IDEOLOGICAL CLOSURE: DRUG PREVENTION IN A POST-POLITICAL SOCIETY

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Ideological Closure

Drug Prevention in a Post-political Society

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To Miranda, Charlie, Axel, William, Elliot, Holger & Inna.
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List of papers


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Introduction

Reduced, like all other objects of bureaucratic management, to pure, quality-free measurements, human objects lose their distinctiveness. They are already dehumanized – in the sense that the language in which things that happen to them (or are done to them) are narrated, safeguards its referents from ethical evaluation. In fact, this language is unfit for normative-moral statements. It is only humans that may be objects of ethical propositions.

Zygmunt Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust

The economic crisis in the Eurozone, and in particular the events during the spring and summer of 2015 – when fierce and sometimes openly hostile negotiations between Greece and the “Troika” took place – illustrate clearly a phenomenon observable on many levels in contemporary western capitalist societies. What emerged during these months was not a simple clash between a country and its creditors over the terms for a third bailout. What surfaced during the negotiations between representatives of the Syriza-led government (and mainly its outspoken finance minister Yanis Varoufakis) and the Troika was a clash between two opposing governmental logics: those of democracy and technocracy. The decision of the Greek government on June 25 to call for a referendum on whether Greece should accept the terms offered by its creditors constituted a break with prevailing notions of how the negotiations should be conducted. During the negotiations themselves, rather than engaging on a purely technocratic level, the strategy undertaken by the Greek government was to “force the conversation into the political realm” (Parker 2015). Together with the surprising move to call for a referendum on economic matters, this strategy left many of the opposite side vexed. The introduction of democratic politics into the negotiations led one furious politician to comment that the Greek Prime Minister Tsipras had “torn down the last bridges on which Greece and Europe could have moved towards a compromise” (Cendrowicz 2015). The source of this vexation and fury should be understood within the context of the specific mode of technocratic governance currently prevailing at the European level. As several commentators have argued in relation to the European economic crisis (e.g. Matthijs & Blyth 2015; Habermas 2015; Chakrabortty 2015), democratic values are today being treated as an “error term” within the European technocratic mode of governance. In the words of Matthijs & Blyth (2015, p. 14):
Such a view begins with the premise that politics is some kind of noise or friction in an otherwise self-equilibrating system that needs to be eliminated. As a consequence we need rules, pacts and treaties to constrain politicians whose policy tools should be delegated to technocrats who can safely ignore the demos and get us closer to that optimal world.

However, the opposition between democracy and technocracy extends well beyond the handling of the latest economic crisis. Some commentators have identified this phenomenon as a part of what has variably been called “consensus democracy,” “post-politics,” or “post-democracy” (Rancière 1999; Mouffe 2005; Crouch 2011). It designates a state of affairs in which problems facing societies are no longer viewed in a political way but rather as technical issues to be solved by experts (Mouffe 2005, p. 10). Opinion formation thus becomes restricted to a search for “a solution that imposes itself as the most reasonable, that is, as absolutely the only one objectively possible” (Rancière 1999, p. 107). In some camps, the shift to consensus democracy has been celebrated as signaling the “end of ideology,” or the appearance of a third-way politics “beyond left and right” (Giddens 1994; c.f. Mouffe 2005), and a move into a more rational mode of dealing with the problems facing society today.

This rationalist conception of politics is part of an attempt to “modernize” politics under the banner of “evidence-based policy making,” bringing with it a specific conception of the role of science in policy-making. As Parsons (2002, p. 44) has described it, “public policy had to be driven by ‘evidence’ and policy research focused on finding out ‘what works.’” This implies a positivist conception of knowledge in which it is possible to provide “hard facts.” Such hard facts, in turn, are to guide the search for “what works” and away from policy driven by political ideology (Parsons 2002, p. 45).

This rational mode of governance has become central in the field of drug policy. In drug prevention this shift to technocratic solutions of various problems has taken the shape of a search for evidence-based methods and programs, and has led to the emergence of what is called prevention science. One central question guiding prevention science and other proponents of this view on politics is whether various communities can “be diverted from traditional, political, institutional, and professional channels (i.e. business as usual) toward a more scientific prevention planning process?” (Feinberg et al. 2002, p. 246). What are termed as “political motives” in prevention planning (Feinberg et al. 2004, p. 167f) are regarded as highly problematic by prevention scientists. In a celebration of a model of technocratic problem-solving, prevention scientists have announced that “[i]t is no longer sufficient to justify prevention programs on the basis of philosophical or political beliefs, a scientific basis for prevention programs is needed.” (NIDA 1997, p. 19).
But how are we to conceive of this rational and scientifically based mode of governance? Have we really moved beyond ideology and entered a world of pure rationality? What role does democracy play in all of this?

Aim and questions

The aim of this thesis is to critically examine drug prevention, not in terms of the effectiveness of an isolated collection of techniques or methods correlating with certain objective and well-defined goals, but as a field of problematizations – how drug prevention becomes established as a political technology within this field, how it connects to certain modes of governance, how and under which conditions it constitutes its problematic, the questions it asks, its implications in terms of political participation and representation, the various bodies of knowledge through which it constitutes the reality upon which it acts, and the limits it places on ways of being, questioning, and talking in the world.

The task will be to question the naturalness with which we currently view drug prevention, the naturalness of certain political and scientific arrangements within which drug prevention is shaped and legitimated, the naturalness with which the current solution to the “drug problem” – in the shape of drug prevention – is presented as “the most reasonable” and “as absolutely the only one objectively possible” (Rancière 1999, p. 107).

The question posed in this thesis is not whether this field of problematizations has given rise to prevention programs that work, in terms of their commonly stated aim to reform individuals and communities in order to achieve abstinence from drug use. The level of analysis is rather situated at the level of political and scientific practices. A field of problematizations is simultaneously a field of actions, values, and goals, enabling the execution of some political programs while rendering others unthinkable. At this level, rather than asking whether prevention programs work, the question becomes one of which political practices become possible within this field of problematizations. As Power (1997, p. 7) has argued in relation to auditing, a field of problematizations1 may consist in “a collection of tests and an evidence gathering task, but it is also a system of values and goals which are inscribed in the official programmes that demand it.”

The questions one has to pose then become: how are drugs problematized in current political and scientific discourses and practices, how are limits established for legitimate political practices, what is left out in this field of problematizations, under which conditions is this field established, and what

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1 Auditing makes up a field of problematizations, although Power (1997) does not explicitly use this term to describe it.
political implications and values can be drawn from this “rational” mode of governance?
Background

What types of knowledge do you want to disqualify in the very instant of your demand: “Is it a science”? Which speaking, discoursing subjects – which subjects of experience and knowledge – do you then want to “diminish” when you say: “I who conduct this discourse am conducting a scientific discourse, and I am a scientist”? Which theoretical-political avant garde do you want to enthrone in order to isolate it from all the discontinuous forms of knowledge that circulate about it?

Michel Foucault, *Two Lectures*

Evidence-based methods and policy

One of the central aims for prevention science is the development of evidence-based methods and policy proposals for the prevention of various problems such as drug use. Evidence-based methods and policy-making have their roots in evidence-based medicine (EBM), which emerged as a term in the early 1990s and has given rise to a wide-ranging international movement (Bohlin 2011). Bohlin (2011) has identified four lines of development leading to the emergence of EBM: the “results-based movement” emerging in the United States in the 1980s which demanded better accountability in terms of results from various treatments; the rise of clinical epidemiology in the 1980s, building on the study of large populations; the development of randomized controlled trials (which had been tried ever since the 1930s); and the development in the 1970s of meta-analysis and systematic overviews. Among demands for efficient and effective government, a need for performance information has emerged which has provided an opening for applied social research committed to program evaluation, implementation, and effectiveness to gain hold (Head 2008, p. 9). This has served to legitimate the concept of evidence-based policy-making.

Within evidence-based practice and policy there is the view that professional practice should start out by establishing specific goals, selecting fitting strategies on the basis of objective evidence about the effectiveness of those strategies, and measuring the outcomes to provide knowledge that could help in improving future performance (Davies 2003, p. 97). This sounds highly rational, but as Davies (2003, p. 98) has argued, it also poses a number of questions such as *which evidence should be used* and *how is this*
evidence selected? Furthermore, there is a highly problematic trust in the objectivity in experimental research, disregarding how scientific findings acquire their meaning within specific frameworks, assumptions, and practices (Davies 2003, p. 99). In what is called evidence-based policy-making, there is an assumption that “ethical and moral issues faced by policymakers can be reduced to questions of ‘best evidence,’ and that what is actually going on in the world can be equated with what the chosen metrics indicate is going on.” (Greenhalgh & Russell 2009, p. 307). In fact, as Bohlin & Sager (2011, p. 20) have argued, the evidence-based movement might be viewed as a process of increasing formalization of procedures of judgment and decision-making. However, this needs to be put into context. Below, some context will help to understand the political meaning of evidence-based practice and policy.

New public management and the audit society

The rise of prevention science and the current “evidence-based” approach taken to drugs should be understood in the context of several dominant trends which form the conditions of possibility for the shaping and development of drug prevention policies and practices. Among these, the emergence of new public management (NPM) principles in governance and what Power (1997) has termed the Audit society constitute some of the important trends informing the development of drug prevention science, policies, and practices.

New public management emerged as a reform movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the United Kingdom under Margaret Thatcher and in the municipal governments in the United States. (Gruening 2001, p. 2). Its rise has been explained in terms of a need for fiscal restraints, ideologically informed commitments to reducing state service provisions, neoliberal values of small government as well as the success of certain political camps demanding improved accountability of public service performance (Power 1997, p. 43f). Among the characteristics of NPM that are most often mentioned by observers we find budget cuts, accountability through performance, performance auditing, and privatization (ibid.). NPM embraces a range of ideas borrowed from private-sector administrative practice emphasizing cost control, decentralizing of management authority, and the enhancement of accountability through performance indicators (Power 1997, p. 43). According to Hood (1991, p. 3), the rise of NPM seems to be linked to four other administrative trends: attempts to slow down or reverse government growth, a shift toward privatization, automation, and the development of international agendas.

Central NPM doctrines include hands-on professional management in the public sector, explicit standards and measures of performance, emphasis on
output controls, a shift to disaggregation of units and greater competition in the public sector, the importation of private-sector styles of management, and a focus on greater discipline in resource use (Hood 1991, p. 4f). The underlying administrative values in NPM stress the matching of resources to narrowly defined tasks, measured in time and money, what Hood (1991, p. 12) calls Sigma-type values. The emphasis therefore is put on output control by setting fixed and checkable goals. This distinguishes NPM values from other administrative values such as Theta-type values relating to honesty, fairness, and mutuality, which prevent bias and inequity in administrative processes through process-controls and aim to build public trust, transparency, and the ability to exercise citizenship effectively (Hood 1991, p. 14f). As some commentators have observed, the new forms of governance taking shape through NPM have brought with them some problems in terms of political representation and accountability toward the electorate. Although political representation still consists in the representation through political institutions, these are to an increasing degree viewed as obsolete and as barriers to increasing efficiency (Pierre 2007, p. 151). The problem is one of a crisis of the traditional model of democratic, representative government that arises when NPM assumes that elected politicians give over their control to managers, and policies are separated from operations (Pierre 2007, p. 152).

The rise of new public management is closely connected to what Power has described as the rise of the Audit society, which entails “a certain set of attitudes or cultural commitments to problem solving” (Power 1997, p. 4). These commitments have not simply presented certain solutions to technical problems but have rather made possible a redesigning of the practice of government (Power 1997, p. 11). What is important in the context of this study is the critique Power has offered of this mode of approaching problems. The commitment to greater accountability found within this field of problematizations “is far from contributing to transparency and democracy.” Instead of opening up for informed dialogue and discussion, the techniques offered as solutions to the problems facing society “demand that their efficacy is trusted” (Power 1997, p. 13).

Prevention science

During the early 1990s, there is a coming together of a number of techniques for the governance of a range of human problems such as adolescent delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, and schizophrenia through preventive measures. In an article in 1993, Coie et al. proposed a new conceptual framework and directions for a new research discipline, which they termed prevention science. The goal of this new discipline was to prevent or moderate major human dysfunctions through the elimination or mitigation of the causes of clinical disorders by preventive interventions. At the heart of the
enterprise was the identification of risk and protective factors through which it was possible to predict dysfunctions and which were seen to cause these dysfunctions. Field trials were proposed as the way to address these fundamental causal processes by testing the efficacy of theoretically guided interventions and thus testing hypotheses about the causes of specific disorders. Alongside this article, a two-year review conducted by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) resulted in a report in 1994 (Mrazek & Haggerty 1994), adding to the establishment of prevention science as the dominant paradigm in prevention research. The review conducted by the IOM and a review by the National Institute of Mental Health Steering Committee (NIMH 1994) led to a broad range of activities aiming at implementing the recommendations emanating from the reviews (Kellam 1999, p. 465).

The consolidation of the dominance of prevention science should be understood within the context of the broader trends discussed above. These include the development of specific techniques, such as randomized clinical trials within evidence-based medicine, outcomes research generating knowledge on the efficiency of specific interventions (which launched health care into what Bohlin (2011, p. 38) has called the “era of evaluations and demands on accountability”\(^2\)), and the rise of new public management with its emphasis on matching resources to narrowly defined tasks through the construction of fixed and “checkable” goals (Hood 1991). The proponents of prevention science drew heavily on the discourses generated within these surrounding trends in order to claim legitimacy for the program (cf. Reiss & Price 1996; Heller 1996; Muñoz et al. 1996; Roumeliotis 2015).

Once established, prevention scientists have published a vast body of literature on prevention alongside a range of influential “evidence-based” prevention programs such as the Botvin’s Life Skills Training program and the Communities That Care program (see articles 3 and 4). In the early 1990s, the Society for Prevention Research was established in the US, including “scientists, practitioners, advocates, administrators, and policy makers who value the conduct and dissemination of prevention science worldwide” (SPR webpage). A similar society (the European Society for Prevention Research) was established in Europe in 2010 with the aim to promote “the development of prevention science” (EUSPR webpage). In the year 2000, the first issue was published of the scientific journal Prevention Science.

Critical perspectives on prevention science

The emergence of prevention science certainly did not come about without resistance. For instance, the conceptual framework presented by Coie et al.

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\(^2\) My translation.
(1993) was criticized by Landsman (1994) for its reliance on the concepts of dysfunction and disorder, which, according to the author, are “a medical skeleton in the closet of the prevention model” (Landsman 1994, p. 1086). Indeed, according to Landsman (1994, p. 1086), the whole article by Coie et al. (1993) was “couched in the metaphor of dysfunction,” and this reliance upon metaphors borrowed from a medical model stunted the development of prevention research. Against this medical metaphor, Landsman proposed an architectural image which would see society as human environment, stressing the ecological embeddedness of humans.

Perry & Albee (1994) added to the criticism of the proposed conceptual framework by referring to the community psychology discourse on mental health and placed the new prevention science in a political framework. They aligned it with a conservative political rationality which insists on searching for physical causes of clinical disorders and prefers to ignore prevention models that stress social injustices (Perry & Albee 1994, p. 1087). The authors claim that this conservative logic is dependent on an individual disease model which denies the causal power of social environments (Perry & Albee 1994, p. 1088). They also criticize the scientific criteria laid for “good science” and “acceptable research methods” for being too narrow and risking to retard the process in prevention research. Especially problematic for Perry & Albee is the absence in Coie et al. (1993) of studies which deal with social injustices and discrimination.

A similar critique of the knowledge base in the prevention field – albeit not explicitly aimed at prevention science – can be found in Sahlin’s (2011) analysis of the shift that occurred in Sweden from preventive measures aimed at societal structures to ones aimed at controlling individuals and groups. The current use of risk factors is in this critique deemed highly problematic due to its conceptualization of different risk factors as being equal in weight and due to their independence from each other. Furthermore, although risk factors are theoretically located at multiple levels (such as individual, family and national levels), they often take on the appearance of individual causal factors (Sahlin 2011, p. 76).

Finally, Gorman (e.g. 1998, 2005, 2011) has launched a massive methodological critique of prevention scientists for their presentation of positive results on the basis of “multiple subgroup analysis, altering outcome variables from research report to research report, post hoc sample refinement, using data from measurement points other than the pretest as the denominator in calculating attrition rates” (Gorman 2005, p. 45). This methodological critique has led Gorman to the designation of prevention science as a “pseudo-science” (Gorman 2008).
Conceptual framework

According to the philosophy of the average modern intellectual, there is only one authority, namely science, conceived as the classification of facts and the calculation of probabilities. The statement that justice and freedom are better in themselves than injustice and oppression is scientifically unverifiable and useless.

Max Horkheimer, _Eclipse of Reason_

Problematics

As stated above, the aim of this thesis is to critically examine drug prevention as a field of problematizations. This means that the unit of analysis is not necessarily a specific solution or theory of certain problems but rather, as Osborne (2003, p. 4) has suggested in a comment on the method of the historical epistemologist George Canguilhem, “the posing of questions, the existence of obstacles” and the “mastery of problems,” as problems are what in the last instance determine the available solutions. A student of Canguilhem, Foucault (2002, p. 25) in a similar way poses his question as from which fields of experience certain behaviors have been problematized and made into objects of thought and concern.

Bacchi (e.g. 1999; 2009; 2012) has developed this notion further, suggesting that the analysis in such a line of inquiry is not to search for the one and only “true” response to an issue but rather the ways that it is questioned, analyzed, and regulated in a specific time and circumstance (Bacchi 2012, p. 1). The task in such an approach becomes one of directing attention to the ways that specific representations of problems play into how governance is shaped (Bacchi 2009, p. xi). There is an intimate connection between problematizations and governance in that political programs are formulated around specific problematizations, such as drug use, which provide the territory upon which politics can act (c.f. Osborne 1997, p. 174f). Without such problematizations, politics could not get to work. As Bacchi (2009, p. 25) suggests, “we are governed through problematizations.” Furthermore, as Bacchi (1999; 2009) argues, problems are not objectively existing phenomena situated outside of politics, but discursively constituted as such through political and scientific practices (more on this in the next section). Problem-
atizations thus entail specific descriptions of problems, a certain way of organizing knowledge, and various implications that follow from this (Bacchi 1999, p. 36). Knowledge and its production hence become one of the central units of analysis in this approach. This will be discussed next.

Knowledge

In his account of the rise of scientific facts, Ludwik Fleck (1979) introduces the useful notion of “thought style.” Facts are in this approach to the production of scientific knowledge seen as emerging from within specific socially and historically situated styles of thought. These act to organize and establish the limits for acceptable ways of knowing. In order to understand objectivity, as Hacking (1992, p. 4) has argued in relation to Fleck’s theory of knowledge, we need to understand the role that thought styles play in generating objectivity. Not because they are in some ways objective – as a way to establish the truth – but because they establish what it means to be objective. They determine the criteria that have to be fulfilled in order for a proposition to be accepted as true. They also provide the legitimate objects, evidence, and possibilities for science. In Rose’s words (2007, p. 12):

A style of thought is not just about a certain form of explanation, about what it is to explain, it is also about what there is to explain. That is to say, it shapes and establishes the very object of explanation, the set of problems, issues, phenomena that an explanation is attempting to account for.

In a similar way, in Bacchi’s approach, objects of knowledge are not taken for granted but seen as constituted as such within specific fields of problematization (such as politics and science) within shifting networks and practices (Bacchi 2012, p. 2). Social phenomena are not ascribed independent status within this theoretical frame. In other words, the aim becomes to distance oneself from the view of objects as objectively existing and stable, and rather study their conditions of emergence (Bacchi 2012, p. 4). As Bletsas (2012, p. 41) has argued, the task becomes one of, not questioning the existence of objects, but rather the view of these as stable and unchanging. The ontological position taken by Bacchi is not one of being and non-being, but one of being and emergence. This can be described – in line with the position taken by Foucault, Fleck, and Kuhn – as a kind of nominalism which does not deny the existence of “stuff”, existing independently of human intervention, but which denies that this “stuff” would be structured or shaped in specific (“natural”) ways (cf. Olssen 1999, p. 66ff). It is about how this “stuff” emerges within specific socially and historically changing discursive

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3 This notion is in some ways similar to Kuhn’s (1996) notion of paradigm.
frames. Al-Amoudi (2007) and Frauley (2007) have argued that this position is similar to that found in the tradition of critical realism, in which objects are situated in a stratified reality\(^4\) (Frauley 2007, p. 620): “realists believe phenomena to be emergent, arising from the intersection of a mass of tangled material and discursive relations.” Vreeco (2010, s. 55) has captured this thought well in a discussion of Fleck’s (1979) theory of the emergence of “facts” as a “historic event”:

> The point here is not that facts “don’t really exist” because they arise in certain times and places, and in relation to certain social circumstances; it is that facts always exist within a historically situated, “simultaneously constraining and determining” […] thought style that has allowed them to come into being. It is only when limits are placed on the possibilities of thought, and when requirements are specified that qualify some utterances to “count” within a field (and that disqualify some others from counting), that facts can develop at all.

Law (2004) has developed this position further in regard to the role methods play in the emergence of phenomena. In Law’s argument, scientific methods are performative rather than procedures for representing a given reality (Law 2004, p. 143). Law criticizes what is called the “Euro-American” method’s constitution of a singular, universal, and independent reality, arguing that a closer look at how science handles its objects reveals that methods rather generate multiple, in a specific sense context-dependent, and simultaneous realities. In other words, if it is the case that reality is singular, this is because a specific method enacts reality as singular. The critique that becomes possible to aim at such a (Euro-American) singular reality thus consists in its “hiding” the possibility of constituting alternative realities (which are just as real as the former). What Law (2004, p. 65ff) calls ontological politics is about demonstrating the multiple character of reality and to attempt to enact some realities as more real.

### Problematics of government

During the 1977–1978 series of lectures at the Collège de France, social theorist Michel Foucault introduced the term governmentality. With this term, Foucault attempted to capture a range of general questions starting to form in the 16\(^\text{th}\) century in relation to the problematic of government, which constituted a break from earlier conceptualizations of government (Foucault 2000). “Governmentality” was conceptualized in terms of techniques and procedures through which human behavior is directed. As Rose et al. (2006) have argued, Foucault’s concern in undertaking an analysis of the problemat-

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\(^4\) The real, the actual, and the empirical (Frauley 2007, p. 620).
ics of government was to understand the birth of liberalism as a political rationality. Governmentality is conceptualized as a “way of doing things” that is oriented to specific objectives and which reflects on itself in certain ways (Rose et al. 2006, p. 84), or as rationalities of ruling that enable the activity of governance to be thought and practiced (Bacchi 2012, p. 5). Rose et al. (2006) formulate the aim of the analysis of the problematic of government thus:

An analysis of government then, is one that seeks to identify these different styles of thought, their conditions of formation, the principles and knowledges that they borrow from and generate, the practices that they consist of, how they are carried out, their contestations and alliances with other arts of governing (Rose et al. 2006, s. 84).

The analysis of government in this approach takes as its starting point the notion that government is inherently a problematizing activity. The ideals of government found at the level of political rationalities are therefore linked “to the problems around which it circulates, the failings it seeks to rectify, the ills it seeks to cure” (Rose & Miller 1992, p. 181). As Bacchi (2012, p. 5) has noted, the central focus in the analysis of government is on how governing takes place, and this is achieved by locating the analysis on practices of government. In the present study, this takes the shape of a question of how “we” are governed through the knowledge and political practices in the field of drug prevention. Governance aims at shaping conduct through work done upon our desires, interests, and beliefs. It is therefore highly dependent on the activities of professionals and expert knowledges. As Bletsas (2012, p. 40) has argued in relation to the issue of poverty, analysis of the problematics of government enables the posing of questions such as:

What forms of governing practice (surveillance, discipline, self-government, etc.) are enabled where poverty is constructed in this way as a problem? What are the effects of this formation – including, and in particular, the lived effects of those who are poor?

As specific ways of problematizing certain fields of experience enable some forms of governmental action (while excluding others), it follows that a critical examination of problematizations becomes highly important. Such examinations potentially open up a space for critically reflecting on possible deleterious effects of governmental practices and problematizations as well as on alternative strategies that might be possible.
The subject

As argued above, the aim of governance is, at least in part, to shape conduct by acting upon our desires, interests, and beliefs. Such attempts constitute what Hacking (2008) has called “making up people”. The perspective taken in this thesis is that categories such as “citizens”, “the homeless”, “adolescents”, or “drug users” do not reflect given realities but are the result of discursive practices through which individuals and groups are assigned meaning (cf. Bacchi 2009, p. 9). Importantly, this is not merely a question of assigning meaning to pre-constituted subjects but of processes through which certain kinds of persons come into being (Hacking 1986, p. 228). Such processes involve several techniques, such as censuses and surveys, used to “describe” people. This implies that the categories used to describe people are not in some way given and stable but constructed and possible to change. The latter point is emphasized by Hacking (1986, p. 223), who has argued that:

Even national and provincial censuses amazingly show that the categories into which people fall change every ten years. Social change creates new categories of people, but the counting is no mere report of developments. It elaborately, often philanthropically, creates new ways for people to be.

In the context of drug prevention, this raises the question of how prevention scientists construct the subject categories into which people are assigned and what role this plays for the problematics of government. For instance, the construction of “drug users” as either rational subjects who simply use drugs in order to enhance their pleasure, or as irrational subjects driven by biological urges, open up different spaces for governmental action. Such acts of “labelling from above” create realities that people potentially make their own (Hacking 1986, p. 234).

In the political context, the ability to participate in political decision making processes is dependent on whether one is acknowledged as a political subject. As Butler (2007, p. 50) has argued, the criteria for political representation are established prior to the entering into the political field. Thus, the possibility to engage politically in drug politics is dependent on whether one complies with the “rules” determining how the political field is structured. In this thesis, the question that needs to be addressed is how drug prevention constitutes the desirable political subject and the “rules” for political participation. In order to address this question, the concepts of politics and the political will be discussed in the next section.
Politics and the political

One immensely important question that has to be tackled in the analysis of how drug prevention constitutes its problematic is the question of the political. The political propositions and possible practices the field of prevention make possible rely on a specific notion of the political. Drawing on the work of Mouffe (2005) and Ranciére (1999), I pose that the political refers to the ontological level of politics – its “essence” – through which a dimension of antagonism constitutive of human societies exists. Its corollary term politics is meant to cover the “set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political” (Mouffe 2005, p. 9).

How this “essence” of the political is understood structures how one is able to act within the field of politics. So, for instance, Mouffe (2005) has launched a massive critique of thinkers such as Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck who have called for a drastic rethinking of the nature and aims of politics (conceptualized by Giddens in terms of a third-way politics beyond left and right). The argument presented by thinkers such as Giddens and Beck builds on the notion that there no longer exist collective identities structured in terms of we/they in post-traditional societies, which has led to the dissipation of political frontiers (Mouffe 2005, p. 48). Instead they advocate a consensus-driven, rationalistic, and deliberative model of the political. However, as Mouffe (2005, p. 11, 50f) points out, every consensus is fundamentally based on acts of exclusion, and Giddens’ and Beck’s inability to pose questions about power relations destabilizes their conception of a non-conflictual version of the political. A similar critique against such consensus-driven models of the political has been provided by Ranciére (1999, p. 101f), pointing to the paradox that:

in the name of democracy, emphasizes the consensual practice of effacing the forms of democratic action. Postdemocracy is the government practice and conceptual legitimation of democracy after the demos, a democracy that has eliminated the appearance, miscount, and dispute of the people and is thereby reducible to the sole interplay of state mechanisms and combinations of social energies and interests.

5 Mouffe’s and Ranciére’s vocabularies differ in that the latter uses the term police to refer to “the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution” (Ranciére 1999, p. 28), whereas politics refers to an antagonistic activity aiming to break with the configuration of the police in which parties acting politically have no part. In order to avoid confusion, I have chosen to keep to Mouffe’s vocabulary, using “politics” to refer to Ranciére’s “police” and “the political” to refer to Ranciére’s “politics.”
Within this model of the political, any dispute is turned into a problem that can be reduced to the means of solving it by rational calculations. The inevitably “modest” role that the expert state takes in relation to the handling of problems in such modes of problematization leads to the disappearance of “the political stage for exposing and processing conflict” (Ranciére 1999, p. 109). Furthermore, as Mouffe (2005, p. 24f) has pointed out, rationalistic and consensual models of the political are unable to acknowledge the role affect or passions have to play in collective forms of identification and as the “main moving forces” within the field of politics. In fact, emotions are central to the possibility of political mobilization through the affective relation that they set up with the world (Ahmed 2014, p. 201).

In terms of the present study, the question then becomes how the analyzed field of problematizations constitutes the political. How is conflict handled in relation to the politics of drug prevention? Is it acknowledged at all? What role does affect play within the political?

**Ideology**

In order to be able to question the naturalness of the political and scientific arrangements within which a political technology such as drug prevention takes shape, it is helpful to turn to the concept of ideology. As Eagleton (2007) has argued, it would be wrong to assume a unitary definition of the concept, because ideologies function in various ways (such as naturalizing, rationalizing, legitimizing, and universalizing), but for the purposes of this study, the naturalizing function of ideology will be central. Therefore, in this section some notions of this concept will be traced in order to provide a useful tool for analyzing instances of naturalization within the field of drug prevention.

The critique Marx offers of the young Hegelians in his and Engels’ *The German Ideology* (Marx & Engels 1998) points to a central “naturalizing” function of ideology that can be found in various later thinkers. Against the idealist method employed by the Hegelians, Marx poses the materialist approach in which ideas, concepts, and consciousness are intertwined with the real relations and practices of people (ibid., p. 42). As the Hegelians’ method is situated at the ideal level, according to Marx, they never get to the constitutive contradiction found at the structural level. Therefore their method is ideological: it hides the “true” social pathology and assists in upholding the existing order. In Marx’s narrative, each individual’s life and social relations (and consciousness) are conditioned by the existing division of labor and take on an “accidental character” as unintentional results arising from historical progress independently from the will of any individual (ibid., p. 87).
This narrative can also be found in Marx’ critique of economists Smith and Ricardo in the *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* (Marx & Engels 1998), in which they are accused of representing bourgeois relations as the result of natural laws, independent of history (ibid., p. 4). The idea of the individual as isolated and free to act (the economic man) that these economists propound is rejected as a mere “illusion.” According to Marx, communism differs from such “naturalistic” accounts due to its treatment of “all naturally evolved premises as the creations of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals” (ibid., p. 89f).

In Mannheim’s writings on the sociology of knowledge we find a notion of the social character of knowledge similar to Marx. Like Marx, Mannheim underlines the importance of concrete historical and social situations and individuals’ entry into pre-existing social and ideational structures (Mannheim 1936, p. 2f). In order to gain an understanding of knowledge it therefore becomes crucial to conceive of the notion of ideology. In his attempt to analyze this concept, Mannheim makes a distinction between a particular and a total conception of ideology. The particular conception views an individual’s or group’s ideas as (consciously or unconsciously) deranged representations of reality and is situated at the psychological level as part of an analysis of interests. This view on ideology only points to parts of an individual’s utterances as ideological, while a common basis for the verification of the truth and validity of the utterance is taken for granted for both parties in discussion (Mannheim 1936, p. 57). The total conception of ideology (which Mannheim prefers) covers an individual’s or group’s entire view on reality (*Weltanschauung*) and can be described as an epistemological principle. This means that ideology is manifest in the thought system itself, in its very form. Two parties can possess two widely different worldviews. No common criteria for establishing the truth of an utterance exist. For both these conceptions of ideology, however, the ideas stemming from an individual or a group is always a function of their social position, which leads Mannheim to conclude that there is no objectively given point from which to view the world6 (Mannheim 1936, p. 74). The problem of relativism which emerges from such an insight Mannheim (1936, p. 79) approaches by suggesting a “relational” character of knowledge: knowledge is always situated in relation to a historically specific experience. Absolute truth thus cannot exist other than in relation to the values and positions that subjects possess within a specific social context. The problem of “false consciousness” for Mannheim therefore does not consist in its inability to grasp an absolute and unchanging reality but rather that concepts and categories prevent individua-

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6 Compare this to Kuhn’s (1996) and Feyerabend’s (1993) notion of *incommensurability*. Lyotard (1988) has also made use of a similar notion in his writing on the problem of the *differend*.
als from adjusting to the world (a specific social context) by hiding the ever changing character of reality (Mannheim 1936, p. 94f). In this sense, ideology acts to uphold a given order by providing a specific worldview.

Gramsci (1971) partly criticizes the “negative” view that traditional Marxist philosophy presented of the concept of ideology. Through a division of the concept into “arbitrary ideologies” – which are created by movements and carry a political element – and “historically organic” ideologies which constitute the necessary superstructure correlating to the material base, Gramsci, like Mannheim, introduces an epistemological principle at the heart of the concept (Gramsci 1971, p. 376f). Historically organic ideologies are seen as necessary for a given structure, and their validity lies on the “psychological” plane, as they “create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc.” (Gramsci 1971, p. 377). In Gramsci’s work, ideologies acquire an epistemological value – “that men acquire consciousness of structural conflicts on the level of ideologies should be considered as an affirmation of epistemological and not simply psychological and moral value.” (Gramsci 1971, p. 365). Similar to Mannheim’s conception of a Weltanschauung, historically organic ideologies can be positioned on the level of meaning and are necessary for the possibility of individuals to move about in the world and constitute the frames for thinking and understanding.

Althusser (2001, p. 109) builds upon Gramsci’s insights and argues that ideology “represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.” This formulation positions ideology on the symbolic level and is close to Gramsci’s view of ideology as enabling an understanding of the world. Individuals thus create a representation of their relation to the world, which cannot be said to be false (as in false consciousness) but rather an epistemological principle. It is in this sense that Althusser’s notion of interpellation – the transformation of individuals into subjects through the operation of “hailing” – should be understood. One of the central functions of ideology in Althusser’s theory is to constitute individuals as “free” subjects in the sense that they voluntarily act out the position provided by a certain ideology (Althusser 2001, p. 118). To this must be added that Althusser views individuals as always-already constituted as subjects and thus always positioned within ideology. This becomes evident if we consider that ideology acts as an epistemological principle structuring the world for individuals.

This is certainly a break from classical Marxist theorizing in that it views ideology not as simply a reflection of “true” conditions but rather structures these for the individual. Ideologies are thus necessary for our ability to move around in the world, and any notion of an “authentic” relation to the world, outside of ideology, itself becomes an ideological notion. As Hall (1985) has argued, when the notion that meaning depends on systems of representation
disappears – which Hall labels as “the naturalistic attitude” – we find ourselves in a moment of extreme ideological closure:

Here we are most under the sway of the highly ideological structures of all – common sense, the regime of the “taken for granted.” The point at which we lose sight of the fact that sense is a production of our systems of representation is the point at which we fall, not into Nature but into the naturalistic illusion: the height (or depth) of ideology. (Hall 1985, p. 105).

The danger with the naturalization of certain systems of representation becomes evident when we consider the role of systems of representation in upholding relations of domination. Fairclough makes this point explicit when he argues for an understanding of ideologies as “significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities) which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction, or transformation of relations of domination,” adding that these become “most effective when they become naturalized, and achieve the status of ‘common sense’” (Fairclough 1992, p. 87).

It is through this conception of ideological closure – the disappearance of the notion of the dependency of meaning on systems of representation – that the current study aims to approach the subject matter. That is, in the sense of the taken-for-granted, “common-sense,” or “naturalistic attitude” of the objects that emerge from within the specific field of problematizations constitutive of drug prevention.
Material and methods

Approach and material

The approach taken to governance in this thesis is a broad one, looking beyond mere state policies in order to grasp a wider picture of how governance takes place. This includes examining the role of experts and how the knowledge they produce enable governance (cf. Bacchi 2009, p. 26). The thesis is mostly limited to the analysis of what could be described as “soft” prevention approaches. Although technically part of a “prohibition” regime rather than a “prevention” regime, in Sweden, the criminalization of drug use is seen as a part of drug prevention. This has sometimes been explained using a model in which “soft” approaches answer to the prevention of demand whereas prohibition answers to the prevention of availability (cf. Andréasson 2008). Much has been written on the criminalization of drugs in Sweden (cf. Tham 1992, 2009; Träskman 2011) so this thesis will focus on the more “soft” dimensions of drug prevention.

In order to enable an analysis of drug prevention as a field of problematizations, different dimensions of this phenomenon need to be addressed. Therefore, four interrelated dimensions of drug prevention have been analyzed in this thesis.

In the first paper, drug prevention is examined temporally in the concrete context of Swedish politics in order to discern possible shifts in this field of problematizations and how politics and knowledge come together to form the “problem” of drugs. This “contextual dimension” provides a better understanding of the (Swedish) political context within which drugs are problematized. The second paper focuses on what can be called the “epistemo-ontological dimension,” critically examining the underlying assumptions in the “thought style” – prevention science – dominant in the field of drug prevention. This enables an understanding of how objects of knowledge are produced within this field of problematizations. The third paper concerns the attempts made by prevention scientists to disseminate the knowledge produced within this thought style to more practical arenas (communities). This third dimension, borrowing a term from prevention scientists, pertains to the “operative system” (Hawkins et al. 2002, p. 951) through which specific programs are selected and implemented. Finally, the fourth paper addresses a

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7 See Sahlin (2011) for an analysis of the role of the police and control in drug prevention.
dimension that might be called “Techne,” in which a specific program is analyzed.

In order to gain an understanding of the context within which drug prevention problematizes drugs, ten public reports covering the period 1981–2011 were analyzed in the first paper. Being political products, public reports provide a useful insight into how drugs have been problematized at the political level while at the same time offering an understanding of how knowledge is utilized in the construction of the problem. As “negotiation zones” (Wisselgren, 2008, p. 108) between the fields of politics and research, public reports highlight the process through which the problematic of drug prevention is established.

In the second paper, the political implications of the epistemological and ontological assumptions of prevention science were examined in an analysis of 14 publications. The material consists of two categories of texts. The first category (nine publications) concerns the general theoretical framework of prevention science: the central concepts, the aims of prevention, theoretical and methodological problems, etc. The second category (five publications) constitutes a specific case. In this material, the specific “problem” of drugs is addressed by the US-based National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), drawing on the principles of prevention science. The choice to look at a specific case was motivated by two considerations. First, NIDA funds most of the world’s research on addiction and is therefore highly influential in what direction research on drugs takes (Vrecko 2010, p. 53), including in Sweden (see papers). Second, as prevention science constitutes a general framework for prevention, including the prevention of mental ill-health and criminality, the inclusion of this case enables an understanding of the specific issues related to drugs.

The material for the third paper consists of 13 publications covering the period 1996–2013 and written by the developers of the Communities That Care program and others affiliated with it. The texts were chosen for their programmatic, descriptive, and theoretical nature, which allows an analysis of the aspirations of the program (programmatic texts), the components of the program (descriptive texts), and their epistemological and ontological assumptions (theoretical texts).

Finally, the fourth paper analyzed eight publications written by the designer of a Swedish Social and Emotional Training program, along with the program’s webpage. The publications included introductory textbooks outlining the various program components and its theoretical foundation as well as program manuals describing the different steps involved in the implementation of the program, articles with evaluations of the program, and the designer’s dissertation, which presents the program’s theoretical foundation and a series of evaluations.
The methodological approach taken to the analysis of this material is introduced below, followed by some reflection on the question of qualitative analysis and the act of interpretation.

Analyzing problematics

The analysis of drug prevention as a field of problematizations corresponds to a specific tradition of analysis concerned with the examination of phenomena in terms of problematics. One of the best-known representatives of this tradition is Michel Foucault, who has analyzed how madness, crime, and sexuality have been problematized (c.f. Foucault 1983; 2002; 2003). The aim in these analyses was to examine how and why madness, for example, was problematized in a certain historical moment “through a certain institutional practice and a certain apparatus of knowledge” (Foucault 1988, p. 257). According to Foucault,

Problematization doesn’t mean representation of a pre-existing object, nor the creation by discourse of an object that doesn’t exist. It is the totality of discursive or non-discursive practices that introduces something into the play of true and false and constitutes it as an object of thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc.). (ibid.).

As Bacchi (2012, p. 1) has argued in relation to Foucault’s approach, the aim of this approach is “to inquire into the terms of reference within which an issue is cast,” including how issues are questioned, classified, analyzed, and regulated in specific contexts. Against this background, Bacchi (1999; 2009) has developed a specific approach to the analysis of problematizations called “what’s the problem represented to be?” This is the main methodological influence for this thesis.

Bacchi’s (2009) approach to the analysis of policy and scientific problems begins with the question “what is the problem represented to be?” (in a specific policy proposal, prevention program, etc.). So, for instance, in the analysis in paper 1, the first step was to pose the question: what is problematic about drugs in the policy proposals put forth in the public reports? Similarly, in paper 4 the first step was to ask what is seen as problematic in the subject’s relation to emotions in the Social Emotional Training program. Through an examination of how solutions to specific problems are presented, it becomes possible to “work backwards” from the concrete solutions offered in public reports or descriptions of drug prevention programs to reveal what is seen as the actual problem within these solutions (cf. Bacchi 2009, p. 3).

The second step involves an examination of the presuppositions or assumptions underlying specific problem representations. This includes an analysis of the epistemological and ontological assumptions in the bodies of
knowledge actualized in the construction of problems. It enables the identification of the conceptual premise of a specific problem representation, thus shedding light on the role of knowledge for specific problem representations. For instance, in paper 2, the examination of the underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions in prevention science revealed that, within this thought style, the objects of inquiry (such as specific behaviors or disorders) were constructed as discrete and bounded entities external to political, cultural, and scientific practices. The epistemological implication is that they are possible to observe and intervene on regardless of cultural or political context.

In addition to the analysis of ontological and epistemological assumptions, Bacchi (2009, p. 7) has suggested that the analysis of binaries or dichotomies (such as rational/irrational, nature/culture) is a fruitful way of casting light on the underlying assumptions in problematizations. This includes looking for possible hierarchies implied in binary relations. For instance, in paper 3, the analysis of how hierarchically structured binaries (called distinctions in the paper) were built into the Communities That Care program revealed that the program makes a distinction between scientific knowledge and other types of (lay, political) knowledge and thus asserts the primacy of scientific reasoning in political matters.

Yet another assumption inherent in problematizations consists in the concepts involved in the construction of the problem. Concepts are abstract and relatively open-ended labels and are thus open to fill with different meanings. The key concepts in this thesis are “drugs” and “prevention.” As shown in paper 1, these concepts have acquired different meanings dependent on the context in which they are used. Whereas “prevention,” for instance, was equated to social political reforms aiming to improve social structures and thereby to prevent the emergence of drug abuse among socially excluded individuals and groups, the concept acquired a new meaning during the 1990s, when prevention came to signify specific methods aimed at changing individual behaviors.

Finally, one central assumption examined in this thesis is connected to categories. As Bacchi (2009, p. 9) has argued, categories, and especially “people categories,” such as “the homeless,” “citizens,” or “adolescents,” play a major role in governing practices. People categories equate what in a previous section was discussed in terms of “subjects.” The task in this approach is not to take such categories as “adolescents” as given but rather in terms of how they function to give meaning to certain problematizations. As Bacchi (2009, p. 11) argues, this involves examining the techniques associated with the construction of people categories, such as surveys, diagnostic manuals, and statistical techniques. For instance, in paper 2, the analysis of the category of “adolescent” demonstrates that prevention science constructs the adolescent as a subject that lacks the skills in rational decision-making needed to abstain from drugs, thereby opening up a space for certain inter-
ventions. As this example shows, the way the category of “adolescent” is constructed in prevention science plays a role in governing practices.

The third step in this approach is to ask how a specific form of problematization has come about. This would require a historical analysis and has been addressed in paper 1 to some extent, along with the “background” section provided in this introductory chapter. The purpose of this question is to highlight that alternative ways of problematizing always exist and thereby to destabilize the naturalness that specific problematizations possess. For instance, the temporal analysis conducted in paper 1 seeks to highlight the change that has occurred in how drugs have been problematized and which preventive interventions have been deemed legitimate in the Swedish context. As the paper attempts to demonstrate, there is nothing “natural” in the way that the contemporary field of prevention is structured (in terms of specific methods aimed at individual behaviors). It should rather be seen as the result of complex historical and political processes.

The fourth step is an examination of what is left unproblematized in certain problem representations (Bacchi 2009, p. 12). This means examining the silences inherent in, and the limits that constrain, specific policy proposals and prevention interventions. This step enables an analysis of the ideological closure exerted by certain problematics. As the questions asked in the previous steps in this approach imply, the way a problem is constructed, the wide range of assumptions, and the way a specific form of problematization has come about shape what is possible to think within the frame of this problematization. Therefore, finding ways to highlight the silences contained in specific problematizations enables us to address issues not currently covered. For instance, as argued in paper 4, the construction of emotions as inherently internal entities decoupled from their cultural or political context and drug use as an outcome of mental illness acts to silence any political considerations in regard to these phenomena. In a similar way, in paper 2 it is argued that the valorization of scientific accounts of drugs in prevention science serves to silence other ways of knowing these phenomena, thus narrowing the field of the political.

In the fifth step, the effects of specific problematizations take center stage. According to Bacchi (2009, p. 15), it is possible to delineate three interrelated effects of importance. First, discursive effects which “follow from the limits imposed on what can be thought and said.” In part, this is connected to the previous step, in which the silences in specific problematizations are brought into light. Second, subjectification effects through which subjects are discursively constituted. Third, the lived effects, consisting in the material impact of problem representations. The lived effects might be exemplified by the analysis in paper 1, which argues that the way in which drugs are currently problematized in Sweden closes off consideration of social exclusionary processes. The lived effects in this case mainly mean that
those who are socially excluded are divested of the means by which to mobilize politically in order to evoke political change.

The final step is to reflect on how and where specific problematizations are produced, disseminated, and defended. In this thesis, the question coincides with the very objects that are examined. As is demonstrated in the papers, drug prevention and its inherent problematizations are currently dominated by the discipline of prevention science. Hence the focus on how, within this discipline, specific ways of problematizing drugs and politics have been foregrounded.

Qualitative analysis and the question of interpretation

Research has traditionally been conceived of as a matter of discovering the truth. Especially within empiricist styles of thought, truth has been viewed as accurate representations corresponding to an independently existing reality (Smith & Hodkinson 2005, p. 916). Naturally, in such a style of thought stressing objectivity, the notion of subjective interpretations coloring the representation of reality constitutes a major threat to truth. However, over the past half century, empiricism has lost its dominance as a theory of knowledge, and several philosophers of science have noted the problems with this stance8 (ibid.). What came to be stressed instead, as in the case of Kuhn (1996), was the theory-dependence of knowledge. But without recourse to an independently existing reality through which to evaluate knowledge claims, what does this make of “objectivity”?

The position taken in this thesis is that we can still keep some notion of “objectivity” even though we lack access to pure facts that would enable us to declare certain interpretations to be true or false. As Marsh & Furlong (2002, p. 29) have argued, this is because a field of study “is a co-operative intellectual practice, with a tradition of historically produced norms, rules, conventions and standards of excellence that remain object to critical debate, and with a narrative content that gives meaning to it.” The criteria set for evaluating interpretations are thus neither universal nor objective but rather “shared criteria for assessing knowledge claims” (ibid.). Objective knowledge, in this argument, should be seen as a normative standard inherent in the practice of criticizing rival accounts of “facts.” This position is in many ways similar to the one taken by Foucault (1971, p. 16), arguing that “a proposition must fulfil some onerous and complex conditions before it can be admitted within a discipline; before it can be pronounced true or false it must be […] ‘within the true.’” Similarly, Toulmin (1982) has argued that it is impossible to identify one single perspective as the correct one to adopt. However, “this does not imply that we cannot recognize truly incorrect, im-

possible, or even frankly outrageous interpretations when we meet them” (Toulmin 1982, p. 103f). In this anti-foundational stance, knowledge claims are not judged against given facts, but rather against facts agreed upon within a particular community (Marsh & Furlong 2002, p. 29).

This means that the arguments and interpretations that underlie the analyses in this thesis should not be viewed as objective in a traditional sense. Instead, they should be viewed as interpretations (or perhaps suggested ways of reading phenomena) made from a specific perspective, the accuracy of which need to be assessed by engaging in intellectual critique.
Summary of papers

Paper I

This paper is an examination of the shift that occurred during the 1990s in how drug prevention has been conceptualized in Sweden. Through an analysis of ten public reports published in 1981–2011, the paper aims to explore how certain ways of conceptualizing the drug “problem” shape the possible responses to these problems.

The key questions that the paper seeks to answer are: How have drugs been constructed as a problem? How has knowledge been utilized in the construction and representation of this problem? What ideological outcomes does the formulation of drug prevention policies bring with it?

As in the work of Bacchi (1999; 2012), policy problems are not seen as existing independently of the way in which they are represented, but they are constituted through discursive practices. Furthermore, knowledge is not seen as neutral but as an active part in the constitution of political problems; through various techniques, reality is acted upon and inscribed with meaning, thereby rendered stable and possible to act upon.

In the publications from the extensive UNO inquiry (Ds S 1981:11; Ds S 1982:7; Ds S 1982:13), launched by the bourgeois government in Sweden in 1977, and the report from the 1982 Narcotics Commission (SOU 1984:13), the drug problem was constructed as inherently complex, marked by unpredictability and flux and not possible to describe in precise terms. The reports positioned the “problem” of drug use in a temporal and dynamic process with several other problems, such as unemployment, economic troubles, and housing issues, which interacted to create a complex phenomenon. Drawing on social and interpersonal theoretical frameworks, and research on the social conditions and life histories of individuals and groups, the reports enabled a specific form of governance that relied upon the mutual responsibility of the state and its citizens. The policy proposals to come out of these reports consequently stressed actions aimed at improving social structures, as the problem was ultimately conceptualized as being about the exclusion from the welfare state and its services (housing, education, work, financial security, and political participation). At the same time, this exclusion was seen as a threat to the social democratic welfare project which stressed the active participation of citizens, including conforming to established social norms and social responsibility. The underlying values guiding these reports were for-
mulated in terms of justice and equality (which acquired their meaning from the labor movement), and a notion of equal opportunity to actively engage in the social democratic welfare project.

In line with this requirement for active participation, the importance of statistics on drug use was due to its enabling public debate. Data on drug use was seen as an indicator of the welfare and malaise of society, and therefore it was society itself that needed monitoring.

Sweden experienced what Blyth (2001, p. 17) has called a “neoliberal ideational shift” during the second half of the 1980s: the public sector was increasingly depicted as a problem, and policies designed to promote equality were recast as efficiency loss. Drugs were increasingly decoupled from critical discourses aimed at social structures, and the use of drugs, rather than the social context of use, was seen as constituting the problem. Taking a substance-centered approach to prevention, the public reports published from 1994 onward advocated that political action be directed at the behavior of individuals and groups—especially children and adolescents—rather than social structures. Collective solutions were now replaced by an increased responsibilization of the family. Parents were to be actively engaged in their children’s well-being, mainly through controlling measures. In addition, drug use was seen as resulting from liberal or permissive attitudes toward drugs. Accordingly, methods were required to strengthen the will of individuals to abstain from drugs. Such liberal attitudes were connected to an increased internationalization, mainly through Sweden’s joining the European Union in 1995, giving rise to fears that drug use might become more common. Research in this latter period was connected to governance through expert systems by providing knowledge about efficient methods and in helping to steer the various activities that the State was involved in. In addition, research was to provide knowledge about the norms and attitudes held by individuals in order to enable more efficient preventive methods. This period also saw the introduction of prevention science in Sweden, which might explain why sociological or criminological research was not considered in the reports.

The argument is made that, during this period, problem representations of drugs shifted from being political in a public participatory sense to being technical in that experts are to handle the “problem” by utilizing efficient methods. Furthermore, this shift has meant that political accountability has dissolved by transferring the issue of drugs from the political field to the expert arena. It has become more difficult to formulate political preferences and objectives on an aggregate level. Above all, this development has led to

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9 Please note that the article (Roumeliotis 2014, p. 344) wrongly states that “Another explanation for not considering this research may be the increasing influence of ‘prevention research’”. This should of course be read as “increasing influence of prevention science”, referring to the scientific discipline.
the naturalization of a certain problematization of drugs, centered on individual attitudes and norms, while discarding discourses centered on issues of social exclusionary processes and political mobilization.

**Paper II**

The aim of this paper is to critically examine the scientific discipline called prevention science, currently constituting the dominant style of thought in the field of prevention. Especially interesting is the political space that prevention science establishes and in which drug prevention is constituted as a political technology. The questions asked in this paper are: How is the problematic of prevention constituted in prevention science? How does prevention science enable the constitution of drug prevention as a political technology? How is “the political,” seen as the symbolic space structuring legitimate political discourse and practice, constituted in prevention science?

In accordance with the theory of knowledge developed by Fleck (1979), prevention science is in this paper seen as a historically situated “thought style.” Thought styles organize and establish the limits for what can be thought and determine what it means to be objective. As such, the paper attempts to examine how this specific style of thought enables certain forms of governance.

The analysis covers the period from 1993 to 2012, and a total of 14 publications describing the theoretical framework, concepts, advances, and goals of prevention science have been examined.

The analysis shows that prevention science provides a narrow definition of prevention research. Among the requirements for what counts as legitimate knowledge is the analysis of interventions aimed at reducing risk factors for clinically diagnosable disorders as defined by the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM). Furthermore, in this style of thought the objects of knowledge are seen as existing independently from all cultural and political contexts and possible to measure objectively. This acts to naturalize the problems for which the preventive interventions provided by prevention scientists are seen as solutions. The subject is constituted as a neoconservative rational choice actor to be inculcated with the skill in exerting self-control in relation to drug use.

Prevention science enables a specific mode of neoliberal governance “from a distance,” allowing the control of networks of actors through the establishment of specific standards, criteria of efficiency, demands on program effectiveness and cost-effectiveness, and the monitoring of outputs. Society is in this style of thought rendered governable through specific forms of data gathering that enable the monitoring and control of expertise, risk groups, and individuals.
The analysis of how prevention science constitutes “the political” shows that, through the establishment of a specific conception of objectivity, statements not adhering to the methodological requirements of prevention science are possible to discard as moralistic claims. Through this it is possible to delineate between true and false statements. Connected to this is the view that political consensus is possible to achieve through recourse to an external and stable reality, and conflict is hence removed from the sphere of the political. In the context of evidence-based policy-making, the problems for which prevention is seen as the answer exist independently of how they are constructed in policy processes and are thus possible to address through “objectively” defined measures. This exerts significant ideological closure on the possibility to challenge the way drugs are currently problematized, while the valorization of scientific accounts in this style of thought marginalizes the public from the policy process.

Paper III

Against the background of an increased interest in community participation during the past decades, the aim of this paper is to examine how the “community” is constituted as a political entity in the drug prevention program Communities That Care (CTC), a program for community empowerment. The questions that the paper seeks to answer are: How is the problem of “participation” constituted in this program? How is “community” constituted as a political subject? What do the concepts “empowerment” and “participation” signify? Under what conditions does it become possible for the community to emerge as a political subject? If the community is seen as in need of empowerment, what are the needs identified by the CTC program?

In this paper, communities are seen as constituted in specific temporal and cultural contexts rather than as naturally existing entities. Drawing on the work by Mouffe (2005) and Ranciére (1999), the analysis seeks to examine how the community is positioned within a political order and the way this order defines legitimate ways of being, doing, and saying. The concept of “disagreement,” developed by Ranciére (1999), is applied in the analysis of whether and how the program establishes a space for conflict and how conflict is staged within this space.

The analyzed material consists of 13 publications written by the program developers and its other proponents and covers the period 1996–2013. The publications consist of programmatic, descriptive, and theoretical texts.

The analysis demonstrates that the CTC program problematizes the ability of communities to participate in political decision and implementation processes. Consequently, the aim of the program is to translate scientific knowledge into community practice, thus asserting the primacy of scientific knowledge over other modes of knowledge. Through various disciplinary
techniques, the community is made into an object of knowledge. It is objectified, classified, and measured against a scientific norm of rationality. Through such techniques, the program is able to discern between legitimate and illegitimate political communities. It is only by becoming a community of experts, which includes the appropriation of the language of prevention science, that the community qualifies as a political subject.

What in other contexts has been regarded as the “essence” of democratic politics, namely the existence and acceptance of disagreement, is to be neutralized in the CTC program through the provision of a common language, that of prevention science. The political community is thereby defined in terms of a community with a common language. The CTC program is through these disciplinary techniques and the neutralization of disagreement positioned as a gatekeeper, regulating the community’s entering into the political field. Furthermore, through the establishment of a moral and affectual bond, the program seeks to discipline individuals into certain behaviors.

The CTC program constructs community needs as existing objectively, anterior to all culturally and politically informed interpretations and thereby readily assessed through surveys and statistical analysis. Data gathered through the Communities That Care Youth Survey, it is argued, enables the identification of a community’s needs. The ability of communities to assess their needs through this survey, along with their ability to choose among a set of evidence-based interventions, equates to community empowerment.

The conceptualization of political action as a choice of ready-defined options constitutes the political subject as a consuming subject. From a democratic perspective, this is a highly restricted notion of democratic political participation, exerting significant ideological closure on processes in which needs are articulated as well as on available political solutions. Furthermore, within the program, some phenomena, such as poverty, are reduced to the status of risk factors predicting drug use rather than being a political problem in themselves.

The paper argues that the configuration of the democratic subject as a consuming subject expected to exert its choices on a market of ready-made choices signals a democratic deficiency prevailing in western capitalist societies.

**Paper IV**

The aim of this paper is to examine how a Swedish prevention program for social and emotional training (SET) establishes a relationship between the subject and emotions, and the political implications of this relationship. The key questions are: How are emotions constituted in the SET program? How is the subject and its relationship to emotions and social norms constituted in
the program? What are the political implications of the relationship between the subject and emotions?

Drawing on Bacchi’s (2009) “what’s the problem represented to be?” approach and Sara Ahmed’s writing on emotions (Ahmed 2014), this paper analyzes eight publications written by the program designer, and the webpage of the program.

In the program, drug use is constructed as an outcome of mental ill-health and of externalizing and internalizing problems such as acting out and depression. In order to prevent drug use, therefore, the program sets out to enhance the participants’ life skills, such as coping, problem solving, the ability to resist peer pressure, and the ability to handle strong emotions.

The program constitutes emotions as discrete entities wholly situated within the body/brain. The subject is thereby set in a position in which it is to decipher emotional signals stemming from the body. Through certain techniques, such as externalizing emotions by verbalizing them, the subject is to be made capable of handling these emotions. Emotions are also represented as a threat to reason due to their physiological basis, which denigrates emotional reactions and responses as irrational.

Along with externalizing techniques for handling emotions, the program establishes a neurodisciplinary regime through which the subject is to discipline the central nervous system (which gives rise to emotions) by “rewiring” the system with the help of certain exercises. The program’s constitution of emotions in a neurobiological self leaves out any possibility of a cultural framing of emotions that would enable alternative ways of relating to the world and the self.

The subject constituted in the program is a classic rational-choice actor aiming to maximize rewards and lacking any reference to pleasure. The participants of the program are accordingly urged to consider the consequences of the choices they make, thereby bringing forth a responsibilization of the individual. This is in line with the program’s view that drug use is preventable by instilling in the participants the ability to resist peer pressure and to “say no” to drugs. Such an “empowerment” of the individual implies the view that individuals are able to influence the course of events and to make free choices without any reference to structural constraints or lack of resources. As part of this responsible and rational subject, the program stresses the abstention from immediate pleasure, such as drug use, in favor of later rewards. By investing itself in social norms prescribing desirable behaviors and ways of thinking, the individual is presented with the promise of happiness. Failure to comply with these norms subsequently risks stigmatizing individuals by allocating the responsibility for this failure to the individual.

The connection made in the program between drug use and the failure to control emotions and mental ill-health risks de-legitimizing those who use drugs from democratic participation by designating them as irrational. Fur-
ther, the view taken on emotions as a threat to rationality refuses to acknowledge the role affect and passions have to play in politics.
As these noble Houyhnhnms are endowed by nature with a general disposition to all virtues, and have no conceptions or ideas of what is evil in a rational creature, so their grand maxim is to cultivate reason, and to be wholly governed by it. Neither is reason among them a point problematical as with us, where men can argue with plausibility on both sides of the question; but strikes you with immediate conviction; as it must needs do where it is not mingled, obscured, or discoloured by passion and interest. I remember it was with extreme difficulty that I could bring my master to understand the meaning of the word opinion, or how a point could be disputable; because reason taught us to affirm or deny only where we are certain, and beyond our knowledge we cannot do either.

Lemuel Gulliver in Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels

The aim of this thesis is to critically examine drug prevention as a field of problematizations – how drug prevention becomes established as a political technology within this field, how it connects to certain modes of governance, how and under which conditions it constitutes its problematic, the questions it asks, its implications in terms of political participation and representation, the various bodies of knowledge through which it constitutes the reality upon which it acts, and the limits it places on ways of being, questioning, and talking in the world.

The main analyses have been conducted in four separate yet interrelated articles. Each article discusses a specific dimension of drug prevention in order to get a grasp of how this field is organized. Paper 1 examines the shift in the Swedish context during the period 1981–2011 in how drugs have been problematized, what knowledge has grounded the specific modes of problematization, and which modes of governance this has enabled. In paper 2, the currently dominant scientific discipline in the field of drug prevention – prevention science – is critically examined in terms of how it constructs the “drug problem” and the underlying assumptions it carries in regard to reality and political governance. Paper 3 addresses the issue of communities’ democratic participation in drug prevention efforts by analyzing the theoretical foundations of the Communities That Care prevention program. The article seeks to uncover how notions of community empowerment and democratic participation are constructed, and how the “community” is established as a political entity in the program. The fourth and final paper critically examines the Swedish Social and Emotional Training (SET) program and the political
implications of the relationship the program establishes between the subject and emotions.

Within the field of drug prevention, questions of political values and priorities are decoupled from the political field in a problematic way, leading to a significant problem in terms of the possibilities to engage in democratic deliberation. Within this field of problematizations it becomes impossible to mobilize a politics against social injustice, poverty, and inequality. At the same time, the scientific grounding of this mode of governing the drug “problem” exerts significant ideological closure on political discourse and acts to naturalize a specific – highly political – way of engaging with drugs.

One way to uncover alternative ways to conceptualize the problems constructed in prevention science is to provide a temporal analysis covering shifts in modes of representing problems. This was partly the aim of article 1, in which a shift in problematics was identified during the 1990s. A new mode of problematization subsequently entered into the Swedish drug prevention field. This observable shift during the 1990s in how drugs were represented as a problem meant the abandonment of a focus on social exclusionary processes and the constitution of problems as parts inseparable from a complex network of social and temporal processes (based on a symptom theoretical view of problems). The earlier period saw drugs as situated within a social context possible to intervene in through structural interventions, for the Swedish welfare state was seen as the obvious starting point from which to problematize the issue. As this mode of problematizing drugs was set squarely within the political field, the role of knowledge prior to the early 1980s (at least in part) consisted in its enabling a broader public political debate. However, the observable shift from a symptom theoretical approach to an epidemic approach to drugs during the 1990s simultaneously emptied drugs from all social representation. Subsequently, drugs have become autonomous, detached entities with no ground in any socially meaningful ontology. They lose their “function” as expressions of societal wrongs and their “function” as a space in which to reflect on issues belonging to the social domain. Each act of drug taking gets reduced to a statistical number representing a unique event belonging only to the individual user and its behavior. It is no longer problematized in terms of the political and democratic dedication of the citizen. If there is any constituting foundation for the meaning of drugs, it consists of its link to individual behaviors and the economy in which the costs of drug use motivate all actions deemed “political.” Rather than knowledge forming the basis for public deliberation, it has become technical, providing prevention experts with tools for assessing the “effectiveness” and cost-effectiveness of their methods and programs. Drug prevention has become inserted into expert systems, at an arm’s length from politics. Such arrangements decouple questions of political priorities and values from the political field and curtail the possibilities to engage in democratic deliberation. Furthermore, they exert significant ideological closure.
upon the possibility to formulate needs. Assessing the needs of communities is inherently a political act involving interpretations that are open to contestation (Fraser 1989, p. 294). By constructing needs as objectively existing, outside of cultural and political representations, prevention science in effect de-politicizes needs and diminishes the space for political conflict.

Contrary to the de-politicization of drug prevention, the field of crime policy has experienced an increased politicization since the 1970s (cf. Tham 2001). This is significant of the shifts and redefinitions we have experienced regarding the boundaries and “nature” of the political. The politicization of crime policy has come about in the context of a weakening of the welfare state and strengthening of notions of the night-watcher state inherent in neo-conservative and neoliberal political rationalities. This has meant a weakening of the possibilities to act politically that has been replaced by symbolic politics aiming at demonstrating a capacity for political action. As Tham (2001, p. 417) has put it, one reason “for the recent expansion in symbolic legislation in Sweden might be that the space available for political action has become smaller.”

Politics is always grounded in specific systems of knowledge. In this thesis, I have attempted to demonstrate that there has occurred a change in these systems of knowledge, moving from a socially grounded, in a sense “sociological” knowledge, to a knowledge grounded in decontextualized risk factors. As paper 1 shows, the requirements laid on this new form of knowledge have also shifted. Whereas more traditional forms of sociological methods underpinned political reflection in Sweden up until the 1980s, such methods have been overridden by the need for knowledge on effectiveness through randomized control trial studies guiding evidence-based policy-making. Surely, this shift can be observed in many places, and the processes leading to this shift are many (see the “Background” section).

With this shift, new objects have emerged in the field of knowledge and old objects have changed: the introduction of risk factors, a new conception of the subject, a new conception of society, a new conception of politics. As the specific thought style examined in this thesis is deeply interwoven with a specific mode of governance, these shifts have enabled a shift in the technologies used to govern society. Previous technologies aiming at the governance of social structures have been replaced by technologies functioning at the individual level. Instead of political reforms aimed at preventing social exclusionary processes we now face methods aimed at changing the individual. Expert systems have replaced politics and the public has simultaneously been marginalized from the public policy process. With this comes a certain conception of how the political is constituted. Within the thought style analyzed in this thesis, consensus is possible by recourse to a stable external reality and conflict is removed from the field of the political. The political is constituted as a scientific-rational field with certain requirements for what counts as legitimate political action. This includes an inability to recognize
the role emotions have to play in politics. With the valorization of a specific kind of scientific knowledge, the particular technologies formed in the prevention field are legitimized. This also risks naturalizing the problems for which these technologies are seen as the solution. In this sense, drug prevention exerts significant ideological closure upon alternative ways of constructing the problems facing society today.
Svensk sammanfattning


Analyserna har utförts i fyra artiklar som var och en svarar mot en specifik dimension i narkotikapreventionen i syfte att belysa det sätt varpå preventionsfältet är organiserat.


kommit att bli den dominanta kunskapsformen inom preventionsfältet, gjorde sitt intåg i Sverige.

Artikel 2 utgör en kritisk undersökning av denna preventionsvetenskap. Denna vetenskapliga disciplin uppstod under 1990-talet i USA men har sedan dess spridit sig globalt. Syftet med denna artikel är att undersöka hur preventionsvetenskapen konstruerar de problem den söker lösa samt vilka politiska handlingar dessa konstruktioner möjliggör. I artikeln undersöks 14 publikationer där preventionsvetenskapens centrala teoretiska ramverk, koncept, styrkor och mål beskrivs.


I artikel 3 undersöks ett specifikt preventionsprogram – Communities That Care – som syftar till att öka olika gemenskapers (geografiska, livsstils- osv.) politiska delaktighet inom preventionsfältet. Då det anses finnas ett behov av ett program för att möjliggöra politisk delaktighet blir den centrala frågan i denna artikel hur ”delaktighet” problematiseras. Utöver detta ställs frågan om vad som utgör ”goda” politiska gemenskaper genom att se på de normer för politiskt deltagande som kommer till uttryck i programmets teoretiska ramverk. I syfte att besvara dessa frågor har 13 publikationer skrivna av programmets utformare analyserats.

I artikeln framkommer att programmet problematiserar de befintliga gemenskapernas förmåga till beslutstagande. Den kunskap och de processer som bör ligga till grund för beslut bör enligt programmet vara av vetenskaplig och inte politisk karaktär. Följaktligen söker programmet att genom olika disciplinära tekniker upprätta vetenskapligt kompetenta gemenskaper som grundar sina beslut med hjälp av de tekniker och begrepp som utformats inom preventionsvetenskapen. Utöver detta så konstrueras gemenskapernas behov som objektivt existerande, ofärgade av kulturella och politiska föreställningar och möjliga att mäta med hjälp av statistiska
metoder. Programmet erbjuder ett antal evidensbaserade insatser för att möta dessa behov. Ur demokratisk synvinkel blir detta problematiskt då det politiska deltagandet reduceras till val av förbestämda alternativ och den politiska process där behov artikuleras görs överflödig.

Slutligen undersöks i artikel 4 hur ett preventionsprogram för social och emotionell träning konstruerar relationen mellan individer och emotioner samt de politiska implikationer denna relation för med sig. Åtta publikationer skrivna av programmets utformare samt programmets hemsida har analyserats.

References


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