaces'

(Foucault, 1986); this is an implication of Foucault's negative epistemology of 'refusing what we are' (cf. Nissen, 2013).

The rich detail in Foucault's own genealogies should be read as an encouragement to acknowledge the wide variety of spatial forms deployed in the fields of community education and social work. Street-level shops, grass-root movements, outreach patrols, theatre projects, countryside communes, school ships, etc. etc. all configure subjectivity and knowledge in different ways (Castel, Castel, & Lovell, 1982; Cohen, 1985; Prior, 1993; Vinum & Nissen, 2006). But mostly, it is central to them how individuals are surveilled and distributed, how intimate dialogues are staged, and how these (disciplinary and pastoral) relations are combined as conducive to forms of self-hood.

One kind of spatial arrangement that is generally constitutive, even in most forms of community work, is the distribution and relation between 'the clinic and elsewhere' (Dreier, 2008; Foucault, 1973; Meyers, 2013). While the 'elsewhere' is often sparsely and loosely conceptualised, typically negatively defined as 'everyday life' (Nissen, 2004), the clinic, and its special configuration as the space of counselling or psycho-therapy, has a long tradition.

Foucauldian analyses are largely unconnected with contemporary research and literature about psycho-therapy and counselling, where spatial aspects are treated very sparsely or only viewed from within given therapeutic standards. We will now turn briefly to this traditionModern forms of psychotherapy are all indebted to Freud's 'talking cure' (Freud & Breuer, 1895) and his invention of a particular psychoanalytic space. Although psychotherapy, counselling and similar practices can be seen as prototypical pastoral techniques, they have a difficult and precarious relation to disciplinary and pastoral forms of power, both in the wider society and as these are played out and handled in the therapeutic encounter.

According to Freud, the psychoanalytic setting, with the therapist sitting behind the client lying on the couch, is a technology of comfort; supporting the body, dampening external stimuli and enabling the client to relax the body and the mind; [picture 4 near here] relieving the client from the gaze of the therapist in order to disrupt the ordinary rational, normative demands from any combination of super-ego/society/farther/therapist/God (Freud, 1958). Viewed as a spatialised psy-technology (Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1998), this can be read as attempts to unsettle standard

formats of conversation that facilitate coercive, dominant forms of power, and to some extent inverse the direction of power and agency (Parker, 2010). Another reading, however, could regard the setup as an extension of those forms of subjectification by staging reflexivity and insight as means for normalisation suited for liberal subjects (Rose, 1996). This difference can also be recognised if we look closer a Freud's practice in terms of spatialisation, where an interesting oddity, or discrepancy, appears.

In Freud's few writings about the psychoanalytic space (Freud, 1958), he emphasises how the therapeutic space should dampen external stimuli and intensity and be a neutral space. Extending this, we could see it as space that in certain respects have similar qualities as disciplinary spaces in the clinic or the hospital, where the subject and her disease is purified. But when we, on the other hand, look at pictures and descriptions of Freud's actual therapeutic setting, we see a space filled with cultural reference; archaeological items, figures, hand-woven carpets, books and other paraphernalia, a heavily impregnated cultural space. In this way, we have prototypically two very different spatialisations of the therapeutic setting; a 'clinical' and a 'cultural' spatialisation.

In psychoanalytic practices, this prototypical spatial setup still exists in different versions, but many forms of psychotherapy have moved on and experimented with new configurations of space. In client-centered therapy, Carl Rogers (1951) had client and therapist sitting in chairs facing each other, to produce a more authentic and less asymmetrical relation. In systemic family therapy, Tom Andersen recounts the development of the idea of a 'reflecting team', from the original tradition of systemic family therapy with supervisors as experts behind the one-way mirror, occasionally telephoning with the therapist with advice; then experimenting with turning the lights and microphones around and having the family watch the supervisors discuss; and finally the inevitable conclusion that the whole set-up with walls and windows is superfluous (Andersen, 1992). A similar movement can be discerned in Seikkula's 'open dialogue' (Seikkula, Laitila, & Rober, 2012).

These experiments with spatial arrangements can be read as a way of working with and changing who are positioned as experts in positions of power, and destabilising patriarchal, pastoral and disciplinary positions where clients are in need of advice, truth and knowledge from – and manipulation by – powerful professionals. They generally appear to move toward dissolving the particular spatial arrangement, rather than create new spaces; along with this, the issue of

spatiality gradually recedes into the background, and evaporates as an object for analysis and research in psychotherapy.

This development is reflected in the contemporary literature on psychotherapy and counselling that typically focuses on technique, methods or the relation/therapeutic alliance, while spatial aspects are sparsely investigated (Fenner, 2011). Obviously, this could be a resurfacing of the deep-seated dualism that haunts psychology and is implicit in most research in psychotherapy, where the active mind is separated from the relatively passive bodies and matter. This leads to seeing therapeutic spaces as neutral, inert, and passive Euclidian containers in which stable self-enclosed subjects act and think, and to neglecting their cultural and productive aspects.

But, as we have seen, many professionals are already on the move away from these epistemological premises, often with a Foucauldian awareness of the 'double language' of traditional forms, certainly, but also by creating new kinds of space. Our task is to go along with them and articulate what those might be. For this, we need to expand and deepen the conceptual arsenal.

Resources for Rethinking Space

In this article, then, we try to move away from space as a Kantian epistemological a priori, an Euclidian container, a passive site, a given context for actions; we seek a processual and cultural-historical understanding of subjects and spaces as continually produced; we also, as mentioned, wish to avoid dualisms by analysing both how (therapeutic, educational etc.) spaces are active in producing subjectivity and agency, and how subjects enact and spatialise places (as therapeutic, educational, etc.), as well as transform these spaces by engaging in projects that reach beyond the confinement of the particular place.

One place to start is in a reading of Foucault, which, similar to Derrida's reading of him in 'Cogito and the History of Madness' (Derrida, 1978, p. 36 ff.), finds him addressing theoretical problems that are more general than the specific genealogical configurations he describes.

> *The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of*

which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another. (Foucault, 1986c, p. 23)

If we take Foucault to thus contribute to a theoretical current, we can see spaces and places theorised as something active, dynamic, both produced by and producing subjectivity, but first of all heterogeneous, multiple, defined by relations or connections and '*constituted as much through the flows that link it to other locations, persons, things, as it is through what goes on 'inside' it* ' (Pink, 2009, pp. 29-30). One way to articulate this approach is to portray space as an *assemblage*, composed of multiple heterogeneous elements (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Latour, 2005). In cultural geography (Massey, 2005), actor-network theory (Law, 2002), non-representational theory (Thrift, 2008), and post-structuralism (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) spaces are analysed using a plethora of different analytical or metaphorical concepts such as 'network', 'fluid', 'fire', 'smooth' or 'striated'. In addition, broadly phenomenological approaches take up Foucault's invocation of 'our living in' spaces of such heterogeneity: Before, beyond or below the spaces given to us and reproduced in our spontaneous rendering of their discursive forms, we exist as always-already 'emplaced' (Pink, 2009); place is given to us existentially before any structured space (De Certeau, 1984, Heidegger, 1963). The two approaches can be seen as internally related, since in research, that phenomenological place, even if it may be a pre-cognitive existential, is always arrived at by way of a reflection of the heterogeneity of spaces, of moving between, transforming or being in-between spaces; and conversely, the general idea of a heterogeneity of spaces, over and above their mere differences, basically, must appear to us from the point of view of our emplacement, rather than from any one of those spaces.

Our ambition for this article is not a detailed discussion with these interesting theories and concepts. Nor are we authors necessarily agreeing on how to understand them, although we do both commit loosely to a practical, relational, cultural and historical understanding of spaces, where spaces are constructed and defined by connections rather than essences. But, leaving these

discussions aside, we will – with a well-worn phrase - use these concepts as a box of tools[2] that allow us to analyse the relations between spaces, subjectivities and becoming in social work practices – yet bearing in mind how, as with other tools, our use of them in turn forms our commitments, intentions and subjectivities.

Methodologically, we agree with Dovey (2009, p. 13) that an analysis of 'place/power issues require multiplicitous methodologies linking phenomenology, spatial analysis and discourse analysis'. In order to do this, we pay attention to different parts of spatial assemblages in the different analyses, focusing both on how artefacts, signs, and other materials spatialise, and how spaces are enacted through activities. We will draw on heterogeneous materials: videos and pictures of a live counselling session, phenomenologically reflexive interviews, and participant observations done by our research team.

We have taken up the space / place distinction, although, in academic discourse, space and place are highly contested terms that show little consistency (Dovey, 2009). In this article, we use the term 'space' for designated, structured places such as the office for counselling, the living room, or the classroom, generalised as kinds of space such as 'disciplinary spaces', 'private spaces', etc. In this definition, we are close to De Certeau:

'Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalise it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.'
... 'space is a practiced place' (De Certeau, 1988, p. 117).

Yet, when we refer to a specific place by the concept for its space – e.g. 'the living room' – we also indexically point to a place that is potentially polyvalent and can become a 'counselling space', and thus may be or become a disciplinary space, a pastoral space or a public space etc. The term space, and the verbs spacing or spatialisation, allow us to analyse these processes of performing space and how different activities, articulations, and forms of subjectivity become possible.

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[2] Deleuze refers to a concept as a 'box of tools' in his conversation with Foucault in: Foucault & Bouchard (1980, pp. 207).

The Materiality of Spaces

In the preview, we saw how the social worker, Michael, was struggling to have a therapeutic conversation with Emily. Emily's body, as we see her crouching in the second screen-shot, could be read as a sign that she does not like to be there, doing that, and her response 'I don't know' to Michael's questions, confirms us in this interpretation.

How might this be a matter of space? As mentioned, we intend to make this point in two steps. First, we analyse the phenomenological and reflexive account of another young client, Molly, of her experiences with counselling in two quite different places: an office at the general drug treatment facility, and a particular room at HelsingUng called the Buddha. This will serve to highlight spatialisations as material configurations that afford, affect and predispose subjectivities. Subsequently, we return to Emily and Michael to see how different spaces can be enacted in what appears to be the same place.

Molly is a 'young mom' (22 years) who has had 12 counselling sessions with the social worker Terry during the last months. As HelsingUng have recently moved to new premises and furnished new rooms for counselling, her openness to an interview gives us a unique opportunity to inquire about 'natural experiments' with spaces for counselling. In the interview, we investigated together Molly's experiences with being in the places we term respectively 'the office' and 'the Buddha'.

The Office

In the picture [picture 5 near here] we see an office similar to the one Molly talks about in the interview. Just outside of view to the right is a desk with a computer, a phone and different papers, behind the desk on the wall is a white-board that can be used to take notes and visualise during counselling. For an ordinary Danish citizen, this could be a standard neutral, somewhat boring office at any Danish municipality. Let us see how Molly describes it.

Molly　　　*... there it was a lot like, emh, you got in and sat down there, and it was really very much 'an office'...*

Mads   *Yeah*

Molly *...that you got into, so it was, like, hard to let go, and relax, right*

Mads *Mm*

Molly   *...emh, because there was the computer, and the telephones where ringing and... on... no matter where you looked, you were reminded about where you where, and things like that.*

The computers and phones are signs that spatialise this room as an office, and not just an office, but 'really very much an office'. For many readers of this article, this may not seem so problematic, but when we place Molly statements in the context of the general difficulties reported by practitioners in counselling young people (Holmgren, 2006; Riber, 2005) and through the Foucauldian understanding of disciplinary space, it seems like the office frames Molly's situation as to do with drug problems, and subjects her to the category of being an addict. As Molly says:

Molly   *You are more conscious that it ... that you are the addict who has to sit and talk with the adult professional.*

In this way it is a disciplinary space, which installs a reflexivity in the subject as being deviant. This is of course not a matter of the specifics of that office as such, but rather of its significance as functionally, discursively and symbolically connected to other disciplinary spaces: Classrooms, schoolmasters' offices, welfare offices, and rooms for counselling, therapy and testing, where Molly, Emily and many others have experienced being observed, assessed, corrected and marginalised. In this way, the specific spatialisation emerges processually, as the subjects' particular experiences, and the material, cultural and historical references produce this specific disciplinary assemblage. Still, the material affordances of the place do matter. Molly points to the furniture:

Molly   *Well you are being pigeonholed, can you... well, I did feel a little, well that. But you just feel very small when you enter a room where you just have to sit straight up in some plastic chair, you know* (laughs).

In the office the 'plastic chairs' force Molly to sit upright, and direct her eyes to meet the professional gaze. This materiel and spatial setup emphasises, enhances and stabilises the asymmetrical relations between Molly and her counsellor Terry, installs a reflexivity, and a way for Molly to understand herself through the addict category.

But the computer and the phone are not only signs indexing this as 'office', but also technical means for inscribing and circulating discursive statements about drug use, personal history, behaviour and identity, beyond Molly's reach and control. These statements are objectified and removed from the context were they were articulated, as truths that at a later point can be read and confirmed by other professionals in order to reorganise the guidance of her behaviour, thoughts and subjectivity. As a node in a network, the office is a spatialising disciplinary technology that, through discourse, artefacts and relations to other spaces, stabilise social categories, subject positions and relations of power. This way, it is quite reasonable to attribute seemingly exaggerated forces to disciplinary spaces. In Damien Duff's discussion of young people's creation of 'private spaces', an informant talks of how the school spaces '*have their use hammered into us*' (Duff, 2009, p. 26). In a similar vein, Molly talks of '*really very much' (an office'),* with an excess of affectedness, which leads to an overload of self-consciousness, to being *'more conscious about that --- that you are the addict'.*

Disciplinary spatialisation works as particular forms of temporalisation, too.

Molly   *Because, somehow (*literally: in some place*) I think, when I sit and think back about it, then perhaps I didn't much feel like being there*

Mads *No?*

Molly *Because I became very attentive to what it was that I had been doing in my past.*

In the interview, the past situation is reconstructed as a possible unwillingness, which highlights the fundamental ambivalence typically experienced by clients who have reluctantly chosen to come, but as connected to being-at-the-office, rather than to a (lack of) motivation 'within' her or

in her relation to drugs; it was being *there* which directed attention to the actions of her personal past as problematic, and made it hard to relax and let go.

On this account, Molly is very directly expressing a problematisation that the HelsingUng social workers have often articulated: The orientation to the past as problematic closes down useful ways of talking. Taking inspiration from 'narrative, systemic and solution-focused approaches' – as they describe their approach – they try to achieve a movement toward a focus on what the young people dream about or wish for, without necessarily being preoccupied with the past. In the disciplinary space, the present is interpreted in relation to the past, and the future is absent, empty except in the negative form of the absence of the problems of the past. Here nothing new can grow. No hope or future dreams are coming to life. As Molly says:

Molly   *Because I was afraid that I'd then get stigmatised, or … I would say something wrong, or something…. 'eh, and you just really feel, you just want to get out from there again, you know'*

Molly's experiences of being judged and just wanting to leave resonate with other accounts of how youth in institutions react to counselling in such places, be it offices or designated rooms for counselling, performed as disciplinary spaces. Metaphorically, the youths are caught in the headlight of the Panopticon. The light is too strong, every movement can been seen, and their bodies freeze up and words dry out, as their shadows are cast out behind them, drawing the outlines of their pasts on the screen behind them, identifying them with their past.

This (mostly Foucauldian) analysis shows power, but also a breakdown of the pastoral space as a technology of power. In the sterile, empty standard space for counselling, the disciplinary gaze is too strong, and this closes rather that enhances the possibility for subjectification through the subjects' articulation of truth in a pastoral relation. The potentially pastoral space is over-coded by the discipline that produces silence, marginalisation, inferiority, resentment and perhaps resistance, rather than subjects who can follow their dreams and wishes and projects without being restricted from this by their drug use.

As a contrast, let us see how Molly describes 'the Buddha', a room for counselling that the social workers have manufactured, and analyse this both in relation to cultural and material aspects and also extend the analysis to include affective, enabling aspects of space.

The Buddha – a Space of Attunement

As we can see in the picture [picture 6 near here], The Buddha looks quite different from the office. And when I ask Molly about how it is for her to have counselling in here, she says:

Molly   *Mmhh... well down here I don't think so much about what I have done. Like, there I think more about it as a place where I come down to get my problems out. So I don't have to go and think about them.*

Molly is articulating the common-sense discourse about psychotherapy and counselling as 'the talking cure'. Here, she can get her problems out, in order to be relived of them, as in a confession. But why is this pastoral technology not over-coded by disciplinary forces here in the Buddha? When we inquire about this in our interviews with Molly and Terry, they say:

Molly   *It becomes more, kind of, like when you have a conversation, for instance if you are at a family party or something like that…there are always some old uncles who sit there and play the wise guys right?* (laughing*) And when you talk with them, like, it becomes more like a conversation, if you can put it like that…*

Terry   *I feel better. Also because I sit in a more relaxed… and cosy chair, compared to my office chair, there, right. It becomes a bit like… I don't think I am so formal, like I can be sometimes. It happens automatically when I am sitting in…*

Both Molly and Terry report experiences of being more relaxed, and of their relation being less formal and feels different from a professional conversation.

The formalism they renounce could perhaps be associated with current attempts to establish legitimacy and credibility by engaging in science discourses about neutral, objective experts deploying standardised methods and instruments. The more 'family-like' conversation format, in contrast, could be seen as giving voice to Molly, in the way that Philp (1979) claimed was central to the form of knowledge in social work: The holistic focus on the person instead of the problems, deviances or diseases, and the recreation of a social subject with full discursive rights, as participant of a social community. Of course, client-centered approaches that give voice and choice to users can easily be standardized; but the formalisms of standard counselling are obstacles to this endeavour, and it is likely that the spatial arrangement plays a part.

From Molly's descriptions, talking with Terry is 'like a conversation'; the assemblage Molly-and-Terry-in-the-Buddha allows Molly to become a speaking social subject, and she is recognised as such by both herself and Terry. Even though the Buddha is a designated room for counselling and there is an asymmetrical relationship in terms of knowledge and power, Molly can relax, open up and engage in conversation. In explaining this, Molly points to artefacts.

Molly   *...where I think down here [in the Buddha] there, there it's more relaxed. Well, there are couches, chairs, pillows all over and ... like.. candles, too, right?, well, all that wasn't there the other places, so it is much more relaxed to be down here.*

One way of understanding this it that the couches, chairs, pillows and candles, and the Buddha statue, are artefacts and symbols that do not connect this place to carceral institutions and involuntary confinement, but rather connects it to a broader culture and commonplace cultural practices such as meditation, yoga and hash-smoking, all practices that have a significant overlap in terms of both symbols, persons, cultural connotations and places. 'The Buddha' is constructed as designated room for counselling, but compared with the office it seems to have a greater capacity for being spatialised in different ways, perhaps because for young users like Molly it can connote both counselling, homeliness, drugs-use and non-disciplinary practices of self-development or spirituality. This is supported by the furniture; the comfortable couch that makes it possible for her to relax her body.

There are obvious parallels to the picture of Freud's office, and for Molly and many other youths[3], the spatial-material configuration of the Buddha seems to help establishing a new kind of pastoral space, or what Duff (2009) terms an 'enabling environment', that does not force Molly and Terry into strongly asymmetrical subject positions over-coded by descriptions of deviance.

Molly   *it is more like… […] not friendship-like, but, but more… well, relaxed, like… it's not as, … it **is** professional, obviously, but it doesn't feel like that when you come to a place like this'*

Molly establishes a distinction between her knowledge that this is still a professional conversation and her feeling, which denies it, and she indicates that these interesting differences may be about bodily or emotional ways of being affected. When we ask her about the difference, she has difficulties in explaining it and turns to a more phenomenological and affective phrases:

Molly   *how can I explain it, well, I…. It is just a totally different atmosphere*

We might articulate Molly's experience as special atmosphere, attunement, vibe or spirit, or through what Anderson (2009) terms an 'affective atmosphere' that affects her bodily/emotional way of being and allows an emotional re-ordering. Here, bodies relax, subjects become more open, permeable and receptive, and words flow more freely. In this way, positioning is not just a discursive, but also a material and spatial matter.

The Buddha seems to make it possible to forget and to feel, opening an affective hope (cf. Anderson, 2006): The utopian horizon of creating a social subject, as key dimension of social work, is far from merely a mirage or a cognitive scheme; it exists concretely as a carefully crafted social, material and spatial technology (Brown, 2012) that makes possible futures present in a way that does not predestine them – rather than conceptually specifiable affordances, the space seems to embody a Derrida'ean *l'avenir*.

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[3] The social workers report that some clients get 'electrified' when the see the Buddha, as this resonates with values and forms of living they adhere to. In one instance we have heard about a client who was repelled by these connotations, as she is an active Christian (which is quite rare in the Danish context).

Performing Liminal Spaces

Matter matters to how space is performed, how it finds its place, and how place is spatialised. As we have seen, material affordances and openings become part of more or less intentionally constructed spatial technologies of affect and attunement. Further, these 'technologies' are temporal and processual, in that they facilitate anticipations and becomings. Following (Stenner & Moreno-Gabriel, 2013) – drawing on a long anthropological tradition (e.g. Turner, 1995) – we can regard the spaces performed in HelsingUng as 'liminal' in that their undecidedness and hybridity call forth general issues of existence and community, yet are nevertheless constituted as moments of processes that connect affect with hope and fear. This can be viewed both in terms of the personal narrative of participants – who, for instance, find themselves in-between childhood and adulthood, deviance and rehabilitation etc. – and in terms of the social work facility that defines itself as developing new standards (and of course the professionals in their career trajectories and as on the verge of being recognised as innovators, and even in terms of our own research as hopefully creating new articulations).

The Workshop

The Buddha was thus temporally contextualised by having been materially constructed in the process of physically establishing the facility recognised as new. Molly steps into a new place, still smelling of fresh paint, but also a new space, and thus, perhaps most importantly, a *space of novelty*. Material production as architecture, building and interior decoration should never be lost from sight when we analyse performance and spatialisation Yet, the performance of space also takes place at more micro scales and with more modest alterations of material objects.

As our first example, we will return to Emily and Michael's counselling session that we began with. Before Michael the counsellor took up the standard solution-focused scaling techniques that performed a disciplinary space, which he failed to turn pastoral, the two of them were engaged in a quite different kind of activity.

Michael   *Look, we have a few things (*points to pc*). We should look into this music project*

Emily   *Yes!*

Michael   *U-turn – do you know U-turn in Copenhagen?*

Emily   *No*

Michael   *(*points to pc screen*) I just had to make this website appear.* [picture 7 near here] *U-turn in Copenhagen is a… an agency similar to ours, only … in Copenhagen, obviously, so: bigger, and … they collaborate with us. Part of what I wanted to do, like I told you, right?, is that they have these music- … groups, groups that make music. I thought you could just, I mean, we can read it together. (*Emily takes pc. Michael leans back*). No, why don't you look at it yourself.*

Emily   *(*reads*). Mm – cool!*

Michael   *(*leans forward*) Sonny – he is here (points to pc screen)* [picture 8 near here]

Emily   *'Buddy'…*

Michael   *Well, I don't know if he would – we studied together. They have some really cool gear. They also do film projects. You wanna see?*

Emily   *Sure, I'd like to see that*

They watch a music video together that is posted on the Internet by U-turn. Then Emily finds another YouTube video, which she herself has taken part in producing when she attended a drama school. She comments on how she has lost weight since then. A little later, they return to the music project idea, and Michael suggests they contact his colleague (not quite 'buddy') Sonny.

Michael   *(*Reading from pc*) I write here – I wrote to Sonny: 'I write to you because we have a young person here in HelsingUng who is very engaged in music and song writing (…) if we could perhaps make an appointment about music projects and making a demo. Let us take it up in the new year. Merry Christmas to you. Michael'. And then Sonny writes: 'Hi Michael, that sounds like a good idea. Let's talk about it in January. Merry Christmas!'*

Emily   *'Merry Christmas!'*

Michael   *Mm. (*writes on pc*) OK, now I write: 'Hello Sonny…'* [picture 9 near here]

Emily *'Happy new year!' (*laughs*)*

Michael   *'We agreed to get back to this in the new year about a music project for one of the kids at HelsingUng. I am sitting here with her now'. Eh… 'and we thought we should ask you how we should' … 'get started'?*

Emily *Yes*

Michael   *Or?*

Emily   *Yes, 'get started'*

Michael and Emily are sitting in the same place as when later they perform therapy and resistance to therapy. But the space they perform is different. First, we should notice how the technologies that connect 'here' with 'there' and 'now' with 'then' are very present, just as they were in Molly's description of 'very much an office', but in a very different way. In the office, they belonged to the professionals, as the tools of their power, and belied the confidentiality of a pastoral space embedded in a disciplinary network of spaces. Here, they invite Emily into a public that watches websites and into an emergent music project established – before our very eyes – in an equally emergent collaboration between professionals in two agencies. There, the technological network is outside of the conversation that Molly is participating in, yet frames it deeply, hammering its excess meaning into Molly even as it remains silent. Here, it is directly the object and medium of the projects they are starting up together.

This space is one of *production*: Overall, what they are beginning is a project that will end up having produced a CD that will be distributed and heard by Emily's friends and family as well as Michael's colleagues and researcher collaborators. [picture 10 near here] And in this particular situation, they are directly co-creating an email that is one of a myriad of intermediate objects in the project. The process of *objectification* is crucial to the professionals: The way that performances and representations of 'Emily' – in terms of a 'preferred narrative' such as that of a music talent rather than a drug abuser or a client – are fixed or 'frozen' in material artefacts and become stabilised and socially recognised more widely. Even the little email is a text that can be reread, forwarded etc. and represents an institutional commitment much more than would any

words spoken eye to eye – as Michael, and probably Emily, too, are well aware. When Michael invites Emily into writing the email, he is quite deliberately continuing a tradition among counsellors inspired by 'narrative practice' (White, 2007; White & Epston, 1990) to experiment with the ways that preferred narratives can be objectified – using simple techniques such as writing on flip-overs of which the client then takes a snapshot with her smartphone, writing letters or diplomas to clients, etc. Emily's CD is not simply 'something else' beside and unrelated to the counselling; it is a *transformation of counselling* viewed as a process of creating and objectifying narratives.

The space that is constituted as a node in a network is radically different when, however modestly, it works to transform that network, and reaches out to other networks that are performed as emergent. One aspect of this is production: The space we have seen Michael and Emily constitute can be likened to a *workshop*, where products are constantly in the process of formation, put together of things brought in from elsewhere and on the way to some more or less well-defined public of users in yet other places. But the fact that another part of what was performed in that same conversation was 'Solution-Focused Brief Therapy' – or rather, an attempt at it – implies that it is a *liminal* space. It is a space of neither therapy nor of music production – or both one and the other; and it is a *space of hope for the emergence of new standards of a social youth work* that fuses counselling with music production as a way of objectifying preferred narratives, and transforms counselling in the process. The space is liminal, rather than merely hybrid: It allows for something new to arise, rather than simply blending two pregiven standards.

Public Spaces: The Stage and the Agora

This implies another aspect that is equally important – the space of public display. Public spaces, as designed and performed 'arenas of political deliberation and participation' (Harvey, 2000; 2006), have evolved in multiple forms since the Athenian *agora*, not least with, on the one hand, the rise of civil society and its variable distributions of private domains, markets and commons, and, on the other hand, emerging technologies for representing community (Anderson, 1991; Goffman, 1961, 1986a, 1986c, 1990; Illouz, 2003; see also Nissen, 2012, ch. 3). The theatrical

stage evolved as a technology of display separated from political deliberation, entertaining a sovereign and later a civil society; but in Modernity, politics increasingly unfold mediated by technologies derived from theatre (Boal, 2000; Brecht, 1971; Mathiesen, 1997) – so that even extra-parliamentary action often takes the shape of 'demos' that are supposed to *represent* a broader public and stage its protest.

Disciplinary and pastoral spaces have in various ways been carefully controlled as non-public; although Foucault speculated that the disciplinary Panopticon might eventually open the position and the gaze of the guards to the public (Foucault, 1997, 293 ff.), and it is possible to find examples of this[4], the seclusion of disciplinary spaces from public surveillance is still the rule, in primary school classrooms, hospital wards, group counselling and up to Guantanamo. Social work spaces like Molly's 'office' protect the privacy of its clients, while also breaking it open to the disciplinary gaze, blocking democratic scrutiny and securing professional hegemony (as classically described by Goffman, 1961).

However, the gaze of the professions is potentially a form of public eye, too. In our example with Emily and Michael, we owe the very fact that we can watch the scene to a tradition emerging mostly in systemic counselling traditions and derivatives, of video-recording sessions as part of professional supervision and training. But the space is opening further. Michael is presenting the video to researchers as part of a collaboration that seeks beyond therapy, inviting us – writers and readers of this very text – as witnesses and participants in a discussion that is not limited to the knowledge domain and the ethics of a professional discipline, but rather that of critical socio-cultural theory and philosophy. And the video connects, as we saw, counselling with new forms of self-display that include website publishing and the production of a CD with Emily's recognisable face and name. In short, our case is a small part of the radical changes currently taking place in the configurations of discipline with the public/private divide (Illouz, 2008); and in this, HelsingUng's development aspirations are crucial. It is a liminal space of hope and becoming which is subjected to public debate; and this makes of it a *new kind of public space as a fusion of the stage and the agora*. When – in a kind of second-order reflexivity – we include our own witnessing of the scene as part of it (knowing, too, that, obviously, Emily and Michael

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[4] For instance, some Danish kindergartens have webcams that allow parents to surveil children and teachers at any time

are aware of the recording), we can see that the power flows and the potentials are different from most disciplinary or pastoral spaces. Thus, Emily's resistance to Michael's attempt at framing therapy is no longer just another self-exclusion; it connects with her enthusiastic participation in the music project to become a potent move in the transformation of the practices of HelsingUng toward new standards of social youth work.

Once we came to this hypothesis, we could see other, more or less unfolded, instances of such public spaces: Of course, the websites of HelsingUng and U-turn themselves, as including various videos and other materials where the young clients present themselves, and thus not only addressing, but also accountable to, a mixed public of youths, relatives, professionals, researchers, managers, and the general public, as agencies developing new standards of social youth work. But also the simple fact that most meetings between professionals at HelsingUng were set in the kitchen where youths would be welcome to pop in and make themselves a cup of tea; and the HelsingUng professionals making a point of it by interrupting the meeting to address the youths in a friendly and welcoming manner. And even the 'micro fact' that the door to the classroom at HelsingUng is generally kept open: The immediate reason is that youths are distracted more by the closed door (which represents disciplinary school spaces), but the implications can be articulated also in terms of an accountability to a wider public which is premised by HelsingUng's identity as development agency.

Conclusion

In this article we used theories of space to understand difficulties in counselling with young people in social work. Our cases and analysis are not universal understandings that readily can be applied to all sorts of settings, but nor is their relevance limited to specific difficulties in working with youth and drug-use. Rather we suggest to understand the cases presented as prototypes, from which we build theoretical models. The strength of our analyses is their potential relevance for many - but not all such practices. This relevance, the impact and limitations, are not pre-given in our research, but something that must be dialogically produced as professionals read, relate and reflect these proto-typical narratives and theoretical models to their own practices, and use them to modify and develop their practices, standards and themselves as professionals in the

process. The flip side of this potential relevance is that our analyses are demanding: Something further ought to be done with them. Whether, how and for what purposes they might be used are beyond our control, but our modest hope are that they be used critically and affirmative in order to understand and develop therapeutic and social work practices.

We have analysed how difficulties in talking with clients in spaces arranged or used for counselling can be understood by grasping how offices and living rooms are spatialized as disciplinary and pastoral. On the one hand this connects us to a 'negative' critique, and points to spaces negatively defined as Other than those of the institutions - everyday experiments where professionals are having conversations with clients while driving a car or sitting on a pool side during a break. In social work and other practices, that negativity can thus itself be positively conceptualised as an Outside space that constitutes a 'neutral ground' on which to meet the youth (Nissen, 2015; Vinum & Nissen, 2006). Both these 'negative spaces' – the space that is Other than the disciplinary and pastoral spaces of the treatment institution, and the Outside space – are very valuable as conceptualisations for the development or transformation of social work and counselling, since any such development must include a problematisation of how that work is spatialised.

But we have pushed on to suggest also some positive articulations of spaces constructed and performed by professionals and users at HelsingUng and U-turn, as part of their development of new standards of social youth work: Spaces of attunement, workshops, and public spaces. These positive articulations are meant to endow the material constituents, and the processes and performances of spatialisation, with an agency that is absent from the classic Euclidian container space.

Each of the three spaces considered reach beyond not only counselling, but also any such spatial instrumentalism. Attunement is about being in the world in a more fundamental sense; production is about creating something that lasts beyond its maker; and the public is an expansion of who 'we' are. These are not arguments against space as such (e.g. in favour of a phenomenological place, a network, or an all-encompassing community of everyday life), but aspects of how spaces are constituted that can be usefully reflected as part of creating spaces beyond counselling.

We find that social work, counselling and therapeutic practices could benefit from paying closer attention to these transformative, enabling and liminal aspects of space are crucial in processes of change and becoming. Being in these spaces is to find oneself in the hope of new ways to perform social youth work. But conversely, it also points to a very earthly version of hope: Hope is rendered as quite sensuous, practical, and for all to see. Hope, too, is something that takes place.

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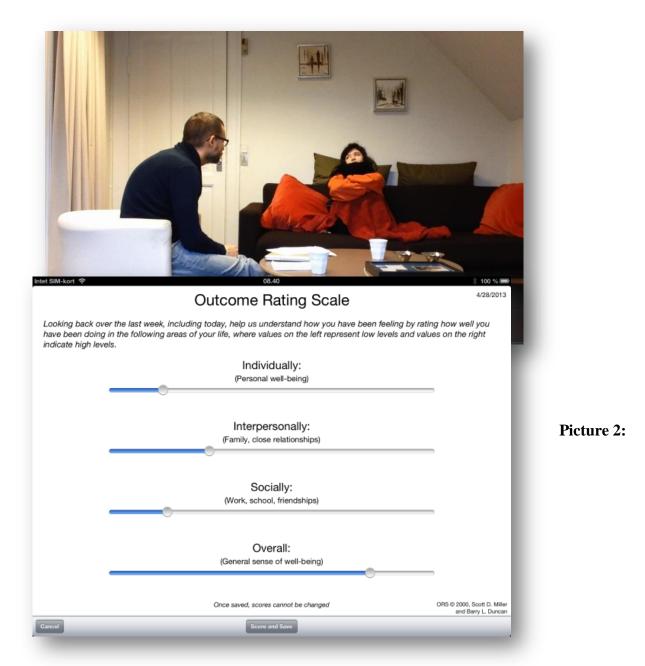Harvey, D. (2000). *Spaces of Hope*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

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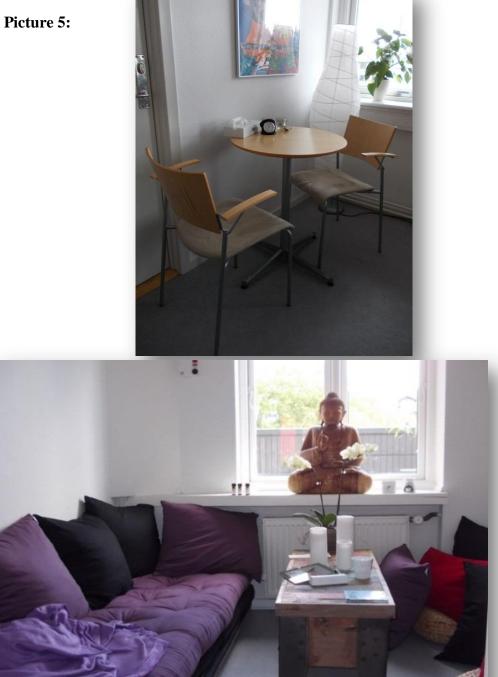White, M., & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* New York/London: Norton & Co.

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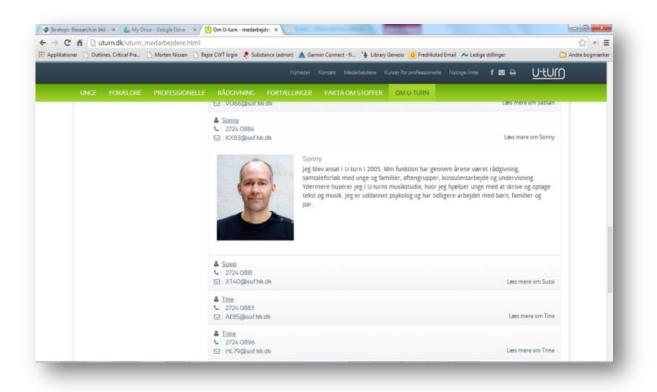
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