Social Support and Repression

An Exploration of the Governing of Social Problems in Sweden

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Master Thesis (SOLM02)
Spring 2022

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Abstract

There is a great belief in the use of repression and increased state control to combat social problems, particularly crime, in current Swedish crime policies, visible through the 34-points program in which most points are aimed at longer penalties and increased state authority. At the same time, the government claims the need for promotion of desistance. This study aims to explore the governing of social problems in Sweden, and the utility of social and repressive control, through the case of desistance from crime, utilizing Wacquant's conceptualization of the Left and the Right hand of the state to analyze this. I address this aim through semi-structured interviews with desistance workers, and aim to answer; 1) Which measures need to be in place for individuals to desist from crime according to desistance workers? 2) Can desistance organizations provide such measures, and do they have the adequate material and symbolic resources? and 3) How do the social measures provided by desistance organizations and the expanding repressive measures of the criminal justice system relate to each other when it comes to desistance? The results show that social measures such as welfare access and social support are important according to the interviewees, however their ability to provide these measures are partly contingent on their ability to allude to neoliberal logics. Moreover, I could show that a colonization of social interventions by the logics of the Right hand is in progress. The conclusion of this study is that the governing of social problems in Sweden is increasingly guided by neoliberal logics resulting in an individualization of social problems, however, to increase desistance social measures needs to become more accessible and the hindrances that are in place today needs to decrease.

Keywords: Desistance, Repressive and Social Measures, Governing, Social Problems, Wacquant

1. Introduction

Today's Swedish crime political climate shows a great belief in the use of repression, increased state control, and incarceration to combat social problems and crime. Moreover, many repressive measures seem to be introduced as solutions on behalf of social intervention to address social problems. An example of this introduction of more repression is the government's main criminal justice strategy *A Safer Sweden*[1]. Central to this strategy is their 34-points program against gang crime[2], their most prominent crime political effort, which is a part of the government's effort to counteract organized crime and increase safety in Swedish society (The Swedish Government 2022). In this program, the main, and majority, of the points are aimed at increasing state/police control and repression through longer penalties and increased state authority. In the middle of this repressive focus, the government additionally aims to improve the work that desistance organizations perform to increase desistance from crime. As such, the current criminal policy in Sweden claims the need to promote desistance through social intervention while at the same time heavily focuses its governmental power on expanding repressive measures.

The government's 34-points program might thus be internally counteractive as research has shown that repression, particularly imprisonment, can have a negative impact on desistance (Bondeson 1989; Laub and Sampson 2003; LeBel et. al. 2008), as such the government's repressive focus is at risk of decreasing desistance. It thus, in the light of the increased repressive control, becomes interesting to ask the question how society can, and does, help individuals who wish to desist from crime and whether the repressive focus in governing impedes or invigorates the ability to desist. The point of departure of this study will be to explore the knowledge that workers at desistance organizations hold regarding the needs of individuals who want to desist, their resources, and their own role in contributing to desistance in relation to the criminal justice system. This knowledge will then be utilized to say something about the governing of social problems and the relation between social and repressive interventions regarding desistance.

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[1] https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/ett-tryggare-sverige/
[2] https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/ett-tryggare-sverige/34-punktsprogrammet-regeringens-atgarder-mot-gangkriminaliteten/

1.1 Aim & Research Questions

The aim with this thesis is to explore the governing of social problems in Sweden, and the utility of social and repressive control mechanisms to address these problems, through the case of desistance from crime.

To address this aim I will explore the experience-based knowledge of desistance workers and based on their experiences I will seek to answer the following research questions.

1. Which measures need to be in place for individuals to desist from crime?
2. Can desistance organizations provide such measures, and do they have the adequate material and symbolic resources?
3. How do the social measures provided by desistance organizations and the expanding repressive measures of the criminal justice system relate to each other when it comes to desistance?

With these research questions, I will address gaps located in the body of literature on desistance (as established in the state-of-the-art) by exploring the relation between repressive and social efforts in the context of desistance, while also providing a seemingly unexplored perspective, the expert perspective.

1.2 Socio-Legal Relevance

The development visible in Sweden today, where social problems, such as segregation and social insecurity, formerly handled through welfare efforts are being redefined as criminal justice problems (Lappi-Seppälä 2007; Tham 2012), brings about the socio-legal question of how social problems are governed and the use of the law to achieve social change (Banakar 2015). This, particularly as an increasing governmental belief in the criminal laws' ability to solve social problems and to function normatively on individuals who offend are taking shape. By studying desistance and how experts view the relation of social and repressive control mechanisms, I can gain insight into these workers' interpretations of the impact that this choice of governing has for desisters. Additionally, desistance is interesting as a case through which to explore when and how the government chooses to use the law to achieve social change since this could be done both through social and criminal legal changes.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

From this point, this thesis is divided into 6 parts. Chapter 2 provide a background and contextualization of the changes in criminal politics and work towards desistance in Sweden, following this, in chapter 3, the literature review is presented. In this section I further explore social and repressive approaches to promote desistance. In chapter 4, I present the struggle between the Left and Right hand of the state within the bureaucratic field (Wacquant 2009) which serves as the theoretical conceptualization used to analyze the material. After this, in chapter 5, the methodological choice of interviewing desistance workers as experts in the field is discussed. Chapter 6 contains the analysis of the material where the theory, literature review and material come together to answer my research questions and aim. Lastly, in chapter 7, I conclude this thesis by discussing the findings and potential future research.

2. Background

This chapter start with a brief background of the criminal political development in Sweden since the 1970s to contextualize contemporary changes happening in Swedish criminal policy, as well as positioning the importance of the aim of this thesis. After this, I present relevant definitions and outline desistance organizations in Sweden to provide a foundational understanding for the material used to answer the research questions. Additionally, to visualize how social and repressive efforts of desistance are conducted today, I go into how desistance organizations and the Swedish Prison and Probation Service (from here on SPPS) works with promoting desistance.

2.1 The Development of Swedish Criminal Policy

Criminal policy in Sweden has since the 1970s moved away from the logic of preventing crime through rehabilitation and readjustment toward more repression, situational crime prevention and populism (Andersson 2018; Hermansson 2019). During the 1960s and the beginning of 1970s, the rehabilitative ideal was still the leading paradigm in criminal policies. This meant that the focus of the SPPS, and criminal policies in general, was to rehabilitate offenders (Andersson & Nilsson 2017). Widespread critique of the rehabilitative ideal was however gleaned during the end of the 1970s and after a report from The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (from now on BRÅ) called *New Penal System*[3] (BRÅ 1977), and the ensuing debate, the penal system was

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[3] In Swedish *Nytt straffsystem*

reformed into the system that we have today were the principles of proportionality and justice serves as the foundational principles.

During the movement away from the rehabilitation ideal, and particularly in the early 2000s, a tougher rhetoric started to take form in the criminal political debate where Sweden was increasingly described as crime infected and that there was a need for forceful preventive measures to 'fight' crime. Shortly thereafter, in the mid to late 2000s, a penal expansion took form when all but one of the criminal policies that the then sitting government implemented aimed at increased penality (Tham 2018). The harsher tone towards crime, the penal expansion and the turn towards repression is still of focus in today's criminal political arena (Tham 2018). This can for example be seen in the current government's 34-points program where increased length of punishments plays a central role and rhetoric of a 'fight' against crime is prevalent (The Swedish Government 2022).

Despite the repressive turn in Swedish criminal policy, penal policies in the Nordic countries have generally, both historically and now, been some of the mildest criminal policies amongst Western countries (Lappi-Seppälä 2007; Lappi-Seppälä 2012), to the degree that the Nordic criminal policy has come to be designated as exceptional (Pratt 2008). This exceptionalism is argued to derive from the strong welfarism present in the Nordic countries due factors such as high social solidarity, faith in the state, the influence of experts, and equality. These factors underlying the construction of the state are argued to lead to a humane criminal justice system (from here on CJS) and a low level of imprisonment (Pratt 2008). There is, nonetheless, a consensus that the penal policies in the Nordic countries are turning more repressive and politicized (i.e., Lappi-Seppälä 2012; Andersson & Nilsson 2017; Tham 2018).

2.1.1 Why More Repression?

The current expansion of repression in Sweden should be understood as a reaction to social problems, i.e., inequality or segregation, being characterized as a criminal justice problem that needs to be solved through criminal justice interventions (Lappi-Seppälä 2007; Tham 2012). As such, social problems that traditionally were handled through welfare efforts (Young 1999; Banakar 2015) are being redefined and allocated to the CJS. This, however, does not mean that the welfare state necessarily is retrenching. Hermansson (2018) discusses how the idea of welfare

is increasingly connected to and depending on increased repression and police expansion through the symbolic use of 'safety', due to its historical connection to the welfare state. For example, the Social Democrats wrote in their program from 2013 that *"Safety against crime also belongs to welfare politics[4]"* (Social Democrats Crime Political Program 2013, in Hermansson 2018, p. 188, *my translation*). With these kinds of formulations, the government can increase repression, for unwanted groups, with the argument that it is for the sake of protecting general welfare, for wanted groups (Hermansson 2018; Barker 2018). Due to this dependency, rather than being used as a last resort to solve conflicts in society as it has previously (Träskman 1995), control and repression is increasingly being presented as an emergency solution to social problems and is being legitimized through the argument of 'safety' (Hermansson 2018).

Another common argument for increased repression, besides that it is needed for a well-functioning welfare, is by referencing to the public opinion demanding harsher punishments and more control. The factuality of this has long been unclear as some studies disprove the statement (Bondeson 2003) while others corroborate it (Demker et. al. 2008). Newer research has thus set out to study general legal awareness in-depth. Jerre & Tham (2010) presents the Swedish specific findings from a Nordic wide study of penal attitudes (for the full study see Balvig et. al. 2015) where they found that the general legal awareness was repressive, however when the respondents were given concrete cases to judge they showed more leniency than the courts (Jerre & Tham 2010). This suggests that the spontaneous penal attitude of the population is to vouch for harsher punishments while the informed attitude is geared towards leniency, thus showing that the spontaneous general attitude is not representative of the concrete penal attitude. As such, the general legal awareness in Sweden is lenient, however the spontaneous attitude is turning more repressive. As such, the general legal awareness in Sweden is lenient, however the spontaneous attitude is turning more repressive. This difference could be understood as a result of the increased political and media focus on repression as this will, often, influence the general legal awareness in the same direction (Beckett & Sasson 2004).

2.2 Desistance in Sweden

In the following sections, I define desistance, desister, offender and desistance organizations, and

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describe desistance organizations in their different forms. Additionally, this section will give an overview of how desistance organizations and the SPPS promote desistance.

2.2.1 Definitions: Desistance, Desister and Desistance Organizations

Defining what is being meant with desistance might seem to be a straightforward ordeal, however when exploring how it has been used throughout academic research it is not. There are mainly two ways of defining desistance that is widely used; as a process during which offending is declining, or as a particular moment when offending has been stopped completely (Maruna 2001). As such, desistance is either seen as a dynamic process where the starting point is when the initial decline in offending is happening (see Laub & Sampson 2001; Maruna 2001), or the moment when offending has been stopped completely focusing on statistically evaluating when the desister is at the same risk of offending as general non-offenders (see Kurlychek et al. 2007; Bushway et al. 2011). As the latter definition brings about the question of how we know when someone has committed their last offense (Maruna 2001), particularly as it is common with intermittent desistance meaning that you have temporary breaks in your offending (Carlsson 2013), the former will be used in this thesis. Defining desistance is however additionally connected to how the concept of offender is defined, who is an 'offender'? Someone who has committed one, two, five crimes or someone who has been offending regularly over a certain amount of time (Laub & Sampson 2001)? Is someone who has smoked marijuana or pilfered some candy an 'offender' or is this title reserved for certain criminal activity? In this thesis, I aim to define who an offender is broadly and therefore choose to define it in the following manner, *an offender is an individual who has a police record of offending and who, according to themselves, are actively offending*.

Combining these two definitions, a desister is thus defined as *an individual who has a police record of offending and actively tries to reduce their active offending with the goal of stopping completely*, and desistance can take place privately or through for example desistance organizations. This definition is used as desistance organizations adhere to understanding desistance as a process, and since some do not demarcate that they provide support for particular types of offending it is fitting to use a wide definition.

BRÅ defines desistance organizations as organizations whose main task is to support desisters wanting to leave a criminal group (Bogestam & Patel 2016). This definition serves as the main

inspiration for the definition that I use in this thesis, however the focus on criminal groups is removed as this demarcation is unnecessary and can be problematic since some independent desistance organizations do not require the desister to be part of a criminal group to be provided support. The following is thus the definition used in this thesis:

A desistance organization is an organization whose main task is to support, in any way, individuals who want to desist from crime.

Interesting to note is that 'crime' in relation to desistance organizations mainly refers to street crime, and often crime committed by poor minority men living in urban areas, as it is this kind of offending individual who is provided help. The organizations do not, to my knowledge, aim to support desistance from for example white-collar crime.

2.2.2 Desistance Organizations
In Sweden, there exists a mix of state-based and independent desistance organizations which function in a variety of ways. Equal between them is their aim to provide support to facilitate desistance. This is usually done by establishing the need of the desister, providing access to a support person, and helping with contacts with institutions or other actors such as landlords (Bogestam & Patel 2016). What service and/or support the organizations provide beyond this depends on the type of organization. Seeking help from any desistance organizations is voluntary and can be initiated in many ways, through the police, schools, the SPPS, by the individual themselves and so on.

The state-based desistance organizations are mainly conducted and governed through the social services who decide upon which actions are to be taken to help a person to desist from crime (Länsstyrelsen Skåne 2022). It is, nonetheless, not unusual that it is not the social services that enacts the actual support. In these cases, it is for example SIGs (social effort groups[5]) or independent organizations (i.e., Passus or KRIS) that conduct the actual work. In this thesis, when I am referring to state-based organizations it is SIGs or the police that I am referring to. This as the social services mainly function as the deciding organ and often do not enact the desistance

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[5] In Swedish *Sociala insatsgrupper*

work. Independent desistance organizations are any organization who aim to support desisters and who are not affiliated with the state. The biggest ones in Sweden are KRIS, Passus and X-CONS. Independent desistance organizations are ideologically driven and are commonly run by ex-offenders who want to use their own experiences to help and support others.

State-based desistance organizations usually focus their aid on setting up routines and structure, providing residence, treatments for addictions, finding a job and so on, while independent organizations focus on providing an opportunity for the desister to develop social bonds and relations to the law-abiding society, however they also aid the desister when it comes to getting an education, establishing contact with for example the employment service or when applying for economic relief. Besides this, independent desistance organizations work outreaching meaning that they visit prisons and custodies to get the inmates interested in desisting once they are released and to spread awareness of their organizations (Alstam, Forkby & Holm 2021; KRIS 2022; X-CONS 2022), which state-based desistance organizations do not do. In some state-based organizations, though not all, there are requirements to be absent from, for example, crime or drugs for the desister to be able to receive their aid (Länsstyrelsen Skåne 2022). Nonetheless, many desistance organizations abstain from any requirements so that there is a low threshold into their organization.

It is quite common that there is a threat against the desister. In these cases, the social services aim to move the desister to another city and give the police authority over the case. This so that the police can have an active role in the desistance process to increase the protection of the individual (Länsstyrelsen Skåne 2022).

2.2.3 The SPPS Work Towards Desistance
Within the CJS, promoting desistance is a part of the mission that the SPPS has. As such, they are the repressive equivalence of the desistance organizations since one of their most important goals is to, among other things, elicit and facilitate desistance within the repressive control of the state. To increase the incentive for inmates to participate in efforts that promote desistance, the offender can have their parole delayed if they do not participate in relapse preventive measures (SPPS 2022).

The SPPS works to promote desistance through rehabilitation programs, education and/or work opportunities. The rehabilitation programs are mainly designed as cognitive behavioral therapy to help the inmate think and behave in a new manner, these are however prioritized for the inmates who are deemed as having a high risk of recidivism. The level of risk for recidivism is determined through an assessment of the inmates' risk (how high is the risk for recidivism), need (the presence of any criminogenic factors[6]) and susceptibility (the individuals' prerequisites for rehabilitation). The education and work opportunities are designed to give the inmate a chance at finding an occupation to support the pursuit of having a law-abiding life after their time in prison (SPPS 2022).

What can be seen in the SPPSs' own statistics regarding recidivism is that around one in three offenders gets a new sentence within three years after their release from their institutions. The amount of relapse into crime decreased between 1999 and 2012, and since 2012 the level has been stable at around 29-30 %.
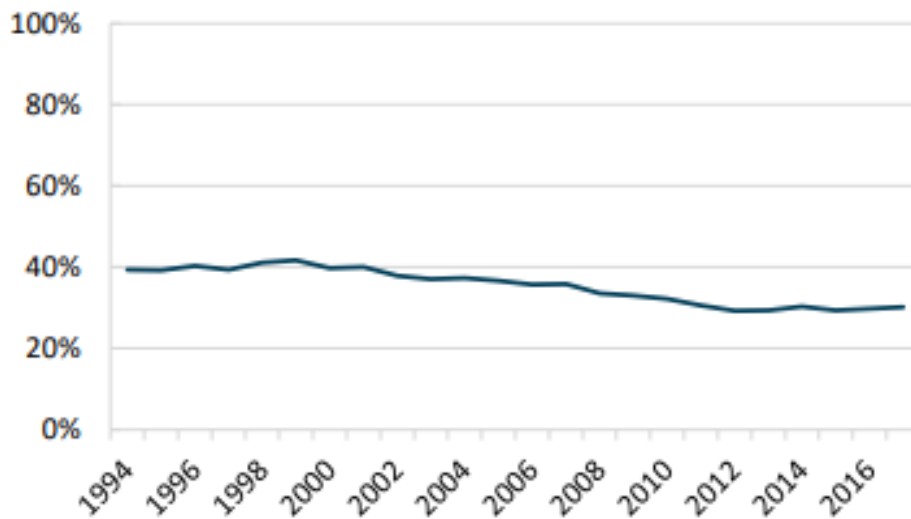

Figure 1: Recidivism within three years of release from a prison sentence from 1994 to 2017. Source: SPPS 2020.

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[6] Criminogenic factors are factors that are perceived to increase the likelihood for offending. These factors can for example be age, gender, level of education, presence of additions, mental illness, unemployment and so on. (Lilly, Cullen & Ball 2015)

3. State-of-the-art

An overview of the current academic field is the backbone of any academic research. This section will start by outlining how I planned and conducted the literature review. After this, I present the findings. This presentation is divided into two parts, the first one is focusing on the academic field of desistance and findings regarding social interventions while the second part is focusing on repressive interventions and thus leans more into the field of recidivism.

3.1 Planning the Literature Review

In the planning of the literature review, my aim was to establish what I wanted to answer with the review and which research to include. Before engaging in the literature search, I therefore constructed a plan where the first question was what the literature review should answer. After a quick browsing of the field two themes were decided upon that would guide the aim of the review. These themes are:

> i. Social interventions and desistance
>   - With this theme the aim is to locate general theories regarding social interventions effects on desistance and empirical findings and to locate gaps in the literature
> ii. Repression and desistance
>   - With this theme the aim is to locate general theories regarding repressive interventions effects of desistance and empirical findings and to locate gaps in the literature

The central problem of this thesis is focusing on the governing of social problems through social and repressive control mechanisms and how they relate to one another in the case of desistance. This is of interest as the current criminal policy changes in Sweden claim the need for social interventions to promote desistance while at the same time heavily focus on repressive measures. To construct this thesis, I thus deemed it relevant to review the above-described themes to get an overview of the field, explore what research has been done regarding social and repressive interventions and desistance, and which findings have been made. Literature on desistance organizations are not included as a theme since I, during the initial browsing, did not find any literature relating to this. Additionally, through these themes I could discern potential research gaps. From the themes, I identified relevant search words and scope limits for my review. The

search words used in the review are the following: Repression, Sweden, desistance, crime, offender, criminal, recidivism, re-offending, prison, social, support.

The search words were decided upon by contemplating what concepts are central to the aim and the planned themes, combined with some initial searches aimed to explore what concepts are commonly used and to discern trends in the literature. For example, initially I thought to use the concept 'defection', however when I started the initial searches it became apparent that this concept is underused in academic literature. Instead, I located the concept 'desistance' as the commonly used concept and thus incorporate this concept into the searches instead. Similarly, synonyms such as end, stop, leave, and quit were tested in the initial searches but showed to be inefficient to find relevant literature.

The main search engines used were LubSearch and Google Scholar. In these search engines the search words were used both individually and in combinations through a Boolean search method (and/or/not). This was also done with a Swedish translation of the search words. Due to time constraints, the articles that were deemed most relevant in terms of topic were extracted to be included in the review, this literature review is thus not exhaustive of all research conducted. The decision of inclusion in the review was made based on the abstracts and introductions. After initial literature was located, I went through the reference lists to look for additional relevant articles and to pinpoint potential core works that should be included. Once I completed this identification of relevant literature, a thorough read through was executed and the review was conducted. In this literature review the decision was made to abstain from going into a discussion of ethnicity as it relates to desistance (see Calverley 2012), the gender perspective (see Gålnander 2019), or a queer perspective (see Berggren, Gottzén, & Bornäs 2020), as these topics are not prominent in the literature, and I needed to demarcate due to scope limitations. The implication of this is that who (foremost young men of minority backgrounds from urban areas) is being affected by the states governing, and thus the increased repression, becomes less visible in this thesis. Even though this aspect is important for understanding the punitive turn through Wacquant's (2009) framework, I believe it to be possible for me to utilize him and acknowledge the place of ethnicity and class in his theory without myself conducting an analysis on the topic. Rather, in this thesis I aim to focus

on the part of his theory focusing on the conceptualization of social and repressive efforts and the governing of social problems.

Literature Review

In this following section I will present and discuss the literature reviewed. Generally, it is of worth to mention that the research overall gave a split view where the literature on social approaches where positive regarding its impact on desistance, and the literature on repressive approaches where negative or on the fence regarding its effects. Thus, this divide is not due to my choice of literature, as I tried to find contradicting literature, but reflects the literature overall.

Before going into the review, I want to note an important and reoccurring standpoint present throughout the literature. A consistent finding states that almost all offenders eventually desist from crime, no matter at which rate or how severe the offending is (Bersani & Doherty 2018). Desistance should thus be recognized as the norm rather than the exception. The pattern of desistance often, not always, follows the age-crime curve. The age-crime curve infer that a vast majority of offenders stop their offending when entering adulthood. Offending is usually initiated during the teenage years, peaks when the offender is in late adolescence, to then decreases during early 20-ies until it usually stops completely in the mid to late twenties (McMahon & Jump 2018; Bersani & Doherty 2018). Thus, most offenders stop their offending on their own when entering adulthood.

3.2 Social Interventions to Desistance

Apparent in the field of desistance is a tendency to describe and explain desistance in relation to social efforts. Most of the large theories and studies have thus a focus on social interventions and efforts. This section will start out with an exploration of the theoretical debate that is present in desistance literature. After this, findings on which social interventions are important for desistance and why will be inquired into further.

3.2.1 Theoretical Discussion

Prevalent in the literature is a traditional divide between two theoretical ways of understanding the root of desistance, one which emphasizes the individual's subjective agency (Maruna 2001; Maruna & Roy 2007) while the other emphasizes access to structural change (Laub & Sampson 2001). What these theories represent is an uncertainty and division regarding the relationship

between the individual and structural influence on desistance. This division seems to be based on an ontological difference regarding the view of the individual offender, as an independent actor or as dependent on, and thus a result of, social structures, and as such, the classical *agency-structure debate* is highly present in the field of desistance.

3.2.2 Structure VS Agency Theory

The structural theory of desistance places emphasis on structural forces which are believed to inhibit or enable an individual to desist, thus the social circumstance of the offender creates the boundaries within which they can act. For an offender to manage to desist from the 'cyclical trap' that crime and conviction creates there is therefore a need for a turning point or a life event to happen (LeBel et. al. 2008). Turning points are large life events, also called 'prosocial structures' (McMahon & Jump 2018), such as education, getting married, having children, or finding employment (Laub & Sampson 2001). These prosocial structures can create social bonds to the lawful society and offer a possibility for desisters to 'knife off', or separate, with 'negative' social structures such as offending peers (Laub & Sampson 2001). 'Knifing off' is however not always positive as some structures, e.g., prisons, might lead to the 'knifing off' of positive aspects such as family relationships (Maruna & Roy 2007).

Maruna (2001) is however critical about the importance given to turning points and argues that its importance for desistance has been overstated. This particularly as every individual experience a situation differently and thus the thing that motivates one person to desist might for another be a reason to keep or escalate their offending (Maruna 2001). Assigning certain events, for example marriage, as 'special' only because of the form of the event itself thus leads to a blindness to the individual experience of these events and creates a theoretical discrepancy. This not excluding that a turning point can contribute to desistance and act as a symbolic function of change (Maruna 2001), but rather emphasizing the problem with glorifying these events. He instead advocates that desistance should be understood from an agency theory (Maruna 2001). The agency, or subjective, theory places the root cause of desistance within the individual and the catalyst for desistance is thus internal changes such as changes in motivations, goals, self-conception, identity, and so on. This theory highlights that 'the self' is dynamic and changes throughout the life course and argues that when *what* an individual wants changes this will influence their behavior (Maruna & Roy 2007; LeBel et. al. 2008). This theoretical approach does not discredit the importance of structural

factors for desistance, but rather mean that for these structural factors to have an effect the individual must want to change and 'go straight'. Without that internal agency it does not matter how many turning points are introduced. References to internal change is moreover a common aspect that desisters describe when explaining why they have stopped offending. As one desister describes it *"My ideas, habits, the way I see life has changed."* (Maruna & Ray 2007, p. 115). It might, however, be that desisters have a hard time recognizing the impact that structural factors have on them and thus attribute their *own* desistance to their agency, since they often reason *other* individuals would be helped to desist through structural changes (Barry 2007; 2009). This implies the need for hesitance regarding desisters' own account of the root of desistance.

Skardhamar and Savolainen (2014) study on the role of employment for desistance nonetheless speaks in favor of the importance of internal changes and directs additional skepticism towards understanding turning points as catalysts to desistance. Their study showed that a decline in criminal activity preceded entrance into employment, thus disproving, in their sample, that the employment per se was a catalyst for desistance. Instead, their findings suggest that the initiation of desistance and most of the reduction of offenses was due to an internal decision or change (Skardhamar & Savolainen 2014). Similar findings have been found in relation to marriage as a turning point (Lyngstad & Skardhamar 2013). It is however, as Skardhamar & Savolainen themselves notes, possible that this skepticism towards turning points only holds true in the presence of a Nordic welfare state as their dataset was collected in Norway. They argue that *"The presence of a strong social safety net and comparatively lenient treatment of convicted offenders (Pratt, 2008; Savolainen, 2009) may decrease incentives for employment among individuals drawn to a criminal lifestyle."* (Skardhamar & Savolainen 2014, p. 287). Thus, it is possible that the structural theory and the importance of turning points holds true in for example the US but less so in states with a prominent welfare. On the other hand, research conducted in Finland has found that *other* turning points than those traditionally used in American studies seem to be more influential in Nordic countries. Savolainen (2009) could for example find that the act of cohabitation rather than marriage (which is traditionally seen as a turning point) had a significant positive effect on desistance. As such it might be that turning points are as important in prominent welfare states as in the US but that they differ in appearance.

3.2.3 Integrated Theory

A strict understanding of the dichotomy of agency-structure is however increasingly replaced by an integrated theory where both factors are seen as interactive parts of desistance (McMahon & Jump 2018). Today it is therefore more common to talk about desistance happening due to a complex interaction between subjective and social factors (LeBel et. al. 2008; McMahon & Jump 2018; Bersani & Doherty 2018). As such, the individual is understood as an actor who influences and constructs their own lives, however this construction is happening within the frame of their social position or circumstance (Bersani & Doherty 2018).

Despite this acknowledgement, in the literature there is no clear conclusion regarding which comes first, or which is most importance for the desistance process. LeBel et. al. (2008) suggest that the subjective change needs to come first for the ensuing structural change to have an effect, i.e., the individual must feel hope, experience a change in character or have a belief in their ability to desist. Nonetheless, at the same time they suggest that structural change is more important for desistance to happen. LeBel et. al. (2008) metaphorically likens this uncertainty with the question of the "chicken and egg". It is also possible that the question of the chicken and egg is the wrong question to ask for developing an understanding for desistance. Instead, it might be relevant to understand the subjective and the structural factors as being in constant interaction (McMahon & Jump 2018), like a circle there is no beginning.

3.2.4 Social Interventions

What the above literature show is the necessity for social interventions to aid the process of desistance. The research shows that no matter how motivated the individual is, he/she cannot, or will have a hard time to, change without support from society and access to social welfare. This can be everything from getting access to employment opportunities and housing or education to getting medical help with an addiction. Many of these interventions require the possibility to get help and support from society and for the problems to not be labeled as something that they themselves should solve. The importance of desistance to not be labeled as an individualized problem is reflected in the literature where it has been shown that the social context, for example living in a disadvantaged area, of the desister has implications for their ability to desist and the risk of re-offending. A reoccurring finding showed that individuals who moved to new, and economically better, neighborhoods were less likely to reoffend, and thus more likely to succeed

with their desistance than those who stayed in their 'original' neighborhood (Kirk 2012; Doherty & Bersani 2016). This alludes to the importance of getting social support as it, particularly for marginalized individuals, can be hard to uproot your life and find housing in a new area on your own. It is thus important to note that structural constraints, imbalances, and marginalization affect both the introduction into offending and the ability to desist since every individual does not have the same access to society's safety nets and aids (Barry 2007; Bersani & Doherty 2018). Access to social support is therefore important for an equal opportunity to desistance. This is additionally reflected in Swedish literature where it is shown that offenders that reoffend usually have worse living conditions than those that desist from crime (Nilsson 2002). As such, access to welfare support seems to be vital for an equal opportunity to desist.

The value of prosocial structures to desistance can be understood as threefold. The social bonds (1) that are developed and provide a source of informal social control, the routines and purposeful activities (2) that these structures provide which keep the desister occupied, and the aid to reach future plans (3) which increases the desisters' motivation (McMahon & Jump 2018). These might, however, not be the only benefits of prosocial structures. Besides the above, prosocial structures can provide various forms of capital (cf. Bourdieu 1986) to the desister. Particularly the value of social capital is present in desistance literature where a lack in social capital, for example, can make it harder to desist or be recognized as a desister (Nugent & Schinkel 2016). Beside this, the importance of economic capital is reflected, if not outright stated, through the theoretical and empirical importance given to employment and access to housing for the process of desistance.

Capital (cf. Bourdieu 1986), however, can work counteractively to desistance as an individual can gain capital through offending (Barry 2007). Because of this, the transition from offending to a law-abiding lifestyle can be experienced as 'uncanny' (Fredriksson & Gålnander 2020) as the desister loses the capital that they had and, before gaining new, lives in a status of uncertainty. Fredriksson & Gålnander (2020) have been able to discern how the desister often ends up in an in-between position between their old and new life. This as they, through the desistance process, both un-familiarizes themselves with the lifestyle and social surrounding that they know, the offending life, and at the same time tries to become familiar with the often unknown normative and law-abiding lifestyle. In this process it is not only about changing into a completely new social

environment but also about changing identity into someone new (Fredriksson & Gålnander 2020). This change entails loss of capital that the individual had in their 'previous' lifestyle and which does not suit the 'new' life that they aspire for, leaving the individual in a precarious situation until they have been able to gain capital that fits their aspired life. The struggle that occurs could explain the prevalence of intermittent offending during desistance as the back-and-forth offending might be due to, additionally or singularly, the desisters' experience of longing for the familiarity and capital that they had before (Fredriksson & Gålnander 2020). These findings hint at the need for a society that can provide possibilities to the desister so that the individual as fast as possible can gain capital that is suitable for their new surroundings as this can both improve the individual's ability to desist and prevent recidivism.

3.3 Repressive Approaches to Desistance

The effects of repressive approaches on the individual and the individual's life after imprisonment are widely studied, these studies are however included in the field of recidivism and re-offending, focusing on why people continue to commit crime, rather than the field of desistance, why people stop committing crime. In the following section, findings from these studies will be explored and discussed as they can say something about what repressive approaches mean for desistance since knowing why someone reoffends additionally contributes with knowledge of why some desist.

3.3.1 Theoretical Discussion

In theory, the goal of imprisonment is divided into individual or general prevention and retribution. For desistance, it is the theories of individual prevention that are of relevance. Individual prevention argues that imprisonment is of value, and contributes to the prevention of future crime, because of the effects it has on the individual through improvement, incapacitation and/or deterrence (Mathiesen 2006).

Improvement refers to rehabilitation of the offender during their time in prison and can take many forms, but the general focus is to 'cure' the individual from their criminal ways and to re-socialize them so that they can leave the prison as a law-abiding person. This idea was commonly accepted as the central focus in Swedish prison services up until the 1970s during which it got heavily criticized and lost favor politically and scientifically. This because of the theory being too

individualistic, structural problems being overlooked, and the idea of 'curing' or 'fixing' the individual being problematic (Mathiesen 2006; Andersson & Nilsson 2017).

Another theory used in individual prevention is incapacitation. This theory argues that due to incapacitation by locking up the individual, prisons work crime preventively as this hinders the individual from committing any new crimes during their sentence. Thus, the number of crimes committed is decreased by removing the individual from society and the value of the prisons is its ability to provide this service (Mathiesen 2006). This theory has also received critique as it is impossible to accurately determine who is at risk of recidivism and who is not. Thus, incapacitation can never be modeled to imprison people who are going to fall back into crime and to release those who will not, but rather becomes a temporary stop to potential re-offending. Therefore, in some cases it will not stop any new crimes and in some cases, it will prevent many, but no matter what the individual will sooner or later be released and be able to re-offend (Mathiesen 2006).

The last theory in individual prevention is the theory of deterrence. This theory suggests that the act of imprisonment deter the individual from future crime as they would not want to experience being imprisoned again (Mathiesen 2006), thus leading to desistance. This theory is, as the previous ones, also critiqued. For example, Clemmer (1940) found that within prisons a criminal subculture is developed which can instead consolidate a criminal identity rather than deter it, he calls this the prisonization effect. Thus, rather than acting as a deterrent for future crime, the time spent in prison can increase the risk of recidivism. Another argument put forward against this theory is that imprisonment might rather lead to a 'rejection of the rejector' meaning that the individual instead experiences frustration and bitterness towards the prison system and their situation (Mathiesen 2006). This might, instead of leading to desistance, lead to a renunciation of the system and a higher risk for recidivism.

3.3.2 Repressive Interventions

Studies measuring the effects that imprisonment, and other penalties, have on recidivism have been present in criminological research for over a century (Villettaz, Gilliéron & Killias 2014). Despite this, uncertainties still exist around what effects penalties have on recidivism. Over-all, research conducted on the effect of imprisonment on recidivism criticizes and questions its use regarding how effective it is at preventing and deterring future crimes (e.g., Bondeson 1989; Von Hofer

1992; Beckett & Sasson 2004; Mathiesen 2006) as there is uncertainty regarding any positive effects (Von Hofer 1992; Mitchell et. al. 2017) and in some cases has rather been shown to have a negative impact on recidivism (Bondeson 1989; Laub and Sampson 2003; LeBel et. al. 2008). This negative effect can, for example, be due to imprisonment hindering the development of social bonds and/or weakening existing ones (Hirschi 1969; Laub & Sampson 2003) or through the prisonization effect (Clemmer 1940). Additionally, the argument of incapacitation, which many repressive criminal policies are referring to, might be dubious when positioning the uncertainty around positive effects against the human and economic costs (Von Hofer 1992). What has been shown instead points to a relationship entailing that less restrictive penalties leads to lower levels of recidivism (Bondeson 1977).

Any potential relationship between less restrictive penalties and lower levels of recidivism might however be more uncertain than it looks at first sight. What has been argued is that there is a difference between those individuals that is sentenced to more restrictive punishments than the individuals that is sentenced to non-custodial sanctions which can make it problematic to compare the two groups (Bales & Piquero 2012; Villettaz, Gilliéron & Killias 2014). Additionally, randomized experiments on the topic have shown that even though there seems to be a slight difference between repressive and non-repressive punishments, where non-repressive punishments lead to less recidivism, this difference is not significant (Villettaz, Gilliéron & Killias 2014). Thus, the currently existing research points towards a need for caution when making claims about which sanctions are effective in relation to recidivism.

Even though the research area of recidivism is vast in Sweden, there seem to be few studies conducted on the effects that repressive penalties have on recidivism in the Swedish context. What is shown statistically is that, in 2017, approximately 30 % of individuals sentenced to a penalty reoffend within three years of their release. Nevertheless, the statistics vary depending on the penalty. In cases of imprisonment approximately 40 % ended up relapsing into crime within three years while in cases of conditional sentence with community service less than 10 % relapsed into crime within three years (SPPS 2020). As such, a clear difference relating to the penalty is present in the statistics. However, comparing the outcome of different institutional penalties without any

within-individual analysis can be misleading (Rongqin et.al. 2022), as such these differences are only providing a part of the picture.
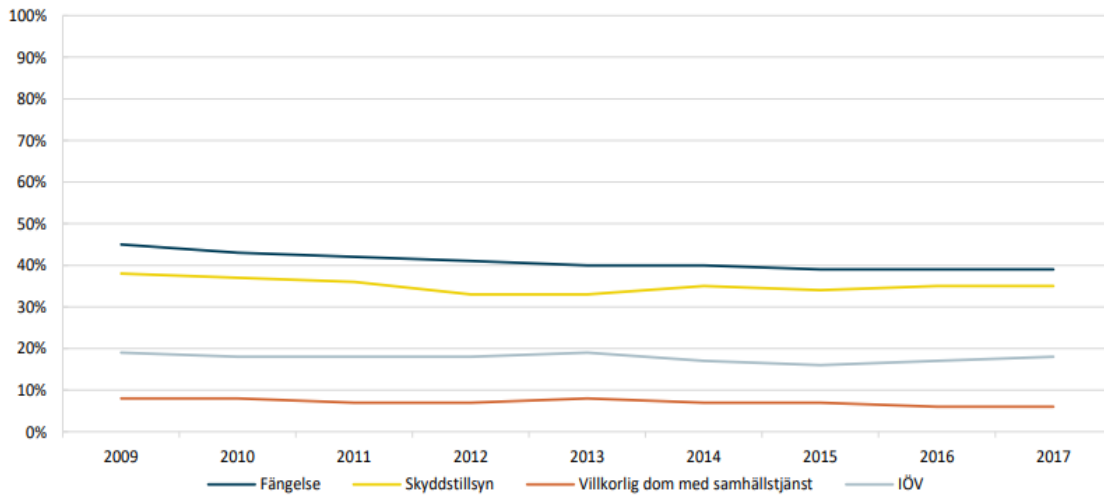
Figure 2: Recidivism within three years from 2009 to 2017 divided between four penalties; prison, probation, conditional sentence with community service, intensive supervision (IÖV). Source: SPPS 2020.

Interestingly, during the same measurement period the longer prison sentences correspond with a lower risk of recidivism rather than shorter prison sentences (see figure 3 below). I could not locate research explaining this phenomenon. In cases where the individual served a sentence longer than two years approximately 20 % re-offended within three years, while of the individuals who served a sentence below one year around 40-50 % reoffended. Thus, the uncertainty mentioned earlier regarding the relationship between repression and recidivism seem to be present also in the Swedish context.

Figure 3: Recidivism within three years from 2009 to 2017 depending on the length of the prison sentence. Source: SPPS 2020.

3.4 Conclusion State-of-the-art

The research shows that social interventions are of high importance for desistance, especially regarding individuals who have less amounts of capital. Thus, to create equal opportunities for desistance it is important for a society to provide access to social w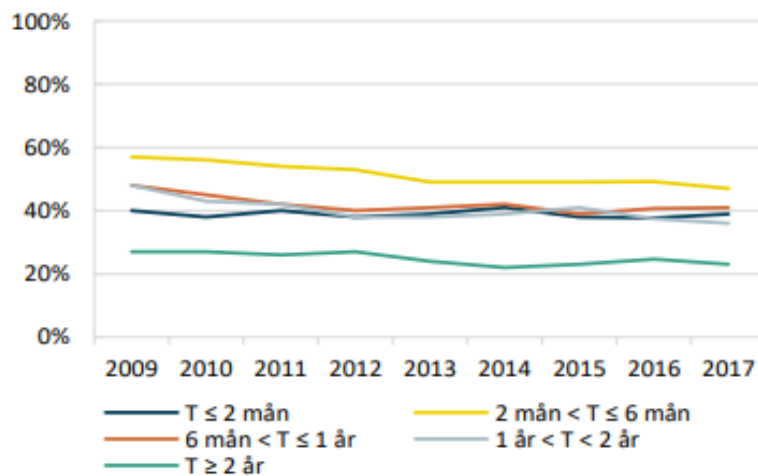elfare. Regarding repression the connection to desistance seems to be more complex and uncertain. It cannot be stated that more repression automatically leads to less desistance however the findings suggests that repression has either a negative or none effect on recidivism.

What becomes prevalent in the review is that there is no research, that I could locate, on the relation between social and repressive efforts in Sweden regarding desistance. Rather, the research that has been done is focusing on the individual's experience of desistance or the statistical findings on recidivism. As such, this thesis will contribute to the current body of research by beginning to explore the governing through these efforts and their relation regarding desistance. Additionally, to this, as just mentioned, the research conducted on desistance, both internationally and in Sweden, is mainly focusing on the desisters perspective. This thesis will therefore be able to contribute with a new perspective on the matter by presenting the expert perspective through an exploration of desistance workers.

4. Theory

The theoretical departure for this thesis is Loïc Wacquant's (2009) developed version of Bourdieu's (1999) conceptualization of *the Right and Left hand of the state*, which are central concepts in the theorization of the functioning of the bureaucratic field (Bourdieu 1999) and development of the neoliberal state (Wacquant 2009). The theoretical departure provides me with a theoretical basis for understanding the logic behind the turn towards punitiveness that is present in Sweden today (Andersson & Nilsson 2017; Andersson 2018; Tham 2018; Hermansson 2019) and how this impacts the governing of social problems.

4.1 Wacquant - The Right and Left Hand of the State

In his book *Punishing the Poor*, Loïc Wacquant (2009) maps out the development of the punitive state in the US and France, how it came about and its repercussions. He argues that the development towards punitiveness and the upsurge of focus on law and order is a reaction to, and diversion from, increased social insecurities in society due to a desocialization of wage labor, a

retrenchment of welfare, and increased inequality (Wacquant 2009). In this book, he tries to *"link the modifications of social policies to those of penal policies ..."* (Wacquant 2009, p. xviii) which will be important in this thesis to begin to understand the relation between social and repressive interventions.

Despite arguing that a hegemonic shift towards repression is visible in Western countries, Wacquant (2009) still means that, as borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu (1999), the state is a bureaucratic field within which struggles over different aspects of governing takes place amongst which are the question of social problems, how it is defined and how it should be handled. Thus, the state is not a uniform space but rather a diverging field consisting of opposing forces (Bourdieu 1999; Wacquant 2009). The bureaucratic field is characterized by two internal struggles, one between market-oriented reforms and traditional government missions and one between *the Left and the Right hand of the state* (Bourdieu 1999), the latter being the main theoretical concepts that I will utilize in this thesis. According to Bourdieu (1999), the Left hand of the state oversees social functions such as education, health, welfare and so on. This hand represents the protective and relief-giving part of the government which aims at providing its citizens with a basic quality of life. The Right hand, on the other hand, is charged with enforcing economic discipline and thus works through economic deregulation, fiscal changes, and budget cuts. Emanating from this, Wacquant (2009) also argues that the Right hand includes the repressive state, such as the police, courts, and prisons. This hand thus represents the punishing and individualized aspect of the government. The conceptualization of the Left and the Right hand of the state is central for Wacquant when trying to understand the government of social insecurity visible in many Western countries where punitiveness and penalization are increasingly perceived as crucial for handling society and social insecurity. This turn in policy, emanating from the spread of neoliberalism, entails both a shift from the social to the penal (from the Left to the Right hand) and that the welfare sector is being reshaped and colonized by punitive logics, thus a colonization of the Left hand by the Right. From this, follows a priority shift regarding fundamental aspects when designing policies, from rights to duties, from support to sanctions and so on (Wacquant 2009). As such, social problems previously handled with a welfare logic through Left hand interventions are increasingly being redefined as problems of control and repression, and as such a task for intervention of the Right hand (Wacquant 2009).

Wacquant argues that an increasing focus on repression serves three functions in society on different levels in the class structure formed by economic deregulation. On the lowest level, incarceration, and repression functions as a tool to physically neutralize and store expendable and dispossessed individuals in the working class and in stigmatized groups. On the second level, by increasing the correctional and repressive control the state can impose de-socialized wage work, workfare, and insecurities for the middle class by raising the costs for resisting. Finally, on the last level, the symbolic value of the penal state is used to convince the whole of society of the legitimacy and authority of the state and of the division between the worthy and unworthy groups in society (Wacquant 2009).

The dominance of the Right hand and the development of the penal state is, according to Wacquant (2009), a function of the neoliberal logic as the increased punitiveness serves as a tool to foster the advancement of the neoliberal state of which both workfare and prisonfare are central components for its development and promotion. In his theory, the expansion of repression and control is needed in the neoliberal state to govern social insecurity resulting from a retrenchment of welfare replaced with workfare aimed at commodifying labor for capital gain (Wacquant 2009). However, Wacquant emphasizes that the neoliberal state is constructed like a centaur as it is lenient, liberal, and enabling for middle and high classes while highly authoritarian and controlling towards lower classes. Thus, the poor in society are being subjected to both a precarious market, social development and penal order leading to inequalities and an uneven penal control of parts of the population (Wacquant 2009).

4.1.1 Symbolic Capital

In Wacquant's (2009) description of the development of the punitive state, the *symbolic capital* that repressive interventions possess is central, particularly when it comes to convincing the citizens of its legitimacy to handle social problems and insecurities. In this thesis, when analyzing social and repressive intervention's place in the increasingly punitive Swedish state, the concept of symbolic capital thus becomes important.

The concept of symbolic capital, as coined by Bourdieu, refers to how reputable an, in this case, organization is in society and connects to the power and resources that the organization have to

enact or influence change in society (Bourdieu 1986). Thus, the symbolic capital can be described as a conceptualization of the combined value that someone or something has within society. In this thesis, symbolic capital is utilized to analyze research question two regarding if desistance organizations can provide the measures that they experience as important for desistance. Additionally, this concept is important for analyzing if, and in which way, social interventions is regarded as an acceptable way of handling social problems as this can say something about to which degree the logic of the Right hand has, or has not, become dominant in Swedish governing.

4.2 Wacquant in a Swedish Context

Nordic criminal policy differs much from other countries and is described to be exceptional by some (see Pratt 2008) due to its mildness deriving from the presence of a strong and inclusive welfare state. Thus, the question becomes to what degree Wacquant's thoughts on the connection between social and penal policies can be applied to the Swedish context.

Barker (2012) contests the 'exceptionalism' regarding the Swedish CJS and argues that the Swedish penal order is 'Janus-faced' where it both enacts as mild and harsh (see also Ugelvik & Dullum 2011). She argues that this duality is central to the Swedish welfare state as it promotes both the individual's well-being and a legal repression which is dependent on if you are deemed as a part of the 'civilized population' or are seen as an outsider. While the welfare state is claiming to be universal for all individuals, it is exclusionary towards individuals who are seen as unworthy which, similarly to Wacquant's ideas (2009), means that the unwanted 'other' in society is being subjected to a high amount of repression for the safety of the population (Barker 2012).

Resulting from this, the state utilizes its penal order and control to uphold and 'protect' the welfare from those who are unworthy, mainly ethnical minorities and poor population groups, and to make sure of its availability to the 'worthy' population, a sentiment supported by findings by Hermansson (2019). Due to this, instead of seeing the turn towards repression in Sweden as an effect of the welfare state retrenching, as Wacquant argues, Barker argues that repression is used to uphold the welfare state, for considered members. With this, the penal order should be seen as double edged, or Janus-faced as Barker calls it, where it is both inclusionary and exclusionary simultaneously, a good example of this is *"The prison population is low but overstocked by foreign nationals…"* (Barker 2018, p. 27). The description of the Janus-face of the state is similar to

Wacquant's metaphor of the centaur, only Barker's is describing the welfare state while Wacquant describes the neoliberal state.

What I gather from Barker is that there are similar underlying logics in the Swedish state and the neoliberal states that Wacquant has studied, as described above but also since neoliberal logics such as efficiency, individualism and economic deregulation are becoming more common, though with a welfarism still present. Thus, even though it is unclear if the welfare state is in retrenchment in Sweden as Barker does not agree with this assessment, Wacquant's (2009) conceptualization of the Left and Right hand of the state, and their roles in the punitive turn, is applicable to the Swedish context based on Barker's (2018) understanding of the Swedish welfare state.

5. Methodology

To say something about the governing of social problems and the utility of social and repressive control mechanisms in the case of desistance, and to be able to answer my research questions, for this thesis I conducted six semi-structured interviews with workers at four state-based and two independent desistance organizations in Sweden. This group of interviewees provided material on their experience of desistance work, which measures are needed, and their own organization's ability to meet these needs. Additionally, the interviewees provided a novel perspective, currently missing in the academic literature, on the relation between social and repressive efforts basing their thoughts and opinions on their own work and experience.

This chapter will go through how the six interviewees were sampled and the methodological choice of semi-structured interviews. From there, the method for data analysis and processing will be described and ethical considerations are made. The chapter ends with discussing my position as well as the research's validity and reliability.

5.1 Sampling

The six individuals interviewed in this thesis are employed at desistance organizations in Sweden, four at state-based organizations and two at independent organizations. To sample which desistance organizations to contact I used a strategic sampling where organizations were chosen based on their relevance to my study aim and their ability to contribute to a suitable range of contexts (cf. Mason 2018). Regarding the aim of this thesis, an important criterion for the sampling

was that the organizations provided support to desisters from *crime*. Organizations that specified that their work focused on desistance from for example extremist groups without any reference to crime were therefore excluded. This exclusion is also relevant from the definition of desistance organizations used in this thesis (see background). To get a suitable range I tried to reach a similar number of interviews from state-based and independent organizations, and I contacted organizations distributed across Sweden. Despite these efforts, I got a slight overrepresentation of state-based organizations and most of the organizations that I booked an interview with were centered in the middle and south of Sweden. This is a result of most organizations being located in these areas and that organizations located further north declined my invitation for interviews. As such, even though I found similar sentiments in most organizations, the results of this thesis will to a greater extent reflect the opinions and experiences of experts who work within state-based organizations in the middle and south of Sweden.

I located organizations to be sampled by utilizing a national mapping of desistance support assembled by BRÅ (Bogestam & Patel 2016) and by conducting internet searches, this since several desistance organizations are not included in the national mapping. From this, fourteen state-based organizations and nine independent organizations were located and contacted. Of these, six organizations accepted, ten declined (foremost due to time constraints) and two showed interest but stopped responding. The remaining five organizations did not respond to my request. It is important to note that there is a high probability that additional desistance organizations are missed in the sampling due to the lack of existence of a comprehensive list over all active desistance organizations in Sweden.

In qualitative research it is common to work with small sample sizes (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006) however it is hard to define what is a suitable sample size as qualitative inquiry does not apply any rules regarding sample size (Patton 2002). Instead, the sample in qualitative research is decided based on the context of the research such as the research questions and external resources, for example economic resources and time (Patton 2002). Due to time constraints of the implementation of this thesis, I set the maximum of interviews to ten interviews although I ended up with six. This demarcation was made based on the time estimated to be needed for conducting, transcribing, and analyzing the interviews.

When having a small sample size, the question of how general conclusions can be drawn becomes relevant (Mason 2018). To be able to study the aim of this thesis, I am looking for patterns and themes that can help me analyze the governing of social problems. Expert's experiences and opinions, which served as the data of this thesis, can aid me in this as they provide me with a deeper understanding for desistance and work with desistance, thus giving me the opportunity to discern patterns of what is needed and what is done in relation to this. By understanding these patterns and analyzing if they concur with earlier literature and the chosen theory, I can thus utilize these experiences and opinions to say something more general about the governing of crime, and social problems, in Sweden.

5.2 Qualitative Interview

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with workers at six desistance organizations in Sweden. The individuals interviewed hold between 2 and 10 years of experience working with desisters and of the interviewees three each were men and women and their age ranged from approximately late twenties to their 50-ies. During the interviews, the point was for the interviewees to represent themselves, their opinions, and experiences, not their organizations stand points. This since I wanted their subjective opinions as experts. I chose semi-structured interviews as the method for data collection since the aim with the data was to gain in-depth knowledge of the experience that desistance workers possess (cf. Mason 2018). Semi-structured interviews fit this aim as this form of interviews provided a flexibility to follow sidetracks or delve deeper into relevant statements, which a more rigid quantitative method would not have allowed (Mason 2018). This was important as the interviewees came from different social contexts depending on if they worked in a state-based or independent desistance organization. As such, unexpected effects from this could be explored further rather than be a hindrance to the data collection. An example of this was that the different organizations differed somewhat in their definitions of desistance. Thanks to the flexibility of the method, their definitions could be fleshed out properly rather than becoming a hindrance in the data.

Utilizing a semi-structured interview method does not mean that there is a lack of preparation for the interviews. Rather, it was important to prepare the interviews properly so that I would be able to 'think on my feet' during the interviews and explore the information that might be of importance

(cf. Mason 2018). To do this, I conducted the literature review and gathered information on how desistance organizations in Sweden are constructed before the interviews were initiated. Additionally, I read an earlier evaluation of desistance organizations (see Alstam, Forkby & Holm 2021). After this, I constructed the interview guide, informed by my research questions, aim and theory, which worked as a tool to roughly keep track of what questions and areas were of interest, though the structure was kept flexible where I could add or remove questions when fitting during the interview. All interviews were opened with 'warm-up' questions regarding the interviewees work position and the services that their organization provides to get the interview going, as suggested by Mason (2018). Beside this, one section focused on questions regarding which measures need to be in place to promote desistance aiming to provide material to answer research question one. Another section focused on the government's 34-points program aimed at providing material to answer research question three, and the last 'mixed' section explored the organizations access to resources, the reputation and validity of promoting desistance through social efforts and whether social efforts or repression is most effective according to the interviewees experience. This last section aimed at providing material to answer research question two and three.

The interviews were conducted through online video services and lasted around one hour, one interview was conducted face-to-face due to organizational secrecy limitations that prohibited online interviews, and they were recorded after consent was acquired. The recording of the interviews allowed me to be immersed in the interview rather than focusing on note taking as it allowed me to focus on listening to what was being said and make decisions regarding what was of interest to explore further and when it was suitable to move on to the next question (cf. Mason 2018). Additionally, the recordings aided me in conducting a more correct analysis of the data since, instead of relying on correct recollection, it was possible for me to transcribe them in their entirety.

5.2.1 Online Interviewing

Due to the continued presence, uncertainty, and worry of the covid-19 pandemic, interviews could not be conducted in person, as is common in social sciences, to ensure the safety of all participants. As I still wanted to create a similar setting to an in-person interview situation, as it is easier to

interact with a visible person than talking without any visualization, I thus opted for conducting the interviews through the online video application Zoom (Lobe, Morgan & Hoffman 2020).

A challenge with online interviewing is the increased risk of unauthorized people getting access to the meeting (see ethical considerations) and the question of technology and access to equipment (Lobe, Morgan & Hoffman 2020). No participant who accepted the invitation for an interview expressed any problems regarding access to technology or equipment. Nonetheless, I cannot say with certainty that these questions did not hinder anyone from participating as it is possible that someone declined to participate due to, for example, not having a microphone (cf. Lobe, Morgan & Hoffman 2020). However, I believe this to be unlikely due to today's technological society and since most professions are more used to utilizing online meetings now due to the Covid pandemic (Lobe, Morgan & Hoffman 2020) and thus have made sure that they have the proper equipment for this. The only problem encountered during the interviews was that one participant's video did not function. This impaired the social dynamics of the interview as there was no possibility to see the participant, however it did not hinder the verbal communication.

Despite the challenges, online interviewing can also be beneficial. Online communication allows for greater flexibility regarding time and location of the interview (Lobe, Morgan & Hoffman 2020), which was particularly important as it made it possible for me to interview individuals located in other parts of Sweden. Additionally, many of the interviewees had tight schedules, thus the flexibility made it easier to find fitting times for interviews. This also entailed a greater possibility for the participants to experience that they could participate without the interview for example disrupting half a day of work leading to salary losses.

5.3 Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected was initially processed by being transcribed in their entirety. The transcribing was valuable for the process and analysis of the data as it provided an opportunity for me to familiarize myself with the data and make it over-seeable (cf. Mason 2018). Once the transcribing was finalized, I conducted an interpretive reading meaning that the data was read with the goal to interpret what the data signified or represented in relation to the aim and research questions of this study. As a result of this it was possible to not just analyze what was explicitly said but also what

was implied or visible in-between the lines (Mason 2018). Throughout the analysis, I understood the data as expert comments and personal experiences, as such they should not be seen as the absolute truth but rather opinions and sentiments that together reveal general patterns.

Once the reading was done, I initiated the analysis. To construct a suitable structure to my analysis, I departed from my three research questions. Thus, the first step in the analysis was to read through the transcripts and categorize the answers that I got depending on which research question they corresponded to. If any of the answers corresponded to more than one research question it was categorized into both or all three. After this, I worked with one research question at a time, searching for themes in the answers by cross-sectionally coding recurring sentiments or topics in the data that were relevant for the research questions (Mason 2018).

The main analysis of the data was an interpretative analysis and was conducted after the data had been distributed between the different themes. I analyzed the material by interpreting patterns and sentiments present in the data and by placing them in relation to the research questions, earlier research, and the theoretical perspective. This involved both looking for similarities and differences present in the data. However, it is important to note that the analysis, as is common in qualitative research, was an ongoing process which I started from the initial data collection (Mason 2018). As such, I made interpretations and creative thinking regarding the information gained from the interviews parallel with other stages of the thesis and noted these down during the process. During the main analysis I revisited these earlier interpretations, thoughts, and ideas and either extended, reworked, or left them behind based on the whole dataset.

Once I had conducted the initial analysis and had constructed analytical ideas, I revised the data this time with the aim of searching for counterfactual sentiments. This is a common step to take in qualitative research to increase the reliability of the study by making sure that the dataset is not misrepresented (Mason 2018). I did not find any that I had not already included in the analysis. After this, I extracted and translated fitting quotes from the interviews to provide a closeness to the data.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

When conducting interviews, ethical considerations need to be addressed to protect participants in the study. In this following section the measures taken to ensure informed consent, confidentiality and how the empirical material was handled is discussed, in accordance with The Swedish Research Council's ethical guidelines (2017).

Informed consent constitutes that the participant needs to be informed and understand the nature of the research that they are asked to participate in, and that they agree to participate voluntarily (Israel 2015). I aspired to do this by taking several steps. Firstly, I included a description of the research in the initial inquiry email regarding participation. Once a participant agreed to book an interview, I sent out an information letter which, once again, included information and a description of the nature of the research. Additionally, before I initiated each interview, I gave each participant a chance to ask any potential questions regarding the research or their participation. Of the interviewees, two asked me to describe the aim of the thesis once again at this stage. To ensure a voluntary participation, I contacted the participants via email, instead of for example by phone, to ensure that they had time and space to decide on their participation without influence from me as the researcher. Moreover, I informed each participant, both in the information letter and right before the interview, of their right to discontinue the interview at any moment without explaining why and that they, during the interview, could decide to not answer my questions.

Regarding confidentiality, questions of anonymity and how the empirical material was handled needed to be considered (Israel 2015). When it came to anonymity no names of individuals or organizations that participated in the study was included in the theses. Additionally, as the field of desistance organizations is limited in Sweden, I modified or completely left out specifics that were non-important for the analysis such as cities, regions, exact years of work and so on, so that it was possible for me to utilize more of my material without disclosing who participated. The above-described steps were taken to ensure that the answers given cannot be traced back to a specific participant. After the thesis was finished, I deleted all recordings and transcripts to ensure that the empirical material is only used for the specific study that the participants gave consent to and that it is not spread. Furthermore, the question of data storage needed to be addressed as this could

entail ethical problems if the data was stored on cloud services where it is easier for outsiders to gain access. To prevent this, I used local storage of the recordings on my computer. This was particularly easy to do via Zoom as this application provides local storage of recordings as the default. This way of storing recordings is the preferable method when using online video applications (Lobe, Morgan & Hoffman 2020).

Besides the considerations above, how I used the data in the analysis was something that I needed to be aware of throughout. What this kind of thinking requires is a critical mindset to the results and analysis presented and to make sure that it corresponds with the empirical material to not misrepresent the data and to produce a fair representation of the participants' opinions. What I could find, there is no definite way of going about this, rather it is a question of being aware of the risk and being careful about the conclusions drawn (Mason 2018). What I did to try to ensure that I did not misrepresent the data was to actively search for contradictions. Additionally, I aimed to be careful with how I represented the data and what conclusions I drew.

As the interviews were mainly conducted online over Zoom this entails additional consideration regarding the ability to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (Lobe, Morgan & Hoffman 2020). Despite LU Zoom being quite safe, to decrease the risk of any unauthorized participants accessing the interview meeting, and thus ensure confidentiality and anonymity, I used the waiting-room feature meaning that each participant needed to be admitted to the meeting to partake. This ensured that I had full control of who participated during the interview.

5.5 Reflexivity, Validity and Reliability

5.5.1 Reflexivity
When conducting research, it is important to reflect on the position that the researcher themselves have and to be transparent about moral ethical stands that might impact the research and how the researcher's social position can impact the research (Mason 2018).

Going into this research, I had, and still have, a sizable skepticism towards the use of repressive means to govern social problems such as crime. Similarly, I held, and still do, a critical stand towards the repressive trend visible in Swedish criminal politics where I found, and find, it

problematic that social efforts are being overshadowed by repression due to what I regard as an increase of populism. This in and of itself does not mean that this thesis is biased but is showing in for example choices made regarding topic and aim and demands that I try to prevent my standpoints from affecting the data, and instead let the data guide the results even when it contradicts my standpoints. An additional step in the analysis process was conducted, to go back and actively search for contradictions and counterfactual sentiments, to try to increase reliability of the results despite this fact.

Regarding my social position, I have many privileges due to where I was born. I am white, highly educated, look like a typical Swedish civilian and have no economic problems. Because of this, I cannot claim to fully understand the hardships that people who desist go through or what their needs are. For this reason, I found it important to listen closely to what the interviewees told me about desistance and what, from their experience, works and when it works. It is of importance to note that my position in combination with the literature overview, and even the theory, is westernized and the findings should be understood as a construct of this context.

5.5.2 Validity

In any research study, it is important that you are studying what you claim to study. It is thus required that the sample and method can say something about the research questions posed (Mason 2018).

This research is interested in exploring governing of social problems through social and repressive efforts relating to the case of desistance from an expert perspective and is doing this with an epistemology where knowledge is understood to be socially constructed and that human experience is a valid and important source of knowledge. The sample choice of interviewing desistance workers, who are experts in the field of desistance through their work experience, is thus a suitable source of data. This as they carry first-hand knowledge of what support desisters need to manage to leave criminality while also being able to give a more generalized perspective, on desisters overall, than what the individual could provide.

Furthermore, regarding the third research question, namely how social and repressive efforts relate to one another in the case of desistance, the choice of data is also valid. Desistance organizations,

and thus also their employees, work towards the same aim as the CJS, to prevent and diminish criminal activity, but use soft values, social support, rather than hard values, punishments. These organizations therefore reflect an effort to decrease offending based on social efforts and thus provide a point of departure different from that of the CJS. At the same time, the desistance workers have knowledge and experience of how repressive efforts impact desistance through their close contact with the desisters, who for the most part has had some interaction with the CJS. Additionally, they usually cooperate in some regards with the police or the SPPS and thus have insights into the relation between these and social efforts. Utilizing their knowledge, combined with knowledge gained from sources in the background and the literature review, to say something of both social and repressive efforts are thus relevant and valid.

Collecting the data through semi-structured interviews allows for the knowledge of the experts to be brought forward as the interviews in part were guided by their answers. This, I argue, increases the validity of this thesis as it allows for the expert perspective to be revealed and put on front stage.

5.5.3 Reliability

Besides a study being valid, it is also important that research studies can show their reliability. In qualitative research, this means to ensure that the data is not misrepresented and that the findings are developed through an accurate, careful, and thorough analysis (Mason 2018).

Some common ways of ensuring reliability in qualitative research is through transparency or triangulation of methods (Svensson & Ahrne 2015). For this thesis, I could have conducted a triangulation of methods by for example incorporating a survey study. However, due to time constraints and that I did not deem it add enough value regarding the aim, I ruled this out for this study. Nonetheless, throughout this study I have strived for a high level of transparency by carefully describing the choices I have made, the processes behind the study, and through the reflexive discussion above. Additionally, I sought to increase the reliability of the results by reevaluating the findings from the analysis by revisiting the data and searching for counterfactual sentiments or inconsistencies (cf. Mason 2018). This to strive for an accurate representation of the data and to try to avoid misrepresentations.

6. Analysis

In this chapter I will analyze the data collected at the same time as I am presenting the material. This is done by analyzing the data in relation to each one of the research questions at a time to provide a clear connection between the data analysis and my research questions.

6.1 Measures needed to desist from crime

In the following section the findings from my empirical material pertaining to research question one, which measures need to be in place for individuals to desist from crime according to desistance workers, is presented and analyzed. Firstly, I discuss general findings that I deemed important, after which I present identified themes.

6.1.1 General Findings

I could locate a clear difference of opinion in the material regarding which measure was most important depending on if the interviewee worked at state-based or independent desistance organizations. Interviewees working at state-based organizations stressed the importance of access to social welfare for desistance and accentuated the importance of a safe residence, income, and appropriate care. On the opposite end, interviewees working at independent organizations gave prominence to measures providing a positive social environment, such as a place to "hang", somewhere to celebrate holidays, access to people to talk to about struggles, emotions and so on. As such, there is a clear difference depending on what kind of organization the interviewee works at. A possible explanation for this is their background. At the independent organizations, the workers themselves have experience of offending and desistance. Thus, their experience not only comes from academic or work-related experience but also from life experience. Earlier research (see Barry 2007; 2009) has shown that desisters themselves usually attribute their own desistance to internal motivational changes which could explain this difference as providing a positive social environment is aimed at inducing internal changes. Contrary to this, those who worked at state-based organizations do not have this life experience and might therefore value structural factors higher. These differences might thus have induced the difference in perspective on what is most important

Consistently throughout all interviews was the sentiment that the individual's needs determine which measures are needed for desistance. As such, desistance is a process that is unique for each

individual, corresponding to the academic literature (see Maruna 2001; Maruna & Roy 2007; LeBel et. al. 2008), and there is no universal answer to which measures are the most efficient. However, despite this it is important that the access to welfare measures are easy and quick, conceptualized as a 'low threshold', as to not deter initiation. The interviewees talk about there being a 'window' within which measures need to be taken, if no measures are taken during this time, it is common that 'the window closes' and the individual no longer wants to engage in desistance.

Besides these general findings. I could locate four themes in the interviews relating to the first research question: welfare, social support, care during incarceration, and the role of individual motivation.

6.1.2 Welfare and Social Support

What is prevalent in the interviews is that the measures that they experience as central for desistance are connected to welfare and support, and it is by providing desisters with the possibility to achieve a good quality of life that they will manage to desist, which additionally is reiterated by the literature (Barry 2007; Kirk 2012; Doherty & Bersani 2016). As discussed above, this takes different shapes depending on if the expert works at a state-based or an independent organization, however both types of reasoning closely correspond to the logics of the Left hand of the state (Wacquant 2009).

Gaining access to welfare by acquiring an income, finding accommodation, psychological treatment, health care and so on, is described by the interviewees as important measures since welfare aids are important for the individual to manage to focus on changing thinking patterns and learning social skills, a reasoning akin to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and as these measures can work as carrots for change. These measures are very individually based, however the things that the interviewees repeatedly come back to is getting an income and a residence.

Both income and residence are described as important due to the place that these two factors have in providing relief for the desister as both not having an income or a residence creates stress and worry for the desister. When it comes to getting a residence, some interviewees express that the safety of having access to a home is especially important for the individual's quality of life and so

that the desister can focus on other parts of the process, such as treatment, rather than where they are going to sleep. As described by an interviewee from a state-based organization, this is important for everyone.

"… the safety of having a residence, which all humans need."

The same is true for income. One interviewee from an independent organization also describes how worry of for example income can lead to an increase, rather than decrease, of criminal thoughts as that can feel like an easier way to solve the problem:

"[interviewee describes how a desister might think] … right now it feels a bit tough, I might have it economically hard and feel insufficient and want to, I don't fucking know, go and rob a bank or, commit some type of theft and, simply commit a crime"

Both factors highlight the importance of governing measures that are rooted in the logic of the Left hand (Wacquant 2009), where the state needs to take a part in providing a basic quality of life for individuals who want to desist as a measure to counteract the social problem of crime. Without this, it is rather a high risk for the individual to feel abandoned and view the continuation of crime as the only solution to their predicament, this particularly as the desisters themselves usually cannot solve their need on their own in a legal fashion, an argument seen reflected in the literature as well (see Barry 2007; Bersani & Doherty 2018). Therefore, it is vital that measures rooted in the logic of the Left hand are accessible. Besides the practical aspect, the interviewees also bring up how access to welfare support can provide hope of change for the desister. As the above-mentioned interviewee continues to describe:

"Their reality is that I am never going to get a car license, I am never going to be debt free, I am never, I am never."

As the quote illustrates, the reality for many of these individuals is that they have lost hope of a "normal" and legal life. They can easily lose sight of the possibility to solve their predicament as they do not, on their own, feel like they have the capital needed to change. Thus, having access to

welfare measures where these individuals can get help with getting back into society can provide them with hope for a different future.

When it comes to access to economic relief through 'income support', however, it is possible to perceive how welfare is being replaced by 'workfare' (Wacquant 2009). According to the Social Service Act, for an individual to be eligible to income support the individual must be, as long as they can work, at the labor market's disposal. Through this wording, the rights to welfare assistance become regulated and welfare measures turn into a control mechanism through which the individuals in society are regulated (cf. Wacquant 2009).

What the interviewees imply through their answers is that an income and residence is important not just for the material aspects, but also since getting a new social setting to act within, can support social reintegration by allowing the desister to learn basic social interaction. This particularly, as one interviewee points out, it is not possible to just quit a crime active life and directly transfer into the labor market and think that everything is going to be fine. Rather, it is necessary to find a social setting in which the desister can feel welcomed and less like an outsider. From there the desister can start to build a law-abiding life. As such, the necessity for measures focusing on providing social integration is being highlighted since these measures can provide a positive and safe social setting for the desister where they can find identification with others, decrease feelings of being an outsider, feel safe to talk about emotions and destructive thoughts or past traumas, and so on. This setting helps them to both process their own situation and opens the possibility for integration, for example learning how to converse with 'ordinary' people. One of the interviewees from an independent organization reflected on their view on the importance of social support in the following way:

"It is to find community, find safety in that this is the way to live. To be able to have trust in each other, to see that there are people who wish you well and through that you get closer to each other, how it is to live a normal life so to say… And then you can enter, with others, into these process groups and talk and reflect, really work through your traumas, and that is where you find a lot of answers about yourself… It is super important to be able to ventilate, when it comes

to behavioral patterns and thoughts, you usually keep it to yourself. Sooner or later you break. It goes from thought to action relatively fast. And therefore it is important to talk and ventilate."

Once again, a connection is made to the need for measures that are providing the individual with a basic quality of life. As seen in the research conducted by Fredriksson & Gålnander (2020), the loss of capital during the desistance process can lead to experiences of the process being 'uncanny', increase feelings of being an outsider, and decrease the individual's quality of life due to ending up in a status of uncertainty. Through being provided with measures that are aimed at social integration, such as organizing holiday celebrations, sport nights, trips to ski resorts, and so on, these negative experiences can instead be decreased making the desistance easier and increasing the quality of life. The same interviewee continues with describing it as "opening up rooms in society" meaning that they are providing the opportunity for the desisters to experience things that they never have before:

"One of our goals is to open up rooms in society so that the unusual can become usual. These individuals are not afraid of running around and carrying a gun, and maybe even use it, but are scared to death when they are standing on a slope in Sälen."

Social support measures are also important for providing desisters with new social capital through which they can alleviate themselves of thought patterns that they used in their criminal context. For example, how do you react to someone saying something that you do not like? In the criminal context, the individual might have learnt to react aggressively while in an ordinary context this might be frowned upon, particularly if you are seen as a criminal individual. Learning how to act, react and think in new social settings and acquire this social capital (cf. Fredriksson & Gålnander 2020) is however not an easy task and several interviewees means that the most straightforward way is through social support. Social support is additionally central for everyday life knowledge. Several interviewees describe how it is important to help desisters feel like they have the proper tools to live a 'normal' life as many of them, according to the interviewees, lack everyday knowledge that most take for granted. An interviewee from a state-based organization formulated it in the following way:

"Many need help to learn to think in new ways. These are usually very intelligent people who have become used to living with a lot of money ... But they might never have learnt how to pay a bill, how to use a washing machine and those kinds of things… so they need to learn to think in new ways, learn basic stuff that they might not have learnt."

Prominent through the interviews is thus a clear focus on the need for measures grounded in the logic of the Left hand, where the goal is to increase the desisters quality of life and to decrease instincts to backtrack and re-offend. This is best done through providing welfare measures, particularly income and residence, and social support aimed at integration and increasing the social capital of the desister. The argumentations made by the experts additionally showcases how a lack of governing conducted with a Left-hand logic can decrease the possibility to prevent crime by obstructing desistance as the individual might instead perceive crime as their only alternative.

6.1.3 Care During Incarceration

The interviewees also expressed that it is possible to engage in desistance during incarceration, thus their sentiment does not reflect that repressive punishment in and of itself is negative for the ability to desist. However, they stressed the importance for functioning and accessible care programs, such as the 12-step program[7], during incarceration to reach the goal of desistance.

Some interviewees argued that there is a difference between detention and prisons regarding their ability to promote desistance. What they argue is that if an individual is offered help to desist during detention, where you only sit for a couple of days, when they are alone and screened off from friends and drugs, there is a great possibility that the intervention will promote desistance. Once the individual moves on into the prison, however, it becomes harder to promote desistance as they "put their offender mask back on" and gets back into the criminal culture that exists in there (cf. Clemmer 1940). There are some contradicting opinions on this point though as other interviewees expressed that prison sentences can increase the chance for desistance as long incarcerations gives the individual time to reflect on their situation and whether they want to

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[7] https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/kunskapsstod-och-regler/omraden/evidensbaserad-praktik/metodguiden/tolvstegsbehandling-enligt-minnesotamodellen/

continue this or not and provides a disruption in their life which can open the window for desistance, potentially explaining why the SPPS statistics (SPPS 2020) show that desistance increased with longer prison sentences. Nonetheless, both still withhold that an open window or individual reflexivity of their situation is not enough, there still need to be efforts in place that these individuals can act upon if the window opens. As described by an interviewee from an independent organization:

"It is when you get consequences in life that you become willing to change. When we talk about these windows, they will probably be more open then. If you are incarcerated for longer periods. But then there also must be efforts in place. You can't just have a change window open and a willingness, and then there is no help offered".

At the same time, other interviewees, mainly those from state-based organizations, expressed the more common academic view that all type of incarceration function as a 'school for crime' where inmates are being exposed to the prisonization effect (cf. Clemmer 1940) rather than getting help to desist. The first two sentiments contradict most academic work which argue that incarceration has no or a negative effect on recidivism (Bondeson 1989; Von Hofer 1992; Laub and Sampson 2003; LeBel et. al. 2008; Mitchell et. al. 2017) while the last share the academics sentiment. This contradiction would be interesting to study in future research and showcases the need for more research looking at the expert perspective.

6.1.4 Individual Motivation

Even though some interviewees argue that there exists an ability for incarceration to promote desistance, they also point to the individual's responsibility to make the "right decisions" to engage in desistance. This interviewee from an independent organization describes it the following way:

"And then it is usually about making sound decisions in locked rooms. You can choose to sit and talk about crime all the time if you want to. But there are also rooms in there that you can access if you understand the value of those rooms. For example, school or care or just socialization".

Even though the interviewees urge society's role in contributing to desistance, sentiments referring to the individual's motivation and its importance for desistance is a recurring theme in all interviews. Many of them explain how, in their point of view, internal motivation is the central factor needed for desistance. This is of particular importance in state-based organizations as they, throughout, held the opinion that if there is no motivation, they cannot help the individual. This sentiment becomes interesting considering the academic uncertainty regarding if motivation, or subjective change, comes before or after the initiation of structural aid (cf. LeBel et. al. 2008). While it is possible that, as McMahon & Jump (2018) suggests, none comes before the other and rather the two factors are constantly interacting, this uncertainty leads to the question of what effect the state-based organization's habit of turning down, what they perceive as unmotivated individuals, has. What the organizations means is that they cannot force someone to engage in desistance, it must of their own volition, which is consistent with the legal regulation of state-based organizations[8]. Nonetheless the current way of deciding who has access to structural support and who does not is ambivalent, which can result in a loss of the rights that members of a welfare state have. As one interviewee from a state-based organization expressed:

"You must take responsibility and be predictable in your contact because otherwise you can be labeled as unmotivated and then you are out. It is viewed as some kind of cause, that A leads to B. That just because I act in this way means that I am unmotivated when it can mean so much other stuff."

Even though I recognize that it is hard for organizations or the state to help everyone due to resource limitations, and that it would not be right to force anyone to engage in desistance, it is relevant to question if this practice goes against the promises of the welfare state.

6.2 Desistance Organizations' Resources

In this section, I analyze the empirical material pertaining to research question two, can desistance organizations provide such measures, and do they have the adequate material and symbolic

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[8] In the Social Service Act, which regulates state-based desistance organizations, it states that any operations under the jurisdiction of the social services are supposed to *"build on respect for peoples' right of self-determination and integrity"* (1 chap. 1§ SoL, *my translation*).

resources? I start by giving a presentation of the general sentiments expressed by the interviewees, after which I analyze possibilities and hindrances.

6.2.1 General findings

On a direct question concerning if the interviewees thought their organizations have the capability to provide the measures that they thought was important for engagement in desistance, as described above, the interviewees expressed that they have the capability for this. Furthermore, they expressed that their organizations to a high degree are perceived, by other authorities, to be a useful method for preventing crime. Thus, the overall sentiment would appear to be that they have access to the material and symbolic resources that they need.

When I look through their answers regarding struggles and hindrances that they experience in their work, it is not as clear cut as they described many hindrances to their work. Additionally, what I could discern throughout the interviews, when it comes to whether the interviewees experienced that their organizations could provide what they deemed important measures for desistance, this was usually in relation to whether they could provide welfare measures such as a residence or employment. Only a few reasoned in relation to the ability to provide social support, and none reasoned in relation to care during incarceration as this is not their line of work. The origin of this focus is not clear, however based on the answers that I got it is likely to derive from a frustration with the stale nature of the bureaucratic system that controls these welfare measures. This, as references to how the bureaucratic system is slow and stale was recurring sentiments expressed by the interviewees. I will discuss this further below.

6.2.2 Possibilities

All interviewees express that they have the economic and material resources to provide their organizations' services and that these resources mainly originate from the state through municipal budgeting. As such, none of them experienced that these kinds of factors limited their ability to provide the measures that they saw fit. One interviewee from a state-based organization rather expressed that they recently had been granted increased resources.

"I think that they try to cater to our need regarding employment, you must give them that. We got an increase now after we had almost doubled our intake. Now we have received a temporary reinforcement and the boss is trying to make it permanent."

This has not always been the case and the same interviewee pointed out that they have had problems with having enough resources before, but this has changed and currently they have all the resources that they need. This increase in resources can be understood as an effect of the government's preoccupation with crime and shows how they heavily invest in what can be understood as different control tools (Wacquant 2009), rather than on structural reforms to decrease segregation and inequality, which the literature show would be advantageous to address crime (see Barry 2007; Bersani & Doherty 2018), and thus diverting attention away from the role of these problems on social security and crime (Wacquant 2009). Another interviewee, this time from an independent organization, gave me a similar answer on a direct question whether they have had problems due to lack of resources:

"No, not during the time that I have been here. Rather the other way around."

In these cases, there are thus no economic or material hindrances for these organizations to provide proper social interventions to desisters. Similarly, the interviewees express that they experience having a high degree of symbolic capital in their field of work. This is visible in different ways depending on if it is an independent or a state-based organization.

In state-based organizations, the interviewees describe that they try to improve the inner workings of the bureaucratic system (cf. Bourdieu 1999) and influence the categorization of desisters to increase the chance that desisters have access to welfare measures. This by developing and establishing common routines for desistance cases on manager level so that potential changes in personnel do not disrupt co-operations and intervention quality, by establishing a contact network between institutions and organizations to foster good relations and improve co-operations, or by increasing the institutional knowledge of desistance and develop a

"consensus on how we best work with the target group"

As the state-based interviewees express that these efforts mostly have been successful, this showcases that they have symbolic capital to be able to influence and be a force for change within the bureaucratic system and in institutional work with desistance. If this influence reaches outside of the bureaucratic system, to for example the public or the government, is unclear. From the interviewees, I got the impression that their organizations only aim to function on the bureaucratic and institutional level and thus do not reason about or even try to, consciously, influence anyone outside of this sphere.

Interviewees from independent organizations also expressed that their organization has symbolic capital. One of the interviewees from an independent organization described how they worked closely with the SPPS, police, lawyers, and other institutions to open doors into closed spaces such as prisons. This, to be able to start motivational work during incarceration and to give social support throughout the transition from prison back into society.

"But we wanted to get into these rooms… so we told them about our idea. That we wanted to enter already in the detention, follow into prison, and even out into freedom. The same coach the whole journey. So they believed in our thing. And they started to open these doors for us, so that we could enter… It [cooperation with institutions] functions well as we have access to these rooms that should be closed to people with my background."

The fact that this independent organization managed to influence other institutions and get access to places that are highly controlled and closed showcases that they have a certain amount of symbolic capital, or else they would not be able to have this influence. However, in the case of independent organizations, some of them have taken a deliberate decision to not engage in political discussions and to involve themselves in debates about what works or does not when it comes to desistance. This decision is made to prevent the doors, as described above, from being closed due to criticism of institutional practices. This is however not the case for all independent desistance organizations. Others are engaged and openly try to influence the public and criminal policies to focus more on implementations of social efforts rather than repression. When it comes to criminal policies, however, these efforts seem to have limited symbolic value as current policies (see The

Swedish Government 2022) refer to the needs of traditional control institutions such as the police and the SPPS, which are attributed as central to handle crime and desistance, rather than the needs of social institutions. This reflects how in the governmental discourse, the problem of crime, and thus desistance, is firmly placed within the logics of the Right hand (cf. Wacquant 2009).

6.2.3 Hindrances

Even though I have been able to showcase that the interviewees experience that they have a certain symbolic capital within the bureaucratic system, several of them describe how this capital is not immediately given when it comes to socially handling the problem of crime. Instead, they describe how their function commonly is questioned at first, as described by a state-based interviewee here:

"...why should they be served on a silver platter and get residence and other things when others need to stand in line. Why should we prioritize them?"

In this skepticism it is possible to discern how the repressive discourse of handling crime is naturalized and how the Right-hand logic has colonized the Left leaving social measures little credibility as a measure against crime (Wacquant 2009). To gain the credibility and the symbolic capital that the organizations have, they thus need to connect their measure to the logic of the Right hand in some way, which is mainly done by arguing for the economic gain of social measures. The same interviewee continues:

"Then I used to show them how much criminal individuals [economically] cost society. Then they understood that 'wow, we have so much to win on helping these individuals. Both for their sake and for society at large'."

As such, these organizations' role as an accepted crime preventive actor is to a certain degree contingent on their ability to pertain to the logics of the Right hand.

The interviewees' reasoning around hindrances to provide the measures described under 6.1 are heavily characterized by their dependence on cooperation with institutions, foremost the social services, to get welfare efforts approved. This since the organizations themselves do not have the

authority to approve measures such as protected residences, economic relief, psychological treatment and so on. The problem with this dependence is, as described by all interviewees, that the bureaucratic system is slow moving and inflexible, which is a recurring sentiment in desistance organizations (see Alstam, Forkby & Holm 2021). This slow pace and inflexibility are described as a hindrance as the window for desistance, as discussed earlier, is volatile and can shut if no measures are implemented. An interviewee from an independent organization describes it as following:

"... that [providing quick help] is a challenge within municipalities since they have longer decision processes. You can send an application for relief, but it takes time for a decision. And during that time the motivation can decrease."

This functioning of the bureaucratic systems thus creates a hindrance for these individuals' access to welfare measures. Another problem with the dependence on institutions regarding which, if any, welfare measures a desister will get access to, is that the system, according to some interviewees, does not always perceive that the desister cannot cater to their own needs[9]. Since this group does not belong to the groups that the social services have a *particular responsibility* for[10], the social services can thus decline interventions such as a residence. This reluctance to, in some cases, approve measures could be due to criminality being seen as a conscious choice rather than a result of bad circumstances, as reasoned by one of the interviewees from a state-based organization:

"...they can only blame themselves… It is very moralizing. Even in the [bureaucratic] system."

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[9] Access to welfare interventions from the social services is regulated in the Social Service Act. In this law, it is stated that the social services are supposed to facilitate economic and social safety, equality in living conditions, and an active participation in society (1 chap. 1§ SoL). Part of their role is to be responsible for *"welfare and service, information, counsel, support and care, economic relief and other reliefs to families and individuals who are in need."* (3 chap. 1§ SoL, *my translation*), furthermore the social services are tasked with *"promoting the individual's right to employment, residence and education"* (3 chap. 2§ SoL, *my translation*). The social services are supposed to facilitate these services when the individual cannot cater to their own needs or otherwise get them catered (4 chap. 1§ SoL).

[10] These groups are children and youth (5 chap. 1 § SoL), elderly (5 chap. 4–6 §§ SoL), individuals with disabilities (5 chap. 7 and 8 §§ SoL), individuals with addictions (5 chap. 9 § SoL), caregivers (5 chap. 10 § SoL), victims of crime (5 chap. 11 § SoL), perpetrators of intimate partner violence (5 chap. 11a§ SoL) and individuals in debt (5 chap. 12§ SoL).

Or a failure in realizing how a history of crime limits the ability to for example get a job or a residence. Nonetheless, the interviewees do express that in most cases economic relief, residence and other welfare measures are approved. One interviewee reasons that the ambivalence regarding if desistance is 'a reason for support'[11] from the social services can be due to crime not being explicitly stated in the law as one of the social services focus areas such as addiction are. This results in there being big differences geographically in how the social services apply the law. A interviewee from a state-based organization describes it as following:

"...foremost there are differences between areas… This as in the Social Services Act criminality is not stated as a group that they must work with, so going strictly by the Social Services Act you can say 'no, an individual who has no addiction, who is not a child and so on is not a target group that we need to work with', but there is desisters who do not fit these categorize."

This is an interesting aspect of desisters' access to welfare measures as this implies that there is an ambivalence regarding the assessment of if there is a reason for support or not during desistance, and that this ambivalence is not inherently necessary. As such, despite possible intentions of the legislators with the Social Service Act, that all should have access to social support, the outcome of the law and the welfare promises is dependent on who within the social services mediates it and, as is reflected in the interviews, citizens access to welfare measures thus depends on geographical placement (cf. Banakar 2015). Moreover, it is visible how the governing of crime, and which legal actions are promoted, directly impacts the handling of this social problem. As the current governing of crime is conducted through the logics of the Right hand (cf. Wacquant 2009) we see the legal changes happening in criminal law through increased control measures and harsher punishments, establishing the police and SPPS as the fitting control mechanisms to handle this social problem and thus the handling being conducted foremost through imprisonment and confinement. If this governance instead was conducted through the logic of the Left hand (cf. Wacquant 2009), legal actions would not be conducted through the criminal law but likely through laws such as the Social Service Act where it would be possible to add criminality as a particular responsibility for the social services. This kind of legal change would entail that desisters, and

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[11] In Swedish *stödbehov*

non-desisting offending individuals, would be guaranteed equal access to welfare measures instead of being confronted with the current ambivalence.

Considering this, the Swedish government's effort to focus legally on increasing repression while overlooking options such as including criminality in the Social Services Act, even though one of their 34-points is to *"develop the support to desisters so that more individuals is aided when leaving criminal gangs and destructive environments"* (The Swedish Government 2022) can be questioned. Their efforts only focus on developing desistance organizations in and of themselves, when this does not seem to be, based on the experience of the interviewees, where the 'problem' lies for desisters to get the support that they need. The act of using legal changes to increase repression but not to increase access to welfare measures to 'fix' the problem of crime, even though both changes fit within the government's spoken aims, reflects a dominance of repressive measures relative to social ones, and can thus be understood through Wacquant's framework of the bureaucratic field and the colonization of the Left hand (Wacquant 2009). Rather, in this instant, legal actions that would address social problems through enhanced welfare are being displaced and supplemented with an expansion of repression and control (cf. Wacquant 2009).

Lastly, I want to note that the dependency on other institutions is not present for every desistance organization. In some municipalities, desistance organizations have been constructed to have the right to 'exercise authority'[12] and thus can make internal decisions regarding economic relief and protected residence. These kinds of desistance organizations are however unusual, and their services are aimed at so-called 'special desister'[13] meaning that the desister wants to leave a criminal network or organization and that there exists a threat towards them due to their desistance.

6.3 Relationship Between Social and Repressive Measures

In this section, I analyze my empirical material relating to research question three, how do the social measures provided by desistance organizations and the expanding repressive measures of the CJS relate to each other when it comes to desistance? Firstly, I analyze the responses that I got

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[12] In Swedish *myndighetsutövning*
[13] In Swedish *särskild avhoppare*

on a direct question about the relation between social and repressive efforts. After this, it is divided into two identified themes in the material; social measures combined with repression and colonization of the Left hand.

6.3.1 Social and Repressive Measures

To gauge the interviewees spontaneous opinion of the relation between social and repressive efforts when it comes to desistance, and if one or the other might be more efficient according to them, I asked them a direct question regarding if they thought that desistance organizations work better, the same, or worse at promoting desistance than the CJS. Their answers were mixed. Before going further into the responses, I want to note that it is hard, possibly impossible, to directly compare the effects of the CJS and desistance organizations. This as desisters in desistance organizations are there because they want to change, this choice does not exist within the CJS. What is analyzed is the experience of their effects.

Half of the interviewees clearly stated that they thought that desistance organizations are more effective at promoting desistance than the CJS. They explained this by referring to statistical differences and by reasoning based on their work experience. One interviewee described that they experienced that support through desistance organizations are more effective statistically and reasoned that this was due to them providing 'the whole packet', supporting the entire living situation both for the individual and for their social surroundings, while the CJS only provide care programs besides their main repressive interventions such as supervision. Another interviewee, from a state-based organization, described their experience:

"If you look at the people we work with I would say that most of them do not relapse into crime in that way. While I hear from the colleagues at the [SPPS], there it is common that they have a larger percentage relapsing in crime again. And they release them after institutional care, then they don't have any contact with them anymore, while we continue that contact no matter if they relapse or not… I think that it is important in this context, that we keep them in our system. Rather than 'now they have served their time, so here you go' and then you have no contact with them again."

The reasoning that the interviewees base this sentiment on correlates to the general answers regarding which measures are most important for desistance (see 6.1). This as their argument of why it is better heavily refers to their ability to provide access to welfare and social support measures which the CJS does not. Not all interviewees, however, expressed that desistance organizations are better at promoting desistance than the CJS. One interviewee agreed that desistance organizations are statistically, to their knowledge, more efficient at promoting desistance than the CJS. However, despite this, they did not want to make a statement regarding if one or the other was better or worse. Instead, the interviewee expressed that the two should complement each other and be combined. This hesitancy towards deciding if one is better than another was also present in another interview where the interviewee referred to ignorance of the statistics and thus did not want to make a statement on this. The source of this hesitancy that some interviewees expressed could be understood through Wacquant's (2009) framework as a result of the symbolic value of the penal state present politically and medially. As repression is constructed as the legitimate way of handling crime and since it has become the dominant control mechanism due to the expansion of the penal state, the perception of its value is even adopted in inherently social organizations. This hesitancy towards being critical of the CJS can thus be understood as an effect of this discourse. I say this as both interviewees expressed that desistance organizations have great statistical results and in one of the cases that it is better than the CJS. Despite this, they did not want to express that it is better, not even statistically.

6.3.2 Social Measures Combined With the CJS

An interesting, and unexpected, sentiment that several of the interviewees expressed were that in the case of creating engagement for desistance both social measures and the CJS are needed, alluding to them perceiving a need for social and repressive control mechanisms to cooperate. This is mainly due to them experiencing repressive punishments to be effective at inducing a subjective motivation to change and to desist from crime after release. Here is an outtake from one of my interviews with one of the workers at an independent organization.

"Q: Do you think that it becomes easier to desist from crime after a longer prison sentence?

Yes, based on my own experience. I think that it is easier since many go through the thought of 'fuck, I have lost so much time and I don't want to do that again'. Instead they want to fix their lives. You have so much time [during a long prison sentence] to reminisce about everything and through that, it becomes easier to make the decision that 'no this is not something that I want to continue with'."

This sentiment does fit with the statistics that SPPS has published on rates of recidivism (SPPS 2020) which showed that longer sentences are more effective at reducing recidivism. The reasoning described above could be an explanation for this correlation, however more research is needed. At the same time, these sentiments are contradicted by academic research (see Bondeson 1989; LeBel et. al. 2008). Similarly, to the common sentiment in academia, not all interviewees agree that repressive punishments will have this effect on the inmates but rather that it can worsen their condition in accordance with theories on the prisonization effect (cf. Clemmer 1940), as expressed by one interviewee from a state-based organization:

"Then you have to look at how they are affected by long institutional stays. It is also known that they don't, it does not improve. On the contrary, many witness that it becomes worse, you make contacts, you lose connection to the ordinary world even more."

One interviewee, who has a background of crime and imprisonment and now works at one of the independent organizations, described that cooperation is important between the CJS and social measures because they have access to different keys and no institution on its own has all the correct answers. Instead, it is necessary to understand and recognize each other's roles in society. When I asked this interviewee to describe how the optimal help for desistance would look like according to them, their answer was that the optimal scenario was if they were able to bring social measures and society into the prisons.

"And we would have society within these prisons. To inspire, to motivate, to open doors. To reach out a hand, to give possibilities."

Thus, describing how it is through an open society aiming at integrating these individuals that we can create change, while still controlling the individual by removing their freedom of movement. I found this reasoning of the need for a cooperation between social measures and the CJS to be interesting as it goes against much research on the effect of incarceration (see 6.1) and research that has showcased that in these situations the control logic of the prison still dominates, for example all social interventions are conducted in a way that is not perceived to 'threaten security' within the prison (Giertsen & Rua 2014). Moreover, this interviewee is clear with explaining that this is not how it works today:

"Think what an amazing opportunity to work with a person who is locked up for a couple of years. If you can fill that time with positive things, inspiring lectures, invite society, give the person motivation for their future. But that is not how it is today, they lock society out and expect the person to be released and have left the old attitude behind even though he has lived in an environment where crime thrives more or less."

It is hard to say how impartial the sentiment of cooperation is or to what degree it is affected by the overall presentation of repression as a legitimate control measure to prevent crime in the media and politics, as discussed above (Beckett & Sasson 2004; Wacquant 2009). Additionally, it can be that I, in these interviews, mainly has studied a spontaneous general attitude, which has been shown to be more repressive (Demker et. al. 2008), instead of an informed penal attitude (Jerre & Tham 2010). I believe that these sentiments are additional signs of how the symbolic value of the penal state has affected and become ingrained even in the minds of social workers when it comes to handling crime, this especially when considering scientific findings contradicts these responses (see Wacquant 2009; Giertsen & Rua 2014).

6.3.3 Colonization of the Left hand

What is prevalent throughout the interviews is how, through the development of a penal state, the logic of the Right hand colonizes the Left hand (Wacquant 2009).

A sign of a colonization of the Left hand is visible in that these social organizations utilize concepts that are economically inspired. An example of this is how most interviewees, both from state-based and independent organizations, refer to desisters as 'clients'. This is a sign of these social

organizations adopting the logic of the Right hand of the state which translates into a change of rhetoric's. However, the economic logic and rationale are not only visible in their conceptualization. For some of the state-based organizations, the cost-efficiency argument is central when the social services are deciding if the individual is eligible for support which is crucial for desistance organization functions.

"And the initial conversation that the social services have with the individual, we are there if 'soss' [the social services] want us to be. Then we are making an assessment, is what he says trustworthy. Because it is not unusual that they are not truthful because they want to profit in some way. Then we assess that. Because it costs a lot to implement efforts and aid the individual. So we check, is the information that the individual leaves true… And then it is up to the social services to assess the motivation, how motivated are they? Is it worth it to invest money on them, will they cope the whole way through?"

From this, we can see how cost-efficiency is the driving rationale, in this case, when deciding about support measures. The state does not want to invest in the individual if there is a risk that they do not get back their investment through a 'cured' individual and decides this by evaluating if the individual is likely to persist throughout the desistance process. If there is a risk that the individual will not, described as a lack of motivation, it is not worth the investment. The argument of economic efficiency thus creates a gate that filters who is getting access to welfare support. This is particularly problematic through the lens of citizens democratic rights as this hinders these individuals from getting social aid because they are deemed unmotivated, in favor of pumping money into control organs of the state.

The economic argument is additionally used to increase the symbolic value of the work conducted by desistance organizations amongst other institutions. One interviewee works within the police and initially noticed a hesitancy towards working with desistance. The solution was, as can be seen in the first two quotes under 6.2.3, a reference to the economic gains of desistance. The interviewee described the same situation happening when she educated municipalities on desistance and the gains of it. What this relay to me is a clear colonization of the Left hand, and thus access to welfare,

where the Right-hand rationale is regulating how and to whom social relief is being given. Moreover, this showcases that this rationale is prominent within our social institutions.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore the governing of social problems in Sweden, and the utility of social and repressive control mechanisms to address these problems. What I have been able to show is that from the point of view of some experts in the field, the most important measures for desistance are social interventions aimed at providing the individual with a basic quality of life, thus grounded in the logics of the Left hand. Measures that provide welfare and social support are vital to make desistance viable in the long term as the individual needs to be integrated, aided, and welcomed back into society. Nonetheless, repressive efforts can contribute to desistance as well through care during incarceration or by providing the arena in which the individual motivation for desistance can flourish, according to the respondents. When this care, however, is not provided the interviewees expressed a risk for the individual to leave incarceration with a more ingrained criminal identity rather than a decreased one. Thus, while repressive efforts can play a role in promoting desistance, they are more ambivalent as they can also decrease the likeliness for desistance.

On the topic of resources, the interviewees themselves describe how they, and their organizations, have both the material and symbolic resources that they need. Regarding material resources, this is something that has increased for desistance organizations in relation to the government's increased preoccupation with controlling crime, and even though it is good that social measures are provided adequate resources this move can also be understood as a tool to divert attention away from structural insufficiencies that social problems such as crime emanates from. Desistance organizations do, however, not have complete access to all material resources that they need, and due to legal deficiencies, there is a certain ambivalence regarding who gets this support, nonetheless most due get it. When looking at symbolic resources, desistance organizations seem to have symbolic capital to the degree that they can enact change within the bureaucratic system, however this capital is heavily reliant on if the work of the social organization can be legitimized through the logics of the Right hand such as economic gain. Outside of the bureaucratic system, these organizations' symbolic capital seems to decrease as their needs and role for preventing crime

is rarely discussed and instead the governmental focus is on the needs of traditional control institutions.

Regarding the question of the value of the CJS and desistance organization, i.e., social efforts, when promoting desistance, I found the sentiment of a need for collaboration between social and repressive control mechanisms where help would be provided during incarceration and continue after release to be interesting. Even though the interviewees overall throughout the interviews provided similar sentiments which usually correspond to the academic literature, when it came to this question, I got more mixed answers and answers that contradict earlier research. I theorize that this can be understood as a result of a colonization of the logic of the Left hand, which is also visible in the rhetoric and the centrality of a cost-efficiency rationale, and the repressive turn resulting in an increased symbolic value of repressive governing tools even in social organizations. The next best option, according to the interviewees, is a prominence of social measures to support desistance, which to a larger degree confirms the academic literature. Nonetheless, even though desistance as a crime preventive measure is recognized as important in the current criminal political strategy, the government does not promote this but rather focus on increased control and repression. Thus, I argue that the focus on increased control and repression, with only limited efforts towards social measures, is disadvantageous for handling the social problem of crime through desistance.

What I have been able to show through this study is that the measures that the interviewees are presenting as most important and effective for desistance, and thus to prevent future crime, are those that are based in a Left-hand logic, i.e., economic relief, social integration, or residence, as their aim is to provide the individual with a basic quality of life. Despite a consensus amongst the interviewees on the centrality of these interventions, it is possible to see how measures rooted in the Right-hand logics are coloring the reasonings of the interviewees. This is particularly present as several of them refer to problems with repression and imprisonment, but still withhold that it is, or can be, valuable to govern and prevent crime by inducing desistance. What this points to is that due to the symbolic capital that repressive methods have, particularly politically, they are increasingly understood as acceptable and relevant governing tools even in social organizations.

Concluding this thesis, I argue that the ideology behind the governing of social problems, particularly crime, is changing in Sweden and that this change is visible through the study of desistance. Traditionally in a welfare state, governing through law is aimed at increasing societal integration and protection of citizens (Young 1999; Banakar 2015), however in Sweden the governing through law is increasingly guided by neoliberal ideologies and an individualization of social problems. By focusing policy changes on repressive control mechanisms, the problem of crime is increasingly defined as a problem caused by bad individuals rather than being an effect of a failure of the state. To increase the number of individuals who are engaging in desistance, and thus engaging in preventing crime and developing a 'safer' Sweden, more focus needs to be placed on the responsibility of the state to make social measures more accessible and the legal and systematic hindrances that are in place today needs to decrease.

7.1 Future research

Throughout this study focusing on the perspective of experts in the field, I have found several questions that would be interesting to study in future research. These are questions of (1) why the opinion partly differs regarding the effect of prison sentences between experts in the field and academic research and if this is true in general or was specific to this group of interviewees, (2) how it comes that there is a difference of opinion on what measures are the most important between workers at state-based and independent desistance organizations, (3) the possible relation between longer prison sentences and increased desistance as was visible in the statistics and in the interviews, this should be studied further to work out this relationship and weather it corresponds to the reasoning that some experts in the field presented.

What this thesis has been able to find is that the perspective of experts in the field on the topic of desistance reveal a new way of seeing the relation between social and repressive efforts to promote desistance and can thus say something new about the governing of social problems. I argue that this study also has been able to visualize the need for more research focusing on this perspective.

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