

## **Governing Classroom Disruptions: The Preventive Dispositif of Affective Regulation through Emotional Programmes**

Organisations are commonly understood as social systems characterised by the specification of conditions under which membership, that is, inclusion and exclusion, can be explicitly determined. Given that compulsory schooling entails a form of enforced membership for pupils within the organisation of the school, exclusion cannot readily be invoked as a regulatory mechanism. Instead, alternative mechanisms and technologies are required to produce performance and conformity, maintain hierarchical order, and secure organisational goals (Apelt, 2016, pp. 15–18). Against this backdrop, the presentation foregrounds emotions and affects as a thus far underexplored yet central dimension of classroom order.

From an emotion- and affect-theoretical perspective (see Parade, in review), the school can be conceptualised as an *affective arrangement*, in which actors (their dispositions and practices), spatial-material constellations, and symbolic-normative orders are interwoven through reciprocal processes of affecting and being affected (Slaby, 2019; Scheve & Slaby, 2022, pp. 140–142). From this perspective, classroom order is not produced solely through rules or sanctions, but is fundamentally shaped by affective dispositions, atmospheres, and attachments that structure everyday school life. In this context, schools generate and shape what has been termed *institutional affectivity* (Churcher et al., 2023, p. 3), understood as situated configurations of affects and emotions that are linked to organisational objectives and sedimented in the affective dispositions of their addressees through processes of habitualisation and subjectivation, thereby constituting them as (non-)recognisable subjects.

Against the backdrop of broader societal transformations of feeling cultures – marked by an increasing valorisation of authenticity, emotional reflexivity, self-regulation, and the commodification of emotions (Illouz, 2018) – a growing strategic mobilisation of emotions can also be observed within the field of schooling. Whereas emotional socialisation has traditionally occurred in more implicit ways, for instance through classroom interactions or pedagogical media such as primers (Parade, in review), explicit and standardised emotional programmes have recently gained prominence (on emotional programmes in organisations, see Neckel & Sauerborn, 2023). Analogous to developments in corporate contexts, programmes aimed at emotion regulation, emotional intelligence, and social-emotional competencies are increasingly being implemented in primary education.

Notably, a considerable proportion of these programmes are developed by private providers and companies operating at the intersection of coaching, event management, consultancy, and (neuro-)psychology – situated, in Foucauldian terms, between *homo oeconomicus* and *homo psychologicus* (Foucault, 1961/2016, p. 550; 2004/2017, pp. 371–372) – and thereby opening up a new market within the educational sector. While these programmes promise stress reduction, enhanced well-being, and resilience, they simultaneously address core problems of classroom order.

The presentation presents findings from an analysis of programmes of emotion regulation and the promotion of emotional intelligence and social-emotional competencies in primary education, focusing on providers such as “Emotioversum”, “Papilio”, and “Superheldenkids”. The analysis examines how affects and emotions are discursively negotiated in relation to classroom order and which repertoires of emotion (Neckel & Sauerborn, 2023) are established as (un)desirable. Furthermore, it considers the bodies of disciplinary knowledge these programmes draw upon and the subject positions they construct for pupils (and teachers). Drawing on the sociology of knowledge approach to discourse (Keller, 1997, 2011), websites, teaching and training materials, as well as publicly available interviews and media reports are coded and reconstructed using sequence-analytical procedures (Keller & Truschkat, 2014; Truschkat & Bormann, 2020), and the findings are situated within the broader specialised discourse on emotion regulation.

Finally, the presentation shows that emotional programmes function as key elements of a contemporary preventive dispositif (Bröckling, 2017) in schooling. They operate in anticipation of potential disruptions, individualise affective ‘problems’, and translate structural tensions of classroom interaction into matters of emotional self-regulation. In this way, they contribute – subtly and ‘softly’ – to the stabilisation of classroom order without appearing overtly disciplinary (on mindfulness programmes, see Kollmer, 2024). Affects and emotions thus emerge as governmental resources for maintaining classroom order, intertwining prevention, normalisation, and self-governance.

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