

Open for Registration / Call for Brief Idea Papers

Who decides the relevance and validity of knowledge?

The use of research in policies that strive toward healthy populations

Nordic Workshop, Stockholm, 14–15 May 2019

What is the definition of useful, meaningful, and valuable knowledge? Who decides and influences this definition and what are the institutionalised processes by which policy relevance is maintained?

Social scientists engage in continuous self-reflection regarding the objectives, usability, and consequences of research. Science–policy relations have been widely theorised in philosophy of knowledge, in analyses of historical power/knowledge regimes and in critical Science and Technology Studies (STS). Discussions have tackled, for example, changing researcher roles when problem formulations stem from political demands. Looming in the background are larger questions regarding who is to be the task master of science production and the sort of implications the different role division has for democracy and division of societal power. In the Nordic countries, the transformation of certain questions into mainstreamed Anglophone understandings could also be seen as the product of a gigantic isomorphic reform that distances us from our own unique historical welfare political grasps.

The field of public health has prided itself on being able to connect science, policy, and action. In some parts of the world, it has an activist history of solving societal health problems. However, health recommendations given to citizens are known to be the result of weighing in accessible data for reaching a consensus in a certain political context and can be heavily coloured by research praxis and financial links. An example of the latter are the relations to commercial enterprises that have come to shape medical research into certain pharmacological solutions. Another example are the ever-changing and sometimes contradictory nutritional recommendations headlined in the media. The ideal pathway from identification of a problem (political or scientific) to production of the best suited intervention model and further into unfolding the intervention in full scale, is described by a process of development-, pilot-, efficacy- and effect tests. These pathways are often short-cut by political ambitions of fast solutions or lack of resources to follow the best possible solutions.

Over the years, these big epistemic questions have figured in several initiatives by the journal Nordic Studies of Alcohol and Drugs (NAD) regarding science production and use of science in the fields of alcohol, tobacco and drug policies, and lifestyles and addictions. These critical discussions have paid attention to variations in concepts of addiction and substance use over time and place.

Objective: This small-scale 2-day workshop targets researchers interested in unfolding the relationship between science and policy-making in questions of public health and lifestyle regulation (concerning for example alcohol, drugs, and tobacco use; gambling; nutrition)

Deadline for registration: 29 March, 2019. Please, register [here](#)

The target group of the workshop are scholars with an interest in the relationship between knowledge production and policies in the fields of lifestyles and public health.

Idea paper submission: Participants are encouraged to submit idea papers of 1–3 pages. These are to introduce readers to a research topic and an approach that the participant wants to present at the workshop. Please submit your idea papers at registration by 29 March. [Link to registration.](#)

Event format: The workshop builds on idea paper presentations and discussions. The workshop aims at a future publication, most likely in the NAD journal, but other publication options are up for discussion.

Place: Nordic Welfare Centre, Drottninggatan 30, Stockholm

Fee: The workshop is free of charge, but participants will cover their own travel and accommodation expenses. The arrangers will cover lunches and coffee on the 14th and 15th of May as well as a dinner on the 14th of May.

Organizers: Nordic Welfare Centre and Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs (NAD).

Program committee: Filip Roumeliotis (Stockholm University), Tom Kettunen (Nordic Welfare Centre), Matilda Hellman (University of Helsinki), Jakob Demant (University of Copenhagen)

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Background reading:

Roumeliotis, F. (2016). Ideological closure: Drug prevention in a post-political society. *Stockholm Studies in Sociology* 63. <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:936804/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

NAD discussion on the role of qualitative research

Hellman, M. (2017). Scientific progress: The role of innovative qualitative inquiries.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1455072517709851>

Edman, J. (2017). A qualitative analysis of Pål Kraft.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1455072517705291>

Järvinen-Tassopoulos, J. (2017). The endless dilemma with qualitative research.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1455072517707880>

NAD Thematic section of the social sciences and public health

Hellman, M. (2017). Should we watch out for the giant isomorphic wheel of public health?

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1455072518765860>

Bergenheim, S. (2017). The population, its health and social sciences.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1455072518765325>

Sulkunen, P. (2017). The two sides of public health.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1455072518765865>

Mold, A. (2017). Framing drug and alcohol use as a public health problem in Britain: Past and present.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1455072518765836>

Stenius, K. (2017). Public health is not an innocent concept.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1455072518765838>

Room, R. (2017). Relevant to all disciplines and professions but central to none: How may social alcohol and drug research flourish?

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1455072518765913>

NAD editorials and commentaries

Hellman, M. (2017). The compartmentalisation of social science: What are the implications?

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1515/nsad-2015-0033>

Edman, J. (2016). Researchers should avoid conceptual banalisation.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1515/nsad-2016-0008>

Perälä, R. (2014). What drives treatment? <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2478/nsad-2014-0024>

Section on use of alcohol and drug research (NAD 6/2007) <https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/nada/24/6>

Hellman, M. (2018). Mainstreaming concepts, discounting variations? Global policies of alcohol, drugs and tobacco. In *Conceptualising public health: Historical and contemporary struggles over key concepts*.

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781315178271/chapters/10.4324%2F9781315178271-10>