Master Thesis

Evaluation of the effectiveness of narcotics policies by the Swedish Government

Health and Lifestyle HL8031, 15 credits
Halmstad 2022-10-03
Authors: Amit Kumar Singh & Barjinder Kaur
Supervisor: Kristina Ziegert
Examiner: Linus Andersson
Executive Summary

Swedish news media are questioning whether Sweden's zero-tolerance drug policy can be sustained. Even in northern Europe, governments seldom take such a strong stance, and the UN has criticised Sweden's "balanced health and human rights strategy. Sweden's tough attitude is one factor. According to The Local, most lawmakers in Sweden's health and welfare committee want to reexamine the country's drug policies. Sweden's health and welfare committee reported this. In Sweden, liberal, centre, Swedish Democratic, Christian Democratic, and left parties promote a new perspective. This support is widespread. To establish whether Sweden's policies are effective, we will analyse both the concept of successful and its strategic criteria. Sweden's anti-drug efforts have enabled the government to proclaim success. Due to Sweden's attempts to reduce drug abuse, recreational drug use is rare. UNODC's Executive Director believes that countries should reduce overall drug consumption. It's harder to understand how this method may help with the negative effects of drug usage, particularly if the problems derive from drug dependency. Problematic are drug-related difficulties. This is because many players and systems are interdependent. Harm reduction and other public health programs may not be enough to address present circumstances, and their narrow approach may exacerbate the situation. Sweden's drug-free ideal has contributed to its inability to cope with related issues, making it harder to find a realistic solution. Because of Sweden's ideal of a drug-free society, these health concerns cannot be solved. It's rare for utopias, like Sweden's, to fail to deal with life's realities (including the continuous usage of drugs in sometimes deadly ways). Drug use is an example. Sweden's low drug usage rate is not due to the country's drug policy activities. Similar sources confirm it. Sweden has one of the world's lowest drug consumption rates, while having identical laws and responses to the issue. Problems seem intractable for any explanation of policy and usage patterns; this shows culture plays a large role. Both Sweden and the U.S. have had vigorous temperance movements, thus their legislative systems limit alcohol usage.
# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction  
1.1. Background  
1.2. Aims and objectives  
1.3. Research questions:  
1.4. Significance and scientific novelty  
1.5. Theory and method  

Chapter 2: Literature review  
2.1. Factors contributing to narcotics usage  
2.2. Sweden’s failure  
2.3. Reducing risk of injury  
2.4. Mortality  
2.5. Drugs reporting in Sweden  
2.6. Evaluation of authenticity  
2.7. Drugs treaties by UN  
2.8. Substance misusage  
2.9. Policies consider human rights first  
2.10. Potential dangers of drugs intake  

Chapter 3: Methodology  
4.1. The Philosophy of Research  
4.2. The Design of the Research  
3.3. Methodology of the Research  
3.4. Data gathering and analysis  
3.5. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria  
3.7. Ethical Consideration  

Chapter 4: Results  
4.1. Cultural Influence in Sweden  
4.2. Governmental policies and its benefits  
4.3. Foundational principles of drug policy  
4.4. Decriminalization  
4.5. Prohibitonist paradigm  
4.6. Primary function of drug policy  
4.7. Changes required in the policies  
4.8. Summary
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Discussion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6: Conclusion</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background

One of the things that people most associate with Sweden is its reputation for having a drug-free society, which the nation works very hard to maintain (Agerberg, 2014). Over the last several years, the drug laws of Sweden have been the focus of a considerable amount of attention as well as discussion. This can be understood in the context of a review of international drug control that was conducted over the course of a decade by "the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS)” (Agerberg, 2014). Additionally, this can be understood in the context of the growing political salience of drug policy reform in many parts of the world (Agerberg, 2014). Those who are in favor of the current UN treaty-based system and those who are in defense of it have cited Sweden as an example of how to implement a zero-tolerance design to drug policy and abstinence-based treatment for dependent drug use. Proponents of the current system include the UK Conservative Party2 and Antonio Maria Costa at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (Goldberg, 2020). Both of these laws are founded on the principle that drug abuse should be addressed in the same manner as other forms of addiction. In 2006, the UNODC conducted an investigation of Sweden's policy framework and monitor the evolution of the more restrictive approach that the nation has taken (Goldberg, 2020). This came about because Sweden was subject to laws that were very loose for a short period of time in the 1960s (EMCDDA, 2020). This was a relatively limited phase. The research was carried out in Sweden, thus the study's name, and it was titled Sweden's Successful Drug Policy. The findings of the research highlighted how firmly it should be underlined that Sweden's stringent policies have resulted to low rates of drug usage in the country. (Goldberg, 2020). According to the conclusions of the research report, the governments of other countries should follow suit and implement similar policies as soon as possible. (Goldberg, 2020).

Because of these and other measures, Sweden has become "a representation of the effectiveness of legislation and regulations " that limit access to drugs. It has also become a paradise that potentially dystopian nations with greater tolerance may be evaluated against. " Drug policy activists and prevention proponents " view the United States as a microcosm of what may be expected when policies are based on an overarching ideological commitment to abstinence. (Goldberg, 2018). The arguments and objectives of the policies that have been used to promote
The goal of this study is to use the efficacy of Swedish drug-control measures. When planning a project of this size, scale, and complexity, it is necessary to conduct an exhaustive investigation of all pertinent topics and to produce a solid reasoning. The business of dealing drugs in Sweden in general, the number of people in Sweden who use illicit substances is rather low (Agerberg, 2014). In the 19th century, amphetamines, not alcohol, were the first psychoactive substances to attract the attention of the government; nonetheless, the way in which the nation has dealt with issues related to drug abuse has undergone substantial change throughout the course of this country’s history (Johansson, 2018). These stimulants had heavy use during the 1930s and 1940s, which coincided with the period in which doctors were allowed to prescribe them. In the 1960s, the medical profession was supplanted in the field of drugs by the Association of Social Workers (ASW) as well as movements for social justice (Goldberg, 2020). This transition was principally brought about by an increase in the use of all types of drugs. After a steady reduction over the course of many decades, the prevalence saw a dramatic uptick in various European nations throughout the 1990s (Missbruksutredningen, 2016). Between the years 1990 and 2000, the percentage of Swedish citizens aged 15 to 75 who used drugs rose from 7 percent to 12 percent (Olsson et al, 2021). At the same time, problematic drug use tripled, drug-related mortality quadrupled, and the need for treatment more than doubled. The prices of drugs dropped significantly, in spite of the fact that there was an increase in seizures. (Norström, 2013) Since the year 2000, we have seen a general downward trend in prevalence; despite this, the quantity of people with uncertain drug usage has stayed relatively same at atmost 26,000; however, the accuracy of this data is subject to some question (Olsson et al, 2021). In 2017, of the 6,480 individuals in Sweden who sought treatment for substance misuse, 34.7 percent of those individuals were injectors of amphetamines, and 25.7 percent of those individuals were injectors of opiates. (Olsson et al, 2021). Cannabis, which is grown in Morocco and enters Sweden via Spain or Portugal, is the most commonly consumed and seized illicit substance in Sweden, as it is in other European nations. Cannabis is brought into Sweden via Spain or Portugal.

Strategy In February of 2018, Swedish authorities disseminated a fact mask on their 2008-2020 Action Plan on Narcotic Drugs (Olsson et al, 2021). According to what has been mentioned, the strategy of the nation is based on the right of people to a dignified living in a society that supports their particular needs for safety and security (Goldberg, 2020). This plan may be described as follows: Illicit drugs will never be allowed to compromise human health, well-being,
or safety; neither will they ever be able to compromise democracy or the public good. The overarching research design of Swedish drug policy is to work toward the establishment of a society free of drugs (Olsson et al., 2021). In the Action Plan for the period 2008-2020, there are three programmatic areas: prevention, treatment, and a reduction in the amount of drugs that are readily available for misuse. Specifically, recruitment to drug usage must be decreased, which translates to drug addicts must be encouraged to give up their misuse (Goldberg, 2020). Research refer to the conceptual framework that forms the basis of a nation's policy to combat drug abuse as the strategy. On the other side, Sweden's objective is to develop a society free of drug use, whilst countries like the Netherlands put more of an emphasis on the negative effects that drug use may have on a person's health. Sweden is the only country in the world to clearly relate this objective to law, despite the fact that many nations throughout the world use language to foster a social scene devoid of drugs (Goldberg, 2020). The individual's need for privacy and security, as well as the safety of the community in the face of a shared danger, are the driving forces behind this devotion. This subject will be discussed once again at a later point in the presentation. There are many different types of outcomes that might be expected from Sweden's policy responses to this strategic aim (Olsson et al., 2021). The consumer is presented as the core unit of the market for narcotics in Sweden, which leads to a focus on the end-user that is nevertheless unusual for current European policy. This is because customers are presented as the most significant unit in the Swedish illegal drug market. Rather than focusing the majority of its security forces on the distribution and supply infrastructures established in other EU countries, Sweden views its own consumer as the main structural component of the market for illicit substances. The treatment methods used in Sweden are especially notable in that they put a larger focus on achieving abstinence as opposed to regulating the consequences of drug use and limiting the intensity of those effects. This is a key difference between the two approaches (Agerberg, 2014). Those who advocate this strategy see it as a way to provide protection, assistance, and support, rather than as a kind of punishment; it is closely related to the American concept of tough love. That the user is out of control, that their willpower has been subsumed by the drug's owner chemical control, or, as the psychiatrist Nils Bejerot theorized, that they are being controlled by instinctive drives that override reason, is a common assumption in Swedish drug thinking (Olsson et al., 2021). This is a common assumption in Swedish drug thinking because it is a common assumption. Because of this, the addict want for
society to regain control from the drug, even if it means resorting to force if that is what it takes to achieve this goal.

1.2. Aims and objectives

The study aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of Swedish drug-control strategies. When it comes to drug usage, Sweden has a zero tolerance policy and spends a lot of money on enforcement, prevention, and contraception treatment in order to achieve this goal. Following a spike in drug usage throughout the industrialized world in the 1960s, this measure was put in place. It was in 1988 that Sweden took the first step toward criminalizing drug misuse by instituting a maximum penalty for drug crimes. In 2013, jail was added as a potential penalty for drug usage, which had previously only been punished by a fine (Goldberg, 2020). The government placed this hefty penalty on them as a condition of being permitted to conduct urine or blood analyses on individuals without their knowledge or permission. More than 10,000 drivers are subjected to these tests each year, which now number in the tens of thousands (Goldberg, 2020). During the preceding ten years, the amount of those sentenced of narcotics charges has increased substantially. Even though fines are the most prevalent penalty, 83% of all penalties are for drug ownership or use, hence the most people arrested are minors (Goldberg, 2020).

1.3. Research Questions:

Following research questions will be answered while carrying out this research:

- What are some preliminary governmental policies for controlling the usage of narcotics among nationals?
- Up to what extent, these policies can be beneficial?
- What policy changes are needed for effective controlling narcotics usage?

1.4. Significance and Scientific Novelty

Previously done research is very limited and is not proposing appropriate recommendations (Karlson et. al, 2021). Modern times have modern problems. Hence, it is important that these policies are modified according to the modern times and modern generation.
1.5. **Theory and method**

Previously done research and literature will be used to evaluate the policies till the year 2015. The analysis and evaluation will be done based on previous literature and official documents released by government websites.

The theory of ethics known as consequentialism asserts that deeds need to be judged in accordance with the effects they have on the community as a whole (Vasiljevic, 2021). For example, the a large number of people presumably share the seems to lie on morally objectionable practice. On the other hand, the consequentialist position maintains that it is ethically permissible to tell a lie in order to save a person's life. Sometimes, those who argue against consequentialism point out that it might be difficult to discern the exact results of a particular action. It is correct that no one can see the future with complete and total certainty. In addition, consequentialism might lead to decisions that are unpopular even though such decisions would result in beneficial consequences.

The harm reduction movement, which advocates for the provision of services that decrease the danger that people are exposed to when they choose to consume drugs, may provide a practical knowledge of the consequentialist ethical theory. The debate over the ethical implications of utilizing certain pharmaceuticals, on the other hand, casts a shadow over the concept of harm reduction (Vasiljevic, 2021). Or, it's likely that critics are letting "the perfect be the enemy of the good" by asking that all drug use be stopped instantly, which, as the failure of the "war on drugs" over the course of man swedish y decades ought to have taught them, is an unrealistic goal. Other harm reduction measures that have encouraging evidence in their favor are now prohibited by Swedish law but may be offered with very modest adjustments to the legislation. In the case of the Home Office, for example, they have repeatedly turned down requests to allow for the distribution of crack pipes by drug treatment services. This is despite the fact that such a move would be particularly pertinent in the current climate in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to provide a means of engagement with crack cocaine users. In spite of the widespread acceptance of drug consumption rooms in other European countries, many applications to establish such spaces in Sweden have been turned down.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Factors contributing to narcotics usage

According to the findings of several studies, the fundamental factor that contributes to drug abuse is an intricate interaction between various social, economic, and cultural factors (Vasiljevic, 2021). There is at best a little impact on the policies that govern drug enforcement and drug policy. In general, Sweden has done well on measures of socioeconomic deprivation and inequality, which are two characteristics that are substantially related with high rates of problematic drug use (Karlson et al., 2021). In particular, Sweden has performed well on measures of deprivation. The riches of Sweden and its well-developed welfare system are the key reasons for the nation's success in this field (Agerberg, 2014). It is possible to find a society that is traditionalist and abstinent in Sweden, which is shown by the country's low rates of alcohol and cigarette use as well as abuse of prescription pharmaceuticals. There are a variety of additional criteria that may be used to measure performance, and Sweden does far more poorly on these measurements. However, it is crucial to bear in mind that the efficiency in the policy of drug couldn’t be evaluated just based on the frequency of drug use. This is one of the most important things to keep in mind. (Vasiljevic, 2021).

2.2. Sweden’s failure

One of Sweden's many failings is that it does not provide sufficient overdose response training, safe injection kits, or vaccines against hepatitis B. The antidote naloxone, which has the potential to reverse the effects of an opiate overdose, is only available for use by medical professionals and cannot be purchased for personal use (Agerberg, 2014). The government of Sweden does not maintain any facilities for the supervised use of drugs, nor does it collect any data on the implementation of harm reduction measures in public locations such as nightclubs and music festivals.

2.3. Reducing risk of injury

There has been a severe lack of services that reduce the risk of injury, which has led to a number of very undesirable outcomes. In Europe, injectable drug users in Sweden have one of the large rates of hepatitis C infection (Lenke, 2022). This is especially true in Sweden. Hepatitis C is a virus that is spread by blood, and if it is not treated, it may be very harmful. Due to the lack of an official nationwide statistic, determining the exact number of individuals in need of viral
treatment or requiring access to needle and syringe programmes is challenging. However, in 2013, the Stockholm needle exchange network reported a high prevalence rate of 74% for the infection. Unfortunately, there is currently no official national data available regarding this matter. Similarly, obtaining accurate figures on the number of fatalities directly caused by the illness is difficult.

2.4. Mortality

In 2022, Sweden recorded a drug-related death rate of 62.5 deaths per million, which exceeded the European average of 17.1 fatalities per million by more than three times. This comparison highlights that even with relatively low levels of drug usage, the associated harm can be significant (Karlson et al., 2021). Conversely, Portugal, due to its progressive harm reduction initiatives and legalization approach, had a much lower drug-induced fatality rate of only 2.3 fatalities per million in 2017. As a direct consequence of this, Sweden’s is thirty times greater. The alarmingly high number of people who die in Sweden from drug overdoses has forced some people to acknowledge the need for a new approach, which has led to change. Even while the availability of OST and NSP is far superior to what was the case just a decade ago, it remains far from adequate (Karlson et. al, 2021). Due to the fact that there is still a great deal of bureaucracy and a great deal of rhetoric on drug-free living, Sweden has been hesitant to finance abroad projects that are essential.

In Sweden, a punitive and abstinence-based approach to drug use has resulted in harmful repercussions for the health and well-being of the country’s population of drug users. These ramifications would be far more severe in the absence of a solid social welfare and healthcare system, as well as a culture that promotes moderation (Karlson et. al, 2021). The example of Sweden demonstrates that the use of illegal drugs is just one component that goes into defining a country's level of success; the overall health repercussions cannot be ignored.

Examining the number of people who pass away as a direct consequence of the problems they have with drugs is one of the most prevalent ways that people try to evaluate the success of efforts to alter drug policy (Agerberg, 2014). On the other hand, it is difficult to undertake this comparison across countries due to the major differences in the ways in which data is obtained and reported in each country. (Vasiljevic, 2021)
2.5. Drugs reporting in Sweden

There are a large number of databases in Sweden, which contribute to the statistics’ high level of precision. In addition, there is a long-standing custom of openness and transparency. To the contrary, when seen from a European perspective, the drug-related death rate in Sweden is rather high (Vasiljevic, 2021). Since 2006, there has been a worrying increase in the number of fatalities in Sweden that are linked to the use of drugs. (Agerberg, 2014). As a result, the government is working to enhance reporting mechanisms and study the underlying reasons.

One of the most prevalent and effective approaches to decrease the number of fatalities determined by drug consumption is via the employment of substitution programs. In Sweden in the year 2014, the overdose deaths caused by replacement medications (methadone and Subutex) exceeded the deaths caused by heroin overdoses. It seems that the bulk of these medicines are obtained via the illicit drug market as opposed to being distributed through opioid replacement treatment programs.

2.6. Evaluation of authenticity

Evaluations of the efficacy of drug policies may be carried out in a number of different ways; however, worldwide comparisons can be difficult to do. Comparisons are made both inside and across nations in order to monitor changes and outcomes over time. The most meaningful comparisons are made between countries. One method for determining this is to count the amount of persons who have utilized drugs at some point in their lives. Since the 1990s, Sweden's statistics have been consistently going down, despite the fact that several other countries have far higher rates (Karlson et. al, 2021). One such way to address this problem is to count the quantity of young person who have experimented with drugs at least once or who do so often. In this sense, Sweden is in a far better position than the majority of other countries, and it is anticipated that this trend continued into the 2010s (Karlson et. al, 2021).

It is also conceivable to consider the number of people who participate in risky drug use as a clue, since this is something that can be monitored (although there is no commonly agreed view of what problematic use is). Because of concerns for individuals' right to privacy, the country of Sweden does not keep a national register of those who use drugs or those whose use causes problems (Agerberg, 2014). The Swedish Public Health Agency reports that there were an estimated 29,500 heavy drug users in Sweden in the year 2017. (often defined as those who use
drugs everyday for four weeks or who inject drugs). According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden, it is estimated that around 8,000 people in Sweden engage in the practice of injecting narcotics. (Vasiljevic, 2021)

2.7. Drugs treaties by UN

According to the drug treaties ratified by the United Nations, cannabis is currently one of the substances that is subject to the strictest regulations. In order to adhere to the terms of the treaty, each and every nation should classify cannabis as a dangerous narcotic (Karlson et. al, 2021). As a result, the World Health Agency (WHO) has not yet obtained any evidence or study that may convince the organization to alter its current viewpoint. This suggests that there is no scientific or traditional justification for classifying compounds in a variety of distinct ways. It is well knowledge that cannabis usage may have negative effects on both an individual's physical and social development. Some of the long-term and short-term consequences of cannabis use include psychosis, hallucinations, and feelings of depression.

If a person starts smoking marijuana at a young age, it may cause irreparable damage to their cognitive faculties, including their capacity for absorbing new information and their skill in the areas of long-term planning and strategy. Because it also causes habit formation, marijuana use might potentially lead to addiction ( Karlson et. al, 2021). As far as they are aware, a number of people have lost their lives as a consequence of cannabis-related activities such as driving accidents and other occurrences. It has been shown that THC, the primary component of cannabis, offers favorable therapeutic advantages, such as the treatment of pain ( Karlson et. al, 2021). These benefits have been demonstrated to exist whether THC is derived from cannabis or manufactured synthetically. However, there is no evidence that smoking cannabis can generate these effects based on the study that has been done (Vasiljevic, 2021). When it was still legal to possess marijuana in the 1970s, 1980s, and into the 1990s, the drug was not nearly as strong as it is today's commercially available product. (Agerberg, 2004). The number of persons suffering from substance use disorders brought on by cannabis usage has increased over the last few years, which has led to an increase in the need for cannabis addiction treatment in the majority of European countries.
2.8. Substance misusage

Sweden recognizes that individuals in various parts of the globe are impacted by substance misuse in a variety of distinct ways. It is imperative that international help and resources be set aside for the world's most fragile states so that those nations do not have to go it alone in the struggle against production and commerce (Karlson et. al, 2021). When compared to thirty years ago, the current worldwide buying habits seem to be significantly different. It is now very difficult to differentiate between countries that create drugs and countries that utilize them since they are both extensively used in the nations that make them and the nations that transport them. It is imperative that vulnerable and disadvantaged producers have access to alternative economic and legal choices in order for them to generate money. The importance of economic and social advancement in low- and middle-income countries cannot be overstated (Agerberg, 2014). It is essential to make expenditures in educational and social initiatives if one want to forestall the recruitment of young people by criminal gangs and cartels. It is essential for the effectiveness of Swedish aid, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to provide support for initiatives in this particular direction (Karlson et. al, 2021). The decriminalization and regulation of any and all drugs is not something that has our backing. Humane and controlled drug policies based on existing conventions that offer resources to every aspect of what is necessary for a successful drug policy, in production, transit, and recipient countries should be encouraged. The international conventions against drugs, trafficking, money laundering, and human rights offer a strong platform for international cooperation (Karlson et. al, 2021). In order to be successful, you need to ensure that the appropriate tasks are completed, that your methods are improved, that alliances are formed, that resources are evaluated, and that allocations are made.

2.9. Policies consider human rights first

Abstinence treatments and other forms of therapy; housing, social interventions, and employment; and a variety of other services are some of the aspects of Sweden's drug policy that are aimed at improving the health of the general public by discouraging drug use. At the same time, these aspects are designed to provide a wide range of services to people who suffer from substance use disorders (Agerberg, 2014). The Care of People with Substance Use Disorders in Certain Cases Act states that the court may decide on compulsory care if someone's physical or mental health is in danger, if they are clearly in danger of losing their lives, or if they are in danger of harming someone close to them as a result of their continued abuse (Vasiljevic, 2021).
are options for mandatory care if voluntary measures have been exhausted. However, the Care of People with Substance Use Disorders in Certain Cases Act states that the court may decide on compulsory care (Karlson et al., 2021). This choice may be made in most countries, despite the fact that it is often included into the mental health laws of each country. The decision must be made in a way that is consistent with both the rule of law and the accords on human rights. Convincing the patient to participate in treatment on their own will for a limited amount of time is the primary objective here (no more than six months)”. The vast majority of people who are required to get mandatory treatment, around 75 percent, are offered the opportunity to switch to treatment that is provided on a voluntary basis for the whole of the period that the judgment is in effect (Vasiljevic, 2021).

![Figure 1: Source: (Statista. 2021)](image)

### 2.10. Potential dangers of drugs intake

The Swedish government's pursuit of a drug-free society has created a situation where therapies focused on mitigating the potential harm of drug use, rather than solely focusing on prevention or elimination, face significant challenges. The resulting hostile environment discourages the adoption and utilization of these harm reduction therapies aimed at reducing the adverse effects associated with drug use. Due to the fact that the previous government was dedicated to an abstinence-based policy in 2011, a substantial review that was released in 2011 highlighted the need for harm reduction to be ramped up (Karlson et al., 2021). However, the current condition of harm reduction programs is below the requirements set by both the European
Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Activists have high hopes that the incoming government would revisit the plans (Moore, 2022)

- There are just five needle exchanges throughout Sweden, and the city of Gothenburg, which is the country’s second largest, does not have any.
- Opiate substitution treatment (OST) is a workable alternative, but it has a number of drawbacks to consider as well (particularly for methadone).
- Because some outpatient drug treatment programs have a zero-tolerance attitude on the use of other substances, fewer people are choosing to remain in treatment. In 2007 as a pilot project, which, while having a very limited level of coverage, continued to be implemented on a national scale in 2010.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 The Philosophy of Research

The design of this research study was developed with the interpretivist research theory serving as the primary foundation. Interpretivism emerged as a reaction to the perceived shortcomings of positivism, which at the time were considered as preventing positivism from adequately satisfying the requirements of social scientists (Collis and Hussey, 2014). The fundamental goal of this line of investigation is to examine the intricacies of social phenomena by cultivating an empathetic awareness of how the studied subjects were viewed by the general people. This will be accomplished via the creation of a knowledge base.

3.2 The Design of the Research

For the purpose of carrying out this particular inquiry, an interpretative research philosophy served as the compass that directed the selection of a qualitative and inductive research strategy to use as the research method. This leads one to believe that the study is exploratory in nature and seeks to acquire depth rather than breadth; as a consequence, the results are rich and subjective. Inductive data analysis is a method that enables meanings to emerge from the data as it is being obtained in order to uncover patterns and connections. This is done via a process known as induction. Inductive reasoning is the method that is used to successfully complete this task. When it comes down to it, the end output of study of this kind is the creation of a hypothesis (Saunders et al., 2017). Secondary data is collected and the thematic analysis is used.

This research aims to investigate the social phenomena of design-driven strategy within organizations with the goal of developing a comprehensive theory regarding the most effective strategies for implementing design in commercial settings. As a direct result of this, the tactic that is the most suitable for successfully achieving the objectives of the study is one that incorporates interpretivism in addition to the intrinsic techniques of qualitative research and inductive analytical procedures. This is because interpretivism is a method that was developed by interpreters.

When compared to quantitative research, which takes the approach that is most frequently utilized within the positivist research philosophy, qualitative research makes it possible to collect data in a manner that is more adaptable. This is in contrast to quantitative research, which adopts
the approach that is most frequently utilized within the positivist research philosophy. Interviewing participants rather than polling them is the primary emphasis of qualitative research, which explains why this is the case. As an example, the process of data collection may be divided up into a number of steps rather than being carried out all at once. In the event that it is required, the researcher is able to make modifications to the procedure even as it is still being carried out. It is conceivable that the researcher will choose to add particular questions to the questionnaire, remove certain questions from the questionnaire, or make no changes to the questionnaire at all based on the new information gathered during the method. In addition, qualitative research enables the researcher to continue with the process of data collecting and analysis until the researcher determines that there are no longer any new concerns forming. This flexibility is not available in quantitative research. This is due to the fact that qualitative research provides far more information than quantitative research does (Denscombe, 2014). The information that is gathered in qualitative research may be in the form of words or visual pictures, and it is gained via the observation and interaction of the study's participants (Denscombe, 2014).

### 3.3. Methodology of the Research

For the purpose of carrying out this particular inquiry, an interpretative research philosophy served as the compass that directed the selection of a qualitative and inductive research strategy to use as the research method. This shows that the study is of an exploratory nature and attempts to achieve depth rather than breadth by basing its conclusions on a body of material that is both rich and subjective. Additionally, this suggests that the research was conducted in a country where English is not the primary language. Inductive data analysis is a method that enables meanings to emerge from the data as it is being obtained in order to uncover patterns and connections. This is done via a process known as induction. Inductive reasoning is the method that is used to successfully complete this task. When it comes down to it, the end output of study of this kind is the creation of a hypothesis (Saunders et al., 2017).
3.4. Data Gathering and Analysis

The data collected is from the journals and articles from Google Scholar and Research gate, with the ratio of total length required by this dissertation. Those articles were selected which were recent and were closely related with the subject of this study. An inductive theme analysis was performed on the qualitative data that was collected from the secondary resources so that it could be analyzed. This was done so that the data could be studied. This goal of the study was supported by a research technique known as theme analysis, which is an inductive analytical methodology. The purpose of the research was to create a theory based on the results of the research, and this objective was supported by the research method (Boyatzis, 2018). Making meaning of the data is the objective of producing themes via the use of thematic analysis as a method. The purpose of this study is to assess the efficacy of Swedish anti-drug laws (Boyatzis, 2018).

3.5. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for the evaluation of the effectiveness of narcotics policies by the Swedish government for the paper from the year 2012 to 2022 include studies published during this time frame, conducted in Sweden or focusing on Swedish government narcotics policies. Research articles, reports, and academic papers assessing the impact of narcotics policies on drug use patterns, addiction rates, crime rates, public health outcomes, treatment outcomes, and social consequences are considered. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies with empirical data and analysis, including primary data collection, secondary data analysis, and systematic reviews/meta-analyses, are included. The studies can be written in English or Swedish. The exclusion criteria encompass studies published before 2012 or after 2022, studies conducted outside of Sweden or not specifically focusing on Swedish government narcotics policies. Opinion pieces, commentaries, editorials, and non-peer-reviewed articles are excluded. Studies that do not directly evaluate the effectiveness of Swedish government narcotics policies, lack empirical data, or focus solely on drugs not covered by Swedish narcotics policies are also excluded. Furthermore, studies with limited sample size, inadequate methodology compromising reliability and validity, and those not available in English or Swedish language are excluded.
3.6. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a method that is beneficial in capturing the nuances of meaning that are present within a data collection. It is an approach that may be found in both qualitative and quantitative research. It is a method that may be used in qualitative as well as quantitative research (Guest et al., 2021). The study made use of the approach of thematic analysis in order to compare the points of view, descriptions, and comments that the participants had on the research, as well as to uncover themes that were present within the data. One such illustration of a theme is the discovery in the data of a consistent pattern of thoughts and observations that were communicated. Examples of themes might include interpretations of characteristics of the phenomena being examined that are not expressly known to the researcher.

Thematic analysis focus on the cultural influence in Sweden, governmental policies and their benefits, foundational principles of drug policy, decriminalization, primary function of drug policy, and changes required in the policies. The following methodology concept outlines the steps involved in conducting a thematic analysis for the study. First, a systematic literature review will be conducted to identify relevant scholarly articles, reports, and policy documents that discuss cultural influence in Sweden, governmental policies related to drugs, and the foundational principles of drug policy (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The search will include databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and relevant governmental websites to ensure a comprehensive coverage of the topic. Next, the identified sources will be thoroughly read and coded to extract meaningful data related to the research objectives. Open coding will be initially employed, allowing for the generation of initial codes that capture the essence of the data. These codes will be iteratively refined through axial coding, which involves organizing and categorizing the codes into potential themes (Gammie et al., 2015). The identified themes will then be reviewed to ensure their coherence and comprehensiveness. Relationships and patterns within and between the themes will be explored to develop a conceptual framework for cultural influence, governmental policies, and foundational principles of drug policy in Sweden (Clarke & Braun, 2017). To investigate the aspects of decriminalization and the primary function of drug policy, additional data will be collected through interviews or focus groups with key stakeholders such as policymakers, experts in the field, and representatives from relevant organizations. These qualitative interviews or focus groups will provide in-depth insights into the perspectives and experiences of the participants.
regarding decriminalization and the primary function of drug policy. The collected data from the literature review and qualitative interviews/focus groups will then be subjected to thematic analysis (Andersson & Kjellgren, 2017). This involves systematically organizing and categorizing the data into emergent themes and sub-themes. The analysis will be conducted iteratively, moving back and forth between the data, themes, and the conceptual framework, to ensure a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the cultural influence, governmental policies, foundational principles, decriminalization, and the primary function of drug policy in Sweden.

Based on the thematic analysis findings, recommendations for changes required in the policies will be identified and discussed. These recommendations will consider the identified themes, stakeholder perspectives, and the existing evidence on effective drug policy strategies. The final step will involve synthesizing the findings into a coherent narrative, supported by relevant quotes and examples, to present a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of narcotics policies by the Swedish government and suggest policy implications for future improvements. It is important to note that this methodology concept provides a general framework for conducting a thematic analysis. The specific steps and techniques may vary depending on the research objectives, available resources, and the nature of the data collected.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

The evaluation of the effectiveness of narcotics policies by the Swedish government must be approached with a careful balance between the intended public health outcomes and the ethical considerations surrounding individual rights and social justice. While the strict approach of criminalizing drug use may have contributed to lower drug-related deaths and addiction rates, it also raises ethical concerns about stigmatization, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities, and infringing upon personal autonomy. A comprehensive assessment should thus weigh the benefits of harm reduction and prevention against the potential negative consequences of punitive measures, ensuring that policies align with principles of fairness, compassion, and respect for human dignity while striving to mitigate the social and health impacts of drug misuse. The research conducted prioritizes the academic integrity. The data collected from the secondary sources are properly cited to avoid copyright and plagiarism problems. The purpose of this data is for academic matter and there is no harmful intention.
Chapter 4: Results

If you are of age to consume alcohol in Sweden, the only substances that you are permitted to use are cigarettes and alcohol. Hashish, marijuana, cocaine, mushrooms, and any other kind of illegal drugs are all against the law (Guest et al., 2021). It is a violation of the law to possess such substances or to be under the effect of them while at school or outside of school hours, and doing so may have serious ramifications. It is also against the law to sell alcohol without having a valid license.

Driving while intoxicated is against the law. To drive lawfully, the blood alcohol content (BAC) must be less than 0.2 percent per 10,000 (Guest et al., 2021). If you register at this point on the Breathalyzer, the authorities will most likely take you into custody and conduct a blood test to determine whether or not you are under the influence of alcohol. Driving under the effects of substances or alcohol is illegal in Sweden. There need to at all times be a sober driver available. If you do not choose to make use of public transit, you might choose to take a taxi, ride a bus, ride a bicycle, or just walk.

4.1. Cultural influence in Sweden

It is also important to note that Sweden does not have a strong culture around the use of drugs. There are a significant number of Swedes who have never tried anything other than cigarettes or alcohol as a recreational drug, despite the fact that Sweden has a more stringent prohibition policy than you would anticipate for such drugs. (Johansson, 2018).

In 2020, the European Union's drug agency conducted a research study analyzing the occurrence of drug-related deaths per capita across different member states (Degenhardt, 2019). According to the findings by EMCDDA (2020), Sweden had the highest rate, exceeding the EU average by over four times. There are methodological challenges involved in the gathering of data on drugs, and international comparisons provide an even greater challenge. Nevertheless, the gravity of the situation cannot be denied in light of these numbers. In a country of the United States' size, a death rate of one drug-related fatality for every 10 residents is just unacceptable.

In February of 2020, a parliamentary committee in Sweden will call for the establishment of a drug commission inside the Swedish government. Many different commissions on drug policy have been established, but none of them have been tasked with investigating the fundamental
problems (Friborg, 2018). As a result, the new commissions instructions became into a contentious topic. After a year, there is still no commission, and I am the one writing this because of it.

4.2. Governmental policies and its benefits

Individuals who pretend to be anti-drugs are instantly embraced in Sweden's version of the war on drugs, whilst those who want less severe or less restricted techniques find that they are questioned by the government. People who don't follow the rules are often referred to as "drug liberals," "a threat to our children," and "naves" when they are being criticized for their behavior. It is hard to undertake an impartial study of their arguments and the measures that they have taken since this creates the impression that they can get away with anything they want. This has been an ambition in and of itself, with the overarching purpose of preserving the Swedish model. According to a statement made by Danish criminologist Jrgen Jepsen, "The war on drugs is also a struggle on alternative meanings and understandings of reality" (Goldsmith, 2019, p. 1).

![Average price of illicit drugs in Sweden in 2017, by drug (in euros per gram)](image)

**Figure 2:** Source: (Johansson, 2018).

After analyzing data from 17 nations outside of Sweden, researchers in 2008 found that there is no correlation between the strictness of a country's drug laws and the prevalence of illicit drug use among its population. The study concluded that drug usage is not uniformly distributed globally and is not solely determined by drug policy (Goldberg, 2019). Researchers came to this conclusion after finding that nations with tougher user-level rules for illicit drugs did not have
lower levels of usage than countries with more permissive policies”. Following a series of large-scale investigations, including a recent one by the Home Office in Britain, all came to the same conclusion: (Goldberg, 2019)

Even after forty years of putting the Swedish model into practice, we are no closer to achieving our primary objective, which was to make Sweden drug-free, than we were when we first started. After coming to the conclusion that an entirely drug-free society is not feasible, proponents of the Swedish model revised the wording of their aim to read "to continue working towards being drug-free." (Degenhardt, 2019). On the other hand, considering that we've spent the entire time heading in the wrong direction, it's high time that we came up with some new goals and solutions. Too often, ideology, being "politically correct," and pandering to popular emotion have been the guiding principles behind Sweden's drug policy. One common tactic used by the Swedish is known as "eliciting anxiety." This may be accomplished, for instance, by putting an emphasis on emotionally charged terms like "dependency," "abducted brain," "abuse," and so on. We need a new vocabulary that is not as emotionally charged as the previous one (Friborg, 2018).

![Figure 3: (Rolles & Murkin, 2014)](image)

The use of psychoactive substances for purposes other than medical treatment is recognized as abusive under Swedish drug policy. Because of this, it is possible that smoking a joint every once in a while will be placed in the same category as injecting a significant quantity of heroin every day. Officials in Sweden have said that this is one of the reasons why they believe their drug policy has proven effective. As "proof," the findings of Sweden's annual "School Studies" indicate that the country's 16-year-olds use far less cannabis than their peers in other EU countries of the
same age cohort. By focusing our attention on this one statistic, we may be able to avoid looking at other, more serious concerns, such as the use of drugs on a daily basis and intravenously. The limited number of conducted studies indicate that the claims of success put forth by Sweden lack sufficient evidence based on available data. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the drug issue, it is crucial to establish a nomenclature that distinguishes between the various modes and patterns of drug usage (Friborg, 2018).

According to the expression that employ (Fingarette, 2019, pp. 101–103), the use of a psychoactive substance is a primary activity in the lives of problematic consumers. The aspects of life that are significant to the majority of people, such as their families, their friends, their jobs, their wealth, and their health, are really secondary. Users of drugs for recreational purposes place a higher value on other things, such as other values, hobbies, and human relationships than on their own drug usage (Peele, 2018, p. 8). They are not unduly distressed by the fact that they do not find importance in the use of psychoactive drugs since they find meaning in the activities of daily life.

If you compare the ways in which different people drink alcoholic drinks, you will quickly see the distinctions between the two groups. When it comes to alcohol, those who live on the streets and people who enjoy a glass of wine with their meal are both abusing the same drug, but they do it in very different ways and for very different reasons (Degenhardt, 2019). It is widely held, in accordance with the Swedish model, that persons who experiment with drugs are more likely to lose control of their conduct, which in turn encourages them to take further substances.

Studies examining the lives of individuals with drug-related problems have identified several factors such as poverty, emotional and/or physical abandonment by at least one biological parent, family history of drug use, experiences of physical and/or sexual abuse, susceptibility to unclear expectations and inconsistent consequences, significant family conflicts, and limited support systems. These factors were observed prior to the initiation of drug use among problematic consumers (Friborg, 2018). These factors have been found in problematic consumers who have a history of abusing drugs.

The fact that the potentially problematic client often exhibits a variety of symptoms, such as melancholy, worry, anxiety, aggression, and a fragile sense of self-defence or projection, is another indication that the difficult customer may be suffering from a psychiatric disorder (Friborg, 2018)
4.3. Foundational principles of drug policy

Even after legalization, drug trafficking is still considered a crime. However, those who engage in this activity may be subject to administrative or therapeutic remedies rather than criminal punishments. Legislation and/or the processes that are utilized to implement it may both be reformed as potential possibilities (Friborg, 2018). Decriminalization may take many different forms, including depenalization, which is one of them. Fines, treatment and counseling, community service, and education are examples of the types of punishments that may be imposed for violations of the law that are considered to be of a lesser severity (Johansson, 2018). Decriminalization is becoming more prevalent in drug laws across the globe, including in Sweden, where minors found in possession of trace amounts of cannabis are frequently referred to social workers for additional assistance.

4.4. Decriminalization

One other strategy for reducing the severity of drug-related criminal penalties is to adopt a policy under which offenders of certain drug crimes will not be prosecuted when certain conditions are satisfied. It's possible that the police will be directed not to intervene, to give other crimes more priority, to issue warnings rather than arrests, etc. It's possible that prosecutors won't even try to bring some drug-related cases to trial if certain circumstances are met. Decriminalization is pursued with the intention of avoiding the social stigma that comes along with drug usage (if they do not commit other crimes Decriminalization entails a distinction between "de jure" laws (those explicitly written) and "de facto" laws (those applied in practice), highlighting different aspects of the process. Therefore, decriminalization requires a divergence between the written laws and the actual implementation (Degenhardt, 2019).

If a psychoactive substance is had, used, manufactured, or sold in accordance with a certain set of criteria, as is the case with legalization, then the act of possessing, using, producing, or selling the drug is no longer a crime. The presence of a market that is legally sanctioned for the sale of prohibited drugs is what is meant by the phrase "regulation." In the past, examples of this kind of packaging have been developed for prescription medications, alcohol, and cigarettes.

4.5. Prohibitonist paradigm
Before the turn of the century, individuals in Sweden held these ideas, which were met with widespread hostility. We are not going to do anything that would make it simpler for people to use illegal narcotics, regardless of the repercussions of such actions. This antagonism was established on the basis of the basic assumption of the prohibitionist paradigm that prevailed in Sweden. The concept of harm reduction maintains that people who use drugs are still citizens who have the right to have as normal of a life as possible. In recent years, however, Sweden has started to acknowledge the significance of this basic assumption. Here are a few examples of when the suggestions proposed by the experimental society have not been included into the Swedish government's drug policy. According to Sweden's opinion, the drugs themselves are the source of the problem. Those who question this idea have been subjected to censorship and even retaliation in certain instances.

4.6 Primary function of drug policy

According to an editorial in Dagens Nyheter, the Swedish drug policy is based on the belief that any drug use represents a serious violation of societal norms. This claim was made in response to the discussion. Since a consequence of this, the answer that is given when this is questioned is unyielding, as the success of the program is dependent on the participation of a large number of people (Friborg, 2018, p. A2). In order to keep ourselves safe from the effects of drugs, the Swedish government's drug policy mandates that we avoid engaging in free and honest discourse with one another. Due to the fact that the activities of the government cannot be called into question, Sweden has never given considerable attention to the policy and democratic repercussions that such a stance may have.

Make advantage of terror to get your point through rather than delivering precise information. In Sweden, citizens are held to high standards of decency and are expected to accept responsibility for their own lives. According to the Swedish interpretation of the consequences that narcotics have on biochemistry, psychoactive drugs pose a threat to the most fundamental aspects of our existence. As a direct consequence of this, people are more likely to justify their actions by referring to the goals they have set for themselves (Goldberg, 2019). For example, when it comes to drug instruction in our schools, we rely mostly on scare tactics and exaggerations, which appeal more to the emotions of the pupils than to their intellects. However, if research want to educate people how to make choices that are in their best interests, this is not the greatest way to use.
4.7. Changes required in the policies

In Sweden, there is a reluctance to conduct an impartial analysis of the repercussions of the country's drug policy. It is clear that there is a dearth of interest in doing research on metrics that are consistent with our prohibitionist mentality (Degenhardt, 2019). There are just a few of countries, such as Sweden, that have made it unlawful to consume substances that are considered to be illicit. If you take a hit from another person's joint, you provide consent to having your blood and urine tested under duress. The justification given for this intrusive approach is that it will allow us to identify those who may become reliant on the product in the future and provide assistance to them before they reach that point. Since this invasive legislation was first enacted more than 25 years ago, we have not conducted any research into its potential long-term consequences.

4.8. Summary

Swedish Zero tolerance policy against drugs is not for longer term. Police have authority to implement the anti drug policies for the purpose they can go to every exceptionality within human rights boundaries. Swedish drug control policies are better than many developed countries UK’s policies. Brief answers to the research questions are as follows:

- Zero tolerance is the famous and recent policy
- Beneficial for the individuals and the nation as well
- Making a plan to implement this policy in longer term is needed.
Chapter 5: Discussion

The goal of the Swedish government's drug policy is to create a drug-free society. It has chosen a strong enforcement-focused approach to the issue of drug usage in order to achieve this aim. Some individuals feel that the Swedish government's implementation of this strategy is the reason for the historically low rates of drug use in Sweden (Degenhardt, 2019). Thus, it is frequently cited as a basis for decriminalisation and legal control of the substance, predicated on the obvious effectiveness of the Swedish approach.

There is some debate as to how much of Sweden's low percentage of drug usage is due to its restrictive policies. Many studies have demonstrated that the severity with which laws are enforced is not the key predictor of drug usage prevalence.

A "zero tolerance" policy for drug usage has been enacted by Sweden to help it achieve its goal of eliminating drug use from society (Friborg, 2018). Significant funds have been allocated to programmes aimed at curbing drug use, as well as preventative and treatment measures that emphasise abstinence. This policy approach was established in the 1960s in response to a rise in drug use over a substantial percentage of the industrialised world (Degenhardt, 2019). Drug offences have been increasing in severity since that time, and in 1988 Sweden became the first country to criminalise the use of narcotics as well as the possession of them.

The data shown below call into question the claim that Sweden's minimal levels of drug usage are directly attributable to the country's rigorous implementation of drug prohibitions:

Between 1995 and 2011, there was a 6% rise in drug use among 15-16-year-olds, despite the fact that one of the main objectives of criminalizing recreational drug use in 1993 was to deter young adults from engaging in drug consumption.

- The use of illegal drugs is becoming more prevalent among young people, while the consumption of alcohol and cigarettes is declining.
- To illustrate, between 1995 and 2011, the percentage of 15-year-olds who reported using cannabis in the past month increased from 1% to 3%.
- In terms of illicit drug use beyond cannabis, this age group has seen an increase from 2% to 4% since the inception of the survey.
• The overall drug use within the population is rising, especially among individuals aged 15 to 64. Despite Portugal's legalization of private drug ownership in 2013, Sweden now has a higher rate of cannabis use compared to Portugal. Cannabis consumption can be measured in terms of "last year" or "lifetime."

• There has been a significant increase in the proportion of individuals who claim to have used amphetamines at some point in their lives, observed between 1994 and 2008 (the latest available data year).

• The percentage of young individuals who have used inhalants and non-prescribed tranquillizers/sedatives has also increased.

• It is worth questioning why countries like the United Kingdom and France, which have a legal framework similar to Sweden's in terms of severity, exhibit much higher rates of drug use. According to research, "the widespread use of drugs may be primarily due to a complex mix of social, economic, and social factors" (Johansson, 2018).

The implementation of drug policy, particularly through drug ban regulations, has shown limited effectiveness. Additionally, studies have indicated that a higher prevalence of problematic drug use is associated with economic disadvantage and inequality (Johansson, 2018). Given that Sweden is a prosperous nation with a well-established and comprehensive welfare system, it has historically performed favorably in these aspects. Consequently, Swedish society tends to be conservative and abstinent, as reflected by low levels of alcohol and tobacco consumption, as well as minimal rates of medicinal product usage (Friborg, 2018).

The efficiency of drug policy should not be assessed solely by its frequency; there are several of additional indicators of accomplishment, and Sweden performed significantly worse than the rest of the industrialised world on those measures. It's also worth noting that the prevalence of drug usage alone should not be used to assess the success of drug policy.

Because of Sweden's emphasis on building a drug-free society, there is a hostile attitude in Sweden towards activities that try to decrease the negative consequences of drug use as opposed to avoiding or eliminating drug use itself.

It was impossible for the previous administration, which was firmly committed to an abstinence-based policy, to act on the conclusions of an important study issued in 2011 that
recognised the need to increase harm reduction efforts. The previous administration, on the other hand, did recognise the importance of this. Some campaigners are hoping that the newly elected administration would revisit the suggestions, but for the time being, harm reduction programmes are still falling short of European Union, World Health Organization, and UNODC standards.

The whole country has just five needle exchanges, and Gothenburg, Sweden's second biggest city, has none.

Many people may get opiate substitution treatment (OST), although it is regulated by strict rules (particularly for methadone)

Fewer people may stay in treatment because of the zero-tolerance approach of certain OST centres regarding the use of other drugs.

Figure 4: (Sweden: Drug-Related Crimes by Type 2021 | Statista, 2023)

However, even if the coverage in penal facilities is far from acceptable, the pilot OST programme started in 2007 and has been sustained as a countrywide endeavour since 2018. If you're looking for a place to get supervised drug use in Sweden, you're out of luck. The government doesn't collect any statistics on the availability of harm reduction programmes in recreational venues like nightclubs and festivals. Because of Sweden's emphasis on building a drug-free
society, there is a hostile attitude in Sweden towards activities that try to decrease the negative consequences of drug use as opposed to avoiding or eliminating drug use itself.

Only 2.3 deaths per million persons were caused by drugs in Portugal in 2012. The growth of programmes targeted at decreasing the harm caused by drug use helped Portugal's decriminalisation plan. As a result, Sweden's share is 30 times larger. (Degenhardt, 2019).

Results of a study conducted by Swedish national television SVT show that in recent years the highly addictive chemical has become more widespread, cheaper and more pure. Law enforcement and customs officers have made further cocaine seizures. Since 2012, the number of drug arrests made by the police has almost tripled, and the number of drug finds made by customs officers has also increased. Customs officials in Sweden seized 485 kilogrammes of cocaine in 2018, the most of it in two large hauls totalling 298 kilogrammes and 98 kilogrammes, respectively. (Degenhardt, 2019).

A larger proportion of deaths were linked to the medicine, according to the study. The Swedish National Board of Forensic Medicine listed cocaine as the cause of death in 20 cases, up from only one case a few years before. The Swedish National Board of Forensic Medicine provides these figures. There has been a 10-fold increase in the number of cocaine-positive postmortem cases since 2011 (Friborg, 2018). Despite the fact that the number of deaths attributed to cocaine use is still a small percentage of the total, the increase prompted an investigation into the drug's role in certain deaths last autumn.

At the Grav 2019 conference for investigative journalism, which took place this week in Kalmar, Sweden, the report's debut was one of several activities. SVT and regional newspapers collaborated to map the spread of cocaine use in Sweden. Research shows that the number of persons who test positive for minor drug offences has increased, as has the number of instances in which cocaine was the substance of choice. Marijuana and amphetamines are the two most often used narcotics, while cocaine usage has increased dramatically since 2011.

Investigations have concluded that the testing technique is not to blame for the dramatic increase in the number of arrests. The results are being regarded as a major indication of the widespread use of cocaine in Swedish society, according to a police intelligence expert who spoke to SVT.
This view is supported by a number of factors, including the wide range of causes of death. In the past, every cocaine-related death happened during a party or other social event. But in 2018, almost all of the cocaine-related deaths were found in the homes of the people who had used the drug.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Swedish news sources are currently debating whether or not Sweden's zero-tolerance approach on drug offences can be maintained in the long term. Even in northern Europe, governments seldom take such a strong position, and the UN has even voiced its concern with Sweden's "balanced policy based on health and human rights." Sweden's firm position in this circumstance is one of the reasons behind this.

According to the policy, police are authorised to conduct urine tests on anybody they suspect of using illicit substances regardless of whether they are using "hard" or "soft" drugs. As a result, the policy doesn't distinguish between drugs that are deemed legal and illegal substances "'Hard' drugs and those classified as 'Soft Drugs.'" Creating "open drug scenes" is more difficult in Sweden since it is illegal to use, possess, or sell narcotics for personal use. In Sweden, it is also illegal to possess or sell illegal drugs. It's at these types of settings where opioids are being used and sold in the open. This is an important aspect of the overall strategy to reduce the availability of drugs and discourage individuals from using them." The policy states that this is what must be done.

The first move toward decriminalising drug usage was taken by Norway's neighbour, which is also Sweden's neighbour. Sweden has a border with this neighbouring countries. Government and other organisations that are frequently viewed as being in opposition backed the decision. It is the objective of Nicolas Wilkinson of the Socialist Labour Party to "stop penalising those who suffer and instead give them with support and rehabilitation," he stated in an interview with VG recently. This was followed up with an explanation of his long-term objective, which is to hand over responsibility for crafting drug policy to the medical community. It was his opinion that this would be the most effective strategy for achieving the ultimate objective.

The majority of legislators in Sweden's parliament committee for health and welfare now want a reexamination of the country's drug policy, according to the local newspaper The Local. The Swedish parliament's health and welfare committee reported this information. Liberal, Center, Swedish Democratic, Christian Democratic and Left parties in Sweden all support the notion of a new point of view being taken on board. All throughout the political spectrum, this support is evident.
Preliminary governmental policies for controlling the usage of narcotics among nationals typically include a combination of law enforcement, prevention programs, treatment options, and international cooperation. Some common policies include stricter law enforcement measures, such as increased policing and border control, to reduce the availability of narcotics. Prevention programs aim to educate the public, particularly young people, about the risks associated with drug use. Treatment options focus on providing support and rehabilitation services to individuals struggling with addiction. Additionally, international cooperation plays a crucial role in combating drug trafficking and reducing the supply of narcotics. The extent to which these policies can be beneficial depends on various factors, including the implementation and enforcement of the policies, the level of public awareness and participation, and the availability of resources. When implemented effectively, these policies can have positive impacts on reducing drug use and its associated harms. Strict law enforcement measures can deter drug trafficking and disrupt supply chains. Prevention programs can educate individuals about the dangers of drug use, potentially dissuading them from experimenting with narcotics. Treatment options can provide much-needed support and help individuals recover from addiction. However, it is important to note that controlling narcotics usage is a complex issue with multiple dimensions. Policies alone may not completely eradicate the problem, as drug use often has underlying social, economic, and psychological factors. To achieve more effective control over narcotics usage, certain policy changes are needed:

- Policies should prioritize harm reduction strategies, such as safe injection sites, needle exchange programs, and access to overdose-reversal medications.
- These measures can save lives and provide opportunities for individuals to seek treatment.
- Governments should invest in expanding access to affordable and evidence-based treatment options, including counseling, therapy, and medication-assisted treatment.
- This can help individuals overcome addiction and reduce the demand for narcotics.
- Prevention and education: Policies should prioritize comprehensive and evidence-based prevention programs that address the root causes of drug use, such as social inequality, poverty, and mental health issues.
- Education campaigns should target vulnerable populations and provide accurate information about the risks associated with narcotics.
Governments should strengthen international cooperation and collaboration to combat drug trafficking and disrupt the global supply chain. Sharing intelligence, coordinating efforts, and implementing joint operations can enhance the effectiveness of policies on a global scale.

In conclusion, preliminary governmental policies for controlling the usage of narcotics among nationals typically include law enforcement, prevention programs, treatment options, and international cooperation. While these policies can be beneficial in reducing drug use and its associated harms, further policy changes are needed. Emphasizing harm reduction, improving treatment accessibility, investing in prevention and education, and enhancing international cooperation are crucial steps towards more effective control over narcotics usage. By adopting a comprehensive and multifaceted approach, governments can strive to mitigate the negative impacts of narcotics and promote healthier communities.
References


Eriksson, M. M. (2021). “Society is closed to you because you’re seen as a criminal”—the social implications of being an indebted drug user in Sweden.


European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (2011) op. cit., p. 119.


Sweden is the joint second-largest funder of the UNODC (at 13.5%, with Germany), behind Japan at 19% but ahead of the US (13%).


Appendices
Drug overdose deaths
in the Nordic countries per 100 000 inhabitants

↑ 6.58
ICELAND, most common: opioids

↓ 4.29
DENMARK, most common: methadone

↑ 5.66
NORWAY, most common: heroin

↑ 5.84
FINLAND, most common: buprenorphine

↑ 6.46
SWEDEN, most common: heroin

Source: Forensic Science International 2020
Lifetime, last-year and last-month prevalence of cannabis use among 15-64-year-olds in Sweden

New coronavirus cases per million residents, last seven days
One of these countries has a drug policy based on prohibition, criminalisation and abstinence. Which do you think it is?

Drug-induced mortality rate, 2012

Portugal

Sweden

Number of deaths per million of population

www.tdpf.org.uk

@TransformDrugs