Moving Organizational Atmospheres

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Moving Organizational Atmospheres

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August 2019
The Doctoral School of Organisation and Management Studies is an active national and international research environment at CBS for research degree students who deal with economics and management at business, industry and country level in a theoretical and empirical manner.

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Abstract

*Moving Organizational Atmospheres* provides a conceptual and empirical exploration of the notion of organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist concept. The atmospheric is presented as an organizational phenomenon with relevance for decision makers, organizations and managers as it concerns aesthetic, affective-emotional and spatial qualities of the work environment, but also addresses issues of profound cultural transformation and social change. As such, organizational atmospheres are considered part of an ongoing aesthetization of society that pervades the emotional-affective climate of organizations and everyday human actions to respond to desires, creativity and the quest for constant growth.

Looking at organizational atmosphere from a non-dualist perspective, shows organization as an aesthetic phenomenon manifesting itself in and stimulating the emotional-affective climate, the practices, the spaces and the ways of working in organizations. Both conceptually and analytically the thesis contributes to the discussions in the fields of organizational aesthetics as well as the affective and spatial turn in organization studies, by addressing how organizational atmospheres work when embraced as a fluid phenomenon and by providing an analytically experimental account of the experiencing and producing organizational atmosphere based on field work in two organizations.

Considering organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist notion, implies embracing ambiguity by attending to subject and object as forming a coherent whole in human experience. The thesis presents a systematic and in-depth engagement with a ‘German’ non-dualist tradition of thinking the atmospheric in organization studies by tracing the philosophical roots in the German phenomenological tradition, spearheaded by the neo-phenomenology of Hermann Schmitz and Gernot Böhme’s aesthetics. Coherently, dealing empirically with organizational atmosphere raises a set of pivotal ontological and epistemological questions, which leads to arguing for a performative research approach to engage with organizational atmosphere as a relational ontological matter coming into momentary presence in the lived space through the embodied affective experience. As such the thesis reflects a move towards understanding organization as an atmospheric phenomena reflecting an aesthetic and processual apprehension, whereby not only considering organizations as part of an aesthetization of society, but proposing a rethinking of organizational categories and the ways of writing organization.
**Resumé**


Kigger man på organisatoriske atmosfærer ud fra et ikke-dualistisk perspektiv, viser organisation sig som et æstetisk fænomen, der manifesterer sig i og stimulerer det affektive klima, rum og de daglige måder at arbejde på i organisationer. Både konceptuelt og analytisk bidrager afhandlingen til diskussioner inden for organisationsestetik samt den affektive og rumlige vending indenfor organisationsstudier. Det sker ved at adressere, hvordan organisatoriske atmosfærer virker, når de anerkendes som et flydende fænomen og ved at tilvejebringe en eksperimentel analytisk tilgang til oplevelsen og designet af organisatoriske atmosfærer ud fra et empirisk feltarbejde i to organisationer.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

*Everything depends on the feel of an atmosphere and the angle of arrival.*

(Stewart, 2010: 340)

*... the atmosphere within a firm, that is the aesthetic or emotional ‘feeling’ within the firm that affects the satisfaction or happiness of employees with their employment. Managers who wish to enjoy the operational and financial benefits of a wholesome and pleasant company atmosphere must then understand and control the environmental factors of that atmosphere.*

(Picard and Grönlund, 1999: 5)

In the above citation Picard and Grönlund emphasize atmosphere as central to the life of an organization, to the well-being of its employees and to the financial performance of the company. It additionally underlines the atmosphere as an aesthetic-emotional sensation intrinsically linked with the surrounding environment. The issue of organizational atmospheres also surfaces in a wide array studies reigning from discussions on the relation between work environment and organizational performance. There are streams considering how the physical environment, social structure, emotions and stress interrelate (Lazarus, 2006; Tuvesson et. al. 2011). Scholars in organizational psychology focus on the ways that organizations’ emotional dimension, such as playful atmospheres and affectively charged events, impact innovation, creativity and organizational climate (Ekvall, 1997; Amabile et al., 2005; Amabile, 2017). Still others have explored the role of architecture and spatial design in their capacity to create an aesthetic environment with special atmospheric powers, including ‘healing architecture’ for hospitals (Frandsen et. al., 2009) and ‘therapeutic landscapes’ in prisons (Moran and Turner, 2018). To all this should be added that the EU-commission also argues for the creation of innovation-friendly environments by promoting workplace innovation articulating organizational changes as being part of a broader policy agenda for innovation, creativity and sustainable growth (EU Commission, 2014).
These different perspectives highlight and exemplify why it is relevant for decision makers, organizations and managers to understand and engage with organizational atmospheres in their aesthetic, affective-emotional and spatial qualities of the work environment. Focusing on organizational atmosphere, this thesis considers all of these discussions interesting and fruitful. However, the shift to the atmospheric seems to have even broader repercussions with regard to issues of profound cultural transformation and social change, and thus more fluid processes of organizing, as hinted at by the statements of the EU Commission (EU commission, 2014: 16f.). In this case, the atmospheric is presented as an organizational phenomenon, for which reason the relation between humans and the environment seems to become a question of producing and controlling organizational atmospheres.

On a similar note, in recent years several influential studies have linked the enhanced focus on aesthetics, creativity, innovation and growth to a more profound cultural transformation and development of capitalist forces (Florida, 2002; Sennett, 2006; Böhme, 2016; Reckwitz, 2014; Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). In their seminal work on ‘the new spirit of capitalism’, Boltanski and Chiapello outline how the development of a network-based and flexible organization has changed the way that work is organized as well as sought to improve working conditions and the level of innovation at workplaces (2005: 217ff.). However, they argue that these changes have come at the cost of employees’ material and psychological security, with artistic practices and criticism having been co-opted by the new spirit of capitalism, thereby rendering capitalism immune to critique. Boltanski and Chiapello call attention to some of the more fundamental changes that have occurred in organization and aesthetics, which require a more critical assessment of atmosphere and their controlled used in organizations. As such, the discussion reflects other critical discussions on capitalism’s development, where floating structures in the organization of work have emerged to adversely affect the individual (Sennett 2006), as well as discussions on the need for different rationalities to address the crises of legitimacy and motivation (Habermas, 1973, 1997), but especially resonates with considering organizational atmosphere in the realm of discussions on aesthetic capitalism (Böhme, 2016; Reckwitz, 2014: 11).

Both Böhme and Reckwitz see aesthetic atmospheres as inherent to any discussion of aesthetic capitalism (see Böhme, 2016: 26; Reckwitz, 2014: 24; Michels and Steyaert, 2018: 44). Atmospheres are part of seeing the aesthetization of society as an ubiquitariy phenomena that pervades all human actions to respond to desires, creativity and the quest for constant growth. Thereby basically arguing, in line with Boltanski and Chiapello, that the aesthetics become part of economic
capitalism and not just a separate object of production (Böhme, 2016: 99; Reckwitz, 2014: 11). Aesthetics turns into an engagement with the sensory-affective perception of everyday environments, manifested as the aesthetic perception and production of atmospheres through, e.g., interior workplace design and organizational architecture, but also at shopping-mall and political events (Böhme, 1995: 13ff.). Böhme, like Reckwitz, argues that the current societal development constitutes a move towards an aesthetic capitalism addressing affect and sensory elements rather than formal rationality (Reckwitz, 2014: 319; Böhme, 2016). The presence of aesthetic atmospheres as an affective and physical environment underlines affective-aesthetic qualities as a relational feature:

The aesthetic in this sense is thus in any case no mere intrapsychical phenomenon, but moves in a social space of subjects and objects, in which perceptual-affective relations are constantly tied. (Reckwitz, 2014: 24)

Reckwitz, like Böhme, presents a view on aesthetics as being fundamentally relational, a view that reflects how atmospheres are constituted as part of perception and thus addresses how the affective-aesthetic environment is part of configuring and reconfiguring the social in contemporary organizations. Reckwitz argues for the aesthetic constitution as a contrast (or supplement) to rationalization and differentiation of society, which puts focus on the sensuous and affective in social forms and processes. According to Reckwitz, creativity is the name for an aesthetic regime of the new, which serves to emphasize the aesthetization of the social. As such, the focus on creativity responds to the lack of affect in the organization of modernity (Beyes, 2018, 15ff.)

Despite central differences between Böhme and Reckwitz in their views on aesthetic capitalism, they both draw attention to the enhanced aesthetization of the everyday, including organizational environments, thus situating the attention to organizational atmosphere in understanding organization, but also the concatenation with broader societal and cultural developments. Atmosphere as an aesthetization of the everyday encompasses a ubiquitous phenomenon that manifests itself in and stimulates the emotional-affective climate, the practices, the spaces and the ways of working in organizations (Beyes, 2016; Julmi, 2015; Reckwitz, 2014: 11; Böhme, 2016), which also shifts the aesthetic-political impetus of atmosphere from representational to a relational politics of the everyday (Jørgensen and Borch, 2018), where the aesthetic focus is no longer defined as an object, but attends to performative qualities (Reckwitz, 2014: 112f; Böhme, 1995: 166ff.; Beyes, 2016). The discussion thereby gets back to the issues of organizational climate and workplace innovation, although maintaining that organization be approached from an aesthetic and critical perspective. As such, this thesis seeks to engage with organizational atmosphere in its configurations in contemporary working life, thereby arguing that dedicating attention to the
production and impact of organizational atmospheres is a relevant undertaking in organizations studies.

Organizational atmosphere

Overall, the term atmosphere resonates with most people, its being part of our everyday language when, e.g., we talk about a bad atmosphere in a meeting or simply bad weather. The research done here puts an emphasis on atmosphere as the everyday experiences of aesthetics, affect and space as part of organizational life. Still, although atmosphere may have been touched upon in organizational studies, Julmi stresses in his review that a central problem in organizational and management studies is that the notion of atmosphere is treated as a dualist conception, which builds on a separation between subject and object that reduces the inherent ambiguity of the notion and deprives it of its relevance (Julmi, 2017: 20). Instead, Julmi calls on organization studies scholars to systematically consider the concept of atmosphere as a non-dualist notion and thus to embrace ambiguity by seeing subject and object as forming a coherent whole in human experience. This thesis fundamentally responds to this call, which reflects atmosphere seen as part of an aesthetization of organizations’ everyday, thus reiterating broader societal and political discussions.

In the past decades such systematic considerations concerning the notion of atmosphere and its non-dualist nature have spread from philosophical discussions (Schmitz, 2014a; Böhme, 1995; Sloterdijk, 2004; Griffo, 2010) to other disciplines like architecture (Zumthor, 2005, 2010; Pallasmaa, 2007, 2014; Fahl, 2016; Albertsen, 2013, 2016; Kazig, 2007, 2018), human geography (Anderson, 2009, 2016a; Hasse, 2014, 2015; McCormack, 2015; Bille et al., 2015) and the social sciences (Biehl-Missal and Saren, 2012; Stewart, 2011; Gugutzer, 2006; Heibach, 2012a), to mention a few. Recently, atmosphere as a non-dualist notion has tapped into organization studies, where the notion of organizational atmosphere is a minor, yet arguably up-and-coming concern (Borch, 2009, 2014; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Beyes, 2016; Julmi, 2015, 2017; Michels, 2015; Strati, 2009: 239; 117).

Talking of atmosphere as a non-dualist notion accentuates an ambiguous and fluid phenomenon often described as airy and constituting an in-betweeness (see Böhme, 1995: 23, 2013a: 37; Schmitz, 2014a: 19; Julmi, 2017: 20, 28; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Borch 2009; Beyes, 2016). As a non-dualist notion, atmosphere approaches the undefined or the ‘un-representational’, which makes it difficult to define as a typical object of investigation (Rauh, 2012b; Heibach, 2012a; Böhme,
The challenge with atmosphere, as Anderson and Ash frame it, is

... that an atmosphere is at once a condition and it itself conditioned. (Anderson and Ash, 2015: 35)

In this perspective, an engagement with atmosphere presents an unstable ontological status, which means that the notion of atmosphere has struggled for legitimacy and to be considered an empirical phenomenon of academic interest (Böhme, 2001: 51; Böhme, 2013a: 29; Böhme, 1995: 29; Schmitz, 2014a; Heibach, 2012a: 12). This may also explain why the notion in an organizational context, both theoretically and empirically speaking, has only recently received limited attention despite its expected practical relevance (see Borch, 2009; Julmi, 2015: 16; Julmi, 2017; Beyes, 2016; Michels, 2015; Michels and Steyaert, 2016). As such, approaching organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist concept asks not only to consider organizations as part of an aesthetization of society but also to rethink scholarly forms and categories of representation and rationality. So to engage with a systematic consideration of organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist notion is in this thesis argued to require a thorough conceptual elaboration, by tracing the philosophical roots as to grasp the potential in organization studies. The conceptual roots refer to the German phenomenological tradition of Hermann Schmitz and Gernot Böhme, who have been seen as forerunners in the conceptualization of atmosphere (see Schmitz, 2014a; Böhme, 1995: 29; Sloterdijk, 2004: 35; Julmi, 2017). As will be shown, their approaches link atmosphere to issues like affect, space and aesthetics, thus offering a view of space and aesthetics as a way of coming-into-the-world and reframing life in modern society. Accordingly, the thesis seeks to contribute conceptually to the burgeoning interest in organizational atmosphere in organization studies, reflecting that atmosphere been outlined as central concern to a proposed new aesthetic research agenda for management and organization studies (Beyes, 2016).

Generally speaking, organizational atmosphere seen as a ubiquitary phenomenon permeating the everyday lives of organizations and society further accentuates its empirical pertinenence. However, dealing with the notion of atmosphere empirically raises a set of pivotal ontological and epistemological questions regarding the need for adequate methods and the ways of ‘representing’ the non-representable (Rauh, 2012b; ch.5; Bille et al., 2015: 33; Heibach, 2012: 12). Thus, to acknowledge the relevance of engaging empirically with the notion of organizational atmosphere (Borch, 2009: 238; Julmi, 2017: 20; Anderson and Ash, 2015; Stewart, 2011; Beyes, 2016; Strati, 2009: 239), means to tap into broader discussions on research paradigms and traditions. Due
to the magnitude of such discussions, which touch on fundamental epistemological and ontological questions, this thesis will be unable to duly consider every element, but will seek to reflect central aspects in an endeavour to engage with the empirical research on organizational atmosphere. Understanding atmospheres as a real, non-representational and aesthetic phenomena, is seen as building on interdisciplinarity, including drawing on inspiration and methods from areas like arts and aesthetics (Heibach, 2012: 12; Anderson and Ash, 2015; Taylor and Hansen, 2007; Rauh, 2012b; Warren, 2008). It will be shown how an engagement in tracing and elaborating the notion of atmosphere as non-dualist builds a basis for approaching organizational atmosphere empirically, which in turn argues for a performative research approach. As such, the thesis seeks to contribute to ways of doing empirical research within a non-dualist perspective, also acknowledging, as Böhme puts it, that

*The implicit knowledge of atmospheres, contained in the practise of aesthetic work, will on the other hand be very important for the continuous development of the theory itself. (Böhme, 2001: 53)*

Considering organizational atmosphere as an aesthetic phenomenon resonates with the attention paid to the distinction between reception and production aesthetics (Böhme, 1995; 31; Beyes, 2016). Yet, pointing towards the development of aesthetics as a perceptive-affective relation that evolves in the encounter. Dealing with organizational atmosphere as an aesthetic phenomenon accordingly means dealing with the affective-emotional as well as spatial dimension in the relation between humans and their environment. As such, the thesis is considered to situate itself inside and contribute to three related strands of research in organization studies.

First, a focus on the aesthetic nature of atmosphere reflects key discussions in the area of organizational aesthetics, considering tacit sensory knowledge and everyday practices as a pivotal source of knowledge in organizations (Strati, 1999, 2000, 2003; Höpfl and Linstead, 1997; Linstead and Höpfl, 2000). This approach has accentuated an alternative way of approaching knowledge and analysing organization by attending to a wider range of artefacts, human bodies and their interaction. Research in organizational aesthetics has accordingly altered traditional representational approaches and encouraged methodological engagement that addresses sensory knowledge and a.o. draws on art-based methods to understand the relation between artefacts, humans and organization (Taylor and Hansen, 2005; Warren, 2008).

Second, the thesis relates to the spatial turn in organization studies and the emphasis on how corporate architecture and space work in an organizational context (Dale and Burell, 2008, 2014;
Clegg and Kornberger, 2006, Clegg et al., 2008; Kornberger and Clegg, 2004; O’Doherty, 2008; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011). Overall, the spatial turn argues for considering space as an important feature of organizations in terms of power and social dynamics, but potentially also for viewing space as a performative-active force in itself. Third, the latter argument connects with discussions in the turn to affect, emphasizing the unintentional bodily capacity to be affected and to affect, thus drawing attention to emotional and embodied aspects in organizations (Thrift, 2008; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Fotaki et al. 2017; Gherardi, 2017). An attention to affect in organization studies problematizes the subject-object dichotomy by working with the relation between bodies and things, which opens for thinking the organization of the social and political.

The thesis shows how organizational atmosphere contributes to these research strands in organization studies by relating to aesthetics, architecture and work practices. Sensory knowledge and aesthetic perception are rendered as components in understanding the relation between artefacts, humans and organization, calling for experimental and performative methods in analysing two specific organizations. This reflects a move towards understanding organization as an atmospheric phenomenon (Beyes, 2016: 115). Accordingly, the thesis has been titled ‘Moving Organizational Atmospheres’ so as to reflect a variety of movements. To this end, first, by reflecting the affective qualities of atmospheres as sensory and existentially touching, a moving experience. Second, an empirical investigation of the relocation of organizations is conducted by following both the architectural design practices of a firm of architects and the practical relocation of a public-sector organization, focusing on organizations moving. Third, by adding to moving the perspectives on organization into an aesthetic and processual apprehension. Finally, knowledge is articulated as an inherently moving and explorative process that reflects a continuous oscillation between the actual and potential.

Reseaching organizational atmosphere

The key argument in this thesis is that the concept of organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist notion gives impetus to the recent turns to the affective constitution and moving spatialities of organized life, both theoretically and empirically, offering a view on organization and the work environment through what atmospheres do to the human body, the active use of space and aesthetic experience. Further, the thesis provides a first in-depth engagement with a ‘German’ non-dualist tradition of thinking the atmospheric in organization studies. To consider organizational
atmosphere as non-dualist notion, attends to Julmi’s (2017) suggestion of giving the systematic consideration by tracing the philosophical roots in the German phenomenological tradition, spearheaded by the neo-phenomenology of Schmitz and Böhme’s aesthetics. Following these lines of thought, the thesis attends to the embodied-affective experience of environments as constitutive for the perception of atmosphere, thereby making the case for the existential experiences of being alive and attuning to the world (Böhme, 1995; Schmitz, 2014a). Atmosphere as fluid in-betweenness constitutes itself as a relational matter coming into momentary presence in the lived space through the embodied affective experience. The spatial character of atmospheres reflects moving emotional powers (Böhme, 1995: 29; Schmitz, 2014a: 30) that unfold a collective sense of space that architecture is able to form (Böhme, 1995: 18, 2013; Sloterdijk, 2004; Zumthor, 2005; Reckwitz, 2012: 254f.). By way of an in-depth engagement with the German phenomenological tradition, an attention to organizational atmosphere is unfolded as a relational ontology whereby knowledge is considered processually. Fundamentally, the engagement with aesthetic and sensory experience presents a shift from a focus on ‘what we know’ to ‘how and why we know’ something (Taylor and Hansen, 2005: 1213; Hasse, 2015: 45; Böhme, 1995: 47; Schmitz, 2014b: 14). This not only reflects atmosphere as an affective-embodied experience of how it feels to be in a space, but also asks how space takes part in forming the experience.

Against this background, the two main research question of this thesis are:

**How do organizational atmospheres work?**

**How are they experienced and how can they be designed?**

A question asking how organizational atmospheres work tends to reflect the aesthetic nature of the phenomenon, emphasizing the non-dualist perspective as enforcing a relational and processual approach that abstains from definitive answers in favour of pursuing a continuous questioning (Schmitz, 2014b; 14; Vannini, 2015a). Attending to the relation between human and environment, the sub-questions ask how organizational atmospheres are experienced and can be designed. This reflects Böhme’s aesthetic perspective on atmosphere, articulating the distinction of the receptive and the production sides of atmosphere as the affective-embodied experience of architecture in particular (1995: 31; 2016: 126,) — a distinction that has been a lineage of this thesis itself and that the analysis has been structured around. Although a non-dualistic notion of the atmospheric entails a focus on the intertwined processes of production and reception, the distinction in this thesis is used heuristically as a means of helping to move the analysis along. As such, Böhme’s
suggestion that organizational atmospheres be approached from two sides (receptive and productive) due to the ‘ontological vagueness’ by being an in-between of subject and object (Böhme, 2013a: 103) has been considered as a starting point for this emerging area of research in organizational studies.

The research question addresses the conceptual elaboration of the notion of atmosphere in order to understand how organizational atmospheres work. Further, the thesis looks empirically at how users (organizations) perceive and experience atmospheres in everyday organizational life, an exploration achieved by following a public-sector organization in its move to new facilities. In addition the thesis empirically approaches the production side of atmospheres as part of the aesthetic work processes in a firm of architects focused on designing interiors for organizations. Each of these sides contribute to the understanding of organizational atmosphere by addressing the organizational approaches to, e.g., embodied communication, spatial aesthetization, the organization of the social as well as power structures. Analytically the empirical research contributes with a performative approach, reflecting the non-representational and processual character of organizational atmosphere. This not only presents a perspective on organizations and their everyday life but also opens up space for thinking-organization rather than thinking-about-organization. As such, the thesis and the empirical research on atmosphere provides an avenue for rethinking the requirements that conventional social science research and representationality pose in terms of issues like objectivity and validity. Yet, this has been recognized as a premise of this research, reflecting Heibach’s (2012: 16) point that atmospheric research is important, as atmospheres hold a strong potential for manipulation, which the theoretical and methodological approaches should reflect, but which also requires a critical cultural view on the ubiquity of staged space and its implications. Clearly, the critical dimension is an important aspect when looking at organizational atmospheres and the extent to which they entail distortive and manipulative power structures (Reckwitz, 2014: 357; Böhme, 1995: 36). However, returning to the discussion on aesthetic capitalism, one notes that an engagement with organizational atmosphere also provides a basis for a fundamental cultural critique (Grossheim and Kluck, 2010; Böhme, 2008a; Schmitz, 2010; Reckwitz, 2014, 2017). However, a cultural critic not targeting values, normative ambitions or absolute goals, but one that might instead be seen as articulating the uncertain by continuous improvement, that contributes to ‘promote creativity, strengthen social competences and unfolds individual opportunities’ (Grossheim and Kluck, 2010: 20, 23).

In sum, the project aspires to contribute to the nascent discussion on organizational atmosphere in relation to organizational research, broadly speaking in the field of organizational aesthetics as well as the spatial and affective turn. One contribution is a conceptual development of
the notion of organizational atmosphere seen from a non-dualist perspective, which it is argued, points at a perspective of organization involving space, affect and aesthetics. The thesis additionally contributes with an empirical investigation of organizational atmosphere in two organizations, thus seeking to add to broader discussions on how organizations might understand and engage with atmosphere as part of their experience and design of corporate architecture. Third and finally, in line with taking a non-dualist approach to organizational atmosphere and the associated ontological-epistemological concerns, the thesis methodologically embarks on an experiment with doing performative research and employing alternative writing styles.

Outline of the thesis

The thesis consists of nine chapters.

**Chapter 1** contains the introduction, framing the general relevance of organizational atmosphere as part of both an organizational and a broader societal concern. The chapter is primarily intended to provide a broad overview of the thesis, emphasizing organizational atmosphere as an aesthetic and non-dualist notion. The chapter argues for systematically considering organizational atmosphere in a way that reflects its fluid and in-between nature. It is further argued that this consideration is reflected in an empirical investigation focused on the intersection of architecture and organization. The thesis essentially argues that organization should be considered as an atmospheric phenomenon, reflecting an aesthetic-affective perspective on organization.

**Chapter 2** contains a literature review situating the thesis in the fields of organizational aesthetics as well as in the turns to space and affect in organization studies. The chapter outlines central discussions in the three related areas of organizational research that resonate with key concerns of in approaching atmosphere, which concern taking an aesthetic perspective on organization, considering the impact of space and materiality as active forces of organization as well as addressing affective-embodied engagement with the world as a pre-reflexive experience. The literature review ultimately presents organizational atmosphere as a nascent perspective for viewing organization as an atmospheric phenomenon, which might be seen as merging key discussions of the different turns presented. It is argued that the view on organizational atmosphere situates itself in the fields of organizational aesthetics, the affective turn and the spatial turn. Such a view contributes to a perspective on organization that emphasizes the aesthetic feature as part of a continuous becoming
and reframing of everyday life in organizations. This further elicits explorative methodological perspectives in organizational research and how to approach atmospheres empirically.

**Chapter 3** traces the conceptual-philosophical roots of the notion of atmosphere as originating from a German (neo)-phenomenological tradition, thus emphasizing the receptive side of atmosphere. The chapter presents the concept of atmosphere as conceived through the neo-phenomenology of Hermann Schmitz, who has been a major influence for Gernot Böhme in his declaration of atmosphere as a new aesthetics. Schmitz’ neo-phenomenology presents a two-fold body concept allowing for embodied communication as a perceptive-affective relationality to for experiencing atmosphere. In discussion with Böhme, the chapter outlines perception as a relational matter that underlines the concatenation with space as being fundamentally existential by forming the embodied attunement. Böhme’s attention to materiality is shown to address performance as a critical actualization, whereas Schmitz’s focus opens a way for performing atmospheres as an existential potentiality of them. The chapter finishes by arguing that Schmitz’s notion of the situation and his approach to phenomena are productive ways of engaging with the analysis of organizational atmosphere. The chapter presents perception as a way of performing organizational atmospheres.

**Chapter 4** continues the conceptual-philosophical attention given to the notion of atmosphere, but this time with a focus on the production side, especially as seen in architectural design. The chapter attends to the material side of atmosphere, guided by Böhme’s aesthetic understanding, but building on an alternative ontological apprehension presented in chapter 3. The chapter argues that Böhme’s argument that architecture produces atmospheres also resonates with Schmitz’s neo-phenomenology, which thus provides a way of conceptualizing the production of atmosphere as an expanded scenography. The chapter shows how architecture in the production of atmosphere is a way of composing materialities, colour, light, etc., thereby creating a condition for experiencing the atmospheric qualities of space as an active force that constitutes a spacing dynamic of organizational atmosphere. Further, the chapter presents a critical view of the anaesthetic office landscape as well as the instrumental ‘use’ of atmosphere, which, it is argued, do not reflect a non-dualist approach. The potential of producing organizational atmosphere architecturally relies on the spacing quality, which reflects a critical architecture that pays attention to inhabitation and inhabitants as a process of learning and exercising. The chapter presents the aesthetic production as a way of spacing organizational atmospheres.

**Chapter 5** is the methodological chapter, reflecting the argument of conceiving organizational atmosphere as non-dualist and relational phenomena, whereby proposing
to consider the methodology as taking an experimental and performative approach to the empirical research, which engages with the notion of situations as constituting knowledge as constantly moving, providing for a processual forming of ‘evidence’. As the chapter presents the researcher’s engagement with the field – a public-sector organization and an architectural firm – the research is shown to take a performative approach that reflects into the researcher’s position and the status of the empirical material. Considering performative research in line with non-representational thinking, the chapter argues for approaching writing as a method of inquiry that will allow for an animated presentation of organizational atmosphere as an analytical assemblage, thus opening up spaces for thinking organization and organizational atmosphere.

**Chapter 6** contains the empirical analysis focusing on the production of organizational atmosphere in the firm of architects. The chapter presents situations from the firm’s architectural design practice, showing how aspects in composing atmospheric interiors hold the promise of engaging actively with organizational atmosphere in the future premises of commissioning organizations. The analysis shows a non-linear design process that attends to different chords of embodied sensation being played out in order to find the commissioning organization’s future melody and to simultaneously tune the organization to its future space. The chapter maps the main design activities in the organization that are part of the architectural design process.

**Chapter 7** contains the empirical analysis focusing on the experience of organizational atmosphere in a public sector organization. The chapter presents situations from the organization arising during its move back into its redesigned new facilities and the aesthetic-affective experience of the organizational spaces. The analysis shows the multiplicity of organizational atmospheres as part of the social and political organizations of space, considered as a variety of stages for performing organizational atmospheres. The analysis accentuates organizational atmospheres as a situational politics of the everyday, where the range of affective-existential happenings impact on the everyday organization and its well-being. The chapter maps out some of the main spaces in the organization where atmospheres work, alter and influence its everyday life.

**Chapter 8** discusses how the findings of the thesis have opened up for ways of engaging with organization atmosphere as a pertinent phenomenon for organization studies, especially with regard to its interest in spatial and affective approaches to organizational life. From the animated analytical accounts of the two empirical chapters, the discussion draws out a set of thematic findings on organizational atmosphere that give heft to rethinking Heidegger’s seminal triad of ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ used as a heuristic approach and that offers a way of thinking organizational
atmosphere as ‘Spacing, Performing, Moving’. This, then, reflects the inherent ambiguity in organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist conception, where the enmeshed relation between space and human perception trickles into processual thinking. This serves to spur an ontological reflection that leads the discussion to present a conceptual contribution arguing for apprehending organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between that reflects a processual understanding of a double-sided relationality.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis, presenting the multifaceted potential of organizational atmosphere as well as acknowledging the limits of the current study. The research will show itself to have provided a systematic consideration of the notion of organizational atmosphere that amounts to a proposition for an ontological apprehension of the in-between and that resonates with broader discussions on efficiency, well-being, creativity, strategy and aesthetic capitalism.
Chapter 2: Situating Organizational Atmosphere

*Organization invariably is an atmospheric phenomenon.*
(Beyes, 2016: 115)

This chapter situates the thesis – as well as the notion of organizational atmosphere in recent research streams – in organizational and management studies. As framed in the introduction, general societal developments have raised key questions about how organization is to be understood and analysed, and these concerns, among others, point to a future agenda for organization studies that thematizes the aesthetic and atmospheric aspects of organizations (Reckwitz, 2015; Beyes and Metelman, 2018; Beyes, 2016). Inherent to these questions are fundamental discussions on organization relating to the conceptualization of organization as a spatial, affective and aesthetic phenomenon. Overall, approaching organizational atmosphere is in this thesis seen to be placed and to contribute to discussions primarily in the fields of organizational aesthetics and in the spatial and affective turns in organization studies.

These turns have generally broadened the thematic and conceptual scope of organizational studies by indicating how aspects like affect, embodiment, aesthetics and non-human factors impact organization and organizing. As such, these turns take organizational studies into areas beyond those on which instrumental and rationality-based understandings of organization traditionally focus. Not only do these turns aim at different thematic approaches, but they also imply shifts that pose ontological and epistemological questions to the study of organization. Accordingly, these recent fields in organization studies present a platform that is already engaging with themes akin to the notion of atmosphere, or have even begun embracing the term itself. Moreover, these areas have generated valuable insight and discussions about knowledge creation and methodology, all of which importantly help to deal with a theme like organizational atmosphere.
Approaching organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist notion proves to be making a promising contribution to organization and management studies, at least viewed in relation to the above-mentioned turns. Yet, as Bille et al. point out, the notion of atmosphere inherently comes with some fundamental challenges, especially when empirically approached:

*Empirically grounded approaches to atmosphere furthermore raise the pivotal questions if the above-mentioned vagueness of atmosphere is an ontological dimension of atmosphere or if it is an epistemological problem (Rauh, 2012; ch.5). Do we, in other words face a phenomenon vague by nature, are our methodological means of approaching atmosphere inadequate, or is our language for representing and communicating atmosphere limited? (Bille et al., 2015: 33)*

Since this thesis intends to engage organizational atmosphere both theoretically and empirically, such questions constitute underlying concerns running throughout the thesis, but are also areas in which the thesis aims to make a general contribution. Despite the challenges, academics consider research in (organizational) atmospheres as auguring a fertile ground for interesting research and have thus stressed the need for further work, including empirical research (Heibach, 2012: 12ff.; Rauh, 2012b, 2014; Böhme, 1995, 2013; Borch, 2009; Julmi, 2015, 2017; Bille, 2015; McCormack, 2008b, 2010; Vannini: 2015; Beyes, 2016). From this perspective organizational atmosphere can be said to engage with the undefined, the ephemeral and a culture of presence, thus acknowledging a need to reach beyond established social-scientific thinking and methods. As such, the thesis is also developed with an attention to the more fundamental discussions on scientific knowledge production and with an awareness that the premise of taking a non-dualist perspective taps into central epistemological and ontological concerns.

The chapter first gives a short presentation on understandings of organization and how atmosphere has been considered in a dualist frame. This enables a brief reflection on the variety of premises for apprehending organization and considering the relation to organizational atmosphere. At the same time, the chapter describes how organizational atmosphere might align with research discussions on organizational climate and culture, although this is not where the research situates itself. The chapter will subsequently present the three different turns in organization studies that make up the field for situating this thesis. The turn to aesthetics is the pivotal turn, which further resonates with developments in the turns to space and affect in organization studies. These turns can be said to have paved the way for an emerging interest of research into organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist phenomenon. It should be noted that the three turns are not confined to organization studies put reflect broader turns in academic research and are connected with discussions in fields as
disparate as cultural geography, social psychology, sociology, feminist studies, anthropology, neuroscience and performance studies. On the one hand, these turns reflect the inherent interdisciplinarity entailed in approaching organizational atmosphere, while also underlining the vast number of perspectives these turns have generated, which even from an organizational perspective are inexhaustible. The final section presents the approach taken to organizational atmosphere.

**Perspectives on organization**

In the realm of organization and management studies, organizations are understood and defined in many ways, but an older textbook says:

*Most analyst have conceived of organizations as social structures created by individuals to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals.* (Scott, 1992: 10)

Such a conception of organization refers to a rational perspective on organization, among other things. The conception of organization has varied over time, which is also a reflection of the different research fields within organization studies. Accordingly, this section will only point to a few exemplary and canonical understandings as a background and heritage by which to consider the move towards an atmospheric perspective on organization. Rational perspectives on organization, in all their variations, largely build on Weber’s sociological analysis of bureaucracy as a rational hierarchic structure. For Weber bureaucracy was the most efficient way of organizing and should thus be done by means of standardized procedures, rules, the division of labour and clear hierarchies. As a spatial way of organizing, Weber linked bureaucratic management to the use of desks¹ as a basis for professional rational behaviour, explicitly stressing to avoid personal interaction, let alone the showing of emotions (Weber, 1968). These ideas were further developed in, e.g., Frederick Taylor’s scientific management, which presented a rational standardization regime and spatial organization of work useful in achieving optimal performance and efficiency. This classical rational perspective has since been modified, e.g., by the Hawthorne studies² of Taylor’s approach, which showed that individuals do not always behave as rational economic actors (Scott, 1992: 57). More recent views on organizations as open systems emphasize the relation between organization and its environment (Scott, 1992: 76ff.). Among these views is the processual paradigm, which presents a view of

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¹ Bureau stems from the word desk in French.
² The Hawthorne study showed that individuals in the Hawthorne plant responded to the attention received by the researcher, as a motivational factor influencing their behavior, questioning the assumption of the rational economic actor, also called the ‘Hawthorne effect’ (Scott, 1992: 57).
organization as an emergent phenomenon constantly in the making. As such, this addresses issues like temporality, wholeness, openness, force, situations and potentiality (Hernes, 2014, 2017; Helin et al., 2014; Steyaert, 2007; Cooper, 1976, 2005, 2007), all of which are perspectives and themes that this thesis reflects and considers to be fertile ground for ‘doing’ atmospheric research. Yet, the approach to process theory is multifaceted and complex, as Steyaert’s review in the area of entrepreneurship shows (2007). Following Steyaert’s outline of routes in process theory, this thesis aligns with a ‘radical processual’ theory insofar as the thesis deals with a certain radicality in the ontological thinking, yet it also intensively builds on the phenomenological heritage of process theory (Steyaert, 2007: 455).

The emphasis on the environment in organization studies, and by extension its attention to atmosphere, can be traced to research on marketing and organizational environment, climate and culture. Back in the 1970s, marketing research addressed atmosphere as a way of boosting sales through positive environmental stimuli (Kotler, 1974). In studying how environment impacts behaviour, research on organizational climate has at times used the term ‘atmosphere’ interchangeably with the experience of the organizational environment³ (Choudbury, 2011: 112; Lewin, Lippitt and White 1939; Pritchard and Karasick, 1973), assuming that a healthy and good climate raises productivity, job satisfaction and innovation. Studies in organizational psychology have shown positive correlations between innovation, creativity and an organizational climate (Ekvall, 1997), and, as such, measure organizational creativity according to factors like employees’ emotional involvement and atmosphere’s playfulness (Amabile et al, 2005: 367; Amabile et al. 1996). From the 1960s onwards, research on organizational climate was paralleled by research on organizational culture, their having similar intents to capture how employees’ perceive their work environment (Schneider, 1975; Guion, 1973; Schein, 2010). The above developments form a broader agenda as to the factors relevant for understanding organizations and their pursuit of specific goals, where the focus on creativity and innovation reiterates discussions on aesthetic capitalism.

Organizational climate⁴ and organizational culture as research traditions nevertheless present critical differences in their theoretical and methodological perspectives, for organizational culture aligns with anthropology, while organizational climate relates to psychology and quantitative methods (Erhart and Schneider, 2016: 13). Accordingly, much climate research has focused on measurement as a means of interacting with organizations, while cultural anthropology looks at

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³ As an example Choudbury writes ”Organizational climate represents how the employees feel about the atmosphere.” (Choudbury, 2011: 112).

⁴ Gestalt inspired approach related to defining indicators, e.g. on the level of affect, to measure the organizational environment and its impact on effectiveness, job satisfaction etc. (Schneider, 1975).
organizations’ core assumptions and value layers that may matter in organizations (Erhart and Schneider, 2016). Both research strands, however, present a perspective on how organizational environments come to be, how they influence outcomes and how they can be changed (Ehrhart and Schneider, 2016: 1). Yet, as Guion (1973: 120) points out, insofar as atmosphere is used interchangeably with climate in these research areas, a major challenge is that

*The idea of a ‘perceived organizational climate’ seems ambiguous; one cannot be sure whether it implies an attribute of the organization or of the perceiving individual.* (Guion, 1973: 120)

Although Guion reflects the ambiguity of atmosphere, he stays in a dualist conception by seeking to attribute atmosphere to either subject or organization. Accordingly, this thesis argues that to work with the notion of organizational atmosphere one must unfold this ambiguity. The notion of atmosphere in the above studies mainly tends to create a label or category and thus does not treat atmosphere as an independent phenomenon. Yet, treating atmosphere as a phenomenological phenomenon resonates with Holt and Sandberg’s general argument (2011) that the full potential of phenomenology in organization studies has not yet advanced, but rather involves

*… a genuine alternative approach that goes beyond and overcomes the subject-object dichotomy in social science.* (Holt and Sandberg, 2011: 238)

Following Holt and Sandberg, by engaging with this phenomenological approach one opens up new areas of inquiry and new ways of investigating organizations, as has been seen in relation to, e.g., strategy (2011: 239) and embodied practices in organizations (Küpers, 2002, 2010, 2013). Yet, such engagement requires understanding the fundamental principle of phenomenology that subject and world are inextricably related (Holt and Sandberg, 2011: 239), a principle that resonates with a processual approach of thinking organization as constantly moving and in the making (see also Helin et al., 2017; Cooper, 2005). Accordingly, approaching organizational atmosphere as a phenomenological phenomenon makes a general contribution to organization studies, as the neo-phenomenological work of Schmitz (2014a) and the aesthetics of Böhme (1992, 1993, 1995, 2013a) – with their German phenomenological heritage – present a notion of atmosphere beyond the subject-object dichotomy. Second, such an approach resonates with other arguments for the non-dualist importance of the notion of atmosphere (Heibach, 2012a: 12; Julmi, 2017: 20). In an article entitled ‘The Concept of Atmosphere in Management and Organizations Studies’ (2017), Julmi conducts a sweeping review, concluding that some of the above-mentioned studies treat atmosphere as an object that can be instrumentalized, which thus renders it a dualist conception. However, as Julmi argues,
the ambiguity of atmosphere is precisely where the contribution lies when one seeks to research organizational atmospheres (Julmi, 2017: 20). This thesis contributes to discussions of a phenomenological and non-dualist perspective on organization in line with recent work being done on organizational atmosphere in organization studies (Borch, 2009; Beyes, 2016; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Michels, 2015; Julmi, 2015, 2017). Having roughly presented areas in organization studies that organizational atmosphere might be associated with, it has been argued that they lack a common premise. Accordingly, organizational atmospheres is rather seen to be situated in other fields of organizational research, as will be presented in the following.

Organizational aesthetics

Research in organizational aesthetics has contributed to thinking organization by questioning rationality as being purely cognitive and the only way to apprehend organizations, thus opening for an aesthetic agenda and an attention to atmosphere in a non-dualist framing. Organizational aesthetics, a field that has been developing since the 1980s, deals with aesthetic reception and production in an organizational perspective, and Antonio Strati has played a prominent role in the field’s development (Strati, 1992, 1999, 2003; 2010; Linstead and Höpfl, 2000: 2; Taylor, 2013). Seen as a whole, general discussions on aesthetization processes, creativity and a move towards aesthetic capitalism (Böhme, 2016; Reckwitz, 2014; Boltanski and Ciapello, 2005) have articulated the continual relevance of aesthetics in organization and management studies (Beyes and Steyaert, 2017; Beyes, 2016; Strati, 1996, 1999, 2000; Linstead and Höpfl, 2000; Küpers, 2002).

The turn to aesthetics in organization studies presents aesthetics as a form of organizational knowledge, where organization constitutes itself as a perceptive relation (Strati, 1996, 1999: 2ff., 2000). This turn operates on the underlying assumption that organization is not only cognitive but also derives from aesthetic awareness and sensory knowledge (Linstead and Höpfl, 2000; Strati, 2003; Höpfl and Linstead, 1997). Organizational aesthetics is said to enrich knowledge of everyday organizational life and theoretical-methodological approaches to knowledge production in organization studies (Strati, 1999: 7). Referring to aesthetic theory from, e.g., Baumgarten argues against Cartesian thinking, and as such constitutes a shift in the perception of organization, where:

… emotion, sentiment and aesthetics are no longer marginal aspects which embellish organizational life or make it more human. Instead, they are concepts essential for its comprehension, and the constitute an alternative to the cognitive and quasi-rationalist perspective. (Strati, 2000: 98)
Two central points follow from Strati’s quote: First, the turn to aesthetics put different themes on the agenda of organizational research, especially those addressing organizations’ tacit knowledge and the knowledge emerging from everyday practices (Strati, 2003), thus critically questioning cognitive knowledge proposing the sensory as an alternative. Second, the approach accentuates an alternative way of approaching organizational knowledge, one that involves considering a wider range of artefacts, human bodies and their interaction in the analysis and understanding of organizations.

The turn to organizational aesthetics shifts the focus to the everyday life of organizations and organizational practices (Linstead and Höpfl, 2000: 2; Strati, 2009: 239). The aesthetic perspective addresses emotional and embodied qualities as part of organizational knowledge by considering complex experiences that precede definition, such as odours, tactility, pleasure and fear and thus emphasize the emotional ties in organizations (Strati, 2000: 2). With the aesthetic approach, organizational life expands its focus from logos to also include ethos and especially pathos (Strati, 2000: 99; Strati, 2003: 55). As Warren has framed it, the aesthetic elements of organization emanate from the ‘felt meaning’ experienced by the organizational members in their sensory encounter with their surroundings:

_These aesthetic elements of organization emanate from the ‘felt meanings’ of organizational members—the perceptions and judgements that people make about their organizational lives based especially on their sensory encounters with the world around them._ (Warren, 2008: 560)

This evokes another kind of organizational experience and view on organizational dynamics as part of an emotional and affective endeavour. Studying the aesthetic environment puts the focus on organizations’ practices in their everyday lives, for the aesthetic approach gives access to a tacit knowledge of organizations, of how work is to do the work in practice. This implies that knowing how to do something is based on sensory experience, such as Strati’s example of roof workers knowing the roof by their feet and not some formalized analytic description (Strati, 2003). The attention to aesthetics presents a different epistemological provenience to knowledge than the logical-deductive avenue. Accentuating tacit sensory knowledge challenges traditional ways of representation, whereby the engagement with aesthetic and sensory experience also presents a shift from what we know to how and why we know something (Taylor and Hansen, 2005: 1213).

The aesthetic focus is largely on art and artistic practices in relation to organizations (Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; Linstead and Höpfl, 2000; Taylor and Hansen, 2005). For Strati
aesthetics is developed into categories of the beautiful, the sublime, the ugly, etc., which present different aesthetic experiences as ways of approaching organizations (Strati, 1992). Strati defines the aesthetic experience as something that ‘oscillates between the subject who describes and the organization that is described’ (2000: 101). Aesthetics concerns perceiving with the senses and making an aesthetic judgement according to aesthetic categories (Strati, 2000: 100f.). However, organizational studies of aesthetics are also to be concerned with the impalpable called ‘the atmospheres of the organization’, despite this being an epistemological provocation (Strati, 2009: 239). Atmosphere is here considered a hybrid object, linked with air, that is sensorially and aesthetically judged in terms of taste. This demonstrates how organizational atmosphere is considered in the realm of organizational aesthetics and how this thesis thus engages in a similar discussion.

This leads to the question of how the turn to organizational aesthetics has further brought attention to the methodological engagement with sensory knowledge and aesthetic perception and how understanding the relation between artefacts, humans and organization has also proven a field of development (Taylor and Hansen, 2005; Warren, 2008). Taylor and Hansen (2005) present an overview of the field of organizational aesthetics both in terms of content and method. As they point out, aesthetics can present a new way of looking at old problems and create different ways of knowing in organization. Organizational aesthetics therefore uses both intellectual and art-based methods in analysing organizations (Taylor and Hansen, 2005) as well as emphasizes artefacts as an actor in organizational dynamics (Strati, 1999, 2010). However, Taylor and Hansen see the most promising developments in the research of organizational aesthetics as being in providing a holistic perspective, where aesthetic forms are used to look at aesthetic issues (2005: 1221). In terms of methods they see a strong alignment with ethnography and visual methods, which relates to a discussion on the nature of data, their interpretation and their representation. Attending to a new epistemological understanding that reflects what they call a post-positivist paradigm, Taylor and Hansen state:

… we need forms of presentation that keep the aesthetic knowledge ‘intact’, closer to the forms and objects that were constructed and experienced by organization members to convey meaning in organizations. (2005: 1228)

Warren explicitly takes up this quest in her attempt to move toward a sensual methodology (2008), firstly by pointing out that grasping aesthetics in their embodied, sensory form

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5 Aesthetic judgement Strati describes as “This type of judgement reveals not a property of the organization, but a property of the organization represents to the knowing subject. That is to say, it reveals how the latter represents the organization to him/herself” (Strati, 1999: 106).
poses challenges in terms of linguistic communication as well as by transitioning the fleeting experience done by research participants to obtain an intersubjective aesthetic judgement (Warren, 2008: 561). These endeavours are further challenging because one can encounter an ‘aesthetic muteness’ when doing aesthetic research in organization (Taylor, 2002). The issue is that research participants can be predisposed to rational inquiry as well as the nature of ‘tacit knowledge’ as a knowing in practice. What is more, the researcher goes from being someone applying a logical-deductive approach focused on objectivity to becoming a kind of sensory-aesthetic participant (Warren, 2008; Pink, 2012; Strati, 1999, 2000; 2003). Strati already described his own approach to organizational aesthetics as an ‘empathic-aesthetic approach’ that challenges analytical-scientific methods by ‘allowing’ the researcher to immerse themself in organizational life by using their own aesthetics skills (Strati, 2000: 102). Following Warren, taking an aesthetic immersive perspective raises another central methodological issue concerning how to evoke and represent the aesthetic perspective on others’ organization instead of just having the researcher-as-commentator (Warren, 2008: 546). Warren in her own investigation of a workplace suggests a sensual methodology that includes narrative-based interviews and photo-elicitation as ways to address the methodological challenges, which reflects approaches found in Pink’s sensory ethnography (2012), among others. Warren points out that the questions she poses are not easily solved and are central to many research areas that do not abide with a classical subject-object dichotomy, including areas like affect and atmosphere. In line with the phenomenological method, apprehending the world itself becomes a subject of the researcher’s knowledge (see Heidegger, 1993: 27; Schmitz, 2014a: 9ff.).

Following Taylor and Hansen, the urge to look at organizations aesthetically is based on a desire to live in a beautiful world through an inquiry that makes use of aesthetic categories (2005: 1216). However, as O’Doherty (2008) argues, such aesthetic appreciation, found throughout most of organizational aesthetics, tends to form a unitarist and bourgeois view of organization. This raises the point that aesthetics is conceived in a conservative and narrow way that reflects the classical distinction of reception and production of aesthetics (2008: 544). Others point to similar critical perspectives, indicating the risk that organizational aesthetics may become conventional, which in turn risks romanticizing aesthetics as art or thus narrowing its focus., partly due to a tendency to stay with aesthetic categories (Beyes, 2016: 117; Julmi, 2015: 82). Looking at atmosphere as a new aesthetics can be seen as a way of opening and broadening the aesthetic perspective of everyday experience by unfolding aesthetic perception as a question of well-being (see Böhme, 1995: 42). In addition, as Beyes argues, when one looks at aesthetics in this broader sense in the study of organization, the boundaries
between reception and production continuously blur (Beyes, 2016: 117). This thesis will both conceptually and practically attend to this broader aesthetic apprehension of the notion of atmosphere, yet, for analytical reasons, as suggested by Böhme (2013a: 103ff.), will work with the distinction between reception and production as a heuristic approach.

Organizational aesthetics has clearly broadened the focus on organizational knowledge by incorporating the aesthetic as a pathic experience of the environment, whereby emotions and sentiments enter the field of investigation. However, this thesis argues that a conceptual development of the notion of atmosphere provides, as in the affective turn, a more radical perspective, for the affective dimension not only broadens the realm of organizational knowledge but also addresses the ontological nature of organization as different from what Strati calls logos (Strati, 2000: 99). Böhme’s (1992, 1993, 1995) revitalization of aesthetic theory, as atmosphere, presents itself as an alternative ontological approach, although it can be discussed how much it differs from the aesthetic notion in organizational aesthetics (Julmi, 2015: 81). This thesis argues that this provides for ontologically re-addressing organization, an argument similar to, e.g., Cooper’s questioning of the ontological underpinnings of organization (1976, 2005). Beyes elaborates the aesthetic view that organization has particular relevance today, due in part to ongoing aesthetization processes, to the imperative to be creative and to the development of modern media (2016). However, viewing organization aesthetically comes with a twist. Beyes write:

Framing the question of organization as one of art and aesthetics therefore means inquiring into the processes and forces that govern, modulate and change the ‘knots’ of what can be sensed, felt, expressed and acted upon. (Beyes, 2016: 115)

Processes and forces rather than aesthetic objects and social constructs come to the fore, which emphasizes Reckwitz’s point that aesthetics has no goal and is oriented at the performance of the moment (Reckwitz, 2014: 23). This shows the importance of not thinking aesthetics as the other of cognition and signification, but as an intertwined process of affect, sensation and sensemaking co-created with the organizational environment (Beyes, 2016: 118). Yet, in the case of atmosphere and sense perception it remains relevant to ask of the other, even when it is not rationality (Beyes, 2017: 71ff.). The opposition to sense perception may therefore be seen as an existential level of ‘not feeling alive’, which reflects both a neo-pheno

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6 An existential reply to the other of sense perception is seen in the philosophical discussions of Nancy on the ‘sense of the world’ and Sloterdijk’s spherology, both of whom articulate the other of sense as an existential matter either as ‘an exposing Death’ (Nancy, 1997: 161ff.) or as reaching into nothingness (Sloterdijk, 2014: 261; 2004: 35, 238ff.).
(Vannini, 2015b; Dewsbury and Thrift, 2002) focus on vitality. The aesthetization process involves how the social is organized and transformed, accentuating a broader appreciation of the aesthetic than found in the ‘first wave’ of organizational aesthetics and pointing instead in the direction discussed by O’Doherty, where atmosphere is viewed as a new aesthetic perspective. In this sense a focus on organizational atmosphere represents an endeavour to contribute to key discussions in the field of organizational aesthetics and concerns both the content and the methodological approach to organizational research.

The spatial turn

The spatial turn in organization studies is linked to organizational aesthetics, in great part through a common linkage to architecture. Architecture is typically seen as an aesthetic practice, and according to Böhme’s new aesthetics, is a prime element in shaping atmosphere (Böhme, 1995, 2013a). A view of architecture as central to atmosphere emphasizes an inherent spatial concern generally connected to the spatial turn in organization studies and the consideration of spaces as part of organizations’ everyday life. The spatial turn may not be considered new, for space has long been a managerial issue. However, the perspectives on space in organization studies have shifted in recent decades, having come to (re-)frame space as a conceptual and analytical category, e.g., in workplace architecture (Kornberger and Clegg, 2004, Clegg and Kornberger, 2006; Burell and Dale, 2003, 2015; Dale and Burell, 2008, 2014; Yanov, 1995, 1998; Taylor and Spicer, 2007; Weinfurther and Seidl, 2018; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; Andersen and Christensen, 2015) as well as in social scientific considerations more broadly (Soja, 1989; Massey, 2005; Lefebvre; 1991). This informs a turn away from a tendency in social theory and social science to consider space as neutral (Reckwitz, 2012: 246). Overall, the reframing of space challenges the rational understanding of neutral space in organizations epitomized in Weber’s and Taylor’s ideas. Taylor’s standardization of work processes is an early example of the rational use of space for the purpose of enhancing productivity and shaping effective organizational behaviour (Christensen, 2007: 47; Duffy, 1995, 1997, 2004). This spatial organization saw humans as controllable machines, a view that has proven inadequate for contemporary organizations and new ways of working, especially those focusing on knowledge and creative work (Christensen, 2007: 38; Duffy, 1995). Yet, as noted by Dale and Burell, the desk work promoted by Weber’s bureaucracy remains a prominent way of shaping office space and organizing (Dale and Burell, 2014: 4).
The spatial turn puts different ideas about how space works in an organizational context on display. In organization studies the spatial turn was connected with issues regarding workplace architecture. Dale and Burell (2008, 2014), Yanow (1995) as well as Clegg and Kornberger (2004, 2006), in particular, have produced seminal works pertaining to a critical examination of space in organizations. Indeed, Kornberger and Clegg’s call ‘to bring space back in’ to organizational research is especially prominent, as it emphasizes how space constitutes power relations and social production (2004), among other things. A central argument is that the organization of space plays an important role in the processes and practices of organizing, since space and buildings...

\[\text{... are social objects creating social spaces whose forms provide implicit answers to crucial questions of power, order, classification, control and function.} \ (\text{Clegg and Kornberger, 2006: 12})\]

As Clegg and Kornberger critically note, the sensemaking approaches used in organization and management studies have tended to ignore the spatial and material reality of organizations (2006: 9). This neglected relation between space and organization, they argue, has caused organizations to pay little attention to ‘\text{how they occupy what space and why}’ (Clegg and Kornberger, 2006: 143). Were this relation more closely considered, however, one could see how space is part of forming organizations and how architecture manages human activities through its distribution of bodies and organizing communication (Kornberger and Clegg, 2004: 1100). Spatial organization in this view thus involves power implications for management, which, it is claimed, means that space is approached neither as something neutral nor as a mere container.

This treatment of space and buildings expresses how social relations are at stake and how power is exercised through buildings. One example of power in organizing space has been the creation of an inside and outside, which is clearly manifested by the function of the wall, which serves to demarcate whether one is an outsider or an inhabitant (Clegg and Kornberger, 2006: 146). A differentiation that has also influenced our thinking is the use of the analytical categories of the subject and object. Such organization of space gives rise to a need for new spatial strategies for organizing, Clegg and Kornberger argue, as innovation and knowledge creation do not thrive in the linearity of an inside-outside demarcation (Clegg and Kornberger, 2006: 153). Referring to Lefebvre and architectural theory, the space in-between becomes of interest, as it goes beyond pure functionality to allow difference to unfold. The in-between space is architecturally framed as a ‘void’ presenting an excess capacity that provides flexibility and possibilities for creativity to unfold (Clegg and Kornberger, 2006: 158). However, the everyday seems to lose having a managerial and intellectual focus when O’Doherty underlines that Clegg et al’s suggestions tend to blend order and disorder in
architectural design, which demonstrates an underlying attempt to intellectually master and control space (2008: 548). The criticism raised by O’Doherty suggests that an articulation of power relations in the organization of space might not itself be free of power relations. As will be shown throughout the thesis, organizational atmosphere as a spatial phenomenon attends to the in-between, but in an apprehension of space that circumvents the classical sense of space as a material thing, as Kornberger and Clegg maintain. By connecting space with sensory aesthetics and affective concerns, one can consider the in-between as atmospheric sensitivity that allows for feeling a spatial dynamic of contraction and expansion.

Dale and Burell look at organizational space as socially produced, thus opening up to the everyday (2008: 7). As they state in their book, they want to apply Lefebvre to studying organizational space, paying special attention to the lived space in Lefebvre’s triad of conceived, perceived and lived space. In terms of power and the social dynamics at play in organization, they view (re)gaining a sense of space as important to understanding management and organization. Architecture is a central point of discussion about how space and organization meet (Dale and Burell, 2008: 23). They discuss the architectural space as contributing to the organization of the social, where different types of office design can be considered as more or less effective for work performance. Most notably, perhaps, the open-plan office or the home-like work space has been seen as among the new spatial solutions for organizations dealing with knowledge or creative work. Nevertheless, these types of spaces often seem to fail despite good intentions (Burell and Dale, 2015: 7). As Burrell and Dale argue the new spatial solutions contribute to the development of organizations since

*These constructions of space are linked to new ways of identifying with work and with the organization, new forms of relationship between employee and the organization.* (Burell and Dale, 2015: 9)

The development of space accordingly concerns new ways of organizing and working, which also involves perspectives on organization that differ from the notion of an entity rationally moving towards a common goal. Architecturally altering organizational space is, however, not a safe bet for creating a more efficient (social) organization, as architects are often unaware of the users (Burell and Dale, 2015: 7). At the same time, they point out that the enhanced aesthetization of space is a way of hiding underlying economic and power inequalities, and such space is achieved via the design of workplaces that speak to the senses through the use of colour, lightning, etc. (Burell and Dale, 2015: 11). As Burrell and Dale mention themselves, this development in organizational life clearly relates to the aesthetic turn (2015: 12). By attending to the creation of pleasant and felt spaces, these tendencies in corporate architecture also emphasize the production of atmospheric spaces as
places of enchantment, which equates with Böhme’s critique of architecture as being used as manipulative embellishment (1995; 2013a).

Inspired by Lefebvre, Spicer and Taylor provide an overview of literature on space, outlining what they call an integrated theory of organizational space that entails spatial scaling and organization on the micro, meso and macro levels (2007: 336ff.). Spicer and Taylor draw on the work of Burell and Dale and Clegg and Kornberger, among others, to theorize about how power relations and practiced space materialize, but also how new office architecture starts blurring the scales of inside and outside (2007: 337). Overall, they aim to create a stronger awareness of the spatial dynamic as a way of understanding organizations. Yet, according to Weinfurther and Seidl, Taylor and Spicer tend to focus on the physical space rather than the wider materialization (2018: 3). In parallel Burell and Dale’s appropriation of Lefebvre’s spatial triad and their emphasis on architecture has been described as tending to reify space, as they prioritize the architectural product (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 49). This reification implies putting physical space above the processes inherent in its production, which, according to Beyes and Steyaert, lacks the co-constitutive features of the triadic production of space in Lefebvre. Ultimately, this lack makes Burell and Dale’s strategies on space representational. Interestingly, Burell and Dale comment on Taylor and Spicer’s (2007) adoption of Lefebvre to study organizational space with a parallel claim that they reduce space to representation and social relations to scale (Burell and Dale, 2015: 22).

Weinfurhter and Seidl in their recent article present a new ‘integrated review of organizational space’ that reflects developments after Spicer and Taylor (2018). They find that most studies do not refer to any specific spatial theory, and, of those that do, most cite Lefebvre, although generally without developing their arguments on the theoretical basis (Weinfurhter and Seidl, 2018: 3). The article proposes that space be treated as a perspective that can be applied to different phenomena, thus opening for new arrays of inquiry. The article also argues for three constitutive elements of space – boundaries, distance and movement – as well as a set of general themes of distribution, isolation, differentiation and intersection. With their framework, Weinfurhter and Seidl attempt to reinvigorate the work with organizational space. Likewise, Beyes and Steyaert (2011) with their article ‘Spacing organization’ aspire to bring space back into organizational studies, stating their aim as being to extend the perspectives presented by scholars like Kornberger and Clegg (2004), Dale and Burell (2008) and Taylor and Spicer (2007). Like Weinfurhter and Seidl, these scholars can be said to pay special attention to issues like movement and intersection. Fundamentally, however, they argue for a performative approach to space as spacing based on a non-representational theorizing.
For Beyes and Steyaert the performative perspective puts an emphasis on the process of producing space, rather than on the spatial product itself, on how space comes to be as an excess composition of force (2011: 48). This is a view in keeping with O'Doherty’s call to apprehend space as an active agent (2008: 546). Beyes and Steyaert take up the excess space perspective, considering it to be a prerequisite for exploring ‘difference, otherness and novelty’ (2011: 52). The understanding of excess space departs from Clegge and Kornberger to become linked with discussions on affect and non-representational theory, which involve thinking the affective dimension of materiality. As Beyes and Steyaert formulate it, excess space as spacing calls for perceiving in the midst of things (2011: 47), a call that underlines the move away from the representational to a moving, relational perspective. Weinfurther and Seidl reiterate the relevance of attending to the underlying dynamics of space, which they take into account in their spatial dimension of movement (2018: 25). However, they pay little attention to the affective, aesthetic and active qualities of space, including the existential and (micro) political potential of organization that has been acknowledged in the human geography strand of non-representational theory, which combines issues like affect, materiality and space (Thrift, 2004, 2008, 2009; McCormack, 2008b, 2015; Ingold, 2011; Dewsbury, 2012; Anderson, 2018).

Not only does a shift towards spacing trigger a change in the focus on space, but also in how space is investigated. This approach calls for methods that do not ‘think about space’, but are ‘thinking-space’, e.g., by using performative and experimental writing that presents evocative assemblages (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 54; McCormack, 2008). As McCormack argues, thinking-space is to be understood as ‘the co-intensive sensing of the creative processuality of something in the world forcing us to think’ (McCormack, 2008: 3). This reiterates discussions in organizational aesthetics on the sensory capacities and aesthetic practices in organization. O'Doherty echoes the spacing perspective in his discussion on blurry atmospheric architecture, stressing that architectural space cannot be viewed as merely a fixed empirical object or way to confirm theoretical truths. Rather,

_The challenge of architecture is more experientially profound and existentially disruptive; it draws out of ourselves and disrupts our routines, mundane ways of being in the world._ (O’Doherty, 2008: 555)

In line with the way Beyes and Steyaert’s perspectives on spacing and O'Doherty’s similar view on blurry architecture argue for viewing organizations as a cloudy phenomenon, this research on organizational atmosphere will contribute to and extend the discussion of space in organization studies as a processual and active quality. This reflects the relational in-between space as central to an understanding of the spatial dimension of atmospheres (Böhme, 1995: 23). Such an
understanding involves the dynamic enactment of space in the everyday performance of organization and its spatial organization, which relates it to its affective qualities. Take, for example, when Thrift views space as conditioning environments that both prime and cook affect (Thrift, 2009: 88). Apart from articulating the organization of space, this understanding further involves the role of materiality in organizations as a way of approaching the affective experience of space.

The spatial turn often implies a concern with the materiality of organization and the-being-in-the-world of organizations. Although space is not only to be understood in its physical form, the relation between space and buildings inevitably focuses on materiality as a way of shaping and forming the experience of space, but also relates to materializing power relations. A sharper focus on how materiality impacts organization studies often draws inspiration from Latour’s actor-network theory (ANT) (2005; 2007), which sees practices as a means of overcoming the dichotomy between the social and material world by focusing on organizational practices (see de Vayjany et al., 2016). Others have attended to the gendered quality of materiality (Fotaki et. al, 2014). Although the ANT perspective presents a relational ontological approach relevant in atmospheric attention, this thesis argues that greater attention should be paid to the affective experience of materiality, which Ash has argued the ANT perspective has difficulty accounting for (Ash, 2013: 21).

This thesis leans towards a non-representational perspective, maintaining a focus on materialism as thinking an affective materiality as a sensory awareness of a pre-individual force (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 52; Thrift, 2007, O’Doherty, 2008; Sloterdijk, 2004). Materiality in its socio-material and non-representational perspective poses questions to the ontological nature and dimension of materiality, issues that are addressed when one takes an atmospheric perspective on organization. Such a perspective opens up for different perspectives in the discussion of the affective qualities of, say, colour in organization (Beyes, 2017, 2018; Beyes and De Cock, 2017). Yet, non-representational approaches to materiality also draw on strands of new materialism (Dewsbury, 2012: 74), which emphasize the performative qualities of material agency as seen in the research of new materialism (Barad, 2007, 2018; Bennett, 2010) and object-oriented-ontology (Harman, 2002) that has emerged in recent decades. Theses strands view materiality in a way that argues strongly for an inherent agentialism of the materiality itself, thus establishing yet another perspective on how and who experiences an environment.
The affective turn

The third turn associated with organizational atmosphere is the turn to affect, which relates to organizational aesthetics and the spatial turn by addressing concerns on emotions, embodiment and affective space in organizations. Barsade and Gibson argue that affect matters to organization in a variety of positive ways, describing affect as an umbrella term encompassing feeling states, emotions and moods (Barsade and Gibson, 2007: 37). They point at new trends focusing on issues like emotional intelligence and emotional regulation, where emotions are shared or transferred, albeit often unconsciously (Barsade and Gibson, 2007: 42). They argue, for example, that a good mood has a positive effect on decision making, creativity, conflict resolution and leadership. They also see the research as limited because it lacks a focus on ‘affective processes existing at the level below consciousness’ (Barsade and Gibson, 2007: 53).

Attending to the ‘unconscious’ level of affective process concerns what is often described as the ‘affective turn’ and which is where this thesis makes its contribution by attending to the embodied, pre-reflective sensations that exceed the singular body. The affective turn has been discussed in social sciences (Wetherell, 2012; Massumi, 1995; Stewart and Lewis, 2015; Stewart, 2017; Clough and Halley, 2007; Clough, 2009; Gregg and Seighworth, 2010), cultural geography (Thrift, 2008; Anderson, 2009) and to some degree in organization studies (Beyes and Steyaert 2012 & 2013; Borch, 2009; Steyaert and Michels, 2016; Gherardi, 2017; Fotaki et al. 2017; Küpers, 2014). However, so far the turn to affect ‘resembles a twist more than a turn’ (Steyaert and Michels 2016, 4) and a nascent perspective (Fotaki et. al., 2017) in organization studies. The turn to affect in an embodied unconscious way does not rely on a single, shared understanding (Thrift, 2009: 82, 2004: 59; Gherardi, 2017: 348; Slaby, 2018; Fotaki et al., 2017: 5). Accordingly, this section will not deal with all aspects of the turn to affect, but rather explore and indicate important issues in the literature that resonate with the affective elements of atmospheres. Thrift mentions that these various schools of affect share a central, common feature, saying that

… the body is given its own powers that are outside social organization, sensu strictu, although obviously, in practice, it is very hard to tell the difference. (Thrift, 2009: 84)

As such, affect brings the body into organization studies, an aspect long neglected by organizational scholars (Fotaki et al., 2017). Others have accordingly named the forgotten body as ‘an absent present’ (Hassard et al., 2000: 3), where the dualist perspective has led the body to be viewed as a passive container for the mind, where the mind is the source of knowledge (Dale, 2001:
Reducing the body to a container for the mind has subjected the body to power and rationality, as can be seen in the standardization of work tasks, which limits the bodily range of action (Dale, 2001: 21). The neo-phenomenological perspective on atmosphere helps to reframe the body and its affective capacities. In line with phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty it reflects a criticism of the Cartesian separation of mind and body, yet it also resonates with the academic work on the body and embodiment extensively advanced in feminist and queer theory (Butler, 2006; Berlant, 2000) and has taken an interest in organizational studies (Dale, 2001; Küpers, 2013; Hassard et al., 2000).

Echoing Thrift’s point, Gherardi (2017: 348) elaborates other fundamental communalities held on the notion of affect. First, affect is a two-sided and unintentional bodily capacity to be affected and to affect7. Overall, the term draws attention to emotional and embodied aspects in organizations and societal development. Second, affect is a flow of forces constituting an excess, and, third, affect forms as an assemblage of potentialities. All three elements sum up to a processual and relational understanding of affect. The turn to affect gives organization studies an understanding of the relation between bodies and things as something neither individual nor social, thus problematizing the subject-object dichotomy by working with a non-linear complexity. Affect theorizes both the human body and the relation to technologies and things, which opens for thinking the organization of the social and political differently as well as presents a way of overcoming dichotomies characteristic of constructivist research (Thrift, 2008; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Fotaki et al. 2017: 6). The thesis seeks to contribute to the view of affect as a flow of forces, as reflected in organization studies on affect (see Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; Michels and Steyaert, 2016) and non-representational theory (Thrift, 2008; Anderson, 2016a; Stewart, 2011, 2017). These approaches address a relation between affect and atmosphere, as well as issues of space and aesthetics, where affect is seen as a transindividual element of organizing, a view that stems from the encounter of humans and non-human bodies as being a mutual capacity of interaction (Michels and Steyaert, 2016: 4).

Barsade and Gibson point at a complex ‘unresolved’ discussion in the turn to affect concerning the relation between emotions, affect and mood. Although the three words may be used interchangeably in everyday language, viewed in the broad church of the affective turn, there are (for some) significant differences. Accordingly, the terminological clarity of the notion of affect and its

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7 A common reference point is Spinoza’s understanding of affect as the body’s power to act, which has been taken up by Gilles Deleuze and ’translated’ by Brian Massumi into ’the ability to affect and be affected’.
distinction with, e.g., emotions and mood is neither straightforward nor consensual. Thinking affect and emotions from a transindividual perspective of capacities challenges a conceptualization of emotions as inherent or socially constructed (Anderson, 2006: 735). Following Anderson, affect is relational, constituting an in-between movement of bodies and materialities that enact space-times, thus going beyond a subject-object ontology. In line with affect scholar Massumi, emotions are seen as subjective (Anderson, 2006: 737, Massumi, 1995: 88ff.). Massumi stresses the need to differentiate between emotion and affect, emphasizing a critique of the classical phenomenological understanding by which intentionality is seen as steering emotions, whereas affect is regarded as a relational force (1995). Flatley in his affective mapping is in line with Massumi, framing emotions as something that happens inside and affect as something relational and transformative (Flatley, 2008: 12). Cultural anthropologists also distinguish between emotion and affect, seeing emotion as a kind of social construction and affect as the process of emergence or becoming, thus suspending cultural assumptions (Stewart and Lewis, 2015: 237). As Stewart argues, attending to affective questions of intensity and movement in research opens for new analytical objects that trace the forces traversing the individual and the collective, such as atmospheres (Stewart and Lewis, 2015: 238). Flatley further addresses the connection to moods\(^8\), defining them as a kind of affective atmosphere (Flatley, 2008: 19). Contrary to affects, moods do not relate to an object, but rather constitute a readiness for affect, forming a fluid relationship that fundamentally attunes us to the world and to the situation we are in, thus enabling us to be together and know what is collectively possible (Flatley, 2008: 17ff.). This resonates with Stewart’s argument of atmospheric attunement as a process of worlding (Stewart, 2010: 445). This thesis attends to discussions on the relation between moods, affect and emotions, emphasizing an existential perspective of organizational atmosphere and the situational becomings in spatial and transpersonal situations.

Thrift presents affect as a way of thinking and a spatial politics, which is a corporeal thinking that focuses on movement and grasps tacit, embodied foundations (Thrift, 2004). According to Thrift, the attention to affect promotes a

\[\text{… a new kind of cultural engineering are gradually being constructed upon which and with which new forms of political practice, that value democracy as a functional disunity will be able to be built. (Thrift, 2004: 75)}\]

Thrift emphasizes that a focus on affect also implies a shift in political attention from representational or formal politics to a politics of the everyday (2004, 2008; 2009). This, in turn,

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\(^8\) Referring to Heidegger’s ‘Stimmung’.
reflects a general focus on non-representational theory and its attention to affect and the bodily, which has increased the attention on matters of the everyday, such as mobility, intensities and performance (Dewsbury and Thrift, 2002; Vannini, 2015b, Stewart, 2008a, 2011, McCormack, 2008, 2015). With this focus, they present a post-humanist move that de-centres the human subject by paying attention to the doings of both human and non-human actors in the everyday. These perspectives resonate with discussions in organizational aesthetics on the embodied and sensory knowledge of practice. In this sense a relation has further developed between the turn to practice and affective experience (see Reckwitz, 2017; Gherardi, 2017; Küpers, 2016; Wetherell, 2012). In this thesis, a focus on everyday doings as a performative act will constitute a central contribution aimed at addressing the situational creation of knowledge viewed from a processual perspective.

Yet, when one talks about affect, it is relevant to address the critique that Leys has comprehensively presented (2011: 443). She sees a shared anti-intentionalism in affect theory, which prompts affects scholars to address a critique of reason and rationality in politics, ethics and aesthetics, as discussed by Kantian and Habermasian philosophers (Leys, 2011: 436), and this anti-intentionalism eludes form, cognition and meaning. This indicates a shift in the role of ideology to the ontological concerns with different people’s corporeal-affective reactions (Leys, 2011: 451). Moreover, following Leys, the separation of affect from conscious experience prioritizes the non-intentional over other ways of knowing, which is where Massumi, e.g., succumbs to a false dichotomy of body and mind. (Leys, 2011: 455). Generally, Leys point resonates with Wetherell’s critical stance, especially towards the non-representational strand, by overall not buying into the ‘beyond cognitive’ (Wetherell, 2012: 30f.). This thesis conceptually attends to these matters via the neo-phenomenological perspective on embodiment and the relation to perception, which points to a way of considering affect and experience as being related.

Central to this thesis is how the turn to affect in non-representational theory (see Thrift, 2008; Anderson, 2009; Stewart, 2008a; 2011) and organization studies (see Fotaki et al., 2017; Kenny and Fotaki, 2014; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; Gherardi, 2017) have shaped new ways of looking at the relationship between, e.g., bodies, space and performance by shedding light on the rather implicit effects and resonances of this relation. As Stewart and Lewis argue:

Affect is a lens for approaching social worlds and lived experiences as ongoing processes. (2015: 239)

This reflects a development in the attention to affect, since the turn to affect initially tended to focus on the individual, while the current discussions and developments on the concept of
affective atmosphere address the collective nature of affective life (Anderson and Ash, 2015; Michels and Steyaert, 2016). The implicitness of affect challenges traditional representational thinking and offers an opening to discussing organization and sociality anew, which reflects a kind of cultural critique (Clough, 2009; Reckwitz, 2017).

Despite differences across the affective choir, its communalities on themes like embodied resonance, atmospheres, relationality of a sorts and new ways of organizing are where this thesis and the focus on organizational atmosphere seek to make a contribution. Michels and Steyaert (2016) particularly discuss the concept of affective atmospheres and its potential to understand organizational affect by relating it to a spatio-aesthetic ontology, while Beyes and De Cock (2017) address colour as an affective organizational force, thus proposing a critical take on affect. Perspectives opening for a critical approach to affect adjust to the non-representational approach as being predominantly in cultural geography (Thrift, 2007; McCormack, 2015; Anderson, 2009). Hence, they aim at the ‘experience’ located beneath the conscious when they describe affective sensations by addressing the immanent critique of writing and modes of presentation, thus inviting transdisciplinary approaches to theory and method. As Clough argues, turning to affect potentially also involves an ontological shift towards a new empiricism as an ‘empiricism of sensation’ (Clough, 2009). This perspective entails a focus on method as necessarily performative because it is part of producing affective resonance and attunement (Clough, 2009: 49). As Fotaki et al., argue, affect theory suggests new ways of apprehending and presenting organization (2017; 7). This reflects a recurring argument that approaching affect requires new performative ways of conducting critique and new methods that can enact the affective dimension of everyday life in research (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000, Thrift, 2003; Latham and Conradson, 2003; Anderson, 2005). Among these arguments calling for experimentation, new styles of writing have emerged (Vannini, 2015b, 2019; Stewart, 2008a, 2011; McCormack, 2010, 2015), a development that resonates with organizational scholars’ argument for finding aesthetic and embodied approaches to writing that can present organizational research differently (see Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 54; Beyes and DeCock, 2017) or employ artistically inspired perspectives (Taylor and Hansen’s, 2005). This thesis seeks to contribute to writing organization differently, taking inspiration from the affective and non-representational strand and considering it a way to ‘present’ the non-dualist character of organizational atmosphere.
Towards organizational atmosphere

This thesis argues that an approach to organizational atmosphere as a coherent area of research resonates with approaches on affect, space and aesthetics in organization studies. In a way, an engagement with organizational atmosphere helps to bridge these strands of organization research that inquire into aesthetic, affective and spatial processes. Yet, as Julmi has argued, despite a huge interest in atmospheric phenomena, ‘a predominant conception of atmospheres across the field still needs to be established’ (Julmi, 2017: 5) Generally speaking, this thesis seeks to contribute to this quest by tracing the roots of the notion of atmosphere to its neo-phenomenological and aesthetic proveniences and thus unfolding the potential of this notion as a non-dualistic conception in organization studies. Thus far, the strongest conceptual discussions on atmosphere are found in aesthetics and philosophy (Schmitz, 2014a; Sloterdijk, 2004; Böhme, 1993, 1995; Hauskeller, 1995; Grifféro, 2010; Grant, 2013; Rauh, 2012b; Heibach, 2012a), followed by architecture and urban development (Zumthor, 2005; Pallasmaa, 2007, 2014; Hasse, 2014, 2015; Kazig, 2018; Albertsen, 2013, 2016) and human geography and anthropology (Anderson and Ash, 2015; Anderson, 2009, 2016b; Stewart, 2011, 2017; McCormack, 2008b, 2010, 2015; Pink et al., 2014; Bille et al., 2015). On the other hand, an interest on organizational atmosphere can be considered as emerging in organization studies (see Borch, 2009; Julmi, 2015, 2017: 16; Beyes, 2016; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Michels, 2015). In these areas atmosphere is generally treated as an ambiguous phenomenon, described as fluid and airy. The non-dualistic approach acknowledges that subject and object form a coherent whole in human experience, and thus explicitly deals with the ambiguity of the notion of atmosphere. As Julmi states:

Non-dualistic conceptions (ed. of atmosphere) try to answer these questions by conceptualizing atmosphere as something that lies in-between or goes beyond the subject (mind, psychological variable, organism) and object (environment, physical variable, stimulus). (Julmi, 2017: 12)

Conceiving atmosphere as the in-between is a common acclamation for scholars working with atmosphere (e.g. Böhme, 1995: 33, 2013a: 29; Albertsen, 2013: 220; Rauh, 2012b; Anderson, 2009: 78; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; Julmi, 2015: 16; Bille et al., 2015: 32). Yet, the use of the term ‘in-between’ to describe the ‘form’ of atmosphere underlines atmosphere as a relational phenomenon that is non-representational and delineates how the notion slips out of traditional analytical framing, but still considers atmosphere a real phenomenon. This is akin to what Stewart calls ‘weak ontologies’ as being in-between moments of something happening (Stewart, 2008b), which explains why the notion of atmosphere has found broad acknowledgement in non-representational
research⁸, (Anderson and Ash, 2015; McCormack, 2008b, 2015; Anderson, 2009; Stewart, 2011; Vannini, 2015a). Yet, a certain geographical-linguistic distinction can be made between the German, French and English research on atmosphere (Kazig, 2018: 5f).

This thesis will focus on the German research tradition, for its profound conceptual elaborations follow a phenomenological-philosophical trajectory that has seeped into a lot of recent work on atmosphere (see Anderson, 2009; Michels, 2015; Borch, 2009; Julmi, 2015, 2018; Stewart, 2011). Yet, the thesis will also enter into dialogue with non-representational theory in order to approach organizational atmosphere analytically methodologically (Thrift, 2008; Anderson and Ash, 2015; Vannini, 2015a+b, 2019), thus seeking to contribute to an experimental performative stream of research that takes the non-dualist character of organizational atmosphere into account. Research on atmosphere may be seen to challenge and identify limitations in the traditional scientific discourse (Böhme, 1995; Hasse, 2015; Schmitz, 2014b; Anderson, 2009; Vannini, 2015a+b; Bille et al., 2015; Albertsen, 2013; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Beyes, 2016), a stance to be recognized as a premise of this research. The non-representational approach as a performative concept, which focuses on the everyday where matter turns into sensed-sensing energy, is, however, what makes ‘atmosphere enter the scene of spatial thinking’ (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 52). In organizational studies this points at different ways of approaching organization as well as of conducting empirical analysis (Michels, 2015; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Borch, 2009). Engaging with atmospheres in such ways can be considered as a process aimed at unsettling fixed categories and categorizations in organization studies, as seen with other ambiguous phenomena (Beyes and Steyaert, 2013; Pors, 2016). This engagement thus addresses with the frailty of physically designed organizational space, a frailty often predicated on an intentionality that cannot be accomplished and on the tensions reflecting the affective forces in play when new office spaces are inhabited – feelings of alienation, frustration or joy. If one instead engages with the notion of atmosphere as affective materiality, then the aesthetic and spatial dimension of organizations can be considered in a new way that allows perspectives on physical space, artefacts, organizing and embodiment to be enriched. Further, the critical dimension is key when one looks at organizational atmospheres and the extent to which they entail distortive and manipulative power structures, as they touch the embodied and pre-reflexive perception (Reckwitz, 2014: 357; Böhme, 1995: 36; Heibach, 2012a: 16).

⁸ The thesis uses non-representation, although it could be argued that the term ‘more-than-representational’ (Latham, 2003) might be more appropriate as to grasp atmosphere as an excess phenomenon. However, the term non-representational is used here due to its general dispersion.
This thesis revolves around the understanding of organizational atmosphere that takes a non-dualist perspective, focusing on organization as an atmospheric phenomenon. The thesis provides an in-depth engagement with a ‘German’ non-dualist tradition of thinking the atmospheric, seeking to add to the turns in organization studies on aesthetics, affect and space, both theoretically and empirically. This makes looking at organizational atmosphere a consideration of how organization and atmosphere intertwine rather than an endeavour to identify atmosphere as one variable in organizations, and is thus considered to be an aesthetic endeavour as part of the architectural design of work spaces as well as to involve the perceptive and affective aspects of organizational atmosphere. Such an undertaking entails an unfolding of the notion of atmosphere, which the thesis will argue may be usefully considered as an ontology of the in-between. An atmospheric view of organization further reflects a new aesthetic research agenda for management and organization that emphasizes a rather recent perspective on organization. It says:

Organization invariably is an atmospheric phenomenon. It takes shape as a swirl of affect, constructed from constellations of objects, stories, technologies, texts, human bodies and their affective capacities. (Beyes, 2016: 115)

This thesis unfolds and investigates this argument, for one because it articulates a broader thematic scope of organizational studies and, two, because it addresses organization as an atmospheric phenomenon. Taking an atmospheric perspective on organization, it is claimed, enables one to incorporate discussions on aesthetics, space and affect in order to attend to the social organization and everyday politics of organization. To this end, the thesis asks how organizational atmosphere works by generally following an aesthetic division between perception and production, as suggested by Böhme (1995: 2013a: 104f., 2016: 126), although remaining aware that the two tend to blend with an atmospheric perspective. Yet, from an analytical-empirical heuristics, this approach allows one to pay due attention to the design and experience of organizational atmosphere, which further reflects the interdisciplinarity of the thesis and the attention to atmosphere.
Chapter 3: Perceiving Atmosphere

Paradoxically, we grasp the atmosphere before we identify its detail or understand it intellectually.

(Pallasmaa, 2014: 232)

When I enter a room, I will somehow be moved by this room.

Its atmosphere will be decisive for how I feel. (Böhme, 1995: 15)

Chapters 3 and 4 will explore the roots of the notion of atmosphere from the perspective of the German (neo-)phenomenological tradition as presented by Hermann Schmitz and Gernot Böhme. This exploration provides the backdrop for the conceptual discussion of atmosphere as a non-dualist notion, in which central aspects of embodied affectivity, space and social organizing are introduced and discussed, thus offering an apt premise for addressing how organizational atmospheres are experienced and can be said to work. Hermann Schmitz has been named a prime mover in conceptualizing the notion of atmosphere, and it is his neo-phenomenological philosophy on which the conceptual approach of this chapter centres. Furthermore, his work plays a key role in Gernot Böhme’s development of atmosphere into a new aesthetics, enhancing Schmitz’s engagement with the dynamic and perception of atmosphere by focusing on how atmospheres are produced (see 1995; 2013). This chapter focuses on how atmospheres are experienced and conceptualized, while chapter 4 will focus on their aesthetic production.

Both Schmitz and Böhme consider atmosphere as an important rearticulation of the everyday spatial and sensuous affective experience, a view that resonates strongly with discussions in the turn to organizational aesthetics as well as in the spatial and the affective turns in organization studies (see Strati, 2000; Thrift, 2008; Beyes, 2016; Michels and Steyaert, 2016). For both Schmitz and Böhme the attention paid to atmosphere reflects a general societal critique concerning certain
political, economic, cultural and scientific questions. Although the two thinkers converge on key aspects of atmosphere, their understandings also differ according to their theoretical stances. Yet, the chapter argues that their focus on perception and atmosphere as fundamentally relational and embodied can be seen as connected in a double-sided relationality continuously oscillating between actuality and potentiality. Accordingly, the chapter argues for considering perception as a way of performing organizational atmospheres. This allows one to attend to the material and the existential as part of perceiving atmospheres. This argument will be unfolded conceptually in this chapter where the focus is on the perception of atmosphere and constitute a background for the conceptual elaboration on the production of atmospheres in chapter 4.

The chapter starts by situating the two theoretical perspectives of Schmitz and Böhme, thus framing how the thesis draws on their work. Next, the chapter outlines central elements of Schmitz’s neo-phenomenology, especially the twofold body concept and how it forms the basis for embodied perception, thus contributing to discussions on affect and subjectivity, which has become constitutive for Böhme’s aesthetic work on atmosphere as a theory of perception. The chapter argues that the commensurability between Böhme and Schmitz enables one to consider perception as an immersive and critical way of performing atmosphere. This leads to a discussion of the ontological nature of atmosphere, which outlines a relational ontology emphasizing the spatial and emotional qualities. For Böhme and Schmitz, presenting an existential apprehension of space as surfaceless and constituted by different levels of mood is a critique of representational space and its embodied alienation.

Working from a processual perspective on the oscillation between actuality and potentiality, the last part of the chapter presents some analytical considerations following the conceptual work on perception and atmosphere, which will then serve as a platform for the methodological discussion in chapter 5. Here, Schmitz’s approach to phenomena and phenomenological revision provide a suggestion for approaching atmosphere, thus leading to the proposition that one might approach organizational atmosphere by considering Schmitz’s notion of the situation as an analytical focus for engaging with organizational atmosphere, which would reflect discussions in fields like non-representational and process theory that pay attention to the moment, situation or event. As will be shown throughout chapters 3 and 4, although Schmitz and Böhme reflect two ontological perspectives on atmospheres (see Schmitz, 2005: 222), their perspectives can be seen as two sides of the same coin, an argument that can add to the conceptualization and analysis of organizational atmospheres.
A neo-phenomenological approach

For Schmitz atmosphere is pivotal in presenting a ‘new phenomenology’ aimed at making everyday life understandable to human beings (Schmitz, 2014b: 7). He builds on phenomenological trajectories from thinkers like Martin Heidegger and Otto Friedrich Bollnow, especially their works on mood (Stimmung) and space as formative aspects of ‘being-in-the-world’. Following the phenomenological questioning of the Cartesian worldview and scientific method, Schmitz challenges the classical distinction between object-subject and body-soul in order to gain new experience-based insights. Using the overall phenomenological idea stemming from Husserl’s notion of going back to the ‘things themselves’, Schmitz seeks to re-establish the everyday experience as a valuable source of investigation and knowledge creation. He argues that the constructs and conventions of modern living have restricted the spontaneous experience (2014b). At the same time, his use of the term ‘new phenomenology’ indicates that he is engaging in a showdown with such central parts of phenomenological tradition as Husserl’s intentionality and Heidegger’s transcendentalism. A parallel critique of social science as failing to acknowledge everyday affective phenomena like emotions, desires and embodied sensations reflects a fundamental argument in theories regarding organizational aesthetics, affect and non-representational theory (Strati, 2003; Warren, 2008, Stewart, 2015; Dewsbury, 2003; Dewsbury and Thrift, 2002; Vannini, 2015a, Beyes, 2016; Michels and Steyaert, 2016).

Staying within the phenomenological framework, Schmitz wants to give phenomenology a new touch by emphasizing the embodied sensibility for the nuanced realities of lived experience (Schmitz, 2014b, 2011: 243). According to Schmitz, his phenomenology is new because he lets the spontaneous felt experience be the final ground (letzbegründung) for justifying all claims (2014b: 13). By freeing the spontaneous experience from the metaphysical tradition, Schmitz seeks to uncover new ways of experiencing life through corporeality and argues for a naïve empiricism. Schmitz (see Schmitz, 1969: 259) and others (Lagemann, 2015; Grossheim, 2003) argue that this focus on corporeality and on the felt experience constitutes an embodied development of Heidegger’s phenomenological idea of approaching life in its vitality. Accordingly, new ways of experiencing are ultimately seen as freeing human beings, not in the sense of having free will, but a free way of

10 ‘Die Neue Phänomenologie möchte also die Schematisierungen der Naturwissenschaft verlassen und neue Erfahrungsschancen freilegen’ (Schmitz, 2014a, p. 17).
thinking\textsuperscript{11} (Gesinnungsfreiheit) (Schmitz, 2014b: 128), a philosophical ambition that reflects the Heideggerian heritage.

Like fellow phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty, Schmitz’s new phenomenology makes a decisive contribution to (re)introducing the body as an essential part of our experience. Both Merleau-Ponty and Schmitz confront philosophical predecessors like Descartes and Kant with a neglect that has resulted in scientific reductionism and dualism. As such, Schmitz’s idea of dismantling traditional concepts and conventions is strongly connected to his notion of the body as the key dimension of our experience and reiterates the existential constitution of being-in-the-world. Experiencing presence is a key to perceiving atmosphere and its spatial-emotional dimension.

As part of defining a new philosophical path, Schmitz’s work is characterized by conceptual elaborations that accentuate his neo-phenomenological trajectory, thus providing a rich conceptual vocabulary and insights that enable a conceptual approach to atmosphere. Schmitz emphasizes this stance in the introduction to Atmosphären, a book in which he criticizes the current philosophy as lacking definitions or, at the least, as lacking a thorough introduction to concepts like atmosphere (2014a: 11). To fill in this gap, he concurrently introduces a neo-phenomenological vocabulary and concepts centred on the notion of atmosphere. His conceptual work is regarded as central to the scholarly endeavour to articulate and legitimize the investigation of a concept of atmosphere (Böhme, 1995: 29; Sloterdijk, 2004: 35; Julmi, 2015, 2016; Pallasmaa, 2014), and his pioneering theoretical work is therefore this thesis’s basis for understanding atmosphere as a non-dualist notion.

Although Böhme is generally internationally associated with conceptualizing atmosphere aesthetically, his work is strongly influenced by that of Schmitz, for which reason the two scholars are seen as largely planting the conceptual roots of atmosphere and fostering the acknowledgement of its non-dualist character. Schmitz is less cited internationally, most likely because his writing has been published mainly in German (for an exception see Schmitz et al., 2011)\textsuperscript{12}. Moreover, being contemporaries, Schmitz and Böhme have been able to engage in conceptual discussions, and the access to such ongoing discussions has provided a valuable means of unfolding and apprehending atmosphere conceptually. Although, their discussions tend to stress their

\textsuperscript{11} ‘Der personale, rechenschaftsfähige Mensch ist durch seine Gesinnung für seine Gesinnung sittlich verantwortlich’ (Schmitz, 2014b: 127).

\textsuperscript{12} ‘Translations of Schmitz’ concepts have been inspired by the translated writing of ‘Emotions outside the Box’, Schmitz et al. (2011). In general words and citations from Danish and German have been translated into English by the author. Where it has been deemed relevant, especially from German, words have been left in the original in parentheses.
differences and thus mask the commensurability of their thinking as well as how the two perspectives might reinforce each other, this thesis argues that considering their commensurability enables a more nuanced and interesting approach to organizational atmospheres. As a point of critique, it should also be noted that Schmitz has come under fire for producing a forced claim of originality, whereby he (self-)emphasizes his differences rather than similarities to other philosophers as a means of underlining his own hermeneutical approach (Kluck, 2014, 87). Others inspired by Schmitz and the notion of atmosphere include Tonino Griffero and his ‘atmospherology’ (2017) and Peter Sloterdijk with his ‘spherology’ (2004). Schmitz’s philosophy has similarly inspired many empirical analyses of atmosphere and corporeality in such varying fields as medicine, urban development, care, sports and organization (Hasse, 2014, 2015; Julmi, 2015, 2016; Fuchs, 2000; Riedel, 2015; Oberhaus, 2010, Uzarewicz, 2005; Gugutzer, 2012, 2017). Although this thesis will not discuss these works systematically, they provide a useful background for understanding the practical implications and applications of Schmitz’s philosophy.

An aesthetic approach

Gernot Böhme takes atmosphere into the aesthetic realm, most notably in his seminal book Atmosphere (1995, 2013). From a philosophical standpoint he does this by presenting the concept of atmosphere as the core of his theory of a new aesthetics. Starting with a critique of previous understandings of perception, Böhme argues that aesthetics is a general theory of perception (Böhme, 2001: 32 & 1995: 47). His major argument is that aesthetics has long been misunderstood as an intellectual judgement of art, whereas it should rightly be read as ‘aisthesis’, meaning sensory perception (Böhme, 2001: 30 & 1995: 15), which resonates with the approaches taken in organizational aesthetics (Strati, 2000, 2003; Warren, 2008). In general Böhme challenges the central focus of classical aesthetics as being on the beautiful and the work of art. Consequently, he broadens the term ‘aesthetic’ to include the human experience and lifeworld, turning it into an ‘ordinary’ aesthetics focused on the aesthetics of the everyday, of commodities, of politics. As such, the aesthetic concerns not only the fine arts seen in museums but also kitsch, a visit to the shopping mall or local bookstore as well as the offices of organizations. This re-actualization of aesthetics instigates a shift from how to perceive an object of art and thus make an elitist judgement of its artistic merit to how something is perceived sensorily as an aesthetic experience. Aesthetics concerns the perception of atmosphere. Hence, Böhme unfolds Schmitz’s embodied understanding of perception into an
aesthetic realm, emphasizing that we cannot aspire to Kant’s universalism or Hegel’s metaphysical foundation but must start where we stand, in the everyday (Böhme, 2001: 30).

Böhme focuses on aesthetics in part because he considers aesthetics to be a basic human need, and this need can be rearticulated with atmosphere as a new aesthetic. So for Böhme the aesthetic work is part of a cultivation process built on the assumptions that humans need to live in an environment of well-being and have a primal need to show themselves and participate in co-creating the atmosphere (1995: 42). These assumption are based on the argument ‘that the environment, the qualities of the surroundings, are responsible for the human well-being’ (Böhme, 1995: 41). First, this points at a new aesthetics that addresses society in general and is not merely an elitist art project. It also involves an important critical perspective, for it addresses the living conditions of the everyday and thereby constitutes a critique of the aesthetic capitalist economy (Böhme, 1995; 2016). These basic assumptions inform Böhme’s approach to atmosphere, and, on a general note, he agrees with Schmitz about the importance of rehabilitating atmospheres as a way of enriching human life and knowledge (Böhme, 2013a: 31).

Following Schmitz, Böhme aims at a new beginning, a new aesthetics, by distancing himself from the dualist tradition and the capitalistic organization of society (Böhme, 2001: 32ff). His overall aim is a new aesthetic humanism, where atmospheres make humans critical participants participating in the world (Böhme, 2013a: 53). Having a critical ambition, Böhme inscribes himself into the field of critical theory (Böhme, 2003b, 2016; Czerniak, 2014; Biehl-Missal and Saren, 2012). Böhme first builds his argument by identifying a current neglect of atmospheres by which they are seen as something either unreal or magical. Schmitz’s work helps to remedy this oversight. Next, everyday life and history demonstrate the importance of addressing atmospheres because they can be used for manipulation and seduction in the hands of powers like capitalism and totalitarianism (Böhme, 1995, 2013: 29&163f., 2016; Heibach, 2012b). Accordingly, Böhme envisions rehabilitating atmospheres as a means not only of enriching human life but also of ensuring a sovereign subject that is not just passive towards the emotional power of atmospheres (2013a: 30f.). Rehabilitation addresses aesthetic practices, especially architecture, as Böhme considers architecture to concern the production of atmospheres (1995: 97; 2013a). Atmospheric aesthetics is therefore a way of critically addressing the role of architecture and the human being as a critical participant in society. Hence, as much as he compliments Schmitz for attending to the receptive side of atmospheres and restoring the everyday sensory experience, he explicitly criticizes Schmitz for neglecting the production side of atmosphere, as found in architecture, design, etc. (1995; 31f.).
Performing embodied presence

The above, brief introductions to Schmitz’s and Böhme’s theoretical work emphasize a common focus on everyday life as a sphere of knowledge and sensemaking as well as situate the two scholars theoretically. Both accentuate a phenomenological focus on presence, but augment it with the sensory and bodily felt experience. This section will focus on Schmitz’s notion of the body, since it is constitutive of his theoretical body and understanding of atmosphere as a non-dualist notion as well as how atmospheres are experienced. To date Schmitz’s work has received less international recognition. Accordingly, the thesis gives his work considerable attention, for it builds on the central argument that his work can add to the conceptual understanding of organizational atmosphere.

Schmitz’s neo-phenomenology contributes to (re)introducing the body as essential in our experience (Schmitz et al., 2011: 242; Julmi, 2015: 56; Böhme, 1995: 28). The introduction of a twofold body concept not only establishes a distance from the transcendent in the phenomenological tradition of Husserl, Heidegger and Schütz but, in its empiricist foundation, also presents an altered view of subjectivity, causality and phenomena, among other things. This view is based on the claim that rationality and transcendentalism, as found in natural and positivist science, have overlooked spontaneity and the body as relevant to experience and the generation of scientific knowledge. Here, Schmitz’s work is generally considered as an embodied development of a Heideggerian perspective, which then leads to a relational view of perception and the engagement with the world. Despite the apparent discrepancies13, this thesis argues that Schmitz’s and Böhme’s views on atmospheres are largely compatible and jointly constitute an important contribution that is analytically relevant and approaches organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist concept.

The presence of the feeling body

Schmitz presents his twofold body concept in his big 10-volume oeuvre System der Philosophie (e.g. 1966, 1969). The concept of the felt body, in German called ‘Leib’, is key to understanding the neo-phenomenological project and is considered one of Schmitz’s major

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13 Parallels can be drawn to the Habermas-Heidegger controversy (see e.g. Habermas, 1992; White, 1991), when considering the affiliation of Böhme with critical theory and Schmitz’ affiliation with Heidegger. As such the Schmitz-Böhme relation can be seen to reflect some of the political-ethical connotations, which however is not discussed at length in this thesis.
contributions (Slaby, 2011: 242; Julmi, 2015: 56; Böhme, 1995: 28; Lagemann, 2015: 150; Gugutzer, 2017: 148). The concept supplements the physical body (in German called ‘Körper’). This twofold conception of the body (Leib/Körper) follows from Schmitz’s criticism of psychologist-reductionist-introjectionist-objectification (Schmitz et al., 2011: 247; Schmitz, 2015: 15). The criticism is levelled at the Western European intellectual tradition originating in Plato and Democritus for the way it leans on the soul/body dualism in its approach to human self-interpretation. The central problem in sticking to this dualism has been that:

the greater part of spontaneous experience of the world is lost sight of to apprehensive attention. (Schmitz et al., 2011: 247)

For Schmitz the spontaneous experience equates with a corporeal experience that happens before rationality sets in. This implies not only that the bodily component has been neglected but also that certain areas of knowledge production have been overlooked. Schmitz defines the felt body as what a human in the vicinity of the physical body can sense of oneself without referring to the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste) and the perceptive bodily schemata (2015: 15f; 2014b: 35.). The felt body is where the sensation of ‘feeling alive’ takes place and is therefore key to experiencing presence as an existential constitution. A corporeal experience is distinct from the five senses, as it is often used in the psychology or analytical philosophy of the mind (Schmitz et al., 2011: 244). Corporeal feelings in the neo-phenomenological sense are thus instead a holistic experience, which Schmitz characterizes as more like an impulse or a pulsating rhythm. In this sense, the felt body takes over where a split in subject/object would normally occur (Kluck, 2014: 83). Emphasizing embodied sensation as an impulse and vitality resonates with discussions in affect theory on intensities, the feeling of aliveness and the body’s affective capacities (Leys, 2011: 436; Massumi, 1995: 88, Thrift, 2004, 2008, 2009; Stewart, 2008a, Clough and Halley, 2007; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000).

Schmitz describes the basic dynamics of feeling alive and corporeal experience (Leiblichkeit) as constituted by a vital drive of being formed by an oscillation between expansion and contraction (2015: 16ff; 2014b: 35f). Being a feeling body means being somewhere between pure expansion and pure contraction (2015: 18f). The corporeal dynamic between the contraction and expansion of this vital drive is the absolute place of the felt body, thus rendering the spatial experience boundless and unstructured. The original space is what enables an experience of spatiality (Schmitz, 2015: 15). A parallel move of going beyond the body/soul divide is presented by Merleau-Ponty (2003), as well as in recent discussions found in Sloterdijk’s critique of the idea of the soul (2004: 240) and Reckwitz argument for the neglect of the senses (2017).
As Lagemann (2015: 150) argues, Schmitz thereby reframes the Heideggerian perspective on existential space, significantly supplementing it with the felt body. In this sense Schmitz also manages to address the transcendental challenge posed in Heidegger.

One of the most banal examples of contraction and expansion is breathing in and breathing out, which is corporeally felt. Likewise, experiencing pain is not just a state that someone is in, but an opposition to be confronted, e.g., through a desire to flee the pain by screaming, with the pain itself a contraction and the screaming an expansion. The feeling body elicits a spatial organization by means of expansion and contraction\textsuperscript{15}. Corporeal feelings form an absolute place (Schmitz, 2015: 17; Kluck, 2014: 178; Böhme, 2000: 47), while the sensing of the felt body presents an absolute place devoid of physical contours, and the physical body is conversely defined by its measurable outline and relative place. Schmitz also refers to absolute place as the ‘There’ (Da), which recalls Heidegger’s notion of being-there (Dasein) and the existential constitution of the ‘There’\textsuperscript{16} (Schmitz, 1966: 13). In this perspective, the dynamic understanding of the vital drive makes life less concerned with a goal, but resonates with being-there as openness, discussed by Heidegger as a simultaneity of world and self (Cioflec, 2012: 169).

Although Schmitz’s approach to the corporeal experience as a source of knowledge obviously resonates with, e.g., Merleau-Ponty’s view on embodiment, it is also said to be distinct from and broader than such a view, because Schmitz accentuates the felt body experience in itself, rather than seeing the body as a base of experience (Gugutzer, 2012: 30; Kluck, 2014: 88). Accordingly, rehabilitating the spontaneous life experience is what ultimately makes the experience of the felt body in itself. In this sense Schmitz may be said to present a concept of the body so nuanced and radical that even Merleau-Ponty’s effort to establish the corporeal experience as a source of knowledge in the phenomenological tradition can still be considered transcendental in comparison (Gugutzer, 2012: 30).

For Schmitz the felt body experience essentially relates to his understanding of subjectivity and affective involvement (1969: 91ff.; 2014b: 29ff.), which concerns a critique and distancing from the intentional conscious subject known from Husserl. Schmitz himself further states

\textsuperscript{15} This spatial organization Schmitz elaborates further into an alphabet of corporeal feelings, which, however, will not be discussed in detail here.

\textsuperscript{16} For Heidegger, what brings the being (Sein) into its there (Da) is the mood (Stimmung) as the ontic dimension of the ontological concept of attunement (Befindlichkeit) (Heidegger, 1993: 134). Attunement as a Heideggerian existential, makes it an experience of presence and constitutes a way of being-in-the-world. An important difference between Heidegger and Böhme (and Schmitz) is that Heidegger does not take into account the feeling body, but sticks to a philosophical outlook based on a metaphysical level (Böhme, 2000: 44).
that his understanding of affective involvement is how he interprets Heidegger’s notion of attunement (Befindlichkeit) (Schmitz, 1969: 259). The Schmitzian subjectivity is based on the affective involvement the feeling body allows. Schmitz defines affective involvement as:

The affective involvement of an experiencing subject is the nucleus of the facts, that belong to the being-that and are primarily subjective, in the sense, that all remaining facts of this being-that, would not be subjective anymore, if all the facts of the affective involvement would disappear. (Schmitz, 1969: 93)

The affective involvement of a person is where it becomes evident that something concerns only them. They might think, for example, ‘This pain is only mine; I am the one feeling it.’ For Schmitz, subjective thereby means that only one person can be concerned (Schmitz, 2014b: 31), i.e. only the person feeling pain can state the pain as fact (Tatsache): ‘I’m in pain’. Affective involvement accentuates that something is of concern as an embodied experience, as it creates a self-awareness based on sensation as ‘mine-ness’ (Schmitz, 2014b: 31; 1999a: 80). The experience is immediate and pre-reflective. This is akin to discussions in affect theory on affect as embodied pre-reflective sensations (see Gregg and Seighworth, 2010; Thrift, 2009; Massumi, 1995; Stewart, 2008a), yet, as shown, Schmitz adds a twofold notion of the body as well as a spatiality of the affective capacity of bodies, thereby presenting the affective dynamic as inherently spatial as contraction and expanse, which is generally less articulated in the turn to affect.

In Schmitz’s understanding, an objective fact is one that everyone can call a fact; e.g., it is a fact that Hermann Schmitz is a German philosopher (Schmitz, 2014b: 31). The subjective embodied experience in its affective involvement is a pre-personal and pre-reflective dimension, since it requires no personal attribution. To feel pain as a fact does not require the person feeling it to be able to list formal personal attributes like age, profession, etc. The possibility of affective involvement leads to an absolute identity with an unintentional self-awareness, an absolute identity concerned with finding oneself before acquiring an identity and being differentiated as a person (Schmitz, 2014b: 33ff, 1969: 80; 2011: 245). Subjectivity in Schmitz’s approach is not a radical singularity of a person’s experience, but rather the corporeal involvement by something (Böhme, 2008: 30). This approach seems akin to Barad’s notion of intra-action, for it argues that individuals do not pre-exist, but materialize through intra-action and form in an ongoing reconfiguration (Barad, 2003). Schmitz’s notion of subjectivity marks a shift not only in the phenomenological lineages but also in such foundational philosophical notions as agency, causality, space, time, knowledge and being. Schmitz thus presents a notion of subjectivity that is not socially constructed but based on the embodied
capacity to be affected, which is akin to discussions under the affective turn (Clough, 2008; Gregg and Seigworth, 2010; Wetherell, 2013; Leys, 2011; Massumi, 1995).

Yet, experiencing the vital drive and affective involvement differs among people, due to what Schmitz calls embodied disposition, which follows from the back and forth between body and environment (Schmitz, 1966: 265ff). Embodied disposition is ‘a person’s habitual embodied character, that has been formed by experience’ (Kluck, 2014: 182). An acknowledgement of a certain embodied biographical lineage resonates with Thrift’s talk of the body as a tool-being, meaning that the body evolves in the interaction with its surrounding, with things (Thrift, 2007: 10), as, for example, when the act of riding a bike or driving a car becomes almost an extension of the physical body’s action, which in turn allows new ways of interaction. So, the embodied disposition determines in great part how people act and react as felt bodies, something that also occurs on a collective level and indicates a culture-specific reaction (Kluck, 2014: 183). Accordingly, the embodied disposition is relevant to the development of a personal identity, as it is the foundation of personal experiences and how they are processed as well as a crucial factor in how situational experiences affectively involve a person and how this involvement is handled (Gugutzer, 2013: 97). However, as Gugutzer points out, neither Schmitz (Gugutzer, 2013: 96) nor Böhme (Albertsen, 2013: 222) pay much heed to the changeability of the embodied disposition related to socializing conditions influenced by society and social interaction.

Following Böhme, Schmitz’s view on subjectivity is an important contribution of his theory (Böhme, 2008: 30), and the idea of mine-ness also surfaces in Böhme’s theoretical split between ‘Me’ and ‘I’ (Böhme, 2001: 39). The experience of mine-ness, of how something affects me, is linked to attunement (Befindlichkeit) as a way of perceiving aesthetically. The ‘Me’ reflects the idea inherent in Schmitz’s mine-ness, whereas the ‘I’ represents a shift from an absolute to a relative identity. What creates the distinction between ‘Me’ and ‘I’ follows from the explicitation of corporeal sensations (Böhme, 2001: 85). Explicitation happens when a sensation is verbalized, which then differentiates the ‘I’ from the affective involvement:

Strictly speaking are we attending the birth of I by the Me: the implicit self-reference of the attunement breaks into an I and the state that it has. (Böhme, 2001: 85)

17 Understood as part of a social identity, the embodied disposition relates not only to the felt body but also to the physical body as Bourdieu's habitus, as in how you walk, body posture, voice, mimicking and gesture (Gugutzer, 2013: 96).
Here, Böhme links linguistic explicitation to the experience of attunement, i.e., the shift from experiencing anger to saying ‘I’m angry’. According to Böhme, this makes it possible to differentiate between me and I, which is also a way of differentiating between the myself and the state I am in. Böhme describes his interpretation of attunement as a translation of Schmitz’s corporeal alphabet by adding a material feeling body (körperlichen Leibes) to Schmitz’s corporeal sensing (leibliches Spüren) (Böhme, 2001: 82). For Böhme the explicitation constitutes an active moment of extraction (Abhebung) whereby it becomes possible to identify the ‘I’ and withdraw from the affective involvement (Böhme, 2001: 85), thus giving the ‘I’ a social and material existence when attunement becomes a sensing of the physical body. As Böhme remarks:

In the way the perception of things as a body turns ourselves into bodies, the perception of things as an object is what turns us into actual subjects. Although subjectivity is originally contained in every perception through the affective involvement, the independent subject is only created through differentiation. (Böhme, 2001: 171)

So, although Böhme acknowledges Schmitz’s pre-reflective version of affective involvement as constitutive for subjectivity, in his version subjectivity only becomes actualized by the ‘I’ through its relational constitution and with an awareness of the physical body. As such, while Schmitz orients his subjectivity to the spontaneous experience before individualization (the me), Böhme focuses on developing the individualized subject (the I). First of all, this distinction between Schmitz and Böhme underscores Schmitz’s interest in the pre-reflective moment of subjectivity, whereas Böhme’s interest lies in the actions of sovereign subject. Second, as a result, Böhme focuses on actualization by attending to the differentiation of things and the material body, whereas Schmitz focuses on the possibility of subjectivity before differentiation. Yet, both consider the connectedness of the two dimensions, which makes it possible to understand the connection as a relationality between the potential (Schmitz) and the actual (Böhme) in line with Cooper’s argument of human agency, which expresses relationality as a continuous forming of the latent and the manifest (Cooper, 2005: 1693). As will be seen throughout this thesis, this constitutes a basic discussion in the focus of Schmitz and Böhme, but as these two perspectives are inherently connected, it is conceived as a processual relationality continuously forming between the actual and the potential.

Still, this divergence has led to discussions between the two scholars, with the various arguments reflecting their respective general theoretical positions. Accordingly, Böhme has strongly criticized Schmitz for being too subject-centred and leaning on the individualism of classical liberalism.

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18 With Schmitz’s building on Heidegger and Böhme’s placing himself in the line of critical theory, an inherent tension is present reflecting arguments of the Heidegger-Habermas controversy on political-ethical questions (see White, 1992).
Böhme, 2008: 34; 2013: 37; 1995: 139). As mentioned by Chandler, Böhme’s critique of Schmitz’s subjectivity reflects what Böhme seeks to avoid in his desire to ground atmospheres materially (Chandler, 2011: 559). Chandler reinforces Böhme’s concern by saying that Schmitz’s view on subjectivity might indicate a denial of non-human agency (2011: 559). In general, this disagreement resembles the critique of the missing subject in affective theory as inferring a loss of sociality and political action (Wetherell, 2013: 123; Leys, 2011). However, as mentioned by Gugutzer, the affective involvement is at the crux of sociality, because understanding felt bodiliness pathically constitutes a relational category connecting the own felt body with something outside of it (Gugutzer, 2017: 150).

For Schmitz, the development of an individualized person is tied to his understanding of time, which is something not prominently discussed by Böhme. Schmitz describes the development of the I as going from the primitive present of mine-ness to an unfolded presence (2014b: 47ff.; 1999a, 75ff.). Schmitz’s distinction between the primitive and the unfolded presence (Schmitz, 2014b: 47ff; Schmitz et al., 2011) makes the primitive presence a rather original phenomenon. In the primitive presence the five moments ‘here’, ‘now’, ‘I’, ‘being’ and ‘this’ are fused, with no references for identification or orientation at hand (Schmitz, 2014b: 34). The primitive presence thus constitutes the ultimate spontaneous experience, such as when someone is suddenly struck by something, which establishes an absolute identity preceding identification and self-ascriptions (Schmitz, 2014b: 33; Schmitz et al., 2011: 248). Finding oneself in this ‘sensational’ way is the nucleus of Schmitz’s theory of subjectivity, in which self-ascription depends on a constant balancing between personal emancipation and personal regression, which similarly reflects the oscillation between unfolded and primitive presence (Schmitz et al., 2011; 2014b, 101ff.). Personal emancipation is the act of neutralizing meaning by setting the private off from the alien, while personal regression is the re-subjectification of the neutralized submerging into the feeling body of the primitive presence. Thus, emancipation is ascribing something to oneself (referens), whereas regression is finding oneself affectively (relat) (Ibid). In this way subjectivity can be understood as a processual becoming.

For Schmitz, the I lives in the world as an unfolded presence (Schmitz, 2014b: 54ff.), and, as Kluck notes, people generally find themselves in this presence (Kluck, 2014: 178). Developing as a person in the unfolded presence, as the I, means that a human relates to others of the same kind and that certain matters become extraneous (Schmitz, 2014b:101). The unfolded world in Schmitz’s sense becomes a field where something can be specified (einzel): it can be put in relation to something

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19 Schmitz links the discussion on person, affective involvement and identity to his apprehension of time, which will not be discussed extensively here (see Schmitz, 2014b; Schmitz, 1999a).
else. Consequently, specification does not exclusively use properties and criteria for being to separate being from not-being, but rather creates a passage\(^20\) between being and not-being that reflects a flow of time (Schmitz, 2014b: 58). The continuous oscillation between emancipation and regression underlines that the oscillation can be considered as shifting between actualizations and potentialities, reflecting also what Schmitz calls the playing field of presence (\emph{Spielraum der Gegenwart}) (Schmitz, 1999a: 175ff.) Schmitz thereby adds a strong focus on time to the embodied spatial sensation of contraction and expanse, which is not very explicit in Böhme. As such, the pre-reflective affective human is linked with experience as part of constituting an embodied character, which opens for a processual constitution of personalities, whereby an organization’s everyday experience will figure in forming the individual, e.g., in the ways they talk and move around. Seen as a continuous relationality, a consideration of the connectedness between potentiality and actual may be seen as way of engaging with Leys’ critique of the affective turn by suggesting a concatenation of affect and conscious experience and thus not prioritizing the non-intentional over ideology (Leys, 2011: 455).

Experiencing the felt body as sensing oneself has also often been described as a pathic concept of the felt body (Gugutzer, 2012: 38; Böhme, 2000: 45; Hasse, 2015: 41ff.; Strati, 2000). In essence, being pathic means having an immediate sensual and vivid awareness of being present as opposed to having a gnostic distant awareness of the world\(^21\). The pathic perspective provides an aesthetic dimension of human knowledge by emphasizing the how-to-know (the sensory-affective) rather than the what-to-know (the rational object) of experience (Hasse, 2015: 45, 2005, 2006;), which is in line with considerations in organizational aesthetics, among others (see Strati, 2000: 99). Such altered attention to the acteur as patheur challenges the cognitive and constructivist approach to the rational subject and agency, thus opening up for a sensibility of human existence and co-existence in the world (Hasse, 2010: 67ff.). This perspective also speaks to discussions on senses and their relation to practice in fields like sociology, cultural theory and organization studies (Reckwitz, 2000: 168; Gherardi, 2001, 2017; Küpers, 2002, 2013, 2016), as Hasse further points out that the idea of the actor entails an illusion regarding the human command of the social world (Hasse, 2005: 8), which also resonates with discussions on post-humanism (Barad, 2003; Anderson and Harrison, 2010). An attention to affective involvement as the affective capacities of (feeling) bodies opens for an

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\(^20\) Schmitz’s understanding of a passage seems akin to Sloterdijk’s talking of folds (2004: 220) or Heidegger’s perspective on borders as beginnings (Heidegger, 1954a: 153). Accordingly, the spontaneous experience has parallels to Sloterdijk’s discussion on subjectivity and the problem of beginnings in the sense that the constitutive moment of a subject contains a cognitive blindness and reference (Sloterdijk, 2014: 42).

\(^21\) The distinction used by the mentioned scholars is based on Erwin Straus’ theoretical work.
understanding of subjectivity, agency and the embodied involvement in the moment, thus reflecting aesthetic pathetic perspectives regarding the perception of organizational atmospheres and paving the way for social organization and discussions on the politico-ethical dimensions of affect.

Relational perception

For Schmitz the vital drive and the feeling body are not isolated, subjective matters, but rather ground his understanding of perception as a relational matter (Schmitz, 2005: 245ff.), with the feeling body taking part in constituting a community by way of embodied communication (Schmitz, 2014b: 38ff.; 2011: 29ff.). Embodied communication is oriented to a partner such as another feeling body, a quasi-thing or feelingless thing (Schmitz, 2014b: 40; 2014a: 57ff; 2011: 29ff.). In this way such communication orients itself to humans as well as non-humans, which also involves atmospheres.

Schmitz describes embodied communication as a dialogical feature that happens when the feeling body is caught in an embodied dynamic relating it with something (Schmitz, 2011: 29). Such a dialogue creates a totality of tension and swelling, for what is communicated is the sense of contraction and expansion, which in this dialogical form, which Schmitz terms ‘encorporation’, is considered a common drive (Schmitz, 2014a: 56). In embodied communication the feeling body senses what is being ‘said’ without previous interpretation – encorporation (Schmitz, 2015: 37ff.). Schmitz has described the common drive as the basic form of resonance where one person adopts and adjusts to the other. As such, the common vital drive is a meshing of action and reaction that creates an embodied co-acting process (Schmitz: 2011: 32). However, as Slaby points out, theories of perception have paid little attention to the issue of co-acting without the time to react, thus constituting a co-perception that makes spontaneous reactions possible in the first place (Slaby, 2008: 332; 2011: 10). This resonates with Cooper’s mentioning ‘primal intermeshing’ of humans and the environment as a generic condition of relationality (Cooper, 2005: 1692), although not paying major attention to affect.

Schmitz refers to encorporation as the major form of embodied communication, which is especially relevant when one speaks of collective atmospheres (Schmitz, 2014a: 56). Schmitz distinguishes encorporation as either ‘solidaric’ or ‘antagonist’ (Schmitz, 2014b: 40). In solidaric encorporation there is no direct partner, and the moving dynamic is a mass experience, such as when

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22 The perspective on resonance as a fundamental human way of relating to the world has also been discussed from a sociological perspective by Rosa (2018). Rosa argues that embodied resonance is the key to life quality to counteract the acceleration and alienation of society.

a group of people sing together or a mass panic erupts. Antagonistic encorporation occurs when oriented at a direct partner, like a colleague or an object, and it shows itself in the immediate movement, such as when something is thrown at you, say, a glance or a stone. Antagonistic encorporation constitutes an interchangeable dominance, as when two persons exchange gazes. Both types of encorporation (solidaric and antagonistic) induce a rhythm and intensity in the experience, which creates the embodied dynamic that moves the feeling body. The dynamic of the common drive is what makes encorporation the homestead of collective atmospheres and collective situations (Schmitz, 2014a: 58ff.) and reflects how both humans and non-humans are constitutive in the dynamic process of relational perception.

For Schmitz embodied communication is the basis of perception (2015: 28; 2005: 147; Kluck, 2014: 88). Schmitz considers not that which is perceived but a quantum field consisting of atoms and molecules, which leads one to conceive perception as relational (Schmitz, 2012a: 246ff.; Schmitz, 2014a: 128ff.)24. In terms of relation, Schmitz makes a distinction between connections (Beziehung) and relations (Verhältnisse), where a connection connects two parts and is reversible, while a relation is irreversible. Schmitz argues that in the realm of embodied communication, some relations are unsplittable (Schmitz, 2012a: 249). In an example with two people, this means:

… they are in an unsplittable relation, that is absolutely unsplittable, since everybody is just conscious of themselves in the other, where no one can make a connection to something on their own … (Schmitz, 2012a: 251)

The unsplittable relation constitutes a state of flow that dissolves the distinction between subject-object by becoming one in the action (Schmitz, 2014: 131ff.)25. Subject-object, Schmitz argues, can only be divided on the basis of the unsplittable relation, which constitutes simple perception. Simple perception is therefore pre-subjective and pre-objective, like the spontaneous experience. For example, in sports when a team enters a state a flow, it plays the game as a united totality. The sudden experience and the unsplittable relation of flow strip everything back to the basic sphere that makes relations possible (Kluck, 2014: 172ff.). The unsplittable relation is a collective, immersive state that reaches into the potentiality of primitive presence, resonating with Heidegger’s ‘There’ as constituting an openness to the world that comes before the subject-object relation, as well as paralleling Cooper’s

24 This resonates with other philosophies inspired by quantum theory to discuss ideas of becomings and time as process, as thoughts found in areas like process philosophy and new materialism (Cooper, 1976: 1012, 2005; Conolly; 2013: 407ff.; Barad, 2010).

25 This bears a resemblance to Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory (1975) concerning individuals performing while immersed in an intense feeling and focus.
discussion of the open field, where perception is a processual engagement with sensations and feeling as a holistic embodied experience (Cooper, 1976: 1012, 2005: 1706). This makes the unsplittable relation an in-between in Heideggerian terms, whereby the subject-object relationship becomes possible (Gioflec, 2012: 150f.). Therefore, perception as embodied communication suspends all questions of representation and further puts into question whether things are primarily what is perceived (Kluck, 2014: 187). Schmitz’s view on relational perception emphasizes that in its simple version, it becomes an immersive quality.

For Böhme perception is slightly different, as he emphasizes how the presence of things, humans and environments are experienced (1995: 25), an emphasis that reflects his primary attention to the material and to actuality. For Böhme perception is also relational but concerns the relation between subject and object as the in-between, which also defines atmosphere (1995: 33; 2013: 16). Although Böhme agrees with the notion of a feeling body and affective involvement, he views sensory perception and being present as concerning the ways the feeling body is near (bei) something (1995: 47f.). Schmitz talks about embodied communication as encorporation that is tied with something (verbindet) (2011b: 29; Schmitz et al. 2011: 39). A reflection concerning Böhme’s and Schmitz’s distinct focus on actuality and potentiality engenders two versions of phenomenologically based perception, where Böhme targets the process of differentiation of the perceived ‘object’ from the actual subject, which is then constituted in the verbalizing extraction. This is founded on Böhme’s central point that rehabilitating the aesthetic perception is to enable humans to engage critically with, e.g., manipulative atmospheres (Böhme, 2013a: 30ff.; 1995: 18). Schmitz, on the other hand, stresses a co-active immersion before differentiation and language (Schmitz, 2005a: 20).

Reverting to Heidegger’s existential on talking (Heidegger, 1993: 160ff.\(^{26}\)) provides a way of considering Böhme’s and Schmitz’s commensurability in terms of language. Heidegger describes talk as the lived and used language, which is central to organizing co-being in the world, where words are not used to define things but come out of a totality of significance (Bedeutungsganzes), a description that has an affinity with the way Böhme describes actualization through small talk and tittle-tattle (Böhme, 2013a: 39). Very importantly, however, in Heidegger’s thinking talking is simultaneously constituted by listening (Heidegger, 1993: 163), which is the prime openness to the world and others, which reflects Schmitz’s point that an embodied dialogue is formed by listening to what is being ‘said’. A similar point appears to be found in Cooper’s claim that silence is the

\(^{26}\) This is not to be considered an exhaustive reception of Heidegger’s existential, but as a way to consider the concatenation between the Böhme and Schmitz perspectives, considering that both refer to Heidegger.
background for speech as the unlocatable origin of all beginnings (Cooper, 2005: 1692). As such, the relationality of perception is seen as performed as a critical perception (Böhme) and an immersive perception (Schmitz), reflecting that the actual emerges out of the potential. This further emphasizes that the spatial embodied perception is linked with a notion of time, which is conceived processually. Here, embodied communication is understood as listening to the possibilities of world, some of which may then be extracted in a verbal actualization, yet considered as a simultaneous event of presencing. This provides a double-sided perception relevant to the embodied perception of atmosphere and the social organization.

As Gugutzer argues, embodied communication constitutes a kind of intersubjectivity (Gugutzer, 2012: 30), also termed ‘transsubjective felt body dialogue’, which uses encorporation to pave the way for social relations and thus for an understanding of the social and its organization (Gugutzer, 2017: 151ff.). This perspective resonates with discussions in affect and non-representational theory on affect and affective atmospheres as a transpersonal dimension where collective evocations emerge in everyday life (Anderson, 2009; Thrift, 2004; McCormack: 2008b, 2013). According to Hasse, Schmitz understands the dialogical character of embodied communication as a performative practice in line with non-representational theory, thus emphasizing that Schmitz’s dialogical focus presents a perspective where all partners – humans, things, spatial arrangements and landscape – are active and lively participants (Hasse, 2015: 181; Hasse, 2010). The embodied communication is not just a question of empathy but also a continuous rhythmic exchange that can change situations and/or atmospheres (ibid.). Kluck and Slaby reiterate this argument in their assertions that the constitution of world is performed (vollzieht sich) in the embodied interaction. (Kluck, 2014: 82; Slaby, 2011: 10).

Accordingly, embodied communication contributes to an understanding of relational perception as being continuously performed (co-acted) by humans and non-humans, thereby taking part in social organization. Understanding embodied communication as a way of performing collective atmosphere and organizing the social seems to counter Böhme’s critique of Schmitz that he is too subject-centred (Böhme, 2013a: 37) as well Chandler’s critique of Schmitz as denying the non-human (Chandler, 2011: 559). Schmitz himself also retorts that Böhme has misunderstood what embodied communication is about, asserting that it is not a ‘projection’ but a co-acting without time.

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27 From an organizational perspective, Julmi has used Schmitz’ two versions of encorporation to equal leadership communication and team communication (Julmi, 2017: 53). This research on organizational atmosphere will, however, understand the ways of encorporation more in line with the receptions by Gugutzer (2017) and Hasse (2010), thus focusing on embodied performance involving the non-human, materialities etc.
to react (Schmitz, 1998: 186). This reflects Böhme’s reference to the actualized and language to form intersubjectivity, but also Julmi’s argument that Böhme needs to be supplemented on the social side of perception (Julmi, 2017: 17). As such, understanding perception relationally is here seen to form as an embodied performance, out of which verbal communication can also grow as ways of collectively performing atmospheres. This is seen in line with a non-representational view where the performativity of the everyday focuses on what actors do. As Vannini says:

While interactions at times does have dramatic qualities, the idea of performativity underlines the broader relevance of concerted actions – or events – in our mundane existence and their fragility and, at times, inscrutability. (Vannini, 2019: 34)

Accordingly, a focus on perception as relational, deals with the mundane performance of human and non-human actors as a process of corporeal coordination that pays attention to rhythm, contingency, changes and improvisation. As Thrift and scholars of non-representational theory also argue, focusing on performance enables one to apprehend different moments of life, such as affect, the bodies’ communicative registers of bodies and spatial movement, as well as pay attention to the now (2003: 2020; Latham, 2003). The focus is put on understanding and working with the everyday as the perception of embodied actions unfolding in an active environment (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000: 415). Accordingly, this thesis will consider embodied communication as performing in its active sense, an understanding seen as resonating with the non-representational framing of everyday doings (Vannini, 2015; 2019: 34; Thrift, 2003; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). This thesis has further argued that Böhme and Schmitz both describe the relational component of perception as respectively emphasizing the actual and the potential, yet that this reflects performing a processual relationality moving from the manifest (actual) to the latent (potential) and vice versa (Hernes, 2017: 108; Cooper, 2005: 1693). As such, perception is relational attending both to a spatial and timely dimension in human experience.

Atmosphere

Having touched on the general relevance of the notion of atmosphere in organization studies and considering the notion to be non-dualist, this thesis must inevitably ask how atmosphere is understood as a neo-phenomenological and aesthetic phenomenon invariably connected to understandings of a relational perception and to a focus on presence. Schmitz defines atmosphere through two central elements: experienced presence and surfaceless space. He writes:
Atmosphere … is the complete occupation of a surfaceless space in the region of experienced presence’. (Schmitz et al., 2011:255)

Recalling Schmitz’s understanding of the feeling body, one engages with surfaceless space by giving way to experiencing presence and encorporation. For Böhme, on the other hand, atmospheres constitute the relation between subject-object, meaning the relation itself. As Böhme says on atmospheres:

They are the sensed co-presence of subject and object, their actual unity, which actually makes it possible to analyse their differentiated being. (Böhme, 2001: 57)

These two definitions underline how atmospheres reflect the double notion that perception attends to the potential and the actual. However, this thesis argues that these levels are to be seen as beneficially complementary rather than oppositional, in the sense that they emphasize each their side of the same coin. This argument is partly based on a central argument Böhme makes that his focus adds an important material aspect to Schmitz’s theoretization of the perception of atmosphere (Böhme, 1995: 31). As can be seen from the longstanding and still ongoing discussions between these two contemporaries, their theoretical situatedness pushes their arguments and disagreements (see e.g. Böhme, 2000; Schmitz, 1998 & 2005). Building on the previous discussions between Schmitz and Böhme, this section will consider the conceptualization of atmosphere as a neophenomenological and aesthetic phenomenon of organizational interest. As organizational atmospheres are the subject of scrutiny, the joint dimension of atmosphere will be in focus, an emphasis that also reflects the assumption that atmospheres have an ‘intersubjective’ quality.

An ontological ‘fluid’

Both Schmitz and Böhme defy traditional thing-ontologies by suggesting alternate ontological thinking, and this divergence is central to apprehending the non-dualist nature of atmospheres. Schmitz introduces the notion of quasi-things (Halbding), which are addendums to feeling bodies and things (2014a: 39, 2014b: 84, 2015). Atmospheres are an example of a quasi-thing, as are the human voice, the wind and emotions. Schmitz’s notion of quasi-things thus encompasses the ontological ‘fluid’. While the category of the quasi-thing28 captures the airiness and fluidity of

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28 To a large extent Schmitz seems to echo Heidegger’s point in ‘Sein und Zeit’ (1993) on shifting focus from what an object is (Was-sein) to how it is (Wie-sein), and to follow Heidegger’s statement that ‘ontology is only possible as phenomenology’ (p.35).
atmospheres, this very fluidity makes the quasi-thing difficult to grasp within a scientific logic built on a subject-object dualism. Böhme terms Schmitz’s quasi-thing as an ‘atmospheric phenomenon’ (Fahl, 2016: 28).

Where a traditional thing is defined by cause and effect and continuous duration, the quasi-thing has a simultaneous cause and effect and a disruptive duration (Schmitz, 2014a: 39; Schmitz, 2014b: 84f; Schmitz, 2009: 84f). The causality of quasi-things means that they come and go without its making sense to question where they were in the meantime. This understanding of causality resonates with, e.g., Heidegger’s anthropological causa as simultaneity (1954c: 175), Connolly’s and DeLanda’s discussion on emergent causality (Connolly, 2008, 2013; DeLanda, 2012) and post-humanist causality (Barad, 2018: 230; Bennett, 2010: 32f.), all of which distance themselves from the instrumental, linear cause-effect sequencing, pleading instead for a relational ontology. For Heidegger causality is defined by things being of concern (Heidegger, 1954c: 173f.), and what concerns him is how things are able to assemble a situational totality of significance. In parallel emergent causality can be seen as forging a qualitative assemblage, a fold, a kind of energizing blend of complexities and resonance (Connolly, 2005: 870). Ash and Anderson incisively refer to emergent causality as the way to understand what atmospheres do (2015: 44), thus underlining the issue of causality as a key to understanding how organizational atmospheres work. Anderson further argues that viewing atmospheres from a non-linear causal perspective is what makes it possible to think atmosphere as at once an effect emanating from the encounter and a cause holding an ‘agentic capacity’ (Anderson, 2016a: 156). Following Anderson, the causal nature of atmosphere in its complexity is what also enables people to collectively sense atmospheres (2016a: 160).

Böhme also presents an alternate thing-ontology by characterizing things according to how they appear and present themselves in space, which he calls the ‘ecstasies of things’ (Böhme, 1995: 167ff.; 2001: 131ff). Departing from the classical ontological definition of things as what-being (Was sein), the ecstatic element is added as something that is in the actual relation to the thing, something that can be experienced and its form of presence captured (Böhme, 1995: 175). This ecstasy involves the spatial composition of things, their place and their voluminosity as well as their taking-on-appearence (In-Erscheinung-treten). Ecstasies, Böhme argues, can be conceived in the aesthetic design (Böhme, 2001: 133). Böhme, then, is doubly tasked with understanding things in terms of ecstasies.

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29 Heidegger presents the idea of ‘das Geviert’ (1954c: 172), which can be understood as a condition of non-metaphysical lifeworld (Kolb, 1986: 107ff). In the late Heidegger, the concept denotes an existential-ontological understanding of the world as the world's worldliness. By the thing’s thingliness it manages to gather the absent in the presence that man inhabits.
and further how those things turn into ecstasies (2001: 138). In their ecstatic way things help modify and thus constitute atmospheres. As Böhme stresses:

… ... the ecstasies determine the atmosphere radiating from the things. So they are the way in which they become sensorily present in the room. (2014a: 108)

For Böhme things come to produce our affective involvement through atmospheres, especially because atmosphere spatially spills out, which is its character (Böhme, 2001: 168). Böhme therefore perceives such involvement to go from being real to actual, which implies that things touch not only the feeling body but also the physical feeling body (Böhme, 2001: 166). The totality of ecstasies creates a scenic condition that makes phenomena emanate, albeit only with the co-presence of humans (Böhme, 2014a: 106). This further explains why Böhme considers the aesthetic practice of architects, scenographers and designers as crucial to any approach to atmospheres (2013a: 105), a viewpoint that will be further explored in chapter 4.

With their alternate ontological approaches Böhme and Schmitz see the world emerging in totalities, a texture of lived possibilities and a relational endeavour in which the world constantly reconfigures itself. According to Böhme, engaging in the relation to things and their description is what enables ecstasies and the social existence of atmosphere to be extracted. As he states:

Describing a thing … means putting oneself in an actual relation to that thing. The description of the thing, then itself stands in an ontic relation to the thing. It is somewhat like a picture. What happens to the things in the description or the picture, is the extraction of their ecstasies. (Böhme, 1995: 175)

Accordingly, the description of a thing creates the extraction, thus making atmospheres a social phenomenon. For Böhme the description creates intersubjectivity, which means that atmospheres come into existence. The articulated importance of things to Böhme and his conception of atmosphere lead to an explicit critique of Schmitz that argues that he confuses thingliness with voluminosity and that he should instead attend to the factual thing-category arising from physical bodiliness (Böhme, 2001: 169). As Böhme puts his critique of the perception of things to Schmitz:

… it is ..() .. not about turning a thing into a feeling body, but rather the opposite, that we experience ourselves as material bodies relating to the thing. (Böhme, 2001: 169)

Clearly Böhme argues for experiencing things at the material level, whereas Schmitz, Böhme maintains, orients himself at the level of the felt body. According to Schmitz, however, this is a misunderstanding on Böhme’s part and what traps him in a version of the classical thing-ontology

The difference between Schmitz and Böhme extends into discussions distinguishing between, e.g., the atmospheric and atmosphere. According to Fahl, Böhme’s distinction between atmosphere and the atmospheric relates to the former’s existing by the co-presence of the subject as a perceiver, while the latter exists independent of a subject, although the distinction is not always clear-cut (Fahl, 2016: 28). Schmitz argues that atmospheres cannot be attached either to an experiencing subject or an object, but instead constitute a totality enveloping and embedding both by being trans-and pre-objective (Schmitz, 1969: 98ff.). Conversely, Böhme considers atmospheres as quasi-objective and as manifesting themselves in the ability to communicate linguistically about them (Böhme, 2014: 104). This distinction reflects two alternate thing-ontologies, one that attends to atmospheres on the level of the physical body (actual) and the other to corporeal sensations (potential). Böhme views this difference as giving cause for critique, noting:

*In contrast to the approach of Schmitz, atmospheres are not conceived as free-floating, but are actually something emanating from and being created by things, humans or their constellation.* (Böhme, 1995: 33)

So, while Böhme addresses the quasi-objective in atmosphere, Schmitz sees atmospheres as pre-objective. This reflects Böhme’s statement that an atmosphere is actualized in part by atmospheres based primarily on verbal co-human communication, although generally founded on a certain consensus and reciprocal trust (Böhme, 2001: 39). The quasi-objective perspective is what enables a withdrawal from atmospheres, according to Böhme (2013a: 33) – a perspective that enters into his critical project of engaging with atmospheres as a new aesthetics and the sovereign subject (2013a: 53). Schmitz and Böhme thereby present two ways of perceiving atmospheres, with Böhme emphasizing a critical-verbal distancing and Schmitz an embodied-listening immersion. However, by considering the two perspectives in the light of relationality, they are considered as compatible reflecting the oscillation between actuality and potentiality. Concomitantly, however, for Böhme, co-human atmospheres are considered difficult to objectify because they are continuously co-produced, which makes him drop the co-human aspect (Böhme, 2013a: 33). This aspect gives some heft to Schmitz’s point that Böhme might tend towards a classical thing-ontology by leaving out the vital interactions and movements between humans. Since Schmitz sees atmospheres as perceived through both the human and non-human elements entangled in the embodied communication and the emergent causality of atmosphere, he allows for movement and changeability. As such, Schmitz’s
approach to atmosphere is seen as a way of considering the world as the movement of relations in line with what in process thinking defines as an existential condition (Cooper, 2005: 1708).

**Emotions spatially poured out**

Considering the joint experience of atmosphere, Schmitz takes an unconventional turn by considering atmosphere as emotions (Schmitz, 2015: 57, 2014a; Schmitz et al., 2011). By placing emotions outside the person, Schmitz challenges the prevailing perspective of emotions as located inside the person. This turn is grounded on the argument that the pre-eminence of dualism has served to lock emotions in an inner worldly cage that allows for an emotionally clean outer world-based objectivity (Gugutzer; 2013: 305; Schmitz et al., 2011; Schmitz, 2014a: 44; Fuchs and Koch, 2014: 1). Previous discussions on emotions, affect and mood, as found e.g. in the affective turn, indicate a vast and complex discussion that cannot be given its due and comprehensive consideration in this particular context (Ratcliffe, 2008; Slaby, 2011, Hasse, 2015; Hauskeller, 1995; Böhme, 2001; Schmitz, 2015; Grossheim et al., 2014; Flatley, 2008; Massumi, 1998). This section therefore focuses on Schmitz’s view of emotions and addresses Böhme’s and Schmitz’s discussions regarding the understanding of atmospheres as emotions and which reflect their differing ontological apprehensions of atmosphere. The section goes on to discuss the immersive power of atmospheres as well as their activating potential. Schmitz considers emotions to be quasi-things (Schmitz, 2014a: 39), presenting them as

… atmospheres poured out spatially that move the felt (not the material) body. (Schmitz et al., 2011: 247)

Emotions and affective involvement are intimately linked, but although both capture the passive elements of being pre-personally involved, emotions contain an active element. Affective involvement as personal self-identification is the basic affective capacity, whereas emotions deal with the collective potential and joint drive. Yet, one’s affective capacity is what enables a conversion from passive perception to active engagement (Böhme, 2001: 84f.; Schmitz, 2009; 1969: 142). According to Schmitz, there are two basic moods, satisfaction and despair, that form the background for emotions (Schmitz, 2014a: 22; 1969: 219ff.). Schmitz defines being affectively involved by emotions like atmospheres as being moved (Ergriffen):

30 Others, like Simonsen, forward a parallel argument of seeing emotions as a public and relational matter, as part of her discussion of embodied practice, affect and spatiality (2007: 175ff.).
The emotions are characterized by the peculiarity of their affective involvement, their ability to move (Ergriffenheit)\(^{31}\). (Schmitz, 2014a: 37)

The essence of being moved by an atmosphere is that one cannot become a distanced observer but must enter a state of ambivalence, of either remaining with the emotion or distancing oneself from it (Schmitz, 2014a: 38; 1969: 139). Moreover, to be genuinely moved, a person has to be solidaric with the emotion and take it on board (Schmitz, 2014b: 86f.), i.e., be willing let go. Conversely, those who approach emotions with a preconceived opinion will only be touched by the emotion superficially. Slaby maintains that this is an essential aspect, not for the banal reason that emotions are moving, but because only on the basis of emotions can meaning be created in human existence (Slaby, 2011: 2). The force of being moved by atmospheres as emotions is poignant, for

…”in the case of an emotion, before the person can intentionally take a stance towards it, they always find themselves already situated in a stance one way or another and can no longer confront it in an unbiased way. They might even become inconsistent with themselves, i.e. the spontaneous initial stance. (Schmitz et al., 2011: 254)

The potentially overwhelming immersive power of atmosphere becomes evident and also alludes to political power and ethical concerns if these can be intentionally formed to ‘make a person become inconsistent with themselves’. On the same note, Schmitz argues that a willingness to let oneself be moved opens up a rethinking of the human approach to the world and life in general, which in its own particularity embraces the post-humanist trends in non-representational theory, process theory and new materialism by presenting the human as willing to open themself to uncertainty and the emergent (Vannini, 2015a+b; Hernes, 2017; Barad, 2018; Cooper, 1976).

Although Schmitz argues for the willingness to let oneself be moved, he adds a very important next step, which is the active moment of either surrender or resistance, i.e., the personal response of surrendering or resisting to an atmosphere (Schmitz et al., 2011: 254; Schmitz, 2014a: 35). The active dimension is related to a personal capacity for accountability as an attitude (Gesinnung) of responsibility (Schmitz, 2014b: 117ff.). Schmitz describes the capacity to distance oneself when being moved as an aesthetic devotion (ästhetischen Andacht), which is part of the personal emancipation linked to the unfolded presence. (Schmitz, 2015: 86). According to Schmitz, the aesthetic devotion is a doubled relation of being moved:

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\(^{31}\) ‘Ergriffenheit’ has been translated into ‘ability to move’ so as to keep a consistent vocabulary, since ‘ergriffen’ is commonly translated with ‘moved’.
that gives the personal emancipated person the possibility in the unfolded presence to have part in the rich, colourful wealth of the tender and marvellous emotions, on the other hand safeguarding from the possibility of disappearing or being expelled, for better and for worse, by emotions poignant powers. (Schmitz, 2015: 90)

Aesthetic devotion is what enables a person to balance between either being totally swallowed by an atmosphere or having lost the ability to be affected by it. Following Schmitz, aesthetic devotion constitutes the happy in-between in relation to atmosphere, which implies that the individual plays an active part in being involved. Aesthetic behaviour in Schmitz’s sense is thereby the ability to keep a distance when moved by atmospheres (Schmitz, 2015: 92). Schmitz thus adds an embodied withdrawal to Böhme’s verbalized distancing. This is by no means an ‘easy’ behaviour since getting affectively involved is also a lust-based aesthetic pleasure (ästhetischer Genuss). Moreover, in the situation where this pleasure takes over, the pleasure becomes habitual and thereby denounces the aesthetic devotion: in other words, the pleasure turns into consumption. This reflects Heidegger’s analysis of human forfeit (1993) as well as Böhme’s critique of aesthetic manipulation. Schmitz thus presents an argument in line with Phillippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2016) on the need to withdraw from atmospheres even when this goes against one’s own desires, which also opens for a (re-)thinking of the political. Such a (re-)thinking resonates with Heidegger’s thoughts on attitude (Besinnung) as being the ability or courage to question one’s own assumptions and actions (1954b) and with Sloterdijk’s idea of ascetic life as a continuous surpassing of personal limits (2012a). Both perspectives echo the focus on affect as a new way of thinking discussed in non-representational theory (Thrift, 2008). This emotional power makes Böhme especially vigilant to the design of atmosphere, which also creates a strong argument for the importance of addressing atmospheres and how they work (Böhme, 1995: 39). However, considering Schmitz’s aesthetic devotion adds an embodied level of withdrawal to Böhme’s verbal critique.

Although joint atmospheres can be moving, not all are, according to Schmitz, who distinguishes between the objective and subjective experience of atmospheres. The subjective experience refers solely to a personal sensation, whereas the objective one occurs when everybody can name the atmosphere (Schmitz, 2014a; Uzarewicz and Uzarewicz, 2005:109). Schmitz distinguishes between being moved and simply perceiving atmospheres without being moved (2014b: 83). These two distinct ways of relating to atmosphere stress a difference between feeling as acknowledging and feeling as emotions, a difference that emphasizes the lack of affective involvement in the former (Hasse, 2014: 230). As such, emotions are implicitly not subjective, understood in Schmitz’ terms, although being affectively involved by them is. Accordingly, joint atmospheres can affectively involve
several people, but only each individual can feel how they are experienced. This means that a multiplicity of atmospheres can co-exist, as Anderson and Ash (2015) also argue. As Schmitz himself mentions, not all people are equally moved, resistant or willing to be moved by atmospheres (Schmitz, 2014b: 86f.). For Slaby this distinction is an important feature of Schmitz’s understanding of atmospheres, as it forms a space of possibility where one can ‘just’ perceive atmospheres from the outside, for which reason they are not always moving (Slaby, 2011: 6).

Hasse has elaborated Schmitz’s two forms of experiencing atmospheres by dividing them into two ‘levels’ (Hasse, 2015: 229ff.). Sensing an atmosphere as perception is an impersonal atmosphere that is pre-objective, that one happens to be in, like the weather. This gives the atmosphere the character of an environment to which one has an affective distance. According to Hasse, a person is not moved but can relate to the environment (umwelt) and sense its existence (Hasse, 2015: 230). If the atmosphere moves the person, it becomes a co-world (mitwelt), which means that the person is moved by the situation and becomes affectively involved if

\[ \text{The situation of an atmosphere then becomes affective and a corporeal moving emotion of situational participation (situativer Teilhabe) develops. (Hasse, 2015: 230)} \]

For Hasse, perceiving an atmosphere versus being moved by it constitutes a distinction between environment and co-world (Hasse, 2015: 230ff.). Accordingly, atmosphere remains a pre-objective element, whereas someone’s being moved by an atmosphere turns it into a co-worlding that constitutes the atmosphere as a mood. Considering moods as affective atmospheres constituting a situational way of being together and collectively knowing what is possible all carry echoes of Flatley (Flatley, 2008: 17ff). As Slaby notes, the supra-personal atmosphere opens for a shared space of possibilities precisely through Schmitz’s encorporation (Slaby, 2011). Slaby sees the core of Schmitz’s view on emotions as being an immersion into supra-personal atmosphere that is adequate for the phenomenon and theoretically sound, although he suggests that the neo-phenomenological notion of atmosphere be described as a space of possibilities existentially performed (Slaby, 2011a: 7; Slaby, 2011b: 35). As Grossheim et al. stress, one requires the phenomenological notion of mood to qualify the embodied resonance and a person’s situative apprehension of the world in its totality (2014: 25ff.). This helps to underline how being moved by atmosphere is more than a response to an external stimuli, instead constituting an interference, a tuning in to the mood. As such, meaning is always affectively tuned because the world lays out a mood-induced background for encounters (Lagemann, 2015: 140). The mood in itself, however, is unthematized and creates a pre-intentional background (Grossheim et al., 2014: 26ff.). Yet, mood is an equi-vocational term, it’s both concerning how it feels
and how the world worlds (ibid.). Thereby Schmitz neo-phenomenology allows one to understand the atmosphere as the spatiality of organizational potential, which when existentially performed becomes part of organizing and reorganizing socially moving co-worlds. This resonates with Anderson’s point that atmospheres both surround (spatially) and radiate socially (Anderson, 2009: 80) and that atmospheres co-exist as a kind of multiplicity (Anderson and Ash, 2015). It further underscores how atmospheres as a non-dual notion both condition and are conditioned at the same time (Heibach, 2012a: 12; Anderson and Ash, 2015). So the moving quality of atmosphere is transferring the potential into the actual, which then gives way to new potentialities. As the next paragraph will show, mood for Schmitz is linked with his understanding of surfaceless space as shaping a pre-intentional spatial background.

**Surfaceless existential space**

By definition, focusing on joint atmospheres is affiliated with space, as seen when Schmitz presents atmosphere as the complete occupation of surfaceless space. This spatial take on atmosphere argues for an apprehension of space other than what is known as geometrical space. Geometrical space is understood as three-dimensional space in which one can identify and place objects. Such space is mathematically treated on the basis of dimensionality and metrical measures. It is understood by means of surface and measurable distance linked to the visual perspective. According to Böhme, geometrical space is conceived as representational space (2003a), such that its function is to represent relationships between things, potentially even as visualizations. For both Schmitz and Böhme representational space reflects a dualist approach.

Although both Schmitz and Böhme are critical of geometrical-representational space, they do not deny its existence or relevance either. Schmitz and Böhme call for a more nuanced and diversified understanding of space because the supremacy of representational space in society has engendered the alienation of space from the feeling body (Böhme, 2013b, 16f, 1995; Schmitz, 2015: 66; 1999b). Schmitz basically argues that geometrical spaces have eliminated the possibilities of corporeal sensations and embodied communication, for

*With the surface begins the alienation of space from the feeling body and thus the chance of orientation* .... (Schmitz, 2015: 66)

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32 Böhme’s term representational space will hereafter be used for the joint critique of dualist space from Böhme and Schmitz.
Surfaced space structures subjugate the feeling body to its objectifying organization, thus turning the human into an object itself. Representational space lacks concern for a more fundamental embodied sense of space, thus losing the capacity of movement as an affective quality and the spatial dynamics of expansion and contraction (Schmitz, 2015: 64ff.). This argument reflects discussions in the spatial turn on the importance of examining space beyond its being a passive container (Kornberger and Clegg, 2004; Dale and Burell, 2008; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; O’Doherty, 2008). Moreover, such an examination becomes of concern when Gomez notes that the Cartesian model of geometrical space is generally considered society’s dominant conception of space, to which, e.g., the approach to space in modern planning attests (Gomez: 2016: 13). The following part of this chapter focuses on the existential dimension of space in order to unfold the notion of atmosphere and the perception thereof, whereas chapter 4 will engage with the spatial discussion as part of atmosphere production in architecture.

Emotional space is the fundamental space concept in the spatial theory of Schmitz (Schmitz, 2015: 57; 1999b; 1969: 263ff.). For him, emotional space and atmosphere are linked, as emotions are spatially spilled-out atmospheres (2015: 25 & 57). Emotional space follows a parallel structure to corporeal spatiality. The relation between the feeling body and emotional space is located in the ability to be moved by the emotional space, and thus by the joint atmosphere. Schmitz draws on his notion of corporeal sensation as tied to a spatial dynamic that instigates the lived dynamic in space as reflected by movement (Schmitz, 2015: 47ff). Three layers of mood constitute emotional space, with the fundamental layer being the pure moods of satisfaction and despair that form the background for emotions (Schmitz, 2015: 57ff., 2014a: 22; 1999b). This base level is constitutive of all other moods and complex emotions. The two pure moods form a basic undercurrent spatially sensed as filledness (satisfaction) or emptiness (despair). The second level of the emotional space gives the pure moods direction. However, this direction is diffuse, as it has no defined source. Schmitz considers the directional emotion as inscrutable vectors that organize into gestalts that are atmospheres (Schmitz, 2015: 59f.). Here the moving emotions might be a sense of anxiety or longing. Rising from the directional emotions, the third level constitutes a centring, where the diffuse atmosphere is pulled together into a theme. That means, e.g., that a sense of anxiety turns into fear, or that longing turns into love (Schmitz, 2015: 61). The centred emotions condensate the diffuse gestalt, but do not give it a reason or cause. Experiencing emotional space is sensed as a corporeal resonance (Schmitz, 2015: 54), as seen, for example, in the way most people, through embodied communication, can smoothly slide through a crowded city sidewalk. Oberhaus (2010) illustrates this
with dancing, noting how the space in ecstatic or improvised dancing is pure and expansional, while in skilled, embodied figure dancing it is directional and centred. Different existential intensities thus cause how one senses the spatiality of atmospheres to influence movement and the type of movement, which in the context of organizations might appear in the (improvised or routine) use as well as in the design of space.

As Schmitz argues, this understanding of existential belongs to the ambition to surpass the issue of intentionality, causal directedness and the critique of emotional introjection (Schmitz, 1969: 260). As Hasse notes, Schmitz’s spatial ontology bases itself on a pre-dimensional space constituted in the dynamic between expansion and contraction (Hasse, 2005: 12). Herewith space surpasses the symbolic or geometrical by not being reduced to a constructed connection between things or in a social manner. The experience of space does not become by defining things, what space is, but rather how it is to be there. This constitutes the central shift from representational space to existential space. As Slaby points out, following Schmitz, emotions are then ways of beings, thus presenting their performance of personal existence and showing a fundamental way of involvement by sensing that something matters (Slaby, 2011: 2). What is more, atmosphere creates a space of possibilities. By dividing emotions as atmospheres into spatial categories, Schmitz has described an incipient classification of atmospheres33, although such a classification is undeveloped and beyond the scope of this research.

Böhme does not go to the same lengths to elaborate existential space, which he terms the space of bodily presence as opposed to representational space (Böhme, 2003a: 4). Basically, the fundamental quality of existential space is its potential for affective involvement, its existential character, which both Schmitz and Böhme acknowledge (Schmitz, 2015: 27; Böhme, 2003a: 5, 2011, 2014d). Thus, one could understand the existential not by determining what something is but by asking how something feels and creates a space for action. Böhme makes clear that space itself is not an object, but rather a background, a horizon out of which objects can emerge (2014a: 127). In line with Schmitz, Sloterdijk argues that the active existential force of space is that it is not a space for the human to be in, but rather inhabitation (Sloterdijk, 2007: 289)34. This constitutes a relation of existential immersion in which the human is embedded in space, and as such creates a different understanding not just of space, but also of participation (Sloterdijk, 2007, 230ff.). As Gomez remarks,  

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33 Clarified by Schmitz at Werkstattgespräch, GNP Conference, 2018, Rostock.
34 This reflects Heidegger’s point on the relation between building and dwelling (1954a), which turns around the spatial perspective by not making the world emerge from space, but space emerge from the world by its inhabitation. A similar argument is presented by Ingold (2011).
attuning space creates a sense of completeness and makes people participate (Gomez, 2016: 93). Existential space in this sense has an immersive character that forms in the embodied attunement process to the atmosphere, as when the architect Pallasmaa talks about the experience of space:

As we enter a space, the space enters us, and the experience is essentially an exchange and fusion of the object and the subject. (Pallasmaa 2014: 232)

This understanding of space clearly reflects an opposition to the Cartesian understanding of space as measurable and objectified, instead emphasizing the experience of space as a sensory and aesthetic experience. In both Böhme’s and Schmitz’s analyses of space also lie an analysis of the world, but they also reflect their respective attention to the actual and potential, as will be discussed further in chapter 4, which will also show how Schmitz’s work acknowledges the relevance of physical space, e.g., in his talk of inhabitation as shaping emotional cultures (Schmitz, 2015: 74). This can be seen as exactly where Böhme takes ‘over’ from Schmitz, engaging in an elaborate discussion on designing atmospheres. Accordingly, they both argue for approaching space differently, proposing a shift from thinking-about-space, as representational, to thinking-space, which can be seen to contribute to ongoing discussions in organization studies and fields like human geography (McCormack, 2008a; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011).

Approaching a non-dualist phenomenon

The previous sections have laid out the conceptual notions of atmosphere and how it intertwines with an embodied perception as doubled sided relationality. The ‘non-representational’ character of atmospheres is evidently not confined to traditional objects of investigation (Böhme, 2013a: 29; Böhme, 1995: 29; Julmi, 2015: 16; Bille et al., 2015: 32). Which, following Böhme, has created the challenge of atmosphere’s being considered a legitimate scientific notion (1995:32), and what may partially explain why organizations studies has done little to address atmosphere as a non-dualist notion so far, as Julmi (2017) has remarked. This section will therefore pay attention to how a phenomenon like atmosphere constitutes its scientific ‘validity’ when framed as a non-dualist notion, and furthermore how atmospheres might be approached analytically. To do this, the section first outlines the neo-phenomenological view on phenomena and how they gain ‘validity’ by their ‘evidence of the moment’. Second, it will be argued that Schmitz’s notion of the situation provides the foundation for an analytical approach to organizational atmospheres. This approach can contribute to the emerging analytical discussions on atmosphere going on in organization studies.
(Julmi, 2018; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Michels, 2015; Borch, 2009; Beyes, 2017; Anderson and Ash; 2015), but potentially also concerns other ‘fluid’ phenomena emerging in organization studies, such as the ghostly (Pors, 2016) or the uncanny (Beyes and Steyaert, 2013).

Evidence of the moment

For Schmitz phenomenology is considered a continuous learning process of refining attentiveness and thereby broadening the horizon of possible assumptions (2014b: 14). Based on the felt body experience, the everyday experience forms a horizon for understanding our world. In this understanding Schmitz pays attention to the experience of the moment and its facticity as affective involvement, meaning that felt body experience of a phenomenon has no focus on specific things, but can be seen as a holistic exchange of corporeal dynamics, described as:

*the world shows up not as a neutral realm of already separate entities but as the atmospheric fields of significant situations, opportunities or quasi-corporeal forces or ‘opponent’ that in the first instance become manifest to the conscious person in form of the ‘internally diffuse meaningfulness’ of holistic corporeal impressions.* (Schmitz et al., 2011: 244).

Experiencing phenomena is a holistic corporeal experience with diffuse meaningfulness, which relates to Schmitz’s view of the world as a series of force fields\(^{35}\) that constitute a totality of mutually influencing forces that create a unified interactive whole. Accordingly, phenomena are characterized by undefinedness, which Schmitz formulates as a logic presented as the logic of the undefined (*Logik der Unentschiedenheit*) (Schmitz, 2014b: 67ff; Böhme, 2000: 42; Schmitz, 1999a: 84ff.). This further gives way to his idea of the chaotic plurality (*chaotische Mannigfaltigkeit*), where it is not possible to separate the identical from the different (Schmitz, 1999a: 44). Böhme calls Schmitz’s logic of phenomena a general teaching on plurality, which poses a new way of philosophically approaching them (Böhme, 2000: 40). Accordingly, Schmitz’s logic of the undefined frames the centrality of the ambivalent, the fluid (Schmitz, 1999a: 84), thus rendering phenomena like atmospheres conceptually and empirically relevant. Schmitz’s contribution in this respect, as argued by Böhme, is that Schmitz develops a logic of phenomena that enables consistent talk on matters that would otherwise be invisible in a dualist perspective (Böhme, 2000: 43).

\(^{35}\) Talk of force fields is known also in Gestalt theory, new materialism and process theory (Lewin, 1939; Parlett and Lee, 2005; Barad, 2007, 2018; Cooper, 1976) Schmitz occasionally refers to Gestalt theory (see 2015: 62).
Schmitz’s phenomena reframe Heidegger’s argument that the possible (Möglichkeit) is more than the actual (Wirklichkeit) and that they can only be considered phenomenologically (Heidegger, 1993: 38). Similar discussions on phenomena can be found in Barad’s ‘agental realism’, which describes phenomena as ontologically primitive relations, their being relations without pre-existing relata (Barad, 2018: 229f.; 2007). As Barad argues, it is through intra-actions that phenomena come to matter, stressing the performative character of agental realism. Points that also seem to resonate with Cooper’s point that the immediacy of presence is the inversion of absence (Cooper, 2005: 1706). As such, the principle of uncertainty reflects an epistemological feature of what kind of knowledge is possible, reflecting a situational, moving and emergent character in keeping with discussions conducted in affective, process and non-representational theory (Hernes, 2017; Cooper, 1976, 2005; Vannini, 2015; McCormack, 2013, 2017; Beyes, 2016; Lorimer, 2005; Thrift, 2008; Stewart, 2011: 452).

Applying a neo-phenomenological understanding of phenomena, Schmitz argues that a claim for universality cannot be made, for it is the sensed facticity that permits an experience to be a fact. Schmitz’s phenomena thereby gain their ‘validity’ from the ‘evidence of the moment’ (Schmitz, 2014b: 14), meaning evidence ‘which cannot earnestly be denied as a fact by the person experiencing something in that specific moment’ (Schmitz et al., 2011: 243). This largely resonates with the celebration of the moment, the now of lived life discussed in non-representational theory and the ambition to uncover the present moment (Thrift, 2008). As Schmitz puts it, a phenomenon is

… something concerns or touches me, where I’m biased (befangen) in that it touches my heart or I take it to heart … (Schmitz, 1969: 91)

Movement thus becomes central to apprehending a phenomenon, and a phenomenon in Schmitz’s perspective is not a thing in itself, nor can it claim universality but must instead appear from a particular conceptual cultural or historical framework (Schmitz et al., 2011: 243f.). Schmitz’s approach stresses that humans, or the ‘observers’ of a phenomenon, belong to the reality one investigates by constituting a whole. As shown below, such phenomenological work entails that one address the richness of the phenomenon in its embeddedness and not have the ability to define things as objects36. Schmitz’s phenomenon relies on affective involvement as constitutive of making ‘factual’ claims, which unfolds a relational perception and existential attentiveness. By and large Schmitz, like

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36 Akin also to Bohr’s quantum physics, where object and the agency of observation constitute as whole, following his principle of complementarity.
Böhme, follows Heidegger’s perspective of putting existence before essence, thus emphasizing the everyday and the lived experience as key to enriching knowledge and research (Böhme, 2000: 44). However, according to Böhme, Heidegger’s and Schmitz’s views of phenomena differ in that Heidegger looks for the ways of being (seinsweise):

Rather than the phenomena themselves types of phenomenality is analyzed. Schmitz on the contrary declares his phenomenology as naïve. It considers the phenomena themselves, the empirical, and analysis these in their elements and not based on their formal conditions of appearance. (Böhme, 2000: 45)

The point Böhme raises first stresses Schmitz’s embodied development of Heidegger, where the feeling body emphasizes another level of existential experience. Second, and more importantly, Böhme raises a key critique of Schmitz’s understanding of phenomena and the implicit phenomenological reduction, as he sees Schmitz as wanting to peel off all pre-structures of the phenomenon, thus making it independent of assumptions and thus enabling one to get at the heart of the phenomenon itself. This leads Böhme to question whether the Schmitzian phenomenon exists at all (2000: 47), which simply shows Böhme’s own attention to formal conditions, actuality and the embeddedness in socio-political settings.

Schmitz has responded to Böhme’s critique, arguing that the ‘evidence of the moment’ is based on a phenomenological revision37, which is a relativization of the concept of a phenomenon (Schmitz, 2014b; 2005b). The main point is that nothing can ever be said with apodictic certainty. Unlike in Husserl’s thinking, it is not possible to get at things, but they must always be seen in relation to something. Ambiguity, not certainty, is ever-present. Accordingly, the phenomenological revision constitutes an explorative engagement (Erkundungsunternehmen)38, where one requires a self-critical approach to one’s own claims. Such an approach seems to resemble Ingold’s anthropological way-faring (2011), Cooper’s speculative wanderings (2005: 1705) and McCormack’s discussion of making post-phenomenological accounts of the world (2017). The principal disagreement seems to boil down to what and how one can claim the existence of a phenomenon, where Böhme, in line with Habermas’s critical theory, requires formal conditions that lead to a verbally articulated intersubjectivity of ‘validity claims’, whereas Schmitz, more in line with Heidegger, considers the ‘validity claim’ to be a situational event.

37 The term ‘phenomenological revision’ is part of presenting the newness in Schmitz’s neo-phenomenology, making a reference to Husserl’s ‘phenomenological reduction’.
38 Term used and elaborated by Hermann Schmitz to explain the way of doing phenomenological revision (GNP Conference, Werkstattgespräch, 2018).
Böhme’s critique stresses his own ambition to identify or outline formal conditions for the presence of atmospheres, thus determining the conditions under which a phenomenon shows itself in a pathic experience (Böhme, 1995: 201f). For Böhme the point is not the empirical conditions of something’s appearing, but the formal conditions of appearance, as Böhme argues:

*This is due to the fact that phenomena are fundamentally to be regarded as more or less distinct differentiations from the chaotic manifold. What one can therefore say about phenomena respectively is at the same time the account of the respective emanation.* (Böhme, 1995: 201)

Böhme advocates for a relational ontology where phenomena like atmospheres emerge and form an in-between of subject and object. Böhme in his approach makes atmosphere the main ‘object’ (Gegenstand) of perception (Böhme, 1995: 48). The fundamental problem, Böhme argues, is Schmitz’s failure to consider his philosophy as a phenomenology of nature, which makes it difficult to unfold its full critical potential. Schmitz’s general concern is the pre-thingli-ness (Böhme, 2000: 45), whereas Böhme is more interested in the thingliness, the actual. As Schmitz notes, Böhme’s critique of Schmitz especially omits the notion of situations in his phenomenology (1998), and that a situation presents an interwovenness of individual and society (Gugutzer, 2017: 157). As such, Böhme tends to omit the timely dimension in his aesthetics, which makes little account of potentiality as seen in movement and a changeability. Schmitz prefers to make the situation his ontological key for attending to atmospheres, which the next section argues allows one to attend to both the actual and the potential of atmosphere.

**Emphasizing situations**

Schmitz’s twofold notion of the body and his relational approach to perception develop into an argument maintaining that the situation is the ontological focus for engaging with atmospheres (1999: 46ff; 2014a; 2005c; 2005a; 1998). Here, this thesis argues in favour of using Schmitz’s notion of the situation as the ontological focus, since it allows one to approach organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist phenomenon in an everyday context that considers both the existential/timely and material/spatial dimension. As will be shown, the notion presents an analytical ‘object’ that enables one to engage with organizational atmospheres, as it attends to the complexity, affectivity and situational knowledge production of a non-dualist phenomenon.

Situations are interesting in relation to apprehending atmospheres in an organizational set-up, for Schmitz considers joint atmosphere as always bound to situations (Schmitz, 2014a: 56).
Schmitz’s notion of the situation differs from a classical sociological understanding of situations, where they are often defined by space-time and require the co-presence of two persons (Gugutzer, 2017: 155). As Kluck and Gugutzer point out, the situation is the central ontological concept for Schmitz (Kluck, 2014: 188; Gugutzer, 2017: 148). What binds joint atmospheres to situations is encorporation, which makes the primary focus of perception as embodied communication (Schmitz, 2014a: 56; 1998; 2005a), thus meaning that

*Situations are the ground and the original element of all experience; all handling of specifics is only possible to drawn from situations.* (Schmitz, 2015: 59f.)

Considering Schmitz’s understanding of perception and specification, his approach to the situation repeats the holistic view, providing a totality for acting (Schmitz, 2014b: 47ff.; 2005). The situation can be seen as Schmitz’s horizon of significance, in the sense of constituting a worldliness in which we are involved. As such, Schmitz also considers the situations as the basis for knowledge, that reflects that knowledge develops out of the chaotic plurality of the situation (Schmitz, 1999a: 168)

Situations encapsulate and form the feelings, actions and thinking of humans, but are also brought out, stabilized or changed in them (Gugutzer, 2017: 155). This has parallels to Cooper’s seeing situation as key to process (1976: 1007) as well as to Heidegger, who viewed the situation as providing a totality for acting in the world (Cioflec, 2012: 163) or, as later discussed, the event (*Ereignis*)³⁹ (Heidegger, 1957; 30). For Heidegger this means that practical reasoning comes before theoretical reasoning in the sense that the action in its performance (*Vollzug*) comes before the division of subject-object and intentionality (Cioflec, 2012: 163). This recalls the experience of organizational atmospheres as a situational performative event emphasizing the embodied communication as performing. This reasoning provides a relational approach to the world, also acknowledged in affect and non-representational theory (Stewart, 2011: 445; Anderson and Harrison, 2010: 6ff., Thrift, 2008), but that additionally reflects the focus on tacit and aesthetic knowledge seen in organizational aesthetics (Strati, 1996, 2003; Linstead and Höpfl, 2000).

Schmitz presents situations as a critical reinforcement of social dynamics in society, which he considers has been undermined by constellationism (Schmitz, 2005: 27)⁴⁰. By

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³⁹ The term ‘*Ereignis*’ the late Heidegger also describes as insight (Heidegger, 1962; 43f.) whereby one experiences momentary openings, which has clear parallels to Schmitz perspective on the ‘evidence of the moment’ emphasizing the instant experience.

⁴⁰ Basically, the critique reflects the requested reversion of worldview, mentioned by Heidegger’s inverting the Cartesian ‘cogito ergo sum’ to a ‘sum ergo cogito’ (Kirkeby, 1995: 405) – a reversion that reflects into the discussion of subject-object relations, scientific approaches, understanding of a phenomenon, but also into discussions on the social, space and embodiment.
constellationism he means that the totality of situations is configured into networks of single elements and specifications, which would reflect the Cartesian divide. In the perception of the world connections take over from the relation by focusing on specificities and thus reducing the complexity that makes up lived life, for example, when an organization treats a person, a customer or a citizen as a case file without acknowledging the underlying lived complexity. Accordingly, Schmitz’s notion of the situation reflects his logic of uncertainty and chaotic plurality concepts (2005a; 2014a: 53), which are features that constellationism undermines.

The situation is characterized by its way of integrating meaning based on facts (sachverhalt), programmes (programme) and problems (probleme) (Schmitz, 2014b: 47; 2015: 22; 2005a; 1998). Facts mean that something is the case, that something matters or more elaborately

… as that which in the worlds fabric provides the possibility to question something, actually regarding the facticity (Tatsächlichkeit) (Schmitz, 1998: 183)

This reflects Schmitz’s focus on phenomenological revision as the continuous questioning. Facts can be both objective and subjective (Schmitz, 2005: 19), reflecting the different ways of engaging with joint atmosphere. Programmes deal with that something should be, focusing on what constitutes a usefulness for a purpose (like norms or wishes). Problems ask whether something is, forming a puzzle or a danger (as in the case of disruptions). All these elements are interwoven, and their significance can thus only be fully understood in the situation, in how they come together in that particular moment and how the situation is dealt with. Anything can be part of a situation, but atmospheres typically load it (Schmitz, 1998: 177). Schmitz’ notion of the situation accordingly includes bodies, affects, spaces, practices and materialities as well as the timely dimension of actuality and potentiality, which in situations unfold a horizon of significance. That means a fact will be understood out of the chaotic plurality of the situation in a specific moment.

There are different types of situations, but these will not be discussed at length here (Schmitz, 2014b: 48f.; 2005: 25ff.; Gugutzer, 2017: 155ff.)41. Since this thesis focuses on organizational atmosphere, the primary attention is given to joint situations42, as well as to the distinction between current (aktuelle) or conditioned (zuständliche) situations. The current situation is constantly changing and only defined in the moment by the immediate movements or the actual

41 Schmitz divides situations into impressive and segmented situations, current and existing, joint and personal, inclusive and implantational (Schmitz, 2005a; 25ff.).

42 Both Julmi (2015: 24; 2018) and Gugutzer (2017) also argue that joint situations are relevant from an organizational perspective.
speech act. Conditioned situations continuously constitute a totality of significance, e.g., the knowledge of how to ride a bike or speak one's mother tongue. However, the two situations are interwoven, with the current possibly becoming condition, a development that occurs over time, e.g., through the learning of new skills. Accordingly, changes that happen in current situations can be identified more immediately, while a longer timespan is needed to detect changes in conditioned situations. Following Schmitz's joint atmospheres (such as emotions) is part of this transition, since

*Emotions effectuate the consolidation of current situations into conditioned, which then again influence current ones and build their back ground.* (Schmitz, 2010: 40)

As such, joint atmosphere helps to consolidate situations and influence future ones. As argued by Gugutzer, the more intense the atmosphere is, the more likely it is that current situations will turn into conditioned ones, e.g., when significant events ('the famous x-mas party where …', 'on the day of 9/11 …') are recalled and (re-)constitute a sense of community (Gugutzer, 2017: 158). Following Schmitz, situations are permeated with atmospheres that imbue the situation with an emotional and existential undertone. Atmospheres therefore shape situations and are simultaneously performed in the relational perception of situational reality. As such, by focusing on the situation allows to consider the changeability in organizational atmospheres, whereas Böhme’s focus on the actuality focuses on the materially ‘bound’ atmospheres.

Following Gugutzer, the embodied communication thereby shapes intersubjective situations, which he terms an ‘atmospheric understanding’ (2006: 4542). This constitutes a pre-reflexive comprehension of the situational significance, which reflects what Schmitz termed the ‘pre-objective’ in atmosphere. Atmospheric understanding constitutes a corporeal-practical competence, according to Gugutzer (2006: 4542), which reflects the point made by Reckwitz (2017), Gherardi (2017) and Küpers (Küpers, 2016a: 26, 2010), among others, on the interlinkage of practice and senses, emotions and affect. According to Julmi (Grossheim et al., 2014: 49ff.), practice theory as formulated by Reckwitz is commensurable with the neo-phenomenology of Schmitz’s notion of the situation and follows Grossheim et al. (2014: 51), especially in connection with the programme dimension. Without going into a detailed discussion on the multifaceted notion of practice, this alludes to an understanding of practice as part of performing organizational atmosphere, thus reflecting a situated and embodied knowledge perspective. This resonates with Chia’s and Holt’s (2006) idea of processing knowing while going instead of knowing before going43, thus altering organizational

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43 In parallel Ingold writes ‘we know as we go, not before we go’ (2011: 230).
perspectives on planning and strategy. Roughly speaking this makes organizing and creating social order a form of co-existence that is aesthetically tuned. As noted by Schmitz, the personality and the personal biography that constitute the personal situation\textsuperscript{44} will, however, play an important role in how a person relates to emotions and how developed their sensibilities are (Schmitz, 2014a: 41). As Gugutzer argues, the pathuers are the actors for social change, as they start changing the joint situation when they have become affectively involved (Gugutzer, 2017: 159).

First, as stressed by Gugutzer, Schmitz’s notion of the situation opens for new approaches to analysing the social, as it interweaves the personal and the joint situation. Second, Schmitz’ notion enables the integration of the micro, meso and macro levels and actor-structure distinctions, as they are sociologically often framed (Gugutzer: 2017: 157). Further, Julmi addresses the important link between Schmitz’s situation and organizational atmosphere (2017; 2018), but he considers that at least two persons must convene for a joint situation to arise (Julmi, 2018: 115). The line of argument in this thesis will follow Gugutzer’s and Hasse’s reception of the neo-phenomenological notion of situation (Gugutzer, 2006; 2017; Hasse, 2015: 38ff.), as this enables an analysis of the embodied practices and affective experiences in social organizing. According to Hasse, Schmitz’s situations further link to space, as creating a situational space overlays other spaces, such as the geometrical, the social and the embodied space, by weaving together a variety of meanings and signification to present a totality (Hasse, 2015: 36). According to Hasse, the lived space develops from the situational holism, where references between doings and meanings are continuously reconfigured. This direct link between situation and space reflects the spatial attentiveness in Schmitz’s neo-phenomenology and creates a synthesis that can also make an analytical contribution (Hasse, 2015: 38). Following Gugutzer, Schmitz’s perspective allows one to deal with a multiplicity of situations and their changes (Gugutzer, 2017: 156). Further, Schmitz’s notion of the situation offers a sociological contribution by constituting a socio-ontological analytical concept that enables empirical studies involving non-rational sensing to be relevant for social organization as well as trans-situative elements (Gugutzer, 2006; 2017: 160). Taking the situation as an analytical object also counters traditional critiques of subjectivity in phenomenological research, but in its embodied empiricism also presents an alternative to a social-constructivist approach. Focusing on organizational atmosphere from a situational ontological perspective captures the ontological locus for approaching

\textsuperscript{44} Schmitz considers a personality a personal situation, which is embedded in joint situations. The personal situation seems akin to Simonsen’s describing the body as a situation, which is a unique combination of an existential condition and the process of becoming as an ontological matter forming the everyday (2007: 173).
organizational atmosphere in its non-dualist nature as well as enables one to attend to both the actual and the potential in its spatial configuration.

Performing organization atmosphere

This chapter has traced the conceptual-philosophical roots of the notion of atmosphere as originating from a German (neo)-phenomenological tradition, emphasising the receptive side of atmosphere. Schmitz’ two-fold body concept, in discussion with Böhme, unfolds perception outlined as a relational matter of embodied communication. This presents an perceptive-affective relationality, which underlines the concatenation with space as fundamentally existential by forming the embodied attunement. As such, seeing Schmitz and Böhme’s approaches a complementary allows for attending to perception as having both a spatially and timely dimension. This leads to argue for apprehending embodied perception as a way of performing organizational atmospheres, which is constitutive for conceiving organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist phenomenon as well for conceiving the development of atmosphere as an aesthetic concept by Böhme.

Although Schmitz and Böhme can be seen to develop their approaches from a German phenomenological trajectory, their theoretical ambitions diverge and have accordingly also sparked pivotal discussions and differing interpretations of the notion of atmosphere and its perception. Despite the divergencies between the two thinkers, this thesis argues that they can be seen as complementary when considered as a processual engagement with relationality oscillating between the actual and the potential. Both scholars acknowledge the inherent relationality of the actual and potential, but due to their overall theoretical ambitions draw on different aspects and arguments. As such, they present two sides of the same coin, with Böhme’s main interest in perception and atmosphere focusing on the actual and the material side, which will be attended to in chapter 4. Schmitz, on the other hand, pays more attention to the timely aspect, considering the situational emergence of atmospheres and embodied immersion, thus focusing more on potentiality. Böhme thus provides a focus on things and materiality that is less developed in Schmitz, while Schmitz retains focus on the timely dimension, emphasizing uncertainty and potentiality as the background for actuality, which is less pronounced in Böhme.

The relational attention is ultimately reflected in two dimensions of embodied perception, centred on the embodied sensation. Relational perception as a doubled feature of an immersive-perception (listening) and a critical-perception (verbalization) provides a way of
considering the complementarity between Böhme and Schmitz as well as of considering the connection between affect and critical experience. This further emphasizes considering the spatial embodied perception as linked with a notion of time, which is conceived processually. Situations and embodied communication become the ground for perceiving collective atmospheres, of what makes perception partake in performing organizational atmosphere. This reflects performing organizational atmospheres as an oscillation between actuality and potentiality. Viewing the human as a patheur engaging in embodied communication and sensory experience opens for understanding perception as performative in line with conceptions of non-representational theory and others, thus emphasizing a continuous mundane embodied exchange addressing the spontaneous and uncertain as an existential experience. In this sense perceiving organizational atmosphere is considered to be a performative process, which means that organizational atmospheres are formed and reformed in the everyday embodied doings of organizations.

This calls attention to the notion of atmosphere as collective experience, where both Schmitz and Böhme articulate the relational nature of atmosphere as an alternate ontological apprehension to the classical thing-ontology. Reflecting atmosphere as a non-dualist notion, they however disagree as to the ‘nature’ of atmospheres as quasi-objective or pre-objective. Yet, this is argued to be encompassed when considering the inherent relationality reflected as actuality and potentiality. Böhme thus provides a focus on things and materiality that is less developed in Schmitz, while Schmitz considers uncertainty and potentiality in the background of actuality, which is less pronounced in Böhme. Böhme thereby focuses more on the co-worlding dimension and its moving character emanating from the (built) environment, whereas Schmitz tends to look at the multiplicity of atmospheres, acknowledging that some move and others just are. As such, organizational atmospheres may be seen as both condition and conditioned at the same time, where their moving affective qualities are part of constituting their poignant and dominant character. Surfaceless space is central to comprehending the spatiality of atmosphere as a pre-dimensional non-Cartesian space, which reflects moods as spatially constituted and thus providing a fundamental dynamic of space. For both Böhme and Schmitz the spatiality of atmosphere outlines an existential spatiality opposing representational space.

Having engaged with the issue of double-sided relationality and considering atmosphere as a relational ontology, this last part attends to the analytical approach to atmosphere by following Schmitz’s neo-phenomenological argument. First, an argument has been made for a ‘validity’ claim that a phenomenon like atmosphere is constituted by the ‘evidence of the moment’, which entails
engaging in an explorative research process of continuous questioning. Second, due to the ontological uncertainty of atmospheres, it has been argued, following Schmitz, to consider situations as the analytical ‘object’ in line with non-representational and process theories. Following Schmitz, situations are considered as the ontological focus, since they are seen as the homestead for atmospheres and knowledge generation, which allows to apprehend organizational atmospheres in both their actuality and potentiality. As argued here, Schmitz’s notion of the situation provides an analytical potential, as it can deal with the concatenation of space, affect and aesthetics in order to address how organizational atmospheres are experienced, and thereby also performed – in their multiplicity – thus also dealing with Böhme’s focus on the production of atmospheres. In this sense this thesis resonates with a non-representational take on atmosphere, for as McCormack puts it: ‘atmosphere is a field of virtual movement from which certain bodies, including wind, are always in the process of actualizing’ (McCormack, 2008b: 419).
Chapter 4: Producing Atmosphere

_Dwelling is having the atmospheric at disposal..._
(Schmitz, 2015: 77)

_.we need to look for new spatial strategies for organizing._
(Clegg and Kornberger, 2006: 153)

This chapter focuses on the production of atmospheres, with a particular emphasis on Böhme’s argument maintaining that architecture is the central aesthetic practice. As a natural extension of chapter 3, chapter 4 thus closely examines the material dimension in the architectural production of atmosphere, but with an underlying attention to the potential as part of the existential dynamic of space. The chapter departs from Böhme’s overall view that atmosphere in the realm of architecture can be seen as the staging of atmosphere. Böhme identifies the design of atmosphere as a process of creating a scenography similar to that in theatre, by which a variety of techniques like lighting, materiality, etc., are used to engender a climate geared for a sensory experience. Moreover, as he argues, atmosphere is a theme anywhere design exists, which is practically everywhere (2014a: 102). Although such a view appears to fuel his argument that atmosphere is important and a broad aesthetic concern, it will be argued here that Schmitz, in his attention to architecture and dwelling (see Schmitz, 1966, 2015), both adds to Böhme and, via contemporary discussions in aesthetic practices, is able to point out further ways to practically unfold the existential dynamic of built space. Accordingly, it is argued that the architectural production can be considered as a spacing of organizational atmosphere, reflecting a non-dualist apprehension.

In general the chapter argues that focusing on producing atmosphere constitutes a move towards an embodied architecture, showing how both Böhme and Schmitz consider architecture as relevant in forming atmosphere and embodied experience. This gives way to seeing architecture as part of a scenographic practice that emphasizes the holistic composition of buildings by considering the synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters in architecture. These characters are opening a way to consider the commensurability between Böhme’s and Schmitz’ views on architecture as an expanded scenography, which comes across by an exemplary examination of elements like light, colour, sound
and materiality in the design of atmospheres. As laid out in chapter 3, the approach of expanded scenography acknowledges that atmospheres have a spatial dynamic that constitutes an existential dimension rather than considering space a mere physical, geometrical notion. Further, in brief the chapter critically addresses examples of dualist approaches to space and atmosphere, including the appropriation of atmosphere for commercial and political gain. Finally, the chapter considers atmospheres’ (critical) and caring potential when it comes to the built environment, a discussion that essentially also articulates organizations’ role in and aesthetic skills relevant to an engagement with aesthetic atmospheres and their production. Engaging with organizational atmospheres as a non-dualist phenomenon enables one to attend to these subtleties, thus also accentuating approaches to space and architecture other than those found in the standardized spatial organization of modern-day office buildings.

Towards an embodied architecture

Paying attention to architecture as a producer of atmosphere means looking at architecture as more than a representational act. According to the renowned architect Peter Zumthor, when one speaks of atmosphere, a building’s ability to move is what defines the quality of its architecture (2005: 11). Reiterating Böhme’s and Schmitz’s critique of the rational geometrical space, this pleas for the reinstallation of the sensory experience of architecture as the key mark of its quality. Such a marker stresses the affective dynamic of space, but also provides a parameter for evaluating architecture other than functionality and an aesthetics of visual beauty. As Böhme argues, architecture has often been confused with visual art (Böhme, 2013a: 105), an argument restated by the architect Juhani Pallasmaa, who maintains that the approach to atmospheric space concerns a critique of ocularcentrism, where experience and orientation in space are based on the eye and not on the body. Pallasma frames it thus:

*As buildings lose their plasticity, and their connection with the language and the wisdom of the body, they become isolated in the cool and distant realm of vision.* (Pallasmaa, 2007: 31)

The above citation reflects both Schmitz’s and Böhme’s concerns that geometrical space loses touch with the body, becoming insensitive to the happenings of the human everyday life. For Böhme space as embodyl sensed means that the human being has to be the scale for architecture45

45 This follows, among others, the classical roman architects Vitruv’s argument (Böhme, 2013a: 111).
Although Böhme criticizes Schmitz for not taking materiality and the production of atmospheres into account, Schmitz clearly acknowledges the embodied affective quality of architecture, when he notes:

*In the face of a building, the observer is corporeally often more easily or intensely affected than in the face of a sculpture or a painting…* (Schmitz, 1966: 150)

Accordingly, Schmitz is alert to the fact that a physical building resonates with the feeling body and underlines his attention to architecture and dwelling. As such, he argues that space therefore refers to the dynamic of the felt body as the vital dynamic of contraction, expansion and direction, which are the central qualities of space, or what Schmitz calls ‘the base chord of embodied attunement’ (*der Grundakkord des leiblichen Befindens*) (Schmitz, 1966: 163). This enhances an understanding of built space as an environment rather than a geometrical form that is to resonate with the feeling body (Schmitz, 1966: 157). Accordingly, Schmitz proposes that his phenomenology of the felt body be used to reframe architectural classification and thus critiques the art-historical focus on style, his argument for this shift being that the corporeal experience allows one to delve into how buildings work, into what is a different, more diffuse kind of categorization than that offered in the classical art-historical approach to style (1966: 150). Schmitz’s focus on architecture reflects his focus on embodied perception as an immersive process, whereas Böhme’s focus on scale underlines the focus on materiality and perception as being with things. These views on architecture address central concerns in the spatial turn that call for moving beyond the reduction of space to representation and visual orientation (Burell and Dale, 2015; Taylor and Spicer, 2007; O’Doherty, 1996; Kornberger and Clegg, 2004; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011). Further, this reiterates the point from organizational aesthetics in which aesthetics is more than embellishment, as it also concerns sensuous knowledge and felt meanings as a way of perceiving organization (Strati, 2000: 98; Warren, 2008).

Further, Schmitz affirms that over time changes in architecture and the way it is understood have spurred changes in the corporeal experience as constituting a re-attunement of the embodied disposition – an affirmation that he backs with historical examples (Schmitz, 1966: 58; 257). Accordingly, people’s and populations’ perceptions of shapes diverge (Schmitz, 1966: 62), for which reason Schmitz is hardly blind to the impact of architecture, art and dwelling on human life (Schmitz, 1966; 2015: 74ff.). As such, despite Böhme’s and Schmitz’s differences, both agree that the arrangement of physical space and architecture goes into building a certain emotional or mood-inducing climate that mediates an embodied experience of atmosphere (Schmitz, 2014a: 62, 1966; Böhme, 2013a: 176). Schmitz further emphasizes how ways of dwelling (*wohnen*) can be organized to
either breed or subdue an emotional climate (2014a: 62ff.; 2015: 73ff.), with dwelling being understood very broadly to include different types of buildings, gardens and cities. In this sense, when it comes to architecture, Schmitz’s work entails an aesthetic attempt that aligns with Böhme’s proposition of a new aesthetics as atmosphere.

Yet, as Böhme rightly argues, Schmitz lacks a more developed approach to aesthetic production, as he builds on very classic art-historical examples like non-contemporary churches and temples, which reflects his aesthetic focus on traditional works of art (Böhme, 1995: 30). Böhme sees this as being because Schmitz has a free-floating understanding of the notion of atmosphere, which does not allow for a coupling with things (Ding) (Böhme, 1995: 30). Schmitz responds to Böhme’s critique by stating that Böhme himself qualifies his assertion that atmospheres can be produced by saying that what are produced are rightly the conditions for atmospheres to emerge (Schmitz, 1998: 180). Schmitz goes on to argue that what is designed is not the atmosphere but rather situations and dwellings as emotional cultures (ibid.). Schmitz’s own focus on traditional works of art seems to ‘overlook’ how much his conceptual argument aligns with contemporary discussions in design, architecture and immersive art that emphasize the situational embodied experience, the processual, and that work with more diffuse categorizations (see Sloterdijk, 2004; O’Doherty, 2008; McKinney and Palmer, 2017; Reckwitz, 2014: 115; Hasse, 2015: 234; Zumthor, 2005).

Unfolding the argument, that architecture is about setting conditions, is argued to be a way of considering the complementarity between Böhme and Schmitz, thus opening for an expanded conception of how space and architecture may condition atmospheres in organizations with a double oscillatory attention between the actual material composition and the situational potential. This double attention in architecture, it is argued here, can be seen as parallel to ‘spacing’, with the production of space becoming an excess space (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 48; Sloterdijk, 2004; Hasse, 2015) whereby the potential exceeds the actual physical composition due to the affective capacity related to space as a relational dimension. Architecture, it will be argued, then becomes a way of thinking-space as a processual movement of thought, bodies, affect and things (McCormack, 2008a). This argument also resonates with the notion that contemporary architecture is developing into something more than just physical buildings (Zumthor, 2015; Böhme, 1995, 2013a; Reckwitz, 2014: 114; Sloterdijk, 2004: 417). As such, the architectural production enables the spacing of organizational atmospheres rather than creating a space for organizational atmospheres.
Staging atmosphere

When Böhme states that atmospheres can be produced, he argues that architecture and stage sets are key aesthetic practices aimed at designing atmospheres (1995; 2014a; 2009). Architecture and scenography are widely acknowledged to be linked with atmosphere, both theoretically and practically (see Sloterdijk, 2004; Hasse, 2015; Albertsen, 2013; Zumthor, 2005; Pallasmaa, 2007, 2014; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Bille et al., 2013; Brejzek, 2017). Generally, Böhme argues that atmospheres must be viewed as an aesthetics concerning both perception and production. Taking an aesthetic approach means putting producibility at the fore, which Böhme states is how he develops Schmitz’s embodied basis seen as a reception aesthetics (1995: 31). As seen in chapter 3, Böhme’s approach to embodied perception follows Schmitz, but also focuses on connecting atmospheres to materiality – and the aesthetic production. Böhme’s engagement with the production of atmosphere reflects the understanding that atmospheres have no ontological safe spot, and an understanding that emphasizes how the non-dualist nature of atmosphere instigates a relational ontology (Böhme, 2014a, 105).

Accordingly, for Böhme the production of atmosphere permits a rational approach to the otherwise ungraspable, as it can be subsumed under the art of scenography, thus freeing the notion from the irrational (2014a, 103f.). This reiterates Böhme’s challenge of working with the uncertain and spontaneous and Schmitz’s critique of Böhme’s approach to atmospheres as potentially resorting to a classical thing-ontology. A pitfall that Schmitz circumvents by focusing on the situation, which also opens for understanding architecture processually. Following Böhme, architecture seen as a scenographic practice is to be understood not as mere shaping of form, but rather as the art of staging, where the purpose of producing atmosphere is that the stage itself becomes part of staging the drama (Böhme, 2009: 192). For Böhme to produce atmospheres as an art of staging means:

*The term making refers to the manipulation of material conditions, of things, apparatus, sound and light. But atmosphere itself is not a thing; it is rather a floating in-between, something between things and the perceiving subjects. The making of atmosphere is therefore confined to setting the conditions in which the atmospheres appears.* (Böhme, 2009: 189).

The above citation stresses the in-between and relational nature of atmosphere, which implies that atmosphere is not a thing to be designed, but is a matter of designing a set of conditions that make atmospheres emerge. This underlines Schmitz’ point that Böhme himself qualifies that his assertion of what is produced is not the atmosphere but rather situations and dwellings as emotional
cultures (Schmitz, 1998: 180). Accordingly, Böhme describes the art of staging as a poetic phenomenology, which is the art of bringing something into appearance (Böhme, 2009: 192). As such, Böhme’s understanding points at a relational aesthetics\(^46\), pointing at the whole of human relations, where the ‘spectator’ plays an important role as participant (Böhme, 2014a: 106). Accordingly, scenographic architecture in Böhme’s perspective aligns with contemporary discussions on scenography and stage sets, where the scenography is not just a backdrop, nor is the audience just a passive spectator, but both aspects take an active part in performing the drama (see Fischer-Lichte, 2008, White, 2012; Machon, 2016, Frieze, 2016). Likewise, architects like Pallasmaa (2007, 2014) and Zumthor (2005, 2010), who are among the prime practitioners advocating an enhanced focus on architecture as a producer of atmosphere, focus on the emotional qualities of architecture and space. As Zumthor phrased it, atmosphere makes architecture an issue of emotional perception (Zumthor, 2010: 11).

The use of the stage perspective ties in with the attention Böhme gives to the aesthetic economy, in which the staging of politics, events, commodities, etc., has become part of a theatricalization of society and everyday life (2009: 192), as seen in, e.g., the shopping mall, the Olympic Games or political events. Böhme views the production of atmosphere as inevitably an act of political power, for which reason the production side also becomes a way of dismantling subtle power structures (Böhme, 1995: 18). For Böhme design is therefore not to be understood as the tradition of merely shaping or configuring, which would easily open (his perspective on) architecture to a critique of being a ‘technology of impression’, as Schmitz argues (Böhme, 2009: 192; Schmitz, 2005c: 33). Böhme accordingly argues that he considers Schmitz’s argument to have a polemic intent. While Böhme stresses that the term ‘impression technology’ is apt, he nevertheless proposes that, to give the perspective nuance, one ought to say ‘the art of staging’ instead (2009: 192). Schmitz’s critique reflects his own critique of constellationism and the propagandist use of impression techniques, which seems, however, to overlook Schmitz’s own arguments on the impact of architecture (Schmitz, 1966; 2014a: 28ff.) as well as Böhme’s own critique of superficial and manipulative architecture (Böhme, 2009, 2013a: 151ff.). The discussion reflects Böhme’s alliance with critical theory and his reason for dealing with the material actuality of atmospheres, whereas Schmitz rather addresses atmosphere as an existential embodied concern, reflecting his Heideggerian heritage. Nonetheless, Böhme and Schmitz align in considering architectural production of atmospheres as setting conditions that constitutes an

\(^46\) Issues also discussed in, e.g., Rancière’s aesthetics acknowledging the emancipated spectator (2009) and Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics (1998).
affective arrangement going beyond representational space and pays attention to the embodied and existential qualities of space. The question then becomes what is meant by conditions?

The stage perspective reflects arguments and discussions forwarded in the field of organizational aesthetics and that emphasize how organization constitutes itself in the perceptive relation, how aesthetics are a form of organizational knowledge and how they thus also enable a perspective of organization as an atmospheric phenomenon (Beyes, 2016; Strati, 1996: 214; 1999), but also reflects discussions on space as an active, processual and affective force (O’Doherty, 2008; Thrift, 2004; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Anderson and Ash, 2015). Further, the stage perspective relates to organizations’ interest and intents in staging their performances by engaging with new, aesthetic office designs and to discussions in organization studies’ spatial turn, reflecting issues of power implications and social organization (Clegg and Kornberger, 2006; Burell and Dale, 2008; O’Doherty, 2008; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011). Engaging with the aesthetic work domain, architecture and the aesthetization of everyday organizational life is therefore part of thematizing how organizational atmospheres work and to what extent they can be intentionally shaped as well as how this shaping impacts organizational life and performance.

**Synaesthetics and kinaesthetics**

Böhme and Schmitz both refer to Wöllflin’s work on the relation between architecture and embodied experience, and, as such, both see synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters as constituting the central conditions of atmospheric space (Böhme, 2013a: 116; Schmitz, 1966: 257). They also both attribute these qualities with playing a central role in the relation between human and environment, as it is precisely in this relation that atmospheres are mediated as a holistic experience. Accordingly, this section will address what is meant by synaesthetic and kinaesthetic qualities. The synaesthetic character can be defined as:

… they are intermodal characters, that often, but not always, take the name of specific sensory qualities, but as expanse, weight and dense memorable silence can also do without, e.g. the sharp, bright, soft, pointed, bright, hard, soft, warm, cold, heavy, massive, delicate, dense, smooth, the harshness of colours, sounds, smells, booming sound and silence, bouncing and dragging gait, the joy, the zeal, the melancholy, the freshness and weariness. (Schmitz, 2014a: 115)

Böhme follows Schmitz’s understanding of synaesthetics as basically being embodied sensations (Böhme, 1995: 93; 2013b: 23), where the synesthetic perception should be seen as a holistic
rather than a partial experience (Hasse, 2013; Böhme, 2013b). This reiterates the general point of perception as relational, with the experience itself thus being the totality and not a set of singular sensory impulses that are then synthesized into a whole, which reflects Schmitz’s argument that singularities come out of the situational worldliness. The synaesthetic has an intermodal character, which makes it especially interesting for architects, according to Böhme, for it constitutes architecture as primarily concerning not physical properties, but the type of attunement of the space to be designed (Böhme, 2013a: 124). Hence, Böhme argues, rather than considering that, e.g., a colour creates a certain felt reaction, one should recognize that the embodied resonance itself creates the actuality of the sensory experience. This underlines the performative aspect of perception. The totality from which the singular can be extracted is what can be termed ‘atmosphere’ (Böhme, 1995: 95). He adds that a spatial experience is where ‘the affectively tinted contraction or expanse in which you enter, the fluidum, hits you.’ (ibid.).

Synaesthetics is not an uncontested concept and in the medico-psychological context over time has even been considered a deviation from the perception norm (Hasse, 2015: 54, 2013). Typical examples of synaesthetics, or synaesthesia in this context, include the hearing or tasting of colours, which focuses on the experience as metaphors and not as a sensory perception. Such synaesthetic theories have heavily influenced a causal approach to synaesthetics, for which reason it encompasses a categorial impulse combined with specific sensory organs that therefore render such impulses a series of associations that are the product of the subject (Böhme, 1995: 91). The holistic approach to synaesthetics is not only a question of perception in general but also a critical revision of a rationalistic view of the human being (Hasse, 2015: 76, 2013), a view that seems to apply for Böhme, for Schmitz and for the affective turn, e.g., when Massumi considers affect as synaesthetic by implying the participation of the senses in their totality (1995: 96). Synaesthetics in this perspective unfolds an emotional and embodied dimension that flows beneath the environment of rationality (Hasse, 2015: 78, 2013).

‘Kinaesthetic’\(^7\) characters can be defined as:

\[\text{… preliminary sketches or suggests movements that are perceived and sensed by your own feeling body, by stationary or moving forms, or by movement, always going above and beyond the extent of the movement. (Schmitz, 2014a: 115)}\]

\(^7\) A more direct translation of Schmitz’ vocabulary would be movement suggestions (Bewegungssuggestionen).
Schmitz mentions the example of a poem’s rhythm or the rhythms of physical shapes and the way the sensation of them gets ‘under the skin’. The kinaesthetic characters of architecture are the physical forms and shapes that invite attunement experienced by the suggestions of movement, but that also evoke massiveness or gravity in the sense of contraction and expanse. Kinaesthetics mediate the embodied communication between the sensing feeling body and things and quasi-things (Schmitz, 2005a: 172).

Kinaesthetics and synaesthetics have what Schmitz calls bridging qualities, which transcribe solid form into an embodied dynamic and, thus, are the elements tying the physical and corporeal sensations together (Schmitz, 2005a: 174). The very fact that a holistic experience goes beyond specific sensory modalities shows that atmospheres can be produced and experienced in a myriad of differently built environments and are not solely confined to classical works of art. It is the kinaesthetic and synaesthetic characters that take part in dampening and breeding a desired emotional climate. Schmitz notes:

_The environment, which is attuned to an emotional climate, has an effect on the inhabitants as the trigger for solidaric encorporation in a shared situation with a collective atmosphere. The dwelling educates the family spirit._

_From current situations of encounter grow conditioned ones._ (Schmitz, 2014a: 63)

Schmitz is describing an emotional climate as being created through the use of light, temperature, sound, walls, furnishing, etc., the dwelling of which becomes educating (erziehen) to the spirit, enabling joint atmospheric situations to be turned into conditioned situations. This description underlines Schmitz’s argument, in line with Böhme, that the built environment is part of forming joint atmospheres. The synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters of atmospheres are considered to be bridging qualities that mediate embodied communication between the feeling body and things as well as quasi-things (Schmitz, 2005a: 168ff.). This is done in combination with emotions and meanings, since they bridge the subject-object by making the atmosphere bodily felt and affected. For example, the silence one experiences on entering a church ‘suggests’ calm movement and lowered voices. Schmitz underlines that kinaesthetic and synesthetic characters are not in themselves to be considered as moods or atmospheres, but merely mediators enabling encorporation (Schmitz, 2014a: 62ff.). Schmitz further points out that being moved by emotions primarily happens due to kinaesthetic characters (Schmitz, 2014a: 104). Schmitz’s view on the bridging qualities of environments closely resembles Gibson’s concept of affordances that an environment provides (1979). Considering

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48 In his psychological theory on affordances, Gibson argues that learning to perceive affordances is a key element in socialization (1979). Affordances, as defined by Gibson, also have a relational character, yet they have an
embodied communication as dialogical then means, e.g., that the staircase presents an architectural
gesture that suggests a kinaesthetic movement on behalf of the perceiver (Hasse, 2015: 32). In this
way the atmospheric characters instigate what Schmitz calls ‘encorporation’.

As mentioned in chapter 3, Böhme considers Schmitz’s view on encorporation too
radical, terming it a form of projection (Böhme, 1995: 94). Instead, Böhme argues that although
atmospheres modify the personal attunement, what is experienced radiates from the objects. Böhme
thus sees synaesthetics and kinaesthetics as characters of the main objects of perception, which are
the atmospheres (Böhme, 2013b: 30). Because the characters of atmospheres are important, they help
constitute the formal conditions. As Böhme points out:

*What matters is that, in speaking of atmospheres, we refer to their character. With this term character
we already bring our understanding of atmospheres close to the sphere of physiognomics and theatre. The character of an
atmosphere is the way in which it communicates a feeling to us as participating subjects.* (Böhme, 2009: 187)

For Böhme the synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters of atmospheres are among the
key elements for distinguishing atmospheres, which is what makes it possible to communicate about
them (Böhme, 2013a: 49ff). The character of something or someone is to be understood as its or
their set of traits that create an impression, that are sensed atmospherically. So, characters are
experienced through bodily sensing, while the aesthetic quality is found in the way characters are
sensed. Böhme understands character as the specific mode in which certain qualities are
atmospherically experienced – their way of attunement – or contribute to an atmosphere (Böhme,
2018: 62; 2014a: 102; 2013a: 123). For Böhme the synaesthetic and the kinaesthetic characters of
atmospheres become ways to distinguish them (2014a: 102; 2001: 84ff), albeit as an embodied
experience and not as semiotic signs. A focus on characters as a way of distinguishing atmospheres,
reiterates Böhme’s focus on the quasi-objective nature of atmospheres and their intersubjectivity as
being verbally constituted, whereas Schmitz focuses on their immersive capacity, which allows for a
spontaneous and ambiguous sensation.

Both Böhme and Schmitz consider the synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters of
atmospheres to have major relevance for architecture, reflecting that the synaesthetic and kinaesthetic
characters in architecture jointly constitute the atmospheric-emotional field of experience (Hasse,

independency of the individual’s ability to recognize and ‘use’ them, since stairs will afford something different to a
crawling infant than a walking adult.

* Böhme further adds a societal, communicative and mood character of atmospheres, which is little elaborated and
considered to verbally classify atmospheres.
Böhme also stresses the human ability to collectively recognize architecturally produced atmospheres, for they can be recognized in their intangibility by their synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters, which means that the design of atmosphere in itself undermines the argument that atmospheres are purely subjective (Böhme, 2009: 188). As seen, however, when it comes to the two scholars’ respective focus on architecture, Böhme mainly elaborates on the synaesthetic elements (1995, 2013b), whereas Schmitz primarily discusses the kinaesthetic dimension (1966). However, as Hasse underlines, the kinaesthetic builds the connection to the synaesthetic as part of creating the aesthetic pattern (Gebilde) (Hasse, 2015: 58). This underlines the interconnectedness of the kinaesthetic and the synaesthetic, with the kinaesthetic rather attending to the durable structure of architecture as well as the movement in space, and with the synaesthetic more closely attending to the scenography of the interior. This connection between the kinaesthetic and synaesthetic aspects, as Hasse noticed, provides a way to acknowledge Böhme’s and Schmitz’s complementarity in considering the architectural production of atmospheres, which pays attention to a broader set of conditions. Conditions for making atmospheres happen by allowing both the actuality and the potentiality of the given design, thus making the central argument that architecture and dwellings take part in nurturing and shaping of atmospheres as a spacing act.

**Composing conditions for atmosphere**

This section will look more specifically at some of the practical elements deemed central in making atmospheric designs, or rather in setting the conditions for atmospheres to emerge as a holistic experience. The endeavour undertaken here to consider Schmitz’s and Böhme’s commensurability will prove compatible with contemporary perspectives on immersive design and post-dramatic scenography. Accordingly, the aesthetic production of architecture is not about producing a representational thing, but is fundamentally a relational aesthetics. The following is not an exhaustive discussion of every element of architectural design, but emphasizes some of its main components, such as light, colour, etc., and how these may provide a spatial dynamic that enables organizational atmosphere to be spaced. At the same time the discussion touches on some challenges and critiques. As outlined by Michels and Steyaert, the design of atmosphere should be considered as happening by both design and accident (2016), which reiterates Schmitz’s concern for the

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50 Schmitz states that the synaesthetic is less important in buildings apart from light (Schmitz, 1966: 150). This can, however, be related to a rather narrow focus on architecture that considers churches only.
spontaneous and ambiguous in the intentional design of atmosphere and his critique of Böhme’s focus on the rationality of aesthetic production. With this in mind, the terms and concepts used here are generally to be considered as encompassing both Böhme’s and Schmitz’s views on how the kinaesthetic and synaesthetic compose an overall aesthetic pattern, reflecting atmospheres as having relational ontological nature.

When it comes to the composition of atmospheric architecture, the total combination of materialities, colours, light, etc., creates the spatial affective dynamic that allows atmospheres to happen. As Zumthor states, the strength of architecture lies in its ability to make combinations that create a space of atmosphere (Zumthor, 2005: 23). It is not the property of a thing, but the spatial dynamic that forms the atmospheric experience, which reflects the potential of architecture in spacing organizational atmospheres. Zumthor reiterates that atmosphere is not created as a specific form, but that architecture seeks the combinations where things come into their own, thus creating coherence. In this sense form is secondary. As Zumthor writes:

… when things have come out well they tend to assume a form which often surprises me when I finally stand back from the work and which makes me think: you could never have imagined when you started that this would be the outcome. (Zumthor, 2005: 71)

This citation emphasizes how an architectural design emerges out of concerns other than a defined beautiful form, e.g., a concern that the architecture be moving and surprising (Zumthor, 2005: 71). Further, Zumthor’s statement underlines that the design process is not based on a linear rationality, but on how the compositions and re-compositions as totalities make the aesthetic result emerge. Consequently, it is in shaping the conditions for a dynamic and moving space that the aesthetic quality is defined.

Materialities

Materialities like wood, steel and glass are fundamental elements of architecture and design. Böhme’s central interest in materiality comes of his critique of technology and the aesthetic economy, in which he argues that technologies enable the continued manipulation of natural matter into shapes (2010: 146f., 2008b). Such continual manipulation ultimately risks that such matter will be emptied of its human content or dimension, which then dehumanizes the relation with the environment (Böhme, 2010: 146ff.). As Böhme puts it, the aesthetization of reality is primarily an extensive presentation of materiality. Böhme points to a new sense of materiality, one that separates
matter and materiality and thus does not make materiality a question of functional character (matter), instead showing its capacity to shape atmosphere (Böhme, 2013a: 156). For Böhme materiality is tied with magic, for in creating embodied attunement it stages the life world, our social reality, as scenography does (Böhme, 2013a: 160f). As such, something might look like wood or marble, but as pure matter it is plastic with a surface painted to look like wood or marble. In this way, for example, the synaesthetic character of a material indicates how it is experienced as hard, soft, warm, rough, cold and so on. Approaching the synaesthetic character of material, underlines the potential as a manipulative tool for power, why Böhme accentuates the synaesthetic over the kinaesthetic as the primary focus of architecture, due to his attention to critical perspective. Contemporary aesthetics are formed by neither form nor style, but rather by atmospheres, which are materiality as it emerges and shows itself (Böhme, 2013a: 158).

However, the prevailing European thing-ontology means that architecture is often seen as forming mass, its being based on the distinction between form and matter. Inherent in this is a distinction between conceiving spatial design as an architectural demarcation of space or embracing a spatial sphere as being part of infinite space (Böhme, 2013a: 160)51. Matter, on the other hand, is also the embodied felt experience of softness, hard, cold, warm and so on. The sensing of matter becomes a sensing of oneself, which for Böhme is a basis for perceiving materiality (Böhme, 2013a: 161f.). As Böhme stresses, the fundamentally gripping atmospheric effect of materiality is based on recollection (Böhme, 2013a: 162). Böhme states the sensation of matter as a childhood experience later invoked through memory to achieve the atmospheric effect of materiality. Although Böhme does not discuss this aspect thoroughly, it nonetheless reflects the question of embodied dispositions, whereby previous lived experience impacts future perceptions of the environment and thus also reflects Schmitz’s minor notation that people across cultures experience things differently. Böhme’s discussion on materiality, however, seems to diminish the embodied experience of matter in adult life and to focus more closely on childhood memories of matter. This gives some heft to Schmitz’s point that Böhme’s impression technique leans toward traditional thing-ontology, whereas Schmitz’s attention to the embodied communication emphasizes the surprising and new experience in the moment. By extension, this divergence may also reflect a tendency in Böhme towards well-being as a conservative and consensual perspective, while Schmitz allows for spontaneity and disruption in the aesthetic experience.

51 A distinction used with reference to the architect Peter Zumthor.
Drawing on Böhme, Anderson takes up the discussion of the materiality of atmosphere, calling it a ‘strange materiality’ (Anderson, 2016a: 140, 2018). Anderson considers atmospheres as being a material phenomenon, but as having a strangeness because materiality has its own force or intensity. In this light, architecture is considered as a way of composing atmospheres that relies on a non-linear, emergent causality. Taking emergent causality seriously in the discussion of architecture might then be seen as accommodating both the material side and the existential side of spatialized atmosphere. In an organizational context this would reflect the spacing of organizational atmosphere as a plurality of actualized affect that mediates the social and cultural compositions of organizational life with an allowance for disruptive and explorative formation as a holistic experience. This reflects Anderson’s point that materials reinforce each other in order to gain their total affective effect and form an affective materialism (Anderson, 2016a: 154, 2018). As such, Anderson’s notion of strange and affective materialism is seen as a way to approach the complementarity considered in Schmitz and Böhme. The different perspectives on materiality also open up towards discussion in the areas of new materialism as to the agential quality of matter, which will however not be pursue further here (see Barad, 2018; Bennett, 2010).

Light

Light plays a central role in architecture and in the production of atmospheres. Throughout architecture’s history, daylight has been used to create sensation and spatial experiences. Take, for example, the Pantheon in Rome. As Böhme argues, light creates space and is therefore crucial to atmospheres (2013a: 91ff.). Böhme distinguishes between light and brightness, with light coming from a source, like the sun or a lightbulb, and brightness being the effect of light, how it illuminates (Böhme, 2014f: 134). Pallasmaa follows Böhme by arguing that light tends to be understood as merely a technical and quantitative matter, which reiterates the ocular focus on distance and separation rather than on embodied affection and intimacy that often comes with the shadows (Pallasmaa, 2014: 47). Light is generally connected with seeing and creating a separation between the visible and the invisible, like darkness. The lack of focus on the embodied and experiential qualities of light has meant that the importance of scales of brightness and shadows has been overlooked. In a societal context, according to Pallasmaa, this reflects more fundamental issues of light than just light itself, but
A culture that seeks to control its citizens is likely to promote the opposite direction of interaction, away from intimate individuality and identification towards a public and distant attachment. (Pallasmaa, 2007: 49)

In this perspective, the use of light, not as an oscillation between brightness and darkness, but rather as constant full illumination, undermines embodied intimate communication, instead promoting distance and voyeurism. The way light is used is therefore part of creating different atmospheres, where the technically disembodied illuminated creates an alienating and distancing effect, which further reflects the cognitive control of space as geometrically measurable. When one looks at the atmospheric effect and perception of light, then brightness and not the source of light is the concern. Following Böhme, the perception of light is its brightness (Böhme, 2014a: 135, 2014f). Bright morning light will give a different feel to an office space than artificial illumination will. This leads Böhme to argue that light as brightness is both part of an atmosphere and something by which to create it (Böhme, 2014a: 139). Brightness is a quasi-thing that presents a totality coming before the things of a space, emphasizing the quality of the spatial environment, rather than illuminating surfaces through light beams. Accordingly, brightness makes things become articulated, not just in their distance, but in their colour, whose grade can change between brightness and darkness, between artificial and natural light. Zumthor describes light as something not to be added as an afterthought, but to be considered from the outset, e.g., through a systematic look at how surfaces reflect light (Zumthor, 2005: 59). Light thus figures in architectural composition, entering as a synaesthetic quality that deals with creating a sensuous experience of warmth, cold, cosiness, calmness, etc. Böhme also frames light as a quality of the space, a state of the space (Böhme, 2014a: 150f., 2014f). Following Böhme, the technical staging of light has today become a central means of creating atmospheres, especially in the aesthetic of commodities (2014a: 158, 2014f). As Hasse states, engaging with light in architecture is essential to the shaping of atmospheric experiences, as its immersive character makes light particularly important for the communication of existential emotions and signification (Hasse, 2015: 284).

The development of artificial light has enabled lighting to shape brightness and darkness in a wide variety of ways that extend beyond the purely technical and that can be used in today’s office buildings in conjunction with the influx of natural light. However, as Connellan stresses, white artificial light has gained supremacy over pigment and material, which reflects a Cartesian divide of mind and body (Connellan, 2012: 72). In line with Pallasmaa, Connellan pinpoints an inherent agency of power related to lighting, since
… designed visibility captures that which would not otherwise be obvious. Lighting, therefore, is not just to make the space easier and safer to navigate because it is not dark, it also ensure that nothing is missed by the omniscient and panoptic gaze. This gaze is not merely surveillance cameras but also, our own internal anxieties that click into place in a brightly lit space. (Connellan, 2012: 73)

Although a brightly lit space may give an impression of openness and freedom, the exact opposite is the case, as creating distance and an overview can be wielded as a means of power and control. The light itself becomes an invisible wall that substitutes for previous forms of physical control and surveillance and, combined with glass and its continuous light reflections, adds, according to Connellan (2012, 2013), to the ambiguity of white spaces. As such, attention to light and light design also becomes a synaesthetic medium of political and cultural communication, which is reflected in the lighting conditions of organizational interiors and the way they steer situations and the spacing of organizational atmospheres.

Colour

Colour is another synaesthetic quality creating the conditions for atmosphere, and is connected to the issue of lighting, as light makes colour perform. In darkness one can perceive no colour, but the experience of colour also varies in daylight or artificial light. Colour has played multitudinous roles in the toolkit of architects and designers. Knowing the physical, optical and emotional qualities of colour is often a key interest of design, as these qualities are seen as essential to a cohesive experience of a spatial world, seen as a dynamic worldview that influences what we see and how we feel intuitively (Klarén and Anter, 2012: 4).

Colour has little importance in Schmitz’s discussions on architecture, as he considers colour and the synaesthetic as a feature mainly associated with painting arts (Schmitz, 2005a: 178ff.). Böhme, on the other hand, considers colour to be highly impactful, a view that reflects his focus on scenography and stage design (1995, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c). Böhme considers colour to show how ecstasies form an atmosphere (2001: 138). Things do not have colour as a property, instead they ‘talk’ to us through colour by being radiant, shiny, etc., and thus have an affective force. Böhme calls this the scenic precondition where coloured things present themselves, their ecstasies (2001: 139). This implies that atmospheres cannot be defined within traditional thing-ontology, but must be described in how they are experienced and in the incident of their coming to presence (Böhme, 1995: 173ff.). Likewise, Klarén and Anter emphasize the situational and intuitively holistic experience of the world,
whereby colour is a mode of experiencing how something appears, a mode of engaging with the world (Klarén and Anter, 2012: 5). As they point out, what is perceived is not a special colour, but the relations between them by which they shape an emotional sensation. Böhme clarifies the relational ‘workings’ of colour as an example

… the ecstasy of things is often not in the colours themselves, but in their articulation. That means in contrast, in competition, in punctuality, border, etc. (Böhme, 2001: 139)

So, for Böhme colour emanates through the composition, such as a contrast or a difference to other colours. As Schmitz himself acknowledges, he does not have a very elaborate vocabulary for colours, contrary to that for the kinaesthetics of solid forms, which is based on arguments (Schmitz, 2005a: 178ff.). Still, following Goethe\(^\text{52}\), Schmitz considers an embodied resonance to exist in the response of different colours to the spatial dynamics, with the exception being the colour white, which shows a lack of embodied resonance (Schmitz, 2005a: 180).

Yet, as Mottram and Jeffries indicate, in recent decades specification and systematization have developed from work with colour in design, especially due to requirements posed in areas such as construction environment and global manufacturing (Mottram and Jeffries; 2012: 23ff.)\(^\text{53}\). The purpose of using, e.g., statutory design codes is so that design decisions meet levels of conformity and performance, which thus simultaneously runs the risk of normalizing and controlling design, as conformity leads to banality and compliance replaces design innovation (Mottram and Jeffries, 2012: 25). This standardization has been combined with inadequate knowledge on the use of colour, despite its relevance in design and architecture (Mottram and Jeffries, 2012: 31f), a situation that corporate architecture is also likely to reflect.

According to Connellan (2012, 2013), the lack of knowledge or interest in colour can be seen as a modernist legacy and its preference for white, as found, for example, in the International Style of architecture. Connellan reads the dominance of white into a socio-political view on designed environments, presenting a critical view on the indirect perception of colour and linking whiteness to the modernist ideal of order and control (Connellan, 2012: 66). White is therefore not a neutral colour but is rather tainted with ideological quests for ways to live orderly lives, with the clean, white surfaces erasing all marks of use and thus eliminating all variation and difference. Although white has the

\(^{52}\) Goethe saw colour as a sensory phenomenon related to an affective dimension, where the effect of the colour is the ‘reality’.

\(^{53}\) This has led to widely accessible standards like RAL, NSC and ISO on the use of colour inside or across industries and sectors.
ability to create meditative silence, expanses of whitened surfaces can potentially grow into a tyranny of white that silences the body (Connellan, 2012: 67), which echoes Schmitz’s point that white lacks embodied resonance. As Connellan concludes, the efforts to maintain purity and whiteness in large expanses do not attend to the affect world:

_White is not socially affirming because it does not induce comfort; instead it is a colour on show, and by extension it positions those within it on display as well._ (Connellan, 2012: 84)

In relation to organizational atmosphere, the use of white discussed by Connellan reflects a critique regarding visual perception as dominating apprehensions of space, which also challenges the social and political organization of space. Taking colour seriously through an atmospheric perspective is a way of acknowledging that colours play a role not only in architecture and design but also as a social technology and organizational tool (Beyes, 2017, 2018). As Beyes argues:

_An organizational chromatics therefore needs to acknowledge colour as a medium of transformation and to assume the doubling capacity as ambiguous organizational force: as a means of unlocking opportunities for the purpose of power and profit, and as an opening of the new possibilities of what can be sensed._ (Beyes, 2017: 1475)

This perspective on colour in an organizational context accentuates that colour is not just an add-on to an environment, but suggests that one consider it a material force in itself. In line with Böhme, this outlines an argument that colour can be seen as having a kind of agency or is an affective force of both anaesthesia and aesthetization (Reckwitz, 2017: 19-22; Beyes, 2018: 99). Accordingly, putting colour on an equal footing with other elements of atmospheric architecture also requires going beyond the ocularcentrism often found in organization studies (Beyes, 2017: 1469). In relation to architecture colour is not to be considered as neutral but rather as an agential affective force of organizational transformation or control, thus echoing the impact of colour not only as part of shaping organizational atmospheres but also in apprehending organization.

**Sound**

Another central element to the experience of atmosphere and the production of conditions is sound (Böhme, 2013a: 76f.; Schmitz, 2014a: 87f.). As Schmitz notes, acoustics and music are special mediators of atmospheres by shaping both a spatial and a temporal intensity (Schmitz, 2014a: 87). Likewise, Böhme emphasizes that acoustics is a principal element of atmospheres (2013a:
Acoustics by way of tunes make kinaesthetic gestures, such as music’s invitation to dance, meaning that acoustics is the way sound behaves spatially. Acoustics relates to music, sounds and noise. Considering the relation between music and space as a basic atmospheric art, Böhme’s writes:

… the aesthetic of atmospheres provides the simple answer that music as such is the modification of embodied sensed space. The music forms the self-attunement of the listener in the room, it intervenes directly in their embodied economy. (Böhme, 2013a: 78)

An example of music and sound consciously used to design atmospheres comes in the soundscapes designed for shopping malls, restaurants and such, but music and sound are also used in the design of so-called ‘healing architecture’. Böhme, however, is preoccupied with whether music is to be considered as performing in the built space or whether it can be considered a spatial art (2013a: 83f.). In the latter case the space itself becomes a theme of musical composition that allows for embodied attunement and the sensing of a spatial expanse, which is the atmospheric quality from a non-dualist perspective. In Böhme’s view, to look at music and sound as part of space art is to conceive space, and thus also architecture, as a spatial art that focuses in a non-trivial way on the innovative potential (2013a: 86). This perspective clearly opens for the potentiality of space as spacing atmosphere. Sound in the production of atmosphere is a key means of acoustically furnishing space, Böhme writes (Böhme, 2013a: 90). However, according to him, it is only now starting to become a more common architectural design element, whereas installation art and theatre have a longer tradition of conscious sound use, as seen in sound design practices. Thus, an attention to the design of sound as a spatial aesthetics also constitutes an approach to space as an alternate ontology reflecting a different conception of architecture (Böhme, 2013a: 86).

Of course, considering musical sounds in design atmospheres is interesting and relevant when one discusses organizational atmosphere, since it addresses the organization of embodied sensed space. As Pallasmaa and other architects (Gehl, 2017) remark, hearing is part of the total experience and understanding of space (2007: 49). Both sound and silence create a sense of the acoustic volume of space, although in Pallasmaa’s view many contemporary spaces lack the ‘returning’ sound, which makes it impossible to get a sense either of the space or of connection and solidarity (Pallasmaa, 2007: 50). Sound can attract or repel, and its echo resonates with the scale, materials and the people in a physical place. However, Böhme’s focus on the production of atmosphere and sound design like music pays little attention to any sound that is not artificially and intentionally produced, such as those

54 Hospital architecture, where sound is one of the elements used to create a curing environment (Frandsen et al., 2009).
produced by the sheer use of a building through the movement of people, talk, etc. Yet, as Schmitz emphasizes, the voice or the tone of a person speaking, whether harsh or fresh, will also contribute to the synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters of an environment (Schmitz, 2005a: 176). One might just recall the kinds of unintended sounds people make as they move around or talk in an open office space – considered as noise that has given rise to immense criticism.

Noise can be seen as an unwanted by-product that emerges in the actual use of physical space, from an event or process. Hainge argues that noise is generally seen as something disagreeable and unintentionally produced by actions pursuing an unrelated matter (Hainge, 2013: 9). Still, though perhaps unintentionally produced, noise impacts the atmosphere. However, noise is not an objective fact, Hainge argues, but related to perception and historical, cultural and other factors, which means what constitutes noise may differ from person to person (Hainge, 2013: 11). This reiterates Schmitz’s point that atmospheres are experienced differently across cultures and affect people subjectively, implying that the experience of noise in, say, an open office space might differ from person to person, but also across countries, despite forming a collective totality. Accordingly, it underlines how perception as performing atmosphere is of a relational nature.

Hainge conceives the ontological status of noise to have an immersive quality, for he understands noise as medial in the sense that it is produced in the passing into actuality of everything, or, as he writes, that it is always in-between (Hainge, 2013: 13). As such, noise has an atmospheric quality that is nevertheless likely to create a kind of uncanny or unpleasant immersive experience, yet it informs the importance of addressing noise in the production of atmospheres:

*Noise, then, in and of itself is nothing, for it arises only in the relational process through which the world and its objects express themselves in an infinite number of possible relations, assemblages or expressive forms.* (Hainge, 2013: 15)

Thinking noise along the lines of a relational ontology emphasizes its atmospheric qualities, its pertinence in everyday interactions of organizations and its relation to movement. The theme of noise reflects the unintended sounds emerging in daily interaction and is thus already highly thematized in relation to contemporary open office spaces, drawing attention as it does to working with spatial sound design adaptable to the practical everyday of organizations that reflect the ontological status of noise as relational. Although Böhme articulates the importance of sound in the

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55 Hainge defines the immersiveness of noise by there not being an outside (2013: 13).
architectural production of atmospheres, the approach reveals the minor attention that his focus on the production side pays to the actual movements, sounds and their impact on the overall soundscape.

**Air and temperature**

Like noise, elements like air and temperature are not discussed intensely by either Böhme or Schmitz in relation to architecture. Yet, according to Schmitz, temperature such as cold and warm also makes a strong claim on the feeling body through encorporation (Schmitz, 2005: 182f.). In work spaces this concerns buildings’ ventilation and temperature systems, which may often be regarded as a technical issue, but may also be considered as part of a workplace scenography. In his spherology (2004) Sloterdijk has put the focus on the latter, discussing air conditions by arguing that atmospheres are air conditioning systems where it is not possible for anyone not to participate. Air conditioning is seen as a relational process of the shared space that takes part in producing society – and organizations, one might add. Sloterdijk discusses the development of air design as an atmospheric technique that has shaped modern ways of existence (2004: 176). Hence, while Schmitz talks of breathing as the most basic form of spatial experience, Sloterdijk develops the connection between air and space, stressing the socio-political dimension of air as an immersive atmosphere by demonstrating how the design of air is gaining relevance. Böhme (plus Schmitz) gives this little attention in relation to the architectural production of atmosphere, but Sloterdijk points to the relevance of attending to air design as a part of atmospheric design, thus addressing a broader socio-political issue that also resonates with organizational concerns and the understanding of organizational atmosphere as a relational ontology.

**Shapes and movement**

The shapes that go into forming architecture are considered important, especially by Schmitz, as they are kinaesthetic characters that invite movement, while Böhme hardly discusses the element. However, Böhme (2013a: 110) acknowledges that movement is central to grasping lived space and thereby atmospheres, but only in passing and without prompting any further elaboration in relation to the production of architecture. This reflects Kamleither’s point that the perception of atmosphere in Böhme’s version is based on a resting individual, which means that movement is not considered terribly greatly in the production of atmosphere (2009: 3). Following Kamleither, this
Further reflects Böhme’s rather conventional approach to architecture, in which he focuses on its aesthetic and not its practical use.

Schmitz considers shapes (Gestalten) of all kinds that gesture or sketch movements and thus connect with the feeling body (Schmitz, 2014a: 95; 1966: 37ff.). Schmitz repeatedly talks of concave and convex shapes as giving way to sensing the spatial dynamics of contraction and expansion. In Schmitz’s line of argumentation, such shapes relate to the feeling body because they invite embodied resonance, whereas the straight line and straight forms do not (Schmitz, 1966: 51ff.).

Following Schmitz, Hasse points out that the embodied communication is the fundamental way of perceiving kinaesthetic movements, where movement is, in the realm of corporeal communication, seen as a constituent of spaciousness and perception (Hasse, 2015: 32). This underlines how Schmitz’s focus contributes a perspective on movement and rhythm that supplements Böhme’s architectural scenography. The focus on movement also reiterates the critique of the geometrical space as being distanced from embodied resonance and communication, whereas crooked shapes invite embodied participation by mediating a spatial rhythm and sensation of contraction and expansion (Schmitz, 1966: 52 & 113). Schmitz himself uses examples from the baroque, an epoch when sensory immersion was invoked as an opposition to the linearity and visual perspective of the Renaissance (see Schmitz, 1966: 291ff.). In parallel Pallasmaa draws on the baroque as an example of a challenge to the visual hegemonic heritage of the Renaissance, thus linking the baroque to developments in modern architecture that privilege other elements over visual perception (Pallasmaa, 2007: 34ff.).

Where geometrical shapes invite one to move from A to B in a straight line, crooked shapes invite immersion, a labyrinthic or rhythmic passage. Further, crooked shapes subsequently provide suggestions for ways of being moved and to move, whereas the linear and geometrical offer almost no opportunity for embodied resonance (Schmitz, 1996: 52).

Accordingly, atmospheric space is a space of movement (Hasse, 2015: 300ff.). Movement thereby activates space in the sense that it is lived as an affective immersive force. As Zumthor indicates architecture as atmosphere involves movement, which is why the architect has to think about how people move (2005: 41). Zumthor illustrates this with the example of places for strolling, like a thermal bath, and places for directing people, like a hospital. Strolling is directing done gently, which he compares to designing a stage that directs a play. The directing is designed as a seduction, creating a path of discovery (Zumthor, 2005: 43). This reflects Böhme’s approach to architecture as the staging of a drama, but also identifies with Schmitz’s argument that different spaces relate differently to movement. Zumthor’s example however, begs the question of whether spaces of
work, like hospitals and office spaces, are solely for directing people or whether his distinction might reflect a more inherent assumption of work as something to be rationally organized. Looking at organization as an atmospheric phenomenon questions assumptions about organization as an ordered entity when one considers space as part of spacing organization (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; Beyes, 2016; O'Doherty, 2008).

Seen as a bridging quality by Schmitz, material shapes help create an embodied communication in which atmospheres can move the human to move. Accordingly, Schmitz adds to Böhme’s focus on the architectural production of atmosphere by attending more explicitly to the kinaesthetic features of gesturing and suggesting movement. Movement, as a transpersonal body, becomes an affective endeavour relating to atmospheres. The rhythm endorsed by kinaesthetic elements can come from the physical environment as well as the human (Gugutzer, 2006), an idea akin to discussions on the transmitting quality of environment and sensing body found in human geographic discussions on affect and atmosphere (McCormack, 2013). This aligns with the ethnographic perspective of Ingold, who says:

The ground is perceived kinaesthetically, in movement. If we say of the ground of a hill that it ‘rises up’, this is not because the ground itself is on the move but because we feel its contours in our own bodily exercise. (Ingold, 2010: 125)

In this respect Ingold is consistent with the phenomenological perspective of being present in the experience and of emphasizing the lived experience as a knowledge base. As Ingold argues, movement is part of perceiving the environment as a whole, although not as a panoptic perspective but as a passage whose horizons thus change along the way (2011: 227). Like Schmitz, Ingold opposes the distanced world perspective, instead arguing for the human involvement that emphasizes the moving dynamic of the changing relation between humans and their environment. Hasse adds to this understanding by pointing out that the knowledge coming from walking becomes habitualized, thus creating feeling rather than mental maps (Hasse, 2015: 147). Movement in this sense creates a situational and contextual experience where ‘we know as we go, not before we go.’ (Ingold, 2011: 230).

An expanded scenography

As outlined, architectural production of atmosphere is expected to create conditions that make atmosphere happen through the creation of some kind of immersive space. In architecture, such
spaces rely heavily on synaesthetic and kinaesthetic qualities to create the dynamic for spacing of atmosphere. By considering Böhme’s and Schmitz’ perspectives as commensurable a broader set of conditions are considered. These perspectives take Böhme’s scenographic argument a step further by adding the issues of movement, reflecting developments especially in new contemporary theatre like immersive and post-dramatic theatre (White, 2012; Machon; 2016; Fischer-Lichte; 2008; McKinney and Palmer, 2017). As McKinney and Palmer argue, these new scenographies can be regarded as expanded scenographies that reflect a non-representational approach, in which affective materialities are at play, the audience co-performs and the scenography has an autonomous situational form (2017: 2f). These new scenographies reflects how the term ‘immersive’, like the notion of atmosphere, dismisses the idea of representation (Machon 2016; White, 2012; McKinney and Palmer, 2017).

Considering Böhme’s argument of the production of atmospheres as stages where the drama can be performed (Böhme, 1995: 87) reflects his view of perception as being with things, whereas taking the view of expanded scenography corporates Schmitz’s argument on immersive perception, through which space and environment are seen as relational and intrinsic to the experience (McKinney and Palmer, 2017: 5), which promotes new ways of thinking space, materiality and design. As such, with both Böhme and Schmitz being criticized for a rather conservative approach to architecture, combining the two perspectives can be seen as reflecting an expanded scenography, which implies an explicitation of the situation as the condition being designed.

Although the developments in scenography cannot be comprehensively discussed here, these recent developments present an approach to architectural scenography as an active spatial event based on relationality, affect and materiality, which accommodates Schmitz’s argument for designing situations (see Schmitz, 1998: 180). Following Reckwitz, precisely the focus on atmosphere addresses how enhanced contemporary aesthetization has shifted the focus from the art work to the art event (2014: 114ff). The art event is epitomized in the performative art installation, a central feature of which is the creation of atmosphere (Reckwitz, 2014: 114; Sloterdijk, 2004: 530). As Sloterdijk terms it, installations are then the aesthetic explication of immersion (Sloterdijk, 2004: 532), which underlines how architecture can be seen as setting the conditions for situations, where the actual and the potential is being spaced and can be performed. Accordingly, Sloterdijk also stresses the centrality of space, via the ‘stage-apriori’, as being the platform on which to unfold our coming-into-the-world (1998: 138). In this sense, considering the production of atmosphere as creating immersive spaces that are not defined by physical walls, in this case, reiterates O’Doherty’s argument of creating organization without walls (2008). Such a take on producing organizational atmospheres as expanded
scenography promotes a relational aesthetics and a processual view that accounts for movement and thereby reveals new ways of mapping political and social positions – a view that is akin to the discussion in the spatial turn on active space and spacings of organization (O’Doherty, 2008; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; McCormack, 2008a), but that also reflects arguments in non-representational theory and the affective turn of new political and social practices as being affectively and spatially thought (Thrift, 2004: 75; Stewart, 2008a, 2015, 2017; Reckwitz, 2017; Gherardi, 2017) as well as the relational dimension of aesthetics in organizations (Beyes, 2016; O’Doherty, 2008).

**Anaesthetic and intentional atmospheres**

The production of architecture comes with certain ambitions, expectations and intentions, for which reason producing organizational atmospheres is not an innocent, nor easy production. As Heibach states, atmospheres imply a strong potential for manipulation, which requires one to take a critical cultural view on the ubiquity of staged space and its implications (2012a:16) and as mentioned by both Böhme and Schmitz, atmospheres are highly potent forces and claim authority by virtue of their moving nature (Böhme, 1995: 39; Schmitz, 2014a: 20ff.). As widely recognized, atmospheres always form a part of the human environment and organizations (Hasse, 2015: 185; Beyes, 2016), which articulates the relevance of critically considering the production of organizational atmospheres and issue of controllability of atmosphere raised in the introduction.

Acknowledging atmosphere as an ever-present phenomenon, requires engaging with the other of aesthetic atmospheres in organizations. The other of aesthetic atmosphere may have been seen as rationality and cognition. However, the development of aesthetics into a performative and processual perspective considers cognition as intertwined with affect and sensation (Beyes, 2016: 118). As such, the other might be seen as an existential other, emphasizing the lack of vitality and the ‘feeling of being alive’. In this context the two different ‘others’ accentuate the kind of critique and potential that can be considered in the production of organizational atmospheres. As such, are aesthetic atmospheres a controllable ‘remedy or tool’ for organizations and mainly criticized as manipulation? And/or are they a way of thinking-organization as an aesthetic process of constant becomings and a fundamental element of existence? As such, it reiterates Schmitz distinction of approaching the world as a constellation or a situation. Although both Böhme and Schmitz are attentive to the cognitive and sensuous, Böhme’s allegiance to critical theory and his focus on aesthetic capitalism make his atmospheric perspective lean toward the other as cognitive rationality and the problem of
manipulation. This critique is also raised in Schmitz, although emphasizing further the potential in reinstalling vitality as an existential other. Yet, reiterating the doubled relationality, this thesis argues that both aspects are relevant to address from a non-dualist perspective as it allows to address both the pitfalls and empowering qualities of organizational atmospheres. Clearly, the critical dimension is an important aspect when one looks at organizational atmospheres and the extent to which they may entail distortive and manipulative power structures (Reckwitz, 2014: 357; Böhme, 1995: 36, 2016; Beyes, 2016; Hasse, 2014: 224). However, a failure to engage with atmosphere neglects embodied sensation and the feeling of being alive (Schmitz, 2014b, Stewart, 2011; Thrift, 2008) by creating numb, disembodied office architecture. The next section will briefly address the manipulative perils of atmosphere, when it becomes a means for political and rational ends, but also the perils of not engaging actively with atmospheres as stemming from an anaesthetics of dehumanized, geometrical conceived architecture.

Anaesthetic office spaces

The Taylorist office landscape, standardized and colourless for the sake of an efficient expedition of files, has been seen as the epitome of the anaesthetic version of Weberian bureaucratic management. A striking example of the stripped humanity of public organization’s bureaucratic culture is described in Ken Loach’s film ‘I, Daniel Blake’, where the government benefits system and its physical office lack an understanding for human life and complexity. This shows bureaucratic management as an anaesthetic and dehumanized practice, reflecting Weber’s statement on the nature of bureaucracy thus:

> It’s specific nature, which is welcomed by capitalism, develops the more perfectly the more the bureaucracy is ‘dehumanized,’ the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is the specific nature of bureaucracy and it is appraised as its special virtue. (Weber, 1968: 216)

The Weberian heritage has unfolded a long tradition of depersonalized offices that have become part of an office culture widely and persistently spread throughout Western culture and that have created environments that stifle new ways of working, new management’s ideas and creativity (Duffy, 1997: 17; Andersen and Christensen, 2015; Christensen, 2007; Burell and Dale, 2003). This has perpetuated the office as a grey and culturally grim place, with the understanding being that such places were not worth spending money on (Duffy, 1997: 14). Accordingly, new office designs are
emerging as new types of work combine with the development of technology from which immaterial work has emerged (Duffy, 1997: 15; 2004; de Vries, 2018). Others stress the connection between the physical work environment and aesthetization in relation not only to creativity (McCoy and Evans, 2002; Alexanderson and Kalonaityte, 2018) but also to human health and stress (Evans and McCoy, 1998, Lazarus, 2006). This reflects discussions in the spatial and affective turns in organization studies, in which questions of aesthetics, architecture and materiality have been addressed in order to approach new processes and practices of organizing (Kornberger et al., 2011; Burell and Dale, 2003; Borch, 2009) as well as to enhance the focus on the affective dimension of work (Barsade and Gibson, 2007; Fotaki et al. 2017; Küpers, 2016; Amabile et. al., 2005). The changes in office design, shifting from the dehumanized and anaesthetic towards the aesthetic and affective, reiterates the development of an aesthetic economy and the relevance of engaging actively with atmosphere (Böhme, 2003b, 2016; Reckwitz, 2014; Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). Although aesthetization may remedy the dehumanized work spaces, the discussion on aesthetic capitalism also draws attention to the risk of aesthetization, with atmospheres becoming an instrumental tool.

Atmosphere as an economic tool and aesthetic politics

Marketing is one prominent area where atmospheres have been consciously produced for decades (Kotler, 1974; Biehl-Missal and Saren, 2012; Julmi, 2017; Heide et al., 2009). Many examples illustrate how atmosphere used as a marketing tool shows little concern for the subtle power asymmetries involved or the non-dualist nature of atmosphere (Julmi, 2017). Such instrumentalization may let consumers fall prey to power structures camouflaged in an aesthetic outlet for the benefit of economic revenue (Böhme, 2014a: 151ff; Sloterdijk, 2004: 533 & 2014: 292; Borch, 2014: 85). As Heide et al. write:

… atmosphere can be considered as a ‘contrallable’ that managers can ‘manipulate’, as a tool to enhance the organizational performance. (Heide et al., 2009: 306)

In this instance the use of atmosphere is being discussed in relation to the hospitality industry, where atmosphere is used to create emotional reactions among the guests to influence their experience and/or loyalty. As the citation states, atmosphere is seen as a manipulative tool that can be successfully deployed to directly help increase the bottom line (Heide et al. 2009: 316). Following Julmi (2017), atmosphere is here being treated as an object, seen as a dualist notion by using a linear causality. ‘Using’ atmosphere intentionally in marketing and by organizations to optimize economical
performance at a certain manipulative cost may seem relatively insignificant to some, but more critical studies on the use of atmospheres in marketing have surfaced in recent years (Biehl-Missal and Saren, 2012).

The use of atmosphere’s power as, e.g., a marketing tool is one reason why Böhme and others have engaged with the notion, for, as Hasse states, the manipulative power of atmospheres is based on the way they exploit the embodied communication to obtain specific goals. (Hasse, 2015: 238). Yet, Böhme and Schmitz also address these same mechanisms on a bigger political and societal scale, expressed in their most extreme form in totalitarian regimes and their production of atmospheres (Böhme, 2013a: 162; Schmitz, 2005c; Heibach, 2012b). Totalitarian regimes have historically presented an aesthetization of politics by deliberately producing atmospheres as part of the political action. As an example, Böhme describes Hitler’s performances, which were carefully architecturally staged through the use of light, music and other elements, all aimed to create a scenic event (2013a: 162ff). Following Böhme, this is an extended version of contemporary marketing design, in the sense that methods for marketing are also those used for the political purposes of creating affective communication design (Böhme, 2013a: 166), or what Schmitz defines as an impression technique. As Böhme importantly notes, these means of manipulation have been more than superficial techniques, for they have also created a political actuality deliberately intended to mobilize the masses and induce loyalty (2013a: 166). This emphasizes the power of atmospheric designs as a politically and socially mobilizing factor (Borch, 2009; Edensor, 2015; Runkel, 2017, 2018). As Edensor’s analysis of the staging of atmospheres at premier league matches shows, the mass mobilizing potency of atmosphere is not just a feature of a totalitarian regimes (2015). He also remarks that this potency cannot be downplayed, describing it as situations

… giving licence for the loss of the self in the moment that characterizes the shared fan impulse to become immersed in the event and ignore the usual conventions of public conduct. (Edensor, 2015: 89)

Addressing the staging of atmospheres at a football match cannot be equated with the intentional political use of totalitarian regimes, but the point here is to show the potency of staged atmospheres resulting from the immersive character and embodied communication that is also to be considered in corporate architecture. Further, it can thus be seen how atmospheres, staged purposefully in everyday life, impact emotional and affective experiences, which reinforces Schmitz’s point that to be moved by an atmosphere one has to let go of cognition in order to immerse oneself—although one might also even be moved to act in discordance with oneself. A critical view on organizational atmospheres attends to the seductive and contagious powers that might be
intentionally aimed, e.g., at ‘exploiting’ employees by blurring their business and pleasure or mobilizing loyalty from citizens and customers. The challenging point is then to take a stance, to hold onto the aesthetic devotion, be critical and not fall prey to aesthetic pleasure and manipulative affection (Schmitz; 2005a: 89ff.; Böhme, 1995).

The potential of atmosphere

Apart from the ‘unintended’ atmospheric consequences of the built environment, the development of an aesthetic economy as well as of politico-historical events shows how atmospheres can become appropriated for economic and political gains. At the same time, the enhanced interest in atmosphere also requires one to address the (critical) potential of atmosphere, which this section attends to. The section emphasizes that engaging with atmosphere, which in a non-dualist perspective holds its potential in its relationality, implies that considering the spacing of organizational atmospheres as an expanded scenography requires one to think architecture in relation to the users and architects. As Albertsen argues, the power of atmosphere is often linked to domination and manipulation, but less so on the empowering dimension (Albertsen, 2016: 575). This section therefore looks at some of the potentialities related to the production of atmosphere as argued by Böhme and Schmitz in particular. As seen in chapter 3, both Böhme and Schmitz acknowledge the power and the empowering qualities of atmosphere (Schmitz, 2005a, 2015, 2012b; Böhme, 2013a: 26; 2014b+c+f). This section especially concerns how the issue of critical architecture and dwelling. This touches on concerns notably raised by Böhme, Schmitz and Sloterdijk on the need for articulating and exercising atmospheric life.

Critical architecture

Böhme’s argument for atmosphere as a new aesthetics involves a call for a critical architecture where ethical and aesthetic perspectives are considered (Böhme, 2013a: 176; 2014c). In Böhme’s view the development of the aesthetic economy has put architecture at the service of capitalism, as seen in marketing, urban development, shopping mall construction, etc. In these architectural creations the ethical gets swallowed by the aesthetic: the comfortable overrules the good. According to Böhme, critical architecture instead engages with the balance or difference between the ethical and the aesthetic, which also puts a responsibility on the architect and aesthetic practitioners in general to be aware of what humans and human (sensuous) needs they are designing for (Böhme,
2013a: 176; 1995: 87). For Böhme the critical potential of atmosphere, as an aesthetics, is the ability to criticize the everyday living conditions and the aesthetic economy (1995, 39ff.). As such, this calls for an individual that is able to engage with atmospheres critically, e.g. being attentive to the manipulative power of atmospheres, which following Böhme calls for the sovereign subject (Böhme, 2013a: 30).

Following Böhme, the critical potential also calls for a responsibility on behalf of the aesthetic practitioners, since they focus on how synaesthetics and kinaesthetics affect mood and how the use of colour, sound and materiality can create an atmosphere. As such, architecture engages with peoples life’s and is not neutral container. As Böhme states, this makes it important to involve architects, interior designers, etc., in the study of phenomena like atmosphere, as they know how to make something appear (erscheinen) (Böhme, 1995: 201; Hasse, 2015: 238), and knowing how atmospheres are made, he maintains, is also what allows for critique. Despite Böhme’s claim that aesthetic practices are about producing atmospheres, this claim might not always be evident or interesting to the practitioners themselves. Insofar as the central assumption is that atmospheres are everywhere and always, Taylorist and container offices also condition atmosphere. In these cases the knowledge on atmospheres and embodied experience might not have been of primary interest to the practitioners themselves, as Burell and Dale’s analysis of architectural practices apparently reflects. They state that:

… many architects and designers remain unaware and often not interested in the user experience of the buildings. (Burell and Dale, 2015: 7)

Another reason why architects may refrain from engaging directly with atmospheric design and scenography is the ‘aesthetic imprisonment’ to which architects are subjected, according to Brejzek: in other words aesthetics remain confined to being a matter beauty and grand scale durability (Brejzek, 2017: 64). Further, the Pallasmaa (2014: 234) claims that architects themselves often consider atmosphere as something ‘romantic and shallowly entertaining’, an attitude they do therefore not address in their buildings and that reiterates Connellan’s argument of the modernist legacy in architecture. Hence, the talk of scenography and the art of staging may collide with assumptions in the architectural profession itself and is a further reflection of architectural interior design’s often having been considered as a non-essential supplement to architecture and its having focused primarily on embellishment (Sloane, 2014: 300). Brejzek argues that an explanation lies in the way different aesthetic practices hold architects in a position that prevents them from working
beyond beauty and therefore from realizing contested atmospheres and thus creating architectures of intensity (Brejzek, 2017: 64).

Although Böhme is alert to potential professional difficulties in bridging architecture and scenography (Böhme, 2013a: 176), he does not pursue the matter in detail. Accordingly, Hasse argues that aiming for an affective and atmospheric architecture will require a new approach to architects’ professionalization (Hasse, 2006: 23). In parallel Reckwitz mentions, the aesthetization of society in recent years has altered the position of the aesthetic practitioners (Reckwitz, 2014: 97). They no longer hold a special exclusive status, but have become professional competencies engaged in collective activities. Aesthetic practitioners have become the ‘communicative oriented arrangers of the aesthetic process’ (Reckwitz, 2014: 115), a perspective that also reflects an enhanced focus on user involvement in architectural practices understood as an expanded scenography. This positions the aesthetic practitioner as someone who lets the oeuvre present itself to the world and who is not the one presenting an oeuvre to the world (Reckwitz, 2014: 99 + 107f). Referencing Böhme and in line with Hasse, Reckwitz stresses that the role of the aesthetic practitioner is transforming from being a producer of art works to an initiator of atmospheres (Reckwitz, 2014: 114ff). Architects are becoming socio-cultural arrangeurs, which involves a new set of qualifications, in which the architect is simultaneously a materials researcher, self-commentator, curator, atmosphere manager and politico-cultural agent. Thus, producing atmosphere through architecture questions existing architectural practice, as when Sloterdijk says that architects basically are in charge of making ‘in-theory’ (2014: 230). Accordingly, producing organizational atmosphere not only concerns how it works, but also how it is produced.

Caring spaces

Considering the production of organizational atmosphere as an expanded scenography also articulates a different perspective on the ‘spectators’ or users, one that emphasizes their co-performing role (Böhme, 2013a: 177). In terms of office spaces and buildings this perspective can be seen as providing a way for users to inhabit them. According to Hasse, a distinction can be made between inhabitant (einswohner) and resident (anwohner), where the inhabitant performatively engages with the atmospheric space, while the resident is just a territorial occupation (Hasse, 2017: 40). Schmitz focuses on inhabitation as dwelling when talking atmosphere and physical space (2015: 74ff., 2014a: 62ff). Dwelling is seen in a broader sense than just the private home, which corresponds with
scholars that approach dwelling as a question of dwelling (Schmitz, 2014a; Hasse, 2015: 151, 2009; Sloterdijk, 2004; Heidegger, 1954; Ingold, 2011). For Schmitz dwelling (wohnen) consists of corporeal space, emotional space as well as geometrical space, thus displaying the intertwining between the physical and lived space. In dwelling, the building plays a central role in integrating the different space types and spatial mood levels, however the specific of dwelling is the way the emotional space is formed (Schmitz, 2015: 74f.). This reflects Heidegger’s (1954a) point that building is not just a technique in its practical sense, but requires an understanding of dwelling. Accordingly, Schmitz defines dwelling thus:

_Dwelling is culture of emotions in caringly enclosing space (umfriedeten Raum) _ (Schmitz, 2015: 75; Schmitz, 2014a: 62)

Schmitz follows the Heideggerian view on dwelling by presenting his spatial integration of the existential and physical space into a caringly enclosing space. Creating a caring enclosing (umfriedeten) space is what shields inhabitants from the abysmal outside (Schmitz, 2015: 76ff.). This resonates with Sloterdijk’s argument that spatial immune systems are created to make the outside bearable, and reflects architecture’s existential engagement with the world. (2014: 260ff). For Sloterdijk, then, different interiors can serve as co-isolation, which Borch has discussed as being a conceptual take on organizational atmospheres (2009). Dwelling thereby captures the existential component of architecture, which for Sloterdijk is the experience of potentially being held into nothingness (Sloterdijk, 2014: 261) and thus resonates with Schmitz’s iterated uncertainty. As such, the potential of architecture is then both to provide a caring space, yet, with the awareness of the uncertain, allowing the actual and potential to emerge in the situation. For Schmitz the existential moment of the situation becomes the constituting core of dwelling (Hasse, 2017: 43). Understanding situatedness as a prerequisite for building is seeing dwelling is a medium of forming the emotional space, since Schmitz says:

_I describe having atmospheres at disposal, inasmuch as they provide a clearance (Spielraum) through caring enclosure (umfriedung), as dwelling in the most general sense._ (Schmitz 1969: 213; 2015: 77)

For Schmitz the actual dwelling entails having atmospheres at the disposal of humans such that they provide a caring, yet intensive and nuanced emotional climate. This climate can be both bred or dampened, which is done by regulating its kinaesthetic and synaesthetic characters

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56 Heidegger discusses the concept of dwelling in his text ‘Building, dwelling, thinking’, where he notes that dwelling is fundamentally a caring (Schonen), as space freed from harm and threat (1954a: 149). Considering Schmitz’s Heideggerian heritage ‘umfriedung’ is therefore translated with ‘caring enclosure’.
The built environment therefore holds the potential of caring and re-attuning the embodied disposition (Schmitz, 1966: 257). This re-attunement indicates a continuous changeability, coming from changes in, e.g., the environment (Gugutzer, 2013: 98). So, while it is one thing to be able to arrange a physical space, it is another make a dynamic composition that is open to future possibility (Hasse, 2015: 152). As Schmitz notes the practical way to achieve this is difficult to understand (2015: 75), a difficulty which, as discussed, contemporary views on immersive design and expanded scenography are at least starting to address.

As such Schmitz’s theoretical work on dwelling and architecture opens for perspectives on contemporary architectural design, thus emphasizing the situation and the relational, which is not, however, reflected in Schmitz’s own work. This underlines how seeing Schmitz and Böhme as complementary gives way to consider the production of architecture as spacing organizational atmosphere as having both a critical and existential potential. This resonates with developments in the spatial turn on understanding the process of producing space as spacing (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011) and of thinking-space as a sensing of co-creative processuality (McCormack, 2008a: 3), where humans, affect, materialities, colours, light and smell all fold together in the everyday organizational performances (Thrift, 2007; Anderson, 2009; Stewart, 2011). This also reflects a move towards blurring the reception and production of aesthetics that emphasizes a processual take (Beyes, 2016), which means that architecture should not be thought separately from organizational life, since organizational atmospheres in their relationality are constituted in the everyday performance of organizations.

Exercising life

According to Böhme, Schmitz and Sloterdijk, architectural design and atmosphere in its most ‘potent form’ contain a critical and engaging potential. However, considering the critique of current societies and the oblivion of the human embodied sensation, both Schmitz and Böhme agree on the relevance of rearticulating the attention to atmospheres. Where Schmitz focuses on establishing a conceptual vocabulary, such as engaging with fluid phenomena like atmospheres (2014b), Böhme argues for the importance of an aesthetic education (2013a). In everyday life the experience of atmospheres is by default a base mood; however, it requires aesthetic education to experience atmospheres by opening oneself emotionally (Böhme, 2013a: 52), and it entails participation and welcoming enticements. In line with Böhme, others argue for the relevance of building atmospheric
competencies (Albertsen, 2013; Rauh, 2012b). Rauh emphasizes building such competence through awareness and perceptive exercises and by talking of atmospheres and personal attunement, which thus makes atmosphere part of an aesthetic education. For Schmitz sensual perception is part of a general learning process of developing a refined sensibility (Schmitz, 2014b: 14; Böhme, 2013a: 50ff). Böhme is aware of this when referring to Schmitz’s ambition that humans could learn to be more present and understand the momentary as chance, rather than focus on consumption, where phenomenology serves to provide a language and orientation. (Böhme, 2000: 51)

Although Böhme recognizes the learning process, for him it leads to a plea for an aesthetic education57 that will develop a new humanism and critical individuals (Böhme, 2013a: 49ff.). Here Böhme takes a step towards critical theory, tending to align with Jürgen Habermas’s normative idea of critical participation in society, whereas Schmitz states that phenomenology is a learning process and ‘an expansion of the horizon for possible assumptions’ (Schmitz, 2014b: 14). This reflects elements in the late Heidegger’s idea of calmness towards the questionable (Gelassenheit)58 (1960) when one also considers Schmitz’s reference to attitude (Besinnung) as an element in his theory of freedom (Schmitz et al., 2011: 254). This runs parallel to Schmitz’s quest for the ability to deal with (and guard) the ambivalent and the quest for aesthetic devotion, which is a way of thinking that is not cognitive reflection. Accordingly, Schmitz argues that freedom is when a person realizes their own limitations and then learns how to deal with them59. This perspective is reflected in Sloterdijk’s idea of exercising being human as a constant training process (2012a). A focus on the intertwinment with an organizational context shows how engaging with atmospheres as architecturally produced and understood as a non-dualist phenomenon is a demanding engagement for the users, yet it holds the potential for instilling vitality in organizations – a vitality fundamental for engaging with uncertainty, difference and creativity in the sense of an explorative engagement with the world.

Spacing organizational atmosphere

The chapter continues tracing philosophical roots of atmosphere, however focusing on the aesthetic production, as seen especially in architectural design. Overall the focus on the aesthetic

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57 This also refers to Schiller’s book Die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen.
59 Explanation by Schmitz on freedom and Besinnung at the GNP Conference, (Werkstattgespräch, 2018).
production of atmosphere is seen as a move towards an corporeally resonating architecture. That implies an architecture responsive the existential dynamic of space. As such, producing atmospheres architecturally can be seen as a way of thinking-space rather than thinking-about-space as a representational approach. Guided by Böhme’s aesthetic understanding of atmosphere, the chapter shows that the production of architecture finds resonance in Schmitz neo-phenomenology. Building on both Böhme’s and Schmitz’s work with architecture and dwelling, this chapter has argued for paying attention to the interconnectedness of the synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters of atmosphere in creating a holistic aesthetic experience and the possibilities of continuously forming an emotional climate. These characters are crucial for enabling a corporeal experience that resonates with the built environment and for opening a way to consider the commensurability between Böhme’s and Schmitz’ views on architecture. As such, both Böhme and Schmitz considers these characters as a way of mediating atmosphere by setting a set of conditions, which Böhme frames as the art of staging atmospheres. By considering the commensurability of Böhme and Schmitz it is possible to address the production of atmosphere as an expanded scenography, whereby viewing architecture processually and as continuous (re)shaping of situations. This potential dynamic of architecture reflects space as an active force, that constitutes a spacing organizational atmosphere, which suggests a perspective on architecture as oscillating between the actual and potential providing an excess of affective space.

The chapter looks at how the architectural production of atmosphere is a way of composing materialities, colour, light etc., that rely on the embodied communication and immersive qualities. The art of staging organizational atmospheres constitutes a relational aesthetics relying a.o. on the engagement of the users. The potential of producing organizational atmosphere architecturally relies on the spacing quality, which both concerns its critical and caring qualities. Considering the production of organizational atmospheres as an expanded scenography sets conditions for atmospheres to happen through an engineering of situations in which atmospheres are experienced. The spacing quality is constituted in the oscillation between potentiality and actuality. This reflects a spatial performativity where the actual interaction accounts for the mediation of the spatial and social capacities.

Considering Schmitz’s and Böhme’s perspectives as coherent, makes the production of organizational atmosphere akin to recent developments in performative architecture and post-dramatic scenographies, thus also reflecting aesthetic atmosphere as a relational ontology. This, however, also reiterates the point that Böhme’s focus centres on the actual as the production of atmospheres and on the critical engagement, whereas Schmitz attends to the potential, how to dwell
and continuously re-attune in the light of the ambivalent and uncanny exterior. As such, this represents a shift from the distanced towards the co-involved audience, thus altering the interaction between humans, space and architecture as a co-performance. Engaging architecturally with the production of organizational atmosphere, or rather with the art of staging as setting the conditions for organizational atmospheres to happen, accordingly alters the position of architects to become the arrangers of the aesthetic processes. It also reiterates that atmospheric focus on space, materialities and bodies is in everyday life and as a mundane aesthetics. Immersive spaces as an atmospheric condition thereby also turn architecture into an event rather than ‘just’ a physical object. This reflects discussions on organizational aesthetics regarding how aesthetics provides a sensuous perspective of organization, but also reflects concerns of the spatial and affective turn in organization studies – concerns that approach the spatialization of affect as being a potent force of social coordination.

However, presenting a critical view on the anaesthetic office landscapes as well as the instrumental ‘use’ of atmosphere, reflect how a non-dualist approach to atmosphere may be a way to address the manipulative trait of atmospheric design as well as anaesthetic ones. This is accentuated the empowering potential of atmosphere as a critical aesthetics and mode of dwelling. This further leads to the point that the everyday engagement with atmospheres is to be seen as a processual learning process of situational becomings, where the production of atmospheres can be regarded as caring enclosing spaces that provide an existential anchor, and yet display the frailty of the worldly uncertain. As such, spacing organizational atmosphere concerns the production of space architecturally, but also involves the activation of existential space as a way of attuning to the world in the mode of everyday dwelling and in performing organizational atmospheres, and thus as a way of spatially accounting for the oscillation between actuality and potentiality.
Chapter 5: Methodology - Moving in and out

*How we are expected to write affects what we can write about.*

(Richardson, 2002: 414)

*Non-representational scholarship is borne out of a disorderly will to experiment and to fail – indeed to try and to fail better.*

(Vannini, 2015b: 324)

This chapter presents the methodological considerations carried out for the thesis. In the chapters 3 and 4, the neo-phenomenological and aesthetic understanding of the notion of organizational atmosphere stresses a methodological trajectory that attends to an embodied and affective approach. These earlier discussions thus influence the methodological approach taken to doing empirical research on a topic like organizational atmosphere, an approach that builds on a non-dualist understanding and reflects a relational ontology. This chapter outlines the methodological choices therefore made in light of the previous theoretical discussions as well as presents the empirical field. The chapter begins by framing the methodological discussion epistemologically, arguing for a performative research approach when it comes to organizational atmospheres that empirically resonate with non-representational methodologies based on the situation as an analytical ‘object’. Second, such a performative approach impacts how one engages with the field, both in terms of the empirical material generated and the researcher’s position. Third, in light of the methodological discussions, this chapter argues for using writing as a method of inquiry, a pursuit that has been approached through the development of situational vignettes that are both written and visual. Basically, this methodological chapter suggests an experimental and explorative approach to engaging empirically with organization atmosphere, one that resonates with the relational ontological status of organizational atmospheres, calling for alternate spaces of knowing, all of which unfold in the style of writing.
Methodology for organizational atmosphere

The choice of methodology reflects a research paradigm that articulates the concatenation of ontology, epistemology and methodologies. Methodologically, there is not one common approach to addressing atmospheres empirically, nor is there one defined method (Rauh, 2012a: 219; Bille et al., 2015). A brief look at empirical work done on atmosphere reveals a broad methodological variety, as can be seen with a quick, broad examination of some of the empirical research previously done on atmosphere (Pink et al., 2014; Biehl-Missal and Saren, 2012; Sloane, 2014; McCormack, 2010, 2014, 2015; Stewart, 2015; Böhme, 2016: 119ff.; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Michels, 2015; Anderson and Ash, 2015; Heide et al. 2009, Kotler, 1974). The different methodological approaches just listed partly reflect a distinction between dualist and non-dualist conceptions of the notion of atmosphere, yet, as stressed by Julmi (2017), empirical approaches do not generally consider the non-dualist feature of atmosphere – at least not in organization studies (but see Michels & Steyaert, 2016).

As Gadamer has pointed out, the word ‘method’ is itself related to a certain ideal of knowledge, since it etymologically refers to ‘the road of following’ (Gadamer, 1993: 48). Method thereby defines the scientific procedure of following, which is based on a scientific ideal of verification whereby knowledge is considered as verifiable and repeatable (Gadamer, 1993: 48) – a stance that aligns with a dualist approach. Gadamer’s argument reiterates Schmitz’s and Böhme’s point that viewing research and method solely in the traditional scientific perspective limits the possibilities of a rich and fertile scientific knowledge (Gadamer, 1993: 51; Schmitz, 2014b: 14; Böhme,1995: 29; Kirkeby, 1994b: 113). As Bille et al. stress, empirical research on atmosphere raises pivotal questions of both an epistemological and an ontological nature (2015: 33). As Anderson and Ash (2015: 2) remark, the central methodological challenge is that ‘an atmosphere is at once a condition and is itself conditioned’, reflecting Schmitz’s understanding of atmosphere as a quasi-thing with an emergent causality. As argued in the theoretical work, the situation – as the homestead of joint atmosphere – constitutes the analytical focus of the empirical approach. New methods or approaches have emerged that deal with, e.g., the relational, unarticulated or affective in order to gain new insights into the social world (see Law, 2004; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Ingold, 2007, 2011; Helin et al., 2014; Vannini, 2015a+b; Stewart, 2008a, 2018; Anderson and Ash, 2015; Michels & Steyaert, 2016, 2018; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; Michels, 2015).

Using the theoretical framing of the organizational atmosphere, this thesis argues that researching organizational atmospheres empirically benefits from a performative methodological
approach, as it can account for the relational, the spatio-material and the affective and, as such, also implies an understanding of the research process as performative in itself. Hence, researching atmospheres, and the relation to space and affect, has led researchers to call for experimental approaches, including experimentation with style (Beyes & Steyaert, 2011; Vannini, 2015b, 2016; Stewart, 2005, 2011; 2018; Anderson and Ash, 2015; Clough and Halley, 2007: 29). Informed by non-representational ethnography (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Stewart, 2011; Vannini, 2015a+b), the methodological approach lays out the empirical research as a performative process emphasising experimentation and writing as the key means of inquiry.

Epistemological reflections

This section starts by examining the epistemological issues related to approaching organizational atmosphere empirically, when seen as a non-dualist notion. These issues concern assumptions about the nature of knowledge and its justification. An attention to organizational atmosphere as a notion that goes beyond the subject-object dualism evidently asks how to know the ambiguous and fluid, a challenge that has already been discussed in chapters 3 and 4. It is not within the scope of this chapter to engage with a broad epistemological discussion, but rather the aim is to build on the conceptual discussions in order to frame the methodological approach of the thesis.

Julmi in his quest for an enhanced non-dualist approach to atmosphere in organization studies pinpoints how this has epistemological consequences (Julmi, 2017: 6). As he argues, such an approach calls for an epistemology of duality instead of an epistemology of dualism, which means the existence of research acknowledging that ‘… subject and object form a coherent whole in human experience’. As such, this reflects Böhme’s and Schmitz’ point that the experience of phenomena like atmospheres is a holistic corporeal experience. As seen, Schmitz argues for a kind of empiricism (Schmitz, 2014b: 14b; Schmitz et al., 2011: 243) that emphasizes the embodied sensibility for the nuanced realities of lived experience, thus reflecting a shift in ‘knowledge production’ from questioning ‘what something is’ to ‘how something is’. Schmitz’s neo-phenomenological empiricism reflects the Heideggerian discussions on ontology as a fundamentally phenomenological approach and method (Heidegger, 1993: 27ff.), which means that what we can know is intrinsically linked with how we know (see Schmitz, 2005b: 24f.). At the same time the phenomenological trajectory also acknowledges that the potential of knowledge is bigger than the actualized, thereby considering uncertainty as a premise. This corresponds with the epistemological approach in process thinking.
(Helin et al., 2014; Hernes, 2014; Cooper, 1976) and in non-representational theory (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Vannini, 2015a+b; Ingold, 2007, 2011).

Accordingly, Schmitz’s empiricism is not based on ideas of a world of ‘given’ objects to be collected, which would classify as constellationalist and parallel the empiricism of, e.g., Hume and methodological positivists (Schmitz, 2005a). Instead, it rather parallels the discussion of new empiricism by Clough (2009), who argues for an ‘empiricism of sensation’ that differs from the empiricism of the senses underpinning methodological positivism and is instead the ‘in-experience’ of affect (2009: 51). Both Schmitz’s and Clough’s ‘new empiricism’ instigates a shift from epistemology of human consciousness into an affective relationality, which Clough connects with the affective turn and ways of approaching bodies, matter and life, as reflected in non-representational theory. Empiricism in that way develops an alternative understanding of truth and perception of the world that resonates with discussions seen in Heidegger’s, Merleau-Ponty’s and Deleuze’s philosophical work, where the issue of knowledge merges with aesthetics (Kirkeby, 2007: 86f.). The question of truth no longer aims at being universal, but finds new configurations and ways of validation. For Schmitz the ‘validity claim’ of neo-phenomenological knowledge is based on ‘the evidence of the moment’ (Schmitz, 2014b: 14). The ‘evidential’ is relational, as it develops in the moment with the corporeal experience making a phenomena impossible to deny. This means that empirical evidence is not seen as objectifiable and cannot be subject to claims of universal truth. Instead, Schmitz’s phenomenon relies on affective involvement as constitutive of making ‘factual’ claims, which are unfolded as a relational perception and existential attentiveness. Schmitz provides a radical answer to the question of validity by claiming the ‘evidence of the moment’ as being a sensed validation, which Gugutzer presents as an atmospheric understanding in the situation that forms the ground of intersubjectivity (2006: 4542).

For Schmitz the ‘evidence of the moment’ gives rise to his argument on phenomenological revision, whose basic premise is ambiguity and uncertainty. The phenomenological revision constitutes an explorative engagement where one’s own claims must be continuously questioned and tested (Schmitz, 2005b: 26; 2014b:14), which is seen to be akin to Heidegger’s point of thinking as movement (Heidegger, 1997: 19), Ingold’s anthropological wayfaring and wayfinding (Ingold, 2007: 75ff., 2011: 219ff.), post-phenomenological accounts of apprehending the world (McCormack, 2017) and process thinking (Helin et al., 2014; Cooper, 1976). Phenomenological revision further parallels features of abductive reasoning. Following Kirkeby, the abductive approach unfolded as a result of a caveat attributed to the inductive and deductive models
of analysis, which goes that none of them can be argued to provide new knowledge (Kirkeby, 1994b: 123). Further, abduction is seen as the systematizing of creativity as an analytical element in research (Kirkeby, 1994b: 122) or as situational reasoning where the uncertainty of an event requires explanation (Brinkmann, 2014: 722). Organization scholars Alvesson and Kärreman, like Brinkmann, note that abduction is not driven by data or theory, but by the mystery and astonishment of one’s understanding, thus emphasizing that research is done for the purpose of living and that theory and methods are tools in the process (Brinkmann, 2014: 722; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2013: 58). Although Schmitz’s neo-phenomenology coheres with abductive reasoning, on major points they differ, especially since the latter is building on a cognitive reflexivity, whereas the neo-phenomenological and non-representational approaches focus on the sensory, embodied and pre-cognitive.

Rauh underlines that researching atmospheres is not an act of proving (beweisen) the existence of atmospheres, but is to be considered as exemplary perseverance (bewähren) (Rauh, 2012a: 210). The aim is not a verification (nachprüfen) but a certain way of re-enactment (nachvollziehen) (Rauh, 2012a: 220), which can be described as a way of witnessing and summoning a certain character of an atmosphere that shows its worth through its perseverance. Rauh approach, following Böhme’s aesthetics, is seen as a way to display an affective credibility in its situational actuality. Yet, considering perseverance (Bewährung) in the light of Heidegger’s approach to truth (1993: 217f.) further ties it aesthetically as a processual happing (see Heidegger 1995: 33: 57; Kirkeby, 2007: 49), which then opens for Schmitz’s phenomenological revision as a continuous questioning and an opening for the potential. Understanding research in organizational atmosphere as a way of re-enactment may then be seen to both attend to the actual and the potential. Accordingly, when one engages with organizational atmosphere the question of truth is seen as a situational and an aesthetic dimension, thus reflecting an embodied and processual generation of knowledge based on the premise of uncertainty. Following Heidegger, Kirkeby points out that the aesthetic experience is connected with a processual experience of truth (2007: 48). Understanding atmosphere as an aesthetics of the everyday, then, reflects how Schmitz’s and Böhme’s perspectives can be linked to an aesthetic sense of truth as a processual concept.

60 The difference between ‘beweisen’ and ‘bewähren’ is subtle, however Rauh here taps into the ontological and epistemological discussions attached to researching atmospheres. Whereas the first aligns with positivist aims of verification, the term ‘bewähren’ is also found in Heidegger’s ‘Sein und Zeit’ as part of his critique of the traditional notion of truth, where he argues for ‘bewährung’ (Heidegger, 1993: 217f).
In parallel with Schmitz, a processual view requires one to think thinking as learning, where the interesting forms in the middle as ‘inter-esse’ (Heidegger, 1997: 5), which reflects Sloterdijk’s point that the meaning of truth consists in increasing interest (Sloterdijk, 2004: 222). Alvesson and Sandberg also mention the importance of research’s being interesting, but in the form of a criterion (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013: 57). Accordingly, what counts as relevant knowledge and ‘valid’ research when one addresses organizational atmospheres articulates the interesting, the aesthetic and affective experience. This can be conceived of in line with Stewarts talk of ‘weak ontologies’, which she considers in a non-representational framing, and that emphasizes the moment and the affective when something happens and how these moments are judged (2008b). Thus,

… the point of theory, now is not to judge the value of any analytical objects or to somehow get their representation ‘right’, but to wonder where they might go and what potential modes of knowing, relating, and attending to things are already somehow in them as a potential or resonance. (Stewart, 2008b: 73)

As such, Stewart points at the world’s uncertainty as a premise, which means the focus is not on a final, right answer but on the possible paths that knowledge can take. Accordingly, this thesis leans on a processual and non-representational understanding of knowledge, thus allowing for an oscillation between the actual and the potential by emphasizing the aesthetic-corporeal experience, thereby paying attention to the situation, the uncertain and the creative.

Researching situations

This thesis has considered organizational atmosphere as an affective quality and a non-representational feature (Bille et al., 2015; Kazig, 2007; Rauh, 2012a+b; Böhme, 1995; Heibach, 2012a; Julmi, 2017), for which reason chapter 3 argued that Schmitz’s focus on the situation as the ‘analytical object’ is the way to encompass both Böhme’s and Schmitz’s concerns. Firstly, situations are seen as the homestead for (the experience of) atmosphere, and secondly, architecture is seen as the design of situations by setting the conditions for atmospheres to emerge (see Schmitz, 2005, 2014a, 2015). Schmitz’s notion of the situation as the analytical entity is understood as being in line with the non-representational emphasis on the importance of the situation (Thrift, 2003: 2020f.; Vannini, 2015a: 7; Stewart, 2008b.: 73), for life is lived in the now and this brings forward situational wisdom on movement, bodies, speaking, spaces, etc. Situations seen as the homestead for organizational atmosphere are understood similarly to what Stewart calls scenes of ordinary affects, which she describes thus:
They’re things that happen. They happen in impulses, sensations, expectations, daydreams, encounters, and habits of relating, in strategies and their failures, forms of persuasion, contagion, compulsion, in modes of attention, attachment, and agency, and in publics and social worlds of all kinds that catch people up in something that feels like something. (Stewart, 2008a: 2)

As outlined by Stewart, such scenes are affective happenings that catch people in an embodied communication where something feels like something. Accordingly, the experience of organizational atmospheres is considered in the affective encounter in situations where something feels like something. Organizational atmospheres as a phenomenon concern affectively following Schmitz (2005b). However, in Schmitz’s understanding considering organizational atmosphere as tied to situations means that they are perceived in the situational totality of facts, programmes and problems. Accordingly, e.g. the meeting (as a fact), work practices, the meeting room (as a programme) and a defective projector (as a problem) may all fold into the experience of a situation and organizational atmospheres in various ways. The moving quality of atmospheres are then constitutive for installing current situations into conditioned ones, which then work as a background for other current situations. For example, someone may prefer or avoid certain meeting rooms because of how these rooms might influence a meeting by having comfortable furniture, being too noisy, being too cold, being too exposed, etc. Understanding organizational atmospheres as a relational ontology means that situations form an affective mediation of constant becomings, drawing on the resonance between the human body and the material environment (see Michels, 2015: 257). Following the theoretical discussion in chapter 3 and 4, situations reflect the performing and spacing of organizational atmosphere, which should be approached in their totality and therefore constitute affective scenes in line with Stewart (2008a).

As such seeing situations as scenes of affective everyday life makes them a matter of qualitative research, when one sees qualitative research as grounded in addressing the world of lived experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2007: 11). As such, an empirical engagement with organizational atmosphere in this thesis focuses on qualitative research and is inspired by ethnographic approaches. However, what is meant by ‘ethnography’ is not undisputed (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998; Ingold, 2017; Czarniawska 2007; 2016; Pink, 2012; Vannini, 2015b+c, 2019). In the realm of ethnographic fieldwork in organizations, Czarniawska has precisely argued that new ethnographic sensibilities are needed (2007: 18), which this research reflects upon by emphasizing the embodied

61 Here the discussion mentioned by Czarniawska (2007: 17) on the difference between ethnography and ethnology will not be elaborated further.
experience, although taking it into a non-representational and processual comprehension. Vannini describes the difference between non-representational and conventional approaches to ethnographic work in the following manner:

_Whereas the traditional and realist ethnography more-or-less posit the representation of their research subject(s) as a faithful rendition of the word 'as is', non-representational ethnographers consider their work to be impressionistic and inevitably creative, and although they are inspired by their lived experiences in the field, they do not claim to be able, or even interested, in reporting on those in an impersonal, neutral and reliable manner._ (Vannini, 2015b: 318)

The citation underlines how doing non-representational ethnography is a creative process involving the researcher, which reflects the relational aspect of knowledge generation and radically alters the researcher’s position, thus attending to research as a performative and experimental practice (Vannini, 2015b; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Pink, 2012: 39; Dewsbury, 2009: 327; Warren, 2008: 562; Michels, 2015: 261; Latham and Conradson, 2003; Latham & McCormack, 2009). Hence, the empirical approach to organizational atmosphere focuses on the situation as scenes of lived experience, which will be considered in a performative research practice, as described in the next section.

**Performing research**

Overall, a performative view in qualitative research reflects calls for new models of truth, method and (re)presentation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2007: 25f.). When research is seen as performative, different strands can be defined. For example, Denzin’s performative ethnography (2003) views performance as intervention whose breaking, remaking and forming is a socio-political act. In organizational studies talk of critical performativity is found in branches of critical management studies (Spicer, Alvesson, Kärreman, 2009), which involves an active intervention in managerial practices and discourse. Broadly speaking, however, both in performative ethnography and critical performativity, the critical relies on cognitive reflexivity and generally focuses less sharply on spatio-materiality and embodied experience as a relational aspect.

Accordingly, this thesis, leans on the non-representational view of performance, for it accentuates the embodied practices of everyday life as caught by affect’s being folded into the environment. Moreover, research into atmosphere has already gained a foothold in the field on non-representational research, including organization studies (see Anderson and Ash, 2015, Anderson,
Yet, the various perspectives on performance and performativity overlap in that they essentially go beyond representation, seeking to expand the realm of research and promote alternative ways of carrying out knowledge ‘production’.

As Thrift and Dewsbury argue, from a non-representational view performative research changes academic practice by extending the range of techniques as well as by providing new forms of knowledge, for example, by emphasizing the use of language and poetic style in making the world emerge (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000: 424; Vannini, 2015a, 2019; Stewart, 2005, 2018). This further reiterates Richardson’s point, that writing styles reflect epistemological perspectives and often maintain deep epistemic codes that inform the truth value of scientific writing (Richardson, 2002: 414). Taking a non-representational view on performance as academic practice is considered as a way of animating the research or bringing it back to life (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Vannini, 2015a: 318, 2015b; Stewart, 2018). This is seen to resonate with Schmitz’s argument for poetic explicitation of situations as well as with phenomenological research as being an invitation to participate in a learning process (Schmitz, 2010: 44f.; 2014b: 14). Following Schmitz explicitation, as talking, is the way to grasp the significance of the situations totality, such as facts, programs and problems, where talk constitutes the way to move from primitive to unfolded presence (Schmitz, 2010: 41). As such, this reflects the move between listening and talking as the Heideggerian existential, where talking is not merely words, but also sounds and tones. Schmitz considers talking the most important tool for handling situations, a stance considered to embrace Böhme’s quest for verbal extraction. Explicitation can be done prosaically and poetically, with prosaic explicitation being constellational, aimed at problem-solving. Poetic explicitation is done by forming a ‘thin and sparingly woven veil letting the totality of the situation shine through unscathed’ (Schmitz, 2010: 45). This resonates with Heidegger’s point that poetry is the constitution (stiften) of truth, where constitution is a threefold giving, founding and beginning (Heidegger, 1995: 77). Accordingly, considering poetic explicitation of situations is seen in this thesis as constituting ‘truths’ as an aesthetic process, where organizational atmospheres are enacted in their actuality and potentiality by continuously offering new beginnings.

This is seen to resonate with Vannini’s presenting performative research as

… striving to find inspiration in the arts, in the poetics of embodied living, in enacting the very un-actualized expressive and impressive potentials of social-scientific knowledge, in taking dedicated risks, in exercising passion, and in finding ways to re-configure thinking, sensing, and presenting by emphasizing the singular powers of action, location and thought. (Vannini, 2015b: 319).
Using a performative approach enables the researcher to pay attention to sensory experiences, the perception and habits of everyday existence and the co-constitution of the social world, as they are anchored in doings, corporeal rituals and embodied actions, all of which suit the focus of organizational atmospheric research. As such, researching organizational atmosphere as a relational process with focus on the poetic explicitation is seen as akin to the arguments for doing performative research in the non-representational approaches. This suggests that researchers should opt for a wider range of writing styles, which will thus enable them to engage with their research in creative, experimental and performative ways (Vannini, 2015b: 319; 2015a). This is seen as a way to contribute to the aesthetic research on organization by using aesthetic means, as suggested by Taylor and Hansen (2005). Doing performative research helps to enact the social reality, thus rendering the research a poetics of social inquiry intertwined with the politics of social theory (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011). As Beyes and Steyaert argue for performing research in organization studies, it involves:

"Performing research enacts new mappings of organizational life, strange maps perhaps, that hardly resemble well-worn representational moves…(…) mapping here alludes to ‘wayfinding’ (Pile and Thrift, 1995: 1) in search of unexplored possibilities of organizational life. (2011: 54)"

The argument reiterates Ingold’s arguments on wayfinding, where the study becomes more of a ‘studying with’, a relational endeavour, than a ‘study of’ (Ingold, 2011; 2014). This constitutes a shift away from engaging in semantics and grand political narratives and towards thinking about the ordinary, the everyday. The everyday and its objects are therefore treated as rare raw material that focuses on acting in the moment. Vannini points out that people envision non-representational research as being better equipped to tackle the matters of event, relations, doings, affective resonances and backgrounds (2015: 7ff.). The non-representational conception of performative research is therefore seen as an unfolding and as an explorative engagement with organizational atmospheres focused on enacting a social and situational reality. As such, considering the empirical approach as performing research alludes to an experimentation with thinking-organizational atmosphere rather than thinking-about-organizational atmosphere.

Engaging with the field

The aim of going into the field was not just to observe but also to attempt to engage in an experimental, explorative and performative research process (Ingold, 2011: 219ff., 2014: 390; Schmitz, 2014b: 12; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Latham and Conradson, 2003). This section
presents the field, which consists of the two organizations engaged with for this study and the empirical material that builds the basis for the analysis. The section further considers the research process as co-performed and involving the embodied affective level of the researcher. Considering the research to be explorative and performed in a manner reflecting organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist notion, I went into the field with a little-planned or structured approach, acknowledging that I wanted to get at how organizational atmospheres work. As such, the avenue I took sought to see the fieldwork as a wayfinding process for participating in the world (Ingold, 2011, 2014).

However, I followed Böhme’s distinction between the perception and production sides of atmosphere (Böhme, 2014a: 104) as a heuristic approach to guide the empirical work. As such, I used the distinction as a heuristics reflecting the thesis’s interest in how organizational atmospheres are experienced and how they can be designed. This became a guideline for finding organizations to engage with in the fieldwork. Accordingly, I found two organizations, one where I followed the move of a public-sector organization into new facilities as an exponent of the performing side of organizational atmosphere, and the other where I followed the architectural design process in a firm of architects as an exponent of the production side. The two organizations were unrelated and not engaged in the same project. Although the two organizations analytically present a heuristic distinction, both were engaged in a process of movement at the time of the fieldwork, which engendered a certain resonance across them. The two organizations were visited over the course of 2017, and these visits are described in detail in the presentation of each organization.

In the research both organizations are treated anonymously, for which reason the names of persons and places have been altered and anonymized. This is intended to help avoid exposing the identities of the individuals involved as well as to observe confidentiality requirements and sensitivity related to the organizations’ work, e.g., those related to public-sector files or customer confidentiality. However, since the research focuses on organizational atmosphere and the situated experience, the research interest is less strongly focused on individuals or specific files and more strongly on the aesthetic-embodied experience and production of space as part of everyday work practices.

Apart from the above analytical distinction, other criteria for the engagement with the organizations were a focus on architecture and an interest in the emotional and affective environment of organizations. The way into the two organizations was paved through my personal professional network. So, although getting into organizations is often considered a critical stage in ethnographic fieldwork (Czarniawska, 2007, 72f.), the process of gaining access happened with relative ease. In each organization a senior contact person was responsible for giving me access to the organization and to
relevant projects. I was at no point denied access or participation in the events, documents or areas that I might have found of interest.

Sensory apprenticeship

Focusing on organizational atmosphere by taking a performative approach to doing research reflects an intertwinement of researcher and the field that concerns both the human and non-human dimensions. The field has therefore been entered on the assumption that the researcher is not a neutral observer but a co-performer, or what Ingolds calls a correspondent observer rather than a distant observer62 (Ingold, 2014: 389; Rauh, 2012a; Michels, 2015: 260). Furthermore, the researcher’s body also becomes involved as well as serves as an important ‘research tool’, where the researcher’s affective experiences also contribute to the insights gained in the field (Dewsbury, 2009; Vannini, 2015a, 2019; Pink, 2012; Michels, 2015: 260; Rauh, 2012a).

While visiting the organizations, I generally considered my involvement as that of a ‘sensory apprentice’, joining the process and using my own bodily capacity to experience atmosphere and engage with the doings of the organizations (Michels, 2015: 259ff; Pink, 2012). This meant working without a predefined protocol, although I had theoretically investigated the concept of atmosphere, which thus directed my perspective and provided me with certain assumptions. As such, I went through a learning process (Ingold, 2014: 390; Schmitz, 2014b: 14), which, as Pink notes, is not just the process of learning a skill, but also of learning about it and of learning how one learns (2012: 69f.). I came to consider engaging in the everyday happenings of the organizations as apprehending their professional practices, but mainly how all kinds of everyday embodied doings are part of performing and spacing organizational atmospheres.

I used a number of strategies to engage with how organizational atmospheres work, essentially deploying my own body as a research instrument that could sense emerging atmospheres. I used field notes to track my own bodily capacity to perceive and be moved by emerging atmospheres. Over time I grew more accustomed to using my own body in the research process, where the practices of the firm of architects made it a learning process in itself. This also made my records from the fieldwork meatier once it ended. This, however, I viewed as underlining Böhme’s argument that there is a need to learn to perceive atmospheres by rediscovering how to engage affectively (2013a: 43ff.).

62 Ingold discusses his understanding of correspondence as an unfolding of paths and relates it to humans as becomings (2014, 389). For him this also elicits the central distinction between ethnography and anthropology.
In my field notes I gave attention to how humans and non-humans, such as sounds, gazes, colours, wordings, etc., triggered my body and provided a sense of contraction or expansion.

Since I was attentive to my own perceptive competences, the theoretical work seeped in as the capacity of both immersion and (critical) withdrawal. On the one hand, this meant I was careful to listen and sense closely the affective power of organizational atmosphere, while, on the other hand, I at times took the opportunity to ask explicit questions and discuss tacit assumptions and atmospheres. As such, the fieldwork constituted a moving in and out of organizational atmospheres, but also between two different organizations and between theory and the field, thus accentuating how boundaries can blur. For example, I got carried away by the colour swatches and combinations in the architect’s studio, which became a way of engaging in the situation through immersive embodiment. I considered this to resonate with Michels and Steyaert’s argument that being a performative researcher should be seen as researching from the middle, which is neither a position of full neutrality nor radical performativity (Michels and Steyaert, 2016: 10) and thus involves a reflexive attention to how the research emerges and depends on the researcher’s own affective capacities. During the research process, these experiences made me aware of my own assumptions and embodied disposition, which revealed the distant observer as a default position that at times left me bewildered as to my own process. As such, this all served to underline the theoretical points that engaging with organizational atmosphere, also for the researcher, requires exercise and is an embodied learning process. It also became apparent that the two organizations provided two kinds of ‘sensory apprenticeships’, which partly reflected my own background.

Being a trained political scientist and having worked professionally in the public sector, I was in familiar territory at the public-sector organization, at least in terms of its tasks and style of organizing. In many ways, despite entering this particular, unknown organization, I was like a native, rather than someone going native, yet as an embodied research experience, it felt distant. As a field note entry about one of the initial steering group meetings says (FN, 18.1.17):

It feels different to be in a listening/observing position, when you know these kinds of meetings SO well. I see the dynamics … The meeting was greyish, the only thing that lightened up was the top managers lightblue boots and otherwise my red sneakers. The rest was a melange of grey, brown, white and black …

Almost automatically, the well-acquaintedness of these meetings and their dynamics made me scan and decode the political and organizational positions of the participants so that I could consider ways of efficient decision making and potential negotiation. So the observer position was a
way to withdraw from ‘embodied’ habits in the beginning. As a researcher, I started out feeling unfamiliarly home, which not only affected my engagement but also emphasized my own resonance with the organizational environment.

Another experience manifested itself in the architectural organization. I entered the organization as an architectural novice. Although being interested in and acquainted with the major trends in architectural history and theory, I knew next to nothing about the architectural design process. I was a stranger to the organization and the daily doings of the architectural profession, but the organization and the people immediately made it feel like a very homely environment. As one of the early field note entries says (FN, 30.3.17):

*It is a nice place to be. The flowers in the room fill the space differently. The space is kind of steaming with materiality … The cinnamon buns, giving another smell to the space. It pushes the office with its sweetness.*

Going into the architectural organization created an embodied sense of homeliness and a place of feeling at ease. It generally felt homely, yet unfamiliar. This distinction between being unfamiliarly home and homely unfamiliar clearly accentuates my own dispositions and the unfamiliarity with performing research. At the same time, the distinction also struck at the difference in the respective organizations’ practices and organizational atmospheres, which in turn became reflected in the empirical research performed. As I got into the everyday rhythms of both organizations, a more nuanced and complex picture of the organizations and their affective registers unfolded. In the process I found my assumptions to be partly dismantled as I became more at ease with my position as a sensory apprentice, a development that underlined how engaging with the field is a (sensory) learning process (Ingold, 2014: 390f.).

Engaging in something like ‘sensory apprentenceship’ also came with certain ethical concerns. First, I generally presented myself as researcher and described my research motifs. In addition, my contact persons in each organization informed the organizational members of my arrival and research focus before my first appearance. Second, I asked for permission to record meetings and interviews. Third, in some happenstance situations I came to feel like an intruder, e.g., when I placed myself in communal areas or open office spaces in the public-sector organization and could therefore observe and overhear others’ conversations at a distance. Yet, these situations and spaces were made with the intent to mix people and to make them part of the organization’s everyday life. Moreover, these random encounters provided valuable embodied experience, since other employees went through the same kind of ‘sensory apprentenceship’ of flexible seating. Finally, considering myself as
a ‘sensory apprentice’ of organizational atmosphere following the conceptual discussion also led me to consider my own capacity for immersing myself and withdrawing as a way to care about the situation, that is, to be sensitive to the situation. Over the course of the fieldwork process, my growing sensitivity can be seen as a movement towards observing from the inside rather than from the outside (Ingold, 2014: 387).

The empirical material

Viewing research as a performative process with the researcher in an embodied co-performing presence centrally addresses the collection of ‘data’, which reflects Brinkmann’s argument that the approach to research practices also extends into the understanding of data (2014). In a traditional positivist approach data is considered as given and to be collected. However, several research practices have questioned the ontological status of data and a linear data collection process, for which reason various scholars have found it more appropriate to talk about empirical material (Denzin and Lincoln, 2007: 38; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2013: 5ff; Yaneva, 2017: 52;) or aesthetic data (Warren, 2008: 569). First, understanding data as the empirical and aesthetic material broadens what can be conceived of as empirical ‘data’. Second, the way to assess the quality and strength of a piece of empirical material follows, e.g., aesthetic, creative and processual criteria, which will be discussed later in the chapter. As McCormack points out, data in atmospheric fieldwork can be understood as:

Rather than nuggets of information waiting to be discovered, data within the field are now understood as coproduced, affective materials. (McCormack, 2013: 11)

Based on an embodied-affective relation as described by McCormack, empirical data is in this thesis considered to resonate with Schmitz’s ‘evidence of the moment’. As such, the thesis stays with the term empirical material, yet acknowledges its performative character, where the uniqueness of performance lies in its temporal immediacy and relational affect. For one to take on a performative approach to methods and the empirical material, the performative qualities of social life and talk have to be recognized (Pink, 2012: 83). Having an understanding of co-produced affective empirical material, I engaged with the two organizations by using a melange of methods, primarily including participant observation, shadowing, interviews and photos. Viewed within a performative framing, the following section discusses how these methods were used in practice.
In the field I dealt with various situations and practices for exploring the embodied-sensory environment of organizations’ everyday life as fundamentally aesthetic experiences of space, bodies, affect and movement. I engaged in participant observation as a sensory embodied engagement (Pink, 2012: 10). I considered the technique of shadowing (Czarniawska, 2007: 17) to come under participant observation, but used shadowing to consider the everyday working routine as a leading principle of the organizational everyday. Yet, compared to Czarniawska’s approach, shadowing was accompanied with sensory experiences as they arose. Shadowing permitted me to be sensitive to space, rhythmic pauses and stops, and to consider the aesthetic and spatial reality of certain working practices. It also allowed me to follow the movements in everyday work practices, as I could pay more attention to the impact of practice in the perception and design of organizational atmospheres than I could have, e.g., by simply walking around (Pink, 2012: 76ff; Vannini 2015b: 322). I further focused on moving around in the spaces so that I could also experience aesthetically on my own. This was also a way to engage with the spatial organization in that, to varying degrees, both organizations reflected flexible seating. I documented my daily observations and shadowings in field notes, memos and photographs. Likewise, I collected organizationally produced documents like design guides, information leaflets and committee notes in relation to the activities joined.

To engage with the employees’ and participants’ capacities to perceive and be moved by organizational atmospheres, I used my field notes to jot down observations on bodily movements in the space, paying special attention to human spatial tendencies (ways of moving, walking, glances) and ways of talking (tone, conversation, gestures). To flesh out my observations, I talked informally with the participants in order to get a sense of the emotional registers and aesthetic experiences attached, and noted these talks in my field notes. In the case of the public-sector organization I asked them to describe how they experienced the atmosphere of the organization and to provide examples. In their accounts they would often address the actual space where the encounter was taking place as well as relate to their professional work (‘it makes work more professional, when …’) or to management issues (‘management has to do something …’). This both gave me a sense of the emotional climate and the organization’s power relations, and also became a way of checking with my own embodied impressions. In the architectural studio I primarily attended to the design of atmospheric spaces, which meant that I observed how the design process unfolded. However, this itself presented organizational atmospheres that emerged in the architectural studio. By following the architectural design process, I both observed and informally talked with the participants, my special focus being on how a mood-inducing spatial environment was designed. Segments of the project days
were audio-recorded and transcribed in order to capture both dialogue and movement that could help in the design process to be interpreted. This was important because the project work contained a lot of new terminology, on the one hand, and formed as a partly embodied dialogue, on the other. For example, swatches are shown or pointed to, followed by a nod or brief comment.

Another part of the fieldwork entailed collecting visual material – photographs in this instance. The photos were understood not as mere representations, but as an invitation to empathetically relate to the sensory moment of the space, place and movement, an understanding building on images as more-than representations and to be considered as ‘an index of the intensity and consistency of attending to and through the everyday life’ (Latham and McCormack, 2009: 256). The photos, where seen to hold the potential of a multisensory knowing and aesthetic worlds (Pink, 2011, 2012: 114f; Warren, 2008). During the fieldwork, I attempted to involve members of the public-sector organization to do photo elicitation. By email organizational members were asked, but nobody replied. Since the employees generally had a busy schedule, I decided not to pursue the issue further.

The photos generated followed a set of guiding principles. First, I took pictures from the physical places I occupied, such as from a seat at a work table, my aim being to recall my own embodied experiences and sensations. Second, I took pictures of places or things mentioned by organization members as part of their aesthetic and atmospheric description, a practice intended to help me recall the material and spatial compositions. Last, I took pictures of a more random character, if I noted something that was funny, strange, curious, etc. In working with the material, I realized, e.g., that I had unconsciously focused on parallel issues, like the use of spot lights (or not), across the two organizations, or I engaged in associative thinking, noting, e.g., in the atrium how daylight flooded it and created shadows in ways that reminded me of a green house or an Italian piazza. In this way the visual material helped accentuate interesting parts of both the design and the experience of atmospheres, also across organizations. Apart from providing a visual account of the organizations, the photographs were a way to re-enact embodied memories and emotions useful in the analytical work.

Interviews with key members were conducted in both organizations, and are described in detail under each organization. In general, the interviews lasted from about 45 minutes to an hour, with the interviewees’ choosing the location. The interviews were audio-recorded, based on the prior consent of the interviewee, and transcribed. The interviews were often held in meeting rooms that constituted everyday organizational spaces and were in themselves sensory-aesthetic experiences in the organizations. In this sense the interview as method blended in with the participant observation
The interviews were kept open to allow the interviewees to draw on the aesthetic experiences and aspects they sensed as relevant and important. I briefly framed the themes to be discussed, such as how it felt to move, the atmosphere of the organization, what made a good or bad atmosphere, etc., and asked them to provide examples. As such, the interview more closely resembled a dialogue, where the interviewee would often use the space we occupied to exemplify or tell stories of events and situations. This gave the sense of an aesthetic-sensory experience and a co-performance with the material and organizational environment.

During the interviews, I would also share my own experiences of the spaces and atmospheres, thus co-performing the interview as a dialogue rather than a distanced questioning. Sharing these experiences enabled me to discuss or explore the similarities or differences between the spaces, materialities and movements (see Warren, 2008: 569; Riach and Warren, 2015), e.g., particular smells or sounds. In this way the interviews also constituted a place for embodied communication that could not be fully grasped in the transcripts, although it comes across either in notes on the tone of voice or in the field notes, or was recalled in own my embodied memories. As such the interviews were seen as worldings in their own right, and not as a mirror of an external world or a person’s inner world, where I as the researcher came to share a bit of the participants’ worlds (Pink, 2012: 87). This, however, also showed how expectations about the research and a researcher as a kind of authority played a role in the performing of the interviews. For example, in some interviews, interviewees would apologize for not being able to define atmosphere conceptually. At the same time, this affirmed the complexity of the notion and the challenges of aesthetic language (Schmitz, 2014a; Böhme, 1995; Warren, 2008: 565; Pink, 2012: 84). Still, the performative approach focusing on embodied communication used here considered this as part of the situation’s totality by also paying attention to, e.g., tracing the ‘missing’ words in the interviewees’ embodied responses, such as gestures, gazes, nods, etc.

In a public-sector organization

The first organization of the fieldwork was a public-sector organization that was transitioning into renewed facilities. In brief, the organization was a municipality with approx. 300 employees who were concerned with the move. Before the move, the organization was physically divided into two main locations – one a former company headquarters, the other an old school. The organization had a declared ambition of using the move to enhance collaboration, create a stronger
sense of community across the organization and put the citizen at the centre of its practices, with the new spaces considered as a supporting element. The fieldwork started in the beginning of 2017 and ended in December 2017. The organization moved into the rebuilt facility in September 2017.

The organization started preparing the move to the new facilities, called the Loop, before the fieldwork, with the first analysis being done in 2014. One firm of architects had been commissioned to renovate and rebuild the organization’s offices, a project that was completed in 2017. Another firm of architects had been appointed to head the interior design of the rebuilt facilities, and started their work at the beginning of the fieldwork period. This meant that I followed the preparations for the move as well as visited the locations housing the organization before the move. The central emphasis of the field work was the actual move and the initial period in which the new facilities were inhabited, which enabled me to follow the actual move and the ensuing three months of settling in at the end of 2017. My involvement with the public organizations is summed up in the table below and can be divided into three phases.

Table 1: Fieldwork in public-sector organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Main activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2017 – Aug. 2017</td>
<td>Pre-move</td>
<td>Organizational preparations for move, incl. interior design</td>
<td>Participant observation: 5 full-day department visits (2 different departments) 1 half-day guided visit to new facilities 5 steering group meetings (movement project) 2 full-day user workshops (led by interior architects) Shadowing: 4 employees in existing work space (half day each) Interviews: 4 employees &amp; 4 managers (pre-move interview) Photos*: spaces and use of space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 Sept. 2017</td>
<td>Moving week</td>
<td>The actual move to new facilities</td>
<td>Participant observation: 4 full days in the new work space Shadowing: 1 employee (half day) Photos*: spaces and use of space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2017 – Dec. 2017</td>
<td>Post move</td>
<td>Inhabiting the new space and organizational adjustment</td>
<td>Participant observation:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 implementation council meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14 full days at new work space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shadowing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 employees in new work space (half day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interviews:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 employees and 4 managers (post interview)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2 employees and 1 manager</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Photos*:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>spaces and use of space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Total number of photos 194

Having been conducted around the move, the fieldwork involved investigating an emotionally intense period. In line with Rauh (Rauh, 2018, 132), moments of disruption, like the move, are considered as especially useful in displaying atmosphere. Due to the focus of the research, this was seen as beneficial in terms of articulating how organizational atmospheres work and can be designed, with the move functioning as an intervention that intensified employees’ aesthetic and embodied experiences, in the sense that their routines and habits were disrupted on many levels and their sensory awareness of, e.g., smells and sounds was heightened. As such, the move enhanced the possibility of engaging with people’s experiences and ways of life (Pink, 2012: 53), but it also gave rise to more spontaneous reactions in line with Schmitz’s emphasis, as seen in the talks and interviews where aesthetic matters, the environmental changes and the disruption of habits seemed to heighten sensory awareness, as reflected in talks about smells, colour, materialities, collective behaviour, etc.

To get background information on the moving process, I attended official meetings of the steering committee and the implementation council, but I also saw these as performing organizational atmospheres. The steering committee gave background insight into the overall ambitions with the move and decisions made, thus presenting the managerial level of the organization. The implementation council gave insight into the inhabitation process at the Loop and into the employees’ feedback, thus presenting the employee level of the organization. Another focus was the user workshops held by the interior architects, which gave insight into the design process and the reactions of the future users.

If one looks at these meetings through a performative lens, they played out their own world and atmosphere, with aesthetic considerations encountering economic and political rationalities, which would eventually also become part of the Loop’s atmospheric powers, if implemented (see Hasse, 2014: 223). I only followed the design process carried out by the public-sector interior architects as it was presented and discussed at the meetings. These meetings showed
that the preparatory process for moving an organization were tinged with affective relations and sensations, expressed in outbursts of frustration, laughter, gazes or other embodied ways of communicating.

I visited different departments before the move. In one department, the head of department organized the visit, including the interviews and shadowing. In two other departments the head of departments were notified, but the visits were randomly organized. These visits provided a way of witnessing, listening and sensing the organization’s everyday before the move. They also provided a background situation for approaching the post-move experiences, for example, by having an experiential and felt awareness of the materialities, spaces, bodies and emotions. The departments were revisited after the move and the same persons interviewed and shadowed, except for one employee. In the Loop new contacts were made, and some extra interviews done. As it turned out, all departments had an overweight of female employees and worked close to the citizen, their dealing with schools, child removals, disabled people and to a lesser degree purely administrative matters. The organized interviews were mainly focused on two departments and displayed a variety experiences that reflected organizational atmospheres in their multiplicity. At the same time, informal interviews or chats were carried out, whenever possible, in order to engage with various experiences. Engaging with and interviewing the same people before and after the move enabled me to experience shifts in the embodied performances, e.g., by being in different meeting rooms, and the various sound-, light- and smell-scapes created an altered, embodied and co-performative experience.

In a firm of architects

My other fieldwork was conducted at the studio of a firm of architects and aimed to attend to the production of atmospheres. In brief, the architectural studio has about 12, mainly female employees. Among other things, the studio specializes in interior architectural design that focuses on mood-induced environments and activity-based working. I followed the firm’s design process on two specific architectural projects. One project involved a technological company’s move to a redesigned factory hall, and the other concerned a cultural organization’s move into a newly built structure. Both projects explicitly sought to functionally and atmospherically create organizationally adept spaces and new or adjusted ways of working.

For both projects, I communicated directly with project managers in order to coordinate my fieldwork. In general, I visited the studio once a week, following the project group or project
manager over the course of the whole day, except for holidays and the summer break. This enabled me to minutely follow the architectural process on the days I was present. The work process in between would be ‘evident’ from the changes and alterations in the plans, 3D models, etc., as well as from the changes explained to me verbally. My involvement with the firm of architects is illustrated in the table below.

Table 2: Fieldwork at the firm of architects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>General focus</th>
<th>Design projects</th>
<th>Main activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2017-Dec 2017</td>
<td>Organizational set up and existing work (space) rhythm</td>
<td>Project 1 (February-June 2017), designing workspace for technological firm</td>
<td>Participant observation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following architectural design process from concept to final architectural design guide.</td>
<td>Project 2 (June-Dec 2017), Interior architectural design for cultural institution</td>
<td>20 days visiting the architect studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ad hoc projects</td>
<td>1 site visit (ad hoc project)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 half day user workshops (project 2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 project managers and 1 partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shadowing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 project groups</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Photo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Studio and work spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>259 in total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the architectural studio the fieldwork itself generally entailed shadowing the work routines of the two main project managers. This meant following the full-day project work, having lunch together and, in the second project, joining user workshops. In every phase of the design process I would assist as far as my competences allowed, which included giving my conceptual input, conducting internet searches, taking notes or helping with practicalities. I had the role of an apprentice, which the project managers also called me. This gave me insight into the way the architectural practice was spatial and sensory in that its employees touched materials, attended to the felt dynamics of space and employed the affective forces of colour. The practices were not interpreted for meaning, but seen as performing specific ways of embodied knowledge and communication that happened in the situation and gave a sense both of the aesthetic spacing and of the performing of organizational atmospheres.

Interviews were conducted with a partner of the firm and the two project managers of the projects followed. All were asked about their views on the notion of atmosphere and mood, since these were explicit concerns in the studio’s design practice. As expected, the members of the firm of
architects had a more elaborate vocabulary concerning atmosphere and aesthetic and spatial experiences than the public-sector participants did. However, the architects also hesitated and showed uncertainty as regards the conceptual approaches to, e.g., atmosphere. The architectural design and aesthetic practice in relation to the projects were also discussed in the interviews.

Writing as a method of inquiry

Taking a performative stance to doing research also extends into new styles of writing, since writing can be seen as intrinsically linked to doing research and as reflecting epistemic codes (Richardson, 2000a: 923, 2002: 414). Recalling Taylor and Hansen’s (2005) argument for more artistically inspired approaches in the field of organizational aesthetics as well as reflecting the non-dualist dynamic of atmospheres, I have approached writing as an experimental and analytical approach. Arguing for poetic and explorative styles of writing in atmospheric research acknowledges the performing and sensory endeavour, which does not fit a classical representational format. This is also seen as way of handling research that is ethnographic or at least ethnographically inspired and of focusing on sensory experiences when it comes to writing text that deviates from social science canons (Pink, 2012: 21; Czarniawska, 2007: 19; Ingold, 2015: viii)

This resonates with Richardson’s points that the way we are expected to write affects what is written about, which argues for applying creative practices in writing research (Richardson, 2000a, 2002). Method scholars on writing (Richardson, 1992, 2000a, 2002; Glesne, 1997; St.Pierre, 2017; Augustine, 2014), non-representational methods (Vannini, 2015b; Stewart, 2008a, 2018; Lorimer and Wylie, 2010) as well as organizational scholars (Taylor and Hansen, 2007; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011) inspired the way I approached experimental writing, reflecting a research style and analysis, that is rather patchy, exceeds representation and does not ‘add up’ (Stewart, 2008a: 8, 2011; Vannini, 2015a: 15; Dewsbury, 2015).

I have considered the approach to writing in a poetic-inspired style as a method of inquiry in line with Richardson’s suggestion of writing as method, which implies that writing in itself is considered a way of thinking and a way of analysing (St. Pierre, 2015: 3, 2017: Richardson, 2000a; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005). As such, my writing and analysis did not commence after I left the field, but was a learning and analytical process throughout the research – a process I considered to reflect Schmitz’s attention to an explorative engagement and poetic explicitation as well as Böhme’s request for a descriptive extraction of atmosphere. I thus considered language and writing not as a
tool but as a way of bringing the world as situations into existence (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Vannini, 2015b; Anderson and Ash, 2015).

Richardson’s writing method inspired how I might approach writing experimentally and somehow systematically. However, on a central point it was evident that Richardson’s post-modern legacy tended towards a more constructivist perspective than the ‘empiricism’ of non-representational theory and neo-phenomenological perspective, which meant that Richardson focused on deconstruction instead of animation. I have considered this difference in the actual writing. Writing as a method of inquiry should be seen as a non-linear and intermingling process, but in this instance I practically describe it by singling out a set of lines and intensities in the writing. Sketching and free writing dominated one line, mapping another line, and then there was a line of crystallization. These different lines should be considered to overlap and reinforce an explorative and experimental analytical process of writing out situations as a way of animating organizational life and atmospheres. These lines were woven together to create the final composition of the analytical chapters.

**Sketching situations**

During my time in the organizations, I started making sketches and diagrams of what I encountered in the field. Using A3 sheets of paper, I plotted words that came up in talks with people, in the writing of field notes, from the pictures I took as well as from the continued reading of literature. The words included expressions like ‘shame’, ‘ratio 80’, ‘coming home’. I also added specific materialities like ‘chairs’, ‘toilet paper’, ‘coffee smells’, and atmospheres that organizational members had named were also put in. These included names like ‘burial chamber’, ‘knowledge factory’, ‘forgottenness’; see Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Sketch of words, atmospheres and materialities

This gave me a sense of recurring events, materialities, spaces and atmospheres – a sense of the somethings that were happening and a way to establish disparate relations. The theoretical and
conceptual words, such as ‘atmosphere couch’ or ‘stages’ also seeped in at times. The sketches were used to engage with a set of creative strategies like spill writing and free association (see Leavy, 2015: 271; Leavy and Chilton, 2014). Taking some of the sketched elements, I engaged with free writing in part to start experimenting with writing poetically, which turned out to be an affective tour in itself; as it was both a learning process and contained a tension by virtue of its being used in a context of rational academic writing. In the process of free association (writing and verbally), I also used associations as a way of exploring and turning things around. The firm of architects and their design practice gave me further inspiration in this venture, as they followed associative traces on materialities, ideas and photos used to explore design options. As such, I came to consider the process as a way of becoming writing in line with Sloterdijk’s coming to language as part of becoming world (Sloterdijk, 2014). For example, ‘forgottenness’ recalled the smell of decay in the organizational building, but it also allowed me to work creatively with the empirical material and thus to re-enact, to analytically explore and to be able to be surprised along the way. Additional conceptual words seeped in throughout the process and were used in the exploration. In this respect the issue of translation between languages also proved to play a creative role in spinning meanings and language from sayings or words that became twisted in translation or became points of articulation in the research. For example, the Danish phrase ‘at være rummelig’ was translated as ‘to be spacious’ in English, although this phrase would more typically be translated as ‘being open-minded’. Thus, the Danish expression reflected Schmitz’s point of the spatiality of the feeling body, but in the usual English translation the feeling body was lost to the mind. Further, I printed out pictures taken at the two organizations and hung them up in my office to help me better recall the spaces when I wrote there. They also helped me recall my embodied experiences of the spaces and the organization, as well as inspired my associative writing. For example, images of the big atrium in the public-sector organization gave me the association of a greenhouse, but they also resonated with Schmitz’s focus on the dampening or breathing climate of dwellings.

Accordingly, I considered these sketches, both written and visual, as a way of writing down the pragmatic namings of atmosphere and affective somethings created in the organizations, as mentioned by Anderson and Ash (2015: 36ff.), who see naming as ‘also a pragmatic way of giving account of a situation or an event. Naming also ascribes to atmosphere in ways that enable, or not, joint recognition’. In line with Anderson and Ash the point is not to represent atmosphere, but to consider its naming as ‘methodological practice combining description and speculation’ (2015: 37).

63 Primarily Danish, German and English
This was also seen as enabling an encounter with both Böhme’s ambition of using description as a way of extracting and Schmitz’s focus on poetic explicitation as a way of getting at a situation’s totality and inherent uncertainty and potentiality.

**Mapping situations**

As another line of writing, I started mapping situations as an analytical step in the writing process. Here, I followed a set of strategies coming out of the conceptual work. Aiming to analytically consider situations of interest, I drew from my sketches, from my field notes, interview transcripts, photos and other material in this process. This mapping of situations continued throughout the writing of the thesis, as one situation would evolve in the writing of another, seen as related totality. Yet, this totality was not contained, but seen as a process of wayfinding (Ingold, 2011: 219ff.).

First, I examined situations where ‘something is happening’, as Stewart terms the affective situations. These situations were considered to account for both subjective and objective organizational atmospheres, their reflecting the degree of involvement and the communality of the situations. In the empirical material, such as field notes and transcribed interviews, the process of analytical writing concerned tracing words, sentences and embodied particularities like laughter, sighs, etc., that had an affective tone and situations that reoccurred or were repeatedly described or discussed. For instance, lunch at both organizations recurred and was accompanied with affective responses and spatial movement. I would look for how the things happening would affectively make people either actively engage or assume a passive role as a means of coping with the moving character of the situation and the lived organizational atmosphere. I also paid attention to my own embodied experience of the organization’s everyday and my engagement as a ‘sensory apprentice’, which led me to recall the frequent laughter at the architectural studio or the coldness from the ventilation in the public-sector office as ways of informing an affective sense of the situations.

What was more, by paying attention to organizational atmospheres as an objective element permeating specific situations, I could take the co-existence of atmosphere into account in keeping with Anderson and Ash’s (2015: 39ff.) atmospheric method, thus acknowledging, e.g., that an organization has not one atmosphere, but many co-existing at the same time. Attending to the distinction between atmospheres as perceived and as moving allowed me to identify dominant atmospheres, that is those perceived by many, e.g., those in certain spaces or departments. This
process was an experiment with working between order and disorder, between the actual and the potential, in the sense that working with the material (written and visual) as it was at a given time would then open for new possibilities, e.g., by paving the way for relations between situations, spaces and sensations or opening up the theoretical discussions.

Second, to unfold collectively affective scenes and situations, I used Schmitz’s and Böhme’s emphasis on synaesthetic and kinaesthetic aspects as a way of following the material, as Michels (2015: 259) and Bertram (2016) have discussed. For example, certain spaces, smells, sounds were mentioned in the interviews and noticed in the field notes as impacting the sensory and aesthetic experience, e.g., noise from the kitchenette or the white colour in the public-sector organization. Employees at the architectural studio, for instance, often articulated smell in relation to their appreciation of food and flowers, which thus reflected a general atmospheric force. This focus on materialities put the attention on situations where human and non-human ‘agents’ reciprocally were affected by or affected each other. At the firm of architects, tracing materials would also concern their working with the spacing of organizational atmospheres as part of their design process, such as the use of colour, light, etc.

Third, Schmitz’s distinction between actual and conditioned situations was used to consider situations of interest. Actual situations were those where something happened that had an affective resonance. For example, somebody might leave a user meeting in an excited state. Situations involving laughter, frustration, silence or fulfilment, were also attention markers in the field notes and interviews. These situations were seen as holding an uncertainty and potentiality in the sense that they sparked a curiosity about where things would go next, but also what other situations influenced the actual situations – such as personal matters, power relations, political decision, work practice etc.

This instigated an exploration of other situations in which I looked for traces of conditioned situations. As outlined by Schmitz, the line between the actual and the conditioned situation blurs. However, looking at norms and wishes (the programme of situations) was seen as eliciting conditioned situations, e.g., in terms of how work is understood and members of an organization are expected to work. These elements were looked for in the field notes and interviews. Further, official documents and regulations were considered to be conditioned situations, in line with Schmitz’s mention of language or family as constituting a long-term influence that would also reflect into norms and wishes in other situations. Exploring conditioned situations, I engaged with official documents from the organizations, but also official Danish regulations and guidelines on working
environments\textsuperscript{64}, which cropped up along the way as part of both experiencing and designing organizational atmospheres. These documents were seen to provide a set of conditions constituting the social and political background of joint situations and organizational atmosphere, reflecting that administrative decisions have atmospheric powers because their implementation impacts the actual atmospheres (Hasse, 2014: 223).

These lines of writing had three situational components: the degree of involvement and intensity; the tracing of materiality; and timely durability (actual or conditioned). All of these echoed the atmospheric attention markers mapped out, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Situational map

These mappings attended to spatial qualities, organizational aspects, legal features and other dimensions. I used them to analytically select situations by considering their intensities and tracing relational connections. The writing process further unfolded the situations, which led to other situations, to the rewriting and reshuffling of the vignettes. This process was inspired by Stewart’s point that trying to follow where things (might) go or have come from makes the habit of attunement become an associational logic (Stewart, 2015: 26). Moreover, in compositional writing as a non-representational method, it is in attuning to the qualities of phenomena that the compositionality of writing draws out curiosity and caring about the potentiality in what is happening (2015: 20f.).

**Crystallizing situations**

The third line of writing follows Richardson’s proposed concept of using crystallization (Richardson, 2000a; 934f.; Ellingson, 2012) to articulate a way of engaging with writing and its evaluation. I used this approach to write out the situations as situational vignettes as part of a multifaceted composition. Richardson considers crystallization to be a deconstruction of the traditional triangulation known in qualitative science. While triangulation aims at getting closer to the truth, crystallization problematizes multiple truths presented. This is seen as compatible with an argument favouring the evidence of the moment and a situational focus on analytical writing that proposes an image for ‘validity’ other than the triangle. The concept is based on mixed genre texts imagined as the way crystals combine symmetry and substance while giving way to an infinite number of shapes and angles (Richardson, 2000a; 934; Ellingson, 2011).

This perspective inspired my analysis and constituted an approach to the empirical material in its relational totality, rather than an approach with a predefined protocol and traditional coding (Augustine, 2014: 748). Accordingly, crystallization does not have a formula for its design (Ellingson, 2011: 73), which is seen to reflect Schmitz’s critique of singularities of constellational thinking or what others define as givens to be collected (Brinkmann, 2014). I have considered engaging with crystallization in this context as akin to creating an assemblage of situations using diverging genres (Bertram, 2016: 288; Augustine, 2014). I developed the analytical vignettes from field notes, interviews transcripts, photos and other material, my aim being to animate the organizational spaces, the participants and their inhabitation of the spaces as a way of tracing how organizational atmospheres are experienced and produced. Following the idea of crystallization, I have engaged with various genres and literary devices, like poetry, photography and narration in my writing practice of writing the single vignette. From the transcribed empirical material, my field notes, sketches, free writings and mappings, etc., I began cutting out passages, words and photos and putting them into the analytical chapters 6 and 7. I then started adding sentences and reflections, as well as combined the passages as a way of drafting the first vignettes. This process felt beyond my comfort zone, as I was unaccustomed to writing in a literary style, even as I was endeavouring to unfold an affective experience without quite knowing where the analysis was going. However, recognizing that

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65 Crystallization is based on the postmodern assumption that no truth exists out there, but truths are partial and co-constructed. Triangulation is originally used in qualitative research, seen as an alternative to validation by the use of multiple methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007: 9; Denzin, 2012).
experienced writers had similar sensations provided a form of reassurance in the process (see Stewart, 2008a: 7).

Starting to write on the basis of my cut-outs revealed an unfolding of situations in the empirical material where something happened. The something was attached to affective experiences that variously took part in organizing or reorganizing. In writing, I decided to devote attention to describing the spaces and the affective environment. This would enable me to follow Böhme’s focus on description as an extraction of atmospheres that could provide a critical perspective. As such, I also stayed with the dialogues with or between participants taken from the transcripts and my field notes as they emerged in the situations. Yet, as I wrote I further attended to the embodied dialogue, such as where voices marked an affected tone, bodies gestured or an affective-spatial experience or moods and atmospheres were described. The situations accounted for the practices, the previous experiences and the embodied dispositions of participants, but also the variations in the expectations about and experiences of space. The dialogues were considered to animate the totality of organizational situations together with descriptions of the environment. As such, the writing revealed emotional experiences and discoveries of the everyday as well as critical insights on approaching space as a social and political dimension. I wrote by using a mix of ethnographic narrative, autoethnography, poetic transcription (Glesne, 1997) and fabulation (Stewart, 2015: 20; 2018).

Poetic transcription served to unfold the atmospheric potentialities of conditioned situations like regulations and official documents (see Glesne, 1997; Leavy, 2015: 77ff.). Health and safety regulations played a large role in the architecture, and although regulations come across as objective and neutral, it became clear that these texts were based on specific perspectives on space and organization with which and around which the architects had to work. For the poetic transcription I selected text pieces and deleted words and sentences to transform them into poem-like compositions, which enabled me to depict the affective connotations of these conditions. This created an affective voice of the conditioned situations that further revealed assumptions about space and organization that permeate the everyday experience and design of organizational atmospheres. Converting official text documents into poem-like compositions in the vignettes was seen as a way of articulating both the actuality and the potentiality of organizational atmospheres.

I turned to autoethnographic writing to reflect the researcher in the vignettes and in the research, thus expressing the author’s embodied, sensory and physical experiences. Part of this process entailed including details of my own embodied experience, such as the smells, tastes and touches I sensed. I intended to follow the non-representational ethnographical notion that embodied knowledge
converts into writing from the heart (Vannini, 2015a: 321). Stories become affective in the flesh by means of a touching composition. Such embodied sensations were noted in the field notes; for example how the cold temperatures impacted movement in the spaces or my attentive abilities. Inspired by Stewart, I marked the researcher position as a simple ‘she’ (2008a: 8). This created a researcher position that

… is not so much a subject position or an agent in hot pursuit of something definitive as a point of contact. She gazes, imagines, senses, takes on, performs, and asserts not a flat and finished truth but some possibilities (and threats) that have come into view in the effort to become attuned to what a particular scene might offer. (Stewart, 2008a: 8)

I strove to remain a ‘she’ figure who followed the performative character of the vignettes and reflected the interwovenness of the researcher into atmospheres as a relational quality. The occurrence of the ‘she’ figure is intended to present the in-between position of the researcher with its blurriness, but was also seen as a way of opting in and out of the situations as the figure of the researcher. The ‘she’ figure was occasionally also used to take on a fabulating voice that could ask questions about the opportunities and threats that emerged in the situations or came up in the writing process. Fabulation was added to Richardson’s crystallization opening for the non-representational focus on doubt and possibilities, (Stewart, 2015: 20; Vannini, 2015a; 2019). In the vignettes I used fabulation to address the ambivalence and potentiality inherent in organizational atmospheres. Fabulations gave the vignettes a voice that pointed at what might become or where things might go.

Seen as an aspect of crystallization, the visual vignettes built on a non-representational apprehension of visual vignettes as an index of intensity (Latham & McCormack, 2009: 256, 2007). Photos were another genre used in the crystallization process and, like the written vignettes, were considered to present something worth attending to. In this sense the images were seen as providing an invitation to experimentally experience and think organizational atmosphere. Crystallization has been suggested to create a prism, and this notion along with some inspiration from the Situationist Internationals’ work with detournement and image experimentation (Rasmussen, 2004; Debord, 1956) led to a performative handling of the images. In this context I used the detournement technique not so much as a subversive appropriation of existing images to undermine the existing meaning, but more in the service of creating a prism and a visual fabulation. In practical terms a photo selected was presented in three versions, two of which were ‘detourned’ in relation to the original. Apart from the original, one was turned into a black-and-white sketch and the other into one with excess colouring, a device intended to present variations of the experience, the becoming of atmosphere and the
changing nature and multiplicities of atmospheres. As such, this threefold imagery was meant to present an oscillation between actuality and potentiality. The threefold construction was kept simple in terms of the technical skills required and was considered an attempt to experiment with visual presentation that could be further elaborated.

Generally, one should not read the situational vignettes by analytically distinguishing between concept, subject and world, but rather see them as an atmospheric enquiry moving through an affectively transforming landscape of organizations – a way of embracing knowledge as situated, partial, embodied and enmeshed in power relations. The animated account of organizational atmosphere looks at the process of spacing and performing by paying attention to the oscillation between the actual and the potential. In line with Stewart, I experimented with writing in an attempt to create new spaces for thinking about and imagining what might be going on (Stewart, 2011: 445). Writing on organizational atmosphere attempts to create ‘a relational platform through which to disclose atmospheres as fields for performing experience and experiment’ (McCormack’s, 2010: 41). In this sense the analytical chapters provide an analytical framework for articulating a fluid and socially complex constellation of materialities, bodies, affect and their interrelation. Accordingly, the analytical situational vignettes constitute relations and movements of organizational atmosphere. The vignettes present a series of performative pieces with multiple speaking parts – human as well as non-human – that show the co-creative formation of organizational atmospheres as evidenced in a moment, in a situation. Yet, as Vannini points out (2015b: 324), a key feature in a non-representational perspective is the embrace of experimentation as a way to unsettle systematic procedures, which also implies embracing failure and learning to fail66, in the sense of failing better. Accordingly, I acknowledge that my experimental and performative writing might have been otherwise and perhaps even have failed by my intent to systematize the writing process.

The aim is to offer an animated account of situations and the phenomena of organizational atmosphere in their complexity and to show ways of producing knowledge, through crystallised vignettes that draw on several genres of writing and media. This meant that I encountered and made sense of the empirical material by following various lines of writing and knowing, ultimately as if seeing it through a prism (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005: p.934). Juxtaposing various ways of writing in this respect has enabled me to attend to subtleties in the empirical material that might have remained hidden if always reported in only one way. This juxtaposition and the situational approach

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66 At the French pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 2018, there was a quote saying ‘Dans notre action, le seul risqué que nous prenons est l’échec. C’est une chance.’ (Alain Arnaudet)
has also been a way of engaging in a knowledge production that allows one to show greater sensibility in the analytical account and thus to push the limits of the knowledgeable and the questions to ask.

**Performative criteria**

As previously touched upon, taking up poetic and experimental writing styles as a routes to knowledge implies evaluating the analysis from their aesthetic and animated qualities. Alternative criteria for critically analysing the texts and their performances in terms of epistemological, aesthetic and political criteria have been proposed (see Denzin, 2003: 243; Richardson, 2000b, 2000a: 937). Yet, as Clough mentions, setting criteria for experimental writing may cause new ways of writing to become conventionalized, an issue also linked to the political contentions of knowledge (Clough, 2000; Clough and Halley, 2007: 47). Acknowledging this critique of criteria, the thesis has been inspired by Richardson’s criteria, using them to guide the writing throughout the research process and to self-critically assess the outcomes.

Richardson (2000a: 937; 2000b: 254) has offered a set of five criteria to evaluate performative writing and creative analytical ethnographic practices. The first criterion is substantive contribution, which is defined by the contribution to our understanding of social life and whether this understanding is grounded in a social science perspective. I have striven to account for this criterion by working from Schmitz’s notion of the situation as the analytical entity, which, following Gugutzer (2017), provides a way of attending to embodied communication, atmospheric understanding and social organization as carried out in the everyday joint situation. This perspective has further enabled me to focus on the organizations’ everyday practices and how they are part of the situational performance, as well as on spacings of organizational atmospheres. The vignettes also build on official documents that help to unfold the potential affective permeation that comes of regulation, by forming resonating backgrounds for social life that mingle with human and non-human doings. The writing and the situational assemblage seek to enact the relationality that constitutes the presence of organizational atmosphere by emphasizing the doings, materialities and spaces as participating in the continuous alteration of the human and non-human actors’ relations.

The second criterion is aesthetic merit in the sense of whether something aesthetically succeeds and is not dull. The emphasis here was on unfolding affective intensities in the situations as well as on forming a rhythm in the vignettes’ composition as well as their compositional totality. To this end, attention was given to the relation of spatial organization, architectural designs and human
resonance as a way of providing a sensory organizational landscape in which the reader could affectively immerse themselves. The use of images and their ‘detourned’ versions was considered to create another rhythm in the analytical text. On a critical note, one of the limits I encountered in working with crystallization was my own ability to float between genres of writing, language and analysis. Writing evocatively, engagingly and insightfully has been a challenge, accordingly, the writing was an experiment in itself. Moreover, writing evocatively in a foreign language also posed a set of challenges as regards aesthetic merit, especially as my use of literary writing devices was not fully proficient. Accordingly, the analytical chapters have been edited to help enhance the evocative resonance aimed for in the analytical work.

Third comes reflexivity, which serves to indicate the writer’s familiarity with postmodern epistemology, ethical issues and the writer’s self-exposure. Although not working from a postmodern epistemology, I have adhered to the non-representational and neo-phenomenological approaches as epistemological foundation. On an ethical level, I have taken care to avoid exposing organization members inadvertently and to resonate with their affective situations. In the writing of the vignettes, I aimed to take care of the situations in their complexity, thus striving to articulate an oscillation between the actual and the potential. I thereby reflected Schmitz’s point that, as the talker making explicitations, one has the role of a trustee (Verwalter) of situations (2010: 46). To achieve such an undertaking, I aimed at presenting the happenings in a given situation in a way that does not aim to elicit a cause-effect relationship (as prosaic explicitation), but that addresses the affective aesthetic totalities of situations (as poetic explicitation). Further, using the ‘she’ figure has allowed me to expose the writer’s own default assumptions and reflexivity in the analytical text, as is also done in the methodological chapter.

The fourth criterion is impact, as in how the work effects and affects the reader, and the fifth is to express a reality. Is the reality fleshed out? Does it seem credible? Both of these criteria are seen as addressing the aim of animation with the analytical work. With these two criteria specifically in mind, I asked the two organizations to read one of the later versions of the chapters on their organizations, so I could get a sense of the extent to which they felt the text touched their reality and affected them. Both organizations informed me that they found the chapters relevant, interesting and exciting, but also noted that the version they received was demanding, a feedback that was seen also to reflect the aesthetic quality of that version and something that was worked with in subsequent iterations. The involvement of the two organizations also entailed an ethical consideration in terms of my reciprocating the trust they had shown me by letting me into their everyday world.
Considering the framing of the organizational atmosphere as a non-representational understanding, it can be argued that Richardson’s criteria lack a focus on transformative and future trajectories. Following Stewart, the aim of writing is to create new spaces for thinking about and imagining what might be going on (Stewart, 2011: 445). Accordingly, the vignettes have sought to integrate fabulation as a way of opening up for perspectives on uncertainty and potentiality. This has enabled the analysis to be considered not only in the light of enacting the actualities of situation, but of enacting the multiple potentialities and thus to point to what knowledge might become afterwards, as a central non-representational feature (Vannini, 2015a: 12), which is seen to reflect Schmitz’s attention to ambiguity and uncertainty of situations.

**Studying organizational atmosphere**

The methodological chapter attends to conceiving organizational atmosphere as non-dualist and relational phenomena by proposing an experimental and performative approach to the empirical research. The approach considers the notion of situations as constituting knowledge as constantly moving, providing for a processual forming of ‘evidence’. This further reflects a claim on validity where the situational perspective is grounded in uncertainties and the ambiguity of the world. In the engagement with the field, a public-sector organization and a firm of architects, the performative approach is echoed in the researcher’s position and the status of the empirical material. This reflects an understanding of co-produced affective empirical material as coming out of an engagement with the field that included participatory observation, shadowing, interviews and photographs. The two organizations have been seen to analytically present a heuristic distinction of experiencing and producing organizational atmospheres, as reframed theoretically into the performing and spacing aspects of organizational atmosphere. Yet, overall the performative approach is not an attempt to represent the organization and atmospheres, but rather to learn and animate the situational mapping.

To analytically engage with the empirical material, this thesis has argued for using writing as its method of inquiry, a process that I approached by developing multi-genre situational vignettes that consist of both written and visual vignettes. This meant encountering and making sense of the empirical material through lines of writing. Focusing on the situation allowed me to attend to the present, the evidence of the moment, as well as to explore what knowledge can become. The vignettes seek to attend to the actual and the potential in situations, considering that they constitute the homestead for organizational atmospheres and can be formed by the material environment. The
vignettes seek to bring ‘voices’ of materiality, bodies, sounds, smells alive, so as to investigate the role they play in the constitution and workings of organizational atmospheres. The aim was to approach the phenomenon of organizational atmosphere in its complexity and thus show ways of producing knowledge, for example, through the crystallized use of several writing genres and the creation of an analytical composition, ultimately as if seeing it through a prism. Considering performative research by approaching writing as a method of inquiry is seen to allow for an animated presentation of organizational atmosphere as an analytical assemblage, opening for spaces of thinking organization and organizational atmosphere.
Chapter 6: Spacing

There are a lot of depressing offices being made, that are utterly … where you just want to leave even before you have arrived.
(Architects’ studio, 7.3.18)

... the architect (is) … somebody who philosophizes in the material.
(Sloterdijk, 2007: 262)

Prologue

She arrives at the architects’ studio after winding her way through a maze of small staircases. As she strides into the studio, the entrance area merges seamlessly with the open office space. Had no one been around, the ‘reception desk’ would have beckoned, both as a welcoming oasis filled with fresh tea, fruit, flowers and literature and as an anchor for visitors finding themselves in that liminal zone somewhere between outside and inside and yet already at the heart of the working organization.

She has gained access to the firm of architects’ offices from Ida, a partner at the firm and a woman passionate about architecture – a person whose words come rapidly and intensely, often punctuated with laughter. Clearly well-versed in architectural theory, Ida has made a mission of sensory architecture. Alma and Mary are the daily contact persons during the fieldwork. Both are experienced architects and managers of the interior design projects she is following. Like the rest of the staff at the studio, these two personalities are attuned to details and embodied sensations, and they too frequently break out in good-natured laughter. The warm, caring wash of their laughter seems to epitomize certain key sensory skills, to exemplify a central way of resonating with the environment … She thinks how that laughter has ostensibly been stripped from many professional toolboxes.

The small firm of architects has a largely female staff. They work in a small, densely furnished open office space with two groups of four desks. A big worktable runs along one side of the open space office, its worktop serving as an archive for the myriad swatches and materials spread across it. Every object, poster and note lying there is imbued with a personal story, as is the miniature
chair sitting in the windowsill. The ceiling contains a network of dangling wires and cables, each a thread connecting things, people, projects. Meanwhile, the reception desk presents an outside face to the world, but is an inside touch point for internal breaks and congenial small talk … Standing here at this nexus, she experiences a space of relations, interweaving personal stories, materialities, objects, ambitions and affective bodies.

The architects at this studio strive to get people and organizations to see new possibilities in space, an aim they seek to achieve by working with how space tunes and attunes. They explicitly focus on mood and atmosphere, how architecture affects and effects human well-being, how we work and thrive … She is struck by the studio’s aptness as a setting in which to investigate how atmospheres might be architecturally designed. She finds the architects’ creative process to be somewhat analogous to music composition, as if architectural design, like writing melodies, is a matter of mastering or at least engaging with a series of different chords. First comes the base chord of spatial assumptions, which they lay out in their architectural statements and includes the commissioning organization’s view on space and much more. The next chord is one of improvisation, the chord that underlies the creative activity of architectural composition and entailing communicating emotions and techniques to form an aesthetic totality. Third is the collaborative chord of tuning, which embodies a process whereby the firm attunes its design to the commissioning organization and the associated spatial requirements, moods and ambitions, as well as educationally tunes the commissioning organization to its future atmosphere. The final chord constitutes the potential sustainable and long-term spacing of the organizational tune eventually to be enacted in the organization’s everyday actions, thus ultimately merging the various tunes and rhythms into a becoming organization … into atmospheres.
Base chord of spatial assumptions

Believing architecture

‘I believe in architecture.

I believe if you started your day badly, then you can’t enter a room and everything is over.

I believe you can enter a room that helps you let it go, or you can enter a room that lets it stay with you.

I believe that we can move each other with the rooms we have, allow ourselves to be touched by the mood we enter. There is an element of surrender and seduction. You also have to want to be seduced. I think that you can make a framework that is irresistible. A place where you can’t really avoid smiling. That, I believe you can design.’

She is sitting across from Ida at a wooden table, enjoying a newly brewed espresso and talking. The coffee and Ida’s presence fill the kitchen space. Somehow the professional and the private person seem to merge when Ida speaks, with every conviction being compellingly articulated. It almost seems as if any theme or thought could find a crack through which to seep into the conversation. No topic is too great or small as Ida explains her take on architecture. The coffee is no less important than the conceptual discussions … Perhaps she wants to maintain a critical distance … for she finds herself pursuing a line of questioning … She asks Ida how mood and atmosphere differ. Ida answers:

‘You can create a mood. The concept of atmosphere is maybe placed on a higher or different level … much subtler in reality. The concept of mood is something you can target, while atmosphere is more “what is it like to be in this place?” I make it more abstract by saying “there’s a difference”. I don’t know if there is … Mood is easier. You sense it in people. You can physically see that they embody it … You hit much deeper … We enter into something basic … that’s why people are “struck”.’
The ‘ahhhh’ obligation

‘Work places have an obligation to create places where when you walk in, you just go … ‘ahhhh’ …’

Ida utters the ‘ahhhh’ as a sigh of relief, of deeply felt comfort, simultaneously raising and heavily dropping her shoulders. The sigh and the gesture also speak of all the workplaces and buildings where nobody goes ‘ahhh’. Ida is outlining a mission, one that embodies a sense of potential relief – and belief.
Reception
Calibration

She sits in the open office, following the rhythm of a typical day. There are sequences of information sharing, times for concentration, moments of collective laughter, coordination between colleagues, renewed periods of joint concentration and deep work pierced afresh by laughter. The atmosphere ebbs and flows like a tide, something building up and then released … She notices the sea of sounds – of mouse clicking, of paper shuffling and of someone riffling through the archive of swatches … The aromas of fresh fruity tea and warm cinnamon buns permeate the space.

She picks up some mumbling at a desk, enjoying the chat. Then suddenly her bubble bursts, she is already baffled from the very first phrase. The words form into absurd-sounding sentences: ‘RAL 90.16 was the standard at the time. The architects really took a risk with 90.15 back then.’

Laughter erupts, indicating that the subtle point has reached its audience. She, however, is lost in translation, clueless as to the nuances of the RAL colour scale or to the historical reference. Here at the beginning of her ‘apprenticeship’, she becomes acutely aware of her colour illiteracy, yet the laughter, the smell of cinnamon and the sudden burst of laughter all gently invite her into new territories full of colour, materiality, space and organization.

She, like the spaces of the studio, undergoes a moment of calibration and transformation … Indeed, the studio spaces perpetually seem to transform, change, recalibrate the entire time she occupies them. Take, for example, the kitchen with its long, wooden table surrounded by a mish-mash of chairs; the greenery at the kitchen windows; the archived piles of samples and swatches. A big corkboad depicts the most recent layout for a project design, and in the kitchen spotlights have been dimmed to a cozy glow while steam hisses from the espresso machine and the dishwasher sloshes … Sometimes she feels as if she were in an actual home … but then the kitchen is a space in constant transformation. At 12 o’clock everyone eats their lunch there. On other occasions it serves as a conference room for internal and external meetings or as an intense project workspace, where staff gather to lay out swatches and discuss sketches … or as a space for taking a quick espresso break … or a space for visiting dogs … or a space for …
Connected
Like milk at the supermarket

She surveys the kitchen table, lavishly set for the daily communal lunch break. Everyone makes their own Danish open-faced sandwiches on rye bread – finely plated food far beyond the drab, institutionalized liver paste she is used to. All the deluxe toppings are there: fresh chives, roasted onions, capers, remoulade, horseradish and on and on. Apparently the attention to detail emerges in all the firm’s practices.

They are curious about her research project. They ask about her first impressions. She mentions the high quality food they serve, their attention to detail, explaining that they seem to fine-tune their senses in everything they do. They laugh in acknowledgement, yet appear a bit surprised by the nature of observation, or at least this is how she interprets their faces. Maybe, however, she is simply herself uncertain of her observation and the very nature of data, although others seem to share her concern for dealing with (fixed) assumptions and expectations, for as the conversation turns to commissioning organizations and their expectations, someone says:

‘Some think it’s like buying a litre milk at the supermarket.’

‘The spaces we provide requires them to embrace it, which means that they have to address who they are, how they want to work,’ another person adds.

Words for space

‘It’s difficult,’ Mary says, struggling to find the words.

Mary outlines how the firm asks commissioning organizations to describe the mood they aspire to evoke in the organization itself and the new space, as such. The words they come up with to describe this mood are often the same: ‘professional’, ‘accommodating’, ‘welcoming’…

‘How is one accommodating?’ Mary asks rhetorically, entering a reflective stream.

‘Is it by making it white, so nobody is scared off by the colours? Or is it by making it coloured, so that you can show yourself?

It’s OK that we have these words, but I don’t think that you can always get them translated into something specific.’

Mary continues describing what she does to translate words into space, at times pausing when she herself lacks the words or using her hands to gesture and her voice to emphasize a point.
Mary mentions how they turned words of affection for one project into something soft and nice, where people sat close together, touched something soft. However, this all depends on the organization. Mary’s gestures, the pauses, seem to space out the words. Drawing on her embodied knowledge of how to turn an organization’s words into affective space, Mary adds:

‘All these words are attached with an understanding. Sometimes they become too abstract, sometimes they are just words. It’s a question of interpretation. There’s no correct answer. I have to interpret them; I interpret them in a wider sense. You can’t interpret from the words alone; you also need a sense of the people. You have to analyse the words. You need to look at the company and what they’re doing. And then you have to transform the words into something. Our tool is what we ultimately put into the space.’

**Air space**

Normally
authorities require
a minimum of 12 cubic metres
air space
for each employee
more space
may be.

She wonders how this measurable definition of air space is practised in open space offices. At least, she finds the smell of fresh cinnamon buns to be insistently pervasive. Does air space take ventilation for employees into account?
Composing the chord of improvisation

Inside out

‘For example, when I sit here I immediately notice the fabric. It’s as if I notice all the door knobs if I’m working on that. It has a lot to do with experience. When I visit a space for the first time, I look at scale, at the light and make notes. To create atmosphere, I try to capture the big structures. The big structures have to carry the atmosphere, as the long, central table we designed for the large open office space does.’

Alma lets her gaze wander around the room as she brushes her fingers on the fabric of the armchair she is sitting in, almost gesturing how to explore space … She follows Alma’s gestures, noticing the woven texture of the turquoise armchair, which appears ideal for relaxed reading, placed as it is next to the window. The daylight sneaks in, climbing down the narrow atrium of the back courtyard. She senses the stiffness, yet comfortable shape of her own chair. The two women are sitting in the small, narrow library with its long, low red bookcase filled with books on architecture, design and materialities. The room feels like a cosy little bubble. She notes some book titles: Closer, Kvadrat textiles and design and Christiania … She imagines the insides of these books, the spaces, the humans, the materialities, the bits of world. Her musings bring her awareness to the world outside. They are talking about the studio’s architectural design process. Alma verbally visualizes how the design process goes:

‘It's a bit like turning a ball. We are constantly looking at it from different angles. It is like zooming in, zooming out. We explore options. We work a lot with surfaces and materiality. When you enter a room like this one, you sense how it can be designed. It’s harder with new and big spaces.’

Alma explains how she might ask herself questions to get a sense of the possibilities the spaces – for example, whether a panel could make another surface, how it might impact sound and light. Alma describes how in the design process she returns to the space several times, each time discovering something new, depending on where she is in the process. Architects enjoy having a lot of balls in the air for a long time, and not until they have all the balls will they start diving into the specifics, Alma continues. Sometimes factors like money, technology or rules prevent an idea from being realized, so they have to toss the ball up again. Since they mostly work with existing buildings,
they must also rely on pre-existing structure, which reflects the firm’s focus on architectural design. As Alma explains:

‘We work inside out.’ … She wonders if working from the outside can lead you to forget the inside. Her mind is flooded with images of iconic office buildings alongside the greyest of grey edifices. These seem to be the buildings people have in mind when open office spaces come up in conversation and people instantly respond, ‘Noise, stress!’
Method
Fine-tuning

‘So, there isn’t one right answer. It’s about understanding the composition of, that if this works in this way, then … if this has this starting point, what is it that you have to regulate to get where you want? This is to know all your means, that you really understand to work with composition, with the elements there are. And when it’s the interior, its light, surfaces, texture, … acoustics, light … it’s greenery … you have a specific tool box you can use,’ Ida explains, continuing:

‘The space in itself does a lot. And that’s what I think you can work with or against, depending on what you want to achieve. These means are for me basically architecture. It’s not one thing … No, it’s the ability to be able to keep fine-tuning the tool that architecture is. Until you get it!’

Soften construction

They are talking about the building where Mary heads the interior design. The task is to soften the organization’s new building. Soft buildings somehow comes across as an oxymoron.

‘To put some love, I would call it that … into that building,’ Mary says in reference to the commissioning organization’s aspirations for an affective, caring mood.

Mary describes the building and workspace, which have an industrial, machine-like atmosphere. The office workspace is large and open, although the ceiling is on the low side. The materials used are glass and hard steel in anthracite tones, and a striped carpet dominates the space. Another carpet had been intended, but a sudden decision was made to go with the striped one.

‘It was a political issue,’ Mary says.

She asks Mary what elements in the office space help to soften the building. Mary responds that the colours have been subdued to soften the carpet and two long, moveable tables have been added to soften the industrial ambience. The tables are conceived of as somewhere people can meet and chat, Mary explains. Others might sit and write, as they might at an oblong family table. Mary further unfolds her thinking,

‘To create mood in that building, mood we can thrive on, you need to put something more corporeal. Something you can sit in or touch, gather around or …’
This approach differs from pure embellishment, Mary stresses.

‘It shouldn’t be pathetic. Like being scared of this big hard building and molly-coddling something into the building.’

In the larger framework of the open space, the table creates something dense, a contrast and a point that people can gather around; it is one way of putting some care and affection into the building, Mary explains. People are drawn to a gathering point, which in turn sparks liveliness. She recalls the times at the studio where she has noticed the ‘reception’ and joined with others for a cupper, for a quick exchange, for a laugh, for a chat, for a break. Maybe some of these gathering points are, in fact, a form of oasis, of organizational lungs.

**Politics of space**

Alma and Roger sit at the same computer station in the studio’s open office space. Roger is seated and guides the mouse around the virtual space on the screen. Leaning on the desk, Alma occasionally lifts her hand and points her finger, placing it right on the screen. The two are looking at a 3D model of the interior space they are designing – a factory hall conversion to a joint open office space for over 200 people.

She sits right behind them, observing how a double click here and there magically makes the tables turn up upside down, rotate or even disappear. Alma and Roger are focusing on how the space invites or should invite its occupants to move.

‘How do you move in this area – without bothering others? There is a lot of wasted space,’ Alma remarks as she explores the spatial layout of the 3D model and indicates the possibilities.

She continues the virtual exploration, commenting, ‘It’s more to get an overview myself. More … how you move around.’ She points at a specific area, continuing, ‘You would walk here …’

Roger gazes intently at the area she is specifying in the 3D space, and they discuss the possible ways of walking around. Their fingers move around the space as they pose questions and discuss the layout. When they talk, it almost sounds as if they are actually in the space being modelled. The tone of Alma’s voice grows more incisive, and she leans in closer to the screen, pointing and saying, ‘I think most will walk that way.’

Roger also points, adding, ‘The table can be moved a bit to the right. So, it won’t become a throughway.’
Alma’s finger rests on something in the 3D model, and she remarks, ‘This will steer it a bit.’

Rogers seeks clarification, asking, ‘That it will make you walk around the department?’

Alma explains, ‘There has to be some kind of principle. A politics of space. We don’t know where the department will sit, if they will expand or not.’

They are working with an everyday politics of space that refers to the organization’s guiding principles. She looks at the 3D model for the entire space, which centres on a long worktable. Alma calls it a governing element of the space, for it governs who is to meet, creates situations and shapes movements and activities in that area. Roger’s rendering shows the worktable with red lamps and hanging greenery. They jokingly dub it the ‘Starship Enterprise’. Everyone laughs … She imagines how they are preparing the organization for take-off, potentially embarking on a new mission, exploring new working methods, boldly heading for new, adventurous destinations – moving and being moved in new ways.
Starship Enterprise
Becoming space

The project group is gathered around the kitchen table, looking at sketches of the spatial layout. In the background the espresso machine is brewing, filling the kitchen with smells and sounds. They are discussing putting some kitchenettes in the big factory space and making a centrally placed project zone. They envision the kitchenettes as open alcoves that allow one to penetrate deeper inside the space, but that also help create more pools of intimacy and variation. They discuss how to go about establishing the project zones. How can the outside be incorporated? What kind of space is the project zone? ... Space in the making, she thinks, and that forms organizations by creating a variety of transformable spaces.

‘It becomes a great deal ... In the beginning the project room was a room. But when we talk with them it isn’t necessarily a room,’ Alma says.

As they all look at the layout on the screen, Alma continues, ‘so that’s a bit, nice, nice…’ Alma utters the word ‘nice’ with a certain reluctance and goes on to say:

‘It’s a bit “we would like a room for 15” OK, how do we make it?’

Alma, Olivia and Roger discuss how they can make the project zone flexible, expand and contract and retract in the space. They talk about using screens and textiles to achieve more fluid boundaries.

Olivia adds, ‘So this one is like, if we get it done well ... then it can cope with both small and big projects ... And projects that are like this and like that ...’

‘ and if there are no projects then you can use it for something else ...’ Alma supplies.

Hooks

She is looking at the design guide. The butchers hooks turn up as a hanging system for paper drawings, jackets or other things, pictured alongside images of furniture, colour samples, fabrics, space plans and other details. A hook transformed, a hook-forming space. The butchers hook has been recontextualized, given new meaning in another totality.

It started with Mary’s saying, ‘OK, the question is, whether I can find some kind of system. You would think that there’s something, so you don’t have to re-invent the wheel.’
They are concentrated on their laptops. Mouse-clicking indicates that they are virtually engaged in designing one of the interior spaces, perhaps perusing digital folders in the online archive or scrolling through web pages to find inspiration for the project.

Mary continues, ‘what word…you said not just hook … you said butchers hook?’

She makes a sound in the affirmative, responding ‘what they have hanging down …’

Mary searches the web and lands on ‘the stable brokers website’, from which she reads aloud, ‘used, i.e., for cows, horses in stables where there has to be free passage, but where it can’t be too cold.’ Mary keeps reading, ‘pigs, sheep and Norwegian interior design,’ adding that the stable brokers are probably unaccustomed to anyone showing an interest in their hanging rail system.

Chuckling while reading, Mary adds, ‘Ohh, that’s a good one, check this out …’

Alma grins and repeats ‘siloes and snails’, asking whether anyone can explain the connection with the term ‘Norwegian interior design.

In a sense they are hooked on the rail system … She feels caught up in the associative process, as images of dead animals suspended on hooks in an open office space float in her mind … Somehow humour guides the exploration, an apparent means of transforming what might otherwise seem totally bizarre, if singled out.

Mary continues surfing, clicking her way through web pages and partly commenting on Alma’s question by remarking, ‘Maybe it’s about …’

Mary stops talking, caught by something on the screen. The images seem to create a momentarily overpowering discomfort. ‘When I write butchers hooks … Uhh, they are harsh, ehh … ouch, ouch … you can hang a whole cow on that one or?’

Mary returns to the design purpose. ‘Anyway … it has to be something that you can easily move things on …’

Alma and Mary joke that they should have a folder named ‘Slaughterhouse’ for these Nordic interior design pictures. They all laugh. They want reference pictures in the design guide to show the principle … She finds it funny how, with a slip of the tongue, the hooks have already turned into Nordic design … Mary continues surfing and exploring different systems, murmuring as she goes:

‘then you get in here … expansive buckle ribbon … it can be things … what can it be … energy …’
Materiality
Variation

‘Let’s say we have these two veneers,’ Alma says, putting forward two veneer swatches. ‘One variation is that you don’t use colours, that you use these two,’ she adds while pointing at the veneer swatches. ‘Then it becomes very classic,’ she concludes.

Mary emits an affirmative ‘hmmm’ sound, while shuffling the swatches around, looking for other variations. Alma assesses a new option and reflectively states, ‘That isn’t ugly.’

Alma and Mary are sitting on the kitchen floor, trying out combinations of colour and materiality. Swatches and colour cards are spread around. In the last couple of hours, they have explored the greys, which prove a bit severe. The dark blue is somewhat too heavy, while yellow simply does not work with all the rest. They are unsure about red; they already have some. Definitely no red chairs, they agree. Pink is tricky and, well, not terribly pleasant. The apparent unpleasantness of pink causes complicit laughter. The options are considered in relation to the furniture, the functionalities, and then the variations are reconsidered.

Alma grabs some swatches and notes, ‘Another variation, is that you only use these, then it becomes fresher.’

‘You can say that,’ Mary declares with a slight smile, adding the evaluative ‘I think it becomes too fresh for them.’ By ‘them’ she means the commissioning organization and the mood they are after.

She has been told about the issue of variation – or at least the firm’s point in addressing it. The totality of the design should accommodate differences. The architects heed the need for such differences by choosing colour and materialities carefully. She reckons that this explorative process does not entail shaping a single atmosphere, but rather a multiplicity of atmospheres and moods.

As Ida conveys, ‘There are days when you need one thing and days where you need another. Or hours in the day, or tasks, or whatever … And if you can accommodate the switches, the better you can create moods, good or bad. Mood is also about the people. Or how they can unfold in the framework you establish. So that you actually ensure that if you want to live something, there is a place to do it. That makes it possible for people to act differently.’
Floor work
Patinating

‘Why is there a good atmosphere?’ She asks Mary.

Mary tries to explain with the example of an old building, ‘In old things, those materials beautify. We can relate to that. That’s why there’s a nice atmosphere.’

Mary draws a comparison with some new designs by saying, ‘But glass, it doesn’t get to patinate. It has to be cleaned all the time. It stands as it stands. It gets dirtier and dirtier. Once in a while something gets broken and will have to be replaced. It doesn’t get more graceful.’

Heaven on earth

Alma and Mary browse with ease through the RAL colour samples while talking. They are working on the colour scheme for one of the project spaces … She is still struggling to grasp the colour coding and the immensity of words used to describe the myriad colours.

Mary starts out by saying, ‘OK, then if you have this and are to find an RAL colour … for the other …’

Alma finishes her sentence, ‘…RAL’ … She has noticed that sentences often shift ownership and are being shared between the two.

‘The yellow isn’t that good,’ Mary continues.

‘… and she was very afraid of that one there,’ Mary adds, referring to their contact in the organization while pointing at a bright yellow. Was it called ‘lemon yellow’? Alma thinks it would be nice for the table. They move swiftly on.

They are scrolling through the grey scales of colours, when Mary compares two different RAL cards and asks, ‘Are they the same 9002?’ She checks, pauses, then rhetorically concludes, ‘No, they aren’t.’

Alma tentatively suggests, ‘9000?’

Mary runs through various colour cards and dismisses some with a ‘This one it isn’t so much, I can tell. That one it isn’t either. The question is…?’

Both are engrossed in the colour cards, as Alma asks, ‘What did you say? 9002?’

Mary confirms with a ‘Yes. To get heaven down on earth …’
‘Heaven down on earth…’ Alma repeats the phrase as if she fully senses the heavenly potential of that off-white shade.

The RAL website promises that ‘a clear, international understanding of colours supports the new multilingualism.’ It claims to help define the optimum colour easily and quickly in any work situation … She has to admit she is not there yet. With 1825 colours, she has encountered ‘signal violet’ and ‘traffic purple’, not to mention ‘traffic green’ and ‘traffic blue’. She wonders what traffic means on a colour scale – perhaps a spatial conjugation? … This kind of multilingualism seems to require a nuanced and spatialized sense of colour – a language able to interpret the world differently by sensing the potential rather than speaking only the actual.
Yellow anchor
Archive of happiness

It is another day of discussing materiality and colours for the design, and an array of swatches from the ‘archive’ are again spread out. The sentences float on a wave of suggestions, generating a pool of possibilities in which the design can develop as the swatches and colour cards are arranged and re-arranged … She cannot identify where the design starts and where it ends.

‘We do “Balder” and “Sunnival”. That’s not what we do often. So, they get something else. Something we’re not used to.’

‘If we are to govern by design … I think it can be a bit crazy. This is the Swedish room. Not difficult to make it neat. Should all the tables be blue? Think how happy you will get walking into this…’

Retake

It is morning, and she is sitting with Alma and Mary in a small alcove that resembles a small cave and was easily rearranged to house the design project for the last couple of months. It features an improvised, whiteboard table for the compositions. Cups of tea are strewn around, intermingled with blueprints of building plans, furniture, Excel sheets and swathes of fabric. Spotlights frame the space. Soft Swedish pop music plays in the background … She finds the space somehow cosy, shielded, womb-like – a kind of interim cocoon that will hopefully nurture a butterfly.

The alcove is next to the entrance. As the entrance door opens Alma raises her head from her computer, peering into the entrance space and acknowledging Ida’s entrance.

‘Are you here?’ Alma blurts out in surprise. She quickly gets up and walks over to the entrance, adding:

‘That sounded totally wrong. Let’s do a retake.’

Alma turns around, goes back to her desk and starts the interaction again. ‘How nice to see you,’ she utters in a slow, warm-voiced tone.

They both roar with laughter at the incident, joking about the self-evident ‘are-you-here’ question. They all laugh even harder as Ida reveals how a cold has given her a hilarious
helium voice. ‘Architects on speed’ someone quips. More laughter … She asks herself if laughter is a way of shifting gear, of changing the pace, of becoming present in space.

**Illumination**

In addition
to giving light to work by,
lighting must
illuminate
in a comfortable way.

**Shadows**

They differentiate between two light perspectives: the experienced, human perception of comfortable light – the quality of the lighting – and the measured, functional qualities of the light source, its light quality. Light means a lot when it comes to an atmosphere, Alma says, but it is complex. In the design guide they connect atmosphere and light. She sees the complexity, as there is:

Light to see by, which must be technically precise and ensure proper readability and accessibility.

Light to look at, which should create an identity or be outright noisy to create highlights and emotion.

Light to be in, which must be comfortable to be in, encouraging reflection and contemplation

Light to be seen in, which must be interactive, bringing one ‘in the company’ to better engage with and make sense to others.

Alma says that they have started working with light designers, another angle that will add a new dimension. Alma mentions that when the light designers joined a visit to the organization’s space, they noticed the shadow certain materials from the top light cast, shadows that might enhance the design … She wonders how organizations consider their lighting quality – and their shadows.
Spot on
Sound climate

Good indoor climate,
sound acoustic conditions.

suitably silenced
not subjected to noise
or vibration from adjacent rooms
or the outside.

Noisy work processes
and behaviour
very annoying,
in the case of screen work

Airy feel

Working in a large, open office space for 200-plus employees can mean noisy work processes and annoying behaviour. They have done sound tests and concluded that more acoustic cladding is needed. As the cladding required exceeds the wall surface area, they suggest cladding two-thirds of the ceiling area. According to the design guide, this option helps give a big office space a light and airy feel.

Totalities

Mary and Alma are digging into one of the spaces, testing whether the combination unlocks the mood and creates the experience desired by the organization. On the kitchen table lie all the different spaces of the interior design, each space displaying its particular combination of materialities, pictures of furniture, swatches and colour coding.

They have been asked to change some of their colour and furniture choices, a request that has challenged the ‘atmospheres’ they have been aiming for … She gets a sense of how the politics of organizations seeps into the design process and demands reinterpretations.

Mary calls the combination ‘beautiful’ with a certain hesitation in her voice. The hesitation in her declaration reduces the power of ‘beautiful’ into an ocular pretty … As far as she can see, red, green
and some veneers are the suitable combination … Alma elaborates on the combination with the statement ‘As if you don’t really get like, “yes”!’ supporting Mary’s hesitation on the word ‘beautiful’. They recombine the options in search of a new combination to recommend. Mary adds, ‘We could take a picture of the totality.’
Composition
Final iterations

The deadline for the project is encroaching and the final iterations are in the works. Mary is sitting with the big inventory list for the final design, which is in a huge Excel sheet with an immense amount of information. There is a sub-section for each space, and the columns contain information on product, producer, material, colour, measurements and other key figures. The rows show gross and net prices, the number of items and more. The entire sheet appears to be a master script behind the totality, the place where design meets costs, decisions, dreams and moods.

They have been asked to lower the total cost. The sofa has been discussed xxx times. The colour regimes have changed. Pink was once hot, but now not. The price differential on one sofa is 30%, depending on the fabric. Mary express-delivers a new sample test to the commissioning organization for its approval. Everyone else is making lunch in the kitchen while she is on the phone, discussing materials. Alma shows up. Mary finishes her call. Together they navigate the inventory list; apparently a front shelf is missing. They add the shelf to an email addressed to the procurement staff. More is added to the list.

The IT is tricky, and the clock is ticking. Mary is unable to send the email, so she texts the sofa colour sample, then gets back on the phone to deal with some specifications, finally succeeding in obtaining them. The email has gone through, but photos are missing. The time pressure raises the adrenaline level. Mary is navigating across documents, switching between her emails, the micro-station and Excel. Some drawings lack tables. Mary mentions that the system has just been updated, so all the short cuts are new. The system loads sluggishly, and some of the chairs fail to appear. Mary clicks around and somehow locates the chairs. She helps Mary count the number of seats.

‘Sorry, I’m not more talkative,’ Mary says.

She replies, ‘No worries, just do what you have to do.’ … Although it should hardly surprise her, she is struck by the attentiveness, in this moment of intense concentration. It makes her think how considerate gestures somehow expand space by creating a sense of openness.

The sketch is ready.

Sent.
Collaborative chord of tuning

Getting under the skin

‘We have a certain common sense, without being able to put it into words. We normally agree whether it’s pleasant or not. I’m probably good at sensing also how they feel. I’m characterized by … a gut feeling. I sense … that is what I can do … with humans. Some kind of basic sensation. I’m not afraid of new architecture or new furniture. I’m not afraid of change. Many are. I sense if they’re insecure. They feel safe with me, they feel listened to.’

She and Mary are enjoying their usual cup of tea. Mary is seated in the armchair next to the window in the library. They laugh at the irony implicit in talking of space. Mary explains how the spaces need to get under her skin.

She remembers one of the project days where the project group was working in a small alcove. On arrival, she had positioned herself on a stool at the very edge of the alcove abutting the corridor that connects the kitchen and the entrance area. Mary immediately inquired whether she wanted a better chair. Alma joined the group a bit later, instantly asking the same question. Another colleague walked by, also asking whether she would like a chair, this time with a back rest. She was surprised at how this small, attentive gesture made her feel. As if they sensed a bodily discomfort collectively getting under their skin. Even before she did. And they cared: about her, about the detail.

‘You relate to it with your body,’ Mary explains how she gets the space under her skin by touching, walking on the floor, sensing the materiality. Mary adds that she can do this on behalf of others and is convinced how it will be right for them.

Mary says that when they listen their designs are more successful. Her listening skills have been praised. Mary listens for the tiny, essential details, curious as to what they mean to an organization and its employees. She asks what purpose this embodied listening serves.

‘Somebody has listened to them. Helped them, if there is something they have themselves not been conscious about. Somebody does something for them, and it functions. It doesn’t have to be very fancy. Pure interior design, pure facade, they are not especially comfortable. No matter how nice something is, if it doesn’t work you get a bad mood.’
Basic sensation
**Zooming in, zooming out**

The project group is in the kitchen discussing the factory hall design and how to present the spatial design principle to the commissioning organization. Referring to the three design principles they have identified, Olivia says:

‘They [the organization] are to choose one of these to move forward with.’

Alma replies, ‘I think, we need to figure out … it’s a bit difficult just to send it … we could sketch a bit … so as not to lock it totally, I would like everything to be up in the air …’

Alma continues, ‘… that’s also a way to tell how we have worked with it … it’s not like “OK, now that’s done”.’

Roger interjects, ‘I think we should make a page for each room. I think we could just suggest two or three ways to approach it.’

‘Yes.’ Alma acknowledges Roger’s point.

‘Yes, how you can use them [the spaces], the different ways,’ Olivia contributes her input to the discussion.

Roger gets more specific, saying, ‘I think they will have a hard time understanding if there isn’t a drawing with tables.’ Olivia agrees.

‘Maybe if we had a drawing of working desks,’ Roger points at another drawing with specifics and adds ‘… then you could zoom in and show in 3D how it functions. Or what?’

They discuss how many proposals to present and at what level of detail. The time frame is too compressed to go into much detail before the meeting or to make major alterations after it.

Roger sums up, ‘… Then you just show the three at this level,’ he says, pointing at the general principles on the table.

‘As principles,’ Alma affirms.

‘and then zoom in on one?’ Roger seeks confirmation.

By zooming in and zooming out in the presentation, they guide the organization through possible new futures, through different functionalities and atmospheres – all a spatial communication of potential contractions and expansions yet to become.
Organizing work

A natural order

of business activities, work processes

must be created.

Applies to

the company, the single divisions, production sections.

Individual work rooms
departments

must naturally be
in relation.

Building occasion

‘This is an occasion. A unique opportunity, an occasion to dream the future,’ Ida announces as she outlines the first user workshop in the project.

Ida, who is in charge of the workshop, states that the general physical structure of the new location is given but that its interior design is up for discussion. How it supports the organization’s work. The framing sets the scene, just as the timber beams and massive wood floorboards of the old warehouse they are in do.

Ida explains what she means by ‘given’. ‘All buildings contain hope. It’s about how you interact with the building. It concerns how I’m in the world. But this also requires a move from “me” and “mine” to “we” and “ours”. Striking the balance. Wanting flexibility is about interaction with the world. The physical framework will never be flexible in itself, but how the framework is used can achieve the flexibility desired. “Who is to meet, who is not to meet” are the spatial questions. It’s about process, not teams.’

Ida points out how the physical framework can both strengthen and weaken the organizational culture. The workshop participants split into groups of four or five to discuss how they
collaborate, how they balance between team and I. ‘Am I disturbed by myself or others, is it their noise or my curiosity?’ Ida wonders. ‘It’s like walking into the project plan’ one of the participants comments. After 30 minutes the groups return to the conference room. Excited, they swiftly approach the posters, filling them with Post-it notes from their discussions. The list of notes covers what works and does not today … She reckons that the profusion of Post-its reflects a comment made by one of the participants, who said, ‘We have a lot of realities. A lot of different ways of working.’

Ida wraps up the first workshop, saying, ‘The way you make your offices, the diversity, is a way of acknowledging that we don’t see the world alike and we aren’t in the world in the same way. It’s an occasion to build on …’

Nomads

The conventional understanding of ‘real’ work is that done at a desk, in front of a PC or Mac, at least that is what studies show. A desk makes the perception of work ‘real’. The workshop participants are asked to consider how they work and what they use which spaces for. How do they ‘really’ work in their organization? What is ‘real’ work? Ida tells personal anecdotes about her use of space.

‘It can be liberating not to have a desk,’ she says, admitting that she has renounced the notion of having one. She feels this is the best decision she ever made, and she solemnly swears that she will never want one again. Since giving up her desk, she now alternates between spaces according to the type of work she is doing and in order to cue her environment as to this work. In the kitchen she can be disturbed, in the meeting room she wants to concentrate.

‘Should we force ourselves to be more nomadic?’ Ida asks. … Although Ida’s question is rhetorical, it challenges conventional desk work, at least as far as she can hear from the snippets she picks up from the group discussions … Maybe employees would like a leader who stops by to seek out information, a small working group discusses. This would provide another means of acknowledgement … She notes how the discussions reflect different ways of moving around space. She wonders if nomadic movements would by nature challenge, or even dissolve, preferences for fixed hierarchies.
Ways of working
Takes your breath away

In their architectural design, the firm of architects aims for the breathtaking, the ‘ahhh’ sigh. At the second user workshop, Ida presents a range of design scenarios to the commissioning organization. The participants are talkative and curious. Three scenarios are presented on the big screen, each showing a different layout for the open office space. The first is a very densely scripted space of deskwork, while the third is very open, verging on nomadic.

‘When we do three scenarios, it’s important that we caricature them a bit. Otherwise you can’t really sense them. In most cases, we end up with a hybrid between the three,’ Ida explains to the participants. Later in the workshop a participant reacts to the scenarios by saying: ‘Great to get it presented, as you say, you can sense it. You get … you react to it, in your own little world. And collective world. I hadn’t expected to be ready for sharing …’

This could come across as a way of pre-sensing possible designs. If the final space is to elicit ‘ahh sighs’, the atmospheres must be staged through a process of attuning organization and design, design and organization.

‘Architecture is something that takes your breath away. That, you don’t get from many offices,’ Ida says with a certain resentment, and, as if correcting a common ‘misconception’, immediately adds that architecture does not have to be diametrically opposed to what also works.

Trustee

She talks with Ida about the role of an architect – an important topic, she surmises from Ida’s focused and intense voice. Ida leaves no doubt that this is serious business. Ida has something on her chest, something heavy … She finds herself unsure how to pursue the matter.

‘It’s about letting go of your own ambitions,’ Ida says of the architect’s role.

Ida twists the statement a bit by strongly emphasizing that ‘there’s a difference if you want to make a mark on the world of “we’ve been here” or if you want to make a mark saying “here we helped somebody to put their mark.”’

This definitely positions the architect and their architecture differently than the tendency of ‘seeing’ the architectural brand before the building. For Ida this relates to the challenge of architecture:
‘… the challenge in architecture is that you have to build a bridge between perception and the reality for which those you build for are in. And then the new world you see they could have. But it has to be their world; it can’t be yours.’

Ida describes another challenge that also puts the architect in the position of a trustee: ‘… that you actually have the ability to balance between something that might almost offend oneself as a person, but doesn’t offend you as a trustee or interpreter.’… She is simultaneously struck by the potency of the words and the potential impact of architecture – if one believes in architecture, that is. This also strikes her in relation to doing research. What role does she assume as a researcher? Is she taking on the role of a trustee and interpreter of others’ lives? Or is she aiming to make her mark on the world. Sometimes her position makes her feel like an intruder putting others’ lives on display, despite all the methods and ethical considerations. Does she care enough, and does it show in her accounts? Is she sensitive enough to be able to listen to the affective details and still turn this into an academic account that makes a contribution?
Spacing the organizational tune

Courage of difference

'We don’t have the same needs. We don’t get disturbed by the same things; we don’t get stimulated by the same things. To the degree that people are willing to recognize that, they don’t need to have the same. It’s having the courage to say, “it’s OK you get this, I don’t need to have the same, because I have my needs covered.”'

Something does something

'Working in a beautiful place is not what makes the difference. It isn’t. Something does something.’ Mary is explaining what makes design work – in terms of atmosphere.

‘That somebody has chosen a pleasant chair, that means something. It doesn’t have to be the most expensive chair in the whole world. That you have made a meeting room where they can sit for long hours … It’s actually really nice that somebody has bought a chair that can swivel. That they have done for me. People just thrive better in spaces where there is some caring. The human relation is important.'

She and Mary talk about the impact of architecture. How it is connected with the use of space. When the caring spills over into the organization, the organization becomes interested in doing something itself. Mary gives an example: an organization she worked with said, ‘We lack a table like that,’ and she replied, ‘Fine, then buy it.’ Mary continues:

‘Sometimes it doesn’t look that nice, but it’s pretty great that they become involved. It’s not about how beautiful the furniture is. Taking responsibility or co-responsibility for the environment you are in and are working in, that’s where people thrive the most. They are taking care.’
The common thread

Alma says that they did something for a company some years ago, but that it is completely different now. The company has simply lost the common thread. Alma explains the notion of the common thread that ties the space and the atmosphere together.

Sometimes organizations forget this thread, perhaps because no one who contributed to the design process is left there. Nobody knows how or why, Alma explains. Rooms take on new uses or people forget to put things in place. The common thread can easily break if the totality is neglected when the time comes to buy a new chair and people have stopped caring. The lacking sense of oversight destroys the atmosphere. The ‘new’ has no inkling of the story. Culture has to do with the extent to which things are taken care of or neglected, Alma states.

Some spaces fail to be used simply because people are unaware of or unaccustomed to them. Alma adds that the organizations her firm works with are often good at asking when the options escape them. This is what makes management so important, Alma notes. Leaders have to be the frontrunners, the role models. This is also why they commission long design processes that involve people in defining the desired spaces and atmosphere. This lets them know how to use the spaces. Such leaders are involved in the development, know why the design functions and, going forward, can thus work on the interior themselves, Alma sums up.

Putting on a jacket

‘You have to stage yourself. There is an element of scenography in it. A bit like putting on a jacket, when you are at work and you take it off when you leave. The physical framework can be that jacket. We have to acknowledge that we are affected by our environment.’
Chapter 7: Performing

*Everything office workers have taken for granted for decades about their working lives and their working environments is certain to be challenged, and almost certain to be changed.*

(Duffy, 1997: 55)

*The perfect workspace does not exist.*

(de Vries, 2018; 207)

Prologue

The public-sector organization has been temporarily housed in two separate buildings, an old school and a modern office building. Soon the organization will unite and return to its former premises, a public building called the Loop, currently being architecturally redesigned. Victor, along with Delia, plays a key role in this moving process. Around 300-plus employees will eventually be moving back to the Loop, whose new structure and design are meant to bolster the organization in its mission to make a difference for citizens and to build stronger communities. Ultimately, citizens are the organization’s raison d’etre, as some of management’s official documents declare.

She has been following the organization in its temporary quarters and will join them in the Loop when they relocate. Victor made this possible, putting her in touch with some department managers who have approved her visits at all the three locations. At the more historic former school building currently housing some of the organization, a manager has swiftly arranged for her to follow George, Charlotte and Sarah in their everyday work and has set up meetings with some of the other managers, specifically Kathrin, Linda, Gerda, India and Anna. The managers at the more modern building do not prearrange any meetings, but just accept that she is to have access to the department space, where she will eventually meet Linda and Juliet. At this stage she has not personally met anyone, but these diverging attitudes to her imminent presence prompt her to contemplate how various departments might meet something alien – such as herself – differently. How might each
department interpret her presence – with curiosity, with annoyance, as a burden, as a threat, as an undefinable other? … She wonders.

Most of the organization’s departments and top management are currently housed in the modern building, a former corporate headquarters. She reckons the temporary building is from the 1980s. It is a monolith of glass, steel and concrete, and its colours range monotonously from black to white to grey. As for its layout, each floor is filled with big, open office spaces. The building looks functional and industrial, fitting right in with the industrial area where it it stands. The entrance requires one to go past a staffed ground-floor reception desk, which serves as a gatekeeper, dividing outside and inside.

The other temporary building occupied by the organization is an old, dingy yellow school building, which houses one major department. The building has the air of an old village school now trapped in a modern, urban sprawl. The interior space is composed of long, dark and narrow corridors with cell offices to each side and winding staircases. The space is labyrinthine, full of quirks and tales from the past. When she visits, she uses the main employee entrance, which is reached up an exterior spiral, metal staircase that resembles a fire escape, an entry through which only those with a code and access card can pass.

In her contact with the different parts of the organization, she has been puzzled by the somewhat uncanny resemblance between them and their pre-locational spaces. A twisting and turning curiosity and an aloof functionality represent two professional ways of doing things in the organization. This puzzle spurs her to wonder how organizational atmospheres are experienced and performed in the various scenographies, especially in the new common space. Her tour through the pre-move spaces provides a glimpse of the (embodied) dispositions, expectations and routines that have been moved, at least physically. The new building, the Loop, accentuates new scenographies for performing everyday practices, thus creating new stages from which atmospheres can emanate. One of these stages is an inside-outside setting: an atrium where the organization partly blurs with its surroundings, its citizens and the exterior of the building. Another is an organizational backstage – an inside setting, sealed off from the public to ensure confidentiality and security and also constituting the backbone of bureaucratic management. These new spaces on redesigned stages emphasize expectations of and perspectives on organizational performance … How might organizations perform differently? How, indeed, do they become performers of organizational atmosphere?
Moving stages

Becoming different

Today
you start
a new everyday life
a lot will be as usual
some things will be different,
the smell, the light and the sounds
Hope,
become proud
as we are,
proclaims the ‘welcome-to-the-Loop-pamphlet’ from top management … She rewinds the narrative,
looks at what usual and different might be. Depending on which building one is coming from – the
old or the new one – starting a new everyday might involve different becomings.
The Loop
Push and pull

They have packed everything in moving boxes, and on Monday everyone will be in the Loop. Before the weekend hits, the entire organization meets at the local sports arena for a day of exercise the organization calls ‘education day’. The day is intended to equip employees with tools and techniques that can improve their contact and dialogue with citizens. It is also a day of transition, of preparing to enter the new space.

‘This is how we can touch people. Our new facilities are to support this endeavour, but the building does nothing in itself. We have to be curious – about citizens – even when they don’t fit in boxes,’ are the words booming from centre stage, from central management.

Words flow enthusiastically from the microphone words, spreading the message and thus emphasizing the engineered occasion and the organizational ambition. Acknowledging that dialogue can be difficult, someone from top management urges employees to appreciate citizens’ humanity, driving home the importance of ‘being able to see the person behind the case file, their feelings, their situation’.

Three hundred people are here to be trained, seated at round tables piled with coffee and croissants. The light is rather dim … She finds it hard to discern who is who, and their reactions just as difficult to read – apart from the preordained clapping after each speaker.

After an introduction the educational workshop starts. The employees are to test the techniques they have learned in a push-and-pull exercise. She finds herself sitting at a table with people she barely knows. Standing in pairs and facing each other, the employees push their palms against each other. Her own opponent informs her that she is up against a former handball player. She shoots back that she too does sports … Perhaps she feels compelled to establish the playing field as equal, or does she just want to avoid any awkwardness in the moment? She is uncertain which and feeling a bit bewildered. Grunts and thuds testify to the intensity and concentration in the struggles playing out around the room; she too is fixated on her own tense battle of strength … The exercise is then modified so that one partner now pulls the other, gently. Her body is more relaxed, and they start to move through space. Other pairs are moving too – some slowly, some at a fast pace. Some bump into each other, and some laughter ensues.

She is struck by how citizen dialogue is reflected as embodied and spatial communication, whereas the dialogical pull creates a dynamic space for movement and joint process; by how citizen justification can remove decision making from its traditional linearity and deposit it
into a complex and spatial causality. An image of ‘Daniel Blake’ in the public office pops into her mind as a devastating lament for the missing human behind the file … Such pure, exhausting pushing, pushing the system ahead of the human.

A school rector describes how she uses pull processes with parents to involve them in designing the process, and how parents’ insights, if used during the journey, might change and thereby shift the potential outcomes. The workshop facilitator invokes mediation methods and conflict resolution, stating that citizens evaluate the quality of legal decisions by the process undergone to achieve them and that feeling listened to trumps judicial correctness. So, procedural fairness, not a slavish adherence to rules and regulations, apparently reflects what people perceive as a good and effective public sector.

Through all of this, she grows aware of how the exercise challenges Weberian rule-based bureaucratic management and distanced decision making. How it challenges a long, bureaucratic tradition of legitimizing the objectively correct ‘what-decision’ and potentially shifts that legitimacy to a felt, processual embodied ‘how-decision’ … She wonders if this is a move towards a system recognizing the complexity of lived human life, asking herself whether the organization and the public sector are really ready to make this atmospheric move to the processual. Yet, can they afford not to?

**Built expectations**

‘We build our expectations on the experience from here. Many mention the same concerns, but they do not seem to be heard. We want our own desks, walls between spaces, and more creative and project spaces to work differently.’

**Introversion**

She is in the open office … confused, searching. Employees spot her standing there and, acknowledging her baffled expression, ask whom she is looking for. She tells them she is there to visit the department before the move. They tell her they know about her arrival. The space is filled with clusters of four or six bright brown tables that contrast the charcoal-grey carpet. Some ochre shelves serve to partition some of the clusters.

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67 Main character in Ken Loach’s film ‘I, Daniel Blake’ describing Blake’s struggle with the forces of bureaucracy and the lack of human responsiveness.
Somebody helps her locate a free desk, but she has to fetch a chair for it. Chairs float unmoored in the middle of the space, waiting to be picked up – impassive epitomes of the house policy of free seating. The office space is divided into zones: active, silent, semi-active, each demarcated with a printed paper sign. She goes for the active zone, yet, even anchored behind a desk, she feels set adrift, isolated, from the get-go. At some point during the day the two sole employees sitting close to her take the proximity as an opportunity to ask her why she is here. She briefly explains her research. They willingly start telling her how they experience the open space and current atmosphere.

‘There’s noise, and then you get hooked on others’ conversations. That grabs your attention,’ one of them says.

‘Yes, even you who is so spacious,’ the other adds with an appreciative smile.

‘The noise and the disruptions at times make you very introverted or rejecting of others,’ one of them explains as being a long-term consequence.

‘Even though you don’t want to, you put up a distancing attitude to get some quiet and to concentrate. This may not give a positive signal to others,’ they reflectively add.
Free seating
Forgotten

‘It’s an ancient building that has something cosy about it.’ India says.

‘When we had the printing and the “blue men” helping …’ India recalls, pausing for a moment and then concluding ‘… when that got closed down, I think, the mood got a bit like this is “the forgotten organization”.’

‘… a lot of time is spent discussing things like there being no toilet paper, that it smells extremely badly in the basement. Down to the details, often coffee or milk for the coffee is lacking … once it was cosy sitting in an old house, now I’m just tired of it and find it disgusting,’ India declares firmly.

She recalls the office she was in earlier in the day. Four desks cramped the stuffy room. The carpet was stained and appeared not to have been cleaned for eons. The two windows shed limited light, their being blocked by the out-of-vogue curtains. Several spotlights hung like birds on a wire staring at the white wall pocked with holes where once something had hung. Now the spots are turned off. The building conceals a host of hidden or forgotten things, an architectural labyrinth that starkly contrasts her perfectly arranged schedule. She remembers how, while guiding her to one of her appointments, Kathrin talked about happening on another team by sheer chance after a year and a half in the building …

India continues talking about the building and how the sound easily penetrates the walls between the offices and in the meeting rooms, like the one they are sitting in now. She and India glance around the room as India describes how conversations next door can take over and distort a delicate situation, which can make meetings with citizens stressful at times – especially when there is screaming or sudden outbursts. She notes the sound of her own voice.

India imagines that their new common base, the Loop, will

‘… give that feeling of being proud of your workplace in reality, but something that we also talk a lot about is the feeling of being appreciated as employees …’
Spot off
Conditions

‘Either you sit densely and then you have more work stations. Or you sit more dispersed and then you have fewer work stations.’

The interior architect mentions this as he presents a sketch drawing of the open office space on the screen. The architects facilitate a workshop with the employees and, ergo, future users, as this feedback helps lay the groundwork for producing the Loop’s future interior design. At the workshop they explain the general principle of the design while pointing at the sketch. Another architectural firm has redesigned the Loop’s building structure using principles for ratio 8068 … Yet, she has become aware that a design argument for ‘strong communities’ has gradually replaced this ratio 80 design.

One employee sardonically quips with a somewhat dry tension in his voice, ‘It’s here we have to sit then?’ and, barely concealing his resentment, brings up the distance between desk groups in a particular section, saying:

‘But some of us, when we measure, we find a very short distance.’

The architect informatively replies, ‘That’s correct. That part is one of the most squeezed areas.’

Adopting a critical and investigative tone, the employee persists, ‘How did you get to the notion that it should be like that?’

‘… that was a decision that …’ the architect replies, but the employee interrupts him in the same critical tone:

‘As far as I can see, we don’t have more work stations than where we are…’

The architect answers with an explanatory emphasis, ‘No, we’ve been asked to make the plan based on the job-profiles made.’

The architect is referring to a report on work observations made in 2014 and delineating an activity-based work environment. She reckons that shaping the interior is not just a matter of creating a condition, but of being conditioned as well, and that these preconditions have manifested themselves in decisions made and directions taken years ago. Clearly dissatisfied, the employee sarcastically remarks:

68 Meaning that on average 80 employees of 100 will be present and need a fully acceptable work station at a time.
‘… then this means we are such thin people that we don’t need very much space?’

Calmly, in a monotone, the architect carries on explaining.

‘Then we would have to say that the precondition is something else. The precondition used is the one that is here…’ the architect refers to the sketch drawing and firmly adds:

‘We’ve tried what we could within the framework we have been given.’

The employee promptly responds with more dissatisfaction, ‘And that, that we cannot change? Right?’

The architect seems at somewhat of a loss about the critical intervention. Keeping her cool, she calmly explains the procedures, ‘Well, you have to bring that up in another forum.’

Agitated, the employee gets up from his chair, concluding, ‘Then I have other things to spend my time on,’ and stomps out through the glass door, almost slamming it.

Struck by the rapid escalation of the situation, she feels spun in circles – an affective reaction to experiencing the space as a contraction, where the ‘thinness’ made it sound like people were existentially trapped or squeezed. Something hangs in the air here, like a prologue to rebellion. Or, frustration … powerlessness? … It is hard to put a finger on … The other participants gaze around for a moment. The architect decides to move on, telling the workshop participants that there are several conditions to be met: some are manifest in the physical structure of the new building and some in the decisions made by the steering group. However, the architect stresses, this is not tantamount to there being nothing that can be changed.
Inside/outside performance

FaceTime

There is a smell of newness in the air – of fresh paint, plastic packaging, new furniture, not yet intermixed with the smell of human bodies – a somehow clean, synthetic smell. Up and smoothly running, the coffee machines drip, drip, drip and the internet hums. Technical staff and handymen dart about, dealing with a leaky water tap here, a faulty outlet there and other immediacies. The air is electric with expectations and excitement intermingled with the aroma of fresh cinnamon buns.

It is Monday. Today starts a new everyday life, where much will be business-as-usual, but some things will be different. She enters through the sliding doors, following the narrow, low-ceilinged passageway that meets an atrium opening up towards the sky. A triangular two-storey building surrounds the atrium, with plentiful daylight flooding through the glass roof. She feels as if she is coming out of the narrow streets of a medieval city into the central square. Perhaps it is no wonder she taps into this sensation, for the ancient Romans used the atrium structure to elicit a feeling of space and light. Glassed in meeting rooms directly face the atrium, and windows from the first floor peer down, offering a sneak peek into the organization’s backstage: access strictly prohibited without an access card.

Employees cross paths in the atrium. She hears them say, ‘Look at this, look at that.’ Someone cheerfully asks a colleague meandering around with a quizzical expression, ‘Are you exploring?’ She accidentally bumps into India, who tells her that a concerned employee showed profound relief after unpacking, saying, ‘I think I can get used to this.’

In the atrium another employee is on FaceTime. Evidently she is proudly giving her husband a virtual tour of the atrium and the meeting facilities. With excitement the employee calls out the invitation to her husband ‘come and have coffee’ … First impressions … Movement is more than a physical transition; it is facing something new, facing change, facing time.

Well received

As she gets off the train, she meets George, and they walk to the Loop, chatting as they go. He tells her the move has been great. It is easier to make contact with others – even across
departments.

‘Sometimes you don’t have the energy to write an email and now you can just talk to people,’ he says.

Apparently, the new space opens up for new practices, at least for those coming from the old school, as George explains. Some find the switch to open space challenging, but they share their feelings and are aware not to stick to the same desk, George explains. They had already started the dialogue before the move. Smiling with an implicit reference, George adds that the new meeting rooms are soundproof, which makes his work feel more professional. She recalls how he talked of being resilient, dealing with child removals. She reckons soundproof bolsters resilience.

At the Loop she and George split up. She meets someone from George’s team, who asks if she is looking for George. She smiles and replies that she just met him. The colleague remarks how wonderful it is to sit together and be a bit closer. As it is, the atrium is outstanding for receiving citizens, for ensuring everyone is well received. Before, at the old school, visitors occasionally went missing in the maze-like space, the colleague adds.

At home

‘Moving in here … unbelievable how quickly you adapt. I am personally, personally happy to be moved. It’s so nice to be here. I feel at home. You really sense “this is where I am” …’

The words almost spill over like a sparkling fountain as Kathrin continues:

‘These are lovely rooms. Particularly the atrium. Just amazing. There is light … there is such a sense of community out there. It’s the citizens’ house. The employees’ house. There’s a lovely atmosphere out there.’

Kathrin speaks enthusiastically and with conviction about the move. She and Kathrin are occupying one of the meeting rooms next to the atrium, withdrawing from the buzz of voices and sounds that could well have emanated from an outdoor urban square somewhere, she thinks. A place where people exchange greetings and hugs.

Kathrin smiles while talking. Her energy radiates through her movements, her eyes and invigorating voice. She is confident Kathrin will not take long to laugh.

Asked, Kathrin describes what makes the atmosphere of the atrium:
‘It’s very much the light. That means a lot. And the lines in the space. It’s bright and
plain … It’s friendly and welcoming. It has such a good balance – between just being, what can you
say … It’s a professional place, and at the same time a place you can feel at ease. This that you don’t
feel you are indoors with all the light.’

Kathrin describes the contrast to the old school, adding:

‘… you were almost ashamed when you had meetings with someone from outside.
I always tried to have such meetings somewhere else, where it looked a bit more decent. I have
sensed that because I have been so happy.’ The smile in her voice attests to an almost ecstatic
relief at feeling a carefree kind of ease, like horses prancing around newly green fields after a
long winter indoors.

‘Like being proud. Going “look, isn’t this cool?”’ Kathrin smiles meaningfully.
They both let out a sigh of emancipation from the manifold smells, sounds and light of the gone
and maybe soon forgotten organization.
Public green house
Poppings

Juliet laughs and affirms, ‘Yes, that’s a possibility. To use it in that way.’

In the atrium, the line between private and public blur. It gently pulls the visitor in with its openness, yet remains full of surprises, not least due to the changing art exhibitions. The women at the reception told her earlier that the building captivates citizens, who find it pleasant, warm and welcoming, they said. The slanting influx of daylight on the trees causes them to cast their leafy shadows over the sofas. A mixture of visitors, citizens, employees, men and women are moving in the space. At this moment most of the visitors are elderly, just enjoying a cup of coffee or, she reckons, checking up on how taxpayers’ money has been spent. Such choices can pay off in the next elections. The public-sector organization is not just receiving the public, but also also taking part in the public sphere. The women at the reception also mentioned that they sometimes have to ‘teach’ employees to use the space … She notices, that new spatial practices have to be learned, enjoyed and sensed.

While she is sitting in one of the green sofa arrangements, an employee comes out of a meeting room – she cannot see who, maybe Juliet. Yes, Juliet, who walks over to the sofas. Two colleagues sit outside on another sofa, eating a piece of fruit. They interact.

Juliet comments that coming out of a meeting one day, she saw colleagues in the sofas and exclaimed, ‘Ohh, you’re really enjoying yourself!’

While the two in the sofa smiled, two heads suddenly peered over the tall backrest dividing the sofa into separate spaces. Two other employees were sitting at the back of the sofa. They just popped up like two puppets in a show. Juliet finds it somehow amusing, adding in a surprised tone:

‘They just sit there for a short break. Talk a bit, eat their fruit.’

Juliet ponders whether this is because they are not allowed to eat at their desks. Or perhaps that team has another tone, one that frees them to ‘just pop out to sit here’. Juliet does not know.

Further sharing the surprising experience, Juliet adds, ‘And then they actually sat four colleagues; it was not just the two of them.’

‘It was a little cosy,’ Juliet admits, tasting the sheer cosiness as she utters the words. Such a contrast to her own department, she confesses. Surprised by the event, Juliet realizes that sitting in the atrium had actually never occurred to her.
Juliet reflects on the possibilities, ‘Yes, to have a break … but you can’t sit in the atrium with a colleague and discuss a file. Although, you think you sit … you have no idea who … where your sound goes … If you sit down out there, it’s either because you’re looking at something, or it’s a break with colleagues. Very cosy.’

Hot tempered

15.11.17: Meeting room 3; 8am-12am: Too little air. Too hot. 12-20 people
15.11.17: Meeting room 10; 2pm-2.30pm: Too cold. 4 people
15.11.17: Meeting room 13; 9am: Normally extremely hot.

Today it was appropriate – yes – 22 degrees. © 8-9 people
16.11.17: Meeting room 3; 11am-12am: Too little air. Too hot. Too dense.

Stuffy. 20 people
16.11.17: Meeting room 10; 9am: Too cold. Unsuitable temperature.

It varies from day to day. 4 people

Turn around

‘It’s insane,’ Delia almost yells in astonishment.

They are discussing temperature, in a room with a decent temperature on the first floor.

‘Like hell, as much as it fluctuates. One day an area is super-hot and the next it’s dead cold. People are super happy with the meeting rooms, except for the ridiculously fluctuating temperature.’

Delia’s voice fluctuates like the extreme temperatures. For weeks handymen and technicians have been trying to regulate and balance the central heating system. They will make another attempt this weekend. Delia does not understand how they can be in this situation. Having felt the fluctuations herself, she also wonders about the extreme variations.

‘Three hundred people come in, and the building can’t figure it out. It’s difficult for employees to understand that the one day you sit with blankets and the next, dressed in a sweater,
you are nearly dying of heat. It affects the experience of the building. The other day we had to move to another meeting room. It was simply so cold we could not talk.’ Delia says with a shake of her head.

The heating system seems to have escaped human control, producing its own erratic climate. Like everyone else, she wonders how this can happen. Somehow something is reacting to all the movement, chipping at the everyday climate, affecting the atmosphere, as if the building itself is tuning into the human action.

‘In my world something has to be turned around. It can’t be that difficult. But maybe it is really difficult,’ Delia adds.

Spaces to grow

She joins Charlotte and a new colleague on the drive to a school where they will visit the facilities for kids with special emotional and learning issues. On winding roads through the woods, they arrive at the school she has previously visited with Charlotte. The new colleague is happy about the space, mentioning how it is easy to imagine placing children here. The colleague adds, that she has two candidates in need of ‘intimate spaces to grow’, like these.

Meeting the citizens and their concerns is everyday practice for Charlotte and her colleague, who deal with children. Others in the organization handle waste disposal, daycare, building permissions, special grants, evictions, deaths. Snippets of life compartmentalized into departments. The decisions made here depend on getting human voices to speak, to tell their stories and share their lives, or to provide new direction and anticipate potential by creating the space to grow.

Earlier in the day, she waited in a meeting room, uncertain if she would be allowed to sit in on an annual follow-up meeting with a young protegée, a meeting that would show a space of a young girl growing. Charlotte entered the room together with a young girl and her mother, small-talking and smiling. The mother and daughter consented to her presence without question. Confidently, the girl took the seat at one end of the long, rectangular conference table, flanked by Charlotte on one side and her mother on the other. She was placed next to the mother. Charlotte’s soft voice brought a calmness to the situation, and she began the session with some open questions about life in general. The girl responded without hesitation, soon taking the lead and relating her stories, thoughts, ideas. Stories flowed voluntarily, in a lively but relaxed manner replete with jokes and laughter. At times Charlotte made some additional comments, letting the girl perform.
She noticed how, when periodically chiming in, the mother also turned towards her. This intensified her awareness of her own power to potentially distort the situation … Charlotte usually orchestrated the seating at meetings and used the space to create a sense of safety in dialogues with vulnerable young people … She smiled and nodded affirmatively at the conversation, in a way entering the stage, but also consciously trying to stay at its fringes … There was little need in this case, though, because the girl shone with a vibrant energy, full of ambition and power, despite a long list of obstacles.

She was convinced that this seemingly effortless communication was built on years of trust, as manifested when Charlotte caringly and knowingly inquired about the girl’s environment, siblings, school, future, dreams, already acquainted with most of her references. They toured the potential, the space of the future, yet Charlotte’s questions and comments were anchored in the here and now, as she helped to figure out the next steps between dreams and realism – that space between where the girl wants to go, the steps she is formally obliged to take, but also the place where professionals anticipate her potential to lead. It seemed to her that the situation provided a space in which to grow.

**Spaced time**

It’s 11:18 am. Lunchtime is approaching. Employees start exiting the back offices, crossing the atrium on their way to the canteen. They are arriving in pairs at the moment. She follows the action from a bench. She hears someone ask, ‘Are you all eating now?’ ‘Yes’ is the reply, as the colleagues pass each other. ‘Ok, then I'll just check with the others.’

For many this is a communal event. A steadily growing stream of people flows to the canteen as the clocks tick towards high noon. At the old school they had no canteen. Earlier, Sarah said that they often just ate in an office. Eating was an opportunity to talk over the state of the world. Sarah mentioned that this had changed now:

‘On the contrary the food is good,’ Sarah said laughing appreciatively, pointing out that the regular, no-work-talk, cozy lunches have continued, but that having a canteen has changed things. ‘… At times you sit next to somebody that you’ve never talked to before. And then you start talking. That actually happens. It’s funny, but also very cozy. You feel a bit more part of the organization. I have another feeling of being part of it, actually.’
Sarah also told her that the canteen is often under pressure during the half-hour lunchbreak. Only one-third of the 300-plus employees can fit in the room at a time.

‘It can be a hassle, and the acoustics aren’t good. Extremely noisy. So, we try to find out when it’s best to eat. In relation to the space. We’ve ended up with 11:20,’ Sarah said.

Sitting there in the atrium, she notices the smell of food wafting from the canteen every time its door is opened. The specials of the day leave their mark, blend with a multitude of voices and the clatter of dishes, cutlery and glasses being moved around … Things are cooking in there.

She notices groups, their plates piled high, leaving the canteen. They confidently walk past her, making a beeline for unbooked meeting rooms, although house policy dictates that lunch is to be eaten in the canteen. She has heard people critically express a sense of being ‘squeezed’ in the canteen, which they see as disrespectful to employees … She wonders if this disapproval of the policy is a kind of protest movement. Is this a territorial marking following the logic of pushing and pushing back? Yet, conditions set in stone do not change that easily, thus forming a politics of space.
Lunch boxing
Performing inside

Circulating

Backstage is the working heart of the organization, closed off from visitors to preserve confidentiality. Its looping structure connects all the open office spaces and facilities. A long, wooden shelf runs along the interior wall, like a ribbon tying this constructed loop together – a certain symbolism for tying strong professional communities across the organization, she reckons.

‘It’s a fantastic building,’ Delia proclaims. ‘No doubt the areas differ.’

They talk about the atmosphere across the organization. In the first couple of days after the move, Delia says she was touring the building twice a day to see how things were going. The tours are fewer now. She asks Delia to give her a tour by drawing a map. Delia has a hard time drawing the actual building layout and pinning down its moods on paper.

Delia starts describing the first floor out loud, ‘One area, on the first floor, they work a lot outside the building. Not many sitting there … And when they come in, they don’t seek conversation or the community. It’s not like they say let’s sit together, talk, exchange views and something.’

Delia adopts a recitatioal voice. ‘It’s very quiet up there. They need to sit down and document, as if they need to get home.’

Moving on to the other end of the building, Delia describes the department over there by explaining it in words and scribbling on the paper. She gets a sense of where they are heading in the building. Despite the patchy drawing, she has also been touring the building and noticed similar atmospheres.

Delia says, ‘They’re present in the office, talking across tables. Before, some of them sat rather isolated in their offices. Then they arrived here and seized the open office space in a way that’s totally crazy. Compared to previous moves where we had to sense and feel our way, it took them a week to seize the space. You go in there and they’ve already made some internal maxims like “Hi, you’re standing there talking, could you just move outside, please?”’

Delia talks in a tone of amazement and gratified relief. She adds, ‘They’ve discovered each other. What they’re each capable of. You hear them talk about their files amongst themselves in
a way that they didn’t do before. And being happy about it. Something crazy has happened by our moving into the open space.’

Delia notices another department … over here …. again she’s scratching marks on the paper.

‘They sit a lot at their desks and need to concentrate. They need to sit and work. Before they sat where there was no traffic like there is now. They’ve been challenged. It’s not like last time though, where there were employees crying for two months. It hasn’t been like that at all,’ she says.

Delia has not heard about anyone crying or breaking down. Some were perturbed in the beginning, but things seem to have improved. Some have got used to it; others have moved. Some have received permission to borrow a couple of desks in another area, so they can work under quieter conditions – on a trial basis, Delia adds, pointing at her sketch.

Delia moves swiftly on, absorbed in her pencil marks on her drawing.

‘This group here has mainly been concerned about getting the practicalities up and running. They have been very physical and practical. Less focused on the mental experience of the open space office,’ Delia remarks.

‘Those sitting in the wide area here, it’s more open, more traffic, there’s much more talk … Whereas those sitting down here, they’re closed off; there’s no thoroughway. You only go down there, if you sit there or you have to ask for something. It’s pretty quiet. When entering you catch yourself slowing down your pace and walking silently. It’s really quiet down there. In the beginning you could hear a pin drop. That has improved … as if they have learned that a bit of noise and talk is OK.’

She and Delia pop down to the ground floor.

Delia points out, ‘It’s the same. In one end a department with managers running around to meetings. There’s a lot of activity; people go in and out of meetings. A lot of sparring with the managers, and an ad hoc mood. There’s life. One team is challenged because they don’t feel shielded. The other team is challenged because they’re not shielded from the phoning of the first team.’

Another space is pointed out on the drawing, yet another pace, another feel, in another end. There are also a lot of people, but it is quiet.
Delia says, ‘It’s quiet like the same space on the first floor. Down here it’s also quiet, but different.’ Delia does not know whether this is because they need total silence or have agreed not to talk.

‘It’s just quiet,’ Delia says.

‘There’s a big difference in the mood, when you walk into the different areas,’ Delia finds – a big difference walking through the first floor.

‘People look up, smile and think “OK, hi’,” Delia comments, continuing:

‘Downstairs people are really immersed in their work. Maybe that’s just how it is, but there’s a big difference walking through there. It’s easier to walk through the first floor than downstairs, since you catch yourself thinking, ‘Uhh, am I disturbing anyone while walking here?’ The feeling of being welcome is not there in the same way. There’s a different mood.’ … She wonders if the common building will mean moods spill over between the spaces. Which ones will dominate, or will some spaces become territorial domains with their own moods?

Moving behind

‘She mentions that she was not here the day they moved into the Loop. It made her feel as if she was behind, as if they had made all the rules of conduct the first day, and then burned them. Of course, it wasn’t like that she adds, but that was how it felt – the feeling of already being behind.’

Proper working posture

individual workplace
appropriately furnished
spacious
necessary fixtures, aid supplies and materials
placed in a responsible manner
all functions
can be carried out
safely
proper working
postures and movements
Vibrant matter

It is late spring and sunbeams warm the small office at the old school. The person she is supposed to meet that morning is not at work. She borrows the person’s desk to figure out her next move. She looks down at the desk, finding traces of this individual, the absent person. Taped onto the worn, brown desk surface is a red paper heart. It reads:

Dear xxx (Christmas, 2016),

Today
you get the elf69.

For being you.

Love your swag
And your fine, soft heart.

Hugs to you.

She feels she has missed out on something, or rather someone. The paper heart seems to spread its affective threads in space and time, creating an affective layer, finely burnished with traces of time and people that give the desk a caring patina. The clean desks policy probably frowns on taped paper hearts, but might the two colleagues yet find places where they can sit closer together?

Desk management

Desks are vibrant matter. They were before, during and after the move. At the user workshops, she has noticed how employees argue for more desks and fixed seating, perhaps because they have already tested the managerial advocacy for having a modern building with free seating and clean desks. Although challenged, management has made free seating the agreed rhythm for the Loop, yet the desk total rose in the design drafting and the number of desks continued to be negotiated. ‘It’s management’s responsibility to create a framework for a vibrant community at the Loop,’ said a Power Point slide in a pre-move presentation.

69 In many Danish organizations, there is an ‘elf’tradition during December, where colleagues do something nice or considerate for the person they play ‘elf’ for.
Free seating means finding a new desk every day, wiped of all traces of the person who sat there the day before. Kathrin shares her experience of the Loop’s flexible seating.

‘I’m surprised how much … that people just take the same desks. Sit at the same places.’

Trying to explain why, she searches for words, for plausible explanations, and continues:

‘I think, it’s mostly people’s expectations to colleagueship. That you sit with people … to talk about what we’re so used to talking about … That’s also part of sticking together.’ By emphasizing ‘used to’ her voice distinguishes her own default explorative enthusiasm. Kathrin pauses, waiting for the right words to come to mind:

‘Maybe that’s important to employees … For their well-being… where am I to sit … and with whom?’

A couple months have passed, and some, including top management, now have a fixed desk, or so she has heard. Kathrin confirms this, struggling to solidify an opinion on the matter:

‘That’s a bit ehhh … I actually find it pretty difficult … it gives … it’s kind of … it’s … shall we just say that it’s OK?’ Kathrin is framing a rhetorical question for which she has no apparent answer.

‘In that sense top management are also just employees, you could say,’ Kathrin reasons and adds:

‘How important is it that you sit … sooo flexibly …’ her arms spread wide as she talks, as if to expand space, demonstrate its flexibility and movement. She continues:

‘Practically speaking, we do something other than we say … if it really isn’t what we want and can do … then you could maybe … say the outline is like this. That’s also OK. You can still address wishes to be flexible … you might just address it in how the tasks are performed … ‘Cause, that’s what makes sense.’ How the free-seating situation will develop Kathrin is uncertain.

Desks, clearly are not just neutral objects. They figure in the negotiations of space between grand politics and the politics of the everyday. There are emotions attached to them, they move and define movement, and they appear likely to keep clinging a Weberian bureaucratic ideal of what real bureaucratic work is. She asks herself if desks have by default embodied professional habits that organizations seek to escape with words of flexibility and community but find difficult to fully understand … Becoming (more) nomadic might call for fundamental and existential changes.
Screening
Lamps

‘...and we need to have desk lamps? Just asking stupidly,’ one of the participants says.

Might seem like a stupid question, but to her it wisely inquires how light should condition their future and what the possibilities and preconditions are.

She is at the monthly steering group meeting preparing for the move to the Loop. Agenda point: Desk lamps. Around 15 people are seated around a big black conference table in a glass-partitioned meeting room with grey carpet and white walls. The interior design budget is not huge, the architects have made clear. Having looked at furniture and prices, the project manager concurs and utters conclusively:

‘We aim to get as much as possible. The best quality. Within the budget.’

This will also have to be within the provisions of the government’s public procurement agreement (SKI), as public-sector organizations MUST comply with this agreement, the project manager clarifies ‘MUST’ goes for office furniture, work desks, chairs and lamps. For lamps the options are:

‘... cheap ugly, or more expensive ugly. Or very, very elegant and very expensive. The one for 200 DKK is ugly. The one for 500 DKK is ugly,’ the project manager says with a small sigh of resignation. Somebody asks for the dream scenario – elegant and cheap. The project manager states the factual. The cheapest lamp on SKI is DKK 500.

‘Desk lamps?’ somebody asks surprised and puzzled, as if trying to understand the actual topic of discussion.

‘Yes, desk lamps. For everybody. We’re talking 300 lamps,’ the project manager replies without hesitation.

Somebody quickly does the math: ‘60,000 kroner.’

The summative economic calculation heightens everyone’s awareness, and several participants sit up straighter in their chairs. Desk lamps have an impact. They have the power of decision-making and the purse, a responsibility for setting future conditions. Yet, they are conditioned.

Phoning

‘... phoning and discussing is part of our job, so we do it where we want.’ That is the
attitude, a temporary employee reports, as she and the employee happen on the subject of the atmosphere and phoning culture. The employee mentions that she normally goes to a separate space to do her phone calls, especially when she needs to speak loudly with citizens. She is used to this practice, but others do not seem to heed it, she says a bit wearily.

The phone is one of the central lines to citizens, although in some departments more than others. Phones are key tools for doing casework, coordination and planning. It comes as no surprise then that phones in an open office space also pose a challenge. She has noticed how the acoustical cladding between the tables does little good when employees on the phone push their chairs back, lean back or turn out into the open space. Conversely, some seem immobilized, as if embodying the notion that any real work they do is bound to their desk.

They act as if it is not their problem that the space accommodates a different form of practice. Yet, as Delia firmly puts it, ‘You have to look at how the physical space supports the work task you have. You need to practice the physical space. It’s a transboundary exercise asking, ‘How do you speak, when you speak on the phone?’

Mostly likely, it is a bit like changing your game plan from defensive to offensive tactics on the football pitch – or for the more radical, from chess to a ball game. She assumes it takes time to accommodate new practices. Being successful, performing, may require some coaching and practice. She asks herself whether more sensitivity to the potential inherent in the space and the colleagues could prove a gamechanger? Or are they simply struggling to survive in this section? So it sounds, anyway, when the employee relates the turnover rate, management changes and absence due to sickness. Could practicing space be a way of converting claustrophobic space into abundance?

Ventilation

‘Ventilation we speak about,’ Charlotte says, as they talk about the move. Humans need to vent – their frustrations, their gripes. Charlotte adds that venting helps someone move on. In the small offices of the old school, they used to talk more, talk louder. They would engage in small talk, comment on work and mundane topics: ‘Like how you think, sense. How you feel at work. Sometimes you question the managers’ communication of tasks. Just an immediate affective response. It isn’t something you mean,’ Charlotte explains and continues:
‘That space. Where you can interpret those things, you don’t have any more. Now it’s closed down.’

The move, Charlotte reflects, changes how they are in the workplace. Now, they have to confront managers more directly. Charlotte is unsure whether this is an advantage, although dealing with problems head-on is a plus, Charlotte mentions. The open space seems to become more sensitive to ventilation. The space requires more direct action of people, makes it somehow difficult to overlook colleagues, the space, the everyday practices.

Whiteness

She sits at a white desk. Touching the surface evokes a sense of something cool and easy to clean. The docking station, keyboard, screen and mouse ensure all the necessary functions can be carried out. The black of the stationary items contrasts the white.

In a repetitive pattern the desks fill the open white office space in row after row of two or three desks. Some are separated by acoustic panels, while others cling to one another in double rows. Cleanliness was high on the move agenda. Employees feared the contagion of free seating.

‘I want some color. All this white…’ Linda tells her as she helps a group reorganize their section of a central wooden shelf system. Another group member is flustered, critically remarking that the office is ‘made by architects for architects. Everything is about the looks and not the function or feeling good,’ she says, referring to the shelving and the overall space.

Linda characterizes herself as probably rather sensitive. Tinged with exhaustion, her words stream out in a low, calm tone. She says:

‘Everything is so sterile and uniform. I get a stomachache. I can’t stand being put into a box.’

She explains the stress she experiences in having to find a new desk every morning, like starting from scratch every single day. Linda makes it sound as if she is daily floating, untethered in a limbic space.

‘It feels like not being allowed to be there.’

The clean white seems to wash away the traces of human activity – a clean that prevents contamination. A space of vision. Cool, exposed and difficult to bodily relate too. She ponders other
ways of becoming, as Linda offers her a piece of dark chocolate from her personal basket. The taste, the complexity of dark, is rather indulgent.
Sterile uniform
Screaming silence

She has been sitting in this office space some days. Employees keep pretty much to themselves, as they did in the previous place. She receives an email from someone responding to the email circulated to introduce her. Writing back, she asks about the atmosphere and receives this email in reply:

The atmosphere
‘silence is an ideal’
friendly talks,
a good morning,
risk
being met negatively
few people
very grumpy
you can get ‘eyes’
be ignored.
To me,
a rude person
with negative attitude,
screams
a thousand times more
than
a ‘how are you’ – of 30 seconds.

Some mention that private talk is unpopular with management in this department. Others speak of strong individualism. Some do not bother to say anything. She gets the sense of a lid that has been shut to silence the sound of movement, of noise, of white, of coffee machines, of humans. Could that be so? Or perhaps no one dares to lift the lid and be assaulted with the pent-up billows of screams. She remains struck by the silent scream. Apparently, the physical proximity makes everyone
more distant. To collectively cope with the spatial sense of contraction, maybe they traded their embodied presence. She is never personally introduced to the email sender.

**Honeymooning**

She crosses the atrium late in the lunchbreak. Some employees are leaving the canteen, others are coming out of a meeting with two citizens. A bride in a Cinderella dress cuts through the ordinary dress code with its understated blacks, greys and subdued colours. The staging of this transitory event resembles the bustle of an Italian piazza on a summer day. The wedding entourage is getting ready for the official matrimonial moment. The thought crosses her mind that moving is perhaps like getting married, like tying the knot with the building, allowing yourself to let go and get it under your skin – a certain rite of passage where both parties have to care. The photographer arrives, probably to portray an affective transition from the old to the new, just as she is doing here at the organization, yet her depictions are situational snapshots of everyday life, where something happens, something moves. Take India’s ‘honeymoon’. She recalls asking India how the move felt, and India enthusiastically answered:

‘I remember that we had moved in here Monday. Friday, I went to a family celebration where we sat talking. I went, “it’s totally crazy, it has done so much for the good mood.” It’s a little like a honeymoon.’

Asked what made it honeymoon-like, India got somewhat caught up in recalling the experience, venturing with excitement:

‘I think that it’s this sense of appreciation. On another level. That is, entering somewhere and thinking, there’s actually someone who cares. To make sure we’re feeling well as employees. That feeling we have missed a lot.’

**Buffer zone**

‘Apparently, it was intended to be a buffer zone, but now there’s always somebody,’ Juliet starts off, referring to one of the buffer zones that adjacent departments can expand into or retract from. It is placed where the Loop loops, as a passage from one side of the building to the other.

The frustration in her voice mounts as she describes how people from other places walk by, at times talking together or on the phone. They brush by the desks, her desk. The desks located
right on the main thoroughfare are especially exposed. There is constant traffic to and from the meeting rooms, the kitchenette, the printer, the toilets and the other department. One can easily overhear three simultaneous conversations nearby. This stresses Juliet, who explains that it can be difficult not to eavesdrop when people around you are talking. One helplessly gets involved, even when typing, Juliet remarks.

‘It’s, of course, about settling in,’ Juliet reasons and continues, ‘Having been here for a while, people wallowed forth and back. I was going insane. It was not that long a period. But, but … ehhh, that is a bit what happens, that people think “now we have to settle in”. And you think, “Wow that was what we were told was the silent zone.” I myself used headphones a lot, because I couldn’t concentrate. It’s not that bad anymore. It happens that I sit in the other room. But you get tired in your head. I get tired in my head in another way.’

She recalls her own maneuvering in the building, exploring how it might be used – the uncertainties or dominances that emerge from previous habits.

‘… some become more dominant with their needs, their bodily signals or whatever they have said. Then others become a bit “uhh, what can we actually do here?” Since you don’t have a clarification on how we can be together,’ Juliet says with resignation.

With frustration in her voice Juliet mentions, ‘You have to clarify between departments, “What are these areas we have here, and why?” Managerially you have to be a bit more precise in what you communicate or what you permit in some places.’

Buffer zones create intersectional spaces, but the buffer zone is also a rather vague terrain, potentially transitional and nomadic in its use and thus an exchange or intrusion into settled habits and territorial expectations.
Passage
Acceleration

Each floor of the Loop has kitchenettes. As transparent, glassed-in spaces adjoining an open office, they are meant to provide a venue for a quick chat, a small retreat and a fresh coffee. The coffee machine, sink, dishwasher and fridge are all at one end, illuminated with harsh, artificial ceiling light. The dishwasher is on, sounding like rolling surf on a windy beach. She pushes the button for an espresso brew, and the coffee beans automatically begin grinding.

Although the kitchenette is a place to pause with a coffee, she notices employees enter and often leave as quickly. On the high-rise café table lies a sign with an emoji and the text ‘Be considerate of your neighbors, be silent!’

The glass-walled kitchenettes have proved to serve as ‘loudspeakers’. Instead of being somewhere to slow down, they have become a place of sound acceleration, a space with centrifugal power.
Amplifier
Documenting anticipation

‘I don’t know if it has anything to do with the move, but you feel more … how to say, confronted … before you could hear voices, but now they’re very close. Asking, “How do you know it works?”’ Anna says, explaining that the dilemma has become more ‘in her face’ with the move.

Anna quickly adds, ‘That is, of course, a relevant question.’

They are sitting in a small flex meeting room devoid of windows. She and Anna had to slide into chairs squeezed between the walls each their side of the light brown table that fills the space: they are sitting face to face. The spatial arrangement forces the talk to be ‘in their face’. They laugh, which deconstructs the interrogatory set-up. The situation makes her aware that they are grappling with similar questions and challenges.

The problem seems to lie elsewhere, Anna firmly states. ‘We need to talk the language that can be understood. So, we can catch it, to make it visible. Not that I have a good idea how …’

Anna talks about her work, calling it deconstructive work practice, meaning practices that call for a language that can be understood – understood by other working regimes. Anna starts describing how they work:

‘We work anticipatorily. Anticipatory is when we have a concern. There is a child, a family, a team not working. There is something there … then we have a concern. We work before a case is a case. And that area is, is very hard to grasp,’ Anna says of the challenge:

‘You need to document it. Somewhere it has to be visible. I find that good. That manifests the gravity of our work.’

However, as Anna makes clear, Excel is not a program they are terribly good at, as it fails to truly capture the preventive, the anticipatory dimension, which in turn clashes with the normal standards of Excel documentation. The language of anticipation is about listening, sensing that something is there, something that comes before an event splits into causes, effects and specificities. It is about the process that precedes Excel, a process where the affective capacities take part in facilitating the process – a process of pull, it seems to her. To her it sounds like working from an emerging causality.
Moving performance

Ambition

At a joint meeting a month before the move, the Loop – its spaces and the organizational ambitions – is presented. The slides outline:

An ambition to realize.

More collaboration, more accessibility.

In practice,

it’s a one size doesn’t fit all.

The new building supports

the highest efficiency,

the highest quality,

and well-being ‘for the money’.

An ambition to get better

taking difficult, troubled situations in the bud,

through citizen-centered dialogue.

Dealing with the cases before they become cases.

An Excelled human

‘Yes, we would like to do something for the citizen, we would like to have them inside,’ Juliet says, adding that economics have pushed humanity aside. Juliet underlines that employees know how to make economic arguments; it is how they get things through. Optimizing the budget and improving things is fair enough, Juliet points out, but there are many ways to go about it. A human perspective is also necessary, she explains. She points to the consequences of lacking one:

‘What happens is that you get ten times more complaints … At least in some parts, that holistic human perspective has been cut down to Excel. It is also the kind of manager you employ,
not because the places where there is more humanity … have someone who focuses less on the budget. Not at all.’

Looking at citizens as holistic humans creates a dilemma with ‘an Excel spreadsheet perspective’, Juliet notes resolutely as she continues, ‘People are not Excel spreadsheets.’

Juliet gets back to the new spaces, saying, ‘there are different things that move, they influence each other. One thing … the rooms … Fundamentally, thinking that everything has to be so cute, and pretty … but forgetting that humans cannot be put in cute, or pretty, or Excel spreadsheets... there needs to be some atmosphere.’
Moving performance
**Lower productivity, higher efficiency**

She recalls the note from a hearing in the departments when the Loop was being designed. The note presented a prognosis for the Loop and its impact on work productivity and efficiency

‘A lot indicates
the number of “fully acceptable work stations”,
where work is done
7.5 hours in a row
is limited;
we must expect
to move

The consequence
we move
all the time.
Time taken
from effective productivity.
It should be articulated to management
despite interior design
supporting more efficient work flow.
We expect lower productivity
but higher efficiency.’

She wonders if that is simply a bad tradeoff, at least if one understands efficiency as performing in the best possible manner with a minimum of waste, and productivity as the number of defined and documented results.
How does productivity deal with cases before they come cases? All the anticipatory work done that is done before, before a child becomes a problem – a case – before parents are summoned, before a professional elucidation, before legal measures are taken, before the human becomes a number. The work that comes before the number in the system, how does one account for it in productivity terms? Or for the savings realized in the long-term human and societal costs when anticipation has enabled the child to ‘escape’ becoming a case in the first place.

**Voices**

The organization has now been in the Loop for a couple of months. The government’s mandatory employee satisfaction survey and physical workplace assessment have been conducted. Providing a peek into the organization’s backstage, the survey and assessment break down the employees into various figures.

- 70% are proud of working in the organization
- 61% find the physical working environment to be good
- 33% find the indoor climate to be satisfactory
- 31% are not bothered by noise

The notes are elaborated with anonymous statements that show the range of experiences:

- ‘in shaping the building
- the well-being of the employees
- and the working conditions
- have been down-prioritized to an unacceptable level’

- ‘It’s a fabulous building,
- we have all possibilities
- to create a connection
- between the good physical conditions
- and a good mental working environment.’
Game change

Anna explains how entering the open office space at the Loop requires body language:

‘I try and look what people are up to … if I enter and you’re sitting and writing, if you raise your head and look at me, then I say “good morning” because I’m interrupting what you’re doing. But if you don’t raise your head, then I know ‘Ahh OK, she’s concentrated,’ and then I say nothing.’

She asks Anna, what body language means to the organization and the new space. As a professional on human behaviour, Anna willingly elaborates:

‘To create a thriving foundation, you need attention … But it is a reciprocal exercise. You also have to step into the room and be susceptible. It is like teaching children to change their game. You decode, attune … Not everybody has the competence to read the landscape. What others are up to. It’s not equally easy. That we have to acknowledge …’
Chapter 8: Moving Towards an Ontology of the In-between

_The in-between questions the established polarity of the subject-object._

(Cioflec, 2012: 75f)

_moving is knowing …_

(Ingold, 2011: 163)

This thesis has engaged with the notion of organizational atmosphere both empirically and conceptually, reflecting an aesthetic, spatial and affective apprehension. Further pursuing the thesis’s overall proposition to view and research organization as an atmospheric phenomenon, this chapter will reflect back from the empirical material to the methodological and conceptual concerns of a shift from attending to organization as a static epistemic phenomenon to a moving relational ontology. The first part of the chapter revisits the empirical descriptions to discuss how the notion of organizational atmosphere addresses the everyday affective-embodied forces of organizing spatially and socially. This leads into discussions on the methodological implications of researching a non-dualist phenomenon. To do so, the chapter suggests to reconsider Heidegger’s seminal triad of ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ as an atmospheric triad of ‘Spacing, Performing, Moving’. On this basis the chapter ends with a conceptual discussion which theorizes organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between that emphasizes a double-sided relationality.

**Organizational atmosphere as an experience and design of the everyday**

In unfolding an affective tour of the everyday at two organizations, the empirical chapters 6 and 7 have mapped out affective situations, thus showing how atmospheres work in an organizational context and are a constitutive part of organizing in itself. The material shows how the event of moving organizations to new facilities constitutes an intervention in an organization’s organizational atmosphere. The analysis traces how organizational atmospheres are produced and experienced, thus giving a sense of how organizational atmospheres work in the everyday lives of
organizations. It seeks to show how something happens in the moment, as Schmitz (2014b: 14) and Stewart (2008a) argue, or what can be called an ‘empiricism of sensation’, as Clough (2009) puts it. It thus aims for another way of presenting organizational atmosphere, one that reflects a non-dualist nature in which a performative perspective on knowledge generation is emphasized and therefore attends to affective and sensuous moments. The analytical experimentation has been driven by an ambition to think beyond traditional categorizations and conceptual correspondence and thus to engage with organizational atmosphere as an affective relational ontology. The aim of this endeavour has been to give attention to processes and forces that emerge as felt meanings in situations.

The assemblage of situational vignettes crystallizes the relation between affect, space and aesthetics in organizations, revealing how the production and experience of organizational atmosphere are interwoven – an interwovenness that resurfaces between the two organizations in the sense that vignettes present relations throughout the empirical chapters 6 and 7 as well as within each of them. The empirical chapters reflect a heuristic distinction in perceiving and producing organizational atmosphere, applying the analytical reasoning of Böhme (2013a: 105). However, for the purpose of moving beyond the dualist perspectives it must be acknowledged that a relational ontology underpins the engagement with organizational atmosphere. Against this background, the discussion will start off by ‘extracting’ five major discussion points arising from the empirical chapters 6 and 7: 1) composing aesthetic totalities, 2) anticipated attunement, 3) moving scenography, 4) amplified multiplicities and 5) conditioned situations. The first two points reflect on the aesthetic spacing of organizational atmosphere, thus addressing the ‘chords of corporeal sensibility’ so as to shape an affectively resonating space. The next two focus on the performance of organizational atmosphere and its ‘stages’. The last discussion point draws attention to some of the conditioned situations that affect the spacing and performing of organizational atmosphere.

**Composing aesthetic totalities**

The empirical material shows how organizations moving to a new physical location use the architectural design process as an opportunity to consider alternate ways of working and organizing. Further, the considerations underlying the new architectural designs emphasize concerns that extend beyond mere functionality, as they address issues like well-being, the sense of community and affection. Accordingly, both the firm of architects’ aesthetic practices and the ambitions of the public-sector organization are seen to exemplify an interest in the affective qualities of space and to resonate with key conceptual discussions on the productions of atmosphere (Böhme, 1995, 2013a; Zumthor, 2005; Pallasmaa, 2007, 2014).
In particular, the firm of architects performs an aesthetic practice akin to the conceptual discussions, its explicit aim being to compose totalities that can condition an affective mood-inducing experience for the commissioning organization. The firm ‘brings space back in’ as well as affective atmospheres to the everyday of organizations, thus proposing an alternative to a neutral, container space and, on a practitioner’s level, reiterating the scholarly request (Kornberger and Clegg, 2004; Dale and Burell, 2008; Burell and Dale, 2003, 2015; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011). The architect’s attention is focused on a processual inside-out approach consisting of continuous movements of zooming in and out of the design, which emphasizes a relational and non-linear way of composing. This form of composition provides an example of ‘spacing organizations’ and organizational atmosphere by offering a processual understanding of space, whose force exceeds the actual composition and forms an active space for a dynamic enactment of the organization’s everyday space (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; O’Doherty, 2008). However, compared to, e.g., O’Doherty’s cloud example, installation art or post-dramatic scenography (see McKinney, 2017), the firm shows how organizations are spaced in everyday environments, a spacing reflecting Böhme’s aesthetics as an everyday notion (1995; 22ff.) and Schmitz’s point that the everyday dwelling participates in shaping the emotional-affective climate as a caring enclosure (Schmitz, 2015: 74ff.).

As the firm explicitly mentioned, it creates affective mood-inducing experiences that touch one’s gut feelings. From the practitioner’s perspective the two concepts of atmosphere and mood are fluid, although they emphasize that mood is what is touched in the gut. Accordingly, the firm’s architectural work focuses on shaping the situations and encounters of being moved as the active and collective component of the design, which reiterates Hasse’s architectural distinction between atmosphere as environment and mood as moving atmosphere constituting co-worlds (2015: 230) – a distinction that builds on Schmitz’s distinction between noted atmosphere and moving atmosphere. In this sense, a spatial design can be understood as constituting a way of being together and knowing what is collectively possible (Flatley, 2008: 22). By emphasizing the gut feeling created by an architectural design, this stresses the focus on the embodied experience of space, which recalls Schmitz’s feeling body as attending to the holistic-existential experience as an embodied resonance.

In order to create organizational atmosphere, the firm relies on a set of ‘words’ to describe the mood the commissioning organization is seeking. This process demonstrates first that the architectural practice constitutes a spatial interpretation, which underlines the non-representational character of affective space. Second, such a process emphasizes an atmospheric aesthetics by seeking an interpretation that transforms words into an embodied experience of ‘how’ it should/could feel,
such as when the architects consider work spaces as needing to meet an ‘ahh’-obligation of comfort and to ‘be breathtaking’. Such an embodied experience highlights an aesthetics of felt meaning (Warren, 2008: 560), which also underlines how the aesthetics of atmospheres pertains, not to categorizations of the beautiful, ugly, etc. (Strati, 2000), but to aesthetic perception as a question of well-being (Böhme, 1995: 42). Further, the firm of architects also emphasizes the relevance of having the courage to reflect differences in organizational space and organizational members’ needs when one designs architecture. This resonates with what might be called a broader organizational aesthetics that focuses on process and forces (Beyes, 2016: 118). An emphasis on difference, achieved, e.g., by creating variation in the design, serves to question Böhme’s rather uniform view on ‘well-being’, thus opening towards Schmitz’s spontaneous experience and the uncertain. This could gently point in the direction of post-humanist discussions that downplay the centrality of the human agent to instead refer to the agency of materiality (Barad, 2018). This agency can be sporadically found, e.g., the attention to ‘patinating’ materials and the public-sector organization’s placement of big trees in the atrium. In this sense a spatial interpretation of words is not only a translation into an actual physical design for the organization, but also a way of spacing organizational atmosphere to create a continuous potential that can be enacted.

The design process in the architectural firm is minute and careful, based on combining, discovering and finetuning between the detail and the totality. As such, the firm’s process of composing architectural designs for organizations generally reflects what Böhme calls the art of staging atmosphere, described as an oscillation between the whole and the parts in a sensory endeavour (Böhme, 1995, 35f.). This aesthetic practice shows how architectural design takes the synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters seriously, e.g., when the ‘variations’ of colours and veneers and how colours can bring ‘heaven down on earth’ are explored or how ‘shadows’ are included in the architectural design. This resonates with Böhme’s attention to the ecstasy of things (Böhme, 1995: 155ff) and the affective force of, say, colour (Beyes, 2017; Beyes and DeCock, 2017). In line with Schmitz, due consideration is also given to the kinaesthetic aspects when the way space invites movement is in focus, thereby creating an everyday ‘politics of space’ where ‘yellow anchors’ and communal tables (like the ‘Starship Enterprise’) become ways of creating a moving dynamic of contraction and expansion. By way of comparison, in the public-sector organization, the concern for synaesthetic and kinaesthetic characters come to the fore in the atrium, while the open space offices generally rely on a more geometrical layout that follows a modernist legacy of white, grey and black (see Connellan, 2012).
The aesthetic practice of the architectural firm presents an embodied process, where, e.g., moods and atmosphere are interpreted as a relational and affective endeavour and an acknowledgement is made of the fact that, depending on the relation, ‘words’ can have different interpretations and that the architectural design could be different. This echoes the point from organizational aesthetics that organization is constituted in a perceptive relation (see Strati, 1996, 1999: 2ff.), yet emphasizes how organization manifests itself in architectural design. That the aesthetic work emerges by the architect’s own embodied and tacit knowledge shows up in the design process when the architects immerse themselves in the design, creating their own spheric bubbles and sensing the potential moods. Here, they merge into each other, such as when the architects finish each other’s sentences, repeat them, exchange gazes or sighs. The embodied engagement further emerges in how everyday life is an immense source of inspiration that merges with professional competences, for an attention to details like smell, taste and sound continually permeates the aesthetic practice. This underlines the architect’s embodied way of engaging with world and organization, revealing a blurred line between profession and everydayness and emphasizing sensory embodied knowledge as being nurtured and exercised in the apprehension of everyday things, doings and affects. This reiterates the notion that organizational atmospheres are an everyday aesthetics (Böhme, 1995) that focuses, not on beauty and embellishment, but on ‘something doing something’. In the architectural design, what ‘does something’ is the affective spatial gesture of caring, like a comfortable chair seen in the totality. This also reiterates Schmitz’s point of considering situations in the production of atmosphere as a way of letting the actual design emerge out of a field of possibilities. In the case of the public-sector organization, on the other hand, the architectural design process at times reflects a constellational approach like the organization’s selecting ‘lamps’. This indicates a different design process, but also how at times economic and political concerns might take over the aesthetic process. Composing aesthetic totalities reflects an aesthetic practise aiming at spacing of organizational atmosphere as an aesthetics of the everyday. Such spacing entails considering the potentials that can become actual by creating an expanded scenography attentive to an organization’s ‘chords of corporeal experience’. This makes space an active organizational force by virtue of its touching the existential gut feeling.

**Anticipated attunement**

The empirical analysis shows how the architectural design process involves the commissioning organization in the process. The firm of architects’ aimed to make organizations take responsibility for their work environment, reflecting the potentially activating force of atmospheres
and its (critical) potential for organizations. As such, the aesthetics composition can be seen as not just spaces made for the organizations, but as a way of spacing organization by attending to the future use. The involvement of the users in the architectural design process by the firm of architects’ reflects an acknowledgement of movement and change in the architectural design. Paying attention to change and the moving qualities of designed space, the firm of architects makes the timely component of relationality more explicit in the design of physical space by emphasizing the role of user. Accordingly, the firm of architects present a relational process, in which organizational atmosphere is spaced by addressing an anticipated attunement in the commissioning organization. As such, the firm engages in a constant ‘fine-tuning’, ‘iterations’ and ‘zooming in and zooming out’ in order to strike the ‘chord’ of the organizations’ collective drive to get the architectural design to create a spatial condition in which organizational atmospheres can emerge. The commissioning organization as the user plays a crucial role in how architecture is received and atmospheres work, especially when one considers organizational atmosphere as a transindividual affective space (Anderson, 2005: 654; Michels and Steyaert, 2016: 82; Schmitz, 2014a: 50ff.).

For both the firm of architects and the public-sector organization, the users play a key part in conditioning the design, which responds to the critique that the user is forgotten in the design of many representational buildings and office spaces (see Zumthor, 2005, Pallasmaa, 2014, Böhme, 1995, 2013a: 14; Burell and Dale, 2015: 7). However, the firm of architects’ relational engagement with its commissioning organizations can be said to take Böhme’s proposition further and turn instead towards Schmitz’s embodied communication as a way of apprehending the organization. Instead of trying to think-about organizations as users, the firm of architects apparently makes an effort to think-with the commissioning organization. This is highlighted in their user workshops and their listening attention to the commissioning organization, which reflects ways of embodied communication.

‘Listening’ is a crucial part of attending to the organization and a practice that reflects an explorative openness to the organization’s world, which is an aspect of giving flesh to the organizational atmosphere formulated in the words for the architectural design. The practice of listening as an embodied communication elicits a way for the architect to attune to the organization and thus anticipate a spatialized future. In this sense, the firm’s process underlines how unravelling the architectural design does not create a space for organizations, but is spacing organizations. Centrally, the embodied communication further shows in the firm’s workshops where the commissioning organization was invited to an embodied engagement that took place through presensing scenarios, the future spaces and new ‘ways of working’. The workshops also enabled
organizations to exercise and ‘build occasions’ for their future space. The encounters between the
firm of architects and the organizations provide an anticipated attunement that makes use of verbal
and embodied communication as a means of attending to spatial dynamics, but also to the way the
organization aspires to be in the world, thus emphasizing the changing nature of organization. As
such, the design process concerns not only the actual physical design to emerge but also the
potentialities of, e.g., ‘becoming space’ and the ‘common thread’ in organizations. In line with the
affective turn, this is a way of making both the physical and felt body present in the design process

The engagements between architects and organizations also show the way new spatial
solutions might illuminate how employees relate and identify with the organization, as argued by
Burell and Dale (2015: 9). The workshop experiences from both the firm of architects and the public-
sector organization serve to demonstrate how the process of architecturally altering organizational
space in an organization touches existing habits, practices and ‘built expectations’ as well as its power
structure and social organization. Yet, the expectations may embody both excitement and anxiety.
This accentuates how organizational atmosphere goes beyond the physical space, starting as soon as
the architectural design is developed and continuing into its everyday usage. As such, the workshops
form a sensuous experience of existing organizational atmospheres and its inherent tensions that
constitutes a way of anticipated affective attunement, which can be actively used in the architectural
design.

As seen in the firm of architects, the success of the architectural design not only depends
on the architect’s skills and competences but also puts a responsibility on the organizations to engage
in a ‘collaborative chord of tuning’, which means that engaging with organizational atmosphere is not
like ‘buying a litre of milk’, but rather like engaging in a process of (self)-questioning how to work and
how to be in the world. This understanding shows architectural production as not an object, but as a
relational aesthetics that unfolds already in the architectural design process. The aspect of anticipated
attunement accordingly draws attention away from what has been discussed as pure embellishment,
as a pure tool for economic goals or ambitions (Böhme, 1995; 2013a; Burell and Dale, 2015: 11f.;
Heibach, 2012a: 12) to unfold different ways of thinking space and organization, ways that point to
an intrinsic existential experience, as seen in the discussions on expanded scenography (McKinney
and Palmer, 2017), and space as an active force in organizations (O’Doherty, 2008; Beyes and
Steyaert, 2011). Following this line of thought, one wonders what ambitions and assumptions
organizations hold when engaging with architecturally designed space, as these will impede the
potentiality of spacing organizational atmosphere depending on the extent to which organizations think-about-space or think-space. One might also wonder to what extent organizations attend to their collective gut feeling, their embodied experience, the possibility of difference, challenges to their comfort zone, etc.

An architectural spacing of organizational atmosphere, however, also accentuates the role of the architect. Attending to a processual development of organizational atmosphere, the firm of architects proposes that the architect be considered as a ‘trustee’ that builds a world for others through an ability to let go of their own ambitions. Taking the role of the trustee questions the traditional (star) architectural authorship, and thereby also touches on key understandings about the role of the architect and their epistemic and ethical position (see Brejzek, 2017; Reckwitz, 2014: 114ff; Hasse, 2015: 237; Böhme, 2013a: 176). As such, the role of the trustee reflects how a processual approach to architecture alters the architect’s professionalization and, in line with Reckwitz, instigates a shift from being a producer to an initiator of atmospheres (Reckwitz, 2014: 114ff.), which takes Böhme’s critical architecture into a stronger processual perspective. Yet, the role of the trustee could be seen as a way of integrating elements of Böhme’s quests for aesthetic education, Sloterdijk’s perspective on exercise and what Schmitz terms aesthetic behaviour. Seeing the role of the architect as a trustee and an initiator of organizational atmosphere might be considered as an atmospheric coaching process for the organization, when coaching is described as an ‘aesthetic learning process’ that understands aesthetics as a sensual situational experience (Stelter, 2007: 193). As the analysis points out, considering the architectural design process as an organization’s aesthetic learning process, such as learning to ‘care’ and be aware of ‘the common thread’, enables the organization to space everyday activities and thus space organizational atmosphere. The aesthetic learning process underlines that a successful design is one that is continuously mouldable to and by the organization itself, but reflects the skills and competences of the architectural profession as the spatial interpreters and initiators of organizational atmosphere. Anticipated attunement aims at making the organization’s world the basis for the architectural design so as to create an adaptable architecture and relational aesthetics. This stresses how the spacing of organizational atmosphere is shaped with the users as a means of unleashing the active potential of organizational atmosphere in the future, which by way of Schmitz and Böhme can be considered as an active engagement that potentially enables both immersive and critical perception.
**Moving scenography**

Turning to the public-sector organization to emphasize the experiential part of organizational atmosphere, the overall empirical material presents organizational atmospheres that can be performed both actively and passively. Further, the empirical material shows a variety of scenographies that form the embodied experience and ways of social organizing. With the move to the Loop, the ambitions of the public-sector organization to ‘become different’ by promoting citizen dialogue and creating stronger communities are laid out in the physical space as a scenography using kinaesthetic and synaesthetic invitations for the organization to perform. Given that the public sector is commonly seen as a stronghold of Weberian an-aesthetic bureaucratic management, the public-sector organization’s attention to sensory and aesthetics aspects of organization with their transition to new facilities constitutes in itself a remarkable and progressive move. As such, the public-sector organization shows how aesthetization processes seep into and are acknowledged in the organizational everyday as ways of understanding organization (Beyes, 2016; Reckwitz, 2014: 11; Strati, 2000: 101).

On the basis of the analysis two main stages can be said to prevail in the Loop: the inside/outside space, which is made up of the communal areas, and the inside space, which is the main work space of organization and not accessible to the public. The moving process stresses how the different scenographies and their spatial dynamics resonate with the corporeal experience and how, in an intensified form for the period of inhabitation, old routines are challenged and new ones start to settle in. When one considers the atrium and the open office spaces separately, these two stages largely present two different scenographies and different atmospheric experiences. The atrium with its daylight, colour, plants and an explorative, rhythmic way of movement is generally received as having a ‘welcoming’ and ‘homely’ atmosphere, reflecting how the conditions produce atmosphere, as Böhme argues (2013a). The atrium space presents an in-between space, where the distinction between public sector and visitor blurs, at least momentarily, which resonates with Kornberger and Clegg’s suggestion that in-between space provides an excess capacity by offering flexibility and possibilities (2008: 153). However, employees and externals also intuitively immerse themselves, embodiedly following the rhythm of the space and exploring its potentialities. This serves to constitute the space as a ‘public greenhouse’, thus breeding an emotional climate in line with Schmitz’s dwelling perspective (2014a: 62). The employees (and citizens) become part of performing the organizational atmosphere experienced in the atrium through their embodied movement, their talk, their laughs – a performance that reflects elements of expanded scenography like co-performance and the immersive
quality of the design as a relation between bodies, objects and environment (see McKinney and Palmer, 2017: 2f.), which makes things happen, spontaneously ‘pop up’. Yet, as the analysis shows, the new spaces also provide a potential to spatialize professional practices, e.g., by how the atrium makes the citizen feel welcome and the facilities work, which adds a sense of professionalism for employees, of feeling ‘at home’, and aids in the embodied communication and dialogue with citizens. A similar in-betweenness of inside and outside is seen at the architectural studio, which uses, e.g., gathering points like the ‘reception’ and makes a more ‘nomadic’ use of space. Yet, the studio is even more radical, its outside and inside being fully blurred because visitors go straight into the office space, while the public-sector organization is legally prohibited from giving the public free access to the office areas. However, the atrium presents an ambiguous space in the sense that it contains an excess of possibilities. Take, for example, the simultaneous happenings of colleagues taking a break, wedding parties showing up and citizens arriving for a meeting with a public official. This enables different kinds of social organizing, but also establishes a different contact with externals. As such, the atrium shows a flow between actuality and potentiality, which opens up for another apprehension of (public) organization, since the official organization fades with the mundane practices outside the organization. In this respect one also sees how the space becomes an active agent that is relationally performed (O’Doherty, 2008: 546; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 52), as the space is more than a reception area for the public-sector organization. Although the atrium enables the performance of an organizational atmosphere of openness and welcoming, as O’Doherty points out, such spaces might, however, not be free of power relations (2008: 545).

Other areas, like the canteen, meeting rooms and the interior open offices at the public-sector organization, present other atmospheric experiences that are much more contested, due, e.g., to the fluctuating temperatures, sound, colour and density of people. Overall these experiences reflect Michels and Steyaert’s argument that atmospheres emerge by design and by accident (2016), as, e.g., in the case of ‘temperature’ which constitutes an own agential force and thus point at the relevance of post-humanist considerations of the agency of materiality (Barad, 2018; Bennett, 2010). As the analysis shows, the uncontrollable temperature and the sound in the canteen instigate unforeseen movements and affective moving in the public-sector organization, thus performing organizational atmospheres that form unexpected social and professional ways of organizing. The ‘lunch boxing’ in the canteen manifests as an intense and contracting space, where the potential for enhancing social coherence is challenged by the actual production of noise and intensity coming from bodies, materials, smells and movement as they all fold together. A situation like ‘spaced time’ illustrates how the
performed organizational atmosphere of the canteen goes against official policies of the organization. In the case of the canteen the experience of the noise as a contracting spatial dynamic emphasizes Hainge’s point that noise also constitutes an immersive and relational ontology of a non-intentional character (2013), which here takes part in forming an organizational atmosphere. Likewise, the fluctuating temperature impacts on the unfolding of, e.g., how meetings are held. As such, the felt meanings emanating from the conglomeration of materials, smells, movements and bodies of organizations influence the continuous performance of organizational atmosphere and social organization. The atrium and the canteen reflect the relevance of considering the scenography as an expanded scenography including movement, sound and air, as it impacts on the social organization as well as the professional practices of an organization. This demonstrates how performing organizational atmosphere is relational. Although it also shows the power of organizational atmospheres in their unintended consequences, it nonetheless also reflects the relevance of considering the embodied resonance of space and the conditions set rather than a visual aesthetics.

Amplified multiplicities

Another central stage for performing organizational atmospheres in the public-sector organization was the inside space, or the backstage only accessible to employees. Where the first main stage attended to a variety of scenographies and their moving qualities, the second main stages show how a rather uniform interior design gives rise to a multiplicities of organizational atmospheres. The aesthetic totality of the inside recalls the modernist ideal of order and little embodied resonance (Connellan, 2012, 2013; Schmitz, 2005a: 180), which is reflected in the clean desk policy and ‘free seating’, as well as in the experience of a ‘sterile’, ‘screening’, ‘alienating’ and ‘white’ environment in the open offices.

Despite a largely uniform interior design, the experiences of ‘circulating’ the different open space offices of the public-sector organization vary widely as regards the work environment and its atmospheric qualities, their ranging from a perspective of enthusiasm over new possibilities, like ‘honeymooning’, to one of frustration and constraint, like ‘screaming silence’. As such the empirical material shows a multiplicity of atmospheres that constitute different dominating atmospheres formed and enacted as ongoing social formations across departments. Fundamentally, this also reflects Böhme’s and Schmitz’s argument that atmospheres co-exist, and especially Schmitz’s argument that one can distinguish between atmospheres that are noticed and atmospheres that move. This resonates
with Borch’s argument that organizational atmosphere should be considered as composed of many spheric bubbles (2009) and underlines how affect forms a flow of forces, drawing attention to emotions and embodied practices of organization (Strati, 1995, 2003; Warren, 2008; Gherardi, 2017; Barsade and Gibson, 2007; Fotaki et al., 2017; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; Michels and Steyaert, 2016) – points that show how this research contributes to discussions in the affective turn and organizational aesthetics.

The public-sector organization also illustrates how the move intensifies the collective affective experience, disrupting routines and embodied habits, with the ‘forgotten’ seeming to blossom in the new environment while the ‘introverted’ seems to remain introverted, at least in the period where the organization settled in at the Loop. This reflects how previous situations may become conditioned ones that influence the horizon of significance of the current situations, e.g., through a collective appreciation of a nicer smell. The move to the Loop provides a moment of amplified sensations, which at the same time constitute multiple current situations that may come to challenge existing conditioned situations as well as form into other conditioned situations over time. This transformative period holds the promise of new beginnings, of ‘becoming different’, but also poses challenges and resistance arising from how situationally performed organizational atmosphere draws on previous conditions. As such, the multiplicity of organizational atmospheres underlines a relational ontology, which means that the potential of the architectural design is actualized in the everyday performance.

Accordingly, the move illustrates how an organization can be moved in different ways and intensities, depending also on the inhabitation of space, which serves to emphasize the existential dimension involved and the willingness to engage with space. On the one hand, the move results in affective organizational atmospheric bubbles of satisfaction and joy, which come in amplified versions such as ‘honeymooning’, ‘welcoming’ and a positive discovery of the organization, colleagues and new possibilities – something reinforcing social interaction and sensing a joint effort of inhabitation and thus constituting a social centripetal dynamic and an atmosphere of engagement. On the other hand, certain organizational atmospheres emerged that constituted a centrifugal social dynamic by which embodied gestures, the everyday performances and the space amplified the sensation of despair or alienation. Instances like ‘screaming silence’, ‘whiteness’ and ‘phoning’ contributed to a very ‘noisy’, alienating and frustrating atmosphere from which employees wished to escape. This tended to socially distance people who sat in close proximity to each other and created a certain affective passivity and isolation. These situations show how different ways of embodied communication with
other bodies, materials, things and affects become ways of attuning with the environment and thus of informing variations in embodied social coordination. This underlines the general argument for understanding organizational atmosphere as a relational ontology wherein space, humans, non-humans and affect blend together in a processual constitution where organization and atmospheres are constant becomings that also have the potential of becoming different, albeit perhaps neither the becomings wished for nor ones creating caringly enclosing space that provides an existential shielding (Schmitz, 2015: 76ff.) or a spatial immunity (Sloterdijk, 2004: 260ff.).

The internal organization shows desks to steer the organization of the open office space, which reflects Burell and Dale’s argument that desk work is what is promoted in the design of office space (2015: 4). Already in the design process work is for many employees associated with a fixed desk. With the move the ‘desk management’ situation shows how top management returns to having fixed desks despite a declared ambition of clean desks and ‘free seating’. This reflects the point made by the firm of architects, that working more nomadically is often a challenge to many employees and organizations, among other things. Further, ‘desk management’ as a current situation seems to permeate the organization with a sense of uncertainty as to what will happen in the rest of the organization, thus emphasizing the power hierarchy displayed. This reflects how social objects such as desks can play a part in creating social and power dynamics by virtue of how they are used and why (Clegg and Kornberger, 2006: 143ff.; Dale and Burell, 2008: 7). As such, managerial decisions, even small ones, may resonate affectively in the organization by creating uncertainty and frustration, as also seen in the ‘buffer zones’. Looking at organizational atmosphere in this sense brings attention to the embodied gestures and happenings of affective concern, which as a constellational specificity may seem banal, but considered as part of a situational totality may enforce an existential experience, e.g., of clean white desks as being unwanted, exposed and controlled. As such, the embodied gestures and spatial practices are also part of strengthening or dampening what Schmitz calls the emotional culture or ‘spirit’ (Schmitz, 2014a: 104ff.) of an organization. Apart from the dynamics and the capacities of the architectural design, the empirical material addresses the potential need to exercise the spacing of practices, e.g., practising how to move, how to ‘phone’ and how to be more ‘nomadic’ in an open office space. Compared to the public-sector organization, the firm of architects show a use of their organizational space in a more integrated manner, spacing their assignments by changing locations, doing ‘floor work’ or improvising a ‘table’ instead of having the assignment fit the desk. In this sense the architects spatialize their practice while also acknowledging that spacing organizational practice requires effort and exercise.
As such, the empirical material suggests that organizations may consider the social dynamic of organizational atmosphere as centrifugal or centripetal forces, a point echoed in Hasse’s point that successful atmospheres and the qualities of the milieu do not make people turn away from one another and isolate themselves, but open up for productive encounters (Hasse, 2014: 223). As such, the performance of organizational atmosphere can amplify the social dynamic and its centripetal force by participating in creating and reshaping a caring emotional climate that shields the abysmal outside (Schmitz, 2015: 76ff.). While the architecture can enable the spacing of organizational atmosphere to various degrees, the space alone does not do it, but the organization also has to be willing (or able) to inhabit rather than reside in a space in order to unfold its potentiality. The situations at the firm of architects display a strong level of embodied attentiveness and embodied communication with humans, materialities and space, as shown, e.g., through ‘calibration’, laughing, the attention to ‘basic sensations’ and by doing a ‘retake’ of situations, all of which underline the dynamic of performing organizational atmosphere that is positively amplified and thus its centripetal force. In line with Schmitz, laughing (and crying) are an example of the balance between personal emancipation and regression, where the laughing momentarily takes one back to the primitive presence, although one knows it is possible to return to the emancipated level (Schmitz, 2014b: 105). In this sense laughing is a means of reattuning affectively with the feeling bodies, which shows the enactment of embodied presence in the firm of architects. Also a retake of what might be a banal, one-off morning greeting can be seen to show an immersive and critical performance of organizational atmosphere by the way it engages with space and the feeling body, that unfolds the potential of the situation. In this sense the retake situation also offers a reflection on how the open office space might be seen as a ‘gamechanger’ and what it may take, when the need for affective ‘ventilation’ becomes a more direct and collective matter calling for embodied communication to be part of the spatial and social organization.

Amplified multiplicities draw attention to the ways of inhabiting space and scenographies, which impacts the way organizational atmospheres are experienced and influences the social organization. The ability to engage embodied with space may result in different amplifying developments as seen in the case of the public sector organization. Yet, as seen in the firm of architects embodied and spatial practices may be ways of enforcing centripetal social dynamics and create productive encounters that will, nonetheless, have to be continuously exercised. As such, performing organizational atmosphere as an embodied perception seems to reflect attention on the spatialization of everyday practices, e.g., how to move, talk, meet with externals and do things as an interaction
with the physical space. Organizational atmospheres accordingly bring bodies into organizations affectively and existentially, but they also point to the affective-spatial dimension of practice and, as such, may contribute to discussions in organization studies considering aesthetics, affect, bodies and practice (Dale, 2001; Hassard, 2000; Gherardi, 2017; Reckwitz, 2017; Küpers, 2013, 2016; Strati, 2003).

**Conditioned situations**

The final major point to be discussed is the focus on what has been termed ‘conditioned situations’, which pertain to elements that influence current situations and how this tinges both the experience and the production of organizational atmospheres. Schmitz’s perspective on the situation opens up for a broader perspective on organizational atmosphere than Böhme’s does. This section seeks to address some of the conditioned situations that influence the production and experience of organizational atmosphere, thus reiterating some of the cultural critiques raised by Böhme and Schmitz on the pre-eminence of geometrical space and the lack of embodied affective attention (see Grossheim et al. 2010). As such, this section highlights how certain assumptions and ways of thinking space and organization emerge in the empirical material from, e.g., regulations.

In all the concerned architectural design the stable, exterior architecture was designed independently of the architectural interior design. This reflects Brejzek’s (2017) and Böhme’s (2009, 2013a) discussion on the distinction between scenography and architecture as being between the ephemeral and the stable. Although Böhme argues that the ‘art of staging’ atmosphere helps dissolve the distinction between architectural and scenographic practices, he pays little attention to how an existing building conditions the final design. As illustrated by the firm of architects, working with an existing building may involve ‘softening the building’. For the public-sector organization, the interior architectural design focused on strong communities and citizen dialogue, while the physical structure was initially developed more around an economic argument. The point to address here is that many buildings come with layers of differing spatial assumptions that can be based on geometrical or ocular aesthetics, which in themselves present as a conditioned situation with which architects are to engage and in which organizations are to perform. The architectural statements made at the 2018 Venice Architectural Biennale, for instance, demonstrate the diversity of spatial assumptions on which star architects operate and how they thus will necessarily be reflected in the conception of workplace aesthetics and the potential of spacing organizational atmosphere.
Likewise, the organization’s own assumptions about space will seep into the physical structure, which reiterates Hasse’s point that administrative decisions also emanate atmospheric powers, as their implementation impacts the actual atmospheres. (2014: 223), e.g., when the public-sector organization initially worked with economic approach. Böhme hardly discusses the settings for these conditions, but they are important to consider, first, because the architects’ ability to set the conditions in which organizational atmosphere emerge can in and of itself be highly influenced and conditioned. Second, as the situation concerning ‘lamps’ in the public-sector organization shows, other economic and aesthetic regimes might influence the development of the architectural design, which stands in contrast to the rather explorative and holistic approach taken by the firm of architects and Böhme’s aesthetics (1993, 1995).

Yet, this reflects another conditioning situation seen in the regulation of the work space environment. In line with administrative decisions, these regulations present an array of assumptions that set an affective tone for spacing organizational atmospheres, a tone that in the case of public-sector organizations is further formed by the government mandatory public procurement regulation (SKI). Evidently, many of these rules and regulations are made to ensure a healthy and safe working environment, yet they generally display a geometrical conception of space and focus on the physical body in terms of measurability and distance. As such, they giving little attention to a felt body experience and the spatial dynamic. Take, for example, the definition of ‘air space’ as a measurable entity of 12-m3. This becomes organizationally relevant when one is practically to treat issues like ‘temperature’, ventilation and transgressive smell-scapes that do not abide with a 12-m3 definition. Developments in geopolitics and aviation show a similar problematization of the geometrical organization of air space70 as practically unsuitable, pointing instead to a performatively enacted approach and a reconceptualization of space (Williams, 2010)71. Likewise, the regulation foresees a natural order of ‘organizing work’ that pays little attention to organization as an aesthetic phenomenon and the perceptive relation, including new ways of organizing work (Strati, 1992, 1996, 2000: 101; Beyes, 2016; Warren, 2008). Hence, attending to some of the regulatory requirements regarding work space reveals the dominance of the geometrical conception of space and objectified body (Gomez, 2016; Pallasmaa, 2014: 237; Böhme, 2003a, 2011, 2014d; Schmitz, 2015: 46, 1969).

70Typically related to airspace law, the practical engagement illustrates the challenges in organizing the intangible and transformative based on classical scientific and regulatory measures.

71 As an example Williams (2010) mentions, the conceptual turn to Flexible Use of Airspace by the UK military, which he argues alters airspace management practices.
The assumptions and their practical implications suggest to consider the conceptualizations of space in workplace regulation as well as in architectural design by taking, e.g., Sloterdijk’s discussion on air conditioning (2004: 154ff.), Böhme’s discussion on soundscapes (2013a: 76ff.) and Hainge’s discussion on noise (2013) into account as avenues for engaging with the atmospheric powers of these dimensions. In this sense engaging with organizational atmosphere helps to pay attention to conditioned situations and dualist assumptions about aesthetics, space and affect that seem to underlie widespread conceptions across practices, organizations and regulations – thus raising questions that become pertinent in the quest for designing innovative workplaces, more nomadic work practices and human well-being.

Reconsidering Building, Dwelling, Thinking

Approaching organizational atmosphere from a non-dualist perspective, the previous section has drawn out the central discussion points emerging from the empirical study of the two organizations. The empirical analysis provide a view of organizational atmosphere that emanates in the situations where something happens, such as an event or a sensation (Schmitz, 2014b: 12, 2005a; Stewart, 2008a: 2). Addressing the architectural production and the experience of organizational atmosphere show, both in the analysis and the conceptual work, that architectural qualities and dynamics of space emerge in relation to everyday performance and use. Further, both the architectural practices as well as the everyday performances tend to reflect ways of thinking aesthetics, space and organization. One way of addressing and reflecting these connections in relation to a (neo)-phenomenological perspective is to reconsider the Heideggerian triad of ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’. The triad serves to articulate the interlinkage between the perception and production of organizational atmosphere, as well as the implications of thinking and exploring the atmospheric. This reframing further articulates the epistemological concerns and knowledge production that arises when one deals with organizational atmosphere as an in-between. It is therefore a reinterpretation that constitutes a first step towards understanding organizational atmospheres as an ontology of the in-between. This section addresses the heuristic approach to dealing with phenomena of a ‘non-representational’ character and how this reflects into ontological and epistemological approaches.

The theoretical and empirical material considered so far gives heft to rethinking Heidegger’s point that building is fundamentally a question of dwelling (Heidegger, 1954a: 146), thus emphasizing a way of apprehending the relation between spacing and performing organizational atmospheres, which in turn addresses Böhme’s aesthetics (1995: 23) and Schmitz’s understanding of
dwelling (2015: 74ff.). This also reiterates the quest for apprehending organization in a broader aesthetic perspective, where the distinction between reception and production blurs (O’Doherty, 2008; Beyes, 2016:117) and can be seen as concatenated not only with ways of processually thinking-space, rather than thinking-about-space (McCormack, 2008a), but also with thinking-organization rather than thinking-about-organization.

On a very practical level this stresses the necessity of thinking building as emanating from its use and users, from the organizational practices and the organization, but especially of thinking building as granting potential. Seen as a way of thinking-space, Heidegger’s main argument is that because the building alone never forms space, it needs to have the quality of a double grant of space (Einräumen) (or invitation) as permission (Zulassen) and as an arrangement (Einrichten) (Heidegger, 1954a: 159 & Heidegger, 1996: 9). This means thinking building out of the uncertain, which in a neo-phenomenological interpretation makes thinking-space a situational event, implying an awareness of spacing as creating caring enclosures in the world in its uncertain and questionable constitution. By letting architecture emerge out of the dwelling, this thinking is seen to parallel a shift from thinking outside-in to thinking inside-out, as the firm of architects does. In line with Schmitz, this suggests that the specific architectural actualization should be conceived from the field of potentialities. Rethinking Heidegger’s triad reflects Schmitz’s embodied redevelopment, which allows an atmospheric apprehension of organization to address the fundamental question of thinking as related to space and inhabitation.

Terming the design of organizational atmospheres as spacing reflects both how space is approached and the dynamic of the architectural design. The process of designing an atmospheric space as spacing conveys the difference between geometrical space and existential space, where existential space attends to space as an active force – as spacing – thus thinking it as a processual and performative term (O’Doherty, 2008; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011). When the firm of architects sees space as a ‘jacket’, this view can be seen as a way of creating space as spacing, a space to inhabit rather than to reside or to be an audience in – a notion similar to the ‘wearable spaces’ that O’Doherty uses as a synonym for blurred spaces (2008). Through the lens of Schmitz’s terminology, this way of creating organizational atmosphere constitutes a dynamic and affective space, one holding an existential experience, as O’Doherty asks for (2008: 555). This creation of wearable spaces, formed as the caring and flexible space elicited by the firm of architects reflects Heidegger’s and Schmitz’s focus

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72 As Heidegger notes, the peculiarity of space is ‘spacing’ (räumen) as creating an opening and happening (1996: 8ff.)
on the caring, enclosing space (umfriedeten raum) that, to invoke Sloterdijk, shapes an immunity that makes the existential outside bearable (Sloterdijk, 2012: 261). As such, the space seems like an extra layer that is an active and flexible force in everyday work practices.

Yet, the architectural attention to the ‘wearability’ of space can be seen as taking Böhme’s conditions further by entering into Schmitz’s issues of dwelling, by which architecture is shaped out of the ambiguous and out of the situations’ potential in an explorative process of fine-tuning. Compared to Böhme’s ‘art of staging’ atmospheres, the firm of architects presents a mouldable space moving towards an expanded scenography, where the architectural conditions are developed with the users, so the firm thus relies on a co-performance and attends to difference. By using colour, light, etc., to develop the dynamics of space, such as anchor points and flows, one emphasizes movement rather than static users. As such, space can be created as a condition for organizational atmosphere to emerge and yet to be conditioned, thus displaying an emergent causality (Anderson, 2016a: 156). This also reflects Heidegger’s point that the architectural technique, here understood as the aesthetic practices, is about creating (hervorbringen) and not producing, which can be seen as akin to setting conditions for rather than producing organizational atmosphere (Heidegger, 1954a: 160; 1995: 59). The firm of architect’s aesthetic practices of aesthetic composition and anticipated attunement underline this, and further manifest their architectural ‘technique’ as an embodied-affective practice of spacing organizational atmospheres that reflects Schmitz’s feeling body concept.

In that light, Böhme’s focus on formal conditions and the quest for well-being tends to become a rather consensual and static approach that minimizes diversity and movement, while Schmitz with his attention to uncertainty allows the sudden to appear and movement to occur. As the firm of architects argues, mood and atmosphere thrive on diversity, which in O’Doherty’s version of atmospheres, such as clouds, are argued to become the new materiality of organizations (O’Doherty, 2008: 554). Space in this sense is part of constantly redefining relations and therefore becomes a matter of continuous organizing. As Beyes and Steyaert point out

… reframing space as spacing implies exchanging a vocabulary of stasis, representation, reification and closure with one of intensities, capacities and forces … (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 47)

This shift means moving away from representational strategies towards embodied approaches to space, ‘to different enactments of organizational geographies’ that contain an understanding of an excess composition of forces (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 47f.). Using the term ‘spacing’ rather than Böhme’s picture of staging better aligns with the ontological understanding of
the design of organizational atmosphere as a processual act that does not concern delivering formal conditions, but rather presents a design that enables encounters, practices and relations. In line with Schmitz’s point that setting conditions is rather forming situation, the firm of architects focuses on engineering affect by using colour, materiality, shapes, etc., to create a spatial dynamic that emphasizes the situational and relational emerging out of the everyday of the organization. This links to Thrift’s point that interest in ‘engineering of the moment’ is a heightening that reflects and influences the performance of the everyday (Thrift, 2003: 2021). Overall, this means that architecture cannot be thought of as a traditional empirical object (O’Doherty, 2008: 555), but rather implies a relational ontology. Revisiting Heidegger, thinking architecture processually also emphasizes the importance of architectural practices, which are central to bringing forth a spatial dynamic of contraction and expansion as well as the timely dynamic of actuality and potentiality in the architectural design. Architecture in this respect allows for the emergent causality of atmosphere, for the space to provide a double grant. As such, Böhme’s perspective on producing atmosphere as an ‘art of staging’ is suggested to be unfolded further into a focus on a situated scenography (Brejzek’s, 2017) and expanded scenography (McKinney and Palmer; 2017), as a kind of performance architecture that articulates the dynamic interaction of bodies, environment and materiality. The production of organizational atmospheres as an inside-out process reflects contemporary discussions in design (Entwerfen) by describing the world by way of a thinking process and relations rather than as a physical object (Von Borries, 2017: 12ff.; McKinney and Palmer, 2017: 2ff.; Brejzek, 2017). Yet, as the analytical work shows, this not only alters the perspective on the ontological nature of architecture but also accentuates a different role of the architect and the aesthetic practice.

Moving on to the issue of dwelling as performing, the firm of architects’ practice of involving the organizations in the architectural design process underlines that spacing is tied to performing, for such an aesthetic practice accentuates the point of thinking-space as tied to thinking-organization. Understanding performing as a reframing of dwelling means emphasizing the everyday doings of organizations. As a processual design practice the co-involvement of the organization is a way to think organizational performance spatially, whereby stressing that the beginning and end of design is no longer defined. A design does not just start with a contract and end with a physical object, but emerges out of relations between bodies, materialities, non-humans, showing itself and developing in the situations. The future and the past, as dispositions, are drawn into the design process, into the present situation, shaping small ‘pre-sencings’. This reiterates Heidegger’s point that dwelling is the purpose of building (Heidegger, 1954a: 146), which here can be reformulated to state that
organizational performance is the purpose of spacing organization, understood as organizational atmosphere allowing the oscillation between actuality and potentiality.

The public-sector organization’s declared will to shift the focus from the case/file to the human behind it is an example of adapting to a more ‘performative’, situationally sensitive way of working that embraces the lived lives. This approach continues to comply with legal requirements but puts a different perspective on how to comply, thus articulating that process is essential to the result. As a declaration this potentially instigates a shift towards an acknowledgement of human complexity, the sensuous and relational importance, which resonates with perspectives on organization as being processual and aesthetic (Strati, 1992, 2010; Beyes, 2016). From a neo-phenomenological perspective, focusing on the human as presented in the public-sector organization means attending to the person as a situation containing complexities and excess potentialities, while addressing the person as a case or file is a constellation focusing on the collection of objective data. In line with Chia and Holt (2006) this may be seen as considering work practices as part of a ‘dwelling mode’ strategy perspective based on non-deliberate everyday practical coping.

The ‘push and pull’ exercise on education day in the public sector organization, further reflects an embodied spacing of practices, where the physical frame of the Loop is considered to be a co-player. This resonates with the idea of ‘wearable space’, which in turn echoes the point that new spatial solutions create new forms of relations between organization and employee (Burell and Dale, 2015). As seen in the empirical material, some professions and employees in their work practices are used to engaging spatially, e.g., when working ‘anticipatorily’ or creating ‘spaces of growth’ in their encounters with citizens. As such, spatializing practices is here understood as an aesthetic and atmospheric orientation, where space is seen as an inherent component, e.g., when one chooses a meeting room that is apt for engaging with children because its composition of furniture, colour, etc., help to create an intimate caring enclosure. As such, the professional employee performs an organizational atmosphere as a caring for the situation, which thereby allows for the oscillation between actual and potential.

Yet, as mentioned in the empirical material, moving to the Loop constitutes a ‘gamechanger’, and the move is not an equally easy transition for everybody and requires practice, as the public-sector organization acknowledges. This reiterates Heidegger’s point that dwelling has to be learned (1954a: 162), which here reflects that performing organizational atmosphere is a learning exercise, as Schmitz (2014b: 14), Böhme (2013a: 43ff.) and Sloterdijk (2012a) indicate when discussing exercising life and aesthetic education, and as the firm of architects does in their aesthetic practice.
So, in an organizational context thinking performing before spacing would inevitably be to (re)think everyday performance in terms of aesthetics, space and affect, in relation to the scenographies and amplification of atmospheric multiplicities. Such thinking reflects into discussions on aesthetic organization and the affective embodied dimension of work practices (Gherardi, 2017; Reckwitz, 2017; Küpers, 2002, 2013; Strati, 1995, 1999, 2003) and on the embodied neglect in organizations and government practices (Dale, 2001; Hassard et al., 2000). Yet, as the case of ‘desk management’ illustrates, an undercurrent of conditioned situations, like habits, regulations, etc., can potentially seep into daily performances, drawing on ocular aesthetics, geometrical space and assumptions of organizational order and ways of working. So when Heidegger, states that only when we are capable of dwelling are we able to build (1954a: 161), then in this case it reflects that organizations have to draw on their embodied and affective capacities to perform, which is then constitutive for the given architecture.

An allusion to the conditioned situation accentuates the last element in the triad, which is the issue of thinking. As the empirical material reveals, regulations, management and practices, e.g., participate in forming the extent to which the situational is recognized or is subject to a constellational reduction, which further accentuates how organizations and others think performance. Although some professions in the public-sector organization work ‘anticipatorily’ or are attentive to ‘spaces for growth’ and already engage in embodied and spatialized practices, they are confronted with requirements to ‘put humans into Excel’. This can be seen to reflect Schmitz’s argument that the dominant way of thinking is constellational, which entails putting the measurable and datafication before human life. This raises pertinent questions regarding how to apprehend organization and its performance, with the analysis presenting such concerns as ‘lower productivity, higher efficiency’.

As the request for Excel documentation in the public-sector organization shows, the format is unable to account for the full contribution from professionals that draw on affective and spatial practices and that may already be said to be attentive to performing atmospherically, at least in the sense that they work relationally and pay attention to situational complexities. This leads one to wonder about the long-term consequences, if the value added by some professions – a value of a non-representational quality – cannot be accounted for in a dualist frame for documentation like Excel. Ultimately, this is not about exposing a professionalism that avoids economic concerns, but about asking how then to approach economic concerns and organization when the relational and the human are to come before the case. In this perspective efficiency, or efficacy, might be more appropriate than productivity. In line with Thrift, this leads to questions about the potential in
thinking affect as an efficacy. As Thrift argues, knowledge and creative practices rework value as a new form of efficacy, which he terms as an efficacy of:

… rightness in that is an attempt to capture and work into successful moments, often described as an attunement or a sense of being at ease in a situation, although it is both more or less than that. (Thrift, 2008: 49)

This perspective addresses the possible affective layers in discussions on procedural fairness from the ‘education day’, in the sense that it focuses on the process rather than result. Adding an embodied way of thinking and learning relates to considering affect as a form of thinking (Thrift, 2008: 175). This gives rise to an ethics of novelty that the ontological involvement of the everyday opens up (Thrift, 2008: 14), thus resonating with the public-sector organization’s declared aim of putting the citizen at the centre of its work. Seen from the perspective on organizational atmosphere and in combination with discussions on procedural fairness, this proposes to look at the performing of organizational atmosphere as part of professional practices as a processual rightness, understood as the ability to attune to the situation. As such, this reflects an aesthetic practice that attends to the senses, engages with space to fully unfold the potential and acknowledges ‘the evidence of the moment’. This reiterates Heidegger’s point to think building and dwelling out of the questionable (1954a: 161), which here can be understood as acknowledging thinking as affective and constantly moving, reflecting Schmitz’ focus on thinking as an explorative process. The everyday performance of organizational atmosphere could thus be emphasized as continuous reconfigurations through an aesthetic attention and embodied caring for the situation, an emphasis that would reflect into discussions on strategy as a dwelling mode and thus reinforce strategy as an immanent practical coping (Chia and Holt, 2006), or as the kind of situated practical adaption Ingold describes when he talks about wayfinding (2011: 219ff.). As Chia and Holt state, disruptions or failures would then also be considered as key elements of strategic analysis and planning. This could be seen as a reflection of Böhme’s view that the critical potential of aesthetic atmosphere (Böhme, 1995: 41f.) has a processual twist. As such, organizational atmosphere can add to these discussions by considering the aesthetic, affective and spatial dimensions of organizational performance as part of discussions on legitimacy, strategy and efficacy.

Accordingly, the approach to organizational atmosphere articulates new perspectives on thinking, which also surface in the analytical work in terms of the spatial interpretation of ‘words’, ‘listening’, the performance of ‘anticipation’, etc., all of which reflects the conceptual discussions on organizational atmospheres. Accordingly, this approach echoes Heidegger’s argument that considering building as a question of dwelling is fundamentally tied to thinking. As reflected in this
thesis, such an argument amounts to thinking space as spacing and dwelling as performing, both of which are intimately interlinked with apprehending organizational atmospheres. Following Schmitz, thinking is an explorative endeavour that is seen as akin to a processual understanding of constant reiteration, whereby thinking and knowledge are considered as a constant movement and as being open to the uncertain (Ingold, 2011: 163; Chia and Holt, 2006; Thrift, 2003, 2008, Stewart, 2011; Cooper, 1976, 2005). Approaching thinking as movement unfolds from an attention to the organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist notion that can be conceived of as an ontological in-between, which will be discussed in the final section of the discussion.

As argued in the thesis, approaching organizational atmospheres empirically also requires one to consider thinking and knowledge generation as moving and processual. Considering the notion of atmosphere as a non-dualist notion and a non-representational phenomenon paves the way for thinking organization, space and aesthetics in new ways, thus attending to both epistemological and methodological discussions. Having conceptually discussed the unfolding of the notion of atmosphere in the realm of neo-phenomenology, aesthetics and aligning with non-representational theory and method, the thesis proposes an experimental approach to the empirical analysis as a situational assemblage that provides an evocative account of organizational atmospheres. The analytical part constitutes an assemblage of situations, emphasizing how architecture might form an expanded scenography as a way of spacing organizational atmosphere, a scenography that emerges out of and in the performing of a dynamic embodied experience. It is against this backdrop that the research seeks to contribute to an experimental and affective methodological discussion by using Schmitz’s notion of the situation, which is seen as reflecting into what Stewart frames as ‘weak theory’ (Stewart, 2008b). Analytically this can be seen as a way of dissolving dualities, the aim being to address both the actuality and potentiality of organizational atmospheres. This resonates with Stewart’s point, which states:

… not to judge the value of these objects or to somehow get their representation ‘right’, but to wonder where they might go and what potential modes of knowing, relating and attending to things are already somehow present in them as a potential and resonance. (Stewart, 2008b: 73)

By approaching organizational atmospheres in this way, the thesis seeks to attend to the plurality and situative of the social world, thus reflecting organizational atmosphere as constituted in the moulding of aesthetics, space and affect of the everyday organization. Thinking with and through atmospheres implies a world made up of relations that shift and change. Organizational atmospheres as a collective affective matter form as a mixture of bodies, materialities, regulations, etc., that
permeate everyday situations, thus organizing the social and professional practices. The simultaneity of condition and conditioning unfolds in intensities, rhythms and fields of potential, thus presenting a causality at odds with dualist and constructivist perspectives in social science and organization studies. By taking an organizational atmosphere approach, this thesis aims at presenting ways of thinking phenomena and the ways they are investigated different from those that can be captured with a dualist research scheme (Julmi, 2017; Hasse, 2014: 218, 2005: 8; Stewart, 2008b, 2011; Beyes, 2016, Anderson and Ash, 2015).

The empirical analysis follows the attempts in the affective turn and among organizational scholars to find new ways to ‘represent’ organization by departing from static concepts and opening up for everyday embodied experiences and relational traces (Beyes and Steyaert, 2011: 53; Borch, 2009; Thrift, 2008; Latham and Conradson, 2003; O’Doherty, 2008; Vannini, 2019). This is seen as cohering with Schmitz’s argument that research is an explorative process seeking the ‘evidence of the moment’ by poetically explicating a situation (Schmitz, 2014b: 12ff.; 2010: 44). Reiterating Heidegger’s point that the aesthetic opens for ‘truth’ as a processual event by forming world (1995: 40 & 57), the empirical analyses in their aesthetic and evocative composition are, as such, an attempt to create an aesthetic account of situational evidence that constitutes how organizational atmospheres work. Accordingly, engaging with performative research has resulted in a different type of research account, one that is less about finding causal explanations and more about describing situational affective accounts as a means of enacting scenes of everyday organizational life and pondering the trajectories to be taken. The extent to which this experiment has succeeded is then a question to be considered.

As described by Stewart, writing evocative and affective accounts is often a ‘maddening effort’ (2008a: 5), and is also often described as messy, unexpected and discontinuous (Vannini, 2015b; Richardson, 2002: 421; Augustine, 2014: 749ff.). Although this may be unsurprising, the process involved in writing the analytical chapters addresses a couple of issues that reflect a general attention in the engagement with performative research. On its own, the task of writing evocatively in a foreign language proved a major challenge, for the language itself was thrown into relief, thus limiting the compositional subtleties, the evocative and aesthetic poignance as analytical features. On the one hand, this can be seen as a discouragement for engaging with performative writing. On the other hand, it reflects how the everyday realities seep into the research practices, but also provides yet another argument for engaging with non-linguistic performative methods, which has been done through the use of images. Images reflect an affective register, touching on the felt sense in another
way than written accounts do. Further, it also called for considering the writing process as relational, in that, e.g., both organizations were involved in reading the material as a way of giving feed back on the aesthetic quality and pertinence. This process was coupled with continuous self-reflection and questioning. As such, this thesis contributes to what Taylor and Hansen called a post-positivist approach to research by engaging with aesthetic inquiry (2005) as well as with the developments in the affective turn and non-representational theory on experimental writing and sensory research (Warren, 2008; Vannini, 2015b, 2019; Stewart, 2008a, 2011; Beyes and Steyaert, 2011; McCormack, 2015). Working with evocative accounts and performative research requires the researcher’s feeling body to be developed, as such work concerns writing from the heart and not (only) from the head (see Stewart, 2011; Vannini, 2015b: 321). However, as in this thesis, this can conflict with one’s own ingrained assumptions about the researcher’s distance. Yet, apart from the challenges, one should consider how such writing aimed at bringing research accounts to life (see Dewsbury and Thrift, 2002; Vannini, 2019) can create new ways of engaging with the public and addressing requests for research dissemination.

In sum, reconsidering the Heideggerian triad of ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, as ‘Spacing, Performing, Moving’ presents organizational atmospheres as a way of approaching architecture as emerging from the everyday organization, thus requiring one to apprehend the continuous movement of organizational atmosphere as a relational ontology. Going from building to spacing is a reframing of the performative qualities of built space, shaping it as a dynamic in-between that implies the opening of possibilities, its being transitory and transformative. In this sense architecture gives way to the situational where participants can become aware of their corporeality by experiencing the space atmospherically. Understanding dwelling as performing underlines a perspective on the situation as a performative event. It emphasizes the co-action in a creative process, where meaning is not representation, but a co-creation in the moment. In this way performing also constitutes a potentially transformative process, whereby experiencing atmospherically alters relations in the organizational context – their being embodied in movements and habits. Performing thereby reframes dwelling as performing the in-between as situational events, which becomes constitutive for approaching architecture. Finally, reframing thinking into moving primarily means that taking an atmospheric perspective on organization requires to move perspective from the representational to what has been termed the non-representational or more-than-representational. Moving in this way is to experience the floating and transitory as a dynamic perspective relying on the embodied perception in the situation and on the affective response of being moved and moving. In this sense it challenges
thinking as defining ‘things’ as static entities, thereby also altering the epistemological perspective on knowledge creation. Thinking as moving thereby focuses on the in-between. Accordingly, the reframing of ‘spacing, performing, moving’ leads to conceptually conceiving organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between, which will be discussed in the next section.

Organizational atmosphere: an ontology of the in-between

Reframing the Heideggerian triad of ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ into ‘Spacing, Performing, Moving’ elicits the phenomenological trajectory and provides a way for approaching the commensurability between the neo-phenomenological embodiment and the aesthetic materiality of organizational atmosphere, as seen in Schmitz and Böhme. The theoretical focus ‘in-between’ Schmitz and Böhme implies that attention has been paid to the potentiality and the actuality of atmospheres, which extends to both the production and experience of atmosphere. Based on the previous discussion, this section will follow up on the quest for a non-dualist conception for organizational atmospheres (Julmi, 2017: 5). Conceptually speaking, this contributes to a consideration of organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between. This, in turn, reflects a non-dualist apprehension built on the understanding of a double-sided relationality, which resonates with discussions in process theory and new materialism (see e.g. Cooper, 2005; Barad, 2018) and also reflects arguments on considering the potential of phenomenology in organization studies (Holt and Sandberg, 2011; Küpers, 2002).

However, to consider the power of organizational atmosphere, one faces the challenge of a phenomenon without a ‘secured ontological place’ (Böhme, 2014a: 103f.). Based on the work of Schmitz and Böhme, this can be seen as a relational ontology. Schmitz’s and Böhme’s relational approaches to atmosphere can be seen as commensurable and as displaying an oscillation between the potential and the actual, which opens for a processual understanding of the ontological nature of atmosphere. Accordingly, one way of conceptualizing atmosphere would be as an ontology of the in-between. This relational ontology parallels, e.g., Latour’s ANT approach (2005, 2007m), and socio-material approaches, but proceeds in another direction by attending to the affective movement as fundamentally inherent to the relation.

Böhme stresses atmosphere as an in-between phenomenon constituted in the relation between object and subject. This is tied to a focus on materiality and the architectural composition’s dynamic capacity to make atmospheres emerge and thus configure how one feels in space. Constituted
in the actual relation between subject and object, the in-between elicits a relational ontology as quasi-objective and as performed in the relational perception. For Schmitz atmospheres are pre-objective and come into presence with embodied communication, but he focuses on simple perception that is pre-subjective, such as in the spontaneous experience. This difference reflects a difference in the two scholars’ time orientation, with Schmitz orienting himself towards a primitive presence that comes before differentiation and the pre-subjective, whereas Böhme is oriented towards an unfolded presence, which is where things, humans, materials are differentiated. Yet, for both Böhme and Schmitz the two dimensions are considered as inherently connected. An understanding of Schmitz’s approach to atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between considers relation to be a fundamental openness to the world that comes before the subject-object relation – an understanding seen to resonate with Heidegger’s consideration of the ‘in-between’ as a way out of the subject-object dualism (Cioflec, 2012: 109). Schmitz is read, in line with Heidegger, as proposing a new angle on relationality (Heidegger, 1993: 60ff.; Cioflec, 2012: 119), which opens for thinking the ‘in-between’ conceptually as:

… that which is neither subject nor object, but emerges from the middle of the two. (Cioflec, 2012: 123)

As such, this stresses that the in-between steps out of the worldliness of the world, as seen in Schmitz’s framing of the world as a forcefield bigger than the human actualizations. Schmitz’s focus on relations can be seen as akin to Heidegger’s suggestion that the in-between is considering what makes the relation as relation possible (Cioflec, 2012: 61; Schmitz, 2015: 59ff). To consider organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between in the light of both Böhme’s and Schmitz’ relational ontological understanding, one arrives at a double-sided ontological relationality emphasizing both actuality and potentiality. This reflects a processual understanding of organizational atmosphere, where relationality is understood as a way to see the world as the movement of relations (see Cooper, 2005: 1708). Basically, this proposes an engagement with the lived life of organizations in all their complexity and variability, where the totality comes before the specification as a diffuse conglomeration of significance (Schmitz, 2014b: 53), which aligns with discussions in non-representational and affect theory (Dewsbury and Thrift, 2000; Stewart, 2008b; Vannini, 2015b; McCormack, 2017). Conversely, Schmitz has described classical ontology as being an ontology of constellations based on things with characteristics that refer to a connection of specifications into a totality (Schmitz, 1998: 185) – an ontology that neglects the uncertainty and excess of the affective and spontaneous.
Conceiving organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between accordingly means considering the inherent connectedness between the perception and production of atmosphere, which reflects that thinking is formed in movement in step with constantly shifting relations. Considering organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between reflects the triad of ‘Spacing, Performing, Moving’, which, e.g., appears in the multiplicity of organizational atmospheres present in the public-sector organization, where some constitute a moving experience, while others simultaneously form an environment evincing how things could be different. An approach to organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between opens for a more fluid conception of organization, one that attends to the processual constitution emerging in the oscillation between the actual and potential.

The in-betweenness is then reflected in the notion of atmosphere as fundamentally tied to space, affect and embodied presence. Organizational atmospheres, in their relationality, emerge in the everyday performances, where situations nurture or hollow the dynamic of an atmosphere and show their immersive power. Referring to the work of Schmitz and Böhme, this means attending corporeally to atmosphere as a holistic experience and thus relying both on an immersive and a critical trait in embodied perception. In line with affect theory this accentuates the bodily capacity of being affected and to affect. Yet, both Schmitz and Böhme address the important ability to also withdraw from the immersive power of atmospheres, which Schmitz terms aesthetic devotion that provides an aesthetic modus inherent in the perception of immersion and withdrawal. This might be seen as an embodied development akin to the Heideggerian perspective of the ‘in-between’ as a phenomenon building on the care structure, which in its phenomenality builds on the call of conscience (Ruf des Gewissens) (Cioflec, 2012: 130). As such, Schmitz’s embodied perception emphasizes listening as a way of openness in the relationality and thereby displays a care for the ‘in-between’ as reflecting the fundamental possibility of relation. Böhme adds a critical dimension to perception, emphasizing the verbalizing of atmospheres as a way of enabling a critical distance to aesthetic manipulation, which takes the perception to the actual. By considering both, one can see them as reflecting the double-sided relationality of actuality and potentiality; the affective as pre-reflexive is coupled to a critical aesthetic experience – a coupling that can be seen as encountering Leys critique of affect as decoupled from experience and ideology (Leys, 2011).

Further, this implies that embodied immersion provides a sense of what might be possible, whereas critical verbalization offers a means of addressing how it feels right here. In an organizational context relational perception as an embodied immersive listening means engaging in
embodied communication, including reading the emotional landscape of the open office, being attentive to one’s own voice when talking on the phone or architects’ being attentive to the organization’s way of being in the world. Yet, when one considers listening as constitutive for talking, this can be seen as being critically transformed by verbal articulations occurring, say, when doing a ‘retake’ of a situation or being aware that the ‘ventilation’ in open offices requires a more direct confrontation. This reflects an affective, spatial and aesthetic relation, emphasizing the pathic agency of humans as an essential part of performing organizational atmosphere, thus attuning not only to a specific space but also to the world as an existential experience. Yet, as seen both conceptually and analytically, engaging with relational perception is something that necessitates education and training in order to build atmospheric competences (Böhme, 2013a: 52; Albertsen, 2013; Schmitz, 2014b: 14) – a necessity that also comes to the fore in the firm of architects in their process with commissioning organizations as being a learning process. Approaching organizational atmosphere thereby also attends to the relevance of continuous embodied exercising and education in disembodied and representationally spaced organizations (Dale, 2001), which is also a way of acknowledging how practices are connected with the sensuous, affective and aesthetic (Gherardi, 2017; Küpers, 2013, 2016; Reckwitz, 2017; Strati, 2000). Moreover, this further calls attention to how practices are spaced as part of performing organizational atmospheres, e.g., through ‘floor work’ or ‘anticipation’.

The focus on the presencing of organizational atmosphere in spacing and performing elicits the emergent causality as a fundamental trait of the ontological nature of organizational atmosphere, which displays a simultaneity of cause and effect. Such non-linear causality makes it possible to think atmosphere as at once an effect emanating from the encounter and a cause holding an ‘agentic capacity’ that in its complexity enables people to collectively sense atmospheres (Anderson, 2016a: 156ff.). This accentuates how everyday life is central in constituting and altering organizational atmosphere, which reflects Heidegger’s point that the task of ontology is about ‘showing movement as movement’ (Cioflec, 2012: 90), a suggestion that has led to a consideration of the situation – rather than things and objects – as being the genuine ground for the holistic experience of organizational atmospheres. This perspective states Schmitz’s facticity of the phenomenon as to be understood hermeneutically (Kluck, 2014: 109), although hermeneutically in the sense that it builds on an embodied resonance. Further, in line with discussions with the affective turn and non-representational theory, this puts the focus on the situational movement and happening (Stewart, 2008a; 2011; Vannini, 2015a+b; Dewsbury and Thrift, 2000). Focusing on the situation can be said to reflect the
way we perceive the world, which echoes Heidegger, but is seen as being co-constituted in an approach to architectural design centred on the situation and the relational, rather than on objects.

Attending to organizational atmospheres as an ontology of the in-between makes the situation the event of emergence, where the phenomenon presents itself in its phenomenality, becoming a phenomenon itself and thus reflecting an emergent causality. This points at the centrality of taking a phenomenological approach to the in-between, which can only be done on the basis of the argument that the in-between cannot be solely a formal concept, but must also refer to the phenomenon itself. (Cioflec, 2012: 18). The in-between as phenomenon is not something showing itself to consciousness, but comes in performing the totality of significance as being in the world (Cioflec, 2012: 79). This makes the phenomenality itself a phenomenon, whereby the ‘in-between’ is both phenomenon and phenomenality simultaneously (Cioflec, 2012: 80). This reflects Anderson’s point of atmosphere as at once condition and conditioning (Anderson, 2009). This gives heft to an apprehension of organization not as a predictable stable order, but as an atmospheric phenomenon of an emergent, processual nature (Beyes, 2016; Michels and Steyaert, 2016; Cooper, 1976, 2005; Hernes, 2014). However, this also reflects the affective dimension of organization, manifesting as an ‘empiricism of sensation’ as the ‘in-experience’ of affect (Clough, 2009: 51).

Consequently, to attend to the organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between, one might approach the situation as the ontological ‘object’, since situations are considered the homestead of atmospheres. Approaching the situation as the ontological spot of the in-between underlines the shift from the classical ontological ‘what it is’ to ‘how it is’, and thereby how to experience atmospheres (Hasse, 2015: 2529). This reflects the focus of the overarching research question as addressing ‘how organizational atmospheres work’.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

This thesis has examined the notion of organizational atmosphere. When used in both a dualist and non-dualist manner, the notion provides for a variety of analytical styles that have contributed and can come to contribute to organization studies. The thesis provides an elaboration and reflection of the initial statement on the need for organizations to ‘understand and control’ factors of atmosphere. The thesis has examined organizational atmosphere from a non-dualist perspective, which shows organization as an aesthetic phenomenon that reflects an intermeshing of affect and space in the organizational everyday. Embracing such a perspective on organization, both conceptually and analytically, especially resonates with and helps to push ongoing discussions in the field of organizational aesthetics as well as in the affective and spatial turns in organization studies.

In the area of organizational aesthetics the thesis contributes to accentuate how sensory and aesthetic knowledge inform everyday organizational life, yet proposes that aesthetics be considered not just as aesthetic judgements, but rather more broadly as a processual force inherent in the unfolding of creativity and human existence (Reckwitz, 2014; Beyes, 2016, 2018). In relation to the spatial turn, the research contributes to thinking-space rather than thinking-about-space, which, e.g., is evinced in the design of office spaces as a continuous process of spacing the potential to be actualized in the everyday performance of organizations. Further, the thesis contributes to the turn to affect by presenting Schmitz’s twofold notion of the body, which couples affect and experience, thus adding to the understanding of the social-existential attunement to the world and the embodied capability of navigating situations, which among others shows in the spatializing of professional practice. Finally, the research responds to the common call from all three strands of research to engage with writing organization, to this end threading an epistemological path that goes beyond representation. This has been done by experimenting and seeking aesthetic inspiration in writing and by analysing organizational atmospheres in order to open up animated spaces for thinking-organization.
Accordingly, approaching organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist concept asks to think-organization and comprehend the peculiar atmospheric constitution of everyday life, which extant research on organizational spatialities, affects and aesthetics has yet to fully trace in its ontological and epistemological implications. Organizational atmospheres have been conceptually shown to ‘escape’ traditional ontological and epistemological social science regimes by constituting a relational ontology, where the relationality itself reflects the epistemological possibility as a constant movement. This reflects Heidegger’s point that ontology is fundamentally about ‘showing movement as movement’, which reflects Schmitz’s phenomenological revision as an explorative process of the questionable. Accordingly, the central pursuit of the research has been to approach how organizational atmospheres work, since their ephemeral ontological status and non-representational nature would not be graspable by defining, e.g., what an organizational atmosphere is. As shown, organizational atmospheres present themselves as moving phenomena that can only be evidenced in the moment of their moving capability and the embodied capacities of being moved.

Accordingly, the thesis argues that organizational atmosphere should be considered as an ontology of the in-between that thus elicits a relational ontology, to be understood as a double-sided relationality that emphasizes the actuality and potentiality as co-existing, in line with discussions in process theory. By way of tracing the notion of atmosphere in German phenomenology, the ontological claim made here is considered to reflect the fruitful commensurability of Böhme’s aesthetics and Schmitz’s neo-phenomenology, whereby embodied sensation allows an oscillating orientation between the material and existential dimensions of the world. The relationality to the material environment is an aesthetic engagement with actuality, yet is seen to be founded in the relation’s relationality as the existential reflection of potentiality – a potentiality that constitutes a fundamental openness to the world and that comes before the actual relation, thus reflecting the emergent causality. Addressing the in-between of organizational atmosphere shows in an emergent causality where the phenomena and the phenomenality form the ‘in-between’ by being both phenomena and phenomenality at once. This links to a processual view on truth as being situational emergences of ‘inter-esse’, which with Schmitz’s embodied reception of Heidegger constitutes an affective ‘evidence of the moment’. Accordingly, an engagement with organizational atmosphere embraces the uncertain and the ambiguous as a pervasive condition of organizational and human life. This contributes to an atmospheric apprehension of organization as a phenomenon of an emergent and processual nature rather than a predictable, stable order (Beyes, 2016; Cooper, 1974; Hernes, 2014; Helin et al., 2014). On a more practical level this articulates the point of reconsidering
Heidegger’s triad into ‘Spacing, Performing, Moving’ as a way for organizations to consider architecture as an active spatial force formed and forming by the organization’s way of being in the world. A reframing by which the thesis presents a non-representational heuristics in the approach to organizational atmosphere. The outlined perspective on relationality situates the research in larger discussions on social reality and relational ontologies, as found in areas like the ANT perspective, process theory and new materialism, which could be suggested areas of further research.

Performing organizational atmosphere has been conceived as an embodied perception whereby organizational members are simultaneously conditioned and condition by way of the doings in the situation. Performing builds on the embodied-affective capacity of ‘immersive-critical’ perception, which has been shown as the ability to navigate affectively, aesthetically and spatially in situations as an oscillation between the actuality and potentiality. This allows to consider (public sector) organizational legitimacy and efficacy as a ‘processual rightness’ based on a caring for the situations and their potential. This is, e.g., reflected in how the employees of the public-sector organization put the human before the file and in how their practices are spatialized to create ‘spaces of growth’, as well as in how new spaces are explored or how an architect does a ‘retake’ of a situation. Yet, performing in this way and unfolding the socially engaging potential of atmosphere are shown to require learning and exercise. For example, how does one move and talk in open office space as a way of embodied communication? This requires further research on how organizational members navigate situations affectively embodied and by spatializing their professional doings as a way of performing organizational atmosphere, thereby ultimately creating a processual rightness that legitimizes decisions by forming them in the process.

As seen, performing organizational atmosphere cannot be seen as isolated from the spatial design. Thinking about space as an instrumental tool that surmounts anaesthetic, geometrical architecture creates alienation and unrest, whereas goal-oriented atmospheric design can fall prey to manipulation or passive aesthetic pleasure. Yet, as shown, architectural design may create a dynamic space oscillation between contraction and expansion that allows for embodied attunement and for seeing space as materially and existentially comforting and challenging at the same time. As such, spatial design becomes a spacing of organizational atmosphere that allows for the actual and the potential, where the design is focused on situations, relation and encounters. Architecturally this ideally creates mouldable, caring enclosing spaces as a kind of immunity, yet acknowledges difference and uncertainty, which is created in the composition of materialities, light, colour, etc. – not by making such a composition visually pretty, but by shaping ‘wearable spaces’. Such spaces care for the
users, opening the possibilities of their having different needs and professional practices, yet also laying out a spatial scenography for the social organization, e.g., by making colours, shapes, light invite encounters to happen. The architectural design shows an engineering of the situation, which contributes to considering organizational atmosphere as an (aesthetic) politics of the everyday. To circumvent passive aesthetic pleasure or manipulation, this requires organization members’ embodied engagement in the ways of immersive-critical perception. Yet, as shown, regulations also set conditions for organizations and the architectural design, presenting a predominantly representational-geometrical view on space and humans. This might call for re-conceptualizations reflecting the relational ontological nature of noise, temperature, smell as well as the feeling body in health and safety regulations and guidelines so that adept ways of ‘implementing’ fluid concepts like air space can be found. In parallel a processual understanding of (architectural) design as spacing organization might also benefit from further considering air-, smell- and sound-scapes in the design, thus presenting a kind of expanded scenography.

The thesis asked how organizational atmospheres work by conceptualizing a fluid phenomenon and providing an analytically experimental account of the experiencing and producing of organizational atmosphere in two organizations. The neo-phenomenological notion of the situation was considered as the analytical framing in a non-representational apprehension, reflecting an empiricism of sensation, providing an assemblage as an analytical animation that attended to the now in an aesthetic, affective and spatial composition of bodies, objects, histories and everyday politics. This presents an account of knowledge as moving, thus constituting a continuous exploration and questioning by describing something happening in the moment, yet also attending to what might happen next. By working with performative ways of writing organization in creating animated accounts, the analytical work has sought to ‘move the reader’ and thus form other spaces and ways of knowing, the aim being to reflect organizational atmosphere as an ontology of the in-between that follows a processual claim to ‘evidence’. The methodological and analytical approach to organizational atmosphere would benefit from further development, e.g., in unfolding writing as a method of inquiry. However, while this would be of academic interest, addressing how to ‘document’ evidence that does not fit a dualist framework has shown, in the analysis, as being also a major concern and of relevance for many professional practitioners looking to account for their results and value creation.

This can be said to reflect a more general cultural critique stemming from Schmitz’s neo-phenomenology, arguing that the complexity of the world can neither be fully explicated nor
controlled (see Grossheim, 2010). As the thesis shows, such a critique is concerned with addressing how assumptions about space, work and organization precondition the experience and the possibilities of designing space, not only at the organizational level but also on a broader societal and political level. Yet, this critique is not intended to prove other positions wrong, but rather meant in a Heideggerian sense: ‘Critique is listening positively to the real motivations’ (Heidegger in Cioflec, 2012: 88). Such a view of critique reflects an attentiveness to the uncertain, argued in this thesis as being a fundamental embodied openness and caring constitution of talking. In this way organizational atmosphere relates back to discussions on how aesthetic capitalism emphasizes the performative quality of aesthetic experience as part of the quest for creativity, human work environments and new ways of working, thus highlighting the potential of affective-embodied communication in the organizational everyday. In this sense the thesis elaborates and reflects on the initial statement regarding the need for organizations and managers to ‘understand and control’ atmospheres, but argues that giving due to consideration to organizational atmosphere as a non-dualist notion elicits another perspective for thinking organization aesthetically and for how to engage with atmosphere.

In dwelling on these concerns, the thesis contributes to organization studies by investigating the philosophical roots of atmospheric theory and its potential empirical reverberations. Throughout the thesis there have been allusions to perspectives and discussions that would have been interesting to engage with but were beyond the scope of the current project. First, a more extensive linkage to discussions on practice theory and the connection with affect (e.g. Gherardi, 2017; Reckwitz, 2017) could prove interesting, especially considering that the performance of organizational atmosphere is tied to professional practices. Second, the linkage to new materialism could prove valuable in discussions concerning topics like the design and composition of organizational atmosphere (e.g. Carlile et al., 2013; Leonardi, Nardi and Kallinikos, 2012; Leonardi and Barley, 2010). Third, ontological and epistemological issues could be further elaborated in discussion with process theory, new materialism and speculative realism, but also the relational ontology seen in actor network theory (e.g. Helin et al. 2014; Cooper, 1976; Barad, 2018; Harman, 2002; Latour, 2005). Finally, the methodological and analytical experimentation conducted here could be further developed as a contribution to non-representational and processual thinking (e.g. Hernes, 2014; Vannini, 2015a), thus reflecting new ways of writing and structuring a PhD thesis in accordance with the EU Commission’s principles for innovative doctoral training, which state: ‘The new academic generation should be trained to become creative, critical and autonomous intellectual risk takers, pushing the boundaries of frontier research.’ (EU Commission, 2011: 1)
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