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When not too far gone:
A pragmatic - reflexive approach to substance and crime prevention in consumer society towards indicated 16-18-year old adolescents

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In rememberance of Kenneth

Norsk sammendrag:

Norsk tittel:
Når de ikke har kommet "for langt": *En pragmatisk- refleksiv tilnærming til rus og kriminalitets-forebygging i konsumentsamfunnet rettet mot utvalgte 16- 18- åringer*

Avhandlingen bygger på en fokusgruppestudie der 17 ungdommer deltok. Ungdommene hadde det til felles at de hadde fremvist en type atferd i tilknytning til rusmiddelbruk og omgang med lover og regler som vekket bekymring for framtida deres blant voksne som brydde seg om dem. Hensikten med studien var for det første å få innblikk i ungdommenes perspektiver og praksiser når det gjaldt sentrale livsstils- og livsførselstemaer og hvordan de forholdt seg til temaene når de snakket om dem i fokusgruppene. Analysen av dataene var ment å bidra til en forståelse av rus- og kriminalitets-forebygging som var i pakt med de endringene konsumentsamfunnet har brakt med seg.

Analysen antyder at ungdommene som deltok i studien i stor grad ga tilslutning til fellesnormer i samfunnet og gjorde grep for å holde mer avvikende livsstils - alternativer på avstand. De var gjennomgående opptatt av det risikofylte i andres atferd.

Likevel var tentativitet i forhold til livsstils - og livsførselstemaene et sentralt trekk i ungdommenes væremåte. Tentativiteten innebar at flere og delvis motstridende livsstils-alternativer kunne se attraktive ut for ungdommene på samme tid, uten at de stoppet opp og reflekterte over hva de ulike alternativene innebar. Livet manglet derfor gjennomgående en retning. Ungdommene uttalte i liten grad frykt for egen helse eller risikoen for å bli utstøtt av «det gode selskap» for egen del. I den grad slik frykt forekom, hadde den mer indirekte uttrykk.

Ulike perspektiv på disse tendensene medfører ulike typer faglige tilnærminger. Konvensjonell forebyggingstankegang bygger på ideen om at folk er like og at kunnskap om konsekvenser i framtida må være retningsgivende for nåværende atferd. Ikke minst fordi denne type rasjonalitet krever et tydelig retningsvalg vil tentativitet i et slikt lys framstå som en uakseptabel væremåte. Når data derimot blir sett i lys av de problemene med å spå om framtida som preger nåtida generelt og ungdomslivet spesielt, fremstår tentativiteten annerledes. Da kan den betraktes som et forsøk på å tross alt imøtekomme de kravene til reflektert selvdannelse som gjelder i nåtidssamfunnet, men som en i kraft av å være ungdom og mangle holdepunkter for hva framtida vil bringe ikke alltid har umiddelbare forutsetninger for å imøtekomme. En vet kanskje hva en *ikke* vil, men ikke hvor en vil og hvordan en skal komme dit. En målsetting i tidsriktig forebyggingsinnsats blir i lys av denne innsikten å i første omgang akseptere retningsløsheten som en «plattform» for mer bevisst refleksjon omkring retning i livet. I neste omgang blir målsettingen å fremme slik refleksjon gjennom å ta tak i temaer som de aktuelle ungdommene rent umiddelbart er opptatt av.

Forskningsprosjektet har utspring i politiske målsettinger fra omkring tusenårsskiftet om å gi

rusrelatert problematikk større plass på området barn og unges psykiske helse. Prosjektet er også motivert ut fra nasjonale målsettinger om å styrke bruker-medvirkning og forebygging innenfor dette innsatsområdet. Forebyggingsinnsats overfor ungdom som har framvist bekymringsfull rusatferd eller som omgås loven på bekymringsfull måte er dessuten et relativt u-utforsket felt. Fokusgruppe ble i det aktuelle prosjektet ansett som den beste metoden for å stimulere til artikulasjon av halvbevisste og ofte uartikulerte synspunkter omkring ungdommenes egne handlemåter, aspirasjoner og livsprosjekter. Utvelgelsen av deltakere og gruppesammensetning skjedde i nært samarbeid med fagfolk som fra ulike ståsted hadde forhåndskontakt med ungdommene. Den analytiske rammen for utforsking av dataene bygget på elementer både fra seinmoderne teori om selvdannelse og seinmoderne teori om sosial makt.

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Synopsis in English

The thesis sheds light on the life shaping challenges of youths who occupy the indeterminable landscape between shared norms for use of substances and abidance of the law on the one hand, and more deviant life arrangements on the other hand.

The concept of life shaping has been derived within theory on late modernity (see Giddens 1991). It refers to the capacity to exert judgment around the socially appropriate and the capacity to shift direction on short notice.

By emphasizing life shaping, the thesis is meant to contribute to a timely conceptual framework for professional effort aimed at hindering that incipient problems with substance use as well as rule breaking / delinquency develop and become persistent.

The data material consists of transcripts from focus group interviews with a total of 17 youths, 11 boys and 6 girls, 16-18 years of age from Trondheim, Norway and some other municipalities.

The youths corresponded on a group level to those risk factors that are statistically associated with persistent delinquency and persistent problems with substances later in life. Additionally, the youths had been exhibiting involvement in risk activities to an extent that made adults be more than averagely worried about their future. All the same, the youths had not developed problems of the most serious kind. Moreover, they represented a wide range of situations and personalities.

It seems to be general consensus among researchers that it is difficult to distinguish the normal from the deviant in adolescence. Approaches based on the assumption that youth in the indeterminable landscape without further consideration are problem youths with life shaping ideals that deviate from the mainstream population therefore appear as inappropriate in a perspective of prevention.

The fact that we deal with youths in constant development as well as the fact that contemporary society has become highly changeable and unpredictable seems to have reinforced the need for new principles for prevention. The capacity to change direction on

short notice and to exert judgment around the socially appropriate is, for instance, as appreciated in today`s world as the capacity for long term planning and risk calculation. This constitutes a principle for life shaping that often is described as "reflexivity".

A result of the development in recent decades is also that the focus on individual responsibility for one's own welfare is increasing at the same time as the knowledge about risk-prone phenomena has become commonly shared. Behavior that puts health at risk against the actors` better judgment is regarded as a threat against the common good. Life shaping or self-shaping therefore appears as a fruitful concept within substance and crime prevention in late modern consumer society; even though much literature on life shaping may be criticized for ignoring social inequality. Without the capacity of reflexive life shaping exclusion from respectable society may become the result. A basic assumption in this thesis is therefore that a focus on reflexive individual life shaping in the future should be viewed as a major basis for substance and crime prevention.

Despite the increasing emphasis on the role of individual life shaping for avoidance of problems in the future, research with a focus on such principles is scarce within the realm of prevention. A reason why may be that the "risk zone" is a landscape which is difficult to conceptualize in the conventional scientific way. It may also be that the very topic of life shaping is regarded as a theme beyond the academic mandate.

Yet, the lack of timelier research may not at least be due to the fact that prevention in the described area is still predominated by a mind-set that fits in a less complex and therefore more predictable society, but which is no longer really appropriate in consumer society. Knowledge based on self-experience, agency and curiosity towards the indeterminable has poor conditions within this tradition. A premise for most prevention effort has, for instance, been that there are relatively sharp boundaries between risk-prone behavior and safe behavior and between "at risk" youths and "ordinary" youths. Moreover, risk in this perspective is not likely to be treated as mere future potentiality, but as something that already *has* happened. In this way, the phenomena appear as determinable in normative space that is relatively indeterminate.

The analysis of the current data indicates that everyday experience after all may be as an important basis for prevention and self-shaping processes as the more universal conceptualizations and solutions that have been developed by experts. This should be the main rule even when the projects may seem indeterminate and directionless in the first place.

Expert solutions are mostly derived from a conceptualization of risk as calculable and predictable.

The assumption that there is a tension in contemporary society between contingency (everybody may become anybody they wish) on the one hand and social constraint on the other, shaped the groundwork for the current data analysis. The analysis suggested that the youths both acknowledged and drew on both tendencies. They made many attempts at keeping more deviant life style at an arm's length, although often in a non-reflected manner. All the same, many of them seemed to lack a determined direction in life. Besides, in the

latter perspective it proved easier to become aware that the youths had problems with arriving at a more conscious position in their own life. There was a tendency to operate in quite evasive ways and participants generally tended to see more easily the risk prone aspects of their peers' activities than the risk prone aspects implied in own modes of operating.

Much is dependent on the perspective by means of which the described tendencies are regarded. If the analysis had been carried out in the light of conventional risk discourse, the evasive maneuvers and the ignorance of own risk could be mistakenly viewed as deviant acts. Moreover, the youths could be ascribed characteristics as morally deviant. This may entail unintended stigma and blocked communication.

When viewed in the light of prevailing currents in contemporary society, however, it also becomes clearer that the uncertain and directionless way in which the youths are operating may even be viewed as a resource to draw on in the interaction with the youths. There certainly are some things they do *not* want for their future and life styles they do *not* want to be identified with.

The maneuvering in the morally indeterminable space that the youths tended to occupy has in this thesis been described by means of the term "tentativeness". In contrast to the concept "practical reason" which is oriented towards the normative and commonly acknowledged, the concept of tentativeness is implying both thoughtless and directionless maneuvering. The data suggest that the leap needs not be far from a predominantly unconscious to a more conscious tentativeness. The professional challenge is above all to take this seriously without over-steering the interest in the youths towards becoming more active in their life projects.

The precondition for this leap is to accept that not all life shaping is calculable. Moreover, one must accommodate the ambiguous and indeterminable and support the single youth`s capacity to get further in life. Not least, it is a crucial point to facilitate the youths' participation in meaningful activity and that they attend work life.

Principles that have been particularly addressed are accept of non-calculability as a part of being, the need to allow for ambiguity and indeterminability, promotion of "nudging" or "scaffolding" practices and the necessity of assisting youth in getting involved in meaningful activity.

Both theoretically and with regard to content the term tentativeness resembles terms derived from cultural criminology. The novel way in which the concept of tentativeness is employed in this thesis is above all that it is related to crime and substance prevention on a so-called indicated level and that it clarifies why life-shaping projects should be emphasized more in substance and crime prevention with teenagers.

Table of Contents

I) Introduction

The background of the thesis in relevant literature

When 16-18 year olds experiment with illegal substances, frequently drink to intoxication, are involved in petty crime or fighting episodes and perhaps have some trouble in other life areas as well, adults who care about them get worried even if the youths have not developed problems of the most comprehensive kind. Undoubtedly, the described activities carry the potentiality for deteriorated wellbeing, illness and early death. Risks of a more social nature in terms of social exclusion, feelings of shame, isolation from mainstream society and eventually marginalization may also be an outcome. Any next of kin in this situation want to do their best to hinder that their loved ones get problems later in life.

There is therefore nothing wrong with worry *per se.* It is a well-documented statistical truth at the group-level that the more problems adolescents who experiment with substances are having, and the earlier those problems begin, the more likely they are to develop into persistent substance problems later in life (Palmer et al., 2009). The most apparent characteristics of those youths who proceed from experimentation and occasional use to more problematic and persistent user patterns already as teenagers may by means of sophisticated statistical methods be identified on a group level (Melberg, Jones, & Bretteville-Jensen, 2010). Certain interventions on this aggregated basis are to prefer before non-worry. Non-worry could basically be harmful because it may result in procrastination of effort that actually could have been most fruitful at an as early and feasible stage as possible (Nordahl, Sørlie, Manger, & Tveit, 2005).

All the same, well-established epidemiological truths as a basis for professional action towards adolescents at the earliest possible stage are not unproblematic for professional effort. Adolescence is a phase in which high-risk individuals are difficult to distinguish from low-risk or non-risk individuals.

The issue around exactly which individual adolescents who proceed from experimentation or occasional use to more persistent problems tends to remain somewhat enigmatic (Kandel, 1998 ; Howard Parker, 2005; Pedersen, 2009). According to a wide range of sources, most teenagers` involvement in potentially harmful experimentation with substances is more likely to dissipate at the transition to young adulthood than to continue into more persistent patterns later in life (Massoglia & Uggen, 2010; Maume, Ousey, & Beaver, 2005; Moffitt & Scott, 2008; Schulenberg et al., 2005).

This tendency seems largely to remain stable. In a Norwegian context, for instance, the extent of illegal substance use that merely occurs on an experimental basis has remained unchanged during the recent decade (Vedøy & Skretting, 2009). At least, those problems with substances that manifest later in life do not necessarily manifest in adolescence. Adults who use illegal substances regularly or who have developed harmful and persistent drinking patterns often did

not start having problems until they reached young adulthood (Aldridge, Measham, & Williams, 2011; Norström & Pape, 2012; Tucker, Ellickson, Orlando, Martino, & Klein, 2005). In fact, recent surveys on Norwegian alcohol practices suggest that above all it is the drinking habits of the current parent or grandparent generation (people over 50) that represent a challenge for indicated prevention today (Bye & Østhus, 2011), at least as far as alcohol is concerned.

Obviously, mind-sets that are based on linearity with regard to such issues are not necessarily reliable as a basis for intervention anymore.

Because of the relatively apparent unpredictability that predominates in this problem field, some researchers have asked whether classical prevention effort is at all warranted towards teenagers who have not developed the most comprehensive problems but belong to a more indeterminable group (Ferrer – Wreder, Stattin, Lorente, Tubman, & Adamson, 2005; Norström & Pape, op cit.). Classical instructive or deterring practices based on categorical conclusions about the youths could even have a stigmatizing effect on them. Communication with youths in the described situation which implies open-mindedness towards how the youths conceptualize their situation without necessarily categorizing them (Backe - Hansen, 2007), and more general health promotion approaches (Ferrer – Wreder et al., op cit.) have been described as the only kinds of effort that may positively affect youths in the described situation.

The difficulties in predicting future outcomes of youthful involvement in rule breaking / minor delinquency and harmful substance use are not only related to the unstable character of adolescence. The probability that involvement in risky activity will develop into persistent problems is also difficult to predict because the world in recent decades has become an over-complex and unstable place. Whereas the health messages of the 1990s, for instance, tended to communicate that once having started using illegal drugs was synonymous with an impending risk of becoming an addict, such messages have later on been significantly modified (Howard Parker, 2003). Risk calculation has on the basis of the increasing complexity and the need to differentiate between individuals even been proclaimed as obsolete given contemporary social circumstances (Reith, 2004a). Life shaping has more than ever become a solitary endeavor (see for instance Bauman, 2007; Giddens, 1991). There is basically no standard key book to lean on that applies to all.

For reasons of this kind, it has been argued that most substance prevention practice has somewhat fallen out of step with historical time and contemporary debates (Karlson & Bergmark, 2009).

Among other things, there has been a shift in the view on risk, which does not seem to have been sufficiently included in the premises for prevention effort. More than others, Beck (2009) has stated that the concept of risk certainly is inevitable in the current era. Given the contemporary circumstances, however, the most reliable risk concept according to Beck is a

more all-evasive concept with a far more arbitrary basis than the conventional epidemiological risk concept. He dismisses the idea of risk phenomena, which are calculable.

According to Beck (op cit.) the attempts at keeping the discourse about risk as calculable alive is a gimmick from authorities with the aim to keep people under control. By means of risk factor analyses and other sophisticated calculative methods risk is made vivid to the extent that it appears as already happened. Although some have pointed to the inconsistency implied in his statements (Reith, 2004 a), Beck`s critique of future calculability in a world of increased flux is appealing and inspiring in many ways. Besides, Becks diagnosis seems to underscore how exertion of power is involved in the risk discourse. There seems to be no doubt that the more conventional concept of risk as calculable still has impact on mind-sets, in spite of its arbitrary basis.

Another aspect that suggests how power is deeply involved in the calculability discourse is the notion that those who are not able to relate to it in a rational way, for instance in terms of making future plans and trade-off evaluations, are irresponsible (see for instance Webb, 2006). In light of this, it becomes highly important to most people to avoid the risk label. It is a tendency mentioned in many literature sources on life shaping and norm-orientation that the distinction lines between "respectful" and "disrespectful" have become considerably sharper but still more implicit than previously (Abrahamson 2009; Marthinsen 2003). Those who have not developed the most comprehensive problems may in a sharpened climate be viewed as "addicts" or "criminals" (Marthinsen, 2010). Thus, such phenomena as the steadily dropping prevalence rates on substance use among Norwegian teenagers may make life shaping even harder in the future for youths who deviate from standard norms on substance use and abidance of the law (Frøyland & Sletten, 2010).

Despite the conclusions from epidemiological research that prevention effort based on the premises of prediction is somewhat doubtful in relation to the current target group, there still seems to be need for professional effort, given that it is timely and allows for a view on morally indeterminable and directionless maneuvering as a necessary interim solution. Being timely in this context implies taking into account tendencies like the increasing individual responsibility for life shaping, the shifting and unpredictable character of contemporary society, and the implicit way in which power is exerted there. According to Beck (op cit.), judgment as a principle for life shaping has little to do "risk management" or other rationalist approaches that the last decades have gained terrain and now tend to predominate in the field.

Beck suggests that the need to upgrade individual judgment as a basis for life shaping, for obvious reasons, is something that will be increasingly important in the future. Yet, research literature or examples of modes of prevention that are oriented towards individual judgment and the search for the socially appropriate forms seem to be difficult to trace in relevant literature bases.

The aim and scope of the thesis

The major aim of this thesis is to contribute to an as timely conceptualization framework as possible for substance and crime prevention practices towards adolescents who find themselves in the indeterminable space between relative normalcy and relative deviance with regard to substance use and law abidance. This aim includes questioning any deadlocked notion about adolescents in this situation.

Firstly, the thesis explores how the study participants seemed to maneuver in that space. Secondly, the thesis discusses how the maneuvers may be understood and what professionals may learn from the identified maneuvers with regard to prevention practice. Thirdly and finally, the thesis will single out some principles for professional practice with the target group, though without being prescriptive.

Many of the conclusions drawn in relation to the current material are similar to conclusions drawn in cultural criminology (see for instance Ferrell, Hayward, & Young, 2008). The thesis therefore does not present anything quite new. The novel thing about the thesis is that it combines elements from cultural criminology, theory on life shaping, and social theory with basis in consumer society. The thesis thus is meant to be a contribution to a more comprehensive conceptual framework for substance and crime prevention on a so-called indicated level of prevention; which according to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA 2009) means prevention towards individuals who have exhibited risk-prone behaviors but who have not developed persistent problems.

The epistemological position that the thesis is based on may be called "pragmatic-reflexive". What I mean by "pragmatic-reflexive" will be explained more in detail in the chapter on methods. In brief, I describe it as an epistemology that aims at scrutinizing the process of knowledge to an equal extent as the very results. Firstly, this implies that the researcher does not take a vantage point. Moreover, a pragmatic-reflexive approach means that both existing and emerging knowledge is constantly revised. Finally, old dichotomies, like structure vs. agency are transgressed. In addition, monolithic explanation models that aim at "eliciting it all" are avoided as much as possible.

What is beyond the scope of the thesis?

It seems important to stress that the data that constitute the basis for the thesis are not viewed in a longitudinal perspective, neither in the sense "retrospective" nor in the sense "prospective". Overall, the idea is not to study individual trajectories but to capture meaning-making at group level at a fixed time in history. Thus, the study is rather exploratory than explanatory.

Introduction to the empirical basis of the thesis

The study and the research questions

The empirical basis of the thesis is a focus group material that involved seventeen 16-18 year-olds from Central Norway who had been assessed by frontline professionals as at a certain risk of developing problem substance use or delinquency. There were 11 boys, and 6 girls in the sample. They were predominately ethnical Norwegians. In addition to the 17 participants in focus groups, two girls who could not or did not want to participate in focus groups were interviewed separately. However, data from these interviews were not included in the final analysis, as they did not to a sufficient extent reflect maneuverings and the meaning-making processes of the kind that were advertised for. At least the single interviews did not provide the same kind of deeper insights as the focus group discussions. It should though be mentioned that they did not deviate from the focus group data in apparent ways.

The research context in which the study was carried out was the regional centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Central Norway[2], where I was a PhD candidate in a period from 2005-2009. My employment as a PhD candidate was funded by the Rbup center that had got grants from the National Government meant to enhance knowledge about substance-related issues in their context. An article has been written based on the same material (Juberg, 2011). Certain discussions and conclusions from that article will be referred and partially revised throughout this thesis.

The study participants were recruited by those frontline professionals (mainly social workers, milieu therapists or teachers) who had assessed them as "at risk". The recruiters represented various kinds of primary services or school units. Most of the participants resided in the municipality of Trondheim.

The majority of the focus groups were carried out during spring 2007 by a co-moderator and me. One group was also carried out during autumn 2007. The overall research issue was as follows:

How do adolescents 16-18 who have been assessed as at risk of developing substance or delinquency problems later in life reason and arrange their lives in areas of significance for future wellbeing?

The more specific research questions revolved around the following questions:

1)   How did the participants envision their future?

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[2] From 1.1.2013 the center was be merged with a center for Child welfare development and research. The new center will be called Regional knowledge centre for children and adolescents: Mental health and child welfare. (Kunnskapssenter for barn og unge: Psykisk helse og barnevern).

2)   Did participants assume a link between current events and future outcomes?
3)   Which were the themes that the participants potentially seemed more interested in discussing right now rather than themes merely concerning a distant future?
4)   How did participants relate to these issues when talking about them in focus groups?

Definition of the sample according to formal and informal standards

In line with the study purpose presented above, the governing principle for recruitment of participants was to get contact with indicated youths who found themselves somewhere in between relative normalcy and relative deviance with regard to substance use and law abidance. That meant above all that they had exhibited problem behaviour of some kind or other, and that next of kin or other adults who cared about the youths on that background were concerned that they could develop more persistent problems in the future. In order to get the youths involved in the study, it was not claimed that the youths viewed themselves as "at risk". On the contrary, it seemed theoretically interesting to get insight into the mind-set of youths who might accept the relevance of risk discourse in general, and other`s assessment of them as at risk, but who did not necessarily count on impendent risk as a factor in their own life. Among those adolescents who participated in the current study, many had already received professional help at some level but they seemed seldom to have asked for such help on their own initiative.

Except for pre-established criteria like the ones mentioned above, the basis for selection of participants was primarily of an informal, semi-scientific kind. I viewed it as important that the sample as much as possible reflected the ideas and principles that govern professional effort at a non-specialized and preventive level. The participants should be adolescents who frontline professionals and prevention workers are likely to meet in the communities. Many of the recruiters worked on an outreach basis or on a basis which did not require formal referral. Thus, decisions around whom to include was primarily left to the informal assessment of the recruiters. Indeed, appreciation of "gut feeling" as a basis for professional assessment has to an increasing extent been downplayed in favour of new ideals of "objectivity" and "scientificity " even in social work, a discipline which traditionally has been critical to more instrumental approaches (Barfoed & Jacobsson, 2012). Therefore, one could assume that the recruiters were not un-influenced by more scientifically established principles when they decided whom to select.

Even though the participants were recruited on a basis that could be labelled as "semi-scientific" more formal modes of assessment could all the same help explain who the participants were. That the participants had exhibited such behaviors as heavy episodic drinking, occasional use of illegal substances, fighting, petty crime etc., without having developed the most comprehensive problems means that they filled criteria for "Indicated prevention" (EMCDDA, op cit.). That means that participants corresponded to criteria that are statistically associated with problem substance use and delinquency later in life. Some also

had approximated social fields in which lifestyle choices and behaviors differed from those in the larger social field. This did not necessarily mean permanent foothold in alternative social fields. The term "indicated prevention" or prevention towards "indicated individuals" has, according to EMCDDA (op cit.), replaced the term of "secondary prevention" which was previously a widely used term.

Indicated prevention is distinct from treatment in the strictest, clinical sense. According to EMCDDA in the cited document, Individuals targeted for "indicated prevention" are, for instance, not expected to fulfill diagnostic criteria in accordance with international diagnostic systems established by the World Health Organization (1990) or by the American Psychological Association (2000). Indicated prevention is also distinct from so-called "selected prevention", a term that refers to prevention on a group level towards individuals who fulfill statistically established risk criteria on the group level, but who have not exhibited behaviors associated with indicated prevention. The most common risk criteria are: family problems, parental neglect or inadequate parenting styles, low academic achievements, individual vulnerability, acting out tendencies, etc. (op cit.).

The target group may also be defined on the basis of general population surveys on delinquency prevalence and intensity in the general Norwegian youth population. With regard to the involvement of the sample as a whole in delinquent activities, one may tentatively conclude that most of them belong to the 12-23 percent of the general Norwegian youth population who according to the "Young in Norway" survey (Øia & Fauske, 2010) have reported involvement in beatings, threats, shoplifting of less costly goods (<NOK 500) and less serious vandalism. A minority of the sample seemed to belong to the 7-3 percent of the general Norwegian youth population who according to the referred source report involvement in more serious offences. That is: wilful plundering at a cost higher than NOK 1000, burglary related to the purpose of theft, vehicle theft and fighting episodes in which weapons are involved.

Moreover, the sample could also be described on the basis of standardized questionnaires aimed at assessing risk of mental health disorder. In the current study, the participants filled out the ASEBA YSR[3] questionnaire (Aschenbach & Rescorla, 2001) at the end of the last group session. The score results have for paradigmatic reasons not been viewed as a part of the empirical basis for the thesis, and are therefore not referred to in detail. The idea behind the use of YSR in the current context was merely to identify participants at a group level and the extent to which one could say that they were more "at risk" than merely "ordinary" youth.

The YSR sample scores were compared both with normative standards and with a clinical sample presented in relevant literature. Those comparisons indicated that the current study

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[3] ASEBA Youth Self Report is based on factor analyses coordinated across the forms: The following factors are included: Anxious/ Depressed, Withdrawn/ Depressed, Somatic Complaints, Social Problems, Thought Problems, Attention Problems, Rule-Breaking Behaviour, Aggressive Behaviour.
http://www.aseba.org/schoolage.html

sample significantly deviated from both Norwegian and North-American normative samples with regard to so called "externalizing behaviors", which has been defined as the tendency to blame external forces for mishaps, acting out etc. (Wichstrøm & Backe-Hansen, 2007). As regards the diagnostic term "internalizing behaviors", which mostly covers statuses like depression, nervousness etc. (op cit.), and the current study sample deviated significantly from a Norwegian clinical sample consisting of same- age adolescents. It should, however, be noted that the boundary between internalizing and externalizing behaviors is in reality blurred (Nordahl et al., 2005). The YSR- scores of the current sample are to be found as an attachment at the very back of the thesis.

Yet, it is a question how much the current sample really differed from the normative population. Answers to that question are mostly dependent on the measures employed. Much is also dependent on the cultural tolerance around normalcy vs. deviance (Nordahl et al., op cit.; Storvoll, 2004). Prospective studies that have combined dimensional and categorical measures on adolescent rule breaking have, for instance, identified a non-significant difference between predominantly law-abiding youths in their mid-teens and same age youths who commit small scale rule breaking or crime (Storvoll & Krange, 2003). According to the authors, significant differences with regard to involvement in rule breaking/ crime did not appear until the adolescents had become older (op cit.). Therefore, the description of some youths as "indeterminable" with regard to how they tackle moral issues seems to be warranted.

Also qualitative studies suggest that a group of teenagers may be described as indeterminate in their relation to recreational substance use along the dimension "normalcy vs. deviance" in defined local communities (Sundar, 2003). Teenager informants according to Sundar identified a group of "in-between people" that consisted of those adolescents who seemed to have no permanent foothold in specific social fields but who tended to drift around in their leisure. They did not merely drink at weekends; they could also consume alcohol on weekdays. Moreover, they were known for truancy and for caring less about what was expected from them. Yet the adolescents in the in-between group, according to their same age peers, distinguished themselves from «the dopers» who used cannabis and other drugs regularly, often in combination with alcohol. «Ordinary» youths therefore avoided social involvement with them.

In-group variation

As the purpose of the study was to explore target group maneuvers so to speak "in-the-making" and not to predict future outcomes, a systematic mapping of background factors was not prioritized. Unless participants themselves on specific occasions chose to involve background factors in the group discussions such factors were not in focus.   The only background factors that were focused on to a certain extent were the vocational background of parents, with whom the participants lived and the extent to which they got help from help services.   Parents' vocational background is a factor that was regarded as having a certain relevance, since parents' vocational status has been emphasized in relevant theory as important for how youths perceive their space of opportunity in society at large. How the space of opportunity is perceived significantly affects the life shaping process. To the extent that participants had filled out such information, a brief review of the responses in that column revealed that they represented a certain socioeconomic breadth. Whereas some parents had academic backgrounds, others were employees, some were self-employed and some were on welfare.

As regards family situation, the preponderant portion of the participants lived with one or both parents. 2- 3 participants were under child welfare custody[4]. In addition, all went to school, and were either in the last year of lower secondary or in the second year of upper secondary school. When it comes to referral to help services, all participants except for one or two had according to the questionnaire that they had to fill out at the first group session been in contact with help agencies. The extent varied significantly. Some reported that they had been referred to specialized services at an early phase in life. However, to my knowledge none of the participants were receiving specialized help at the time of inquiry, except for medication for ADHD etc. in a few cases. Those participants who had received professional help more recently seemed to have been seeing social workers, psychologists etc. on a brief intervention basis. The aim in most of those cases seemed to be the solving of suddenly arisen crises. Mostly they were crises of a more ecological kind, like parent divorce or acute conflicts of other kinds. The information gathered via the schemes on help seeking or help reception are uncertain because some participants had problems with defining "help" of this kind. For instance, some spontaneously mentioned in-group discussions that they had been referred to help services, but they had not always put it down on the information scheme.

Information gleaned in-group sessions about personal substance use or involvement in delinquency indicated great variation. For instance, not all reported to have tried illegal substances. Some had been involved in shoplifting, wilful plundering, etc., without having been involved in violent episodes, whereas others had frequently been involved in fighting episodes without necessarily having been involved in other rule breaking.   Moreover, the participants who had used illegal substances on an experimental or occasional basis were not necessarily involved in heavy drinking or rule breaking of other kinds. In the sample there

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[4] The number is uncertain because information about care status was not always provided by the youths themselves but by recruiters and vice versa.

were also a few participants who had been or still were computer game dependent without representing any of the other behavioral problems mentioned above. No one seemed to have been involved in crime beyond the level of seriousness that requires action in the mediation board, and nobody except for one or two seemed to have developed substance problems to the extent that normally warrants specialized help.

Thus, viewed from one angle the adolescents of the study sample may be said to deviate from commonly shared moral norms. On the other hand, they might be viewed as equally different as any other youths in the same age group and thus equally "normal": they took care of siblings, some worked part-time beside school, some did babysitting and some cultivated their hobbies etc. Most participants seemed to party at weekends but had as minors had trouble finding a decent place to party. The only basically common factor that seemed to apply to them all, and which was looked for when recruiting participants to the study, was that adults who cared about them were more than averagely worried about their future prospects.

The structure of the thesis

In the subsequent parts of the thesis, I will firstly describe the background for the study within its institutional context and in relation to Norwegian prevention policy documents. I will then provide a little more information on the reasons why the study topic was approached in the way it was. I will also give an account for the concepts used in the thesis.

Secondly, I am going to present those perspectives that seem to prevail in current academic discourse, that may have relevance for indicated prevention and that seem to have something to contribute in relation to the aim of the thesis: i) The prediction perspective, ii) the contingency perspective, and iii) perspectives on social constraint in consumerist society.

After the discussion of the different perspectives, I will account for how I worked methodically in the process of data generation. After that review, which is merely procedural, I will discuss the data trustworthiness in light of the research questions and the epistemological premises that the thesis is based on.

Thereafter, I will present elements from the qualitative data material that shape the empirical basis of the thesis and try to outline what kind of insight they provide on the participants` life shaping. While doing so, I will draw on several elements from the chapter on literature and theory. Finally, I will discuss what the study may add to professional practice in the area and try to single out certain practice principles, without being prescriptive.

II) Background

Research context and research interests

About the current research context: The Regional Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Mid-Norway

As noted in the introduction, the current study was carried out at the Regional Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (Rbup), Mid-Norway. The center merged with a center for development of Child Welfare (BUS) in January 2013. The new center is called "Regional knowledge centre for children and adolescents: Mental health and child welfare." The fusion is expected to bring about a broader scope of research, yet the very mandate of Rbup seems to have remained the same as before. Like Rbup before the fusion, the new organization is part of the Norwegian University for Science and Technology (NTNU) and is administered by the faculty of Medicine.

As a university center, Rbup by customary decree does research and provides education programs at a master's level. In addition, the center has also been given a particular commission by the National Government. This commission implies implementation of national policy on child and adolescent mental health in the Mid-Norway region. The center by virtue of being a governmental competence center provides education programs to primary and specialized services like the specialized mental help services for children and adolescents (Bup)[5] . Particularly from 2007 and onwards, Rbup has collaborated systematically with municipal authorities, resource centers on the national and regional level and with the County governor administration in the Mid-Norway Region.

By being multidisciplinary composed, the research group at Rbup during my period as a PhD candidate from 2005-2009 reflected the whole range of tasks supposed to be solved by the child and adolescent mental health sector of today. In addition to psychiatrists, there were researchers with backgrounds as psychologists, educationalists and social workers.

The thesis in relation to national aims concerning children and adolescents mental health and welfare

In 2003 a governmental action plan on child and adolescent mental health *"Together around mental health …"* initiated by the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services (Helse&Omsorgsdepartementet, 2003b) became operative. This plan was a direct reason for my employment as a PhD candidate at the center and provided the background for the aim and design of the current study. The plan stressed the need for more knowledge about substance-related themes of relevance for children and adolescents` mental health. National

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[5] Abbreviation for "Barne og ungdomspsykiatrisk klinikk": Child and adolescent mental health clinic.

grants that followed the plan were therefore spent on employment of a PhD candidate for a period of four years.

Among other things, the referred plan from 2003 ordered that sub-clinical mental health statuses in children and adolescents were expected to be managed exclusively by primary services, while the regional clinics from then on were expected to primarily concentrate their effort on children and adolescents with full-fledged diagnoses. A more economical use of resources in the specialist clinics was the major motive for this impressed practice. Yet, the clinics still had an obligation to assist primary services in terms of advice and provision of education programs in collaboration with Rbup. In addition, they were supposed to have an increased focus on prevention. The order has been referred to as the "expanded mandate".

In addition to the increased emphasis on prevention, the referred strategy plan also underscored the need for a sharper focus on problem substance use of the kind that affects children and adolescents in some way or other. Substance-related problems were at that point in time said to be a neglected problem area within the specialized mental help services (Bup). The mental health statuses that normally are referred to Bup are anxiety, sadness, attention deficit, general behavioral problems, eating disorders, problems with stabilization, social relations or traumatic stress. [6] To the extent that adolescents who had substance-related problems or who had severely transgressed law codes had been treated by the specialized services (Bup), they most likely had had other problems that were diagnostically significant and that represented their primary disorder.

One reason for the lack of referrals in cases of substance-related problems may certainly be the age group for which Rbup, as an initiator of national policy, has responsibility, namely 0-18 year-olds. Whereas other problems viewed as behavioral problems may reach a significant diagnostic level in childhood or in adolescence, the boundary between diagnostic and sub-diagnostic problem substance use is vague at that age. Generally, adolescents must reach the age of 18 before full-fledged substance disorders could be identified (Kandel, 1998). Similarly, it is within the age group between 18-20 years of age that most individuals in Norway are caught for delinquent acts (Øia & Fauske, 2010). This generally means that identification of persistent delinquent patterns before the age of 18 is the exception and not the rule.

To the extent that substance related problems are explicit in minors, those minors who have such problems tend to be referred to a specialized mental health service in the region with particular competence on problem substance use, namely the regional Psychiatric Youth theme (PUT). This theme often helps those adolescents between 15-18 years of age who have substance problems at a certain level of severity.

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[6] http://www.stolav.no/StOlav/Avdelinger/Bup/Dokumenter/Avdelinger/Poliklinikk/Brosjyrer/BUP-Klostergata.pdf online 18.08.2012.

Yet, my impression was that during my years as a PhD candidate at Rbup substance related problems were addressed to an increasing extent also within the Bup clinics. Not least, there is reason to believe that the Bup clinics because of the new order to focus on prevention would have become increasingly involved on a consultative basis in those cases in which adolescents merely experiment, make occasional use of substances or have been in conflict with the law. Since child welfare now has become a clearer mandate of the organization this is even more likely to be the case in the future.

My thesis on substance-related problems with its focus on indeterminability as regards mental health and behavioral statuses is thus probably of most interest for the consultative role and the prevention focus within this organization.

The current thesis focuses as previously noted on problem substance use as well as on rule breaking/delinquency among adolescents. To the extent that both problem areas may be subsumed under the label of "behavioral problems", one may say that Rbup already had developed much of the competence needed, as research on behavioral problems had been highly prioritized over time. Yet, as also noted previously, "behavioral problems" is a broad and imprecise category, which both may and may not encompass problem substance use, somewhat dependent on problem definition and assessment procedures (Storvoll, 2004). It therefore seemed important to supplement the already existing research on behavioral problems at the center.

Certainly, substance and crime prevention aimed at the current age group may also be addressed by the considerable bulk of research carried out at the center. This is among other things research with a focus on transition from adolescence to young adulthood. Still, with a few honorable exceptions, neither problem substance use nor minor delinquency had been attendant as main themes in the research portfolio of Rbup at the time when the referred action plan on child and adolescent mental health became operative. To the extent that such problems had been addressed in Rbup research projects so far, they had been touched on as a part of studies with a broader mental health scope.

Hopefully, this thesis will be perceived as fruitful in the sense that it is complementary to other research at the Rbup center, which mainly is of an epidemiological kind. Although my epistemological approach is not one of epidemiology, I try to a certain extent in the thesis to use literature both from epidemiology and literature with emphasis on meaning making and judgment. I thereby hope that the thesis also will be interesting to an audience that is predominantly engaged in epidemiology issues.

The study in relation to my own research interests

The emphasis on problem substance use and prevention in the referred action plan on children and adolescents` mental health fitted well with my vocational background and general research interests. For instance, I had been a social work practitioner and probation officer for

more than 20 years prior. I had also worked for 4 years as adviser at a regional resource center for alcohol and drug issues[7.] My tasks at the resource center were primarily oriented towards prevention issues, a field that I found relatively inspiring. Still, the kind of policy that the center was expected to initiate partially became a source of a certain unease in me. The unease was primarily related to paradigmatic issues. For instance, I felt that there was limited opportunity for thinking critically about prevention policy, and that lay expertise was not emphasized to an equal extent as "expert expertise". Overall, the interplay between individual and society, and the power mechanisms that are involved in this interplay seemed to be somewhat lacking as a basis for prevention effort, albeit the alleged social character of the phenomena at issue.

My background as a cand Polit. [8] in social work most likely reinforced my interest towards social aspects of the current phenomena. Because notions of respectability tend to get increasingly narrow, the inclusion of "deviant" youths in mainstream society is at stake. Although having a background in social science is not a guarantee against reductionism, inclusion and justice are classical social work issues (Stepney, 2006) that in my opinion should add to an individual focus or a focus that is merely interactionist without taking broader societal currents into consideration.

With regard to my comments on national prevention policy during my time at the resource center on alcohol and drugs, I heavily accentuate that I merely refer to it as I experienced it during that period. Things might have changed in the meantime. Anyhow, on the background of what I in the past had felt was certain limitations on the free mind, it was inspiring to get the opportunity to do a PhD within a more liberal framework.

My research affiliation is first and foremost the large research environment in Mid-Norway within Social Work, which recently has generated many PhDs and PhD candidates. Qualitative research within this environment is quite common. The fact that the current thesis has a thematic which requires a qualitative design also fits well with my research interests. One may view the interest for qualitative research as the factor that primarily influenced my choice of topic. Anyhow, my study by being qualitative represents an exception to the standard research profile at Rbup, which may be described as empirical-logical and epidemiological. To my knowledge, this is the first PhD thesis with an entirely qualitative design written at Rbup.

The fact that my research interests by and large deviated from the research profile at Rbup at the time I was a PhD candidate at the center has been both a demanding and a stimulating

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[7] http://www.rus-midt.no/korus The Resource Centre for Drug and Alcohol Issues in Central Norway is commissioned by the Norwegian Health Directorate to assist municipalities in the region with the development of prevention programs and to work with Drug and Alcohol specialist services in order to develop their competence. The center has since the turn of the century had a specific responsibility for competence development on youthful and young adult substance use with emphasis on indicated prevention.

[8] Academic degree that existed in Norway prior to the internationalization of the academic system, and which corresponds to the current master`s degree, although somewhat more extensive.

experience. Among the demanding things was that I was somewhat at odds with the tradition both at the center and at the faculty of medicine, which in some cases caused confusion. For instance, I believed that writing a monograph on the basis of the current study was out of question. First after having written three article drafts I realized that there were no formal hurdles for doing a monograph, although there were few examples of it in the current context. This certainly was good news to me, since the aim of my work better fitted the monograph format than the article- based thesis format.

The stimulating aspect by staying in a predominantly epidemiological environment was above all the broadened access to perspectives I otherwise would have ignored. Considering those perspectives has broadened my insight around the current issue.

The background of the thesis in current Norwegian substance and crime prevention policy

Norwegian substance and crime prevention policy dating from the last decade has above all been expressed in policy documents like the action plan for early intervention in the substance area (Sosial&Helsedirektoratet, 2007)[9], the Governmental escalation plan within the substance area (Helse&omsorgsdepartementet, 2008)[10], the Government action plan for prevention of crime (Justis&politidepartementet, 2009)[11], the guidelines "From concern to action" (Helsedirektoratet, IS1142)[12] and a Report to the Storting[13] mld.30 (2011-2012) from the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services (Helseogomsorgsdepartementet, 2011) on the need for an overall policy on alcohol, drugs and doping. Indicated prevention is just scarcely mentioned in these documents.

Nevertheless, the mentioned policy documents stress three issues that are of particular relevance for the thematic addressed in this thesis. Firstly, a balance between expert-based approaches and approaches that accommodate target group agency and participation is encouraged. Secondly, a balance between primary prevention and prevention effort towards indicated individuals seems to be an aim. Thus, whereas the guideline document "From concern to action" (Helsedirektoratet, IS 1142) emphasizes that a *clearer* public health focus in terms of an approach directed towards the whole population has to be established, the other policy documents tend to underline that the risk of stigma or scapegoating must not overshadow the benefits of identifying groups at enhanced risk. Intervention at an as early stage as possible seems all the same to be stressed in both perspectives. The cited Report to the Storting, St.mld.30 (2011-2012) is warning against the risk of stigma that is implied in any intervention.

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[9] The Norwegian Directorate for Social Affairs and Health
[10] The Norwegian Ministry of Health and care services
[11] The Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public security
[12] The Norwegian Directory of Health
[13] The Norwegian Parliament

The third issue that has been particularly emphasized in the policy documents is the need to facilitate access for adolescents with minor problems to appropriate agencies, in order to prevent further problem development. It is particularly the action plan for substance prevention (Sosial & helsedirektoratet, 2007) which has this as an aim. Outreach work, which has a long tradition in Norway, has been described in the action plan as one of the most important ways of achieving this aim.

The policy aim of enhancing accessibility to help services seems to be in line with conclusions in research on youth involvement in illegal substance use. The shameful character of problem substance use and rule breaking may make adolescents reluctant to seek help even in those cases when such substance use brings about mental unease (Gunnarson, Fahlke, & Balldin, 2004). This thesis aims at bringing the issue of how adolescents in the current target group could be reached further by discussing to which extent shame may be a factor that not only prevents young people from seeking help, but also from thinking about themselves as at risk.

In the paragraphs below I will, however, take a particular look at the two first concerns: the need to balance target group agency and participation against expert power, and the relative importance of focusing on particular risk groups. I will suggest how the thesis could fill identified gaps in those areas.

The emphasis on agency and participation in relevant National policy documents

The previously referred Norwegian national strategy plan on child and adolescent mental health (Helse & omsorgsdepartementet, 2003) is in line with those conclusions from research that are referred to in the introduction and that stress the need for participation from youths when mental health-related measures are carried out (see Backe-Hansen, 2007). In accordance with this, the strategy plan emphasizes that one must avoid that children and adolescents *"lose faith in their own capacity to have impact on their own life and to handle challenges and problems"*.

Policy documents that more specifically address substance and crime prevention, like The Government action plan for early intervention in the substance area (Sosial & Helsedirektoratet 2007) and the Government action plan for prevention of crime (Justis & politidepartementet, 2009) have also signalized that agency and partnership are principles that shall be encouraged within this problem area. Thus, central policy documents at least in principle have underscored the need to primarily view prevention as an issue of individual life shaping. Yet, individual life shaping as a basis for prevention may be approached in different ways. One, in my eyes, negative kind of approach is the "Blame-the-victim" tendency. It is drawing contemporary individualism to the extreme.

Yet, there seems to be relatively few indications in Norwegian substance and crime prevention policy of those "blame-the-victim" tendencies (France, 2008; Goldson, 2000 etc.) that have been suggested to predominate British policy on crime and substance prevention in the area. It

has for instance been suggested that risk factor analyses (Arthur, Hawkins, Pollard, Catalano, & Baglioni, 2002), which serve as the basis for much prevention effort in a British context, often contribute to widening the definitions of "problem youths" instead of narrowing them (France, op cit.). In line with this, the focus has also been on a tendency to conceptualize adolescents involved in rule breaking as "young offenders" rather than "children in need" (Goldson, op cit.). Finally, a salient concern in British research on these issues has been to point to how certain drinker groups tend to be criminalized (Measham, 2006).

All these tendencies may be summed up as attempts at viewing prevention as something which should be based on prediction, in the sense that indeterminate phenomena are made as determinable as possible. The referred researchers tend to ascribe the mentioned tendency to neo-liberal currents and to the deregulation policy that is accompanying it for the growth in punitive approaches. Yet, just because of the increasing emphasis on individual responsibility in contemporary society, there also seems to be broad consensus across relevant research fields and paradigms that punitive or educative prevention methods are not recommendable and should be substituted by timelier approaches like health promotion and emphasis on agency (see for instance Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006).

An explanation of the seeming difference between British and Nordic contexts could be that the Scandinavian welfare states have been less influenced by neo-liberal policy than in other European countries, like the Anglo-Saxon, (Kvist, Fritzell, Hvinden, & Kangas, 2012). It has been stated in Norwegian policy documents that substance prevention still shall base itself on the universal Nordic welfare model, which is characterized by high degree of employment, low wage differentials, high degree of participation and redistribution (Helse& omsorgsdepartementet, St.mld 30 (2011-2012)).

Yet, the emphasis on agency in Nordic policy documents is no guarantee that practices that put constrain on agency do not flourish in Nordic practices. Such constrain is often subtle in its character. Therefore, the fact that the sharpening of the distinction between respectable and non-respectable drinking or other substance use may create just as an impending risk as biomedical risk of substance use often fails to be addressed in policy documents.

However, whereas the issue tends to be ignored in policy documents, it has been broadly explored in social research. Several scholars suggest the role of youths as a new moral underclass (Abrahamson, 2009; Hunt, Evans, & Kares, 2007). Young people, and not at least young females (Berridge, Herring, & Thom, 2009), tend to be portrayed as the most reproachable binge drinkers[14]. In previous historical periods, it was adult females or the classical street drunkards that were ascribed such a role (op cit.). Also Norwegian newspaper articles have for a while tended to put an extra emphasis on the drinking of young females (Aartun & Borud, 2006). The increasing tendency to blame youths is also apparent within

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[14] Binge drinking in most literature refers to the drinking of more alcohol units (in the US 5 units or more) in a row. It seems to overlap with the concept "heavy episodic drinking" (HED). Heavy episodic drinking in a Norwegian context is defined as six or more alcohol units (small bottle of beer, glass of wine) on one occasion more than once per month (World Health Organization, 2012) .

criminal law. Recent Nordic research literature on substance and crime prevention has, for instance, identified a tendency that support aspects and control aspects merge in a way that makes them indiscernible from each other (Malm, 2012). Thus, currents that promote control and currents that promote agency seem to exist side by side.

An understanding for the contradictory character of the current historical era seems to be an element lacking in the discourse on agency. Agency is one of those concepts that have an ambiguous as well as "slippery" character. It has for instance been argued that agency tends to be required from marginalized youths to a greater extent than from "ordinary" youths, because adults basically tend to doubt marginalized youths` capacity for agency (Sulkunen, 2009). A persistent accent on agency may thus in some cases produce "blame-the-victim" tendencies even when they are unintended. On the other hand, as also pointed to by the aforementioned author, stress on agency may be an indication of "laissez-faire" practices. A de-authorization of prevention effort has been going on in recent years due to certain neo-liberal influences. It is, for instance, a tendency in today`s prevention practices that professionals merely function as facilitators, and not as advisers with a certain professional authority (Sulkunen, op cit.). Interestingly, this trend is going on at the same time as expert-based regimes are escalated.

Thus, although Norwegian policy documents are well-intended with their accent on target group agency, a profound understanding of how individual judgment may be improved seems to be missing. In order to achieve that aim it seems necessary for prevention approaches to include reflection on how conflicting political and cultural trends in contemporary society assert themselves on mind-sets and thereby often create a type of "invisible" hurdle for the exertion of genuine agency and judgment around the socially appropriate. In the chapter on relevant academic debates, I will go further into the power issue and look at how power tends to be involved in exertion of agency, reflectivity and judgment of the appropriate social form. I also pursue those issues in relation to the empirical material that the thesis is based on. By means of those angles of attack, this thesis could contribute to the contextualization of indicated prevention into a timelier framework.

General prevention vs. attention towards groups at enhanced risk

As noted above, Norwegian policy documents largely tend to encourage a balance between a high-risk focus and a focus on measures oriented towards the population as a whole. The issue concerning how to balance those concerns is well known in international academic debate. Room, Babor, & Rehm, (2005) seem to have had the ideological functions of having a risk group focus in mind when maintaining that a high risk focus on the individual level could bring about *"rather palliative than preventive"* effects. They argue that public health measures, like tax on alcohol, availability restriction or specific measures against phenomena like drunken driving are more effective and should be prioritized before measures merely directed towards arbitrarily defined risk groups.

The tension between a risk group focus on the one hand and general population focus apparently has its background in what has been described as "the prevention paradox" (Rose, 1985). The prevention paradox implies that adverse statuses are most likely to emerge in the general population at the same time as most effort is devoted to specific risk groups. Even though Rose`s thinking was developed in relation to public health initiatives towards heart disease, the described paradox all the same may apply to substance and crime prevention research and policy development. Roses` primary intention by pointing to the paradox seems to have been to underscore the relativity of both the risk concept and the normalcy concept, and to avoid "either-or" positions in the area. Yet, the effects of public health approaches should at any time be weighed against the effect of risk group approaches (op cit.)

Already before the turn of the millennium the need was stressed for a tighter bridging between general population epidemiology samples on the one hand and diagnostically significant samples on the other hand (Kandel, 1998). Randomized community samples had until then proved incapable of capturing such phenomena to a satisfactory extent (op cit.) Also in a Norwegian literature review on substance research a decade ago (Helse&omsorgsdepartementet, 2003a NOU 4 :2003), it was advertised for more knowledge about the effect of prevention measures aimed at specific risk groups.

The degree to which high-risk groups should attain a particular focus is by and large a question of shifting ideologies and the need in a given society to emphasize certain population groups before others. In practice, it seems hard to keep the balance between the two concerns. For the time being, a focus on high-risk groups seems to be emphasized more than general population approaches, even in Norwegian policy documents. For instance, the Government's plan of early intervention in the substance field (Sosial & Helsedirektoratet, 2007) stresses the need to both observe and assist youths who so far have only exhibited *incipient* substance problems and youths with *apparent* behavioral problems, such as involvement in crime and gang affiliation. All the following categories are the targets of prevention intervention: *"delinquents, gang members, risk youths with minority backgrounds, youth who experiment, youths who are admitted to hospital because of severe intoxication and youth who have developed dependency"* (Sosial & Helsedirektoratet, op cit.:7). Besides, a salient part of governmental approaches to indicated prevention in Norway today has been to identify

children of adults with alcohol or other substance problems or mental health problems and to offer them follow-up (St.mld.30 (2011-2012)).

By focusing on youths that at least on a group level constitutes a risk group, the thesis certainly is signalizing that intervention towards risk groups is warranted. On the other hand, it puts focus on the risk of premature conclusions around the target group. The indeterminacy, which from one angle may be viewed as risky, may from another angle appear as positive. An indeterminate status may, for instance, be viewed as a protection against more adverse statuses. On such a basis, being at high risk may become demystified to a certain extent. I hope that the thesis by avoiding an either-or position around the prevention paradox, may add something to existing literature at this point.

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III) Some concept clarifications

Real life phenomena may be difficult to categorize. The pragmatic-reflexive perspective that the thesis is pursuing is, for instance, is implying that the content of scientific terms is negotiable to a considerable extent. As most of the terms regarding substance use and rule breaking / delinquency are relatively "slippery" and highly culturally conditioned, one is relatively free to define them according to context and situation. A pragmatic-reflexive approach also implicates the transgression of the conventional dichotomies, like the one between individual and society. The perspective thus requires that terms that express absolute certainty or terms with connotations of an "either-or" mind-set are avoided as much as possible.

"Behavioral problems" is an example of a term which has been described as slippery (Nordahl et al., 2005). It may cover most of the risk-prone activities in which the study participants were involved. It may also cover a wide range of statuses because the distinction line between serious and less serious behavioral problems is difficult to draw (Nordahl et al., op cit.). Neither is determination of the cut-off point between less severe and severe problem substance use a straightforward endeavor (St.mld. 30 (2011-2012)). Particularly in adolescence, categorical terms may be inappropriate. For instance, the diagnostic criteria related to the ICD 10 (World Health Organization, 1990) and DSM IV (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) systems for assessments of mental disorders are usually too strict to apply to minors (Wichstrøm & Backe Hansen, 2007). Thus, also when the aim is precision terminology may represent a problem.

Whereas slipperiness may be a liberating factor in many ways, it may also be subject to misuse. This may be the case particularly in a climate that is condemnable towards the un-control implied in behavioral problems or use of substances. A nearby example is the "addiction" concept. Few terms related to the realm of alcohol and drug use have been more misused and misunderstood than this concept (Reith, 2004b). Although substance disorders have become included in the international diagnostic systems, there is no academic consensus around the use of "addiction" as a diagnostic concept (Akers, 1991; Renairman, 2005). For example, not until the 1980s, was cocaine defined as an addictive substance (Akers, op cit.).

As suggested in the introductory section, also the risk concept is ambiguous. On the one hand, the concept of risk may signify an all-evasive phenomenon that nobody can escape. On the other hand, the risk concept is closely related to the prediction perspective. As such, it aims at distinguishing the deviant from the normal in a precise way. In this thesis, I have often put the risk term within quotation marks in order to underscore that it in reality carries significances that are ambiguous. In the chapter where I discuss different academic perspectives of relevance for the topic of this thesis, I go further into the tensions between opinions that exist around the risk concept.

Thus, if terms like "behavioral problems", "risk", "problem substance use" etc. are not defined in accordance with the specific context and theoretical basis of the thesis, misunderstandings about the study participants and not least, stigma because of their maneuvers, may easily arise. This section therefore provides an examination of a wide range of terms that have been utilized in the thesis but which could mean something else in a different context.

Prevention

Prevention effort has been described as the endeavour of "*establishing a buffer at the present against undesired problems in the future*" (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2005). This may appear as a relative neutral definition. Yet, the term prevention in this sense may also take on connotations of the future as controllable and predictable. A definition of prevention as something which is primarily future-bound, might have fit the historical preconditions of industrialism (Dean, 2006). Yet, prevention in this sense does not necessarily fit the preconditions of the late modern epoch. As this thesis aims at underscoring the importance of basing current professional effort on concepts of life shaping that reach beyond merely avoidance of risk, I have been in doubt whether I should employ the term prevention at all.

Many would regard "promotion" as a more appropriate term for what the thesis is about. Health promotion in relation to children and adolescents has been, roughly speaking, defined as optimization of resources in and around the single individual (Gulotta & Bloom, 2003). Certainly thus, promotion more than prevention appears to be oriented towards life shaping processes in the broadest possible sense, while the prevention concept seems more specifically associated with prediction of risk and health behavior. All the same, opinions differ considerably with regard to how promotion should be defined. Although they are not completely incompatible in all respects some maintain that prevention and promotion represent opposite epistemologies (Mæland, 2009), while others, like Ferrer-Wreder et al. (2005) maintain that there is no sharp distinction between them. The latter authors define prevention as a positive and proactive endeavour which together with promotion constitutes an integrated whole. In my opinion, both promotion and prevention seem to be based on the "calculus ethos" and thus on ideas about prevention effort as predominantly expert-based and risk-oriented. As this thesis aims at both capturing target group conceptualizations in an as pure form as possible and questions the notion of risk as something "out there", promotion does not seem appropriate in the current context.

As a consequence, there are no other alternatives than to accept that the term prevention is basically neutral but apt at shifting content along with shifting ideologies or contexts (Sahlin, 2000), or to find terminological substitutes. For instance, "self-management" (Banerji, 2009), seems to be an example of a term that could have been more theoretically appropriate than "substance prevention". "Self-management" in many ways reflects an increasing tendency to emphasize target group expertise, agency and reciprocal support among peers. All the same, "management" may be interpreted as a support of rational choice assumptions, something

which is not quite in line with conclusions drawn in this thesis. Therefore, everything considered, I prefer to use the term "prevention" in those situations when a collective term is needed for efforts that aim at keeping more persistent problems at an arm`s length. It also seems to be a point that concepts in use in research literature shall be comprehendible to broader audiences. "Prevention" is in spite of the mentioned critical remarks a relatively broad term that is commonly understood.

Indicated prevention vs. early intervention

In the description in the introductory section of the current empirical material I stressed that the thesis is above all meant to inform so-called indicated prevention (EMCDDA, 2009). There I also provided a definition in line with the latter literature source. In common usage, however, the term "early intervention" is more likely to be heard, at least in a Norwegian context of substance and crime prevention. "Early intervention" has been defined as *"measures brought into action early in a defined process of problem development"* (Nesvåg, Backer-Grøndahl, Duckert, Enger, & Kraft, 2007 :7).

However, because the problem development of the current study participants may not be described as "defined" in all cases, the term "early intervention" does not necessarily seem suitable for description of professional effort towards the current sample in an appropriate way. In the referred EMCDDA review(op cit.) of relevant research literature from which the definition of indicated prevention is fetched, the term "early intervention" is most often reserved for effort towards individuals who carry certain *"identified strong indicators of substance misuse"* but who *"do not* (yet) *warrant a DSM-IV or ICD-10 diagnosis"*. In other words, the term should preferably be used when it is likely that the targeted persons without further intervention will develop diagnostically significant statuses.

Another reason why the term "early intervention" is avoided in this thesis is that the use of it evokes different associations in different contexts. During my period as a PhD candidate I, for instance, learned that "early intervention" within a child and adolescent mental health context mostly was reserved for professional effort towards toddlers or children in their pre-teens, thus meaning intervention towards those problems that occur "early in life". As this thesis is about adolescents, it seems important to employ terminology that after all is universal.

Rule breaking / delinquency

Rule breaking / delinquency is a mode of expression that encompasses two phenomena both of which signify deviance from commonly accepted moral codes at some level. Moreover, as there is no agreed-upon cut-off point that distinguishes the one from the other, both terms may be identified as points along a continuum. In a sample like the current, we are for instance likely to deal with the whole span of rule breaking from the widespread and "next to normal" forms such as sneaking on the tram, to offenses of the kind that get treated by the mediation board or by the conventional criminal justice system in more extreme cases. Rule breaking

like "sneaking on the tram" was for instance reported by 34 percent of the participants in the most recent round of the "Young in Norway" study (Øia & Fauske, 2010).

Neither are the terms that refer to more adverse kinds of rule breaking, like "delinquency" or "crime", according to Øia & Fauske (op cit.) clear concepts. Because of the unclarities described here, I try as much as possible to use the terms "rule breaking/ delinquency" in conjunction. Sometimes I also refer to "minor delinquency", which is a term that is apt at indicating less serious kinds of deviance from legal codes. I use the term "crime" as well, despite its connotations of relative serious deviance from legal codes. The reason for this is first and foremost that "crime and substance prevention" is an established concept often seen in literature.

Substances, substance use, problem substance use

When the terms "substances" and "substance use" in the current text are employed without further definition, they are meant to cover both alcohol and drug use. In English usage a collective term for both that is sometimes seen in research literature is "intoxicants". The term "intoxicants" seems to be compatible with collective terms like *"rusmidler"* in Norwegian language, but it is not well known in broader contexts. Out of the concern for language variation, I sometimes use the formulations "alcohol and other substances" or "alcohol and other drugs", which are quite common formulations in substance research literature. In those cases where it has seemed appropriate to refer to more comprehensive activities, "alcohol and other substances and rule breaking/ delinquency" would be a too elaborated formulation, although attempts at making it shorter negatively affects its preciseness.

Neither is the boundary between "substance use" and "problem substance use" clear-cut. Some employ the term "problem substance use" on any use that is illegal. I have reserved the term for a kind of use that is known as putting both health and social inclusion at risk, being it acute or slow in its potential effects. The relative normalization of "lighter" substances (cannabis etc.), in spite of low prevalence and the non-legality of its consumption, may in my opinion justify that cannabis use both may and may not be put under a problem label.

When I sometimes employ the term "problem substance use", I thus refer both to occasional use and to use that is more regular. Yet, I have tried to avoid the term as much as possible, as it may evoke associations of more persistent problems than was the case in the current sample.

I also have avoided the use of formulations with connotations of inevitable continuity, like "incipient" or "initial" substance problems. As I see it, the diffusion of such modes of expression illustrates that there are few terms in Western language to describe non-direction or stagnation. Both mind-sets and language from Western culture tend to reflect notions of linearity (Archer, 2004). Also, the term "experimentation" in relation to substance use practices may be criticized. At least in some contexts, "experimentation" may designate a first

phase in a problem development that is "bound" to happen. Besides, the term also seems to reflect the notion that quite conscious and deliberate consideration lies behind the use. A topic that I will return to in subsequent parts of the thesis is the relative irrationality involved in much substance use.

The relative connection between the terms rule breaking / delinquency and problem substance use

The aim in prediction research is to as precisely as possible identify *"subgroups and their distinct problems for targeted concerns"* (Sharland, 2006 : 248). In a context in which prediction of problems or provision of problem-specific interventions is meant to be carried out, encompassing the whole activity complex of rule breaking/ delinquency *and* problem substance use thus may be problematic for paradigmatic reasons.

On an epidemiological basis it is for instance not given that "behavioral problems" as a collective term for the complex of activities that the current sample represents includes "problem substance use". The terms "behavioral problems" as well as "conduct problems" or "anti-social behaviors" are terms that both may and may not encompass problem substance use. The extent to which these phenomena are viewed in conjunction is somewhat dependent on measures and assessment procedures (Storvoll, 2004). In addition, the temporal order between behavioral problems and problem substance use is statistically uncertain. For instance, behavioral problems are more likely to predict problem substance use than the other way round. Youths who do not exhibit any sign of externalizing or so-called "anti-social" behavior may, for instance, all the same misuse substances (Wichstrøm & Backe Hansen, 2007). Besides, cannabis use in adolescence and early adulthood may entail subsequent involvement in criminal activity, but this is not necessarily the result of a general involvement in crime. Rather, involvement among Norwegian users of cannabis is generally exclusively related to the cannabis use (Pedersen & Skardhamar, 2010). Finally, some substance use is also legal. In relation to mere alcohol use it would not be appropriate without further reflection to put such use under the same label as rule breaking or delinquent behaviors.

There are also ethical objections to the appropriateness of viewing the described phenomena in conjunction. One has for instance been warned against seeing problem substance use and rule breaking / delinquency as an expression of an underlying, common syndrome (Wichstrøm & Backe Hansen, op cit.).

On the whole, specialization of problem areas into specified and unbridgeable areas or sectors is in increase in contemporary society (Sulkunen, 2009). From a perspective that aims at transgressing conventional boundaries between phenomena, and in which knowledge and power is viewed as intertwined, however, the splitting of rule breaking / delinquency into distinct areas is unfavourable.

One reason for scepticism around terminology that contributes to maintenance of sector boundaries is of a political kind. It has, for instance, been suggested that vested interests are behind the splitting of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use into themes that are separately addressed (Parker, 2003). Integrative analyses even may even be sabotaged for such reasons (op cit.). The process in which crime became a subject area segregated from related areas of knowledge with its own institutions has above all been described by Foucault, but also by Laclau & Mouffe (In Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999).

The selected examples above suggest that if collective terms like "behavioral problems" are to be used overall activity complex that the current target group represents, the arbitrariness around the use has to be kept in mind.

In relation to the current thesis, it was viewed as most important to address the whole spectre of problems that professionals who work with youths on a primary level are likely to encounter. In the practical reality in the communities, scientific or ethical arguments against a joint view on phenomena like rule breaking, delinquency, dependency and problem substance seemed to matter less than they could have done in a setting of specialized service provision. The recruiters of participants for the current study, all of whom operated on a primary, sub-specialist level did not seem to make a problem of the fact that the sample reflected risk factor diversity. They seemed to have an immediate sense of which type of adolescents I was trying to recruit for the study, although one may say that the sample seemingly consisted of "odds and ends". Primary-level practice and specialized practice may thus diverge in their view on the need of conceptual and practical specificity.

In my eyes, it is the *purpose* of the dual focus here in question that seems to be the decisive factor with regard to how much it is warranted. Literature stemming from restorative justice, for instance, suggests that the bridging of problem substance use and crime is utile when the focus is twisted away from etiology issues and the strength of potential statistical associations, and rather is directed towards the effects that the complex of phenomena has got on the social environment (Shenk & Zehr, 2001). Both phenomena are, for instance, inclined to cause problems for other people or to disturb "ordinary" social interaction (Nordahl et al., 2005). Last, but not least, adolescents who are involved in problem substance use and rule breaking/ delinquency are met with approximately the same informal sanctions in the community. The youths in the current sample might also have been regarded by their primary-level recruiters as having some of the same challenges and some of the same needs for assistance in their life shaping processes. Given this interrelatedness, collective labels like "behavioral problems" on the complex of the activities that the study participants were more or less involved in could be warranted.

The appropriateness of the terms "behavioral problems", "antisocial problems" and "externalizing problems" in the current context

The problematic aspects of the term "behavioral problems" have in the preceding text been described from several perspectives. In my opinion, the term "behavioral problems", although it may cover everyday reality in the communities, is somewhat problematic in the current context because it takes attention away from participants` capacity of making meaning and exerting purposeful action, although not always on the conscious level.

The concept of "behavioral problems" may simply have connotations of something that solely may be ascribed to inherent features in the adolescents in question and not to the mutuality in the interplay between adolescents and the social contexts in which they are involved. Such considerations have made me speak of the phenomena in less general and more concrete ways.

Because I try to avoid terminology with connotations to the current phenomena as solely individual and not fundamentally social, I have also found it difficult to use the term "anti-social". This is a term which is often used in literature on behavioral problems and which is also included in the previously referred international diagnostic systems.

The term "anti-social" seems to describe opposition to established norms. Certainly, some of the activities that the current adolescents are involved in may be anti-social in their effect. Nevertheless, "anti-social" seems to suggest a strong association between "rule breaking/delinquency" on the one hand and sub-cultural affiliation on the other, an association which lacks a firm empirical basis (Hauge, 1980). . To the extent that sub-cultures exist in contemporary society, the boundaries that separate them from other prevailing cultures in society at large have become vaguer. This is a recurring topic in the theoretical section of the thesis. Therefore, I will not go further into the problematic in this part.

The problems that the youths in the sample reported to have with law and rule abidance may also correspond to descriptions in literature based on self-reported so-called "externalizing behavioral problems" (Wichstrøm & Backe-Hansen, 2007).

The cited authors describe self-reported problems of the externalizing kind as visible modes of behavior that are primarily directed towards others. A characteristic of young people with externalizing behavioral problems as described by Wichstrøm and Backe-Hansen is, for instance, that the young people normally do not perceive their behaviors as problematic. Rather, parents, teachers, peers or help services are perceived as the source of the problems. Crime and delinquency as well as more general difficulties to meet common rules of conduct are phenomena that are often associated with externalizing behavioral problems (op cit.). As will be demonstrated in the section in which the data are presented, this description may be appropriate in many ways. Exactly because of the tendency to blame one`s surroundings

before self, there is a risk of getting socially excluded on the basis of involvement in problem substance use and delinquency.

All the same, "externalizing behavioral problems" may not be the most appropriate term in the current context. Firstly, opinions may differ around *why* the behaviors may be described as externalizing. Secondly, the sample as a whole seemed unlikely to correspond to the stricter criteria for "externalizing problems" which are implied in the international diagnosis systems described by the above-mentioned authors. In order to fit the criteria in the diagnostic systems, the problems must, for instance, have been observed over time (Wichstrøm & Backe Hansen, op cit.). Although this criterion might have been met by single participants, I have as much as possible avoided the label of "externalizing behavioral problems" because it evokes associations about the sample as having more severe problems than they really have.

"Behavior" and "behavioral" vs. "activity", "maneuvers" etc.

The term "behavior" is in itself problematic. Quite often, the term seems to exclusively refer to external aspects of human activity, and not to the mind-sets or discourses that such activities may derive from. Neither does it refer to the social context in which it emerges.

  "Life arrangements" or "activities" are in my opinion terms that are more appropriate for description of human action as fundamentally collaborative in its character. Each individual act is merely a part of a larger complex of social and cultural interchange from which the single acts cannot be isolated (Leontjev, 2002). In the subsequent text I, therefore, have tried as often as possible to employ expressions like "social practice", "life arrangements", "activity", "maneuvers" etc. instead of mere "behavior".   In particular, terms like "maneuvers" or "maneuvering" appear to me to be appropriate in the specific context, as they seem dynamic at the same time as they express indeterminacy by carrying connotations of trial and error; consciousness and unconsciousness. On the whole, the way in which we learn and develop is mostly through actions that are embodied. As shown in subsequent chapters of the thesis, theory on embodied action is a very central basis for the understanding of the indeterminate aspects of the situation in which the targeted adolescents find themselves in. Similar assumptions seem to lie behind the expressions "knowledge as embodiment" (Law, 2004).

Adolescence

The term "adolescence" as it was used originally, that is from the beginning of the 20th century on, designated the teens as a life phase that in principle is isolated from historical and cultural reality (Øia & Fauske, 2010). Later on, significations of the term have become looser and tend to reflect a view on the teens as a process in which liberation from standard adult norms on the one hand and adaptation to the most legitimate adult roles on the other hand tend to co-occur (op cit.). Also lexical definitions suggest that adolescence is a highly uncertain phenomenon due to its volatile character. Overall, no agreed-upon definition seems to exist of

where it starts and where ends. [15] As noted by Øia & Fauske, even the term "youths" is also a very imprecise concept in contemporary society, as it to an increasing extent also encompasses young adults. Besides, it not only refers to age but also to a state of mind (op cit.).

In this thesis, the term "adolescence" is used in the looser sense described above. Moreover, terms like "youths" and "adolescents" are used interchangeably. I also use "teenagers" to a certain extent for the sake of variation.

Discourse

"Discourse" is a term that covers a wide range of meanings. Its significance may differ from discipline to discipline. Winther, Jørgensen & Philips (1999:9) suggest the following minimum definition of the term: *«a fixed way of describing and understanding the world»*[16] . When the term is used within the framework of critical, post-structural social theory, like in the works of Foucault, the term has got undertones of a highly constrained way of defining conditions of opportunity (op cit.). In this thesis, "discourse" is mostly used in the wider sense.

Target group

My use of the term "target group" may also run counter to the pragmatic-reflexive epistemology that is underpinning the thesis. According to common usage, "target group" is a term that first and foremost belongs to prediction research, in which accurate targeting of groups and aims is important. This may in many ways be a valid reason for not using it. On the other hand, I dare say that "target group" is not a term that is perceived as particularly value-laden in a Norwegian cultural context. Participants of a study that are selected on the basis of specific criteria are necessarily "targeted".

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[15] Adolescence according to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolescence

(From Latin: *adolescere* meaning "to grow up") refers to the physical and psychological human development that generally occurs between puberty and legal adulthood (age of majority). Scholars do not agree upon a precise definition of adolescence, but there seems to be consensus that chronological age alone is no exact marker of adolescence.

Adolescent according to http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/adolescent

1. Growing to manhood or womanhood; youthful.

2. Having the characteristics of adolescence or of an adolescent.

Synonyms:

1. immature, young. **3.** Youth, teenager, minor.

[16] My translation

Modernity concepts

Modernity, at least as it has been described by authors like (Giddens, 1990), Bauman (1998) etc. tend to be explained as the relatively long historical period in which tradition and authoritatively based decisions no longer has served as the self-evident basis for individual life arrangements. Because the post-industrial era has become quite more complex and unpredictable than modernity during industrialism, some social theorists even speak of "post modernity" or "second modernity" (Hviid Nielsen, 2010). Giddens (op cit.) has on his side argued that such a transition from one phase of modernity to another may hardly be so abrupt to the extent that a "before" and an "after" may be identified. Some aspects of the current era still resemble previous phases of modernity and some aspects are new. Giddens, therefore, is speaking of "late modernity". When needed in discussions in this thesis, "late modernity" is employed instead of "post- modernity".

Timely

As mentioned in the introductory paragraphs, one aim of the thesis has been to contribute to a "timelier" framework for substance and crime prevention towards indicated adolescents. Yet, the above-mentioned scepticism of Giddens against periodization is highly relevant also in relation to the term "timely". Foucault (2003) has, for instance, criticized the principle of being "timely" in the sense that history is read from the privileged vantage point of the present. According to Foucault, one epoch thus cannot be identified with only one trend. History is full of conflicting perspectives, which all tend to have more or less an impact on how society is arranged and individuals lead their lives. The above description of why Giddens (1990) prefers the concept "late modernity» before other concepts also seems to be based on the same kind of assumption. According to Giddens, one should instead of assuming sequential order carefully note that modernity involves processes that are both dialectic and non-sequential. Neither is it given that those features that primarily constitute the different phases of modernity necessarily occur in close conjunction (op cit.). "Timely" in the current text implicates different angles of attack, all of which are supposed to have impact on contemporary mind-sets. Generally, angles of attack are presented without giving primacy to one before the other.

Agency

The thesis employs an agency concept in line with definitions in existential psychology. According to May (1971), being a free agent means to exploit one's own potential but within those limitations on the life course which in some way or other are present in any context. The freedom vs. conformity dichotomy is thus suspended. In other words, we do not deal with freedom in its most radical sense, but neither do we deal with a conformity of the kind that is assumed to "absorb" the individual; a view on individuation that first and foremost has been represented by the philosophy of Heidegger (in May, op cit.)

IV) Review of relevant literature and theory

How I worked to trace relevant literature

In order to get a general overview of literature on substance and crime prevention towards youths, regardless of which paradigm it stemmed from, I went through a wide range of literature sources. The general scarcity of literature in this area was apparent, particularly with regard to effect studies. To the extent that literature in the area existed at all, it tended to be oriented towards general prevention issues or deal with prevention measures towards youths who already had developed persistent patterns of problem substance use (Nesvåg et al., 2007).

The above-mentioned authors suggest that the reason why indicated prevention towards youths has not been more focused on in research may be due to the fact that early childhood prevention has more appeal to both policy-makers and researchers. Even in a world characterized by discontinuity in many respects, theories that assume an unremitting continuity between negative early childhood experiences and deteriorated future wellbeing still have a strong position (Mc Leod & Almazan, 2004). In this light, adolescence may be characterized as already "too late" for prevention effort.

However, the lack of appropriate literature may also be due to a general reluctance in research to work with indeterminate phenomena. Besides, researchers may be sceptical towards having focus on tendencies that are most likely pass on their own. As noted in the previous section such a focus may cause stigma.

Scarcity of literature that could be apt at eliciting indicated prevention was, however, not the only problem related to the tracing of relevant literature. To the extent that relevant literature existed, it was also hard to trace in electronic databases. At the outset, when I did not quite know where to start, I tended to employ search terms like "substances", "crime", "offending", "youths", "adolescents", "prevention" "early intervention", "drugs", "alcohol", "crime", etc. These searches usually engendered a wide range of literature derived from epidemiology studies. Hardly anything emerged that could elicit how a focus on life shaping issues in general and individual judgment of the socially appropriate form in particular could strengthen prevention effort. I also searched for literature on "help seeking", "participation", and "resilience" etc. without really convincing results. As broadly noted under the paragraphs on concept clarifications, the indeterminate character of the phenomena makes the study thematic identifiable under a wide range of only partially overlapping labels. Because I also wanted to trace literature that viewed problem substance use and rule breaking/ delinquency in conjunction I had some extra difficulties. Literature on the one thematic often excluded literature on the other and vice versa.

It was strenuous and time consuming to sift through an overwhelmingly abundant and only partially appropriate body of literature that proved to be somewhat less than fruitful.

A general problem, but which also has been mentioned in reviews of "what works" literature (Nesvåg et al., 2007), is that it is difficult to get an impression of the content of articles merely on the basis of their titles. The titles of articles and book chapters do not always precisely convey the thematic content. In my case, a wide range of titles seemed to be relevant at first sight, but proved to be fairly irrelevant after a more thorough reading.

Reference practices also become difficult because of the described lack of coherence. When I refer to research literature in this thesis I, therefore, sometimes refer to literature that mainly applies to substance use issues, not to issues related to rule breaking/ minor delinquency. On other occasions, I refer to criminology literature or other literature that has a main focus on rule breaking / minor delinquency although it is uncertain whether it is appropriate for the whole complex of activities addressed. Although I found good reasons for viewing the two thematic areas in conjunction, my use of literature may thus confuse the reader and hinder the validity of conclusions in some cases. Yet, there were few alternative ways of doing it as far as I could see.

Little by little, I found that I had to give up on getting a full overview over relevant literature. In my opinion, a full overview is not an apparent aim as long as I do not view knowledge as accumulative. Still, in order to make sure that the thesis really adds something to existing knowledge one feels a certain urge to be updated on "all there is". Not least, the fact that I was a bi-faculty PhD candidate, working with highly interdisciplinary issues influenced my wish to have a broad integrative backdrop for my analysis.

In hindsight, I actually think that the time spent sifting through the abundance of epidemiology literature was actually relatively worthwhile. The relevance of certain perspectives often does not come to light until they are discussed on the background of opposite perspectives. Viewed from this angle, only fantasy puts limits on literature searches.
In particular, the results from epidemiological research, which I point to in the introduction, were valuable. Among other things, it was the doubt that those results generated about the relevance of risk calculation as a basis for prevention effort in the area that made me orient myself more towards individual judgment as the major issue.

Yet, the most relevant literature was found within realms of research that has not been explicitly defined as prevention research. Keywords often recurring in anthropology and sociology literature about young people`s general life shaping challenges and that carry aspects of issues related to individual judgment and meaning-making, were also tried out and proved to be relevant. Particularly, literature from culturally oriented youth research and cultural criminology proved to be appropriate. For instance, I discovered studies derived from within cultural criminology that were thematically fairly close to mine, and therefore useful to draw on.

However, neither literature from cultural sociology, cultural criminology nor anthropology was always easy to trace. The phenomena in this knowledge area are manifold and complex and independent on those universal word codes that are likely to occur in epidemiology

literature. The use of key terms like "life shaping", or "judgement», could significantly have reduced the number of dead ends during literature searches. However, in the initial phases of the research process I had no real sense of "life shaping" or "judgment" as headlines to my work. Consciousness about their relevance was something that grew along the way during the research process.

After I took on a more pragmatic view on the literature, I found that those book or article titles that tended to show up at unexpected places often proved to be more fruitful than the titles I found by means of more systematic search procedures. Research may be an unconscious undertaking at times (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Thanks to some unexpected recurring themes, I grew aware of the fact that I, above all, needed contributions that could help with the contextualizing and theorizing of the data that was generated during focus group sessions. Literature of a more explanatory or confirmatory kind was after all not what I really needed. On the whole, there exists a wide range of possible sources and view points, all of which could contribute to a more conscious and determined view on the indeterminacy that was supposed to characterize the life shaping of adolescents in the current sample. As stated by Yin (2009): the point with literature reviews is not necessarily to get an overview of all that has been written on a topic but to get some ideas on how to develop the most appropriate issues.

Among the electronic bases from which I fetched much relevant research literature were Sociological abstracts, Social work abstracts, PubMed, Psych-info, Psych-Articles, Google Scholar, etc. Literature to cover the theoretical frame of reference within which the data have been analysed was mainly found in BibSys, the Norwegian university library base.

Current academic debates of relevance for the topic

In this section I will discuss three perspectives which may have something to contribute with regard to substance and crime prevention towards indicated adolescents as all of them are involved in predominant academic debates. Yet, not all of the perspectives are necessarily equally relevant for the shaping of a *timely* framework for prevention.

Firstly, I will discuss the prediction perspective. It aims at creating more certainty around the long-term outcomes of activities that are currently held as a threat to future wellbeing. The perspective rests on the notion that there is an inevitable continuity between current life arrangements and their future outcomes unless expert-based effort is invested. It is the prediction perspective that above all seems to underpin prevailing professional efforts in the area, regardless of the increasing complexity in contemporary society and the alleged irrelevance of prediction. Although prevention based on individual judgment is opposed in many ways to prevention based on prediction, we live in a world where we cannot completely escape from the mind-set underpinning prediction. At least we need to have it as a backdrop for other ways of conceptualizing prevention.

Secondly, I will discuss the contingency perspective, in which it is stressed that we can know nothing for certain in a complex and unpredictable world. Therefore, each individual must develop a qualified judgment based on individual experience and on knowledge that fits the specific cultural context to which he or she belongs.

Thirdly, but not quite independent of the contingency perspective, I am going to discuss the perspective of social constraint. It focuses on the limitations but also the opportunities for life shaping implied in social interaction and power relations. By presenting these perspectives and discussing them in relation to each other, I hope to shed light on which of the perspectives is the most appropriate. Both the extent to which the perspectives shed light on the empirical material in a timely way and the extent to which they may inform timely professional effort in the current area will be considered.

The perspectives mentioned above are all closely related to currents in modernity. The process of modernity has been summed up as a process of "*liberation from traditional and particularistic ties*" (Sulkunen, 2009).

Whereas our pre-modern forefathers had no other basis for life conduct than to rely on fate or lead their lives in line with previous experience, modern man has not only a significant impact on his own life course, but is encouraged to try out the unknown. Modern man has also got the ultimate responsibility for future outcomes of present life arrangements. It was the great discoveries of the 16th century and the prerequisites for globalization and standardization that were brought about in the wake of them that made modernity possible (see Giddens, 1990). . In relatively homogenous modern societies, both the assumption that all people are alike in certain salient respects and the assumption that science was able to control life shaping in a direct way were strong.

Consumerism with its emphasis on general purchasing power and broad accommodation of individual lifestyle choices has brought modernity further. The influence of consumerism during the last decades has, for instance, significantly contributed to the acceleration of individualist tendencies. In this thesis, consumerism is viewed as having one of the most permeable influences on the issues relevant for indicated substance and crime prevention. Not least, it has brought about change in the view on risk and its calculability. As products of modernity, all the mentioned perspectives count on risk in some sense, either in the positive sense of "chance", in the sense of incalculability or as something that may be calculated but be kept under control provided qualified procedures.

However, a much-disputed theme in relation to modernity theory seems to be the degree to which the *"liberation from traditional and particularistic ties"* is a reality, even for people in the secularized world. Some argue that the objective basis for power imbalance and social inequality has eroded considerably. In this light, the reason why hierarchically based power still has a strong impact on the life shaping process is mainly the tendency in most people to stick to habitual patterns even when they are not bound to do so. Bourdieu (1990, 1995) is, for instance, a theorist who more than anyone has emphasized this.

In contrast to this, others will argue that the objective basis for a free life shaping in terms of economic and structural opportunity is still fairly limited in a quite tangible way. Therefore, not all theorists agree with Baumann (2007:4) who has proclaimed late modernity as an era in which "*loyalties* (are) *abandoned without regret"*.

Indeed, what kind of standpoint we choose regarding these issues will influence the extent to which we emphasize agency and individual judgment as the most central part of substance and crime prevention on an indicated level.

The three perspectives mentioned above not only deviate from each other with regard to how far-reaching the liberation process in the current historical period actually is. They also represent different epistemologies. It follows both from the genealogical approach to history of Foucault in general and from Giddens` description of the late modern society in particular (see the explanation of "timely" in the definition part) that conflicting currents tend to co-exist or even overlap within any figuration of society. The reason why the perspectives of prediction, contingency and social constraint are set up against each other in this thesis is primarily analytical, but the need to have a joint view on them is also given in term of historical preconditions. It seems important to underscore this, because the presentation below could otherwise seem a little overdone.

In the subsequent paragraphs, I will try to describe the three perspectives one by one with regard to their contribution to the thematic of the thesis and their limitations with regard to a perspective which is primarily based on individual life shaping and the exertion of individual judgment.

The prediction perspective

The wish to be "on the safe side" in the encounter with a relatively unpredictable future seems to be a strong motif for the activities carried out within the prediction perspective. "Risk" in this perspective is defined as "the probability of an outcome" (Kraemer, Stice, Kazdin, Offord, & Kupfer, 2001), something which may seem neutral. All the same, by emphasizing what Beck (2009) has called the ethos of the "probability calculus" it opposes the significance of risk as "chance". Within a frame of "probability calculus", only the kind of theory that is based on a strict empirical logic may be adept at preventing incipient problems from becoming worse. The indeterminacy which characterizes adolescents who find themselves somewhere in between standard moral norms and deviance from them will in this light most likely be viewed as a predominantly negative phenomenon.

Prediction, industrialism and post industrialism

The prediction perspective, which is underpinning most prevention effort also of today is said to have emerged with industrialism (Dean, 2006). According to Beck (2009), the fears that are involved in the modern concept were kept at bay during industrialism thanks to those historical conditions implied in it that allowed for a high level of political consensus and for relatively standardized conceptualizations of "good moral". A solid basis for a research tradition in which identification of universal traits of substance use patterns across cultural boundaries, independent of time and place (see for instance Kandel & Jessor, 2002), and the classification of them in order to study their relative distribution between them over time was thus established. Consequently, there was great optimism about the possibility to predict future outcomes of current life arrangements and to let the knowledge derived from it positively affect the target groups involved.

Even the long-term effects of highly indeterminate phenomena like social interaction and the relation between structures and individuals became subject to prediction during industrialism (Sahlin, 2000).

Interestingly, however, those tendencies that constitute a particular "prevention science" (Hunt et al., 2007, etc.) and which above all may be characterized by a predominantly negative risk concept, first began to grow at a period in time when the preconditions for the classical, industrialist prediction perspective began to wither. It was, for instance, not until the 1990s that the preoccupation with potential individual and social future problems emerged to the extent that characterizes much prevention policy of today (Sahlin, 2000, France, 2008). Until the 1990s, according to Sahlin, professional prevention effort was less instrumental and less based on aggregated knowledge on individuals than today. The focus was rather on general life shaping issues like socialization. The life-shaping topic as a basis for substance and crime prevention is, therefore, not brand new, but rather a reoccurring kind of principle.

The emergence of a distinct prevention science, accompanied by pessimism and a predominantly negative focus on risk is, for instance, apparent in the previously referred definition of prevention as an effort which is made in order to "*establish a buffer at the present against undesired problems in the future*" (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2005).

The emergence of a prevention science and the way in which it is express seems largely to correspond to the way Beck has described how the notion of calculable risk has survived in spite of the lack of a firm epistemological basis for it (see Introduction). In order to still keep phenomena determinable and calculable that in reality have become increasingly indeterminable, prevention science requires an overall, coherent framework. It, for instance, appears as highly important to get to know the character of the undesired problems, how they develop and how they could be identified at an as early stage as possible. On the basis of already accumulated scientific knowledge, risk factors are not only identified, however. Their intensity, durability and their statistical relationship with other risk factors are also examined. Adverse health statuses like substance dependence or delinquent patterns are regarded as highly probable outcomes of identified risk in the present unless experts actively do something to control and minimize it. The tendency in prediction research to exclude other knowledge sources than those that have been developed on the basis of randomized and controlled effect studies has also been strong. In a perspective of prediction only those prevention measures that have proven effective according to this strict logic may be accepted. Little is left to fate or serendipity, with the result that those cases in which things in spite of all do develop in more favourable directions are paid less attention.

Because both the classical prediction paradigm and prevention science more specifically aim at representing generalized and universalized truths, it may be compared to what Gadamer (1989) has called "science about things". A "science about things" is opposed to a science based on experience.

If historical time is to be taken into consideration when regarding the three perspectives here at issue, it seems crucial to look at the reasons why prevention science in the shape we know it today began to prosper at the mentioned period in history.

It looks as if the emergence of prevention science first and foremost may be explained by the emergence of "risk society" (Beck 1992, 2009). "Risk society" is a term that not only refers to the general anxiety involved in modernity. According to Beck (op cit.), "risk society" is also the result of phenomena that have been particularly apparent during the last decades: intensification of the global economy and the consequent vulnerability of the nation state, global terrorism, the threat from global catastrophes etc. In short, they are all tendencies that affect all humankind and not only the less privileged. Not only are the tendencies new in many respects, but they also represent the proof that science has relatively little to contribute in those areas in which it previously appeared to be supreme. Certainly, it has been doubted that the impact of globalism has been as radical as Beck is suggesting (Garrett, 2004). Anyhow, one may suggest that because the future is perceived as more opaque and unpredictable than ever, the optimism that existed on behalf of science during industrialism

has been reduced in the post-industrialist era. Certain reassurances, in terms of a risk discourse that reifies risk are needed. Risk as reified in this sense has been described by Beck as *"statistically describable and hence "calculable" event types that can be subsumed under supra-individual compensation and avoidance of rules"* (Beck, 2009: 7).

Prediction in light of the "the diversity turn"

Regardless of the characteristics attached to the prediction perspective in the previous paragraphs, the perspective inevitably gets subjected to the changeability of the contemporary era. The so-called "diversity turn" in epidemiology (Kraemer et al., 2001) may, for instance, be viewed as a twist in those research practices that previously were unambiguously based on universality and determinacy. The authors cited illustrate the "diversity turn" by pointing to changes in the classical nature-nurture conflict around genetics. Whilst the "old" way of thinking about this conflict gave primacy to causality and to the influence of genetic factors, bi-directional influences between genetic and environmental factors in the contemporary era are counted on to an increasing extent. Not least, research on "the social brain" (see Adolphs, 2009 etc.) is an example of research that has devoted much attention to bi-directional influences. Also, prevention science seems affected by the diversity turn. For instance, Kraemer et al.(op cit.) underscore that even when it comes to the etiology of those disorders that are clear-cut enough to meet criteria in the diagnostic systems, it is increasingly acknowledged that the same complex most often is constituted by a wide range of risk factors between which there is an intrinsic interplay. The authors conclude that the linear models in statistics that imply mere accumulation of risk factors for such reasons have little to contribute when it comes to understanding of problem etiology. Besides, they are hardly precise enough to constitute a basis for accurate prevention effort.

The part of prevention science that has been more specifically engaged with problem substance use issues seems to be influenced by a diversity "wave". A more dynamic view on risk has been promoted over the years (Kandel, 1998). There has, for instance, been an increased use in prevention science of mediation models. A strong wish has also been expressed to view etiology and treatment for adolescent substance abuse in close relation to each other (Baer, MacLean, & Marlatt, 1998). In order to achieve this, more knowledge on differential use of classes of substances etc. has been advertised for (Kandel & Jessor, 2002). Moreover, more dynamic assessment procedures have been introduced. Dimensional risk assessment approaches tend nowadays to be preferred before more categorical approaches (Storvoll & Krange, 2003). Not least, the use of prospective studies has been in increase the last 15-20 years; an approach which provides more insight into diversity than the classical cross sectional approaches. Prospective studies in the area have the advantage that they may capture knowledge on occasional substance use and on how people tend to move in and out of use patterns (Baer et al., op cit.).

What are the specific contributions of the prediction perspective to the current thematic?

The powerful logic that is underpinning the prediction perspective cannot, without further consideration, be dismissed as inutile, even though it runs counter to the aim of the thesis which is to establish a more "relaxed" attitude towards indeterminacy and non-directionality, at least in the first place. The agenda of the prediction perspective to make the indeterminate as determinable as possible may be fair enough. Getting hold of one risk factor in one problem area may positively affect wellbeing in other life areas (Storvoll, 2004). Given the awareness that *"statistics is the aggregate product of individual action"* (Reith, 2004 a), statistics may be one of the more valuable sources of insight into both "objective" and "subjective" aspects of life shaping   (Bourdieu, 1990). Instruments that assist the drawing of long, universal lines may also be important as a kind of guideline at the individual level when used cautiously. Longitudinal approaches may, for instance, identify those periods in the life course when people in general are most susceptible to onset and intensification of problems related to health or social inclusion. Particularly when longitudinal studies provide novel insight into contemporary adolescent mind-sets, at the same time as they describe some more general statistical tendencies (see for instance Aldridge et al., 2011), they seem to have much to contribute also to life shaping based on individual judgment.

All the same, the most apparent contribution from the prediction perspective in relation to the aim of this thesis is the literature derived from it that creates scepticism around principles like determinability and calculability. There seems to be little doubt that the general scientific interest towards sudden, unexpected and positive occurrences, described as *"random developmental noise"* (Sampson & Laub, 2005), has grown considerably in recent years. Attention towards the role of "turning points" as a relatively natural occurrence has also grown as seen in research on crime and problem substance use (Teruya & Hser, 2010). According to the latter authors, the concept of "turning points" is referring to *"an alteration or deflection in a long-term pathway or trajectory that was initiated at an earlier point in time"* (p.16). A criterion put up by these authors is that the change must be of a permanent character.

At least partially, structural changes may explain the increased unpredictability. Young people do not any longer attend work life or settle down at an early stage of young adulthood, but generally delay it until later on. At least, the life style patterns with regard to when one settles down have become more heterogeneous. As a consequence, methods seems to be needed that may capture the shifting character in lifestyle patterns.

Because of this novel interest towards discontinuity, the strong determinism that seems to have prevailed in prevention science to a considerable extent tends to weaken. On the whole, the acknowledgement has grown that there are multiple pathways to adulthood that are both of a positive and negative kind (Cleary, Fitzgerald, & Nixon, 2004). Pathways *out* of risky situations have also become more known (Jahnukainen, 2007).

The previously referred study on the continuity of adolescent heavy, episodic drinking (HED) into young adulthood (Norström & Pape, 2012) seems to suggest that temporal order with regard to peaks and declines in substance prevalence patterns is about to shift. The majority of the participants in the study that reported problem alcohol use as young adults had been drinking little or nothing when they were adolescents. Inversely, the majority of those who drank considerable amounts of alcohol as adolescents have not developed subsequent problem drinking as young adults. Norström & Pape, on this basis, suggest that it might be a waste of effort to establish preventive measures against general adolescent heavy, episodic drinking. In longitudinal research on newer patterns of illegal substance use it has been noted that experimentation is not bound to develop into durable patterns or deterioration. Having given up illegal use because of a bad experience after the first try or after a few single occasions seems to be a phenomenon that is more common now than before (Aldridge et al., 2011). Thus, "prediction" may in the future not only imply prediction of adverse potentialities but also positive prospects.

Thus, in a more reflexive view on risk, risk cannot be denied. As an example of how strongly we take linearity, finiteness and universality for given even in the increasingly diverse contemporary society, Baumann (1998) has pointed to concepts like "development", "convergence", "consensus" etc. Another example that represents such a principle is the trajectory concept (Bourdieu, 1998), which is frequently used in prevention science. Hannah Arendt (1971), a philosopher who apparently has been inspired by the impact that the Einsteinian revolution has had on modern thinking, has pointed to other aspects of the same tendency; such as a sequential view on time makes us think that any human activity has got a definite and calculable end. Our language is "stuffed" with sequential and spatial terms like "before", "after", "behind", or "ahead", terms that appear as mutually exclusive and thus apt to create distance between phenomena that in reality are interrelated or even integrated. Indeed, a mind-set based on sequentiality is embedded in human nature (Arendt, op cit.). Thus, there seems to be a close relationship between the prediction perspective and what many people find sensible, although it may speak against better judgment at times.

Thus, as noted by Dean (2006) the risk concept per se is not necessarily the problem; it is rather how it is interpreted that matters. This implicates that we may consider how risk may be nurtured by the increasing heterogeneity and the blurring of the conventional boundaries between normalcy and deviance. It seems to be this less radical critique of the conventional, epidemiological concept that lies behind the previously noted conclusion that risk in adolescence is ambiguous to the extent that attempts at calculating it are inutile (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2005). At least, risk calculation is not viewed as likely to be empirically solid enough to function as the sole base for preventive intervention.

The novel interest towards epidemiological diversity has, as suggested above, on the one hand entailed a more relaxed attitude towards the determinate-making of indeterminate phenomena. On the other hand, the diversity turn represents a renewal of the interest for science to conquer the future. One has actually never given up on identifying more precisely *how* risk statuses develop into adverse statuses and under *which* conditions, in order to identify *which*

adolescents who are likely to proceed to more adverse patterns of rule breaking or substance use. Particularly when the aim is intervention in terms of prevention or treatment, new attempts are indefatigably made in the light of increasing diversity at sophisticating measurement definitions:

> "*The point of risk research is to promote understanding of the possibly multiple causal paths, some involving complex chains of causal risk factors, leading to disorders. Then the goal is to use that information to decide correctly for whom, when, and how to intervene to prevent the onset of disorders or to facilitate recovery*" (Kraemer et al., 2001: 855).

Quite often, the aim is to not only identify adverse substance use and rule breaking patterns at an as early stage as possible in a conventional individual vs. expert relation. Identification of risk in recent research is also based on as many contextual factors as possible. Arthur et al. (2002), who advocate risk factor analysis as a viable way of achieving accuracy in the field, describe their approach as something which encompasses everything from identification of problems in communities and neighborhoods, low school achievements in individuals, disruptive individual characteristics like hyperactivity and impulsiveness, and "antisocial" peer relations to bad parent monitoring and discipline problems within the family. The broad ambition that risk factor analysis thus represents of reifying risk may, together with the ambition to order the life process into surveyable sequences, seem to signal that the ideals underpinning the prediction perspective are more persistent than before.

The emphasis on integrativity is also an example of the breadth that the ambition to conquer the future has attained. Integrative in this sense means that a wide range of disciplines, local communities and agencies provide their cooperation, together with parent groups and adolescents (Cairns, Cairns, Rodkin, & Xie, 1998; Ferrer – Wreder et al., 2005; Stockwell, Gruenewald, Toumbourou, & Loxley, 2005). The latter initiatives thus tend to blur the alleged boundary between health promotion and salutogenic perspectives on the one hand and epidemiological risk on the other. Still, albeit their ambition being to emphasize diversity, the methods are all the same directed towards invariability.

Critique of the prediction perspective of relevance for the current thematic

Critique of the prediction perspective is often described as critique against the risk concept. The most radical critique, namely the one based on constructionism implies a total rejection of risk on a theoretical basis because it is viewed as merely temporal (Reith, 2004 a). As underscored by Reith, risk from a constructionist perspective only makes sense in relation to an unknown future; it is nothing in itself, and therefore not real. When people in spite of the assumption that risk is non-existent still have got a sense of something as risky, risk merely exists "in their heads" (op cit.). This assumption may be recognized as the assumption that is underpinning Beck`s concept of "staging".

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Becks (2009) critique of the discourse on risk as calculable is first and foremost that he points to the paradox that in spite of the falling optimism on behalf of scientific attempts at controlling and foreseeing the future, probability calculation as a method is as previously mentioned not abandoned. Risk is "staged" by authorities in order to shape an illusion. This illusion has merely got a reassuring function and is exerted in order to keep people in place. Risk is made so vivid that "not-yet" phenomena like substance use and rule breaking which is of an episodic kind, and thus does not constitute an entire problem pattern, is perceived as almost already real and extensive.

Beck`s critique is an important critique with regard to the current target group. The "blame-the-victim" tendencies that were described in the previous section on current prevention policy may be viewed as a result of it. In a perspective on risk as already real, individuals may be ascribed characteristics that make them responsible for problems that actually are deeply social in their character. At least in a British context, it has been a tendency among prevention researchers to unambiguously focus on children and adolescents who are educational underachievers, have poor mental health statuses, and who are involved in criminality, drug misuse and become pregnant already as teenagers (France, 2008). Although it is important to outweigh those social inequalities that already have emerged, an individual focus may cover up the need for structural change (op cit.).Out of the noble wish to be on the safe side, such a mind-set may entail that those adolescents who are drifting in an indeterminate way between relative normalcy and relative deviance as regards substance use and abidance of the law, are regarded with a high degree of suspicion. It rather seems urgent to "tame" the adolescents into more definite forms. A consequence noted by Sharland (2006) is that risk making on such a basis often may be as big a threat to adolescent development as the risk-*taking* itself. The possibility of viewing directionless drifting as a necessary part of life shaping is not accommodated. The question is whether this is as much a threat to adolescent development as the risk-*taking* itself.

A modified version of a conclusion drawn by Law (2004:4) may be appropriate as a comment to this: *"while standard methods are often extremely good at what they do, they are badly adapted to the study of the ephemeral, the indefinite and the irregular."*

Integrative measures, however innovative they may appear, seem to be predominantly governed by professional experts and aim at making the indeterminate determinable in a way that may be characterized as reification of risk. The predominance of expert authority in this branch of research has entailed a request for research on 'non-expert' risk management (Duff, 2003), knowledge on how youths conceptualize "risk", "resilience" (Mohaupt, 2009) or young offenders` conceptualizations of relations involved in youth justice (Smith, 2009). As noted by Beck (2009), a premise for paradigms that are based on probability calculation and that have a natural science framework is that expert knowledge and lay knowledge are separated. Lay knowledge is assessed as too "subjective" and therefore too poorly informed to be emphasized. In contrast to lay risk concepts, "objective" measures of risk are within the prediction perspective regarded as the only basis for intervention that is "precise" enough for intervention (op cit.). Thus, variations that experts have difficulties with explaining remain

un-reflected. The unique access that so-called lay epidemiologists have to the many-faceted daily life experience is therefore not valuated (Hunt & Emslie, 2001). According to Bourdieu (2005) the fundament for a subjective evaluation of an act as purposeful or not, is most often a *«corpus of half-formalized knowledge»*. Common sense, ethics, adages etc. mix with more scientific concepts (op cit.).

Another kind of critique against the prediction perspective is the tendency not to question its premises. Given the validity of Beck`s analysis that prediction has a reassuring function in contemporary society, self-reflexivity is not likely.

Even if the motif of being "on the safe side" that the prediction perspective represents is deeply human. One may on the background of the considerations above conclude that the prediction perspective only to a modest extent contributes to the framing of timelier indicated prevention in the current area. Inversely, attention towards the individual life shaping maneuvers of the current target group as a source of knowledge may not contribute much to the prediction perspective. Moreover, prevention science does not seem likely to prioritize a target group that cannot be more precisely defined, something that the scarcity of prevention literature in the area seems to confirm. Prediction gives primacy towards the future despite the well-documented changeability in the current historical era. The view that the boundary between the tenses has been suspended (see Arendt, 1971) is not paid much attention. This conclusion brings us over to the next perspective.

The contingency perspective

Philosophical and historical trends underpinning contingency

According to lexical definitions[17] of the term contingency, it means *"a future event or circumstance which is possible but cannot be predicted with certainty"*. Whereas the prediction perspective conceptualizes risk as something primarily related to negative outcomes and therefore stresses the need to be on the safe side, the contingency perspective tends to underscore the fact that we know nothing for sure. This may be viewed as a liberating rather than a frightening fact. The per se neutral significance of risk, understood as *"the probability of an outcome"*, in the contingency perspective has connotations of "chance".

Risk in the sense of "chance" implies that successes from the past are not viewed as a guarantee for future triumphs (Baumann, 2007). Neither do those defeats that were experienced yesterday necessarily stand in the way of tomorrow's triumphs. A contingent view on life also implicates that the knowledge one acquires during the course of life is under constant revision. Thus, the perspective of contingency is intimately related to the research agendas that often have been described as "science about experience" (Gadamer, 1989). It is also based on the paradigmatic shift that has become labelled as "the linguistic turn". In

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[17] http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/contingency

research that is influenced by the linguistic turn, the attention is twisted away from invariability and categorization. Instead, it is assumed that most phenomena are in constant transformation. Within the scope of interest are, for instance, the following: how agency is exerted and adjusted; how nuances in the language may bring about changes; and how meaning around everyday arrangements may be made and re-made.

On the whole, we speak of those epistemological principles that belong to the Einsteinian scientific revolution (see Reith, 2004 a) and that are based on simultaneity, instantaneity and relativity.

The work of Hannah Arendt on time (1971) is based on the same kind of principles. It therefore seems to be especially utile as a theoretical basis for prevention effort based on the contingency perspective. Whereas the prediction perspective is underpinned by the premise that past is something that initiates from a definite point of departure and is almost unnoticeably driven towards a future over which we have no real control, a more contingent perspective on time assumes that the continuity between the tenses may be disrupted and become subject to the will.

More figuratively, Arendt has described this idea by means of a diagram which consists of two axes in which the horizontal line is representing the past and the vertical line is representing the future:
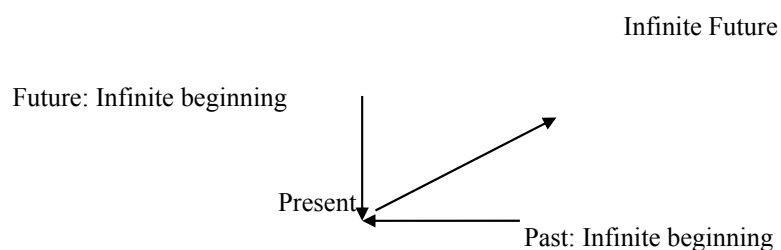
Fig.1. Diagram demonstrating Arendt's time theory – based on the model in Arendt (1971:208) The Life of the Mind: The ground-breaking investigation of how we think.

The novelty about this model is that both time lines, quite opposite to what is usually expected, have no definite point of departure. They do not point towards some defined point "out there"; for instance, in terms of an "*aggregate product which has been projected into future*" (Reith, 2004 a). Instead, they are directed towards a definite point "already in-here", namely the corner in which the two time lines clash. The present is to be found at this "clash point", which according to Arendt represents no-time, and in which the human agent is inserted.

What the diagram above all is illustrating is that the future is in our hands, not in the sense of a statistically calculated reality, but in the sense that the uniqueness of each individual

situation and each occurring moment may influence the further life course. When being at the clash-point between the two time lines that run towards us, we are invited to take an active look at future possibility based on a down-to-earth evaluation of previous experience. We normally do not notice that we are situated in the clash-point between the tenses. Nevertheless, there is basically no escape from the position that we have when we are at that clash-point. The habitual thinking, in the diagram symbolized by the diagonal line, has come to a stop. Arendt`s time theory holds *the present* and not the future as the real locus of reason:

> *The location of the thinking ego in time would be the in-between of past and future, the present, this mysterious and slippery now, a mere gap in time, toward which nevertheless the mere tenses of past and future are directed insofar as they denote that which is no more and that which is not yet"* (Arendt, 1971:208)

Thus, unlike the assumptions that are underpinning the prediction perspective, future in the contingency perspective cannot be reified. Future is in principle unpredictable. It is exactly this unpredictability that shapes opportunity. According to Arendt (op cit.), great works could have been made if this possibility for exertion of agency had been more acknowledged.

Arendt is also one of those who have pointed to how the concept of *"Avenir"* more than other future concepts seems to encompass the momentary, simultaneity of present and future, which is implied in the described clash-point. The concept of *Avenir* has its basis in phenomenology. The concept has influenced the works of Bourdieu and predominantly refers to a liberating view on the future (Broady, 1991). The concept also seems to integrate past and future. On the one hand, the wisdom we have been developing by means of our past experience shapes the ground for our exertion of foresight and the making of our future plans (op cit.). On the other hand, future is impelling us at any occurring moment.

However, adults and adolescents may experience the implications of *Avenir* differently. Whereas adults after all have had to make whole series of normative choices that limit their space of opportunity with regard to further direction in life, adolescents have a wide range of options before them. Nothing is settled yet; life may move in both normal and deviant directions. However, when the experience is lacking that normally puts adult life shaping on tracks that are more specific the future may appear as opaque. One does not know where to go. A relatively unconscious tentativeness is likely to be the result of this feeling of opaqueness.

Given that we accept Arendt`s premises of time as contingent, it is not unimportant which terms we employ in order to describe individual development. For instance, the conventional notion of identity as more or less "readymade" (see for instance Sulkunen, 2009) does not seem very utile in the contingency perspective Although identity theory in previous decades has counted on changeability to an increasing extent (Erikson, 1968), the concept of "life shaping" is preferable to the concept of identity in a context like this thesis. As noted by Giddens (1991), life shaping in late modernity in principle rests on the capacity to evaluate one's own direction in life against constantly emerging novel and often unexpected events.

In contrast to prevention science that primarily recommends the use of aggregated information observed over time as a guideline for life shaping, the basis for life shaping in a contingency perspective is to improve the kind of capacity that Giddens has described as essential in the current era. As the label of the perspective is suggesting, the major attention is on the contingent aspects of being which may be many or few, though somewhat dependent on life length. Practical knowledge and practical ethics in their manifold of facets shapes its basis.

Consumerism and its possible effects on substance and crime prevention

A tendency within a more contingent society that is apt to radically affect individual life shaping is, as previously mentioned, de-authorization of the former distance between lay and expert knowledge. The contingency perspective allows for practical wisdom and so-called lay epidemiology[18]. Beck (2009) has gone as far as stating that the more society is influenced and transformed by science and technology, like in the consumerist period, the less expert authority is taken for given. To put it with Baumann: in late modern systems of governing there is *"no centre, no control panel, and no administration"* (Baumann, 1998:76).

Contingency in this sense seems to be a major premise for consumerism. Consumerism has been described as one of the most dominant regimes of truth of today [19] (Croghan, Griffin, Hunter, & Phoenix, 2006). It both involves choice between a wide range of options and emphasizes individual solutions. While industrial society expected nothing from the younger generation but their becoming producers or soldiers (Baumann, 1998); the post-industrial society expects their children to become consumers. This above all implies the making of choices. The consumerist emphasis on consciousness about taste and lifestyle seems to go hand in glove with the flexibility demands and the negotiability implied in the life-shaping project that Giddens has described (see reference above). Interest in such things as clothing, fitness and housing aesthetics may, for instance, represent attempts at achieving wellbeing to the same extent as less materialistic approaches. Themes that touch on consumption of such goods may therefore also provide fruitful insights into how people tackle salient life shaping challenges, like the tensions between contingency and constraint, and individual and collective.

With new times and new preconditions for life shaping in general, new perspectives on substance use and law abidance also emerge.

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[18] Cfr. Hunt and Emslie 2001

[19] Foucault has been the creator of the concept of truth regimes, as has been described in his work "Truth and Power". It refers to some core beliefs and values in a society and that predominate the overall debate in society. They are constituted by scientific discourse, and economical and political forces, diffused via societal apparatuses. Foucault, Michel. 1980. Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Trans. Colin Gordon et al. New York: Pantheon. "Truth and Power" (Interview, 1977). *Power*, 111-33 / *DE2*, 140-160. (NB indirect source http://www.wdog.com/rider/writings/foucault.htm)

Consumerism seems to have had great impact on how substance use and rule breaking/ delinquency are conceptualized. For instance, the tendency to emphasize contingency may outweigh the ignorance of non-expert risk management strategies that has prevailed in both substance prevention (Duff, 2003) and youth justice (Smith, 2009). As a consequence of the de-authorization tendencies, people continuously reformulate expert knowledge and are able to make independent judgments of expert knowledge (Giddens, 1990, 1999). Subverted versions of the bio-medical addiction concept have, for instance, been identified in qualitative interviews with active substance users (Bailey, 2005).

According to Giddens (op cit.), however, much knowledge production is also beyond the comprehension of most people. The need to have trust in experts is therefore in many respects as strong as previously. Yet, trust in this sense is all the same not the same as blind faith in something outside of oneself. Therefore, predefined categories and codes may still have their value, although often in modified form.

Despite the tendency that expert knowledge may still prosper, indicated prevention towards adolescents seems unthinkable in a contingency perspective without active participation from the target group. In the current climate a view on adolescents as capable of self-reflection is more likely than previously. Participation on this background is not merely a question of adaptation to prevailing rules. As citizens in consumer society, adolescents of today cannot escape the need to make a way of their own even while they still are minors in the juridical sense.

Normalization and differentiation trends with regard to substance use

Central in relation to substance use in a contingency perspective is the so-called normalization thesis or normalization framework (Parker, Aldridge, & Eggington 2001, Parker, Williams, & Aldridge 2002, Parker, 2003, and Parker, 2005). In the works of the authors here referred, it was the practices and conceptualizations of young people that above all were focused upon. As the years indicate, the framework was developed around the turn of the millennium. This was a period, which according to literature on such as cannabis use and cannabis users, has been described as a period in which the police in many countries tended to scale down their control of illegal substance users (Hathaway, 2004). Another sign of normalization was the fact that the boundaries between dealers and users had become increasingly vaguer (op cit.). Both the social redistribution policy of the classical welfare state, which significantly expanded the access of the general population to luxury and recreational goods, and the encouragement to consume involved in the de-regulation policy of the latter decades also seems to have contributed significantly to the described normalization tendency.

The normalization framework in Parker's version first and foremost aimed at capturing newer practices and newer conceptualizations on illegal substance use. Among other things, a barometer for systematic assessment of normalization was developed (Parker, 2005). The

barometer was meant to assist at capturing the prevalence of illegal substances and who those individuals were that used them. However, the barometer was also meant to assist the estimation of the extent to which use of illegal drugs was accommodated in the general population (for instance to what extent is the illegal drug use of others accepted or rejected) and the general availability of illegal drugs.

The increased emphasis on individual responsibility for one's own wellbeing, which is implied in the life shaping concept, also involved an emphasis on "drug wise" practices. Being "drug wise" was a central concept in the literature derived within the normalization framework. To be "drug wise" implies, according to this literature, a rational consideration of potential harmful bio-medical effects of substances against pleasurable aspects. According to Hathaway (op cit.), however, being drug-wise also has a strong social aspect. Being drug-wise in the social sense above all refers to the skills that cannabis users (or users of other illegal substances that all the same are relatively accommodated) develop around where, when and in relation to whom the use may appear as normal and non-sanctionable.

However, it was not only the use patterns that began to change around the turn of the millennium. As an obvious consequence of normalization, also the users tended to be of a different kind than previously. The research literature that emerged in the wake of the normalization process has, for instance, pointed to the apparent absence of classical risk factors in many users of illegal substances. Individual vulnerability or socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds were no longer viewed as the only background for development of a relatively comprehensive use of illegal substances. As noted in relation to a study from around year 2000 on young Britons who used illegal substances as a part of their leisure, they were *"too many to be pathologized"* (Parker, Aldridge & Eggington, 2001). Also in a Norwegian context, the discovery has been made that users of illegal substances may be recruited from all sectors of society, "affluent environments" included (Moshuus, Vestel, & Rossow, 2002; Pedersen, 2009).

Even after the very peak of the normalization trend around the turn of the millennium, there seems to have been an increasing tendency to view risk-taking as both deliberate and innovative (Peretti-Watel & Moatti, 2006; Ravn, 2012; Sharland, 2006) and not only as a threat to wellbeing. It seems relevant to view this tendency on the background of more general consumption theory, which to a greater extent than previously views young people as creative consumers and not merely victims of consumption (Heggen, 2004)..

Youths who take drugs and thus according to negative risk discourse put health at risk have, all the same, been described as generally more *"curious, outgoing, sociable and pleasure seeking"* than risk-avoiding youths (Aldridge et al., 2011). To a certain extent both sensible alcohol use and sensible use of lighter substances is more likely to be generally accommodated now than previously *"as long as it doesn't affect them"* (op cit.). Thus, more innovative versions of risk-taking may outweigh or even counteract the opposite tendency of "prudentialism" (Reith, 2004 a). "Prudentialism" is the tendency to spot risk in a continuously increasing number of daily life activities, being it intake of food, drinks, drugs, tobacco,

amusement, shopping, gaming etc. (Reith, op cit., see also Sulkunen, 2009). This makes people become not only over-cautious and alert, but also skeptical towards any sign of uncontrol in self and others. In this climate, a too positive self-image does not seem to be any good either (Peretti-Watel, 2003).

Even though also Nordic social research on substance use has pointed to tendencies of normalization both with regard to substance use and substance users, it is not given that all aspects of normalization that have been described in a British context may apply to the Nordic countries. Great Britain seems in many ways to represent the utmost example of alcohol deregulation policy (Hackley, Griffin, Szmigin, Mistral, & Bengry-Howell, 2008); the Nordic countries still rely on an alcohol policy that aims at reducing the total alcohol consumption (Sulkunen, 2009). Measures like limited availability of alcoholic goods, particularly for the under-aged, licence regulation, high price levels etc. are examples of such policy (op cit.). Consequently, figures on prevalence of such as cannabis use are relatively ambiguous in a Norwegian context. Whilst the life time prevalence of cannabis use is relatively high in the Oslo area (Pedersen, 2009), lifetime prevalence of such use in the general Norwegian youth population is relatively modest (Vedøy & Skretting, 2009). Also, the prevalence of regular illegal substance use in the population as a whole is modest. Thus, normalization tendencies of substance use seem to experience keen competition from self-restriction tendencies with regard to such use (Frøyland & Sletten, 2010; Iversen, Skutle, Bolstad, & Knoff, 2008). A certain dread towards all kinds of excess tends to penetrate consumer society (Reith, 2004b).

All the same, globalization and consumerism undoubtedly have also influenced so-called "dry" cultures like the Swedish and the Norwegian. The foremost contribution of the normalization framework, and not least the barometer developed by Parker (2005), has been to show that low, overall prevalence of the use in the general population in the current consumerist era may co-occur with a relative high degree of availability and with common acceptance.

Differentiation of substance user practices simply tends to take over for tendencies of dichotomization. The most recent ESPAD survey (Hibell et al., 2011), for instance, suggests differentiation as a major trend across European countries when it comes to young peoples' practices.

Differentiation tendencies, therefore, seem to be highly important when the maneuvers of the current participant group are going to be explored and understood. Phenomena could not without further consideration be put under a fixed label and the righteousness of assigning fixed characteristics to people should be questioned.

On the whole, rigidity in the current cultural context seems to run counter to the readiness to change "at short notice" (Baumann, 2007) and to reflexive tentativeness as an all-evasive principle for late modern life shaping.

Normalization and differentiation trends with regard to rule breaking/ delinquency

Descriptions of differentiated life style patterns and blurred categories have also become a theme in criminology literature of today. Firstly, it has been emphasized that mainstream notions of right and wrong have become less unambiguous. Implicit or partial justification of deviant acts or deviant inclinations reduces the likeliness that persons, who in the general sense are law conforming, will sanction them (Toby, 2005). Secondly, there seems to be an increasing tendency to view offences as something which could not solely be studied in relation to objectivised entities like gender, class and education (Ferrell et al., 2008). .

Already in the late 1950s, however, the belief that there are sharp distinctions between law-abiding and minor offenders was questioned (Sykes & Matza, 1957). From then on and throughout the last five decades, monolithic conceptualizations of crime and law abidance, and mainstream culture and sub-culture have constantly been criticized. Such critique was, in particular, involved in Norwegian criminology studies from the 1980s (Ericsson, Lundby, & Rudberg, 1994; Hauge, 1980). The notion that youths who participate in illegal activity have other convictions about good and bad morals than the normative population, according to the latter authors, proves to be based on false premises. Currents like this within the criminology discipline have often been referred to as "cultural criminology" (see Ferrell et al., op cit.). Its interest has been how the offender actively draws on a whole "bank" of cultural understanding in his or her encounters both with the justice system and with the "man in the street" that could mitigate the effects of the rule breaking. The tendency is, not least, likely to appear in self-talk.

The concept of "field" launched by Bourdieu (1990) has by some authors been viewed as appropriate for shedding light on the relation between sub-culture and mainstream culture in a more "liquid" society[20] (see Jensen, 2006). Certainly, the field concept refers to homogeneity in certain respects. Bourdieu has, for instance, described the relations between individuals in a field with regard to their relative access to economic, social and cultural capital as fairly homogenous. According to Bourdieu, such homogeneity even tends to be reproduced. Yet, the reproduction only occurs because a direct correspondence is *perceived* between objective structures and lifestyles. The direct correspondence is not objective in the conventional sense. Although "inhabitants" of a field do not tend to be aware of it, the concept of field therefore also encompasses social mobility in the economic, social and cultural sense. Neither is there any objective basis in contemporary society for sharp distinctions between fields with regard to law abidance. Rather, subcultural affiliation vs. affiliation in morally mainstream fields is collectively negotiated (Jensen, op cit.). According to Jensen, this means that each individual may have a foothold in more than one sub-field at the same time, and that social or cultural capital is relatively convertible across field boundaries.

Even those population groups whose opportunity of integration in normative society is permanently or preliminarily blocked may manoeuver in ways that give them a relative access

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[20] "Liquid society "is the title of one of Baumann's books on late modernity.

to common goods and to respectability (Sandberg, 2008 a). An example of this described by the author is asylum applicants. Another example of blurred boundaries between sub-culture and mainstream culture is "hard core" drug users or drug dealers. They do not necessarily prefer to remain sub-cultural, but long for and adjust to "straight" lives at times (Lalander, 2009). Thus, respectability notions are more differentiated in consumer society than previously (Marthinsen, 2010). As also noted in other parts of the thesis, respectability has become a distinction that may mean quite as much in the current social hierarchies as socioeconomic positions. This is one of the reasons why a stronger focus on individual judgment seems to be needed in prevention practice.

Differentiation, homogenization and polarizations as parallel trends

Boundaries in consumer society have been blurred between social fields to the extent that differentiation is not the only trend. One may also speak of a homogenization process in many respects both when it comes to abidance of the law and to substance use. With regard to substance use, consumerism undoubtedly has entailed that those patterns of use that previously were in correspondence with the conventional class hierarchy have had a tendency to harmonize (Griffin, Bengry-Howell, Hackley, Mistral, & Szmigin, 2009; Shildrick, 2002a). To the extent that sub-cultures of substance use still exist, they are likely to function on the premises of a mass culture (Thornton, 1995). Certain substance user styles, together with certain music and clothing preferences among youths may, for instance, constitute a pattern which to single individuals has got the purpose of standing out from the mass (op cit.).

Yet, an increased widening of the distance between law-abiding individuals and offenders has also been observed. Whereas there is a drop in prevalence among Norwegian youths of rule breaking and minor delinquency, more serious, violent crime in the same age groups is in increase (Øia & Fauske, 2010). To the extent that this tendency is widespread, a larger gap between the relatively law-abiding and those who offend may grow in the future. One may on this background rather speak about differentiation and polarization than normalization. The need for young people to exert judgment around such as appropriate and non-appropriate substance use therefore is likely to grow from now on and onwards.

The role of recreational substance use in adolescents` life shaping today

As already suggested in the section on how I worked to trace literature, culturally oriented youth research on substance use proved to be among the most fruitful sources for an improved understanding of the study topic.

One of the effects a more contingent society seems to have engendered is the increasing emphasis in research on the fun part of substance use, above all the fun part related to the use of alcohol (Griffin et al., 2009). Previous research on how adolescents relate to alcohol and other substances sharply distinguished between recreational use of illegal drugs on the one hand and hard drug careers on the other (Aldridge et al., 2011). It has, however, been argued

that those versions of substance use that above all have been aimed at deadening *"compulsion, pain and pathology"* (O `Malley & Valverde, 2004) are not easy to find in pure cultivation any more. De-pathologized practices (Åslid, 2007) may thus exist to an equal extent as practices of self-medication.

Interestingly, it has been noted as somewhat of a paradox that those youths who have behavioral problems have often been portrayed as individuals without a recreational life (Nordahl et al., 2005). Particularly because sensitivity to the surrounding environment has been summed up as a key factor in prevention programs directed towards adolescents (Paglia & Room, 1999), this tendency to overlook the fun part is somewhat sensational.

It is above all culturally oriented substance research literature that has given attention to recreational substance use. Norwegian researchers have defined such use as *"any use of illegal substances in social gatherings within which the use of the substance per se is not the major purpose"* (Moshuus et al., 2002). (My translation).

Alcohol as a significant factor for the life shaping process, beyond its inebriating potentiality, has been emphasized in culturally oriented research on youths and alcohol (Demant, 2007; Tutenges & Hulvej Rod, 2009). This kind of literature has also paid much attention to gendered practices of recreational alcohol use (Griffin et al., 2009; Haugland, 2007). By means of alcohol as an ingredient in the gendered games adolescents play, more general cultural expectations attached to adult roles may be appropriated (Demant, op cit.).

Conclusions that adolescents are making extensive use of alcohol in order to adapt to existing norms for life conduct seem to sharply contrast with conclusions in research literature derived from a discourse on risk as predictable. There, recreational adolescent drinking has first and foremost been described as a way of liberating one's self from "normative society", first and foremost represented by the parent generation ((Forsyth & Barnard, 2000; Storvoll, Rossow, & Pape, 2010). Yet, as adolescence is a phase that to an increasing extent involves adaptation to norms as well as liberation from them, both types of conclusions may provide insights that are fruitful for substance prevention on an indicated level.

Critique of the contingency perspective as a basis for prevention

Certainly, consumer society is dependent on the freedom of consumers to make choices. Thanks to consumerism, the opportunity to make choices has thus become the reality of an increasing number of people. This seems to nurture certain notions of rational choice as a major regulator of life shaping. Yet, although decision making, "risk management" and other rational choice principles often referred in literature on substance and crime prevention certainly have got their limitations, such limitations often tend to be ignored in a contingency perspective. It is above all the research group behind the normalization framework that has been exposed to critique for the relatively blind faith in rationality principles (Shiner &

Newburn, 1997). According to the authors, single individuals`poor decisions cannot be the only factor that triggers problem substance use.

What some have called a strong "just do it" ideology (Garrett, 2004) seems to have been particularly nurtured within consumerism. A negative implication of this may be that failure in individuals to exert rational choice or risk management is used as legitimization of prevention measures that are punitive in their effects (France, 2008; Garrett, 2007b; Goldson, 2000; Haines & Case, 2008). Yet, at the same time as certain punitive tendencies exist, the emergence of de-authorized prevention measures seem to outweigh some of the effects that punitive or strictly instructive approaches have got (Sulkunen, 2009). When the tendency of de-authorization is driven to its extreme, "laissez faire" may be the result. Therefore, it is not given that emphasis on agency as the basis for prevention necessarily will benefit youths (Sulkunen, op cit.).

Ignorance of individual vulnerability is another kind of critique that in particular has been raised against the premises of the normalization framework. The tendencies implied in the trend to de-pathologize substance use have, for instance, been described as an exponent of a "*postmodern unwillingness to look backwards* "(Pape & Rossow, 2004). According to the authors, the results from research carried out within the normalization framework are not trustworthy as long as mental health parameters have been omitted. If such parameters had been employed, it might, according to these authors, have been unveiled that much substance use is not merely recreational and rational but rather irrational, embodied and often an expression of the need to mend vulnerability. With reference to Erikson (1980 in Giddens, 1990) Giddens, on his side, has underlined that when there is lack of coherence and a sense of basic trust in a person's life, a reflected approach to identity formation may be demanding. Thus, the impact of the past on the life course may be acknowledged in theory on late modernity.

Giddens has also been criticized for being too optimistic when it comes to the distribution of life chances in the general population. It is Giddens` concept of "life politics" (Giddens, 1991) which is the political framework within which his life shaping concept is included that in particular has been subject to such critique. According to the critiques, not everybody has got the opportunity to exert the mode of life shaping that Giddens has prescribed. For instance, phenomena like mass poverty, trafficking and social dumping etc. are examples that prove that the "unlimited dialogical self" (Tappan, 2005) does not exist in pure cultivation (Garrett, 2004). Rather is it so that individuals who really are emancipated from time and place constitute a minority (op cit.).

In addition, the so-called Parker-group has been criticized for not having looked sufficiently at social context, the impact of social constraint and the impact of shame factors (Shiner & Newburn, 1997). Giddens has, as a response to such critique, underlined that human action certainly has a chronic character and that more contingent perspectives on life take into consideration historical and cultural context (Giddens, 1990:37). On the contrary, human

action is constantly monitored against the background of contextual knowledge in a reflexive loop (op cit.).

Theory that emphasizes contingency has also often been criticized for being too rationalist. Some of this critique seems to have been based on false premises. For instance, it seems necessary to distinguish between genuine contingency principles and rational choice principles. According to Beck (2009), pro-et-con-rationality, trade-off evaluations etc. have nothing to do with real judgment of the kind that is needed in life shaping processes based on a more genuine contingent view on life.

Wrong conclusions may also have been drawn around the time concepts that are underpinning late modern theory. One of the reasons why the life shaping concept may be perceived as ignorant of vulnerabilities in the past is probably to be found in the fact that "before", "now" and "tomorrow" are integrated to the extent that the grounds for our acts are not clearly discernible from the acts themselves anymore (see Giddens, 1990 ibid). The causal mind-set simply does not fit in the late modern world and is not the basis of life shaping. The phenomenon of vulnerability is thereby, not dismissed. It seems easy to forget that the analyses of Giddens, Beck and Baumann on the effects of late modernity never were meant to be empirically based analyses (Hviid Nielsen, 2010). They rather represent attempts at diagnosing contemporary living conditions.

To sum up: It follows from the assumption involved in theory about contingency in late modernity that we are basically free from causality laws and that that our life direction therefore is constantly adjustable. Nothing is in principle "too late" on this basis. Still, there are in the lives of most people some "fixities", either due to tradition or due to certain structural hurdles that have to be overcome before the expanded space of opportunity that the theories describe could be fully recognized and exploited.

The social constraint perspective

The critique against the contingency perspective for putting too little emphasis on constraint brings us directly to the issue of how social constraint can be conceptualized in contemporary society, and the ways in which social constraint may affect substance and crime prevention at an indicated level.

A striking fact when viewing theory on contingency and contemporary versions of social constraint in conjunction is that the two perspectives actually seem to complement each other to a considerable extent. Already implied in the existentialist agency concept is, for instance, a transgression of the conventional freedom vs. constraint dichotomy. Individual freedom has always been oriented towards a hierarchy of lifestyle choices and could never be completely liberated from it (Gadamer, 1989). A sense of being judged by powerful others is simply deeply embedded in human beings as a species. This is a sense that asserts itself in terms of feelings of honour, pleasure, power, knowledge, etc. (op cit.) Inevitably, the judgment which

is implied in the late modern life shaping process is oriented in some way or other towards the risk of being socially sanctioned.

Theory on social constraint in consumer society

Joint perspectives of the described kind have become apparent in recent theory on social constraint. During industrialism, when conventional class distinctions were sharper, much theory on the etiology of crime was about blocked opportunity (Cohen, 2011). It was described how uneven distribution of material success impeded the ability of youths who were living in poverty to cope with the demands in the emerging consumerism. The incapacity to consume in line with newer ideals significantly violated a kind of norm conformity that is critical for societal acceptance and inclusion in consumer society (Agnew & Kaufman, 2010). In post-industrialist welfare societies, however, those preconditions that seemed to cause blocked opportunity are mostly history. Everybody has in principle got improved access to wealth and luxury. Theory that tends to encompass this must therefore be allowed for. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that a certain lifestyle "dictatorship" certainly has its limiting impact on individual freedom.

Bourdieu is a theorist who has based his conceptual framework on the described change in historical preconditions for social inequality, although this is not always recognized. To many readers of Bourdieu's framework he is still a "pure" structuralist. As previously noted, however, a core point in the theoretical framework of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1998:3) is that there is no longer an empirical basis for a direct and mechanical relationship between socioeconomic position and human action.

This means that socioeconomic factors in the "pure" economic sense also have lost their direct impact on substance use patterns. Entities like class, gender or other "one size fits all" kind of theoretical concepts, for instance, prove to be a relatively insufficient basis for exploration of those social constraint phenomena that matter for indicated substance and crime prevention. Some even suggest that socioeconomic factors are the only factors that do *not* have a significant influence on the development of substance user careers (Pape & Rossow, 2004, Pedersen, 2009). To the extent that socioeconomic factors have some impact on substance user patterns, they are inclined to be a part of an intricate and unpredictable interplay with other factors, like user styles and how they are accommodated in the immediate social environment (Room, 2005 a). As noted by Room, much is still left to be known about this dynamic. Anyhow, there seems to be relative consensus that people in consumer society predominantly shape their lives by judging how their lifestyles and tastes will be socially accommodated and use the taste and lifestyles of privileged elites as a yardstick.

Yet, the capacity to appropriate the most legitimate respectability notions, and thus also the most legitimate life style choices, is a capacity that has a powerful, embodied character. According to Bourdieu (1990, 1995), taste and life style choices are inscribed in bodies, which means that they are not experienced as the result of deliberate choice. They are neither

constituted by structural, external forces nor by the market. Social profit is mostly achieved by a more implicit kind of appropriation of the most legitimate notion of respectability.

This fairly invisible way in which power asserts itself in consumer society is a core premise in the works of Bourdieu on social constraint:

"...power is visible everywhere, while in previous ages people refused to recognize it even when it was staring them in the face (...) we have to be able to discover it in places where it is least visible, where it is most completely misrecognized - and thus, in fact recognized" (Bourdieu, 1992:163).

Not least, in the works of Foucault (1977, 2010) the invisible and horizontal character of social power has got centrality. In Foucault's conceptual apparatus the phenomenon is best known as "governing at a distance". On the background of the power concepts of Bourdieu and Foucault individuals are governed *through* their freedom and not *against* it (Reith, 2004 b).

Those respectability notions that seem to underpin power that is exerted "at a distance" may shift from context to context and from situation to situation. Yet, everybody has, in some way or other, to relate to the reality that consumption is encouraged and expected at the same time as the most dreaded sides of consumption have to be tamed or avoided. According to Beck (2009) "at risk" persons or groups tend to count in society as non-persons. Risk "divides, excludes and stigmatizes" (Beck, 2009:16). Among the subtle forces at the symbolic market that, the tendency to "make up" statuses that are more adverse than there is basis for in reality (Reith, 2004 b). The tendency according to Reith implies to assign characteristics to people that are hinting at an *"indiscreet anatomy and mysterious physiology"*. A dread for things to become indeterminable and impossible to categorize is assumed to lie behind. As such, the tendency is apt at fuelling suspicion and at entailing the blaming of others. In a climate in which this tendency prevails it seems quite apparent that adolescents in the morally indeterminate space that is explored in this thesis easily are ascribed undeserved characteristics and properties that they do not necessarily possess.

Reith refers to Foucault's historical genealogy in works like "Discipline and Punish", "Madness and Civilization" (Foucault 2001 in Reith, op cit.) as the inspiration source of the perspective that adverse identities are "made up". The most obvious example provided by Reith of this trend, and which applies to the thematic of this thesis, is the concept of addiction, which as previously noted tends to lack a firm empirical basis.

Also marginalization theory has begun to reflect the tendency of "making up adverse identities". Whereas marginalization theory previously was based on an engaged indignation over the economically poor, the concept of marginalization has more recently been taken over by groups that have an interest in preserving their own privileged status quo by blaming others (Svedberg, 1995). Since there are no external forces or authorities that could be directly blamed any more, the distinction-making between groups and individuals seems more

urgent than ever. There is always someone to blame with a lower position in the respectability hierarchy.

The balance between respectability and disrespectability may be hard to keep, especially in adolescence when the sense of the socially appropriate is after all not yet fully developed. The reason why youths are described as the new moral underclass is thus both their lack of experience and their low status in society, two aspects that seem to mutually influence each other. .

Even more so, children and adolescents who have been disadvantaged in some sense or other, materially or mentally, may have difficulties with exerting what Beck (op cit.) has called "normative self-limitation" (see for instance Heggen, 2004). Neither is it given that they are immediately able to exploit the contingencies implied in the consumer state (op cit.) something that also may be looked down on.

Can we still count on shame as a factor that regulates life shaping?

It is a well-established fact that the ways in which substance use and intoxication practices are received differ significantly between societies (Room, 2001). The extent to which shame plays a role for how practices are received seems to be an important issue in the current context. Although the impact of social constraint on life shaping in principle may be as strong as ever, it is not given that shame feelings make people refrain from or reduce their involvement in risk prone activity.

The work of Becker (1973) on how a career of regular marijuana users develops is often referred to in order to illustrate the impact of shame on substance use. It rests on the assumption that shared notions of good and bad were highly influential within the North American society of that period. Many marijuana triers, for instance, refrained from further use because of the shame involved in the use. Shame also seemed to have a curbing effect on the speed in which the career developed. Shame could, for instance, more or less directly hinder people from exploiting the euphoric propensities of the substance. Those of Becker`s informants whose marijuana use after a wide range of trials and evasive maneuvers finally developed really deviant use patterns tended to be fairly isolated from the social in-crowd. The prerequisite for reaching that far was basically avoidance of contact with those individuals who conformed to mainstream society`s condemnation of such use. There seems to be a real distance between the impact of shame apparent in those tendencies and the relative accommodative climate of today with regard to cannabis use.

Also the framework of neutralization shaped by Sykes and Matza in 1957 was based on shame as a regulative factor. The assumption was that young delinquents were likely to feel shame even for minor offenses. In order to uphold bonding in society at large they, by means of certain verbal techniques, tended to neutralize the shame feelings that the deviant acts

tended to evoke in them. The framework has later on become known as the Neutralization framework.

However, as conceptualizations of normal and deviant may be more diverse in contemporary society than in the industrialist societies, and concepts like "mainstream" and "sub-cultural" have lost some of their original contents, theory based on shame may seem a little outdated. Beck (2009) has, for instance, maintained that the "paste" that keeps communities together in conceptual unity is gone, and Baumann (2007) has as previously noted that *"commitments and loyalties have been left without regret",* a statement that also seems to include the relatively reduced impact of shame.

Already in the industrialist era, the validity of theory that assumed shame as a regulative factor was doubted. It was argued that Western societies were not anymore sufficiently monochrome with regard to moral standards to produce shame feelings in people (Hirschi, 1971). In line with Hirschi`s critique, communitarian theories (Braithwaite, 1989) have been criticized for building on too simplistic assumptions about moral homogeneity. On the whole, communitarian views on shame seem to have gone hand in glove with the universality ideals that prevailed during industrialism, but that appear as less topical today. On this basis it could have been most appropriate to conclude that shame only plays a role today within those cultures in which there is a constant fear of disgracing the family name or in which parenting styles are very restrictive (Unger et al., 2002).

Yet, although the relatively differentiated mass consumption societies tend to accommodate such as cannabis use to a far greater extent than previously, shame in relation to such use still does not seem to be exterminated. For instance, even younger cannabis users in fairly accommodative cultures experience stigma, if not shame in the conventional sense (Hathaway, 2004, 2011). Moreover, a review of research that has been carried out during the last six decades and that has been based on the assumptions of Sykes and Matza concludes that shame as a regulative factor has got validity even in consumer society (Maruna & Copes, 2005). Neutralization techniques are being used even today in relation to minor delinquency like music piracy, fraud and shoplifting. The reason why may be found in the marriage between consumer society and the welfare state. Any act that may threaten the common wealth evokes the need to protect oneself against sanctions both of the informal and embodied kind, and of sanctions of a more formal kind (Peretti-Watel, 2003).

What the role of shame is within the theoretical framework of Bourdieu does not seem immediately clear. To my knowledge, Bourdieu has not explicitly addressed the theme. This does not mean that his framework has nothing to contribute. Shame issues may just be expressed in a different way. It seems, for instance, to be of importance that Bourdieu's theoretical framework is rooted in a mind-set which is economical, although in a symbolic sense (see for instance Bourdieu, 1990). Emotions in the conventional sense are mostly not the question. With the laws of the symbolic market as a framework, the concept of shame may therefore appear as somewhat alien.

One of Bourdieu`s major assumptions is, for instance, that the imbalance as regards access to goods with symbolic value is an imbalance which nobody tends to recognize. Those situations or activities that may involve shame to some extent are more likely to be reconceptualised as something that appears to people as indifferent or less important. People in less privileged or legitimate positions, for instance, tend to denounce the value of the practices and lifestyle markers which the symbolic elite hold as the most desirable. Statements like "that is not for us anyway", "I have got quite other preferences" etc. are typical examples provided by Bourdieu (1995) in "The Distinction" of such disinterest. In contrast, the usual way of thinking about shame as a factor that regulates life shaping is that the maneuvering meant to neutralize it is fairly recognizable although embodied. Yet, a major point made by Bourdieu is that the described disinterest is the very "proof" that the dismissed value is basically appreciated.

On the basis of the above literature review, it seems as if shame and fear of stigma are still factors to be counted on in the life shaping attempts made by adolescents in the same situation as the current sample of participants.

Some contributions from the social constraint perspective to indicated substance and crime prevention

Generally, the tendency of "prudentialism", which has been described as the tendency to identify risk in any emerging, everyday phenomenon (Reith, 2004 a) is one of the most illustrative examples of how social constraint in consumer society appears in a highly embodied way. In its more extreme form, it may appear as equally binding as the structural constraints that structuralist social theory was suggesting.

The major impression left by relevant literature based on newer theory on social constraint is that a sound life shaping process in a contingency society seems to be based on the need to bridge tensions that previously have been viewed as unbridgeable, like the one between pleasure and prudence. Prudentialism in this light is overdone. It seems to draw the attention away from the more positive potential for life shaping that is implied in recreational substance use and deliberate risk taking. In itself it is therefore neither healthy nor desirable.

Those lifestyles which encompass both being prudent and having fun tend to have a greater symbolic value and to be what people mostly strive for in consumer society. It may be an ideal which is not easy to achieve. According to Bourdieu (1986), the concept of symbolic goods refers to a certain good, material or immaterial, which is desired because of its relative scarcity.

The need to bridge the urge to consume on the one hand and the anxiety of becoming "consumed by consumption" (Reith, 2004b) on the other hand, seems above all to be reflected in the expression "*civilized enjoyment*" (O`Malley & Valverde, 2004). In *"civilized enjoyment"* , industrial discipline and protestant work ethics merge with pleasure to an extent

that makes pleasure *become* reason and vice versa (op cit.). A *"new culture of intoxication"* has emerged on the basis of this dual expectation (Measham & Brain, 2005). The aim is to experience "pure pleasure" as much as possible. Yet, a learning process is typically involved that is physically strenuous and includes a wide range of sacrifices. This new culture has been described by means of a wide range of names: "calculated hedonism" (Szmigin et al., 2004), "controlled loss of control" (Measham & Brain, op cit.), "determined drunkenness" (Measham, 2006), "partying right" (Demant, 2007) and "pleasant loss of control" (Østergaard, 2009).

As a consequence of the fact that such practices have, or at least have had, high symbolic value in consumer society, those youthful drinking practices that are covered by the names listed above cannot any longer be viewed as exclusively disordered or disruptive enterprises. However, by encompassing excess the practices also distinguish themselves from the classical moderation ideal. As far as alcohol or other substances are concerned, the considerations of appropriateness as a minimum tend to involve choice of drink types and with whom and where to drink or take other substances.

There seems to be an intimate relationship between drinking practices of that kind and more recent views on risk-taking in the more general sense. To an increasing extent, risk has been described as deliberate, innovative and even expressive (see Lyng, 1990, Peretti-Watel & Moatti, 2006, Sharland, 2006, Ravn, 2012). As particularly emphasized by Lyng (op cit.) risk-taking thereby tends to combine the seemingly opposite claims of constrain and contingency.

Such combination of seemingly opposite phenomena seems to pave the road for the development of a connoisseurship that in many ways seems to have become the pathway to high social estimation even for youths who at the outset were troublemakers or less privileged (Järvinen & Gundelach, 2007). The authors view their findings as in line with Bourdieu´s assumption of symbolic goods. They need not be inherited, but are also acquirable for those who are willing to work hard. At the same time, however, the referred findings also suggest a relatively constrained moral climate. The authors point to how "bad behavior" in terms of violent episodes, general trouble-making and use of hard drugs is viewed as disgraceful by those youths who have got the power to define respectability. This illustrates how excessive and unhealthy behaviors of all kinds are constituted as moral failure in a late modern normative climate (Croghan et al., 2006)

Thus, one may draw the preliminary conclusion that the dry drinking culture of which the Norwegian and the Swedish are examples, and conventionally dry cultures like the Danish tend to harmonize more than previously. Swedish studies, for instance, suggest that it is not necessarily so that the most excessive drinking styles are the styles that attain most admiration among Swedish teenagers (Bogren, 2006). Considerable portions of youths in Sweden seem to appreciate moderation or abstinence to an equal extent (op cit.). The latest ESPAD survey suggests that the use of alcohol among teenagers is still widespread in European countries. The majority of European teenagers (15-19) use alcohol on a regular basis Yet, there are no

drinking patterns in Europe as a whole that are more prevalent than others among youths in that age group (Hibell et al., 2011).

Also, most Norwegian teenagers in the mentioned age group come into contact with alcohol before the age of 20 (Vedøy & Skretting, 2009). All the same, youths in this age group use less alcohol and less drugs now than they did only a decade ago (Iversen et al., 2008; Vedøy & Skretting op cit.; Frøyland & Aaboen Sletten 2011). Based on the dropping alcohol consumption rate among Norwegian teenagers, Vedøy & Skretting (op cit.) suggest that the normative climate around alcohol as well as cannabis use might have tightened.

If the "dry" tendency continues and the opportunity for exerting "civilized enjoyment" is decreasing then conventional binge-drinking or "heavy, episodic drinking" (HED), which involves vomiting, passing out, competitive drinking games, urinating in public, waking up in hospital etc. (Griffin et al., 2009) may become real "symbolic burdens" (Marthinsen, 2010) in the future. So far, young people refer to such practices with both contempt and benevolence (op cit.). A symbolic burden according to Marthinsen represents the negation of symbolic capital. It is not only viewed by the legitimate majority as plain and unattractive but is also viewed as condemnable.

To sum up: The above review of literature that have presented newer concepts of social constraint seem to strongly underscore that the focus in substance prevention first and foremost needs to be put on the implicit aspects of human action and on individual judgment. Risk concepts that are still sensitive to social constraint are fairly implicit and incalculable, at least when compared to the risk concept, which is predominating in prediction research. In order to find a more determined direction in their life shaping process those adolescents who are in a morally indeterminate space therefore have to exploit their space of opportunity *within* the current engagement around fitness and respectability, not on the outside of it. Both adaptation and innovation are thus implied in the skill to exert individual judgment.

Practical reason and phronesis as core concepts in timely substance and crime prevention effort towards indicated adolescents

Two theoretical concepts more than other concepts prove to be fruitful to build on when it comes to the constitution of a timelier framework for substance and crime prevention on an indicated level: Practical reason and phronesis. The interrelatedness between them seems obvious, and will be drawn on in the final discussion of the data from the current study. Here, I limit myself to an initial presentation of their significance.

Practical reason is a central concept in Bourdieu`s theoretical framework (see for instance Bourdieu, 1998). A judgment based on practical reason in the sense Bourdieu has used it refers to the freshness of phenomena that exist relatively undisturbed by intellectual categorization of reality. Practical reason according to Bourdieu is the result of dispositions and practices that have been acquired over time and that are directed towards objectives that

have not emerged as the result of conscious designs. Thus, practical reason is in contrast to strategic action. Practical reason is above all directed towards the socially appropriate or lucrative.

Like other concepts in the conceptual apparatus of Bourdieu, practical reason has been wrapped in a vocabulary fetched from market theory. Concepts that reflect the dynamics of the profitable markets may be preferable in relation to exploration of youthful substance use and other risk-taking (Thornton, 1995). Much conventional theory tends to mystify the relational character of youthful life shaping (op cit.)

The above description of practical reason implicates that adolescents involved in activities held as risky and who often are ascribed characteristics like "disrespectable" or "irresponsible" also exert judgment at some level. By virtue of being agents in the symbolic market they cannot escape it. Although the judgment is predominantly unconscious, this fact may be easy to overlook, both by the youths themselves and their social environment.

The relevance of the concept *"phronesis"* for the thematic of the thesis has also background in a practical kind of reason. *Phronesis* may be translated as "shrewdness" or "refinement"[21]. Gadamer (1989) has described *phronesis* as practical knowledge and practical ethics oriented towards the "eternal" and constantly recurring topic of "how should I live? ". Like the concept "practical reason", it cannot be isolated from the social context in which it occurs and is unpredictable in its character. A person in possession of phronesis knows, according to Flyvbjerg (2009) how to behave under shifting circumstances.

Although exertion of *"phronesis"* within a rationalist, modern frame is perceived by many researchers as something beyond the academic disciplines, Flyvbjerg (op cit.), stresses that *"phronesis"* is an intellectual virtue that will become even more important in the future. Critique of the categorical thinking and empiricism that tended to characterize modernity during the industrialist era is underlying the renewed interest towards it.

Critique of the social constraint perspective

Critique of the perspective of social constraint is assumed to be covered by the descriptions of the prediction and the contingency perspectives. Critique against it therefore has got no section on its own in this thesis.

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[21] "Kløkt" in Danish and Norwegian language

Conclusions around the utility of the described perspectives

Having grown out of the historical preconditions of modernity, all perspectives discussed above in some way or other seem helpful as a basis for prevention effort. None of the three perspectives tend to view indeterminacy with regard to the balance between standard moral norms and deviance from them as a bearable status in the long run. Yet, the perspectives are different in significant respects with regard to how so-called "incipient" problems should be approached.

Roughly speaking it is the prediction perspective and the contingency perspective which appear as the most incompatible perspectives. This may best be illustrated if one sets them up against each other:

Whereas the prediction perspective is dependent on categorizing, the contingency perspective is tentative and pragmatic.

Whereas the prediction perspective is oriented towards continuity, the contingency perspective is oriented towards discontinuity and the unexpected.

Whereas the prediction perspective is oriented towards norms and rules, the contingency perspective is directed towards spontaneity and individual connoisseurship.

Whereas the prediction perspective is oriented towards expert knowledge, knowledge production within the contingency perspective accommodates lay perspectives to a considerable extent.

On the background of this review, the contingency perspective seems to be preferable to the prediction perspective when it comes to the shaping of a timely framework for understanding of the current data material. Yet, both the contingency perspective and the social constraint perspective when viewed in conjunction appear to be more appropriate than when they stand alone. In brief, one may conclude that the social constraint perspective may significantly modify the individual freedom implied in the contingency perspective. Inversely, the contingency perspective modifies the risk embedded in the social constraint perspective for determinate-making. Besides, both the two perspectives tend to have captured both conflicting and converging aspects of consumer society, which make the combination of them even more significant.

By means of both the contingency and the social constrain perspectives the analytical focus is turned away from both the rationalist mind-set predominating "just do it" ideology[22]and the attention towards background factors implied in pathology theory, to a mind-set based on practical reason and non-calculability.

Already existing theoretical compromises

The above conclusion, which implicates that a conceptualization framework for indicated substance and crime prevention in order to be really timely must encompass both contingency and social constraint, has already been drawn several times. The conclusion seems, for instance, to be reflected in an article written by two authors that at the turn of the millennium represented either side of the normalization debate, namely Measham & Shiner (2009). They heavily emphasize that normalization tendencies have to be discussed against certain issues concerning social injustice and vice versa. Cieslick & Pollock (2002) already a decade ago advocated a combination of postmodern theory and structural-functional perspectives as a frame of reference for analyses of youths in risk society. Although this thesis is neither based on theory which is purely "post"- neither modern nor "structural-functionalist" the thesis may be said to be on the track that the referred recommendation is implicating.

On a more theoretical level, Bourdieu`s habitus may serve as an example of a framework which involves similar compromises. Habitus implicates transgression of the conventional dichotomy between structure and agency. As a result of this tendency of suspending conventional boundaries between seemingly opposite phenomena, Sulkunen (2009) has pointed to how Bourdieu`s habitus also contributes to enhanced understanding of social practices as basically synthetic. Social practices in the light of the habitus concept may be viewed as a situational combination of objective circumstances, subjective action and intended and unintended meanings. The habitus concept has for that reason been suggested as an appropriate frame of reference for the study of youthful risk-taking as it allows for a view on the young risk-takers as both active constructors and structure-bound at the same time (Sharland, 2006, Ravn, 2012).

All the same, it has been argued that Bourdieu`s habitus concept has limited applicability in relation to issues of the kind that are addressed in this thesis. Garrett (Garrett, 2007a), for instance, with reference also to other authors has pointed to how the habitus concept has failed to enlighten how children develop their sense of habitus. Other critics stress that individualization and differentiation as regards lifestyles after all tends to be more far-reaching than Bourdieu assumed (Heggen, 2004). Certainly, one may oppose to this point of view by emphasizing that Bourdieu actually describes himself as a constructionist structuralist (Bourdieu, 1990). All the same, it is not difficult to understand what the critique is hinting at. Garret (op cit.) has suggested that the emphasis in Bourdieu`s works tends to remain on unconscious reproduction of existing hierarchies. Although the theoretical premises that Bourdieu is building on are of a kind that cannot be described in more mechanistic or

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[22] Cfr. the previously referred concept of Garret 2007

systematic ways, the potential that is implied in the alleged tension between objective structure and individual contingency has not been properly exploited or elaborated by Bourdieu himself (op cit.). According to Garrett, little has also been written about how a group may struggle for power and influence within and outside of their primary social fields. Some also stress that the habitus concept may be difficult to grasp (Thompson, 1992).

My conclusion around the utility of the habitus concept is that it may add something valuable to the process of analysis, without necessarily being a frame of reference that is meant to "explain it all". The assumption implied in it that we are not aware of our contingencies seems to be of particular significance in the current context. The habitus concept thus contributes to the understanding of why people tend to remain stagnant in vulnerable or humiliating positions instead of shaping a path that entails positions that are more respectable. My preconception of the target group for prevention that the study sample represents at the outset was that they strive to find a more determined direction in life. The habitus concept may serve as a tool for further exploration of the current material with regard to that aspect.

Closely related to the assumption that social constraint has a binding effect on people with regard to exploitation of their potential is the assumption of the impact of the symbolic market on life shaping. Particularly the issue of "what is really at stake for the time being" comes into focus with the symbolic nature of the habitus concept as a backdrop. The concept may, thereby, add a future dimension to exploration of present relations. A salient question is for instance: What will certain life shaping processes pay off in social and individual reward; here and now but also on a long-term basis? All the same, in the analysis I do not make very explicit reference to the habitus concept. It is underpinning the analysis in a more indirect way.

V) Methods

In this chapter I will firstly account for the epistemological framework of the thesis, which in the introductory section was described as "pragmatic-reflexive". I will then provide an account on how I proceeded methodically. The last part of this chapter is titled: "Second thoughts about choice of method". There I discuss the procedures and data trustworthiness, and some other issues in light of the pragmatic-reflexive researcher position.

The pragmatic-reflexive researcher position

The implications of pragmatic-reflexive research were introduced in brief already in the introduction of the thesis: knowledge is continuously revised, dichotomies are transgressed and those explanation models avoided that aim at "eliciting it all".

The prefix "pragmatic" when used in this context is first and foremost meant to underscore that there is no ambition implied in this epistemology of achieving absolute certainty. "Pragmatic" also means to give up the ambition to achieve logic coherence in the strictest sense. When data from this thesis are analysed and presented in subsequent section I will, as a consequence, not attempt to fit the single elements into a comprehensive explanatory model.

"Reflexive" first and foremost refers to the ambition of transgressing the subject vs. object divide. Reflexivity is also implied in the ambition to constantly revise knowledge.

For the sake of simplicity I, in the remaining part of the thesis, sometimes merely use "reflexivity" or "reflexive" when I refer to the pragmatic-reflexive episteme. This is how it is commonly referred. Pragmatism is in my eyes an inherent part of reflexivity. The reason why the term "pragmatic" all the same has been made explicit when presenting my epistemological position is that "reflexive" when standing unexplained often is associated with "reflective" . Although one could hardly be reflexive without being reflective, reflexivity appears to me as a broader term. It could be substituted by the term "world-view".

As the above list of characteristics already suggests, the pragmatic-reflexive approach appears as intimately related to the historical preconditions of late modernity. It, for instance, allows for uncertainty and takes flux into consideration. An example of an approach which indeed has captured the capricious and arbitrary character of social phenomena is Foucault's genealogy (Bastalich, 2009).

The late modern influence is also visible in the view on theory as something that is hardly apt at "eliciting it all". According to Giddens (1990), for instance, there is barely any conceptual

frame in the current historical era that is able to precisely describe social practice and social development. Therefore, "theoretical frameworks" seems to be a more appropriate pragmatic – reflexive term than "theory" in the conventional sense. In the works of Bourdieu, for instance, epistemology seems to be focused before ontology. Instead of aiming at getting into the depth of the logic underpinning social order by studying the full breadth of its appearances, something which we may call the *"what"* - issue, Bourdieu`s project is rather to discuss the very issue of *how* knowledge about the logic of social order and social phenomena may be captured  (Broady, 1991: 156). With reference to Bachelard (in Bourdieu, 1998:2), Bourdieu`s conclusion seems to be of a particularistic kind. A social logic can only be grasped by scrutinizing very specific and historically located examples that represent "a special case of what is possible" (op cit.). According to Broady in the cited reference the methods of social science may thus be compared to tools in a tool-box.

Alvesson & Sköldberg (op cit.) also underscore that interpretation flexibility of data is needed to an equal extent as identification of the possible rules that govern them. The aim of the pragmatic-reflexive researcher is not necessarily to arrive at an ultimate conclusion in the final discussion of the data. Rather, one must primarily be prepared to be taken by surprise and to have a scope that encompasses data ambiguity and complexity (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2005).

If reflexive research is not aiming at fitting data elements into strict frameworks nor at providing final conclusions, what is then its aim? Basically, reflexive research is taking the intimate relationship between contingency and social constraint into consideration by dealing with *"contextualization of the agent in the structure with the space of possibility in mind"* (Marthinsen & Skjefstad, 2011).

In this light, academic debates and theoretical frameworks on the one hand and the data on the other constitute two parties that are in constant dialogue with each other.

Two of the most outstanding aspects of a pragmatic-reflexive paradigm merit a more in-depth description: Firstly, the tendency implied in it to transgress either-or positions and secondly, the emphasis on language and meaning that is implied in it.

Transgression of either-or positions

 "Outward" and "inward" aspects should preferably be viewed as intrinsically dependent in a reflexive perspective. Thinking inspired by currents in late modernity largely shapes the premise for the part of the current data analysis that is on time orientation. An example of such a premise is the presented assumption by Arendt that the distinctions between the tenses have been suspended. In this sense, future may be interpreted as an "in-here" entity.

As already noted in relation to the joint view on contingency and constraint, the subjective-objective divide is also suspended in a pragmatic-reflexive perspective.

In the post-Newtonian scientific era in which we are living the object is viewed as not fully discernible from its context. One could not on this background claim the objective as more true than the subjective. Objectivism when it stands alone fails to grasp the fact that activities within the social, everyday world cannot be reduced to rules in the same way as scholarly derived knowledge (Bourdieu, 2004, 2005). In the current focus group dialogue it, for instance, seemed important to allow for the aspects of being that are not easily capturable by scholastic concepts or instruments but that all the same belong to the everyday experience of the participants. However, this also implies that the "lived experience" of the subject has no primacy before more objective aspects of social practices. The total reliance on subjective phenomena, which is encouraged within subject philosophy, may thus be apt to making the spectator scientifically blind.

In a study like the current, it certainly is easy to be intrigued by the idea that something like "participants own" conceptualizations exists. Yet, such a position entails ignorance of those relations that the single youths have both to specific social fields and to the broader social and historical context, and which constitute variations *among* participants. There is thus hardly any empirical basis for portraying the participants in the current target group as an enigmatic "tribe" or as a homogenous group or class.

Besides, "frog perspectives" tend to hide the fact that there is an apparent inconsistency implied in life shaping processes (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). In the current thesis, a frog perspective as the sole basis for analysis may entail ignorance of variation *within* each adolescent with regard to how risk is tackled.

On the whole, the issue of how the subject is *relating* to the object or "objectifying" it is the most interesting point of departure for a data analysis (Bourdieu 2004, 2005). Subjective experience and entities that are more objectifiable have to be kept in mind at the same time. Additionally, one has to keep a balance between distance and closeness to data and to keep an eye on the process by which they are objectified.

As a consequence, the analysis of the current data attempts to keep a balance between what seems to be the particularities of adolescents in general and "at risk" adolescents on the one hand, and approaches being more general and less age-categorical on the other.

An implication of the assumption that *"everything is related to everything"* (Alvesson & Sköldberg, op cit.) also alters the conventional view of the researcher as distinct from his or her object. Within a reflexive framework for research the researcher does not have a neutral privileged position in the encounter with a social practice or a data material. Rather, the reflexive research process predominantly has a collaborative character, although responsibilities differ. Alvesson & Sköldberg suggest that the relation between researcher and researched could be compared with the relation between teacher and student. In both cases the communication is precarious, various and process-based in a way that distinguishes itself

from the conventional and more rational question-answer patterns. It is not assumed that "objects", "forces" or "mechanisms" govern the process from the "outside".

On the other hand, fallacies may also follow from the suspended distinction between the researcher and the researched. For instance, blind spots may emerge as a result of the fact that the researcher often belongs to the same social group as the participants. Both parties may take things as given which from a more "naïve" or "not-knowing" position could have been questioned. Besides, many scientific fallacies arise because researchers often fail to recognize that they themselves are also socially constructed; it is not just the participants in a study who are so (Bourdieu, 2005).

Researchers may not only misrecognize their privileges in the larger social hierarchy. Researcher vulnerability or vulnerability in the research context may also be misrecognized (Armour, Rivaux, & Bell, 2009). Objectification of such vulnerability, which means to examine its basis and how it could be re-conceptualized, is therefore a salient ingredient in the research process. When carrying out the current study I, for instance, had the sense of not always being able to live up to certain hierarchically based images of the successful researcher. Because verbatim transcripts reflect what has been said and not said in an often merciless way, my sense of inferiority about my verbal contribution and experienced inability to convey clarity was reconfirmed many a time. I certainly forgot to recognize in the beginning that speech does not necessarily follow a logical pattern. If I had not recognized this, I could have been tempted to exclude less flattering parts of the transcribed dialogue from the analysis.

In the current thesis, the interrelatedness of phenomena is meant to be reflected by the establishment of an analytical frame of reference that emphasizes contingency as much as constraint. The scope of a pragmatic-reflexive epistemology may not and should not be merely associated with single theorists or specific theoretical frameworks. In fact, it draws on many theoretical sources of the kind that question absolute certainty about social phenomena. It has been inspired by *"hermeneuticians, critical theorists, poststructuralists, linguistic philosophers, discourse analysts, feminists, constructivists, reflectivists and other trouble-makers"* (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009 :3). Thus, it is recognized that there is a need to transgress established theoretical opposites. The episteme may, for instance, encompass established opposites like contingency and constraint, or diversity and unification, and consider them as complementary. Reflexive research assumes that nothing is viewed in its own right. Particularly in relation to adolescents transgression of theoretical positions seems to be an imperative. There is generally little consistency between the various ways in which adolescents are conceptualized in contemporary society (Oliveira & Santos Lopes, 2006).

Emphasis on language and meaning

Nuances in the language are in a reflexive kind of epistemology assumed to play a significant role in making contingency out of constraint. The view on language as a tool for liberation is not least implied in Bourdieu's habitus concept (see above all Bourdieu, 1992).

By emphasizing such aspects, the reflexive position demonstrates its position within what has been called "the linguistic turn". The "linguistic turn" refers to a movement that has been going on for a hundred years or more (Gadamer, 1998). The most striking example in this thesis of how this movement has asserted itself is the shift in criminology theory away from structuralist positions to an emphasis on meaning, everyday practice and language in the 1950s and 1960s.

The linguistic turn has also had impact on substance research, for which Becker`s (1973) before mentioned work on the pathway to regular marijuana use may be an example. Instead of viewing such a pathway from an external, classifying perspective, Becker concentrated on the negotiable aspects that he found in his material. For instance, he observed that marijuana users constantly negotiated between their urge to consume the substance on the one hand and the urge to uphold social inclusion in the more "respectable" in-crowd on the other.

On the whole, the linguistic turn has a radical impact on theory building not only within philosophy but also within social science (Gadamer, op cit.). More than many others Bourdieu has been a proponent of the view that there is an existence *beyond* the objectified constructions on language that were set up by the structuralists (Bourdieu, 1992 etc.). Language in Bourdieu's perspective is not viewed as a predefined object, which merely reflects structures or communities. Agency is highly involved in addition. As a consequence of this view, it would be impossible to ignore the interplay between language and sense-making in the analysis of the current focus groups interviews.

Reliability and validity issues in a pragmatic-reflexive perspective

An important point to account for is also how reliability and validity issues are viewed in a pragmatic-reflexive perspective.

It has been argued that terms like validity and reliability are terms that only fit a strict empirical-logical paradigm. Such a paradigm above all aims at making the indeterminate more determinable by accentuating rigour and coherence. However, as long as "validity" and "reliability" in relevant literature sources are used reflexively and in a way that is adapted to the study purpose, the wording did not seem as a big point to me. In this thesis I, therefore, alternate between the concepts of validity and reliability on the one hand and the concept of "data trustworthiness" as a more collective term on the other hand.

The overall purpose of both validity and reliability concerns in all research, regardless of epistemological position, is to ensure that the results are not completely arbitrary even in those cases in which generalization or prediction is not the aim. Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009), for instance, hold the view that there must be a *reasonable connection* between elements.

Silverman (2001) has listed a range of universal research claims. At least some of them also apply perfectly well to the current study. One example is the claim to make sure that the phenomena that the research questions one aims at exploring really are explored.

In order to carry out the exploration in the intended way the method must, for instance, fit the nature of the research questions. There must also be a comprehensible connection between data and existing knowledge. Besides, one has to ensure reliability in the sense that other researchers could not have drawn quite opposite conclusions around the same material.

The latter claim seems reasonable even in qualitative studies on social phenomena in constant change. In relation to the current study I found it both necessary and fruitful to bring in second opinions on the data at a stage before they got summarized. Possible converging viewpoints between the co-analysers, and between the co-analysers and my own preliminary interpretations, could serve as an indication that further explanation and additional theoretical intakes were needed. Yet, although it is important that possible convergence is further explored it, however, does not necessarily represent a threat to validity or reliability. Again, it must be emphasized that ambiguity in a reflexive perspective is viewed as part of reality. If the data get too "tamed", the ideal in pragmatic-reflexive research to be taken by surprise cannot be fulfilled. Such a mismatch with theoretical premises could also represent a threat to data trustworthiness.

With regard to the general trustworthiness of the current data it appeared to me as helpful to present excerpts from the material and preliminary conclusions in various settings. Critical but constructive questions then arose which otherwise could have been easy to ignore because of my own cultural "blind spots" or vulnerabilities like the ones described in the previous subsection.

Among Silverman`s universal research claims is also the claim to keep those records available that provide insight enough for readers of the final report to make their own judgments on data trustworthiness. By making as detailed accounts as possible about my procedures I also hope to have met the universal trustworthiness claims that Silverman describes.

There are, however, also some trustworthiness criteria listed by Silverman (op cit.) that are not very relevant in the current context. One example is the claim that one should make clear distinctions between data and interpretations. This criterion tends to be underpinned by a view on representation that is not compatible with the ambition in reflexive research to transgress the subject-object divide. The pragmatic-reflexive epistemology rests on the assumption that a

direct, one-to-one relationship between phenomena is indiscernible because "everything is related to everything". Clarification of own preconceptions is, all the same, important.

With regard to more reflexive validity concepts, the concept of "communicative validity" (Kvale, 2001) appeared as a constructive contribution in the current context. Communicative validity seems to be quite in line with the premises of the linguistic turn. It refers to the extent to which the purpose, procedures and results are understood by those who are affected by the study or by those who are to develop professional practices on the basis of a study. Through my collaboration with the practice field around central aspects of the study, I hopefully attained a reasonable degree of communication validity, which also could affect its utility in practice contexts. I return to that issue in the subsection *"second thoughts about method"*.

Methodical procedure

How I worked to capture data in line with the research questions

In order to provide a clear overview of how I proceeded methodically I have chosen a step - by - step account. As always, the research process was in reality not as orderly as it looks like when described stepwise. Many steps were made at the same time and often in an order that was quite opposite to the order here accounted for.

Step 1: Preparation of the study in collaboration with the relevant practice field

Both the preparation of the study, the data production and the data analysis was as much as possible carried out in collaboration with primary service practitioners who worked with youth in the same situation as the study participants. Above all, I collaborated extensively with practitioners in the preparation phase. Taking part in preparation meetings were practitioners who later on functioned as recruiters as well as others who were not directly involved, but had relevant insights to share. A resource group was also established, consisting of practitioners from the field, other researchers and people with personal experience with the current problematic.

The overall research question was already defined when the first contacts with the field were made. It was, therefore, first and foremost the more specific sub-questions that were subject to collaboration with the field. As already noted several times, those sub-questions revolved around images of future; to what extent a link between present and future was experienced by the participants; what the participants were more eager to discuss there and then compared to mere future-related issues; and how participants tended to appear when they talked about the issues that were triggered in focus groups.

Particularly the third research question, which focuses on the themes that the participants seemed more engaged in right then, was by and large a product of contact with the field. The

field workers, by stressing the importance of that particular issue, underscored the need to downplay rationalist assumptions around risk and risk management. They, for instance, made me extra conscious that health messages seldom have an impact on "at risk" adolescents because they build on assumptions that have somewhat fallen out of step with vital conditions in contemporary society. Thus, the practitioners also influenced the paradigmatic rooting of the thesis. The epistemologically oriented discussions I had with the field around the research questions also affected the definition of inclusion criteria. As I have described in detail in the introductory section, I became gradually aware of how important it was that the sample was selected on the basis of field discourse and not merely on scientific discourse, to the extent that those aspects are distinct from each other. It was also the field practitioners that emphasised that the information letter had to contain several lines aiming at reassuring potential participants that they were welcome to participate regardless of whether they themselves meant they were at risk of a deteriorated future wellbeing or not.

The help I got from the primary service practitioners with formulation of the information letter addressed to potential participants and their next of kin was also valuable. Some of the practitioners were invited to a meeting at which a draft was critically examined. Thanks to them, the language in the letter was as much as possible stripped of academic formulations and acquired a shape that would better appeal to teenagers. Yet, as there are certain formal standards for such information letters that have to be followed, the letter alone seemed relatively inappropriate as a "teaser". The practitioners therefore suggested the use of an information flyer in addition to the letter, which could be distributed during initial contact with potential participants. A flyer was made in line with these recommendations.

Several practitioners also contributed to the preparation of the study by formulating so-called provokers. In a dialogue café in advance of start-up, practitioners from primary services as well as secondary services discussed what they perceived as shared characteristics or behaviours of the target group. After having discussed these issues in small groups, they were asked to arrive at a consensus about certain brief statements that were provocative enough to prompt focus group discussion.

Last, but not least, it was by means of practitioners in the field that I found appropriate participant recruiters. Without the collaboration with the field on this point I would probably not have achieved the breadth of recruitment sites that I finally got. Such breadth was considered important in order to reflect the assumed diversity of the target group. Once having found recruiters that were willing to do the job, formal access to the sites was achieved by informing managers of the various units about the purpose of the study as well as other relevant aspects.

Step 2: Compassing the target group

The sample, as it finally appeared, has already been described in the introductory chapter. The claim from the Regional committee of ethics that parents or next of kin had to give their

73

consent had already put a certain limit on which inclusion criteria to use. In practice, only adolescents with parents who already were aware of their involvement in activities held as risky were likely to be recruited.

In advance of start-up I had, as previously noted, decided to include adolescents who were assessed as at risk because they met certain more or less formal criteria associated with problem substance use or involvement in delinquency later in life. However, there had to be an additional reason for adult worry. They had to have exhibited behaviors of the kind that commonly are viewed as problem behaviors. Those two criteria types are the same criteria types that qualify for the label of "indicated prevention" (EMCDDA, 2009). Yet, it was not expected that participants should fulfill or have demonstrated serious problems of the kind that normally entails referral to specialized in-patient or outpatient help services.

Within this framework, the primary level practitioners were in charge of the sampling. As previously stressed the rationale behind was that the mind-sets of the practitioners could differ from the objective standards that are prevailing in epidemiology discourse on risk.

Because boys have been described in relevant literature as more likely to be involved in risk-prone activities of the current kind, I did not expect to achieve as many girl participants as boy participants. However, I asked the recruiters to try to as much as possible keep a gender balance. Besides, when talking with recruiters in the first place about whom to ask, I emphasized that the youth preferably should be of the kind that "liked to talk".

Step 3: Approval of the study

The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) approved the study with regard to data gathering, data analysis, methodology issues, privacy and research ethics.
The study was also approved by the regional committee for medical and health research ethics (REK), on the condition that certain formal demands related to minimum age, group size and consent from participants' next of kin were met. The REK also set the standard for the introductory letter and controlled its final content.

Step 4: Information and recruitment procedures

As already mentioned, the conversations with frontline practitioners very much revolved around the formulation in the information letter under the headline "Who may participate?" Recruiters were generally very concerned that the invitation to participate in the focus groups should not convey a view on the participants as more peculiar or more negative than other youths. They otherwise feared that their effort of providing them with self-confidence and of assisting them to view themselves as "ordinary youth" as much as possible could have been in vain. The practitioners found, for instance, that the "at risk "label could be very stigmatizing, particularly in a written version. They, therefore, recommended that the term "risk" should be totally avoided in any written information about the study. "Danger zone" was chosen instead, something which to me in content by and large seemed to converge with the risk

concept. Still, this made me reflect on the formulations anew, and I found that the practitioners should be heard also on this point, although one could object that the terminology issue was nothing but semantics. The whole information letter is attached at the back of the thesis[23]. Here I merely provide some excerpts from it. As one may see from the excerpt below, for instance, the term "the danger zone" was defined in a way that was more in line with the contingency perspective than the prediction perspective: *» To be in the danger zone" means to be at a point where it is still possible to prevent potential problems from developing or to prevent lesser problems from becoming larger problems."*

With regard to the issue of *"who may participate?"* the following formulations were chosen:

> *Any adolescent between 16 and 18 years of age may participate who so wishes, has consent from next of kin and who either themselves think they are in the danger zone of developing problems - for instance related to use of substances (alcohol or other intoxicants) - or are assessed by others as being so (for instance by next of kin or other adults). There are a lot of reasons for being assessed as in the danger zone, and opinions may differ around* **when** *someone is at such a point. If it still seems unclear who may participate, do not hesitate to take contact with the undersigned.*

On the whole, vocabulary in relation to inclusion criteria was a challenge. In hindsight, an "if" instead of the "when" in the above passage would, for instance, have been more appropriate.

In order to underscore that the participants could provide refreshing insights into the current issues and therefore not merely thought of as "problem youths" who had to be taught something, the following formulation was also added: "*Youths who are assessed as being in the danger zone may have thoughts or experiences that are of great value for professionals involved in prevention to know about".*

The letter contained the following phrases as regards potential benefits of participation.
-      *The opportunity to share one's opinion and get heard.*
-      *The opportunity to influence authorities so that measures directed towards youth in the danger zone become more in accordance with how youths in the danger zone are thinking.*
-      *Experience as a co-researcher: One will be exploring an area in which there exists little knowledge in advance.*

In addition to those already mentioned, two more benefit points were added: "*and perhaps some aha- experiences. Besides, there is a possibility of being inspired to become more future-oriented in one's own life."*

In addition, the introductory letter contained information that the focus would not be on each participant`s biography but rather on the interaction and meaning-making processes.

Only in those cases in which the adolescents signalized that they were interested in participation, were their next of kin contacted. At most of the sites, it was the recruiters who

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[23] Only a Norwegian version exists of the entire letter.

took the responsibility for giving the introductory letter to the next of kin and who handed back their written consent to me. This was a procedure which made sense at those sites where the recruiters already knew both participants and next of kin in advance. Disadvantages and benefits of this in relation to privacy and confidentiality ethics are discussed later on. At those sites where the recruiters did not have close contact with parents or next of kin, I myself sent the letter directly to them. Their written consent was expected to be returned to me directly by mail or through their son or daughter. An envelope with a stamp on it was enclosed in the information letter to all next of kin in order to facilitate response. In principle, all next of kin could have given their consent in this way.

At some sites, parents or other next of kin were also invited to an information meeting where I told about the purpose of the study and where it was possible to ask questions face-to-face. Few parents exploited this opportunity, while about half of the participants got their information from me at such meetings after having read the information material.

Step 5: Choice of method

People may not always be in touch with or immediately capable of articulating their motivations, feelings and opinions (Morgan, 1998 c). Those aspects of life shaping that the current study was meant to capture are fairly abstract and seldom reflected on or spoken about. On the contrary, I expected that the way in which the current participants related to the themes at issue was predominantly embodied. There was also doubt whether the participants related to risk in a way that could be immediately thematicized. Few readymade concepts seemed apt at promoting such thematicizing. When we hear others speak, however, we may be more able to articulate obscured or unfinished thoughts (Morgan, op cit.). Because the focus group method allows for the listening to others, the method seemed a relatively obvious choice in the current context.

Also, because the study was meant to capture target group conceptualizations of a kind that were relatively "undisturbed" by academic discourse, it seemed important to choose a method which draws on those potentialities for new and refreshing perspectives that is often generated in the free dialogue which the focus group allows for. A well-known advantage with focus group conversation is that it does not distinguish itself much from daily life conversation (Krueger, 1998). Participants may, in principle, do what they are used to in their daily life settings (op cit.). Whereas single interviews tend to reflect those phenomena or themes that I as a researcher am already conscious about, the focus group method helps me to get on the track of new themes and concepts merely by listening to the dialogue.

The overarching group topic is to be defined by the researcher, but for the rest the aim is to trigger group talk around the topic in a way that makes it a self-going process.

The fact that the focus group dialogue in the current study was meant to be among same age peers was, not least, a reason for choosing the method. As noted, one of the principles that

pragmatic-reflexive research is based on is that nobody in the research setting can claim to have a privileged access to the truth.

When same-age peers talk with each other, communication occurs in a horizontal manner. Horizontal communication is characterized by uncertainty, ambiguity and continuous re-definition (Frønes, 2006). When minors and adults speak with each other in a more vertical kind of pattern, the communication to a greater extent tends to implicate instruction, adjustment and cultural reproduction (op cit.) The chance that the study participants could ask each other questions that I never would have thought of asking seemed, therefore, to be enhanced by means of the focus group method. Although the single interview also could encompass ambiguity and negotiation of meaning (Gubrium & Holstein, 1995), it inevitably implicates the often unintended result that the communication is affirming conventional generational roles.

On the whole, the collaborative character of the focus group method contributes to the prevention of misunderstandings and thus invalid conclusions. Group members and moderators help each other in finding the most adequate formulations:

Moderator:	*What is required in order to be accepted?*
	(Silence)
Co-mode-	
rator**:**	*As an adult, or more generally?*
Moderator:	*I first and foremost thought of it in regard to adults….*
Participant:	*To be accepted ….by society?*
Moderator:	*Society, yeah.*

Step 6: Choice of group sites, composition of groups, etc.

As already suggested, sites were selected strategically. The principle behind this decision was to compose as diverse a sample as possible with regard to problem severity and contact with help services. For instance, I supposed that the group of adolescents that were recruited directly from schools were likely to have been involved in risky activity on a more episodic basis and to have had less contact with help services than were participants that had been recruited through more established child welfare units. This also proved to be a general truth.

The overall aim when composing groups was to allow for a high level of comfort in the relation between participants. The Regional committee for medical and health research had set a limit of five participants per group. The limit of members in each group seemed to be a key factor in order to achieve comfort and overview. In practice, no group had more than four members. Sometimes only two participants constituted a group, in the group literature labelled as a "dyad".[24] Some groups were gender mixed, others were not. In most groups only one gender was represented.

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[24] A dyad is a unit (for instance consisting of two persons) that constitutes a whole http://snl.no/dyade

In order to ensure that the groups consisted of youths who got sufficiently well along with each other, the recruiters were also given the main responsibility for composition of groups. This entailed that some focus groups were "natural groups" in the sense that members also stuck together in their spare time. The issue to which extent members in a focus group should be acquainted is somewhat ambiguously described in literature on the method. In order to facilitate communication between participants and to enhance frankness in the group discussions, it seemed important to ensure that the group members had approximately the same frame of reference for talk about the current issues.

At one of the schools they wanted me to do the recruiting of participants in direct contact with students. This was a school at which there were no school social workers or milieu therapists that in an inconspicuous way could do the recruiting. As a consequence, I myself talked about the study in all classrooms and left the flyer and my phone number in order for those students who were interested to get in contact. Also that method proved to be usable in the concrete setting. A school nurse was informed about whom I had recruited and gave her opinion whether their participation would fit the purpose of the study. Without the latter possibility it would have been more difficult to know whether those who volunteered had met the established inclusion criteria.

Step 7: Doing the focus groups

Here, I only account for what we did in the groups to facilitate group talk and the rationale behind certain actions. Issues like the reason for choosing the focus group method before other methods will be discussed in the subsection "My second thoughts about methods".

Totally 18 focus group meetings were carried out. Each group or dyad met three times, except for one that met two times on the same day for practical reasons. In a couple of groups the participants met three days in a row, in other groups there were weekly meetings. Thus, the data stem from a relatively limited period of time. The meetings were mostly held at the recruitment sites or in nearby localities. In line with advice from the practitioners with whom we collaborated in advance of start-up we served food at the meetings. Participants also got an incentive in terms of a gift voucher for the value of NOK 200.

As managing focus group conversation at the same time as one tries to get good quality may be a demanding task (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), I decided to make use of a co-moderator. She was present at 2 / 3 of the group meetings. The primary task of the co-moderator was to provide follow-up questions and to help put the group back on track at relevant occasions. We, who were moderators, did not always think in the same way about which emerging topics were of relevance for the enlightening of the research questions. The co-moderator often pursued some aspects of the discussion that I ignored, and vice versa. In that way the co-moderator also had the important task of complementing the data so they became as diverse as possible.

In one of the focus group meetings one of the recruiters was present as well in order to consolidate the conversation pattern in the group. At the first meeting there had been certain "show off" tendencies that hindered collaborative exploration without someone present that they knew in advance and respected. The recruiter has been labelled as "guest moderator" in excerpts from that specific meeting. In the other groups, concentrating on the task was never a problem to participants, although there was a need for us as moderators to keep talk on track sometimes. As a general rule, it seemed important that the recruiters kept away from the meetings, to make the speech as little influenced by "adult preconceptions" as possible.

Yet, although the focus group method is expected to produce self-going talk, it has been warned against viewing the focus group session as a "happening". Focus groups are after all conversations that are governed by the researcher, and the researcher is the one to decide the major topic (Morgan, 1998 d; Wibeck, 2000).

Consequently, we were to be conscious about the nature of the research questions if we were to produce data that were rich enough for our purpose. All research questions revolved around fairly abstract and existential issues that we assumed the participants were not used to talking about.

Also, the fact that the groups of the current study had not gathered spontaneously but were strategically composed by the recruiters, could enhance the risk that someone`s voice was silenced, and that data consequently did not reflect the desired breadth in perspectives on the phenomena at issue. Those power hierarchies that prevail outside of the group room also tend to assert themselves on the inside.

In order both to stimulate talk and to keep conversations as much as possible on the intended topics an interview guide was formulated. The guide was mostly meant to serve as a reminder and a checklist for the moderators. The guide mostly reflects my thinking about the themes in the preparation phases of the inquiry. The prompts in the guide were, therefore, mostly substituted by more functional prompts *en route*. In addition to the interview guide we found it important to have some non-verbal techniques up our sleeve "just in case". Yet, the major principle in focus group studies is after all to make talk emerge spontaneously.

It seemed important for the shaping of a safe and easy-going atmosphere from the outset that we postponed talk around the more abstract research questions to the second meeting. For instance, the research question that was related to future images and the one regarding the possible link between present and future did not seem to be appropriate questions to start with. Rather, the first prompts were about "plain" daily life issues, though with a major emphasis on risky situations: Quite successful prompts within the interview guide at the first meeting were: *What is a good day"?; "Describe a bad day "; "What is a normal Saturday night like? "; "What did you do last Friday/ Saturday night"?; "What may be unpleasant events (or risk) that may occur on a night out?"; "Is there anything in this neighborhood that could threaten your safety? " etc.*

With regard to this challenge of making the abstract questions about future risk more concrete, we also had prepared for the use of stimulus material such as the making of collages. Instead of just talking about future images, we thought it would be more appropriate to start with making a collage consisting of scraps from illustrated magazines. Sometimes we just handed out pen and paper and said: *"rank your future dreams from 1-5 "etc.* One could more or less tell from the group climate which version was most adequate.

We also made use of the statements that had been created by the practitioners in advance of the study and that were meant to provoke group talk. The provokers we found the best were *"youths don't care about future"* and *"youths who are using drugs seek each other's company".* Examples of other prompts that were future oriented were: *"How would you like the future to look like"; "what are your dreams and plans?"* or alternatively *"How far into the future is it possible to think"; "When does a person become an adult?*

As noted, when participants got the choice between stimulus material and "just talk", they tended to answer "just talk". This may be due to the fact that recruiters had tried to find adolescents who liked to talk, but it could also be that the stimulus material we had chosen was not quite appropriate. Stimulus material in focus groups must be well prepared and be culturally adequate in order to function (Törrönen, 2002).

In order to produce target group conceptualizations on epidemiological risk but also more "home-made" conceptualizations of risk we used the following kind of questions: *"When you think back on your life so far: Advice you would give to younger siblings or someone else your care about? ; "What is required in order to be included in your peer group?; "What would make you leave your peer group?"; "What makes you lose respect for other people? "; "What is a respectable adult? "*

As also suggested previously, a particular epistemological challenge was related to the capturing of participants' possible conceptualizations of a link between current involvement in relatively tabooed activities like illegal substance use or rule breaking and negative future outcomes. To the extent that they are consciously reflected on at all, such conceptualizations are not only difficult to articulate but they may also be perceived as sensitive. It belongs to the general ethical codex of research to avoid exertion of undue pressure on the participants with regard to talk in the group about issues that many people find sensitive and for which one is not emotionally prepared. We were, therefore, concerned about avoiding premature disclosure from participants on such as substance use or other phenomena of a potentially sensitive or tabooed character.

Those prompts that are exemplified above and meant for producing knowledge on how participants related to risk were neutral in their form. Still they could be answered more specifically by those participants who felt comfortable with it. In addition, what I would call "third-person" approaches were also employed at times. By "third-person" approaches I mean approaches that are of a generalizing character: *"What do most youths do in order to…" ;*

"How do your friends handle...." or *"what do youths who use illegal substances normally think about this..."* etc.

Another example of the third-person approach could be "*what are the characteristics of youths that adults are worried about?* "

On the basis of such prompts, it was up to participants themselves to decide how concretely they would like to comment on issues that many people think are sensitive.

Although contamination perspectives on such as substance use and rule breaking have been partially repulsed in relevant research, we could not exclude that a certain risk of contamination effect was involved in doing focus groups of the current kind. The participants belonged to an indeterminable space in the moral sense, which could mean that they could be attracted both by those moral norms that prevail in society at large and norms prevailing in social fields that to some extent deviate from the mainstream moral norms.

If we had used prompts that could leave the impression that we viewed participants as more experienced in illegal substance use than they really were, then there was a risk that we could evoke the curiosity of "innocent" participants towards illegal substance use and stimulate a wish to try it out. We, thus, could have violated quite salient ethical codes. Yet, the contamination aspect is not the only aspect of concern. Verbal exaggerations of the kind that may threaten focus group trustworthiness could also come out of prompts that suggested the participants as being more "far gone" than they really were. Although it was important in the current study to get an impression of how the participants generally appeared when talking about the issues in focus, such exaggerations could threaten the trustworthiness of the data. For those kinds of reasons we tried to ask as open questions as possible.

We also tried to avoid disclosure about problems that could put other people`s privacy, such as participants' family members, at risk. Yet, we had to accept that looser, non-evidenced talk about concrete persons outside of the group room could occur at times. Such reference to others not only belongs to adolescents' everyday life. Also adult talk is normally full of it.

Although it was important to avoid unethical or rhetorical questions or prompts, we all the same had to strike a note sometimes by deliberately mentioning tabooed themes like sex, drugs and violence in concrete ways. By doing so, we wanted to signalize that talk about those themes was allowed for.

Step 8: Analysis

In order to get ready for analysis, verbatim transcriptions were made from all focus group recordings. As stuttering and stammering and "help words" in some cases were viewed as

clues into the sense making of participants as well as of moderators, they were kept in the transcripts. In the subsequent presentation of the data, however, such stuttering has most often not been referred unless it has got theoretical interest.

The analysis of the current material started with a rough thematic analysis, in which the data were taken more or less at face value. The themes that seemed most central in this first round were substance use, abstinence from substances, future images, spontaneous evaluations of the research project, themes concerning adults vs. adolescents, help-seeking and support, mental problems, gender issues, rule breaking, passions and interests, problem solution and risk management, participant conceptualizations of disquieting or risky aspects in participants` daily life context, participant values and norms.

In contrast to more specialized and systematic qualitative methods of analysis, like content analysis or discourse analysis, thematic analysis is fairly intuitive and characterized by much trial and error (Howitt & Cramer, 2005). It is therefore difficult to account for in a trustworthy way. In the current study, clear thoughts at this stage about how data could be interpreted were absent. As noted by Berg (2005) this is the stage at which one is asking oneself: *"What is it that they* (the participants or "co-thinkers") *want to tell me?"* Berg describes the analysis process as a wandering through the fog, in which there are only some scattered boundary stones as support for the interpreting mind. All the same, I had at this stage an unarticulated sense of there being "something" with certain utterances that was important, in some literature described as "bright stars" (Simons & Lathlean, 2008).

In order for the analyst to succeed with the further analysis, it is crucial to really get acquainted with one`s material (Howitt & Cramer, op cit.). It is, for instance, highly recommended according to the latter authors to make the transcripts oneself. The fact that I was present at all focus group meetings of the current study and did all the transcribing myself seemed important in order to get familiar with the data. An indication of the familiarity with the material that I had little by little achieved was that it was always easy to trace data down when I, for instance, suddenly remembered a quotation that could be crucial to include in the further analysis. I most often remembered the occasion at which it was originally said and often also *how* it was said. On the whole, achieving closeness to the current material was not difficult. Already in the first round of analysis it seemed highly interesting with regard to the current topic. Besides, it was full of spontaneous, colorful and fairly rich "to- the -point" considerations.

Bourdieu (2005) has described how there may be a tension implied in any data analysis between the urge to get as detailed knowledge about an unknown world as possible on the one hand and the need to tear this well-known world out of its context on the other hand. I could actually have got lost in intriguing details implied in the data if I had not remembered the reflexivity ideal of keeping a simultaneous distance to the data.

The need to look for more explicit "bright stars" began to play a role after having carried out the thematic analysis. The explicit bright stars have often validity across concrete contexts

and may thus bring the understanding beyond face value. In my case the more explicit bright stars were predominantly found by reading of relevant literature and theory. It was also helpful to talk and write about the topic even before it was quite clear which "deeper" truths were hidden in the material. This more objectifying part of the analysis process may also be described as taking the bird`s eye-view of the landscape (Berg, op cit.). In turn, the bird`s eye view may entail a renewed curiosity towards details, where after the need to distance oneself from the material becomes apparent. In that way, reflexivity is ensured.

Collaboration with others around the analysis process is held as critical in qualitative analysis (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2005). Even more so it may be critical in research that is based on reflexive premises. The loop implied in a reflexive analysis between pre-assumptions, empirical elements and new assumptions usually is stimulated by the awareness that we mobilize when other interpreters give their opinion (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Also in my case the use of co-analyzers helped in maintaining a distance. When data had been generated, transcribed, de-personalized and classified into face value categories, two colleagues were invited to read and to give their comments on what they saw as the predominating aspects. In order to make it clearer to the reader in what way the co-analysers contributed, I here provide an excerpt from the communication with them. The passage is a direct transcription of the recording which was made when I met them[25].

Co-analyzer 1:	*Well...eh…yes, the way I understand it is that they do not capture...capture what you are trying to find out, in a way ....*
Anne:	*M-m*
Co-analyzer 2:	*I can't think of any question right now, which ....*
Co-analyzer 1:	*No … I don't remember any either, but …*
Anne:	*Hm… no, but I have been noticing it when making the transcripts …*
Co-analyzer 1:	*Yeah…that it is….and it has….eh… that they don't grasp…*
Anne:	*I think it is like when I try to introduce...eh…something that is fairly theoretical and which has…and which is not fairly clear to myself either….that's when it happens, I think …*
Co-analyzer:	*M-m*
Anne:	*Well …sometimes, then …*
Co-analyzer 2:	*I don't know…whether they at all reflect around those things you ask them about…it is getting….it isn't their domain or they …*
Co- analyzer 1:	*Yeah…*
Co-analyzer 2:	*It seems so little….their life …actually it does not seem as if they …sure, they've got plans for the future and that and… but they don't think about the connection….what is demanded of them…*
Anne:	*No…*
Co-analyzer 2:	*There is kind of discrepancy there, in a way …. (...)*
Anne:	*Exactly …*
Co-analyzer 2:	*Very much like that …That's a finding, isn't it ….the things we think about, we adults, who are concerned about these kids…* (But) ***they*** *are not concerned …*
Co-analyzer 1:	*Yeah …and when they are to* (assess own risk according to the informal prompts)….*they of course say «low risk" …their risk score is so and so, right? Or they have an average score …and then …if they are to exemplify what risk is, then it is those extreme* (cases): *The father of a neighborhood kid…who is an addict and is injecting, and…*

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[25] The co-analysers are informed that I recorder the conversation and that a part of it is cited in the thesis.

Co-analyzer 2:	*That's what they present....*
Co-analyzer 1:	*They present the extreme in order to… find something risky or find something worrying….it **is** worrying to them…* (But) *they don't view themselves as* (at risk?)....
Co-analyzer 2:	*No, you ask them about help services…whether they have been in contact with it…and it seems as if they haven't reflected around their being in contact with such services, or…*
Co-analyzer 1:	*Yeah…*
Co-analyzer 2:	*There was a woman…from the child welfare service …who functioned as a support person to one of them…she drove him to various activities and … but he didn't view her as child welfare* (…) *Kind of strange.....*
Co-analyzer 1:	*They are not a risk group in the way we view it…right? … That's not where they are…*

Although the research questions and the introductory letter were based on the assumption that the participants might not relate to risk in a very explicit way, or perhaps even deny it, the fact that it was also reflected in the material had to be acknowledged so to speak anew. It also had to be theorized.

After the referred encounter with the co-analysts, the analytical focus was narrowed down to a considerable extent. The tension between the participants` here-and-now orientations and non-reflectiveness on the one hand, and their future orientation and more goal-oriented maneuvering on the other became more of a core theme. In order to get more overview of the interrelatedness of certain themes and potential contrasts between them I also made a set-up that consisted of more sheets with a centre line on them. On the one side of the sheets, I listed manoeuvres that seemed to contain explicit time orientation and rationality-expressions. On the other side of the halfway line I listed elements from the maneuvering that seemed to be of a more embodied and implicit kind.

The new categories concerning future orientation were: embodiment categories, explicit time concepts, reference to predominant discourses on time, and risk. Also, research question 3 and 4 to a greater extent came into focus in this round than they had been from the outset. Examples of categories around those research issues were: inconsistency, problems with articulation and communication, appearing as invincible or irreproachable, etc.

The above-mentioned thematic categories have been revised many times and also been elaborated or transgressed as a result of constant turning back to the original, unabridged transcripts, communication with co-analysers, and reading of relevant literature.

Inconsistency in the way the participants maneuvered in relation to the emerging categories also began to stand out as a framework around which one could make further sense of the material. I therefore made a sequential kind of analysis (see Simons & Lathlean, 2008) in which I tried to follow the moves of each participant throughout all group sessions in which he or she participated. All sequences from the group discussions to which each single participant had contributed were studied in a row. Although this analysis revealed that each participant made several turnabouts and inconsistencies throughout the process, it was the

utterances that were directly contradictory that tended to be the real clues into a deeper understanding of the data in a contingency-constraint perspective.

Throughout the process, data and theory became increasingly more connected. Yet, as suggested above the approach to data was never purely inductive. The most appropriate overarching label for the analytical process, in which empirical data and theory elements were processed into an integrative shape seemed to be the one of "abduction" (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). The term implicates that it is impossible to describe analysis as either inductive or deductive. Effects of the abductive process have, not least, been harvested during the writing up process. Both rewriting of text and re-interpretation of data has been going on all the time until the very last letter was typed. Those extra rounds have certainly added a deeper understanding of the data for each time I have been dealing with them.

It should be added that the decision to shift from an article-based thesis to a monograph provided me with the opportunity to make a more multidimensional kind of analysis. Whereas, when writing article drafts I had concentrated most on the relational dimensions of the material, I found it desirable when I got the opportunity to expand analysis to also go further into how participants related to the future.

Confidentiality and secrecy

Confidentiality issues should be particularly emphasized when we deal with minors (Morgan, 1998 a). Adolescents are generally not supposed to be fully able to foresee the consequences of participating in research (op cit.). For such reasons and because of the relative sensitive character of the themes addressed by the study, the ethical committee (REK) that was to approve the study required written consent from next of kin. The fear that also the privacy of family members could be violated also lay behind this decision.

It was also feared that participants could feel hurt or have their problems worsened during group sessions. Both concerns entailed the condition established by REK that participants should be 16 years old or in year 10 in lower secondary school, that each focus group should not consist of more than 5 members, and that each participant should be offered a single interview after the focus groups were completed if they so wanted. As also counted for above, we were conscious throughout the process about the need to look for signs of discomfort among participants. However, the advantage of having recruited participants through key practitioners was that there was always a support system to take care of them in case participation in focus groups caused problems for someone.

As noted, all group meetings were audio-recorded. For reasons of confidentiality the recordings were deleted in 2009, whereas de-personalized transcripts have been kept throughout the project period. That means that they are kept until publication of the results.

My second thoughts about the procedural steps and their premises

During the analysis process, the following second thoughts arose around study purpose and the connection between theoretical premises and research questions:
-        Did the participants really understand the purpose of the study?
-        Did they really understand the moderator prompts that were meant to initiate group talk?
-        Were the research questions (as presented in the information letter) really reflecting the theoretical premises of the thesis?

Alvesson & Kärreman (2005) have underscored how the understanding of a study purpose may simply be quite limited among participators in research. Instead, these authors claim that certain fundamental characteristics inherent in language and language usage tend to complicate rather than facilitate the use of qualitative methods like interview and observation.

At this point Alvesson & Kärreman seem to be in line with the view on language that is represented by Bakhtin (1993 etc.) among others. According to Bakhtin, there is no necessary correspondence between an utterance and the social and cultural context from which it is derived. The reason for this is that all social phenomena are in constant flux. Therefore, we cannot really *share* opinions with each other.

Also the current study participants may for such reasons have had problems with fully understanding what I was aiming at. In the excerpt below from a dialogue with a study participant it is not evident that we understand each other with regard to the study purpose. We speak rather at cross purposes at times. I present the excerpt as a kind of meta-dialogue. My second thoughts about what is said have been marked with bold letters in order to distinguish them from the remaining text.

Moderator:	*Last time-was it like you expected it to be?*
Participant 1:	*Eh… that you …what?*
Moderator:	*Themes we were touching on last time…* **(Probably not overly clear what I mean by this comment)**
Participant 1:	*You mean…when we were sitting…our expectations towards these conversations?* **(Well done: "expectation" seems an appropriate term to me…)**
Moderator:	*Yeah, whether they* **(the themes we touched on last time?)** *corresponded to them* **(the expectations? How imprecise I am…)**
Participant 1:	*What shall I say…I did not have any particular expectations…?* **(Surprise: He answers adequately to my rather awkwardly formulated question)** *…other than…I was supposed to answer questions and…to chat…* **(Does answering questions really appear as interesting to today's adolescents? If so, why? You say you like to chat-that's at least some indication you don't experience this as just a piece of schoolwork or something)**
Moderator:	*If you were supposed to give an account of it now…what is the purpose of the project?*
Participant 2:	*I don't know …* **(What don't you know?)**
Participant 1:	*Look at the future…wishes or plans…of someone, generally and …*

	(Is a tension suggested here between the general expectations of all youths towards future and more private future images – and if so why is it?)
Moderator:	*Yes (I go for my immediate interpretation that you mean youths in general)* *...what all youths may have in common, you may say, but also youths who adults may worry about (**I feel uncomfortable by making a distinction between youth in general and "youths that adults worry about", but all the same, I feel obliged to be faithful towards the announced rationale of the study**) ...that is the headline we have chosen, yeah…*
Participant 1:	*Why, then? (**Why didn't I ask further here about what you meant by asking «why? "…**)*
Moderator:	Y*eah ...it may be interesting because adults worry a lot about youth who have been in difficult life situations, or who have started to experiment with substances….measures are made on the basis of adult worries…while in my opinion it is a point to ask how youths perceive their own situation.*
Participant 1:	*Aha … (**Was that new to you? I thought you had understood this from the start?**)*
Moderator:	*Some argue that risk…kinda … (*careful here – too biased attacks on risk discourse – it violates the purpose of openness…)
Participant 1:	*I see! (**What did you see? Just a manner of speaking?**)*
Moderator:	*Yeah, you are just ordinary youth ….at the same time as some worry about you…then it is (also) important to find out how you think in more general ways (**Hm? Do I by this comment devalue the intermediate status of being "at risk?" – And do I only want generalized opinions? **) …but what made you say yes to (participation) the project, actually?*
Participant 2:	*Well, we got the question whether we should like to participate in a project…and I just said yes…you might ask me… (**Why this willingness to go into something you do not know anything about?**)*
Moderator:	*Did you get the (study) material and that?*
Participant 1:	*I knew what it was about …yeah…I imagined what kind of questions that would come up and…several things… (**That's not what you said before – you said you had no particular expectations, but it is also kind of reassuring: The information ahead of the study seems to have made you able to anticipate what might be going on after all**)*

When viewed from the perspective of Bakhtin even talking at cross purposes may be productive as long as there is no ambition to achieve validity in the strictest sense of correspondence. The general focus group literature has paid little attention to the role of communicative breakdowns. This is somewhat sensational, as it is not smooth speech that normally makes us aware of the extraordinary (Gadamer, 2004).

Also Bourdieu has questioned the necessity and feasibility of complete understanding or consensus in communication. Most human action according to Bourdieu is embodied. Therefore, subjects in general are not even always capable of achieving full insight into their own practices and aspiration and may therefore have problems with articulating them in encounters with others (Bourdieu, 1990:81).

Although somewhat paradoxical, I found that phenomena like fumbling for adequate terms or talking at cross purposes basically could be an indication of study validity. My aim was to study the life shaping processes of adolescents in the space between relative normalcy and relative deviance. I become increasingly aware that this is a space in which embodied action is predominating. As a consequence, messages of a kind that are explicitly articulated could

not be expected. If the relatively abstract purpose of this thesis had been immediately understood in the same way by both parties, it could be taken as a sign that I had recruited a more reflective study sample than would be desirable in the current research setting.

Were the research questions and the prompts really appropriate?

In line with the above conclusions that most communication is not really shared, Alvesson & Kärreman (2005) are stating that the researcher for the same reasons never can know for sure whether the questions in an inquiry are understood by the interviewee.

It seems quite clear that one could not avoid talking about future in a study on life shaping processes. Yet, the research questions that according to my co-analysers first and foremost seemed to be badly understood were number 1: "*how did the participants envision their future ?,*" and question number 2: "*did participants assume a link between current events and future outcomes?* " It was particularly certain communication breakdowns in the dialogue between moderators and participants that they meant could be indications of that. A related issue was also the observation made by the co-analysers that participants were generally unlikely to relate to risk of deteriorated future wellbeing in the way it is conceptualized in predominant discourse on risk. Based on this, I found it necessary in the current context to pay heed to the universal validity claim (see Silverman, 2001) that one must make sure that the phenomena one *aims* at exploring actually *get* explored.

Clarity of moderator language has been described as a key factor for initiation of the self-going process that is a focus group characteristic (Krueger, 1998) and therefore an important basis for evaluation of study trustworthiness. Even from a perspective on language as not very accurate in its character, it seems reasonable to achieve as much clarity as possible. It, therefore, has been necessary to consider the possibility that the prompts were too awkwardly formulated to be understood. With "awkward" I, not least, think of the potentiality that many of the prompts were too academic to fit the colloquial language usage of the participants. .

Yet, Alvesson & Kärreman (op cit.) stress that even utterances or dialogues with an unclear content are highly significant and may put the analyst on the track of answers to the research questions. In accordance with this Nairn, Munroe and Smith (2005) have described "failed interviews" as a source of fruitful knowledge.

Although I find such viewpoints both interesting and fruitful, some questions still seemed important to answer. If I could not account for validity at this point, the study results would be of little worth.

There seemed to be at least three possibilities that could explain why the participants did not seem to understand all of our prompts concerning the future and the implicit risk discourse implied in them:

1) The participants possessed individual characteristics that hindered them in reflecting about the issues and to articulate them.
2) The questions and prompts were awkwardly formulated.
3) The themes were of a kind that makes them difficult both to reflect on and to articulate, at least in the first place. The themes are simply of a kind that most people are not used to talking about.

All explanations may be plausible to some extent. In hindsight, I have all the same excluded the first possibility as a general truth. I have no basis for answering question 1. The awkwardness suggested in question 2 seemed to be confirmed by earthy participant utterances like *"speak Norwegian!"* or *"take a journalist course"*. It was clear that I did not always succeed in making myself clear.

Still, I tend to view the third possibility, namely that it was the abstract and not very timely character of the future-related issues that made them difficult to handle for both researchers and participants. One could also add that the heavy emphasis on responsibility for one's own wellbeing in contemporary society makes the future an unpleasant theme to talk about if one is already involved in risk-prone activity.

Based on the consciousness I now have gained thanks to theory discussions and epistemological considerations, I could have wished that the research questions had fewer connotations to prediction discourse. Already the overall research question contains certain formulations that seem inappropriate to me now: *"Adolescents 16 -18 years of age who have been assessed as at enhanced risk of developing problems with substances and crime: How do they reason and arrange their lives in areas relevant for future wellbeing? "* The term "reason" for instance tends to reflect a prior assumption of rational choice as a background for participants' acts.

Also the sub-questions tend to be based on the assumption that there is continuity between the present and the future, an assumption I later on have taken a more explicit exception to. Particularly, the second research question seems to be underpinned by typically rationalist assumptions and therefore seems less adequate for the time being. As a member of a society in which the prediction perspective still prevails, I probably was more influenced by the ideas underpinning prediction research at the time when I prepared for the inquiry than I was aware of. In retrospect, it seems almost incredible that I did not take the universalization of risk into consideration in the first place. Yet, it is my tendency to elevate discourse on calculable risk in the encounter with participants, so to speak in spite of my growing consciousness, that is actually the "proof" that the discourse on risk as calculable still maintains a considerable grip on contemporary thought.

A related thing that might have put validity at danger was also the terminology, which was typically fetched from a discourse on risk as calculable. Prediction discourse has influence in contemporary society despite its alleged futility in many ways and we often used the term "risk" un-reflectedly. As citizens of contemporary society also the current study participants

were likely to conform to it to a certain extent. We could perhaps in order to avoid consolidation of terms from prediction discourse have triggered focus group discussions by using terms like "dangerous", "unsafe" instead of explicitly mentioning "risk". Yet, such terms like dangerous and unsafe do not necessarily represent something qualitatively different.

There is *per se* nothing sensational about being influenced by one`s preconditions or with having difficulties with clarity. Also Kvale (2001) emphasizes that full clarity around the deeper purpose of a qualitative study is difficult to establish. The deeper understanding is developed *en route* (op cit.). In my case, the insight gained *en route* that the communicative breakdowns around issues about the future were of decisive value although not immediately graspable, brought me further in the understanding of the current material. Exclamations like *"speak Norwegian"* also entailed that new and more functional formulations were tried out which were better apt at ensuring content validity. The earthy comments also served as reassurances that the participants generally were not too timid to make clear that they did not always understand.

One of the best ways of avoiding direct use of risk terminology was the "third-person" approach described in the subsection "Doing the focus groups". Prompts of a kind that engendered much data around the second research question were, for instance, *"what kind of advice would you give to younger siblings when they start drinking? "* However, even the "third- person" approach tends to convey aspects of predominating discourse on health risk and assumptions of a possible continuity between present and future. Yet, the advantage that this approach represents is that it is closely related to the daily life sphere of participants. One of the most important principles in research with minors is that its design is in accordance with their feelings and interests (Davis, 1998).

On the whole, the moderator task in the group generally was much easier when it came to capturing knowledge around the third and the fourth research question

> *3: Which were the themes that the participants potentially seemed more interested in discussing right now than themes merely concerning a distant future?*
> *4: How did participants relate to these issues when talking about them in focus groups?*

This does not necessarily mean that the first two research questions should have been omitted, although that thought has occurred to me at times. The feasibility of research question three and four is probably owing to the fact that these questions were not subject to any direct prompts; that the data they engendered "just emerged" in a more spontaneous way than the first two research questions. As such, they represent a mode of ensuring the validity and reliability of those parts of the current material that are apt at informing about participants` life shaping. For instance, they are in line with a salient theoretical premise on which the analysis was carried out, namely that future and present are integrated.

Second thoughts about the collaboration with the field around recruitment and information about the study

"Collaboration" in the sense that everybody involved had full influence on all levels of the research process was not the case in the current study (Starrin, 1993 :119).

Although field practitioners did not contribute to the extent described by Starrin, they had a considerable influence on the study process. By collaborating with stakeholders or those who are directly affected by the problem around the direction of a study, knowledge is, for instance, expected to be produced that represents a contrast to conventional discipline-based approaches in many ways (Gibbons et al., 1994). Not least, collaboration with the field tends to facilitate getting on the track of conceptualizations that so far have been obscured. It has been argued that collaborative approaches to knowledge will become more appreciated in the future, not least, in relation to welfare issues (Karvinen, 2001, Karvinen Niinikoski, 2005). However, collaboration with the field may also have its ethical implications.

On the one hand, the fact that the recruiters with whom I collaborated already knew potential participants and their parents seemed to be critical for recruitment of study participants in the majority of cases. On the other hand, the decision that recruiters at most sites were also given the task of conveying information letters could have had its weaknesses. The exertion of pressure at a certain level can generally not be ignored in such cases (Peek & Fothergill, 2009). There was a certain potentiality that participants in the current study gave their consent because they felt obliged to do so. Additionally, the fact that the majority of the participant`s next of kin worked in close collaboration with the current units or agencies, could have been felt by some of them as a kind of pressure to give their consent.

Because I was the one to take direct contact with potential participants only in a minority of cases, I do not know exactly how many youths that were contacted in the first place about the study, how many of them that said no and why they said no. I have therefore no clear answer to the question whether feeling pressured could have played a role. It seems, however, important to emphasize that none of the recruiters were involved in branches of the child welfare system that have power to decide in issues concerning child custody or other juridical interventions.

To the extent that I have insight into the recruitment process, my impression is that a study of the current kind generally is rendered more harmless when those who were to give their consent had a dialogue in advance with someone they knew and towards which they were likely to feel confident. When standing alone, a formal information letter might not be very confidence-inspiring.

Besides, the recruiters generally appeared as open-minded people who were not likely to force anybody, being it adolescents or their parents to participate. They were all of them genuinely engaged in the youths and genuinely concerned about their future. It should also be added that the participants in general seem to be individuals with no problems about speaking up. Rather,

they were among other things selected on the background of being youths who "liked to talk". At one site some of the participants exclaimed after I had introduced them to the study plans: *"Should **we** help you get your PhD? No way! "* . It belongs to the story that those who were reluctant to help me get my PhD decided that they would participate after all.

On the whole, concerns implying that adolescents could suffer from research of this kind may be disputed. For instance, children and adolescents are often held as more vulnerable than they actually are something which from time to time may basically compromise their participation in research (Powell & Smith, 2009).

Second thoughts about choice of method

The focus group method in spite of seeming quite appropriate for the current study purpose has certainly also got some disadvantages. Not least for ethical reasons, the focus group in some cases may be counterproductive. The moderator has for instance less control with groups than with use of single interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). For such reasons it has therefore been suggested that single interviews would be more appropriate in relation to tabooed or sensitive topics (Hyde, Howlett, Brady, & Drennan, 2005). Yet, definitions of sensitivity may vary from culture to culture. According to Morgan (1998 b), it is primarily unawareness around the powerful effect of focus groups on mind-sets that may be unethical, not primarily the disclosure *per se*.

My conclusion with regard to the current study is that ethical standards were not threatened because of the method itself. With regard to the risk of premature disclosure for instance, the involved persons were as previously mentioned informed in advance that the focus was not to be on each participant's biographical material, but on how the participants tended to make meaning around life shaping on a group level. Single interviews in my opinion could have been epistemologically appropriate if the study purpose had been to understand such as problem pathways or on how risk-taking activities were experienced.

Also for validity reasons the focus group method may be questioned. Certainly, positions participants take on alcohol use and other issues are probably more marked in a focus group discussion than in everyday life (Demant, 2007). Gender games, for instance, constitute a salient part of this more marked way of behaving (op cit.). The gap between private opinions and opinions shared in the group may thus widen. Besides, as suggested also previously, it could be tempting to appear as more experienced than one actually is with regard to such as substances ((Frøyland & Sletten, 2010; Pape, Storvoll, & Rossow, 2006). Yet, the inherent tendency implied in the method of constant validation and invalidation among members of each other`s utterances may protect the validity of data (Eder & Fingerson, 2001; Hyde et al., 2005).

In a reflexive view on the focus group process exaggerations may also be informative with regard to life shaping issues. The way in which group members appeared in the current group discussions was, for instance, supposed to tell a lot about who they aspired to be in the future

92

and not only who they happened to be at the time of inquiry. The fourth research issue was meant to capture that kind of knowledge. With use of other methods than the focus group method this aspect had probably not come to the fore in the same way.

Could other methods have been chosen?

As mentioned previously, single interviews were discarded because of the somewhat vague and difficultly appropriable themes that were addressed in the study. Internet chat sites might, however, have been an alternative method. The use of Internet discussions allows for non-censured talk about lifestyle and the potential risk of substances without the governance of a researcher (Banerji, 2009; Bogren, 2006; Graffigna & Bosio, 2006).

Participant observation also represents a thinkable alternative, particularly given the fact that the study was on abstract issues with participants who were supposed to be in a non-reflective state most of the time. In those cases in which a need is identified to reach beyond verbal communication, data tend to become richer when observations complement interviews (see for instance Kittelsaa, 2008). Certainly, observation could have provided better access than focus groups to "pure" target group conceptualizations in the current study.

Focus groups are managed by the researcher, whereas, the field researcher may explore the practices of participants without having established an agenda in advance. One may simply remain expectant in order to see which themes are brought up by the participants themselves. By choosing field observation I could, for instance, better have ensured that epidemiological risk discourse was not imposed on participants from "the outside".

On the other hand, by doing a field observation I would have missed the breakdowns between scholastic preconceptions and practical reason which proved to be a fruitful source of knowledge in the current case. Still, the principal objection to field observation as the only or an additional method in the current case seems to be its feasibility. It is time consuming and there is no discernible single field in which the participants could actually be found. If I were to keep the breadth of the current sample, I would have had to make observations at more sites at the same time.

One may also discuss whether merely focus group data without supplement from other kind of data are sufficient to provide knowledge on the matters in question. All the same, it has been argued that it is a myth that material generated in focus groups cannot stand alone (Morgan, 1998 b). When this objection is advanced, it is likely to be derived from paradigms that aim at making the indeterminate more determinable (op cit.).

Yet, it may be objected that a study that is leaning on mere verbal communication alone, may be a source of misled conclusions (Bourdieu, 1995). It only is by use of multiple methods that the distinction between the subjective and objective may be fully transgressed (op cit.). Register data could for instance, have added something in the current case. In this thesis

93

certain results from surveys partially serve as a kind of substitute for more quantitative data on both "at risk" and normative populations.

Second thoughts about group composition

The decision to run only small groups proved to be wise, but it was not given that participants in a dyad are comfortable with being just the two of them. Undoubtedly, the dialogue was more fluent and self-going in a group of three or four members, while the dialogue in a group with only two tended at times to get more like the question-answer pattern of conventional single interviews. Still, this was a little dependent on who the two of them were and to what extent they knew each other in advance.

It proved to be an absolute advantage to let recruiters decide composition of groups with respect to so-called member compatibility. An important thing was, for instance, that the recruiters by knowing the adolescents could by and large ward off a non-productive or hostile group climate by putting those members together who were supposed to get along well with each other. In addition, the choice to carry out the groups close to the residence of the members seemed to be a good choice. The more similar to the daily life setting the focus group setting is the more children feel comfortable (Eder & Fingerson, 2001). The disadvantage of member compatibility is also obvious. "Group think" of a kind that limits validity may arise on its basis (Wibeck, 2000) and hierarchies outside the group room may also hinder free within-group dialogue (Krueger, 1998). As suggested by Bourdieu (1992), any linguistic interaction is reflecting, expressing and often also reproducing the predominating social structures.

Single participants' perceived supremacy could, however, also have threatened validity. In the concrete group setting, when someone constantly kept having the role of "smarty pants"[26] others could have kept opinions or accounts to themselves. Some "off the record" comments from my participants indicated that "smarty pants" could have constrained group talk on certain occasions. Such tendencies would perhaps have been less likely to occur in groups with adolescents from different sites. Generally speaking, however, the dialogue seemed to allow for speaking out to a considerable degree.

Second thoughts about confidentiality and secrecy

Several issues concerning confidentiality and secrecy have already been discussed. A remaining issue to be discussed is the fact that all group sessions were recorded. A few

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[26] Synonym for "besserwisser"

participants mentioned in the beginning that they felt a little uneasy because of the presence of the recorder. Previous experience of betrayal of secrecy from health workers and others was the reason for that. There were also some who felt the need for reassurance that no one but the moderators would hear the recordings before they continued providing certain accounts on such as substance use. Although all participants had been informed in advance about the recording and that the material would be depersonalized before use, there proved to be a need for repetition of those rules because of such reasons. Others did not seem to care, and some were even very eager to check that the batteries worked so we would not miss anything from the discussions. As a conclusion, there seemed to be no indications that secrecy was violated. Still, absolute certainty about this is difficult to obtain.

Second thoughts about analysis

As an aim was to question absolute truths about the participants, elements that were particularly apt at illuminating the assumed indeterminate character of the indeterminacy of the space between normalcy and deviance were particularly looked for in the analysis. At least it became so after the first rounds of analysis. Not least, the fourth research question was fruitful with regard to the indeterminacy and ambiguity aspect. As previously noted, the fourth question was on how the participants tended to relate to life shaping issues when talking about them in focus groups. Thus, whereas a focus on the *products* of the group dialogue would have engendered knowledge of a more unitary and consensus-based kind, a focus on the group *process* was expected to engender much information around ambiguity and indeterminacy. The group process itself has been de-focused in most studies based on focus groups (Wibeck, Dahlgren, & Öberg, 2007).

One may also ask whether the sequential analysis provided insight into the moral indeterminacy in question. As stated in previous subsection, it occurred to me at a certain stage in the analysis process that certain ambiguities and not least unclarities embedded in the focus group dialogue proved to be significant clues into the issue of how the data could inform about participants' life shaping challenges. Simons & Lathlean (2008), for instance, stress that a merely thematic analysis seldom allows ambiguity to come forth.

I certainly think that it was important for getting on the track of ambiguities and indeterminacy that I went further than mere thematic analysis. In many ways a focus on how each participant relates to the group process and how participants collaborate in order to engender knowledge may be viewed as the objectivation process, which Bourdieu (2005) has described as a necessary part of a reflexive data analysis. According to Bourdieu, the issue of how the subject relates to the object is the main point of an analysis. A sequential analysis could have provided such insight.

 Yet, as previously noted, the presence of inconsistency in the way the participants discussed several issues of importance for their future wellbeing did not become apparent to the extent I had expected. This made me wonder whether inconsistency and ambiguity were phenomena

95

that had a limited empirical basis to the extent that their significance for the current material should be downplayed and that I had made it up. All the same, ambiguity and inconsistency seemed to play a role in some very distinct moments of truth when I viewed them in the light of certain theoretical frameworks. Based on an abductive approach to data, I could suggest that phenomena that represented a breach with theoretical premises mostly represented the real clues into the research issues (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2005).

Another question of high topicality for analysis was how I could know that I had reached a level of data saturation. I have concluded that it was mainly when the group topics had showed up several times and we began to wonder whether two groups in a row had been enough that the limit could be set. It is therefore not given that we could have got more out of the participating groups by arranging additional meetings. Neither is it necessarily so that an expanded number of participants would have brought anything new into the analysis. A key factor with regard to the awareness of ambiguity was rather the before mentioned possibility to be familiar with and have overview of the material.

How data were prepared for presentation

When excerpts from the data are presented in the part below, stuttering, hesitations and seemingly dead ends have sometimes been excluded for the sake of clarity. Yet, when stuttering etc. is relevant for the understanding of the content the incomplete elements are kept. The embarrassment or confusion embedded in stuttering and "hums" may help to get behind the evident (Gueranger, 2009). As "hum`s" often represent language elements of a kind that make the interlocutor go on with reflection, exclusion of them may even produce invalid results.

On a few occasions, the order in which utterances occurred within the same sequence has been changed. People in general do not speak in accordance with a grammatical logic. The aim of changing the original order has been to facilitate the reading and understanding of the content of the utterances.

Moreover, on one or two occasions separate utterances that originally did not occur in the same sequence have been put together. Such endeavors may of course be hazardous because of the potentiality for interpretation bias implied in them. Still, I found it fruitful to do so at times in order to more clearly convey the connection I meant to have found between certain utterances and the theoretical framework against which data were viewed.

Language differences have been another challenge for interpretation and presentation of data. Differences between languages may impede the understanding of the content of utterances when they become translated into another language than the original. The participants and the moderators all spoke the local dialect *(trønder)* during group sessions. There might be a considerable gap between modes of expressions in this dialect and English colloquial language. Out of the concern to keep as much as possible of the cultural air of the dialect, the

excerpts that seemed most relevant in the first rounds of analysis were translated into English colloquial language by a person who was familiar with both language versions and the way in which youths use language within each of the respective cultures. Some excerpts have been added later on which were translated by me, although I do not know colloquial English too well. Hopefully, the intended meaning will come forth anyway.

Moreover, there may also be a need to explain why excerpts from the focus group dialogue alternate with quotations from one participant at the time. Interactional processes and self-development are interwoven in a focus group process. The members draw on the method in order to constitute themselves in their life shaping there-and-then (Hyden & Bülow 2003; Wibeck, Dahlberg, & Öberg, 2007).

In some cases I, therefore, found that focus on one participant at a time in terms of single citations was the most relevant way of presenting data. In other cases, however, just because conscious-enhancing processes seemed to be particularly related to the collective effort implied in the focus group dialogue (see Wibeck et al., op cit.), it seemed most relevant to provide full dialogue sequences.

When excerpts from transcripts are presented later on, participants have been given fictive names. Sometimes participants even have been given more than one fictive name. If not, it could have been possible to trace "who said what on which occasions" throughout the process, something that could have endangered the secrecy of each participant. The disadvantage of such practice, with regard to theoretical perspectives on the data, is that which ambiguities and inconsistencies in each participant that was given two or three names do not come to the fore.

In order to make it clear which of the genders that the names represent, it seems necessarily to inform that Arne, Agnar, Geir, Gunnar, Ivar, Kim, Kjell, Knut, Kåre, Magnus, Martin, Nils, Pelle, Petter, Rolf, Terje, Tim, Tore and Trond are boys names. Ada, Ida, Guri, Gøril, Lise, Lotte, Molly, Torill and Trine are girls' names.

VI) Presentation and discussion of the data

In the following section I am going to explore participant maneuvers along two dimensions: i) between relative normality and relative deviance as regards substance use and abidance of the law, and ii) between past, present and future with emphasis on the relation between present and future. In the subsequent parts, I refer to them as the relational and the temporal dimension.

The identification of the above-mentioned dimensions is a result of an abductive approach to data. Firstly, the data have been explored in the light of the synthesis of late modern theory on contingency and late modern theory on social constraint that constituted the framework of analysis. Secondly, the data have been explored in the way they appeared when the same theoretical premises were bracketed as much as possible.

I will not start with going into detail about the data. Instead, the natural first step is to present a figure, which is meant to illustrate how the relational and temporal dimensions both converge and diverge.

While discussing the data I partially refer to the previously mentioned article I have written on the same material (Juberg, 2011). This article predominantly focuses on the maneuvers along the relational dimension. However, after having decided to write a monograph my exploration of the data took on a broader scope. I, for instance, included data that also could shed light on how the participants maneuvered along the temporal dimension. The temporal dimension above all represents data on how participants related to explicit future. These data seem to mainly have been captured by means of the first two research questions: the first of them concerning participants` images of the future and the second one concerning the extent to which participants perceived a link between future and present. Data implying more implicit future orientation have above all been identified along the relational dimension.

Yet, the split between data on explicit time orientation and data concerning relational issues is artificial. My consciousness around the interrelatedness and complexity of these phenomena has grown during the analysis process. What I seemed to need was a figure that could express the complexity of the data and which all the same could provide overview and a certain orderliness.

Certainly, the making of a system which implies localization or even categorization of data into a fixed system is not an obvious endeavor in a pragmatic–reflexive perspective. The phenomena under scrutiny in this thesis are difficult to categorize even from an epidemiological point of view. The task of the reflexive researcher as Bourdieu has seen it is not to identify how and to which extent participants correspond to scholastically developed parameters, but to look for what the participants *get out of* their practices (Wilken, 2008). For such a purpose, illustrative utterances or field observations could have been enough. The

elaboration of a figure that encompassed both dimensions therefore seemed necessary merely for the sake of overview and clarification. How data fit the figure in a more exact way will not be discussed.

Together the two described dimensions shaped the axis system, which is presented below:

An overview of data in relation to time, space, normalcy and deviance

```
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │  The temporally │
                    │     remote      │
                    │   and unknown   │
                    └─────────────────┘
                            │
    ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────┐
    │          │   │ Everyone may become anyone:│   │          │
    │ Normalcy │───│ Concept-less and non-predictable,│───│ Deviance │
    │          │   │    but reflective moments  │   │          │
    └──────────┘   │                            │   └──────────┘
                   │   The indeterminate Space  │
                   │                            │
                   │      Thoughtlessness       │
                   │     Maneuvering "blind"    │
                   └──────────────────────────┘
                            │
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ The temporally close,│
                    │   domestic and  │
                    │   well-known    │
                    └─────────────────┘
```
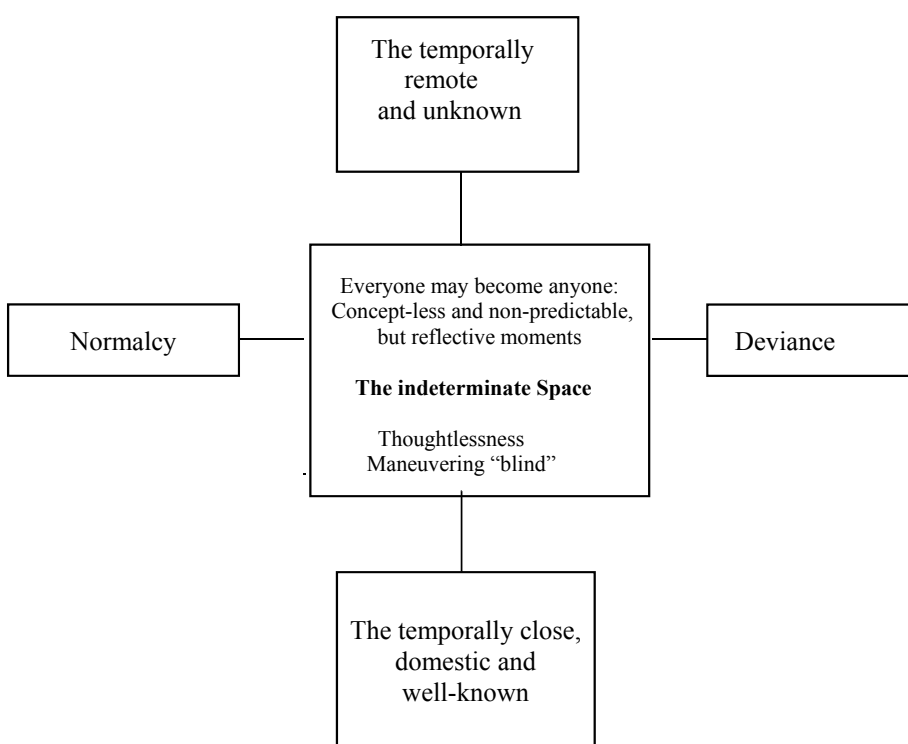
Fig. 1 The life shaping process in terms of the indeterminate space: Space and time categories

The horizontal axis of the figure represents the social and moral orientation of the participants, with normalcy and deviance with regard to substance use and rule breaking/delinquency as extremes. The vertical axis is meant to depict how participants related to time.

On the vertical axis I have, however, avoided sequential terms like past, present and future. I have substituted them with more spatial terms. As the figure suggests, examples of terms I have used are "remote" and "unknown", "close" and "well-known". The reason why I found spatial terms more appropriate is that temporal terms may carry certain connotations of a

99

prediction mind-set, something which I actually abandoned in the theory chapter. Certainly, conventional labels on the tenses like past, present and future need not be irrelevant. Nevertheless, spatial and emotional dichotomies may better designate timelier and hence implicit ways of temporal orientation. Spatial terms about time may also contribute to a view on data that integrates space with time. One of the best examples of concepts that are based on an assumption of time and space as inseparable is Bakhtin`s concept of *"chronotope"* (In Todorov, 1984:14). The concept has basically been derived from principles in the relativity theory of Einstein, but when applied by Bakhtin, it has mostly been related to his studies of literature genres. The chronotope is according to the definition provided by Todorov *"a spatial/temporal expression emergent in any novelistic subgenre"*. The use of spatial terms instead of or parallel with the use of conventional temporal terms may therefore better fit the theoretical premise in this thesis about future as an in-here reality. Implied in that premise is also that present and future do not succeed each other in a strict sequential pattern but rather appear as inseparable.

It is particularly in his work "The Dialogic Imagination" (1981) that Bakhtin has described how the past by mentioning of place may "take on flesh" and "nail" the otherwise unpledged flux implied in conventional literary plots. Thus, the mentioning of place is not only apt at evoking memories from the past. When reminded of those historical and cultural conditions and those myths that are embedded in a specific place, strong images of where we belong, but also of who may become may be evoked (see Bakhtin as interpreted by Chanan(2000)). Inversely, when an event is described without any reference to a particular space and in the remote tense we may remain indifferent to it.

In contrast, Arendt`s description of the re-orientation that may occur when future and past coincide are completely concept-less and beyond any spatial or temporal category.

Also Baumann (1998) in his description of how currents within late modernity affect life shaping has addressed the need to view space and time in relation to each other.

Yet Baumann's concern seems above all to have shed light on the possible conflict in content between spatial and temporal closeness on the one hand and spatial and temporal remoteness on the other hand. When we find ourselves in our domestic and well-known surroundings, and thus are "c*hez nous"*, we are in a place where we never feel lost, aimless or uncertain about how to act (op cit.). The safety we may feel when being *"chez nous"* opposes those feelings that are evoked when we have to face what is both temporally and spatially distant from us. We may not only have a sense of unattainability in those moments but may also feel fear. The life shaping process is filled with such moments. According to Baumann, it is quite normal to regard the transgression of our normal boundaries as a nerve-racking experience.

Also the routinized, everyday behaviour which Arendt`s concept "thoughtlessness" is meant to express (see Arendt (1971)) seems to have a spatial dimension. At least, it has got connotations of something "earth-bound" and thus seems to contrast the somewhat "airy" message implied in the consumerist mantra that *"everyone may become anyone"* (Reith,

2004b). The "indeterminate space" delineated in the middle figure above is meant to illustrate this tension between bounded-ness and renewal.

As hopefully demonstrated, there seems to be consensus among the referred thinkers that most of us rarely catch sight of contingency in the most radical sense (Holzkamp (1998).

Yet, there are also some apparent differences between relevant thinkers with regard to *why* we tend to be earthbound. Whereas Arendt does not address the issue of social inequality as a factor at all but rather tends to assume an equally distributed potentiality for becoming who we want, thinkers like Freire (1977), Baumann and Bourdieu emphasize the significance that uneven distribution of life chances based on hierarchical power has for future orientation. Arendt`s concept of "thoughtlessness" which is placed at the lower extreme of the vertical axis may in such a perspective be viewed as the result of the suppression implied in hierarchical power and violation of democratic influence. Freire is speaking of self-contempt as an aspect of suppression and thus as a factor that holds people down. Bourdieu (1995, 1998) even goes as far as stating that the freedom that we may feel in certain moments to choose our lifestyle is actually a result of being kept in place by the most privileged. A double kind of repression is thus implied, with the consequence that both rebellion and self-realization in the more individualized sense is suppressed.

Reproduction of pessimism towards the future which is based on social inequity is according to Bourdieu (1995) mediated through the habitus. Yet, the extent to which habitus constitutes a static entity or is susceptible to change, and thus increased influence for the suppressed in consumer society, is a much disputed issue (Garrett, 2007 b)**.**

Also, freedom and adjustment may be viewed in the same integrative perspective as present and future, space and time. The current data analysis has been based on the assumption that individual freedom and social adjustment are relatively inseparable entities. There is, for instance, an embodied quest for "*the correct form"* implied in all human action (Garrett, op cit.). Although the quest for the correct or the socially most appropriate form may constitute individual uniqueness (symbolized by the mantra at the upper extreme of the vertical axis), concern about the correct social form may all the same imply both passive adaptation and a tendency to remain within the well-known, domestic sphere (see Bauman op cit.).

The most central part of the horizontal axis is above all meant to illustrate the moral indeterminacy that participants represent when involved in transgression of certain moral or illegal codes. One may conform to moral standards on the one hand. On the other hand, however, one may also slightly deviate from such standards without necessarily ending up in a determinable deviance category. Life arrangements identified within the most central part of the figure are quite undetermined with regard to categorization, and directionless. Also here, spatial terms seem more appropriate than temporal terms. One may move sideways, either towards respectable or towards non-respectable categories or one may remain "out of category", at least for a while. One may also be perceived as on the "outside" of shared norms, at least on an occasional basis. The meaning involved in being "out of category" will

be discussed by means of examples in the subsection *"maneuvers in the indeterminate space"*.

In line with much research on adolescents that has been cited elsewhere in the thesis, the maneuvers that were observed along the horizontal and relational axis undoubtedly appeared as more significant to the current participants than the maneuvers that were observed along the vertical and temporal axis. As expressed in a song, "Heaven can wait".   All the same, future orientation was observed to a considerable extent, although not in the explicit way assumed in prediction discourse.

I hope that the figure presented above will suggest how the remote and unknown, and the well-known and domestic constitute a whole. Being permanently in the well-known, non-reflective sphere will not bring us further, even though it is experienced as the safest place. On the other hand, being merely in the remote sphere will deprive us of the practical sense we need in order to exert individual judgment around the appropriate form with regard to lifestyle.

The quadratic space surrounded by a broken line at the intersection between the two axes is meant to describe the indeterminable space within which the target group as a whole seemed to find themselves. The space was indeterminate both with regard to the tension between the well known and the unknown that the participants seemed to experience, and the dilemmas they were supposed to feel regarding substance use and law-abidance. The attempt at identifying an indeterminate "space" is equally artificial as the idea of making an axis system out of the indeterminacy and ambiguity of the material. This space should therefore, as much so as the remaining parts of the figure, not be conceived of as just another way of categorizing participants.

The rationale behind the drawing of a broken line is rather that the current study sample is hardly distinguishable from mainstream youths in most respects. However, neither are they absolutely distinguishable from youths who have developed more persistent problems with substances or who are more involved in rule breaking/delinquency. The boundaries between the mentioned statuses are in principle uncertain and negotiable. Given that unrest and non-supervision are normal characteristics of young people`s growing environments today (Heggen, 2004), ambiguity per se is no surprise. Basically, it may also be difficult to discern the unrest that derives from directionless and indeterminate attempts at life shaping from unrest in the more global sense. Also because of the latter concern a broken line is warranted.

Participant maneuver along the temporal dimension: the vertical axis

Explicit future orientation

Although *"everything is related to everything"* in a pragmatic-reflexive epistemological frame of understanding, it is above all the first two research questions that may be related to the temporal, vertical axis in the axis system. Research question number one: *"how did the participants envision their future",* covers the upper extreme of the axis which signifies the remote and unknown, but also the opportunity to come out of thoughtless and subdued positions. The second research question: *"Did participants assume a link between current events and future outcomes?"* expresses the expectation that the more we are able to establish a link between current activities, the more responsible we are for own life shaping.

Both research questions do, as previously noted, reflect assumptions from the discourse on risk as predictable and controllable. To a certain extent it may, however, also make sense in a more general approach to life shaping

I was particularly curious about what kind of data the second research question could engender, and was wondering about the following issues:

- To what extent did the risk concept seem to have relevance?
- Is it true that "at risk" adolescents are more reckless about future outcomes of their present activities than same age peers are?
- Did the participants have any sense of risk at all?
- To the extent that they related to risk in some shape or other, did risk appear to them as a useful concept, or were there alternative ways of viewing their involvement in the activities that evoked worry in their immediate environment?
- What were the similarities and differences between the risk concepts that "high risk" youths potentially may rely on and prevailing risk discourse in society at large?
- Could they have a point if they disregarded the need for a long-term perspective on their present life arrangements?
- Did their conceptualizations of the involvement in risky activities differ from same-age peers that had not been assessed as "at risk"?
- If the participants in the current study proved to conceptualize the activities as risky in some sense or other, how did they handle the tension between risk on the one hand and pleasure and purposefulness on the other?

If the worry that is derived from discourse on risk as calculable proves to be out of place or exaggerated, what should the consequences be for professional practice in the area?

Tendencies in the data in relation to how participants envisioned their future

In the beginning, I found it difficult to foresee what kind of data could emerge in relation to the research question on future images. As noted in the section on methods, the first research question was highly but still somewhat unconsciously inspired by the notion in prediction discourse that the clearer the images we have of future wellbeing, the better. In that kind of perspective "future imagery" may also mean *"risk scenarios"*. Inversely, lack of capacity to reify future may be viewed as dubious to the extent that it becomes a symbolic burden in the sense Marthinsen (2003) has described it.

When I in this section refer to participant future imagery, I inevitably also touch on perceptions of risk to a certain extent.

This does not necessarily mean that the primary purpose of the first research question was to make the participants generate very abundant, realistic and "serious" images. Rather, focus group prompts that were oriented towards images of the future primarily were meant to shape a positive atmosphere in which participants could feel free from any constraint on thought. They could in principle even share their dreams if they wanted, without having to think about the hurdles that might exist in their everyday contexts for realization of those dreams. The focus on future imagery was also motivated by the assumption that sharing of dreams would stimulate group talk around more profound issues related to life shaping.

The expectation that participants would create fairly colorful pictures in those group sessions that were on future imagery was only partially met. Really "juicy" and personalized future images about who participants wanted to become and how they wanted life to be in the future were rather scarce.

It was generally easier to have participants share images of what they perceived as a normal adult life. Fairly well worn templates on adult life are, for instance, mentioned in the following excerpt as a response to my question about what a "normal life" is:

Moderator:	*What's a normal life, do you think, if it is possible to say something about it?*
Petter:	*To have a house, car, wife and kids…A job…and that stuff….*
Moderator:	*Yes….*
Petter:	*bullshit…*
Moderator:	*What? Bullshit?*
Petter:	*No!*
Moderator:	*Eh… ha- ha … don't you agree, or?*
Petter:	*Well, yeah… it's the norm isn't it?*

The tendencies to under communicate future imagery may be manifold and dependent on the perspective from which they are viewed. Firstly, however, it seems appropriate to dwell on the potentiality that there were certain methodical reasons why the prompts that were aimed at generating future imagery provided little information.

I have already stated in the description of methodical procedure that prompts of the kind *"You in 10 years"* , which first and foremost were expected to be performed by means of scraps and

other collage material etc., were not as fruitful as expected. The use of this approach in group sessions was therefore also reduced.

With regard to methods I have also considered whether a clearer distinction between "plans and dreams" when participants were encouraged to share their dreams could have engendered juicier future images. It did not seem unlikely that if they were explicitly encouraged to speak about their dreams, however airy they might seem, more participants would feel free to transgress the boundaries implied in their habitual thinking. Roughly speaking one could say that "dreams" covered the intended meaning behind the first research question, whereas "plans" covered the intended meaning behind the second research question. Certainly, in the focus groups in which I made such a distinction when instructing the participants about what kind of information to share, it seemed to increase participants' imagery capacity to a certain extent. Yet, the predominant tendency was that participants generally were not very likely to take airy dreams they might come up with very seriously, something which the following utterance from Ada may demonstrate: "*My **dream** is to run my own bar. My **plan** is to work with people who have problems with drugs"*. (My emphasis).

Therefore, more substantial reasons for the scarcity of images seemed more likely after all.

Problem-oriented perspectives around the data on how participants envisioned their future

The fact that the tendency to be unable to mobilize colorful images of the future often is viewed as doubtful and related to a tendency to deny risk is not sensational. In most of the perspectives which have some influence on thought in this area the idea on future is that it is the locus of reason and that there is a need to establish an explicit and rational cognitive link between one`s current arrangements and future outcomes. In research on such issues, adolescents in general are appear as predominantly less future-oriented than the adult population (see Abrahamson, 2006). Since youths to an increasing extent have been constructed as the moral underclass (see previous reference to Abrahamson, 2009 and Hunt et al., 2007), lack of long term future orientation may be viewed as a result of immaturity. In a bio-medical perspective, this tendency to view generations as distinct from each other when it comes to future orientation seems extra strong. It is expected that adolescents will be capable of prioritizing a long term perspective as a result of growth into adulthood (Sowell, Thompson, Holmes, Jernigan, & Toga, 1999). Yet, demographic knowledge tends to strongly modify that conclusion (Males, 2009). Also middle-aged adults tend to display high levels of crime, violent deaths, traffic fatalities etc., which may indicate that they disregard their long-term wellbeing given certain life conditions.

According to Males (op cit.), poverty seems to contribute more to lack of orientation towards the remote and unknown and for how one relates to risk for that sake than age per se. Among those who advocate future orientation as predominantly class-based are Threadgold & Nilan (2009). With reference to a study among high school students the latter authors maintain that youths who have grown up in a privileged childhood environment tend to have adopted a

more contingent and reflexive kind of future orientation than have their less privileged counterparts with a working class background, although future ambitions may be high in both cases.

Moreover, the extent to which parents' lifestyle deviate from the conventional pattern seems to matter. If parents have been living very unconventional lives, there is a tendency that their children want a conventional life (Claezon, 1996). Likewise, one may imagine how children who have lived under unstable life conditions and who have lacked a sense of coherence in life (see for instance Heggen, 2004 on this point) may avoid future planning. They may have learned that nothing becomes as they have foreseen anyway.

For all we know, this may be the background for Mette's statement below:

> *I actually think it is a little hazardous to make plans and things like that ...because all of a sudden you can get disappointed... (...) ...and it isn't really... then you ruin all of your...*
> *I nearly said all of your dreams... (...) My way of thinking is a little complicated, but... (...) I nearly said...it isn't necessarily probable that things will run in that direction ...a dream has to be feasible, I think.*

Also other scholars suggest that there is a link between relative poverty and negative or expectant future anticipations in Norwegian teenagers (14-16), in spite of persisting universalistic welfare policies (Aaboen Sletten, 2011). Yet, the link is mediated by a wide range of factors, like low academic achievement and unpopularity in the peer group.

The reference to contextual perspective of this kind is certainly a reminder of the fact that fallacies of the theoretical kind may occur if it is assumed that the endeavor of exerting "pure" future imagery was something which everyone immediately could make in a self-evident and unstrained way.

The perspective that social inequality is highly involved in the ways people relate to the future also makes us focus attention on the role of language in a power perspective. For instance, we cannot disregard the potentiality that people do have future images and future ambitions without being able to express them in the way they are expected to by those who represent the linguistic hegemony. People, when feeling inferior in some way or other, may in most cases be left "speechless", "tongue-tied" or at "at a loss for words" (Bourdieu, 1992:52), regardless of this feeling being based on objective grounds or not. Thus, the power mediated through language probably influences us more than we are aware of. A re-occurring theme in this thesis is that explicit reflection cannot be commanded. Reflection is dependent on words, and words may be a scarce commodity at critical points in the life shaping process. A view on the capacity of envisioning the future which does not involve social and historical context on this background seems both unfruitful and misleading.

Research results are, after all, ambiguous with regard to imperilled youths and the extent to which they are inflexible and pessimistic or flexible and optimistic in the encounter with future demands. It has, for instance, been suggested that a considerable portion of youths who

live under instable and unpredictable conditions seem to develop strategies that make them particularly capable of coping with shifting life conditions (Ogden, 1991 as interpreted by Claezon, 1996). Based a follow-up study with children of substance abusers and how that background affected their life shaping, Claezon (op cit.) emphasizes that children with such a background may be even more positive towards the future than youths in general. At least, this was the case when they had developed a realistic idea about the negative aspects of their childhood experiences and did not try to deny or under communicate them.

On the whole, according to Males (op cit.), one`s view on the significance of long term orientation is quite dependent on the extent to which one is viewing human behavior as internally driven or socially mediated. If we assume that the behavior of the current youths is internally driven, our tendency to ascribe certain individual propensities to the youths seems close at hand. Matza (1964) in his work on the phenomenon of *"drift"* in the morally indeterminate space described the "drifter" as someone who is lacking the *"position, capacity or inclination"* to become an agent on one`s own behalf. Yet, in the perspective of cultural criminology from which Matza is speaking it is assumed that we all may be inclined to drift in the same directionless way at times. Thus, Matza's statement is not likely to be interpreted as an attempt at explaining future pessimism and lack of life shaping ambitions as an individual propensity. Yet, there may all the same, be certain elements in the way that "drifters" or "at risk" youths have in common when thinking about the future as a positive possibility.

In relation to youths assessed as having behavioral problems, Minken (1998) has launched the distinction between "because of" and "in order to"- motivations. Those concepts by and large correspond to the distinction in Figure 1 between "everyone may become anyone" in the upper quadrate on the vertical axis and "thoughtlessness" in the lower quadrate on the same axis. Whereas "because of"- motivation may expresses a proactive attitude towards life, an "in order to" motivation is expressing a predominantly passive or bounded attitude towards life. Until youths with behavioural problems get involved in activities to which they feel devotion and those needs are met that may provide them with individual meaning, they, according to Minken, tend to be impressed by "because of" attitudes towards life and will not find a more determined direction in life.

In the article based on the current material (Juberg, 2011) I have stated that most data that were generated in relation to the research question *"how did participants envision their future"* were "shallow". Terminology could be misleading on this point. Shallow may in Norwegian usage be employed in order to characterize an individual. The term usually means to be superficial or indifferent. It therefore seems necessary to emphasize that participants did not generally seem "shallow" in this sense. What I meant by the expression was that the participants' future images were generally few and little colorful.

In line with reflexivity principles for use of theory it seems appropriate to consider all the above-mentioned angles of attack, although not all of them are equally fruitful in the current context.

107

Normalizing perspectives on how participants envisioned their future

Unlike most of the perspectives mentioned above, reluctance towards the making of long-term plans and reluctance towards the exertion of foresight could also be interpreted in positive ways.

Not least, the theoretical premise implied in late modern time theory of future as unpredictable allows for interpretations that are more positive. In a more contingent perspective rigid expectations of how things are going to turn out, of the kind that are predominant in prediction discourse, could even be viewed as something which curbs self-realization. After all, readiness to change in line with shifting precondition is what matters in a contingent society. Future planning is not out of the question; but plan B in a more contingent view on life shaping has got as much worth as plan A.

All the same, the feasibility of less rigid expectations towards the future may be questioned even in today`s world.

In an engaged follow-up of the above presented excerpt where Petter is delineating well-worn templates around adulthood, Petter's group mates tried to constitute an alternative to Petter's template list by adding a personal twist to their pictures of the future. In spite of some good tries, however, it proved difficult also to the others in the group to express more contingent and personal alternatives to those notions of adult life that predominantly tend to govern mind-sets:

Kjell:	(as a comment to templates that Petter has listed) *I don`t want a life like that…*
Moderator:	*What kind of life do you imagine?*
Kjell:	*Well, it is* (I want to be) *more with pals and that…have cars and that….*
Moderator:	*Ok, not any family, or?*
Kjell:	*No.*
Guest moderator:	*What about job, then?*
Kjell:	*Sure!*
Trond:	*I fancy a life with gambling…to take chances…I think that could be thrilling*
Petter:	*Thrilling in what way?*
Guest moderator:	*With gambling, you mean games, then?*
Trond:	*Yeah, games,* (or) *to gamble instead of having a car and….*
Kim:	*What?*
Trond:	*Well, instead of an ordinary life…gamble and…challenges …instead of leading an ordinary life where you go to work and come home, have dinner, have a nap and clean the house and then go to bed, you see?*
Guest moderator:	*But you`ve got to have an income?*
Trond:	*I`m gonna have a job, for sure, but I gotta have a little…instead of doing the same and the same …* (I want to) *gamble a little and challenge…challenge yourself…*
Moderator:	*Make variation?*
Trond:	*Yeah …make something new happen… (…)*

It has been suggested that it is always difficult to create a future from the present even in those situations that allow for a genuine use of free imagination (Goltz, 2009). The cited

author conducted a study with young gay people as participants. The aim of the study was to explore their future images and the prompts to serve that purpose were typically of the following kind: *"describe how your life will look like in 20 years."* Goltz concludes that the youths in question were relatively incapable of depicting the future because they lacked appropriate templates beyond the ordinary hetero-normative versions. This example may illustrate how the tension between the remote and unknown and the familiar and well known that Baumann (1998) has demonstrated may be highly perceivable when we lack the means by which we could bridge past and future. Images of the future do not exist independently of what we have experienced so far or independently of those images that prevail in the current culture. Yet, even though concepts like wellbeing, which not least tend to show up in formulations of objectives in substance prevention projects seldom have any content beyond mere conveyance of good intentions, authorities emphasize them to an increasing extent (Sulkunen, 2009).

All the same, the templates on future and on "normal" life that circulate even in contemporary discourse seem to be functional. They even appear as essential when we try to approach our more remote future in some way or other and the future for historical reasons appear as opaque to us.

Thus, to the extent that the participants in the current study identified with the hetero-normative templates listed by Petter around future, their familiarity with certain templates could be fruitful to them. Templates could also protect them against being at loss for an answer when encouraged to share future images, although at least some of them could have wished to be more creative on this point.

Yet, even if it is demanding to provide a personalized outline of one's own future the desirability to avoid templates and to be flexible in one`s ambition seems to be deeply embedded in contemporary discourse on life shaping ideals. Beck (2009) has pointed to the concept of *"wellbeing"* as an example of such flexibility or say inexpressibility. Another example of a concept with a fairly arbitrary basis is *"quality time"*. In one of the focus groups, laughter burst out by Trond`s mentioning of the latter concept:

> *"And then you find a woman ...and then you gotta have quality time ..."* (Laughs)

It may be uncertain why the group, moderators included, felt an urge to laugh at this comment. It certainly might have something to do with a precocious undertone in the way in which Trond was launching the concept in the group context. The laughter might, however, also have to do with the paradox that Beck has underscored is implied in such concepts, for which there were no accessible ways of articulation there and then.

Although such all-embracing terms as "wellbeing" and "quality time" seem to be fairly empty and without obligation, it may well be that the few attempts at describing one's own future images could be explained by this "timely" tendency of not being too specific about one`s wants and wishes. Although the discourse on prediction is strong even today, consciousness

may at the same time have grown that the future is relatively unpredictable. The discourse of free choice and individualization implied in consumerism certainly has an impact with regard to this. Thus, people of today resist identities that are imposed on them (Hviid Nielsen, 2010), and have consequently problems with admitting that they fit into a pre-established category (Turner, 2000).

Viewed on this background, the quest for very specific and personalized quality pictures of the future seems like a paradoxical kind of endeavour in a contemporary context. The future appears as opaque at the same time as the making of vivid pictures of future is expected. In addition to the fact that we are embedded in routinized everyday concerns, this makes it difficult to look forwards. When confronted with one of the "provokers" created at the dialogue café in advance of the study suggesting that *"youths in the target group of the study do not think much about future"*, Guri and Molly had the following comments:

| Guri: | *We do it a little, but not so much, maybe …* |
| Molly: | *We don't just sit there each weekend and consider like: "What shall I become?"* |

As a general tendency, the habit of letting routine and tradition decide appeared to be strong in the current participant group:

Moderator:	*Are there some kinds of adult life that you take exception to?*
Kåre:	*Well…like…when it becomes like* (the life of) *our parents and that…*
Co-moderator:	*You prefer not to become like that?*
Kåre:	*You don't want it to become like that, you know…but so it will become….*

These kinds of comments could support contingency assumptions to an equal extent as more problem-oriented views on the lack of known from risk and prediction discourse. All the same, having a certain foresight was assumed by Guri to be part of the human nature:

"*…it is difficult **not** to think about the future, though.*"

When it comes to foresight and future planning, however, the participants did not seem to deviate much from the attitude of the total population of Norwegian youths. In spite of the cultural expectations implied in the contingency perspective to exploit one's own potentiality in contemporary society, Norwegian national surveys carried out among general youth populations in the same age group as the current participants suggest that it is quite common at this age to think in fairly traditional ways about one's own future (Krange & Øia, 2005; Marthinsen, Røe, & Hovland, 2006). Krange & Øia, based on the material in the 2002 version of the "Young in Norway" - study, even emphasize that Norwegian teenagers are fairly conservative in their lifestyle choices. In addition, the results from the referred study of Marthinsen, et al., which encompassed students who were at the same age as the youths in my sample, suggest that few youths exploit broader contingencies in the work market. Instead, the study participants proved to have made fairly down-to-earth and traditional choices for course of study in secondary school.

Also, international studies suggest loyalty to tradition as a general tendency in spite of the expansion of objective life chances that consumerism is supposed to have brought about. Young people of today mostly "settle down" in line with well-known and conventional "adult" patterns (Massoglia & Uggen, 2010). The low ambitions that have been reported in Norwegian research on future orientation appear as extra sensational, since all youths with access to Nordic welfare goods in principle may become "anyone".

Kåre with his somewhat resigned position neither seems to deviate from a significant portion of Norwegian *adults* with regard to conformity to tradition. According to national surveys carried out the last couple of decades, for instance, the general Norwegian adult generation may be divided into two main groups as regards how fresh and innovative their view on future contingency is (Hellevik 1996/2001 in Øia & Fauske, 2010). One group of adults demonstrates a will to exploit the contingencies implied in the future, while the remaining group tends to more passively shape their life in line with tradition. Still, on the background Baumann`s (1998) assumption of a fundamental tension between the safe and domestic life sphere on the one hand and the seemingly unsafe and remote life sphere on the other, we may conclude that there is nothing sensational in *not* having future ambitions and clear pictures of where we want to go. Transgression of the boundary between the well-known and remote may be scary.

Thus, on the background of the above overview on contemporary tendencies around future imagery it may seem easier both to the current participants and people in general to tell what one does *not* want than to provide a vivid picture about qualities of relatively unpredictable future phenomena. It is, for instance, not an easy task to provide examples of which qualities a future husband should possess:

Moderator:	*How should your baby's father be?*
Marit:	*I don't know…*
Moderator:	*How should he **not** be, then?*
Marit:	*How he should not be?*
Moderator:	*Yes…*
Marit:	*Alcoholic… he he…*

Although the age factor was set aside in one of the above discussions as a very vital factor when it comes to creation of future pictures and risk scenarios for that sake, the fact that the current sample predominantly consisted of 16-year olds must all the same be given attention.

At the age of 16, young Norwegians are normally about to or have just recently chosen a course of secondary academic study or vocational training, though without having much personal knowledge basis for making those choices, for instance with regard to their feasibility. Without an explicit agenda of one`s own which is rooted in first-hand knowledge, a choice among available "evils" may be perceived as the only option. Frønes & Strømme (2010) maintain that prolonged youth and subsequent delayed work attendance have somewhat deprived teenagers of today of the capacity for making more determined choices about life direction.

Gunnar, who was in year 10 at school and about to make his personal vocational choice, seemed to have no clear thoughts around how he could apply the education he had chosen. Like the majority of my sample, he had chosen an education within health service. In the subsequent excerpt, however, Gunnar seems to mobilize very little enthusiasm in relation to this choice:

Molly:	(addressing Gunnar) *are you choosing something* (course of study) *just to have chosen something?*
Gunnar:	*Well, I cannot **not** choose anything, can I? Hehh…*
Molly:	*No, but what about car mechanics and transport, or something like that, then?*
Guri:	*Car …*
Gunnar:	*It is sooooo dull, then … (…)*
Moderator:	*But which profession is it that you really should have liked to be educated for, then?*
Gunnar:	*Haven't got the faintest clue…*
Moderator:	*So you have really been struggling to find out what* (which course of study) *you should apply for, or?*
Gunnar:	*Yeah… it is so… yeah! Heh…*
Co-moderator:	*Have you had any help, or? Have you been seeing a* (career) *adviser?*
Gunnar:	*Yeah, they just talk bullshit, you know...*

Certainly, the lack of enthusiasm that Gunnar is demonstrating could also be viewed in a propensity perspective or in a perspective that youths with certain behavioral problems have something in common, although not necessarily on a permanent basis. It is for instance not unlikely that Minken's above mentioned expression "because of" motivation which was suggested as a characteristic of young people with behavioral problems could well apply to Gunnar`s lack of enthusiasm. It seems probable that the well-known association between school failure and behavioral problems brings about a stronger feeling of future opaqueness in youths with such problems than in youths from the so-called normative population. One may also imagine how a sense of future as opaque may be reinforced if the youths have had strenuous lives for other reasons than mere behavioral problems.

The experience that follows from growing older was, however, a factor that seemed to impact the capacity of future envisioning to a certain extent. In the current material one could, for instance, observe a certain difference between 16-year olds and 17-year olds with regard to this aspect of life shaping. After all, the 17-year olds among the participants had more knowledge about the journey they had set out on and were more conscious about where that choice would lead them than the 16- year olds. While the 16-year olds so far predominantly lacked that kind of experience, the 17-year olds had begun their upper secondary education and had made a vocational choice already a year in advance of the inquiry

Data regarding a possible link between present and future

Regardless of its being purposeful or not, the second research question was meant to capture typical assumptions in discourse on risk as calculable of a potential direct link in participants' future orientation between involvement in current activity and future outcomes.

It was not only the scarcity of future images that was apparent. Participants also tended to seem a little perplexed or confused when the potentiality of a self-evident link between future and present was brought up. In addition, there were as mentioned certain indications that participants generally tended to downplay the importance of such a link. To the same extent as the tendency to lacking future images, also this fact certainly made me wonder whether the discourse on risk as calculable in a long-term perspective and the terms involved in it was too abstract for adolescents to grasp, or whether such issues which touch on real profound phenomena would have been difficult to tackle for anyone in contemporary society, regardless of age. Themes related to explicit future are not usually a part of people`s daily life conversation repertoire. It may be difficult to articulate themes or ideas that one do not usually reflect on.

A methodical gimmick I hoped could assist in overcoming potential epistemological hurdles was therefore to let participants point out where they would place themselves on an imaginary risk scale. Contrary to my expectations however, this kind of prompt generally seemed to make little sense to participants. In the excerpt below neither Marit nor Mette, who on many other occasions had demonstrated vital aspects of the prediction perspective, seemed to be immediately able to make sense of the risk concept when Mette was asked to put herself on that scale. Not until the end of the sequence, probably thanks to the fact that I explained it in a more adequate way, was she able to make the assessment:

Moderator:	*If you were to place yourself on such a line…at which the one extreme is low risk and the other extreme is high risk …where on that line would you …*
Marit:	*High risk, what do you mean by that?*
Moderator:	*High risk….how fine that you ask about it - I forgot to tell… I mean risk in relation to the potentiality that you will not do well in adulthood …*
Mette:	*I think I am relatively low down, actually.*

In order to overcome epistemological hurdles in focus group discussions of the kind mentioned above, we also, as mentioned in the section on methods, sometimes tried to employ a third-person perspective. It is generally assumed that it is easier to speak about abstract or tabooed themes when one does not directly address the person in focus, but rather appeals to that persons' identification with parents, siblings or intimate friends. Yet, in the following sequence with Nils and Geir, my attempt to appeal to their presumed insight into future concern for their own future children typically fell on dry ground:

113

Moderator:	*In the future ... (...) when... or if ...you become parents ...* (what will) *evoke concern in you with regard to your own kids .....*
Geir:	*Pjjjjyy...eh...in the future? ...that future is so difficult, I think...*
Moderator:	*Hm...*
Nils:	*I just have to say I'm blank on it ...*

In hindsight, I view the above attempt as a very awkward way of advancing a prompt on risk. Other prompts from our repertoire like: *"If you have minor siblings, for instance ...what kind of advice when it comes to typical risks would you have given?"* generally worked much better when participants were to talk about risks; being it risk in the calculable sense or risk in a more comprehensive sense. However, the task to foresee what kind of worries one is likely to have in a so far unknown future on behalf of children who not only are unborn but not even planned, could be to an upper limit abstract kind of enterprise.

Overall, questions meant to produce knowledge about how deliberate and reflected participants` actions and choices actually were, most likely were answered by phrases like "it just got like that". On the basis of prediction discourse, such responses may easily be interpreted as a "happy-go-lucky" kind of attitude. For instance, I was likely to ascribe a "happy-go-lucky" characteristic to Petter based on the following utterance:

Moderator:	(on Petter's decision not to use drugs) *I was wondering if you decided for it, or if it just happened...Eh... like it just got like that? ...*
Petter:	*Nah, I think it just happened ...*

On a later occasion, however, Petter uttered that he had reflected much about the potential impact of heritage and contamination effects: *"If my mom and dad had been druggies then, I could have become one, too".* I did not quite grasp whether Petter has also been living with parents or relatives who had substance problems. Not all participants wanted to communicate openly about phenomena of that kind. Anyhow, such occurrences like the one above are reminders that reflections in a more abstract way may occur even when not articulated. The fact that it is relatively difficult to capture by research does not make the phenomenon less true.

There were also examples in the material that suggested that participants could relate to future risk as calculable at times, even in a way that applied to self. In the below excerpt, for instance, both Nils and Geir seem to be conscious about the effect of certain lifestyle "choices" and seem able to reflect around possible consequences for future wellbeing of present health neglect. Stimulated by the prompt on how they imagined life in ten years, the two of them linked their present eating practices to certain foreseeable outcomes in the future. In the excerpt, they simply seem to view un-health as highly likely to occur unless they actively do something about their current body weight:

Nils:	*I have* (hopefully) *become fat in ten years...*
Moderator:	*Yeah?*
Geir:	*Yeah, so will I ...* (I want to) *eat until I get a belly*

114

Moderator:	*So, the two of you mean that you are too thin now, then…as you mention that specific issue …*
Nils:	*Yeah!*
Moderator:	*Really? ….so you are worried about your weight, are you?*
Nils:	*Well, no …not really worried …but I kind of have to start gaining weight, you know …I almost manage to grip around my upper arm with my little finger…*
Moderator:	*Aha…*
Geir:	*Yeah, I can also do that …*
Moderator:	*So …yeah? That is a sign of something wrong?*
Geir:	*Yes, indeed!*

All the same, the assumption that many youths are relatively carefree with regard to future is not totally far-fetched. On the contrary, research on the adolescent brain may have a point (see for instance Crews, He, & Hodge, 2007; Leenrot & Giedd, 2006; Sowell et al., 1999). According to the referred research literature, it is an objective fact that the capacity of abstract thinking in terms of future consequences of current life arrangements is a slow-going process in adolescence. From a neurocognitive perspective it is therefore not obvious that teenagers or even young adults could grasp the more profound contents of the risk concept. Adolescents' alleged difficulty to grasp the abstract aspects of risk concepts seems in particular to apply to long-term risk.

Research on "the social brain" (Blakemore, 2008; Adolphs, 2009, Burnett, Sebastian, Kadosh and Blakemore, 2010) is a branch of the neurocognitive approach to the adolescent brain. Indeed, it bases itself on the above referred premises. Still, more than the conventional research of this kind it puts focus on the nature-nurture relationship and the potential implied in education of adolescents in order to strengthen their perception of a link between present and future. To the current participants, the idea that developmental processes are important for the capacity to exert common sense and foresight did not seem far-fetched. Tore in the following excerpt is commenting on shoplifting, which he tended to view as both childish and as something which was likely to pass due to maturation of brain capacity:

> *When you…when your head starts to develop…* (which means) *when you get over the 13 yearold stage in your head, then you can begin to stop doing it (…)*

The vast bulk of research on "future discount" may, however, seem more ambiguous when viewed from the theoretical premises that are underpinning this thesis. The concept of "future discount" designates *"a tendency to reduce the present subjectively perceived value of outcomes that are temporarily distant"* (Yi, Gatchalian, & Bickel, 2006). An association may, according to these authors, be established between so-called *"future discounts"* on the one hand and*"common behavioral manifestations of impulsiveness"* in selected individuals on the other. Impulsiveness is something in which drug use, abuse and addiction are viewed as symptoms (op cit.). Acknowledgement of such associations also seemed to belong to the discourse on risk that the study participants were drawing on, although the next utterance from Guri contains few indications whether the association is permanent or temporary:

"For sure, there are some who have huge problems and who do not think about future at all. They drink and do the things that show up there and then… (…) …they do not think forwards, about consequences and stuff…"

Certainly, one could not exclude that one in the future may identify "general syndromes of deviance" or a "problem behavior syndrome" as an explanation of so-called "risk denial" in specific individuals (Peretti-Watel, 2003). Development in the future of methods that build on integration of genetic and social factors could result in such findings. So far, according to this author, empirical joint analyses have at least brought knowledge in the area a little further. It has, for instance, been possible to conclude that individual dispositions or propensities contribute as much as environmental factors when it comes to the identified association in some cases between drug use, dangerous living and promiscuity (op cit.). Also, studies that have examined the more specific association between future discount, alcohol consumption and alcohol-related injuries in 13-17-year olds tend to provide support to selection perspectives (Rossow, 2008). Yet, the latter author accentuates that some methodology issues related to the mentioned relationship are still unclear, like the issue of causality.

Actually, there are also some studies that tend to disprove those research results on future orientation that have been engendered within research based on selection perspectives. For instance, hypothetic-empirical trials suggest that the alleged incapacity of regular substance users to relate to time schedules and to uphold commitments on a long term basis is proven to pass as soon as psychoactive substances no longer have impact on the brain activity (Bretteville-Jensen, 1999). Also, the research of Becker & Murphy (1988) indicates that people who make extensive use of substances may be quite rational in their use. Until they achieve an addicted status they, for instance, relate quite adequately to such as future rewards. On this background, conclusions from research on future discount must be regarded with precaution.

The relatively well-documented difficulty among youths in general to apply discourse on long-term risk to self (Abrahamson, 2006) may also reflect a difference between generations with regard to time orientation. The question is merely how this difference may be explained. Unlike the exponents of research on the adolescent brain, critical social scientists claim that generation is a poor unit for analyses on how youths arrange their lives in contemporary risk society (Cieslik & Pollock, 2002; Wyn & White, 1997). Certain social differentiation processes are factors that matter more (op cit.).

Yet, it seems counterproductive to completely abandon the idea that generation matters to some extent. The most fruitful ideas around this topic in relation to the focus of this thesis seem to be how youths and adults may have different time concepts due to historical changes. According to Frønes (2006), for instance, the role of the elder generation as educators, which was a firmly consolidated role in traditionalist societies, has recently lost its fundament. Contrary to previous cultural expectations, the adult generation of the present era may have something to learn from adolescents, because adolescents among other things are said to be

more able than adults to grasp and handle the ambiguous and unpredictable character that the contemporary society has taken on (op cit.).

As was the case with future imagery, one cannot exclude that historical time has an impact also on the lack of an explicit link between current life arrangements and future outcomes in the current material. Risk in late modernity is, as previously noted, generally not necessarily a stable phenomenon which could be predicted. As risk in the current historical period has been brought into the present and *«within reach of human agency"* (Reith, 2004 a) it needs to be acted on at a moment-to-moment basis, dependent on contextual and situational differentiation.

However, as was stated in the theory section, hardly anybody can escape the risk concept in contemporary society, albeit its being epidemiological risk or risk in a more global sense. Therefore, the generation perspective does not appear as an all-evasive explanation.

A kind of "hypothesis" on the possible link between present activity and future outcomes that emerged by and by and was pursued in the analysis of the data was that participants in general were not necessarily incapable of exerting the foresight required in epidemiological risk discourse. Even though they had problems placing themselves on a risk scale, all the same, it could be that they just had difficulties with viewing long-term risk in relation to *self.* This is exactly what the above-referred study by Abrahamson (2006) suggested. There, the difference between adults and adolescents in her participant group when it came to their view on drugs and alcohol use was most apparent in relation to how the risk concept was applied to self. Mostly there was consensus across the generation gap about such things as acute risks involved in alcohol and drug use. There was also consensus about the general risk that in a long-term perspective often is associated with such use. For instance, the young participants tended to be worried about the long- term effect of the way in which some of their peers used alcohol or other substances. Yet, whereas the adults showed concern about possible future effects, the youths almost without exception ignored the potentiality that alcohol or other substances could negatively affect themselves in a long-term perspective.

In addition, the participants of the current study were more ready to make long-term risk judgments on behalf of peers than on behalf of themselves. The following example is the example that was referred to by the co-analyzers in the sequence I have presented in the method section about how core tendencies in the material were identified. Kåre who on other occasions reported in the group that he used to smoke hash on a relatively regular basis, put the focus on a peer as soon as the topic of worry about self in a future perspective was brought up:

Kåre: *I have been worried many times for one of my pals,…he is smoking hash with
                   his dad and that…and…he has been watching when his dad has been injecting
                   …*
Moderator: *Ok…so his dad is a drug user?*
Kåre: *I am very…I am very worried about that pal ….*

117

On the background of the discussion I had had with the co-analyzers about the tendency to, so to speak, "dissociate" oneself from potential substance-related risk, I thought it could be very interesting to know participants' reasons for participating in a study that was promoted as a study about being "at risk". Kåre provided the following considerations:

Moderator: *When he* (the recruiter) *asked you if you would participate, was it because he was a little worried about you, then, or was it....*
Kåre: *Hm ...I actually don't know...*
Moderator: *No? ...He did not tell why? ...*
Kåre: *No.*
Moderator: *No?*
Kåre: *He just asked ... (...) at first, he sort of asked if I was drinking much, and stuff... (...) and then he asked if I would take part in a project, then,...and then I said: "I wouldn't mind, suppose it's ok..."*

Obviously, the recruiter by mentioning drinking in the first contact with Kåre as a potential participant had not under-communicated what the study was about. At the same time, such terms as "at risk" or "worry" probably had been avoided. There is nothing in my opinion sensational or really unethical about that. The difficulty to define so-called calculable risk and not least the difficulty to communicate someone`s being at risk was as previously noted touched on in the introductory letter to potential participants.

Therefore, the tendency among participants to acknowledge that others viewed them as "at risk" despite their denial of the risk label on their own behalf was no surprise. The following utterance from Guri emerged in a group discussion about risk assessment in relation to minor delinquency:

My mom thinks it`s worse than it really is... cuz I was caught for a lot of things in a month... so... yeah... it`s the only thing I got caught for, then...and then everything turned... (But) *everything became known at the same time... so I ...that`s why my mom got worried about me...*

It seems as if perspectives that emphasize the reprehensible status in consumer society of risk-prone activity may have something to offer. For instance, the concept of "prudentialism" that Reith (2004) has referred to seems to be quite to the point in that respect. In the relatively narrow climate of *"civilized enjoyment"* that was described more in detail in the theory section, substance excess becomes a risk-prone activity that may significantly threaten one`s self-image. Geir and Nils who were referred to above in relation to their pronounced fear of becoming too thin both certainly also spoke relatively openly about their use of hash. Still, it seemed as if it was easier for them to speak about future consequences of eating problems than about those future problems that their hash use could entail. As exemplified in other parts of the thesis, both of them tended to "escape" or shift topic when the issue of self-risk showed up.

Peretti-Watel (2003), who has developed a theory on the phenomenon of "risk denial", makes his case clear on why this is bound to occur. . It is the consciousness of doing something that

118

violates common order and the common wealth that, according to Peretti Watel, actually evokes the tendency to avoid putting the risk label on one's self. Shame and the fear of losing face in the social space are factors with greater impact than generally believed. A major premise of Peretti-Watel`s theory is that people generally *are* aware of the risk involved in many of our daily life activities. We live in an enlightened society and there is basically no rational excuse for behaving in a risky way. One can, for instance, seldom directly refute general expert knowledge on the risk involved. Not least, this is the case when it comes to the physical effects of psychoactive drugs. It is an unavoidable truth also in lay epidemiology that early death is sooner or later the outcome of intensive substance use over time. A major hypothesis in the risk denial theory presented by Peretti-Watel is that although most people do not seek risk purposely, neither do they *"endanger themselves quite unconsciously"*.

Although the extent may vary between individuals, all of us do things that aim at preserving the best possible version of self. In consumer society this involves a highly controlled kind of consumption otherwise there is great risk of being sanctioned. Abrahamson (op cit.) uses this line of thought when discussing the trustworthiness of her study results which are referred to above. She takes into account that the responsibility that the adult participants were showing in focus groups about alcohol and other substances may be the result of underlying cultural expectations towards the parent generation. Their substance using practices may in reality look different. Also, the seeming inconsistency in the youths' way of relating to risk may originate from a fear of being sanctioned. Neither could one ignore the impact of cultural expectations when it comes to what they share in focus groups. Since youths are constructed as inherently careless in society as a whole, they may tend to live up to this expectation in focus groups discussions and at least partially exaggerate their involvement in risk prone activity.

Undoubtedly, risk denial theory has a timely character. It, above all, seems to suggest how concern about risk and the urge to exhibit individual responsibility go hand in glove with each other in contemporary society. At least until we obtain more specific knowledge on the association between individual propensity and the tendency to be involved in risk prone activity, this theoretical framework seems to be one of the most powerful frameworks when it comes to exploring the indeterminate and ambiguous space which is the focus of this thesis.

Summary of the section on explicit future orientation:

When the data presented in this section are to be summed up, future opaqueness tends to be a key word. Attempts in the current study at having participants create pictures merely *"out of the blue"* tended to fail.

This opaqueness may, however, be viewed in quite different ways. A mixed perspective of contingency and social constrain make us draw attention away from unambiguous selection and maturation theories on temporal orientation although they also may reflect reality to a certain extent. The mixed perspective above all helps us capture the changes in future orientation that consumerism tends to have brought about. Light is shed on the fact that

modern life shaping ideals deviate from the ethos of calculation. In that respect the excerpts strengthen the suggestion in the introductory part of the thesis that individual judgment is a more appropriate basis for substance and crime prevention among teens than ideas derived from the prediction perspective.

The section, however, also indicates that there may be a gap between objective and perceived life chances. There is no direct basis in the data for concluding that the target group of the study as a whole distinguishes itself significantly from the general youth population in that respect. Yet, there is reason to assume that many of the youths who participated in the study had had tougher life conditions than average youths. The tendency of viewing the future as opaque therefore also may be due to the potentiality that the majority of the current participants had grown up under life conditions that were particularly tough. Tough life conditions is a point of departure that may negatively influence future optimism, although not necessarily.

I will now proceed to those parts of the current data material about the immediate risks that participants perceived in their home sphere. The home sphere is represented by the lower extreme on the vertical axis in Figure 1.

Implicit notions of future risk: The risks next door

The data related to the domestic realm were mainly generated at the beginning of the first group meeting. In the section on methods I have described in more detail how participants were encouraged to speak about what they did in their leisure time, for instance after school and on weekends, and what kind of dangers and risks they experienced in that context. The abductive exploration of those parts of the material that are on these issues resulted in division into the following subsections:

- Risk and pleasure in relation to substance use
- Other risks in the neighbourhood
- Vulnerability vs. agency
- Expert vs. lay conceptualizations of risk

Interestingly, these headlines indicate that many conventional dichotomies that originally were established in order to mark the distinction between abnormal and normal become transgressed when risk in the domestic sphere is put under scrutiny. This transgression of dichotomies may be viewed as the result of the continuously on-going need in consumer society for tackling the tensions between restriction and indulgence on the one hand and encouragement of consumption and denial of impulses and desires on the other hand (Reith, 2005).

As heavily emphasized in the former section, the need to suspend dichotomies that once functioned in a more predictable kind of society, may also affect the conventional dichotomy

between present and future. The suggested tendency that risk in consumer society no longer is an *"out-there"* phenomenon but has become *"within reach of human agency"* (see Reith 2004 a in another reference) makes it more of a differentiated phenomenon. Every individual has to localize the risks that are implicit in an everyday context and that may become real both on a short term and on a long-term basis. Besides, those risks need to be defied or minimized in a way that fits the immediate context.

Risks and pleasure in the material related to substance use

A point of departure in most groups for exploration of their perception of "risks in the neighbourhood" was to ask for input on what the participants did on weekends.
Because of the illegality of drug use, we could not, as emphasized in the part on methods, directly encourage participants to tell how drug use constituted a part of their everyday life.

What we could do was to encourage participants to talk about those aspects of their leisure time in which use of alcohol was likely. In line with the conclusions in recent studies (Griffin et al., 2009, Tutenges & Hulvej Rod, 2009), data on alcohol use in a party context could provide insight into risk-taking and risk control. The totality of experiences that are involved in alcohol use and which in a party context may span from the most bizarre and scary aspects to the most joyful ones may also provide fruitful insight into salient aspects of life shaping in general. Also, Norwegian studies suggest that teenagers ascribe significance to the sociable aspects of drinking practices as much as to the intoxication aspects (Øia & Strandbu, 2010).

Interestingly, there was an apparent lack in the current material of accounts that could shed light on the bizarre and joyful aspects of alcohol consumption that characterized the stories referred to by the authors referenced above. This lack of joyful stories seemed to support the general impression left by the current data that "blind hedonism" or "passion" was not an apparent aspect in the participants` life arrangements. During one of the first rounds of the thematic analysis, I tested out the prevalence of data that hinted at participants being passionate, because there were some hints that were pointing in that direction. Yet, I decided after a while that "passion" was not an appropriate category and removed it from the analysis map. Apart from those participants who had become involved in regular leisure time activities that fit their areas of interest there seemed to be few life arrangements to which participants in general were really devoted. In a perspective of future wellbeing this may be a disquieting tendency. Yet, it may also be interpreted as the result of having appropriated crucial demands in consumer society.

Such demands do not necessarily mean that the current participants did not have fun when drinking. As noted in the theory section, the pleasure part of consumption may now more than ever be indiscernible from aspects aimed at controlling consumption. It is exactly this indiscernibility that O`Malley & Valverde (2004) are underscoring when they suggest *"civilized enjoyment"* as the overarching label of recent substance use practices; pleasure *is*

reason and vice versa. One could say that "fun" and "risk" together constituted a "bittersweet" whole (Pedersen, 2006) in the leisure life of most participants.

Yet, the scarcity in my material of accounts about the joyful aspects involved in drinking could also be due to the fact that during the recruitment process the study had been promoted as being primarily aimed at contributing to prevention. This purpose was, not least, mentioned in the information letter and in other information in advance of the study. In my opinion, the idea that substance and crime prevention is a kind of topic that is too serious to make fun about is very prevalent in a Norwegian context. This idea might have had impact on researchers as well as researchees and could have blocked the emergence of "fun talk". If I had been more explicit on the fact that the aim of the study also was to capture more general everyday experiences, the emergence of anecdotes on the pleasant aspects of substance use would probably have emerged to a greater extent.

When stating that fun stories were missing it therefore seems important to raise the question to what extent it is permissible for minors to test out the pleasurable aspects of alcohol use in a Norwegian context.

It has been stressed in more studies that those outdoor areas to which young people are banished because of regulations in the alcohol policy are often alienated and un-stimulating outdoor areas. National surveys suggest that only one tenth of those occasions at which Norwegian teenagers have been drunk take place in licensed premises, something which is due to regulations towards minors (Storvoll, Rossow, & Pape, 2010). Half of the occasions at which teenagers get drunk take place in private homes. For the rest, episodes of drunkenness take place outdoors in areas that are unsupervised by adults (op cit.).

In line with this Ada, among other participants in the current study, reported that she had the habit of hanging out at specific places that were unsupervised:

> "*I would hang at the same spot all the time and was* (also) *drinking at the same spot all the time…yeah…and we would sit outside…*"

Based on this, it is no wonder that the blessings of adult life were in their eyes first and foremost related to the opportunity to drink legally at licensed premises and to buy alcoholic drinks at the state monopoly store.

Despite the preventive intentions behind the regulation policies, studies that have been carried out in the Norwegian cities of Trondheim and Stavanger (Frøyland & Sletten, 2010; Kristiansen, 2008) indicate that there is an association between coming from a home where there is lack of parent supervision on the one hand and frequentation of outdoor leisure areas on the other. Yet, exceptions of this tendency may also be identified. Moreover, the results from these studies tend to reflect that the outdoor areas in question often function as introduction venues to illegal substances or minor delinquency. Being in such leisure areas also enhances the probability for getting involved in violent episodes (Øia & Strandbu, 2010).

Therefore, Norwegian adolescents who seem particularly at risk for developing problem substance use or delinquency also tend to be those adolescents who have the poorest chances of experiencing the joyful aspects of drinking, and lack the potential for positive life shaping and appropriation of adult mainstream norms that are implied in it (see for instance Demant, 2007; Østergaard, 2009).

Ada's comment in the next excerpt seems to confirm the above-referred results that drinking in outdoor areas is not unambiguously associated with having fun. The drinking may also implicate boredom and lack of meaning:

> "(Even when) *it was winter, we were sitting outside when we were drinking, and that is nothing but a "hobby-curb", I think…"*

It might have been a point to a majority of the current participants to have the opportunity to party under as few regulations and as little surveillance from adults as possible. At least this is a point that has found support in previous research (Forsyth & Barnard, 2000, Room, 2005 b, Storvoll et al., 2010).

Yet, based on the current study material one may say that lack of better alternatives may have made participants feel *bound* to party outdoors on most occasions, and not necessarily to first and foremost rebel against adult norms.

At the same time as unsupervised areas seemed to be searched out, some party places, which involved adult control, were described by many participants in the current study as the ideal place to party. The community house is an example of such a venue that was referred to by most participants as a very attractive place to party. Community houses belong to a tradition in rural Norwegian areas. They represent secularized alternatives to houses built for exertion of religious activities. A community house, where all kinds of activity took place during the week, was a venue for multi-generation partying at weekends. Several community houses still exist in rural districts around Mid-Norway towns. Since voluntary adults serve as guards, we may speak about involvement in risk taking within certain protective conditions, though at a low-intervention level. Gøril in the following excerpt is describing the community house as a place where safety and adventure may be combined:

Gøril:	(About the guards) *there are almost more guards than people you know …*
Moderator:	*Aha- but they don`t check?*
Gøril:	*No.*
Moderator:	*What`s the use with guards then?*
Gøril:	*Hehe…they mostly prevent brawl from bursting out …*
Moderator:	*Ok, so they don`t care so much about the drinking…*
Gøril:	*I find it quite ok….when you first have decided to drink somewhere, then it`s your own responsibility, actually …I don't think it is their task to bring you up …and then there are plenty people who take care of you if something happens…* (And) *they recognize you if you did something wrong last time …so, they are strict down there as well, you see…they take care that everything turns out all right…*

The sense of safety and fellowship that could be related to partying at the community house seemed to be appreciated by Torill:

> "*A lot of people go there…its kinda fun when you discover people you haven't met for a long time and stuff….besides there are not so many "fjortisa"* (younger or more childish teenagers) *…mostly boozy farmers.*"

Although drinking indoors is not allowed at the community house, the community houses in practice seems according to Gøril to be the only public place in a Norwegian context where 16- 18-year olds may party indoors, in addition to private parties:

> "*What is nice, then* (with the community house)*…Cuz you see, things that are going on in town…it is not allowed to drink there…you`ve got to keep your drink outside* (of the building)*. But at* (the community house) - *there you can bring as much as you want… heh…*

It has been noted that adolescent drinkers in urban landscapes often find themselves in a kind of squeeze in the nightlife scene between the encouragement to consume and the regulations that prevent them from it (Demant & Landolt, 2013). As space is negotiable (op cit.), solutions may be found for alcohol consumption and the testing out of adult roles in a way that does not merely mean displacement and deference but also agency, enjoyment and relative safety. The partying that goes on at the community house may be viewed in such a perspective of negotiation of "place" both in the concrete and more abstract sense. In this way, the community house may represent a more protective environment than the venues in alienated urban landscapes which otherwise had been the only place to be.

Yet, several utterances indicated that there was no reason to unambiguously romanticize partying at the community house or partying at home for that sake.

Risk in some shape or form always seemed to be just around the corner in the everyday leisure context of the participants. The venue for fellowship and fun, which the community house may represent, may as Terje is viewing it easily turn into an unsafe and violent place:

> *Brawl breaks out bloody fast down there…* (And) *hooch is so easy to come by when the price is low….*

Some participants who had better alternatives therefore took exception to it. Tore had the following comments when asked about why he does not party at community houses any more:

Tore: *There's so much shit going on…*
Moderator: *What may happen at such a party, then, that you don't like?*
Tore: *Drugs and stuff…*

Again, it is not given that the dread for overconsumption of intoxicants that is heavily involved in consumerist contexts was not perceived by the participants. In line with the conclusions of Peretti-Watel (op cit.) on risk consciousness in contemporary society, the less

joyful aspects related to drinking were also acknowledged and relatively broadly discussed in the focus groups. Some participants had, for instance, had bad experiences with "home-alone-parties". Peers of the kind that tend to invade private parties had ruined much of the excitement for Ada:

> "*I had told them the rules and that… (But) the more drunk they got … (the more) they gave a damn… (…) everything was knocked over and broken…and like… there were pinches of snuff and ashes all over the place…*"

Friendship on such occasion could be subject to considerable strain:

Pelle: *My buddy smashed a chair* (at my party)*…He got up and jumped on it. I had bought it for my hard-earned money and my parents are far from rich …so it is kinda weird…*
Moderator: *What did you do about it?*
Pelle: *I was just a little irritated because of it…he had been fairly…*
Moderator: *So you said nothing?*
Pelle: *Well, no I did not do anything…I just don't* (want us to) *be friends anymore…I don't bother to get upset…it`s a chair, after all… but when you let them into your house, you trust them…that they won`t do it…and all of a sudden, they smash things, right? …that belong to your parents…or to your siblings….it`s not very proper….when you trust them and let them in…*

In relation to a Danish study on the drinking habits of 15-16 year-olds (Järvinen & Gundelach, 2007) it was concluded that the capability to drink to intoxication in a way that merely involves *"pure pleasure"* tends to be a scarce commodity to the extent that it has become a symbolic good (see Bourdieu, 1986). That means that many desire it but few acquire it.

Only once, practices somewhat similar to the *"controlled loss of control"* formula were mentioned and then barely in terms of an anecdote about an acquaintance of Kjell`s:

> "*I know a guy who drinks until he vomits, and then the fun starts for him*"

One even may discuss whether this at all represents the refined pattern involved in "*controlled loss of control*" that has been described in relevant literature. The person in question above did not seem to have reached the most advanced level of newer practices of intoxication since a criterion of such practices is to exert excessive intake of alcohol *without* having to vomit.

Not unexpected in a Norwegian cultural context, most participants in the current study, if they drank at all, predominantly seemed to stick to the *"weekend excess-weekday restraint"* pattern (Measham, 2006) that has been described as a major characteristic of a typical "dry" drinking culture. Despite the newer tendencies of *"civilized enjoyment"* (O`Malley & Valverde, 2004) that were described in the theory section, the *"binge and brawl"* tendency that opposes that pattern on certain crucial points, still seems to be a tenacious tendency among Norwegian adolescents (Pape, Rossow, & Storvoll, 2008).

In the participant group of the current study, however, the issue whether *"binge and brawl"* styles in their most "unpolished" shapes could be ascribed symbolic value seemed to differ among the current participants:

Magnus: *Well, if you go party with pals….do you **have** to drink, then?*
Martin: *Sure!*
Terje: *That's what`s fun*
Magnus: (But) *do you **have** to drink, then?*
Terje: *Yeah, in order for spirits to get high….*
Magnus: *In order for spirits to get high, yeah ….and* (for you) *to become a little dizzy?*
Martin: *No, one doesn't get dizzy (…) it is no fun anymore when you… sort of… have had too much…It's no fun….*

Whereas it came to the fore that Magnus drank no alcohol at all, the participants in this group who were drinking tended to base themselves on a variety of parameters for both having fun and keeping prudent. They tried to calculate their own tolerance level, considered their cultural background, and seemed to pursue an embodied feeling of when *"enough is enough" or "when drinking is no fun anymore"*. Still, we are hardly speaking of strategies of the more conscious and rationalist type. Rather, we may observe elements of that kind of judgment that is highly embodied and non-calculative but still aims at identifying the current versions of the socially acceptable. If that is the case, the assumption that Magnus seems to base his argumentation on, namely that annihilation is an aim to most teenagers who drink, may not hold water.

Newer research on drinking patterns among young males in Nordic countries suggests the older "binge and brawl" patterns are, after all, under constant revision also in "dry" drinking cultures like the Finnish. At least, alternative drinking patterns are more allowed for than previously. Demant & Törrönen (2011) have for instance launched the term *"heroic drinking"* to characterize certain *"binge and brawl"* styles among young male adults. The rival practices, which the referenced authors have categorized as *"playful drinking",* may be subsumed under the paramount headline of *"civilized enjoyment"* (see the theory part). *"Playful drinking"* appears to be a far more prudent pattern than the pattern of *"heroic drinking"*, but as the label indicates it also allows for the experience of *"just having fun"*. To Martin, according to his utterances in the above sequence, the limit is reached when he gets *"dizzy",* or preferably before the drinking has brought about such symptoms. It also seems as if staying robust and healthy was important to Martin. He seems to think that his having been raised in the countryside makes him more robust against acute risks and unpleasant effects, and thus seems to view it as a protective factor:

 Martin: *Like…I was born in the countryside, so I actually can put up with pretty much* (alcohol)
Moderator: *So there`s a difference?*
Martin: *Sure…I can see the difference between me and him* (meaning Magnus), *so…*

Although practices and preferences differ, the alternative of staying away from alcohol seemed unthinkable to most participants in the group. As suggested in the following sequence, it actually takes a while before Martin and the others in the group realize that Magnus is deliberately refraining from any kind of alcohol use:

Magnus: (Trying to break through) *I never drank anything, I didn`t ….*
Martin: *Maybe I can put up with a little more …I really think I can*
                 take more than you…
Magnus: *I haven`t touched alcohol at all! ….*
Martin: *So? You say you haven`t? …*
Magnus: *No….*
Martin: *You haven`t? You did not even taste beer?*
Magnus: *Never….*
Tom: *You never touched alcohol?*
Magnus: *Well, I drank malt beer* (non-alcoholic) *on Christmas Eve…*

The surprise among the other group members around the fact that a "problem kid" deliberately refrains from alcohol use is not sensational in a cultural context in which drinking alcohol is usual among an overwhelming majority of people. The reason why Magnus kept abstinent, however, was that he had been living with people who were misusing alcohol. He therefore seems to have developed a genuine aversion against it:

> *At home, you see …if it…if "someone" gets too much, I just take the bottle and then I*
> *smash it   or empty it. I get so sour that I… cuz they don't show me any consideration …"*

Aversion was not the only part of Magnus' emotional repertoire. Situations with people who were drunk were also likely to evoke feelings in him of insecurity. In the utterance below, Magnus describes how he has developed the skill to judge between risky and not risky in unexpected situations. He has felt an urge to do so on the basis of his personal experience that unexpected situations in an alcohol-consuming context could mean trouble, apparently also in the physical sense. One option for Magnus, who feared that he could *"turn mad"* in such a situation was, for instance, to avoid leisure contexts in which alcohol was consumed:

> *I think it`s cheerless… like on New Year`s Eve, I was out, and then…I was not at a particular*
> *party, but I find it cheerless that people I don`t know come over to me …at weekends also…*
> *and are really pissed (…) and then I kind of think that …I don't want to have something to do*
> *with them, cuz you never know what they will say, right? …and situations may show up that*
> *actually should be avoided, then…*

Aversion when deeply rooted in negative personal experience, as was the case with Magnus, may certainly have its more uncontrolled outcomes. Yet, as indicated in the above excerpt, both aversion and a feeling of being unsafe could also have protective and preventive functions.

Although Magnus with his teetotaller standpoint represented an exception in the sample, participants in general seemed to have experienced that acute risks related to drinking had become unpleasantly real and concrete on certain occasions. In one group session, for

instance, Marit mentioned that she, if she were to give some advice to younger siblings in order to protect them from everyday risks, would have said: *"Don`t be with people you don`t know and don`t drink too much…and don't accept drinks from people you have never seen before …"*. By the mentioning of Marit's rule of thumb her group-mate Mette suddenly remembered an unpleasant party episode:

> *I was at a party once…close to* (name of restaurant)*….if you know where that is…(…) we did whatever we could to be with those who were older…to drink with them; it was cool (…). I drank a lot of shots and stuff…I was offered a drink from a guy …heh…I had nothing left to drink…* (and) *he had two drinks…they did not seem strong, so I poured them down…because I wanted it to keep going and to keep staying pissed the whole* (night) *….like, I was not so old; I may have been like thirteen…fourteen…and I got dopey …I had taken something, I think, cuz I got so dopey…until I had tasted his drink I had been hyperactive, pissed and cheerful… (…) I got so dopey I just said «carry me» and stuff- my head grew dark and I had no control over my feet…sure, that`s usual* (also) *when you get pissed, but I know myself so well that I know when I get dopey…you really feel the difference (…) I had a very bad experience …*

Although not having had an all-evasive effect on Mette in the future with regard to later substance practices, the above-narrated episode nonetheless seemed to have had a certain significance to her. There were for instance some occasions in which she totally avoided use of alcohol, like when being by herself:

> *"If I sit down to drink alone, then something is wrong, I bet"*.

Precaution practices of various kinds, like avoiding drinking alone and avoiding drinking *"for the wrong reason"* are among the examples mentioned by Demant & Järvinen (2011) of those differentiated drinking practices that may be observed amongst Danish teenagers of today. The fairly embodied skills acquired with regard to judging when, where and with whom to share which drinking styles, according to the authors, belong to contemporary teenagers' social capital and tend to guide the drinking. Social capital is used here in the Bourdieusian sense (see Bourdieu, 1986). Moreover, restrictive alcohol practices and practices of *"civilized enjoyment"* in the Danish study tended to exist side by side. This, according to the referenced, means that the same teenager could exert both kinds of practices, somewhat dependent on which social capital he or she already had acquired, or on the basis of the social capital that is constituted by the personal experiences he or she already had been having.

The tendency to "design" one`s alcohol pattern in a highly individual way, and the sensitivity it requires for which situations and places that are appropriate, seems to be closely associated with the differentiation processes that go on in consumer society at large. The tendency is broadly described in newer research literature on changes in general alcohol and drug use patterns. Aldridge et al., (2011), for instance, describe a *"pick and mix"* pattern when it comes to judgment around which substance to use on which occasion. Because the new tendencies could be negotiated across the conventional, class-based drinking patterns they may thus also modify and differentiate the alcohol practices of *"high risk"* youths.

Merely by exploring single participants and the maneuvers they, according to their utterances in group discussions, are making along the vertical axis could have provided fruitful insight into highly differentiated patterns spanning from fairly impulsive *"acting out"* patterns on the one hand to drinking practices that are in line with mainstream discourse on the other hand. As noted above, we may catch sight of rudiments of the reflexivity that late modern life shaping requires, namely the constant monitoring of one's own behaviors and ideas. The question is whether we, when it comes to the current participants, really have to do with the refined judgment involved in such reflexivity or with a more tentative kind of pattern.

The underlying reference to risk in Mette's narrative above as random but still predictable to a certain extent is interesting in relation to the previously referred theoretical discussion around risk as a predominantly *"in-here"* or *"out-there"* phenomenon. Risk as predominantly implicit and non-calculable phenomenon in line with late modern theory on time (see Arendt, 1971 and Beck, 2009) is not so much about being careless or wary. The question is rather towards which tense one is oriented: risk in the future or risk here and now.

Narratives of on violent episodes and other neighbourhood risks in the material

The current data material also suggests that both in relation to risk of getting involved in violence and in wilful plundering the conventional dichotomy between the aggressor and the victim is suspended. That theme will be more specifically treated in a separate subsection later on.

Anyhow, the many spontaneously occurring accounts in the current material on violent episodes tended to suggest that violence was an impending risk in the participants` everyday context and certainly therefore a theme that evoked engagement in most groups. Several participants talked about the violent tendencies that they observed in their leisure time, expressing aversion and at least verbally distancing themselves from it.

In fact, the tendency of referring to violent episodes was apparent to the extent that also external co-analysers spontaneously commented on it when they reviewed the material. At least the boys seemed inclined to end up in episodes like this, which is quite in line with tendencies observed in recent general population research on the topic (Øia & Fauske, 2010). At least the tendency is apparent when alcohol is involved. Results in longitudinal research which has been focused on the association between drunkenness and problem behaviour among Norwegian adolescents (Pape, Rossow, & Storvoll, 2008) has suggested that such things as theft and burglary are no longer strongly associated with drunkenness. However, the association between drunkenness and violence has so far remained strong when it comes to Norwegian youths (op cit.).

The following example was according to transcripts from group sessions, a relatively frequently occurring kind of event on a night out at those leisure venues that the participants frequented:

Kjell:	*There are so many who just are looking for trouble, you know...*
Moderator:	*Yeah...*
Kjell:	*When I was out and strolled around in town together with some pals,*
	then they come, the three of them behind me. I am about turning around
	to take a look…and all of a sudden I get knocked down, you see…
Moderator:	*Hm...*
Kjell:	*They keep standing there kicking while I am lying down…*

However, definitions of violence may differ. Øia & Fauske (op cit.) suggest that the definition of violence should be expanded beyond mere scratching and beating. Violence according to these authors spans over a continuum from gests, grimaces, threats of violence and harassment of the kind that may be classified as bullying to more pronounced violence. Thus, at least with regard to what our participants seemed to be experiencing on a night out, the leap from a glance to a slap need not be far, with or without the use of alcohol:

Moderator:	*Why is there relatively much fighting between youths? .....*
Mette:	*It usually starts with some kind of disagreement and stuff…..*
Moderator:	Yeah?
Mette:	*Or with someone staring bitchy at another….*
Marit:	*Heh…*
Mette:	*and then the other gets angry, particularly when alcohol is part of*
	it…damn…every time I drink and get a critical comment... then I hit (them) …
	(...)
Moderator:	*Hm…so it`s …you said that there are some remarks that are fairly ...*
Mette:	*Glances.*
Moderator:	*Glances?*
Mette:	*Yeah...comebacks and glances…I tolerate nothing when I drink .....*
Moderator:	*Hm…so it`s a bit different when you have been drinking and when*
	you have not, then…?
Mette:	*Or… when someone has been saying shit about me...*

In the excerpt, Mette does not seem to view alcohol as a necessary trigger of violent episodes. She thereby also suggests that outbursts of violence may be a matter of temper, individual vulnerability and low impulse control. As shown in the subsection in which the sample was introduced, the current sample as a whole had higher scores on so-called "externalizing" behaviours than those same age samples that were drawn from clinical populations and from the general population. As previously noted, externalizing disorders are among other things characterized by an observable tendency of blaming others for mishap (Wichstrøm & Backe-Hansen, 2007). Viewed on that basis it seems likely that the current study participants were more easily provoked and more involved in violent episodes than "average" youths.

Yet, involvement in violent episodes needs not be a phenomenon that exclusively applies to "at risk" youths. As suggested above, significant portion of Norwegian youths in the current age group run the risk of being involved in violence or being threatened by violence (Øia & Fauske, 2011, Frøyland & Aaboen Sletten, 2011). Besides, there is a statistically strong association between drunkenness and aggressive behavior in the general Norwegian youth population (Pape, et al., 2008 and Øia & Strandbu, 2010).

In spite of the relatively high extent of involvement in violence in some shape or other, both in the participant group and in the remaining youth population, there seemed to be few participants who affiliated with environments in which involvement in violence tended to be regular, daily fare. Indeed, the fact that the focus group discussions deliberately focused on "risks in the neighborhood" and not on "risks in the family", entails that I know very little about to which extent the participants could have been exposed to or initiators of domestic violence in the family or in other close relationships. Anyhow, Torill, who had claimed that she actually was in a "wrong environment", seemed to represent an exception with regard to exposure to violent action in one`s leisure environment.

Moderator:	*If I`ve got it right, there`s dope and…some have been in contact with police, then, or?*
Torill:	*They have been sentenced for violence, and …stuff…*
Moderator:	*What kind of violence, then?*
Torill:	*Fighting and stuff …*

There were also few signs that violence was idealized. In the focus group discussions violence was rather spoken of in a matter-of-fact way in the sense that it just "belongs to life", although not desirable:

Co-moderator:	*Does it happen that you tell people* (peers) *when they go too far? ….*
Geir:	*Yeah…*
Co-moderator:	*Like, "that's not very clever," or? ….*
Nils:	*It has happened lots of times that I've had to stop someone….*
Co-moderator:	*Stop them from what?*
Nils:	*Like for instance when a fight breaks loose….then I've talked them out of it…stuff like that…*
Moderator:	*Hmm…and they let you? Talk them out of it, I mean?*
Nils:	*Yeah…*
Moderator:	*What`s the* (your) *appeal to them, when you talk them out of it?*
Nils:	*Well, I tell them to not give a shit, ignore it…*
Moderator:	*Hmm… just like that…*
Nils:	*Cuz I don't want my mates to get beaten up… it would hurt me…*

Interestingly, the risk of being involved in violence even when partying was by several participants experienced as impending to the extent that what normally is thought of as protective strategies against risk like *"the soberer, the safer"* , is turned upside down. Particularly the next excerpt gives some insight into how drinking to intoxication may also have the purpose of gaining control and self-protection, however paradoxical it may seem in a mainstream kind of perspective. It may also entail an upgrading of self-image in their own eyes:

Moderator:	*Could it feel good to lose control?*
Gøril:	*Well, in fact…it depends: I actually think you should be so pissed that you`re able to protect yourself! If you drink Tequila you`ll succeed, you see….*

Being "pissed" and aggressive enough to protect oneself may be efficient in the "dry", "binge and brawl" context in which Gøril is partying, namely at a community house in Mid-Norway. Youths who virtually practice *"controlled loss of control"* have, however, heavily emphasized that troublemaking in terms of violence in their view is incompatible with this refined kind of alcohol excess (Järvinen & Gundelach, 2007).

Another interesting aspect implied in the sequence above is that I, as a moderator, seem to take it for granted that both non-control and the appreciation of it tends to govern participant behaviour. I must admit I had expected a *"yes"* as the most likely response from Gøril to my question about whether it feels good to lose control. By doing so, I actually reproduce the prevailing conceptualization of participants as hedonists and as predominantly careless with regard to self-protection. That is a conceptualization that tends to lack a solid empirical basis.

When we asked participants during focus group discussions to classify respectable lifestyles from non-respectable ones and respectable individuals from non-respectable ones, certain sexually related phenomena were also touched on. Participants apparently regarded exposure to unwanted sex as part of the unsafe leisure sphere to which they were likely to belong. According to Øia & Fauske (2010) on the basis of the latest wave of the "Young in Norway" study, sexualized violence is on the increase among youths in general.

For instance, some accounts about rapes in the neighbourhood tended to circulate in the various leisure venues to which the participants belonged. According to those stories, both boys and girls were exposed to this kind of risk. Although such occurrences sometimes seemed to be based on rumours, the telling about them may reflect a fear in participants of them becoming reality. In accordance with this, certain adults who according to participants deviated from the adult norm with regard to respectability vs. non-respectability seemed to be ascribed sexually unacceptable propensities. In the next excerpt, for instance, both the sexually dubious and those who belong to the category *"the losers that hang in bars"* emerged as if they were associated phenomena.

Ada:	*If you go to* (name of place) *you`ll see the losers that hang in bars and who stir up people at our age…*
Moderator:	(trying to say something)
Ida:	*And then there are ugly adults…*
Ada:	*Hehehe….*
Moderator:	*What do you mean by ugly?*
Ida:	*Like….that the looks are not on their side, perhaps….and those pedo-guys …*
(…)	
Ada:	*Yeah, like when* (mentions a girl) *… a man came and asked her if she …how much she would charge for fucking him, and he was maybe seventy…no, sixty…fifty years old …was shit ugly, fat and hideous…shit-heel…*

The episode that Mette was telling about also seemed to evoke general reflection about possible sexual assaults involved in these kinds of episodes. She commented:

> "*I haven`t got the faintest idea about what happened …but a friend looked after me* (that night), *and she said nothing bad had happened.*"

Examples of personally experienced sexualized violence were not directly presented in the group, probably because we were careful not to stress sensitive topics of that kind in the groups.

The tension between vulnerability and agency in the material

As mentioned in the previous subsection, the current data material contained relatively abundant information of the likeliness to be involved in violent episodes. However, as suggested in the introduction to this major section, "*Implicit notions of future": The risks next door"*, it remains unclear to what extent participants in the current study were aggressors or victims.

Certainly, the focus group method may be fairly inappropriate for revelation of such relations. For obvious reasons like shame, the risk of *exerting* violence was not necessarily mentioned to the same extent as the risk of being *exposed* to violence. Mette's accounts on her tendency to smash people who stare at her and Magnus' fear of *"turning mad"* at drunk people who approach him on weekends are relatively exceptional.

A recurring issue seems to be whether the current youths by virtue of being individuals who have been assessed as having *"externalizing problems"* are more likely than the so-called normative population to initiate violence in their leisure contexts, although there were few examples of such initiation in the material.

A general conclusion seems to be that the epidemiological stress on "externalizing behaviors" as a predominant tendency among youths with behavioural problems of this gets more nuanced when tendencies in the Norwegian youth population as a whole are taken into consideration. A significant portion of so-called normative Norwegian youths are not only exposed to threats of violence above all advanced by their peers (Øia & Fauske, 2010). Many of them also engage actively in violence. For instance, as many as 25-26 % of a general population sample in Stavanger (Frøyland & Aaboen Sletten, 2011) reported that they had themselves beaten, scratched someone else or pulled others by the hair. The suggested 25-26 % seems to constitute a significantly larger portion of the general youth population than the youths who fulfil diagnostic criteria for externalizing problems are likely to constitute. Therefore, being an aggressor, or at least using violence as a means of self-protection, seems to be a part of the everyday context of a considerable portion of the Norwegian population of youths.

Inversely, the suspension of the former dichotomy between victim and aggressor entails that youths who correspond to the inclusion criteria of the current study and who according to clinical discourse exhibit "externalizing behaviours" are also relatively likely to be victims of

133

violence. This is less of a surprise in discourse on youths with behavioural problems as predominately vulnerable and therefore "children in need" (Goldson, 2000).

To the extent that threats of violence or exertion of violence was addressed in the current focus groups, the accounts on those phenomena did not provide a clear answer to the question *"who attacked whom?"*

In one of the groups, for instance, the rage against a boy who was described as *"messing with everybody"* was brought up as a theme. There were several indications that group members also had been *"messing"* with the boy in question.

Anyhow, several utterances indicated that there was consensus in the group that a fair solution would be to "pay back" the assaults for which the boy allegedly was responsible. Apparently, however, this kind of solution to the problem had already been tested out by other youths in the neighbourhood:

Arne: *He was the toughest guy in town, at least he believed so (...)*
Guri: *Was it him who got roughed up?*
Arne: *Yeah, he was roughed up at* (name of place 1)
Guri: *How funny!*
Molly: *Nice!*
Arne: *Yeah, wasn't it? ...They kept on beating him* (until he) *spurted all the way
                    from* (Name of place 1) *to* (Name of place 2)
Guri: *I have been bullying him for quite a long time ....*
Molly: *I was also cheeky to him...*
Guri: *Bah! Did he escape, then?*
Arne: *There`s a lot of people who have been threatening him...*
Guri: *No wonder why!*
Moderator: *So you get paid back if you are extremely...*
Arne: *Yes, if you mess with the wrong person ...*
Molly: *Who from* (Name of place 1) *was it that roughed him up, then?*
Arne: *It was someone from* (Name of place 3) *that beat him.*
Guri: *(...) I saw him hanging with someone at* (Name of place 1)...
                    if he comes to (name of place), *then I stop* (unclear) *... all I want is to jump
                    on him if I see him, you know...*

An aspect that may be discussed on the basis of the discourse around aggressor or victim, vulnerability or agency is whether sequences like the one above actually are about risk at all. Certainly, real events that are perceived as unjust make the basis for the talk. Yet, the question has been raised in literature on young girls and violence whether threats or talk of violence are basically fictitious or really meant to come into being (Franck, 2005). Based on her data the referenced author finds it likely that young girls violence or talk about violence in most cases is a means of boundary-making, or a marker of solidarity, mutual accept and acknowledgement of a kind that is salient in a sound life shaping process.

In the light of Franck`s findings, the above excerpt from my study tends to suggest how negotiations of the boundary between exposure to risk and causing risk, good and evil, justice and injustice, guilt and innocence may constantly go on in everyday talk about those issues

also in mixed groups. To an equal extent, as certain fantasies of how to pay back were shared in the group, merely the talk about episodes in which violence of harassment was involved seemed to fill a purpose. A spirit of unity and vigour towards a perceived common enemy seemed to emerge which also might have had its positive sides in terms of re-establishing justice. Not least, the group talk also tended to serve as a kind of reassurance against further risk of being exposed to violence or harassment.

On this background, one may see a principal link between the tendencies in the current focus group material and the suggestions made by Taylor (1995) around how a focus on deviance may create consciousness around our more unyielding principles for living. Normalcy and deviance in this picture are not really opposed in all respects. Thus, talk about violence in the current focus groups could not only provide valuable information about maneuvering in the morally indeterminate space, but also about what they held as overarching moral principles after all.

In accordance with the tendency to suspend the aggressor vs. victim or the agency vs. vulnerability dichotomies, the alleged link between individual vulnerability and general risk-taking has been questioned to an increasing extent in contemporary society. As previously suggested, risk-taking as a deliberate kind of phenomenon has by and large been observed also in "risk society" with its heavy emphasis on keeping risk at an arm`s length (Peretti-Watel & Moatti, 2006; Ravn, 2012). As a deliberate phenomenon, risk rather reflects agency than victimization tendencies. Not least, the literature on such as edge working (see Lyng (1990) in the theory section and in the previous section on temporal orientation) has suggested that the notion of risk-taking as something that only vulnerable or particularly sensation-seeking people are involved in needs to be modified. The conventional notion for youths "at risk" of developing problem substance use as more morally deviant or more vulnerable than other youths tends to crack. It has, for instance, been suggested that the most risk-taking youths also are the most outgoing, sociable and popular in their peer groups (Aldridge, et al., 2011). The cited authors refer to British general population youths in their teens, but as a result of globalization, the difference to Norwegians needs not be great in that respect.

In situations where risk of adverse development was impending, some participants in the current study also clearly demonstrated that they were responsible agents and not merely objects to adult initiatives. Trine, for instance, had taken the initiative to take action by contacting the child welfare authorities. She, by doing so, had defied her mother`s skepticism towards involving professional helpers:

> *The first time I mentioned that there were actions I could take…cuz it was my idea… Then my mom was like: "good god… they'll say you're this and that (…)...But then, when I got back after seeing them* (people from the child welfare service) *then….then she realized how much it had helped me, so she was like… then she understood it wasn't that stupid after all...*

On the whole, there were quite a few examples in the material where participants managed to convert previous defeats to future triumphs in the way Baumann (2007) has described it.

When first having managed to do so, it seemed as if the participants were more capable of thinking of the future with optimism. This is quite in line with research that suggests that a conscious distance to one`s own past history, however miserable it might be, increases the probability of looking optimistically on future (Claezon, 1996).

Lotte, for instance, seemed to have the conscious agenda that she would not transfer to her future children the misery she has been experiencing but working hard to overcome:

> "*I would have taken care that they were fine all the time and stuff… so they won`t become like me … *(not)* like how I have been … I would not like them to have to go through such things …*"

On the whole, the troubles that brothers, sisters or parents had been through seemed to be the source of fairly realistic attempts at risk control in the present. Even more so, personal problems shaped a base for realistic risk relations. Looking at experienced problems from a distance might significantly assist the shaping of more vivid future pictures of the kind that are emphasized in prediction discourse. Lise, Lotte's group mate, also proved to have a positive future agenda rooted in personal negative experience. Since she had had a father who had problems with substances, she had been reflecting a great deal on the probability that her father's problems may be inherited. Because this is an issue to which no certain answer may be established, to be on the safe side she had decided not to use narcotics:

> "(The probability) *that it`s in "your blood"…. It might be such things that have made me determine that I am not gonna touch that stuff. In my view it is only him that's like that …so I'm keeping away…* (from drugs)"

Thus, there were certainly also examples in the material that personal experiences with such as drug use shaped the basis for more conscious considerations about whether to stop or continue. Although participants for the previously described reasons were careful with provision of accounts on drug use, there were all the same some examples in the material of the phenomenon of having *"given up because of bad experience"* in relation to drug use. According to Aldridge et al. (2011), it has become increasingly common already in mid-adolescence to put a definite end to experimentation with illegal substances. Also this phenomenon may be interpreted as an effect of risk having become *"within reach of human agency"*. Gøril, for instance, provided this account on her rejection of cannabis after experimentation:

> *I dunno …I have tried cannabis twice, you know, and I had bad experiences both times …and then I was fairly pissed from booze in advance, so it did not turn out all right at all… it was a real nuisance, because it* (the effect) *lingered for so long. So, I found out I wouldn't try it any more…*

With the problems in mind that were described in the section on explicit risk of envisioning future the examples above seem informative. The prerequisite for exerting control of long term risk seems to be concrete, personal experience. At the end of this section I further discuss this phenomenon, which I call *"domestic identification"*.

136

Expert vs. lay knowledge about risk in the material

The above-described tendency in contemporary society of turning phenomena like vulnerability and ignorance into positions that are more agentic has also entailed a democratization of medical discourse (Bailey, 2005). It is particularly conversion of the addiction concept that has been focused by the cited author. According to Bailey, the relationship between addiction and agency, which conventionally is conceptualized as a relationship that tends to portray the agent as an object to irresistible forces, has by "addicts" themselves been re-conceptualized as a relationship in which self-motivated action plays a considerable role (op cit.). When being taken over by lay expertise scientific concepts tend to become subject to constant negotiation and modification, which means that they take on a more fluid and dynamic shape (Reith, 2004 b).

The theoretical basis for a more dynamic view both on how mere risk becomes real and how it may become minimized is, as noted in previous sections, to be found in those theories that emphasize embodied and non-calculative action as the source for most life arrangements. At least some participants provided everyday evidence for this tendency.

Quite illustrative of the relative inappropriateness of rationalist approaches to emergence of risk and risk control were, for instance, the response of one participant to one of the provokers that were developed in relation to the current study. The provoker was formulated in the following way: *"youths in the target group tend to deliberately seek each other's company"*. This is a statement which tends to reflect both contamination assumptions and human action as rationalistic. When the statement was advanced in his group, Kjell spontaneously commented:

> "*Nobody is deliberately **seeking** a drug using environment; it's just there, kinda ...*"

Above, I suggested that the concept of *"domestic identification of risk"* could be a concept to cover the kind of future foresight that tends to grow from a reflexive systematization of personal and contextually sensitive experience. As future may seem opaque and perhaps alien to most people at times and to "at risk" youths in particular, the need to bridge the well known and the unknown is crucial. By being concrete and highly individual in its fundament, a risk concept based on *"domestic identification"* opposes the risk concept derived from risk discourse. The risk concept derived from risk discourse is based on aggregated truths and on the premise that phenomena remain stable over time (Reith, 2004 a). In our complex world concepts based on such principles constitute a poor basis for individual life shaping.

The term *"domestic identification"* is also meant to reflect that expert and lay knowledge tend to merge in consumer society. Exactly as is the case with concepts like "addiction", "pure" health messages that are conveyed in national governmental campaigns or programs are on the one hand hardly likely to be appropriated in a direct form. On the other hand, however,

such messages are neither unlikely to influence practices to some extent (Skårner & Månsson, 2008).

To the extent that scientific theory merged with lay knowledge in the current material, both biomedical concepts and social theory on reasons for problem substance use could be observed in an individually appropriated form. As the excerpt below may indicate, participants` notions on how a problem substance use career develops not only tend to be torn between prediction and contingency perspectives. Interestingly, the excerpt ends up with accent on the need to differentiate explanatory models:

Moderator:	*Hm … they who drink much or take dope, are they the most unhappy ones, or?*
Molly:	*You may say…* (It is) *them who have the biggest problems at home, and at school….*
Arne:	(mentions the name of a boy) *had no problems at home, he just ended up in the wrong environment…*
Guri:	(is trying to say something)
Molly:	*It is not necessarily always so, but it is often like that….*
Arne:	*Well, I would say it is most likely when you are in a bad environment…*
Guri:	*Sure…but often it is like …* (mentions a name of a girl) *had problems at home, for sure…*
Arne:	*Yeah, but…*
Guri:	*That was a part of the person she became…*
Arne:	*It depends!* (The girl Ada mentioned) *is one person* (the boy Pelle mentioned) *is another person!*

Probably, the basis for the somewhat differing statements made above is a mixture of their own observations and popular and scientific discourse. "Scientific discourse" may be ambiguous both with regard to backgrounds for getting involved in more problematic substance use and with regard to where the distinction line is running between deliberate and sound risk-taking vs. potentially harmful risk-taking.

In the excerpt below, Ada, after having made the statement that there is an association between use of cannabis and the likeliness of bad health, assumes that that the link is socially mediated. The attempts at smoking hashish according to both Ada and her group mates depends on with whom you congregate, and which places you tend to frequent. The risk implied in "listening to other youths" is also touched on as part of the notion that social relations mediate the cannabis-bad health association.

Ada:	*I do not hang at[27]…that`s just bullshit...*
Rolf:	*Or at* (name of another neighborhood)
Ada**:**	*I don't hang there either*
Pelle:	*Where are you, then?*
Ada:	(name of a third neighborhood)
Rolf:	*You listen to other youths…*
Pelle:	*Therefore people start using hash…seventy five per cent*
Ada:	*Then I`m among those* (remaining) *twenty five per cent!*

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[27] Name of a neighborhood where the "hash crowd" allegedly used to hang a couple of years ago

As we may see from this sequence, social science discourse is used as reference both in relation to confrontation and defense. Even statistical figures play a role as a rhetorical instrument. That the figures probably are based on guesses seems to play a lesser role. The excerpt primarily seems to demonstrate that adolescent strategies to a considerable extent take scientific discourse into consideration, although this hardly occurs quite consciously. Besides, there are some relational aspects as well involved in such utterances, as the section on the relational dimension of figure 1 indicates. In contemporary society it really matters to appear as invincible to malign factors as possible, not necessarily by keeping away, but by demonstrating that one is capable of resisting any kind of temptation. This seems to be suggested in the following utterance by Ada:

> *It is quite ok to be friends with them, as long as one does not start with it oneself .....*

Therefore, when Ada, according to her utterance above, is attempting to protect herself by staying away from those neighborhoods where hash-consuming youths according to her experience are most likely to be found, we never know how consistent she is in doing so. However, she is more or less in line with prospective research with regard to the habit of being at "wrong places" with "wrong people," presumably regular hash-smoking youths, doing "wrong things":

> *It depends on the environment…when you make friends with someone who does wrong things, then…Most of them enter the downtown crowd, then…quite a lot do that.*

Above all, we may in Ada's explanation observe elements of the rationale behind Becker`s (1973) interactionist perspective on how a drug user career develops. It tends to get more severe but also more apparent when individuals spend more time in the company of "hard-core" users, in this case the illegal users of the downtown crowd, than with people who conform to standard norms on such use.

In addition, other studies suggest that youths in general tend to have clear notions on how one may end up in an impasse with regard to substances (Sundar, 2003). Participants in Sundar's study, for instance, tended to employ «gateway» theory (see Kandel & Yamaguchi, 1992) on how a drug user career develops. More specifically, the theory implies that "soft" drugs may lead to the use of "hard" drugs, although not automatically. Sundar's participants also employed modified versions of the most widespread scientific definitions of behavioral problems, namely as opposition to prevailing norms in society at large, and tended to assume that behavioral problems and more permanent use of drugs were associated (Sundar, op cit.).

Summary on of the section on implicit notions of future risk: "The risks next door":

Also in this subsection, light was shed on the general statement that modern life shaping ideals deviate from the ethos of calculation. Quite in line with the tendencies described under the headline "explicit temporal orientation", it has been suggested that late modern society is in lack of pictures (Ivar Frønes & Brusdal, 2000). The conclusion, which these authors draw on that basis, is that if we have no pictures, we have to make some. Most probably, such pictures, when it comes to both risk and ambitions must be rooted in the encounter between the well known and the unknown. The term "future planning" has thus taken on a new significance. One has to count on the fact that risk rationalities change in line with rapidly changing societal preconditions (Dean, 2006).

An appropriate label for the judgment, which is based on previous experience, could be "domestic identification". This does not mean that the refined judgement that is needed in late modern life shaping was fully developed. On the contrary, the exertion of such judgment could occur on an arbitrary basis. Still, experiences of this kind may represent a potential that might be paid attention to in prevention work.

"Domestic identification" in many ways seems to oppose all those current psychological and sociological but still fairly rationalist catchwords that have been identified by Frønes & Strømme (2010) and that refer to the need to keep inner control but also to have a determined direction in life: *"self-efficacy", "self-regulation", "locus of control"* and *"reflexive competence"*.

Participant maneuver along the relational dimension: the horizontal axis

The issues that I will address in this section proved to be primarily covered by research question three and four. Research question three aimed at capturing those issues that the participants were more eager to talk about right now than remote future concerns. Research question four was concerning how participants tended to appear in the groups when they talked about the totality of experiences that are significant for future wellbeing.

The question-three-issues were issues that could emerge unplanned in any group session. A focus that seemed particularly apt at producing data around those issues that participants were caring most about was, paradoxically, focus on remote future. After some dutiful rounds of responses to moderator prompts on future, the conversation tended to, almost without exception, to slide towards themes that were oriented towards everyday themes.

The data that were engendered around research question three proved to be relational in their character.

Research question four also seemed to best fit along the horizontal axis in the system presented in Figure 1. I accentuated in the introductory parts of the thesis that modern life shaping inevitably involves the relational question *"what is the appropriate form?"* (See Garrett, 2007 b). Not least, in an individualist society it is of great importance how others view the steps we take. Even prediction discourse acknowledges the significance of orientation towards prevailing norms for life shaping. Conformity to *"the appropriate form"* has been described both as a factor that might prevent problem substance use and rule breaking/delinquency and as a factor that is apt at outweighing the effect of risk factors (EMCDDA, 2009).

Yet, since it was difficult to separate maneuvers that belong to the horizontal axis from the maneuvers that primarily belong to the upward axis the question *"what is the appropriate direction?"* inevitably also governed the analysis of the "horizontal" maneuvers.

In order to understand how participants related to research questions three and four, it, for instance, seemed necessary to take a further look at how they related to prevailing life shaping ideals or discourses in the larger and more legitimate social field. The following subsection is on that issue.

How participants related to life shaping ideals prevailing in the more legitimate social field

Quite contrary to expectations in current populist discourse on risk groups, participants' implicit emphasis on the mantra *"everyone can become anyone"* seemed to be strong. This became more apparent when they were encouraged to name those virtues that they regarded as the most important for social inclusion in the Norwegian society. Particularly literature derived within cultural criminology has suggested that "at risk" youths tend to embrace those moral standards that the majority of people share. The notion that youths who are involved in rule breaking / minor delinquency are rebellious and "against society" and that they thus constitute a distinct sub-culture simply seems to have a weak empirical basis (Ericsson et al., 1994). Rather, commitment to standard moral norms and remonstrance against those phenomena that evoke social sanctions in the larger social space, such as illegal drug use, is common also among youths assessed as at risk of developing problem substance use or delinquency (op cit.). Because of the subtle way in which power imposes itself on people of today, each individual almost unnoticeably tends to convert prevailing ideologies into personal beliefs and desires (Dean, 2006).

Mette, in the excerpt below, for instance, seems to fully identify with commonly shared principles for modern life shaping. She underscores that directionless-ness within a limited period in one`s teens certainly must be allowed for. Yet, she thinks that everybody`s aim in the long run should be to exploit one`s potential in a more determined way:

Mette:	(It is) *ok that they ...like ...get pissed and that kids smoke hash and that... everybody tries it... everybody`s got to get through it, almost* (everybody). *They don`t have to ...but everybody has been through something like that ...and I think it`s quite ok. But if you have been thinking that you will go on with it for the rest of your life, and maybe try something stronger and stuff... then I think it`s just stupid. Cuz...most things are up to you...*
Moderator:	*Hm... so... a loser... that`s one who doesn`t grasp his possibilities?*
Mette:	*Yeah, in a way ...if you put it in a drastic way like that ... (...) That`s what`s irritating me ...If they`ve got the possibility...that they don`t choose that direction…*

Interestingly, there are traces both of the mantra *"everyone may become anyone"* and of a rationalist *"just do it"* ideology (Garrett, 2004) in the above sequence. Thus, although the participants proved to have few personalized future pictures to come up with, the strong commitment among them to the discourse of individual responsibility for own wellbeing may be viewed as a sign that the participants also tended to tacitly acknowledge the symbolic value of foresight in the contemporary welfare society. Such commitment to standard norms or ideals seemed to exist somewhat independently of the extent to which the youths themselves were living up to them.

Quite in line with prevailing ideas, participants also tended to emphasize education as the very basis for a respectable position in society. This occurred in spite of the fact that most participants did not seem to be satisfied with their academic achievement. Again, it was Mette's viewpoints that were the most pronounced in the area:

Mette: *You see…everybody has the possibility to go to school, then…and if they drop out of school it is always their fault, I think…*
Moderator: *(…) Therefore they should not get any help, or?*
Mette: *Well…that's not what I'm saying. But I think they themselves have rather caused it (…). They're losers in some sense, actually, cuz I think they have a possibility to make things well (even) if they come from a poor family and that. (…) I don't mind that… kinda… people from …eh …Iran and Iraq and places…where there has been war and stuff…they cannot help it …but Norwegian citizens…who end up at the street (…) well, I think it`s a little…*

Mette may have understood the point emphasized by Frønes & Strømme (2010) that the need for education in Norway today not only bases itself on the necessity of acquiring knowledge and skills. Those who drop out of upper secondary school, which are quite a few, also run the risk of being ascribed negative characteristics.

Other participants tended to share Mette's viewpoints on the aims for life shaping. Consciousness around the necessity to exploit one`s space of opportunity could, for instance, lie behind the proclamation from Ada and Ida that they wanted to go to an upper secondary school on the other side of town the subsequent school-year. They stressed that they wanted to *"get away from the losers that stay here"; "here"* meaning the neighborhood to which they originally belonged.

In the following excerpt, the participants tend to convey that there is a perceived link between education and attention to work-life on the one hand and notions of respectability on the other. Those moderator questions that seemed to trigger the utterances in the excerpt were *"who is not respected?"* or *"what must people do in order to become respected in the Norwegian society?"*

Trond: *The most important thing is that you don`t start playing with society and…*
Kjell: *That you aren't a receiver of benefit from the employment office …*
Moderator: *You will not be accepted if you do that?*
Kjell: *Far from it, you will be regarded as a scamp without education …sitting on his bum, doing nothing.*

It also became apparent that participants assumed a link between "straightness" with regard to substance use and inclusion in the larger social fields. When Nils and Geir were asked which criteria that count as inclusion criteria in the Norwegian society of today the first thing that seemed to occur to them was control and precaution in relation to use of substances:

Geir:	(to be) *straight…*
Moderator:	*And what is the content of the straight role?*
Geir / Nils:	(unclear) *…*
Nils:	*Avoid smoking hash, for instance...things like that ...not drink every weekend and so on, I guess...*

The fact that I had promoted the study as a study related to substance prevention may explain the fact that those two participants chose to mention examples from the substance realm. Yet, as the two of them seemed to be more involved in problem substance use than several others in the sample, they may also have been speaking out of personal experience.

Because of the tendency to conform to standard moral norms in relation to work life, the following utterances on the work life vs. leisure balance might even in the eyes of most participants have sounded a little dubious:

Knut:	*I'm looking forward to becoming a pensioner …*
Moderator:	*Yeah?*
Knut:	*Then I shall enjoy Life …*
Moderator:	*What did you say?*
Knut:	*Enjoy Life …*
Moderator:	*Enjoy Life, yeah… you don`t do that now?*
Knut:	*No, not as much as I could have (enjoyed it) if I had been satisfied with myself and…could think that now, now I am done; now I have made my contribution…*
Moderator:	*Hm…*
Knut:	*…so* (unclear) *… then* (as a pensioner) *I can* (finally?) *do what is pleasurable.*

Certainly, there may be many suggestions to how Knut`s viewpoints could be interpreted. I tend to interpret the excerpt as a product of the fact that labor is the fundamental prerequisite both for the Norwegian welfare state and for consumer society, and thus has become a kind of symbolic capital that almost everyone in today's world tries to acquire. In this light, society tends to ascribe worth to pensioners for what they have accomplished for the benefit of the common good. Youths, in contrast, have neither produced nor consumed anything yet. Society may therefore view them as inutile. Knut may also be viewed as a hedonist who is longing for a life without obligations, which from a utilitarian point of view is only possible "after" and not "before" one has served one`s duties.

As suggested above, the use of templates is apparent also in this part of the material. The question that was raised in the section on "explicit future" concerning whether the current participants employed the templates merely as something to hide behind or whether they represented the best available way to express personal convictions on morals is somewhat unclear also here.

Yet, after having accepted templates as a necessary kind of reference tool in relation to issues regarding one's own future, I tend to conclude that they may also be significant tools for expressing opinions about moral issues. Ericsson et al. (1994), who observed similar

tendencies among "at risk" youths, provide a thorough discussion about this and conclude that youths who find themselves between normative and deviant norm sets, all the same, conform to the standards. Besides, the assumption that there needs to be full correspondence between conviction and action is hardly in line with those assumptions of human nature that underpin the study. Rather, the study bases itself on the premise that human nature is predominantly inconsistent and irrational in its effects. Thus, what may seem at first as mere "lip service" may also reflect that "at risk" youths also share the same ideals as anybody else, although most often in an unconscious or inconsistent way.

The tendency pointed to by Dean (2006) above, that often there is no discernible difference between people`s own ideals and the ideals that are promoted by authorities may be linked to the concept of "doxa". According to Bourdieu (1998: 67), a characteristic of a "doxic" state is its basis in a linguistic consensus that may not be real. In a non-calculative way, people act upon "doxa" as real and obliging, even if it does not necessarily benefit them in the end. The concept of doxa is intimately related to Bourdieu`s habitus concept which implies the tendency to reproduce power imbalances of a kind that base themselves on old privileges, but which also implies potentiality for non-conformity or rebellion to a certain extent. Thinkers differ with regard to which extent one may liberate self from the influence of doxa.

A preliminary answer to the research question about how participants tended to appear when discussing issues of relevance for life shaping is thus that the participants had acknowledged commonly shared ideals, such as exploiting one's own opportunities and taking care of one's own health as guidelines for one's own life shaping. This implies the influence of doxa. Yet, this did not necessarily mean that their current everyday life arrangements reflected such ideals.

The link in the material between taste, life style and life shaping processes

In relation to the section on methods, I mentioned that I was prepared for the possibility expressed in the third research question that participants could be more eager to talk about other things than long-term risk of deteriorated wellbeing. Therefore, the third research question, more than the other questions, functioned as a corrective to scholastic approaches. Because the idea behind the third research question was to avoid prefabricated concepts, the themes that the third question aimed at engendering could not be included in our interview guide. Rather, the themes had to come forward as the result of the participants' own initiatives.

Interestingly, whereas attempts at creating future merely by means of forced imagery tended to fall short, participants by means of the strong engagement in taste issues managed to create future images in a far more concrete, although still somewhat implicit, way. In discussions on taste, the tangible and sensual aspects of being on the one hand and future aspirations on the other could be bridged and provide fruitful insight into life shaping.

145

In particular, discussions around name brand vs. second-hand clothes caused high levels of excitement in groups, not least in gender-mixed groups. As a rule, the girls spoke more warmly about tastes and brands than boys. Yet, not all girls were as engaged in name brands as Guri and Molly:

Guri:	*I like boys with Volcom* (brand)-*clothes, Nikita* (brand)-*clothes, you know… JC* (brand) *and that…*
Gunnar:	*Posh boys…*
Guri:	*Yeah, posh in a way, but there's different ways of being posh…*
Molly:	*Those who buy either CUBUS* (brand) *or Kapp-Ahl* (brand) *clothes, they ….*
Guri:	*Hahahaha*

The following excerpt may serve as an example of how the link between present and future asserted itself on talk about taste, although in a wider sense than mere "fashion". Actually, the sequence emerged in a group discussion on future imagery and vocational plans. Yet, in contrast to the attempts at making participants imagine the future somewhat "out of the blue", the future-related themes that are touched on in this sequence based themselves on the everyday mode of approaching issues of significance for future wellbeing:

Guri:	(Addressing Arne): *do you wanna work with* **babies**? (Original emphasis)
Arne:	*I think it's fun, you know…*
Gunnar:	(trying to say something)
Guri:	*Just think, your whole life working with* **babies**… (Original emphasis)
Molly:	*That shit themselves…*
	(The girls giggle)…
Guri:	*Then you have to wipe their ass…other peoples` kids…*
Arne:	*You don't need to work there* (with it) *all your life….*
Guri:	*No…*
Moderator:	*No, I guess that's true…*
Guri:	*You can… you can be my babysitter, hah!*
Co-moderator:	*It's an important job, thou….*
Arne:	*I babysit.*
Moderator:	*Mm… important job, shit pay…*
Arne:	(I`m) *not thinking of the cash…*
Guri:	*You stupid or what?*
Molly:	(addressing Guri): *What, you gonna get a job according to money…?*
Guri:	*Ahh, imagine … what if you have two kids, you think they wanna walk around like losers? My kids are gonna be well cool…so then, I gotta have a decent job (….). Name-brand clothes are important …. Hello!! Have you seen Volcom? Even looking at it turns you on… (…)*
Gunnar:	*Ohhhh…. name-brand clothes!*
Molly:	*Yeah?*
Gunnar:	*That has so much to say for being cool… (…) I don't bother to care about those trifles that she cares about (*makes a voice like Guri): *"I* **got** *to have name-brand clothes".*

Indeed, consumption of such as clothes or other goods has become important to people in consumer society to the extent that it may represent the very meaning of life (Sulkunen 2009). All the same, it was a little unexpected to observe that the issue that, above all, seemed to trigger the participants in group-discussions was the significance of taste as a marker of those life shaping ambitions that the issues of *"who I am", "who I want to become",* and *"how I want to be perceived by others"* represent. In fact, the importance for life shaping that the tangible and sensual aspects of being are representing did not occur to me until the latest rounds of analysis. Rather, in the beginning I tended to perceive the dialogues on taste and lifestyle as sidetracks, and was afraid that valuable group time could fritter away if taste or lifestyle distinctions got too much attention in the group discussions. I, for instance, more than one time felt an urge to limit talk on "trivialities" in order to get to "the point", and I even thought of excluding taste and lifestyle themes from the analysis. When reflecting on it in retrospect, I think this had to do with my being part of a larger social field in which consumption certainly is encouraged, at the same time as its more untamed aspects are condemned. The linguistic practices that accompany certain hedonist expressions in in the excerpt above, for instance, may at first sight appear as both inappropriate and vulgar although they seem appropriate for the embodied desires implied in consumption (see for instance Thompson in Bourdieu, 1992).

However, since lifestyle issues came up with such vigor, not least with regard to future orientation, I after a while realized that cutting them out would be a scholastic failure. I therefore decided to include talk about taste issues into the analysis after all.

If I had avoided analysis of such talk it would, for instance, mean that I, without further reflection, would have conformed to the tendency to upgrade rationality and to dread excess, and to portray concerns about taste as superficial, a prevalent attitude in consumer society.

The way in which market forces work may explain the significance of taste issues for life shaping. Youths and the market have common interests in the sense that the market is offering those tailor-made solutions that are salient ingredients in in late modern life shaping (Heggen, 2004). In a climate based on the premise that one style does not fit all, talk about taste and fashion may provide an opportunity to mark that one is about to find one`s own way in a way that stands out from the crowd (Thornton, 1995). Not least, because consumer culture is a mass culture, standing out from the crowd has become salient (op cit.). Thus, the issue of *"who I am"* and the issue of *"who do I want to become"* converge in conversation about life style. To some, like Arne, swearing to second-hand clothing may, for instance, represent a solution to the question of how to mark one's self as unique:

> *I buy my clothes in second hand stores and I'm proud of it…*

Because of the strong emphasis on uniqueness in consumer society, theories that view youths merely as victims of aggressive commercial forces mat thus seem to be less valid now than previously (Heggen, 2004). Yet, attempts at expanding one`s space of opportunity may also be challenging. The individual in consumer society must, for instance, possess the capacity to "bear the burdens of liberty" (Measham, 2006), which among other things means to show

moral strength (Kjærnes, 2011) and prudence (Reith, 2004 a). If one does not possess those capacities, one`s social bonding is also threatened. Consumption has been individualized to the extent that one overlooks that it is a collective endeavour in which structural changes at the macro level are strongly involved (Kjærnes, op cit.).

Some explain the strong engagement of young people in taste issues from a neuro-cognitive point of view. Results from research on "the social brain" (Burnett, Sebastian, Kadosh, & Blakemore, 2010), for instance, suggest that adolescents, more than people in other life phases, are self-aware, embarrassed in social situations, receptive of the perspective of others, hyper-responsive to rewards and not least, more risk-taking. It is the establishment of the self in relation to others that takes most of the single adolescent`s mental capacity. Therefore, the pace by which those brain functions that promote abstract thinking develop is relatively low at this stage in life.

Certainly, the research on the adolescent brain may appear as reductionist (Males, 2009). Among other things, such a perspective fails to take into consideration the influence of consumer society, and may certainly also discard how symbolic power influences the emphasis on relational before rational issues. The assumptions that underpin "social brain" research run counter to a pragmatic- reflexive perspective. They therefore must be nuanced. All the same, this branch of research seems to have captured some salient aspects of adolescent life.

Yet, neither the power perspective nor the neuro-social perspectives are the only perspectives that apply to the current participants` engagement in taste differences. The wisdom in Taylor's (1995) philosophy on identity and the connection between weak and strong evaluations may also be topical in order to complement other perspectives on the role of tangible and sensual issues for life shaping. According to Taylor, our choices between phenomena that do not seriously affect our self-image ("*weak evaluations*"), such as the choices between two different clothing brands, are intimately connected to the choices that may be of deep importance for the further life course and that include values that we share with most people ("*strong evaluations*"). Therefore, the "trivialities" implied in consumption shape an intrinsic relationship between the close and domestic sphere and the remote and the unknown sphere, an endeavour that may make future less opaque and scary.

The studies referred to before on the significance of young peoples` drinking stories for their life shaping may, not least, serve as an example of Taylor`s statements (see for instance Tutenges & Hulvej Rod, 2009). These authors underscore how it has become increasingly usual among Danish youths to, without further shame, share stories with a content that previously would have been tabooed or viewed as something exclusively associated with "disruptive" social groups (op cit.). A reason why the referenced authors view the stories as being of high value for life shaping is the delight with which they are told and their potentiality for re-creating the past and for creation of the future in light of the present.

Commodification in the indeterminate space

In a historical context framed by consumerism, commodification appears to be a penetrating phenomenon. Particularly in a perspective of symbolic economy, commodification seems salient. The tendency to make all kinds of goods a commodity asserts itself on anything from immaterial goods like thoughts, dreams, opinions, habits, etc., to clothes, furniture and not least electronic equipment. Although being important for the building of a social self-image and for the shaping of future aspirations, commodification processes may all the same contribute to a narrow normative climate. Commodification of clothing style may serve as an example. As clothes and person blend in with each other, such choices as the wrong dress codes or brands may entail fatal outclassing of the person (Croghan, Griffin et al., 2006). As a consequence of the relational aspects interwoven in taste negotiations, in the current data material signs of waiving one`s social life generally tended to be looked down on. Quite often participants, for instance, spoke negatively of "nerds" or "computer geeks", who in their eyes did not live up to the urge to enjoy life, which is implied in consumerism.

Guri (about nerds):	*They are so smart, they have no life… they just stay in… and then… like if we all try to sneak out and tell the subs: "we got flex time" …Then they say: "No, we got Maths now!" Aaarrggh… idiots…*
(…)	
Trond:	*And then we have the computer geeks… well that's what I call them…. They have girlfriends and stuff… and what they call "mates" on the "net" (whom) they've never met …*
Petter:	*Computer geeks?*
Trond:	*Yeah, pretty much…*
Petter:	*What do you have against them…?*
Trond: (mumbling):	*I dunno…*

As suggested in the question *"what do you have against them" in* the above sequence, some in the group could seem to feel hit by the relatively categorical comments, however innocent they may seem to the outside spectator. The comment may serve as a reminder that differentiating forces may appear in any piece of interaction, in any comment. Trond`s mumbling in response to the question above all tends to indicate how arbitrarily the symbolic value of goods are categorized.

Consequently, negotiations around dignity were constantly going on between participants in terms of discussions about taste distinctions. The discussions could, for instance, be around which drinking practices that one would estimate as the most valued:

Moderator:	*Well, so you fear methanol and such things.*
Ada:	*I don't think about it, cuz I don't drink….I almost never drink hooch… (…)*
Rolf: (ironically):	*Hehhhh*
Pelle: (ironically):	*Only goods from the state liquor store?*
Ada:	*How often do I drink hooch…I have been drinking it three times, for sure…*
Pelle:	*Well, then I saw you all those times!*

Ada, by emphasizing that she does not drink "hooch", seems here to have the agenda of showing moral strength and thereby ensuring that she belongs to the normative majority. She is, thereby, drawing on the fact that boundaries between social fields that previously were relatively homogenous with regard to lifestyle characteristics recently have become much vaguer. Life style distinctions are therefore less field specific and symbolic capital is convertible across fields (see for instance Jensen, 2006). The liberating potentialities that Ada has access to by virtue of the language, may assist her in standing out from the habitual thinking in her field.

Yet, as the excerpt suggests, however, it is also probable that Ada`s attempt at standing out as more decent than the others may be sanctioned rather than appreciated. Not least, the potentiality of being ascribed "tall poppy" tendencies in the sense: *"and you think you are better than us",* seems likely. Pelle and Rolf seem to take it for given that "hooch" has the highest symbolic value in the social field in which all three of them after all belong. Thus, even if uniqueness and individual freedom are virtues that are among the most cherished in consumerism there are "mechanisms" implied in language that keep people in place.

The search for *"the appropriate form"* may under such conditions be highly tentative, something which was the fact with the current sample. When future in addition seems remote and opaque, there is little left but outward distinctions and sideways movements to lean on in one`s predominantly embodied attempts at making one`s way.

Competition in the indeterminate space

Because boundaries are generally vague, a struggle also seemed to be going on between the current participants and the larger and more legitimate social space around dignity.

In the same way as clothes blend in with persons, brand distinctions as well as the distinction between name brand or second-hand merge with distinctions between respectable and non-respectable. As noted by Hovland (2006); in order not to be perceived by others as deviant from the perspective of the in-crowd to which I conform, it does not only matter what I wear, but whom I am seen with at which place. If I do not manage to keep distinctions sharp enough, life chances may be seriously threatened. Even if it is a well-established fact that youths "at all times" have tended to show little mercy or solidarity with peers that deviate (Øia & Fauske, 2010), life shaping conditions in consumer society seem to add significantly to that tendency.

Guri, in the previously referred excerpt about vocation, clothing and decency may serve as an example of the dependency of outward social markers when it comes to the very salient life shaping issues *"who am I?", "who do I want to become?"* and *"how do I want others to perceive me?*. In the excerpt, she reported that the normative society could regard her children as "losers" if they were not wearing those clothing brands that the normative society holds as appropriate. Her fear seems to be that if she is not capable of living up to the norm,

150

she may easily end up in a category that does not reflect the direction in which she tries to orient herself with regard to decency in the broadest sense. Many youths who are somewhere "in between" opposite norm sets share the problem that Guri seems to have with telling who she is and who she wants to be (Ericsson et al., 1994). The "moral majority" has no other "proofs" for her having respectable intentions other than certain outward distinctions. As long as Guri remains in a normatively indeterminate space, the normative majority will have difficulties in grasping that Guri's moral orientation is creditable unless she marks it in a way that is visible and tangible to all. Thus, for such reasons, youths in the same indeterminate situation as youths in the current sample may be extra alert when it comes to style issues.

As previously suggested, one could not exclude that certain gender games or competition between genders were also involved in those group discussions in which taste and lifestyle issues were addressed. For instance, whereas girls in particular as previously noted had a fascination for fashion, most of the boys tended to mark their worth and aspirations in terms of "anti-fashion". Gunnar, for instance, by the comment *"oooh-name-brand clothes - I don't bother to care about trifles like her",* may perhaps, first and foremost, be responding to the girl`s initiatives to talk about outward quality by showing off his masculinity. Indeed, boys tended to agree with boys across groups that other things than clothes matter for wellbeing. Yet, also in groups consisting only of boys participants brought up the issue whether there is a link between clothing styles on the one hand and wellbeing or worth on the social market on the other:

Kim:	*Clothes got nothing to do with it.*
Petter:	*No*
Guest moderator:	*It doesn't?*
Petter:	*Personality* (matters) *…it doesn't matter what you wear….*

Yet, even though the boys denied the importance of taste, the topic seemed to hit also their nerve in a very specific way. According to Bourdieu (1995), denial of the symbolic value of certain goods means a tacit acceptance of their symbolic influence. One is simply bound to relate to it in some way or other, either by trying to acquire the kind of capital that is held as the most desirable by the most privileged groups, or by denouncing it in public. In the perspective of Bourdieu, the somewhat patronizing term "trifle" employed by Gunnar on Guri's engagement in name-brand articles may, thus, probably be an expression of general debility in the encounter with those goods that the majority holds as desirable. It is less likely to be a gendered attack on the attention towards taste.

Consumption and transgression of legal and moral codes

To some of the participants the desire for goods implied in consumption ideology had more or less directly made them transgress legal codes. Guri, when telling about her previous habit of stealing name-brand clothes and other goods in stores, uttered:

> "…it was a good feeling to have something expensive and brand new…"

151

On the whole, the embodied aspects of being could be perceived as so strong to some participants that they had a sense of being totally under the influence of emotion when committing theft. Arne, for instance, said the following about stealing:

> *"I did it…and found out it was the adrenalin kick that you can get from it…you go for the kick, you see…"*

The above citation may however also be viewed as an attempt at drawing on the tension between control and un-control in consumer society. Explanations of own behavior that are based on the potentiality of being *"consumed by consumption"* are legitimate to a certain extent and may thus serve as mitigation of guilt.

There may also be a link between illegal activity and anti-materialist attitudes. Some suggest that "hang-loose" styles and alternative clothing in terms of second-hand clothing is statistically associated with regular cannabis use (Pedersen, 2009). Therefore, the attitudes that the boys in the sequence I referred above were demonstrating when they described interest in clothes and other material goods as "trifles" could, for instance, reflect that kind of association. Geir, who had been open about his regular cannabis use, is in the following excerpt very critical towards image building on the consumerist markers like brands etc.:

Geir:	(regarding what peers in general perceive as cool): *... what can make me a leader… what can make me cool… what can… eh…. What can make people look at me differently…?*
Moderator:	*(…) so people kinda struggle to get a different image?*
Geir:	*Everything is "image" now… I get so sick of it…*

However, absolute certainty around those relations is not given. Also in the referred study by Pedersen it is stated that the majority of teens that demonstrate anti-materialist attitudes, have "hang-loose" manners and clothing styles, and use cannabis convert this capital into more broadly accepted lifestyles at the transition to adulthood. An explanation with reference to the broader popular culture in Norwegian society is that anti-materialist orientations is part of one`s habitus and thus a trend that may be "inherited" from former generations. Some authors suggest that one could divide the Norwegian general population, independent of age group, into roughly two lifestyle groups: "materialists" on the one hand and "idealists" on the other (Hellevik 1996/ 2001, in Øia & Fauske, 2010). Criticism of materialism is thus as likely to be a normal phenomenon as an indication of moral deviance.

Seeing through the game with regard to consumption?

Overt critique of consumerism may also positively assist the process towards a life shaping that is more conscious. For instance, one may reveal the arbitrary basis for goods to be ascribed symbolic value (see for instance Bourdieu, 1990). The next excerpt, which is from Geir`s continued reflection around the tendencies of outclassing that he observes at school, seems to contain elements of such revelation:

Geir:	(Mentions a boy in his class): *He really stands out… he's like a different person to everyone else in the class, cuz they're from* (name of place) *… out of town… pikeys… they listen to Too Far Gone* (local band) *and drive an Escort you know…*
Moderator:	*Ha-ha…*
Geir:	*They're such stereotypes, though….*
Moderator:	*Yeah?*
Geir:	*They are a different species, really…!*
Moderator:	*Yeah … yeah that's how it is? ….*
Geir:	*And that guy, he is like a nerd, reads books and that and plays "World of Warcraft "or whatever it is….*
Co-moderator:	*So they're not alright with him at all?*
Geir:	*No…. what can I say…. They're kinda blocking him out... completely...*
Moderator:	*Hmm...*
Geir:	*It's just getting harder and harder for him to make contact…. cuz I can see him trying…*

By means of Geir's observation, we can see the powerful impact of taste on human relations. The fine-masked network of lifestyle markers or distinctions, illustratively called *"feine Unterschiede"* in German language, may to the *«naïve"* spectator be difficult to distinguish from each other. If one is part of a tacit agreement on the symbolic value of those almost invisible differences, however, they really constitute differences in the taste hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1995, 1998, etc.). My laughs at the mentioning of the car brand "Escort", for instance, may be the "proof" that I am part of a social contract established by those who look down on Escorts, although I know nothing about that car brand. Merely Geir's mentioning of it adds to my impression of it as something undesirable and distasteful. I also take exception to the musical style that the above-mentioned band "Too far gone" is representing and to which other people with the same economic, cultural and social capital as me tend to take exception to, albeit its being fair or not. Thus, there must be some correspondence between the symbolic capital I swear to and the symbolic capital participant Geir holds as attractive. We need not explain why driving an Escort and listening to a certain kind of music is distasteful. The most important point here, however, is that the irony also is skewing the tacitly established contract between the Escort drivers and the boy that tends to be excluded because of those deviant interests that are only slightly visible on the surface. By means of the irony, which Geir is showing around the arbitrariness of the described power relations, the impact of the established distinctions becomes a little weaker.

In the excerpt referred below Lise, in an even more reflected way than Geir in the previous excerpt, demonstrates how one might "see through the game" (Bourdieu, 1995). She is sharing how she after a while in a new party environment adjusted her drinking practice and let it become more in line with her stronger values (see Taylor, 1995):

> *At the first three or four parties I drank a lot to show them I was capable of drinking ….but staying at the party was not so fun when you tumbled around …tripping up your own feet. You learn that you may just drink for the sake of* (your own) *enjoyment …the party is more fun if you don't drink too much…*

At first, Lise let her "*sense for the game*" govern the way in which she arranged her partying. After a while, however, instead of tacitly conforming to the social contract that exists around partying in the current local context, Lise had the courage to choose a path of her own. She became aware that she prefers "having fun" before annihilation. Thus, she is converting one kind of cultural capital into a cultural capital that better fits her own desires and ambitions still without losing her bonding in the field. By doing so, she also demonstrated the late modern life shaping ideal that Giddens and Baumann have described and which implies getting ready to change direction "*at short notice*". Certainly and exactly as Baumann (1998) has described it, to transgress the boundary between the well-known and the unknown implies the risk of losses. The dread that Lise might have felt in the first place of being excluded from the field in which she partied and which at first made her "*show them that she was capable of drinking*" was overcome in the end. The capacity to overcome the dread could positively affect her life chances.

Also, the excerpt below with Guri talking about her involvement in shoplifting suggests how the "pure" sensibility and tangibility implied in daily life settings now and then may reach a more contemplative level in the way Taylor has described it. In a perspective, which counts on serendipity to an equal extent as prediction, exactly *how* this happens seems to be of less importance. Regardless of the reason why, it seems to be exactly in those moments that the well-known and tangible on the one hand and the remote and unknown aspects of being on the other are connected in a more decisive way:

> *It was a good feeling to have something expensive and brand new….But when I think about it now….it just wasn't worth it (…). It`s better to quit than to keep doing it, cuz I saw this woman, she might have been around 30, stealing sweets….at the corner shop with her boyfriend … I was like… oh my god, I was so embarrassed for everything you know, so many keep stealing till they are like…*

Not everybody in the current sample was as determined and capable as Lise of determined life shaping attempts. Guri was more typical in the sense that she momentary had insights about where to go but for the rest tended to be inconsistent with regard to direction. Such inconsistency will be further scrutinized in the next section. Conscious judgment of the kind that implied the making of a link between present arrangements and a more determined direction in life was overall rare in the material. This does not necessarily mean that participants were not on the search for better alternatives. Authors who have commented on the processes that is initiated when "habitus" and "field" are not completely congruent anymore, and a new kind of capital is searched for, point to how the agent may be left puzzled about how to act and what to say (Thompson, 1992). There are few guidelines in the area.

Yet, as shown above in Guri`s utterance about shopliftiing, even the idea of what we do *not* want may provide us with the courage needed for setting out on a somewhat unknown journey. Thus, if one was looking for embodied rather than reflective action, it was possible to

154

trace certain "leaps" from the usual embedded-ness in "headless" consumption. Guri, for instance, who in a previous sequence was the most predominating mouthpiece for the view that name brands are of the utmost significance for social status and wellbeing, on another occasion demonstrated her capacity for taking ironic distance to the viewpoints she had previously advanced:

Moderator: *Is there something that the Norwegian society looks down on?*
Guri: *That you`ve got ugly clothes and they don`t match... hehe ...*

I will discuss these ideas in more detail later on.

Between relative normalcy and relative deviance, agency and social constraint

Whereas the last subsection was mainly about how participants appropriated and adjusted to prevailing symbolic distinctions in consumer society, this part is mainly on how participants tackled the tension in the indeterminate space between relative normalcy and relative deviance with regard to substance use and law abidance. Towards the end of the section, some attention will also be devoted to how the focus group dialogue may assist youths in the indeterminate space to find a direction in life that is more determined. Whereas the subsection on lifestyle and taste suggested relative differentiation among participants, this part first and foremost points to those tendencies that participants tended to have in common. The figure below (Fig.2) represents an attempt at portraying how the maneuvering in the morally indeterminate space, according to the current data material, tended to function.
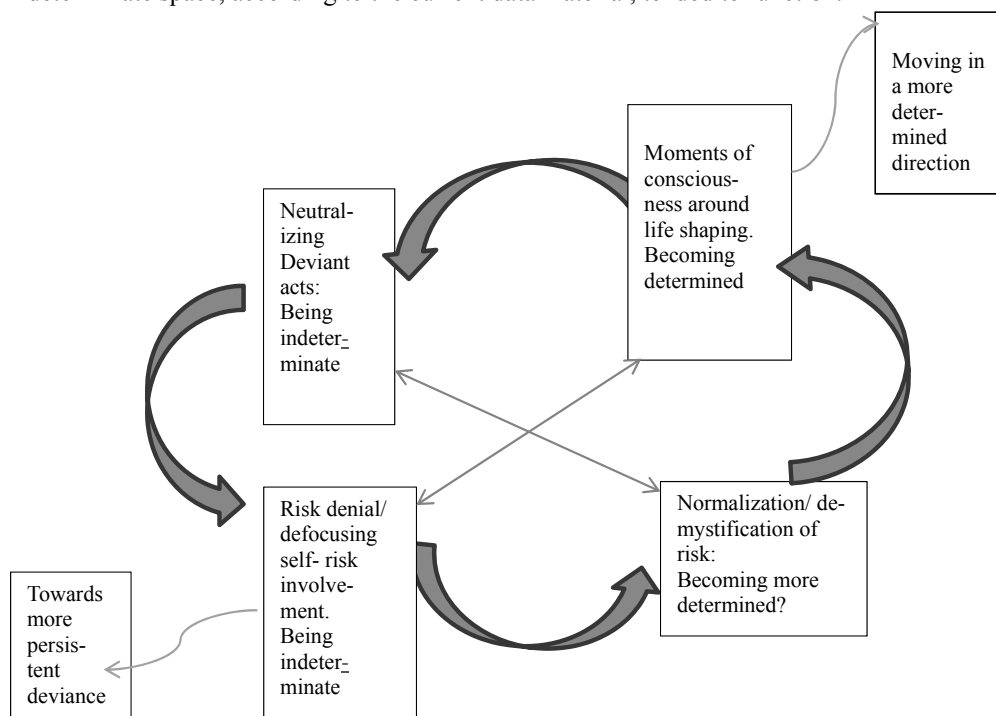
Fig. 2: The life shaping process in the indeterminate space: tentative positions

The main reason why I made the above figure circular was that I wanted to describe how the majority of participants most of the time occupied no fixed position but seemed to be drifting around without determinate direction. The tiny, curvy arrows indicate that the leaps in more determined directions generally were neither long lasting nor frequently occurring. Yet, a leap in a specific direction did not need to be irreversible. By being circular, the figure also leads attention away from causality. The search for a specific or conscious meaning behind maneuvers of people being involved in deviant acts may simply be in vain (Cohen, 2011).

156

Escape, deviance or orientation?

The previously referred study by Sundar (2003) may assist us in understanding how an indeterminate status of the current kind may assert itself on everyday life. The foremost characteristic of those adolescents in Sundar`s study who were described by their normative counterparts as "in-between" people was that they did not fit into any pre-existing category. Moreover, they typically did not have foothold in any specific social field, and they were merely involved in occasional problem substance use and less severe rule breaking. Although they did not care much about others` expectations towards them, their most apparent deviance from the regular pattern was that they not only drank on weekends but also on weekdays and occasionally skipped school.   In contrast, the "dopers", who seemed to use substance on a regular and problematic basis, were socially excluded in the sense that they were not invited to parties or to other activities in which "ordinary" youths were participating. Whereas the "dopers" seemed conscious about their deviant status, it was more unclear how conscious the "in-between" people seemed to be about how people in their local environment perceived them.

Although participants in the current sample did not actually occupy fixed positions with regard to substance use, law abidance and other moral issues, there all the same seemed to be some in my sample who on a permanent basis were closer to the "dopers" than to "in-between" people (see Sundar, op cit.). Their relative deviance had become overt to the extent that it was impossible to deny it or escape from the fact in other ways.

Torill, for instance, was a participant who seemed less indeterminable with regard to the normalcy vs. deviance status than many others of the youths in the sample did. Her commitment towards her closest friends, with whom she had been congregating since she was in her early teens tended to persist, although she did not regard those friends as the best kind of company with regard to her further life shaping process. From her present point of view, she already had reached a point of no return:

Torill:	*I am actually in quite the wrong environment…there is some…a little hash and things that nobody (else) knows about as well, then… (…) Well…But they are my friends, you know…*
Moderator:	*Yeah…*
Torill:	*That`s just the way it is…*
Moderator:	*Yeah. Some things are ok; some things are not ok...?*
Torill:	*Yeah (…) … many things have happened, and still I am with them …I have been with them since I was like thirteen…twelve…*
Moderator:	*Exactly...*
Torill:	*So…ehm…so I don`t bother to kinda leave them now …*

Inversely, some participants deviated from the rest by being both reflective and consistent. To put it in the same way as Minken (1998), they had substituted the relatively thoughtless *"because of"* motivation with a more offensive *"in order to"* motivation. An "*in order to*"

motivation implies consciousness about a link between law abidance on the one hand and the capacity to make judgments about *"the appropriate form* "on the other, both with regard to drinking practices or other daily life phenomena. The participant Lise may serve as an example of a participant who more or less consciously tried to live up to this ideal. In the previous subsection I, for instance described her as a participant who had seen through the symbolic game. As such, she better fitted the criteria for "selected" rather than "indicated" target groups of prevention (see EMCDDA, 2009). To be "selected" in this context means as previously mentioned to meet certain established risk criteria for developing problem substance use later in life, without having exhibited any behavioural signs in that direction.

Yet, EMCDDA accentuates that the distinction line between the two risk groups or levels may be difficult to draw. Likewise, with regard to risk of later problems it may also be difficult to draw the line between the predominantly law-abiding part of the youth population and those youths who are occasionally involved in rule breaking. Most youths in the age group between 16 and 18 years of age have been involved in rule breaking or minor delinquency on at some point in their lives (Storvoll, 2004).

My reason for pointing to the distance between Torill and Lise was the need to illustrate the breadth of variation in the current sample with regard to how participants related to standard norms. Torill, like a couple of other participants who tended to have a more incontestable footing in deviant environments than the majority of participants, was to the same extent as Lise somewhat at the margins of the intended target group. None the less, their participation in the study was worthwhile. They, among other things, contributed to the making of a determinable backdrop on the indeterminacy that was apparent in the rest of the sample. I will also underscore that there were no indications in the current material of Torill as "lost" in terms of conformity to standard moral norms.

In the rest of this subsection, however, I concentrate on the segment of the sample that moved between these polarities.

In general, the maneuvers could be described as inconsistent, evasive, furtive, vague or sometimes "externalizing". In a more contingent perspective on life shaping neither are such maneuvers productive in the long term. However, from a more contingent position one is more likely to view the potentiality for enhanced reflexivity that they imply. In the subsequent text I, for the sake of overview, categorized the maneuvers. The category labels, named in their order of appearance, are: neutralizations, risk denial, evasiveness, normalization and momentary reflections. The "risk denial" category has much in common with the category of "neutralizations". Yet, risk denial also represents an independent kind of category. Under the risk denial category, as well as under the neutralization category, there are more sub-categories. What might be worth noting is that the labels on the maneuvers in the thesis are somewhat different from, and in my view, more appropriate than the labels in the article that I have written on the current material (Juberg, 2012).

The impact of shame and its consequences for participant maneuvering

In the theory section I accentuated that an important premise for the appropriateness of late modern theory on social constraint was the persistence of shame feelings in relation to substance use practices and transgression of moral and legal rules. On a basis that was primarily theoretical, I found that shame was a vital factor also in consumer society. The current empirical material leaves the same impression.

Torill and Gøril, for instance, communicated that they had felt a little shame about the fact that they attended a school arrangement meant for youths with behavioral problems. Both of them had counted on the risk that attending the program could provoke other people`s prejudices:

Gøril: *In the beginning, I felt a little ashamed, you see…*
Torill: *Me too!* (…) *you could see it from my* (name of chat site at Internet) …
                   (there on my profile) *I wrote that I still went to* (name of ordinary school).

If the aim is to prevent current deviant patterns in becoming more persistent, the fact that morally indeterminable youths still feel shame could seem important. Only exceptionally, however, have researchers asked youths who are involved in minor delinquency or illegal drug use about their moral convictions. Even less so does the "man in the street" (Ericsson et al., 1994). Therefore, as the utterances from Gøril and Torill may indicate, there is a risk that radical myths about them may arise that unfairly portray them as more morally deviant and rebellious than they really are (Hauge, 1980).

Several participants had, for instance, personally experienced the effect of spreading rumours. Rumours develop easily and may be difficult for morally indeterminable youths to tackle. Such rumors are for instance difficult to disprove however false they are. The risk of rumors may even be extra high in a historical climate, like the current, in which the majority of people view both the use of tobacco, alcohol excess, drug use and other activities with scepticism. Particularly in local communities that are socially relatively transparent, it is likely that youths with a bad reputation have a limited chance of gaining respect (Sundar, 2003). Therefore, attempts at standing out as morally better than expected seem urgent.

Pelle for instance, probably because he for a while had been part of an environment that mostly consisted of "dopers", was eager in many of the group discussions to mark himself as one who has begun to put things straight and less than ever merited the label of a "doper":

Pelle: *I mostly keep sober, nowadays, then, in order to take care
                   of friends.*
Moderator: *In order to take care of friends?*
Pelle: *For instance, if some friends have party at home…*
Moderator: *Ok?*
Pelle: *So, I…keep sober, in order to take care of …*
Ada: *Yeah …*
Moderator: *In order to prevent intruders from coming in?*
Pelle: *Yeah, or* (I) *prevent people from getting sick …*

159

Ada:	*That doesn`t help me much, but ok! (…)(Referring to a party on a special occasion where Pelle was present)* *He kept tidying up and stuff....*
Pelle:	*I tidy up if people make a mess, for sure….*
Ada:	*You should have been at my place at New Year`s Eve.*
Pelle:	*I take those people with me who feel like vomiting, then…I take them who are pissed with me into the toilet…I just carry them into the loo….and put them at the toilet bowl...*

Also Ada seemed to have felt the strain from the somewhat narrow-minded crowd, something which she tended to deal with a certain indifference:

> *I don't give a shit… loads of people thought I just sat around smoking. I was giggling when I was talking to them and they thought I was doing dope and that, but I've never done it, so I just said "Test me! I am clean", you know….*

In spite of the somewhat indifferent attitude, Ada finds it unjust that she is accused of using drugs, because she has the agenda of staying straight. What she does not seem to take into consideration, however, is that in the eyes of others it is not obvious that she is innocent when she keeps hanging out with the "wrong people" and evidently has been involved in minor delinquency.

For all we know, the need to demonstrate one`s un-reprehensibility, as Ada seems to do above, may also be an indication of the fact that one is still is within reach of deviant acts. If so, we cannot set the possibility aside that Ada tries to create a space in which she remains indeterminable and therefore also un-attackable, but still open to rule breaking or delinquency to a certain extent. By doing so, she is delaying a final decision about further direction in life. Particularly when the benefits of "straightening up" are still unknown, and future appears as opaque, in lack of better alternatives one may find moral indeterminability as the best solution. If we accept the premise that both agency and shame are factors that regulate how people balance the boundary between the respectable and the unrespectable, it is exactly at this point that the neutralization theory framework (Sykes & Matza, 1957) may illuminate the empirical material of this thesis. It represents an attempt at describing how shame makes young delinquents smarten up to their tendencies to deviate from moral codes at times. Yet, the framework applies to rule-breaking adults as well (Maruna & Copes, 2005).

In line with the ground premise of the neutralization framework (Sykes & Matza, op cit.) and by Matza (1964) in his subsequent theory on "drift", one may state that most maneuvers in the indeterminate space are not only un-calculated. They are also non-directional in the sense *"neither committed nor compelled to deeds nor choosing them"* (Matza, 1964:28). Because such duality may be difficult to grasp within a discourse on rationalism and prediction many readers of Matza's text have understood his message as an explanation of how a criminal career develops (Fritsche, 2005; Shiner & Newburn, 1997). Neutralization, from an etiology perspective, appears as the first step towards more persistent delinquency because it constitutes a moral "limbo" which allows for further deviance while one still belongs within respectable society. The referred misinterpretation may illustrate how strong the assumption

on causality actually is, even in today`s world. However, Maruna, & Copes (2005) strongly repulse the view that the neutralization framework is about the etiology of crime. These authors have studied how researchers across paradigms and during more than five decades have used neutralization as a framework for data analysis or as a basis for theory building. Maruna & Copes do not discard the idea that neutralization may serve as justification of crime in certain cases, but according to them it does not *cause* further deviance.

As already hinted at, a hallmark of the neutralization framework is the premise that there is nothing like a deviant subculture, at least not in relation to minor delinquency. Yet, this is a highly disputed premise. Whereas some in line with this maintain that subculture merely exists in terms of the tendency in each delinquent to ascribe criminal attitudes and values to other members of his group (see for instance Hauge, 1980), others suggest that the denial of a subculture which is described by Sykes and Matza is to "overshoot the mark" (Fritsche, 2005).

The critics of the notion that subcultures do not exist have stressed that situational or individual factors may play a significant role with regard to whether neutralizations are used as an excuse or not when facing the "moral majority", or as a justification of further crime, for instance in terms of self-talk (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003). In the light of a more contingent but also morally more heterogeneous society, however, it seems increasingly appropriate to speak of *compromises* between law-abiding tendencies on the one hand and more subcultural tendencies on the other (Jensen 2006, Sandberg, 2009). . The foremost contribution from cultural criminology has been to pay attention to *"fluctuation, crossing of boundaries, conflict and hybridization"* (Ferrell et al., 2008), phenomena for which there are obvious historical prerequisites in contemporary society.

As an attempt at overcoming the dispute, Maruna & Copes (2005) suggest that one preferably should distinguish between positive, neutral and negative neutralizations, but not exclude the existence of any of them. As examples of negative neutralizations the authors mention dehumanizing of one`s victims, a phenomenon above all known from war crime. They also mention the somewhat more consolidated tendency *"to view the world as hostile"*. Labeling oneself as *"naturally deviant"* is the third example of negative neutralizations that the referenced authors mention. However, we probably may not often observe negative neutralizations in relation to minor delinquency and minors. Negative neutralizations aim at justifying crime, and are mostly used by people whose moral norm set is relatively distinct from the moral norm set shared by most people in a given society. Neutral neutralizations are far more common, because they are primarily employed by people who conform to standard moral norms, but for several reasons still find it difficult to keep fully law-abiding.

According to Maruna and Copes we may, for instance, speak of neutral neutralization in such cases when people need to *excuse* the crime, meaning that it serves as an attempt at mitigating the shame and regret most of us feel when we have broken the tacit contract around laws and rules that keep most of us in place. By means of neutralization we could, for instance, minimize the effects of the deviant act in some way or other, or blame others. It is this

161

understanding of the neutralization concept that is underpinning the presentation of neutralization maneuvers in the next section.

The similarities and dissimilarities between neutralization and risk denial theory

Before I go further with further presentation of those data elements that I placed along the horizontal axis, however, it seems necessary to provide a theoretical explanation of the difference between neutralization described by Sykes & Matza (1957) and "risk denial" presented by Peretti-Watel (2003). The frameworks have much in common, as both of them assume that the phenomena at issue are rooted in the need to excuse oneself, and that they are in common use within the general population. Not least, both of them aim at preserving a positive self-image.

The options both concepts represent for life shaping makes them also fit within the framework of symbolic economy. They represent the exertion of a tacit kind of judgment, which aims at yielding social profit in the larger and more legitimate social field. At the same time, one may by means of both modes experiment more freely with activities that are somewhat on the edge of the law-abiding, mainstream society. For instance, some studies suggest that youths in their late teens do "symbolic boundary work" by employing neutralization techniques in order to normalize such activities as cannabis use (Järvinen & Demant, 2011). To what extent and for how long neutralization or risk denial are appropriate maneuvers with regard to preserving one`s bonding in mainstream society seems to be an open question.

The most important difference between the original neutralization framework established by Sykes & Matza and the risk denial theory of Peretti-Watel is that they reflect somewhat different historical epochs and provide somewhat different answers to the question: "Neutralization of *what*?" According to Peretti-Watel, several of those neutralization techniques that Sykes and Matza listed do not reflect the increasing individualization in the late modern era.

The five neutralization techniques presented by Sykes & Matza (1957) were denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners and appeal to higher loyalties. Other techniques have been identified later on, for instance, in relation to shoplifting (Cromwell & Thurman, op cit.). Just as is the case with prevailing definitions of behavioral problems, the theoretical frameworks that explain neutralization seem to be influenced by a need in the individual to externalize responsibility for deviant acts. There are certainly neutralizations that do not involve externalization. Still, as pointed to by the originators of the neutralization framework, the fact that laws seldom are categorical allows for such externalization to a considerable extent. In contrast to theories on behavioral problems, however, that base themselves on pathology explanations, the neutralization and risk denial frameworks are both underpinned by the assumption that everybody in society is using such techniques, because all deviate from rules at time. The need to externalize or at least mitigate the effects of acts that are not normally accepted is, in this light, deeply

162

embedded in human nature. Even when individuals who are somewhat at the margins of the morally normative society use them, the non-calculated but still significant rationale that lies behind them is of a healthy kind. Neutralizations may uphold inclusion in those social fields that are viewed as respectable.

Even though neutralization in the version of Sykes & Matza had its origin in industrialist society and therefore could be regarded as outdated, Maruna & Copes (see reference above) are stating that the framework is still topical. Certainly, the vague boundaries between law abidance and those kinds of rule breaking, in which most people are temporarily involved, are probably even vaguer today than during industrialism. One could therefore assume that the diversity of norm sets is great in contemporary society, and that each individual feels less commitment to a specific moral community. In a morally heterogenic society, the very idea of neutralization is losing its significance (Hirschi, 1971). Yet, because of the increased emphasis on future risk that I addressed in the theory section, it does not seem unlikely that a new basis for moral unification seems to have arisen. Hence, the dynamics of shame and the fear of losing bonding in the more respectable social fields still nourish the need to neutralize (op cit.). The fact that Aldridge et al. (2011) as well as Järvinen & Demant (2011b) found neutralization of substance use amongst adolescents in their mid-teens or late teens underlines the sustainability of the framework.

Yet, as noted above, Peretti-Watel (op cit.) has questioned the validity of some of the original neutralization techniques. He claims that "appeal to higher loyalties", "condemnation of condemner" and "denial of the victim" are not really timely in late modernity because of the de-authorization of power and the increased emphasis on individual responsibility, which has been going on during this period. Besides, the discourse on risk as calculable had not really developed yet when Sykes and Matza developed their framework in the 1950s. The risks that are involved in tobacco, cannabis and other substance were phenomena that still were relatively unknown in that period. Although people have not stopped committing conventional minor delinquency, like thefts, burglary etc. and are involved in newer delinquency like music piracy, shoplifting, fraud etc., it is primarily risk-taking that is "the new sin", according to Peretti-Watel. Therefore, theory which includes the need to neutralize such risk and which takes into account the societal changes that consumerism has brought about is necessary (op cit.).

Because of the heavy emphasis on risk in late modernity, people are fully aware of the risk implied in an increasing number of daily life phenomena and are well informed about the consequences (Peretti-Watel op cit.). We cannot blame anyone but ourselves for involvement in risk prone activities and the harms that such involvement may entail. The need to deny risk in relation to risk prone activity must be viewed, not least, in relation to the strong tendency of "prudentiality" (Reith, 2004 a) that we experience in "risk society" and which implies that there is a future risk involved in any activity or phenomena. Society`s common good may be heavily charged with risk-taking. The only way of upholding social bonding is cognitive and verbal techniques that mitigate our shame and normalize or neutralize some of its alleged consequences. The most effectual way of neutralization in individualist society is, according

to Peretti-Watel, the declaration of one`s willingness to carry the consequences for risk-taking. Self-blame and self-disparagement are techniques that may keep reprehension at a distance.

Risk denial theory has both by Peretti-Watel and by others (see Järvinen & Demant, 2011) been employed to focus on how young people tend to deny or normalize the risk related to illegal cannabis use. A classical version of neutralization related to alleged risk is that one may point to how the effects of alcohol use is equally or even more risky than the effects of cannabis use. *Comparison between risks* is what Peretti-Watel has called it. Another example that Peretti-Watel has provided of how "ordinary people" employ comparison between risks is the way in which people who are exposed to radioactive danger convince themselves that being exposed to such radiation is less dangerous than driving a car and smoking cigarettes.

At this point it becomes apparent that risk denial theory is drawing on elements from several previous theories, among which Festinger's theory of cognitive resonance (Festinger, 1957) seems to be the most important source. Festinger's basic assumption as Peretti-Watel views it was that everyone tries to avoid acting in an inconsistent way and therefore tends to preserve the image of self as consistent and rational.

Scapegoating of other risk groups is also a technique described in risk denial theory. This version of risk denial is defined by Peretti-Watel as the drawing of a boundary between the stereotyped "them" (risk-taking people) and "us" (safe people). In those cases, referring to a deviant population seems more meaningful right now to people than to relate to their own situation. Finally, we have *self-confidence.* Self-confidence implies to distinguish self from an anonymous other on the background of an unrivalled trust in the capacity to master or overcome risky situations.

All versions emerged in the current data material. I will present some of them in subsequent subsections.

- *"I`m sure the police agrees with us": Examples of classical neutralization in the current material*

Despite the referred statements that certain of Sykes and Matza`s techniques are outdated I, all the same, observed examples of *"condemnation of condemners", "appeal to higher loyalties"* as well as *"denial of the victim"* in the current data material.

In the subsequent excerpt, for instance, we can observe how participants describe police involvement in such activities as tuning of mopeds as unreasonable. Here, the statement that laws and rules are not categorical imperatives, but open to interpretation is illustrated (see Matza, 1964). The participants are also drawing on arguments that are often advanced in media debates around priority of taxpayers` money:

Kjell:	*They say it is safer to drive slowly, but it is more dangerous to drive at a speed of 45 where the speed limit is 80 than to drive 90 in the same zone when there are cars that could blow you off the road when they try to go by you …*
Kim:	*I`m sure the police agrees with us … (…)*
Kjell:	*So I don't get why they bother about things like that. Why couldn't they catch rapists instead, for instance?*
Petter**:**	*Yes!*
Kjell:	*Couldn't they just coop them up for a hundred years…*
Petter:	*Yeah, that would be better …*
Kjell:	*instead of catching us and fining us! We, who hardly can afford the penalty!*
Moderator:	*So what... what's the police's thought behind it,* (why do they) *do what they do? Trond, you said something about it earlier....*
Trond:	*It's to secure a better future, for those* (kids) *who challenge the rules and…everything...*
Kjell:	*That's not why we do it...*
Trond:	*It's cuz it...*
Kjell:	*No, I don't tune my moped to break the rules...*
Trond:	*No? ....*
Kjell:	*I do it cuz it's fun to speed...*
Trond:	*Yeah, fun to speed and feel the power, but you do it cuz …almost all mopeds are* (tuned) *... it has... it is almost trendy now...*

The reference to the police`s disproportional use of energy on such "trifles" as moped tuning may be classified as *condemnation of condemners"*.  Kim`s suggestion in the excerpt that the police will agree that there are more important things in the world than chasing young moped drivers may be classified as *"appeal to higher loyalties"* . Yet, the argument that it is less dangerous to drive fast than slow rather resembles the risk denial technique of *"comparison between risks".* The argument may even be reasonable for all I know, never having been on a moped.

Neutralization was, however, also to be found in those cases in which more severe transgression of rules was the case. There, one could not always appeal to the goodwill of authorities or to the fact that the rules often are flexibly enforced.   It is, for instance, an undisputable fact that a conviction will hinder access to the United States. The possibility of neutralization that one has got in those cases is primarily to blame lifestyle choices or taste priorities of others. Because of his involvement in drug use, Knut had a conviction. He made the following comment on the consequences it implied for travelling in the US:

> *"What kind of goal is it to go to the States, thou? There's quite another world that's waiting to be seen… is the States that big?"*

As the neutralization framework has been continuously developing, researchers have continuously identified new versions and twists. In the following excerpt Guri seems to neutralize her involvement in shoplifting in two ways among which one seems relatively novel. Her attempt in the next sequence at neutralizing stealing by use of the *"Everybody Does It"*- technique is, for instance, said to represent an expansion of the original neutralization framework (Coleman, 1998 in Cromwell & Thurman, 2003). It may be viewed

165

as an effect of the increased emphasis on taste in consumer society. Secondly, Guri makes use of a modified version of scapegoating, which actually belongs to Peretti-Watel`s expanded work on neutralization. Guri does so by condemning the persons that have been stealing in a nearby neighborhood. Probably, the latter occurrence in her eyes appears as a more serious kind of minor delinquency than shoplifting.

Guri: *I don't care if people know it and that, I don't…* ***and everybody here has stolen, I bet, so it isn't that bad.***
Moderator: *Everybody, at the whole school?*
Guri: *Well, most of them, then….*
Gunnar: *That's the strangest thing I`ve ever heard.*
Arne: (unclear). (In a comment shortly after the above sequence): *There have been thefts up at (name of neighbourhood)*
Guri: ***Yeah…losers!*** (My emphasis in both places)

The apparent inconsistency demonstrated in the above sequence, in the sense "speaking against self", also seems to have a neutralizing effect because it mystifies the issue of individual responsibility. Still, we may primarily interpret the inconsistency as an indication of the embodied and therefore non-calculative character of maneuvers in the morally indeterminate space. In a more reflected moment, Guri probably would have been able to observe her own inconsistency. She might even have been critical of her own normalization of theft because she, as suggested in other subsections, does not always excuse it. The comment from Gunnar *"the worst thing I ever heard"* may indicate how unreasonable neutralization may sound at a distance.

- *Positive, negative or just neutral neutralizations?*

As suggested above, most people may be more inclined to employ positive and neutral, or directionless neutralizations as I prefer to call them, than negative neutralizations (see Maruna & Copes, op cit.). According to the cited authors, this means that the practical reason behind the maneuvers that I observed along the horizontal axis delineated in Figure 1 were mostly oriented towards *excusing* deviant acts than *justifying* them. Although I could not exclude that justification was the motif in some cases, I did not see examples in the material that seemed to express hostile worldviews or reference to self as "naturally deviant".

Rather, it seemed to be a point to remain indeterminable in lack of better alternatives. Neither could one exclude that participants could feel a certain attraction towards the fun part related to the tuning of mopeds however deviant it is. A hallmark of directionless or neutral neutralization is that the backdoor is kept open in all directions and that decisions about more determined directions in life are delayed.

Anyhow, as shown in the excerpt from the discussion on moped tuning, it seemed to be a point to "demonstrate" conformity to prevailing moral norm sets. Participants could expand their modus operandi by "exploiting" the vague boundaries between mainstream and more

166

deviant cultures and thereby appeal to those discourses that tend to gain support in normative society.

In contrast to neutral neutralizations, Maruna & Copes (op cit.) view positive neutralizations as the more explicit maneuvers that often serve as a means of taking exception to previous involvement in deviant activity. The criterion set up by these authors for describing neutralizations as positive is that there is a temporal distance between the narrator and a former immoral self. Only on that background, may one establish a trustworthy version of a more respectable self-image.

Positive neutralization, as described by Maruna & Copes, allows for exaggeration. It is the intention behind it, namely to appear as a decent person, that counts. The accuracy of the information that positive neutralization accounts provide is less important in a perspective of prevention or rehabilitation. The previously referred habit of Pelle of tidying up at parties could represent a positive neutralization. We could not exclude, for instance, that the emphasis on his capacity for keeping order at parties represents a genuine attempt at taking exception to his former affiliation in deviant social fields. However, as could have been the case with Ada in relation to the rumors, the tendency to preserve a positive self-image may also be an option to cover up a continued attraction towards a more deviant peer group. As we can see, the maneuvers are relatively indeterminable with regard to the purpose they are fulfilling.

In a perspective of agency, it should primarily be up to each youth to discern between neutralization types and to determine the practical sense that they are underpinning. Yet, as the maneuvers are embodied rather than conscious, assistance from peers or adults is needed. I will turn more profoundly to the latter issue later on.

The following example from a focus group sequence may illustrate both the character of directionless neutralizations and the advantage of the focus group method with regard to the potentiality that positive neutralizations may take over for the more "neutral" or directionless maneuvers. Guri initiated the sequence by telling the group that she had been involved in shoplifting. In the subsequent parts of the sequence, Guri tends to employ both positive and directionless neutralizations. Although she largely tends to ensure her retreat, we may, however, observe how the two neutralization types tend to continuously alternate:

Guri: *Yeah, I stole a* (brand) *skirt and gloves…and we stole hair dye*
                 and stuff like that…it is so easy; cuz if you take the hair dye to
                 the changing room, take it out of the packaging, put it in your
                 bag, put the packaging back onto the shelf … it …well…yeah?
                 (…)
                 Being caught for shoplifting was the worst
                 kind of feeling one could ever have… but we were not (immediately)

	caught, because we had the thing in our underpants. They (the security guards) *do not know anything about it. Therefore I think it could have been great fun to be a security guard (...) There are a lot of things they don't know that we know...and they could not say anything about the clothes* (that she was suspected for having stolen) *cuz they had no proof* (price tags had been removed). *So...they kind of check only here* (pointing to her clothes) *and in the pockets, and then they don't check any more.*
Arne:	*That`s* (not) *what they do! They kinda say: Do you have...what do you have in your pants? And then they say: I know you`ve got something there, right? And then they ask you to take off your pants, right? Cuz they actually have the right to do it, you see.*
Guri:	*They have no right to check us that much, for sure...*
Arne:	(No) *it`s like this: they may ransack you, right...instead of just touch you. They may take you into a room and then pull your pants off so you stay there completely stripped off (...) or: they can see if you`ve got something in your panties, and they say: Yeah, you`ve got a snuff-box there, then ...they always are able to see the circle* (of it), *regard-less of where it is...*
Guri:	*Well, they could only prove I had taken some make-up. In reality, I had more things. I admitted it later on to my mom ...and we went off to hand back the things to the store...*
Moderator:	*So, you actually wanted to settle up, then?*
Guri:	*I wouldn`t do it ...* (original emphasis on "I")
Moderator:	(So it was) *your mom* (who wanted it)*?*
Guri:	*I got weak…*
Arne:	*You`re heartless….*
Guri:	*No, no, no…but it`s like…before, I felt guilty for everything….*

On the background of Maruna and Copes' descriptions, the sequence may be interpreted as follows: Positive neutralization directed towards demonstrating one`s more respectable self is represented by Guri's reference to the shame feelings she got from her own involvement in the shoplifting: *"it was the worst kind of feeling one could ever have"*. The phrase *"we were not immediately caught"*, however, seems to have the effect of minimizing the deviant act. The neutralizing effect is reinforced by the reference to a *"trick of the trade"* that follows immediately afterwards. It implies that security guards *"know nothing about"* the option to put stolen objects into one`s underpants in the changing room. Guri then turns the issue into an issue of mere security guard incompetence and tends to demonstrate how youth may lead the adult world up the garden path because of it. At the same time, however, she again seems to neutralize her probable guilt feeling a little by offering her expertise to the adult world: *"therefore I think it could have been great fun to be a security guard"*.

Moreover, a move made by Guri that I will describe as an attempt at keeping her retreat open, is her argumentation derived from juridical discourse. Being checked for stolen goods by the security guards is, for instance, construed as infringement of rights; a kind of argument that could be taken as a justification of possible further deviance.

Both when Guri minimizes the effect of the offense and when she is referring to infringement, the validation attempts made by Arne seem valuable in a life shaping perspective. He seems to assist Guri, consciously or not, in nuancing her somewhat illusionary notions about the incompetence of adults in general and security guards in particular. Yet, so far, she does not

168

really seem to have definitely dropped the idea of further deviance. A basis we have for guessing so is among other things the fact that she says it was not her will to settle the offense. Actually, it was her mother who wanted it and who initiated it. Guri, for the time being, is even viewing her compliance to hand the stolen things back as *"weakness"*. Yet, those ways of expressing self may also be figures of speech.

As the indications of a certain desire for further occasional deviation in Guri`s utterances run counter to what most of us will find respectable, we might easily pay more attention to them than to the more positive neutralizations in the excerpt. Not least, it is easy to forget Matza's message that being in the morally indeterminate space means to be *"neither committed nor compelled to deeds nor choosing them"* (Matza, 1964:28). This means that one may not necessarily invest much will in a deviant project, but rather prefer to stay indeterminable. As further commented on in later subsections, it is here that the understanding of the practical sense behind neutralizations puts the professional facilitator to a test. The following excerpt from a focus dyad with Lise and Lotte may illustrate that. The background is that Lise has presented a very determined agenda for her future with regard to avoidance of drug use. On own behalf, however, Lotte for the time being does not seem to be quite as determined as Lise. She seems rather to find it intriguing to leave the backdoor slightly open and to keep testing things out a little, which is not sensational in adolescence:

Lotte:	*I agree on most of the things* (that Lise said) *…but sometimes I will try things. You never know what could occur those years…*
Moderator:	*So you can imagine that you perhaps…could happen to try some shady things, could you?*
Lotte:	*Well…I will not use substances, I won`t….but some…other things perhaps…*
Moderator:	*Ok, what could the other things be?*
Lotte:	*Well, I could for instance smoke every day and things like that…*

To me as a researcher, but also as a practitioner, the sequence is instructive. I, for instance, immediately tend to assume that Lotte is *"compelled"* to involvement in "shady" activity. Instead, it seems as if she merely wants to delay a decision of a more determined direction as regards the risks "out there" and has no clear intention which she wants to put into practice.

Overall, cultural criminology by introducing concepts like neutralization, has contributed significantly to the conceptualization of non-directionality and non-intentionality in the indeterminate space here at issue. From a Bourdieu perspective we could explain shifts between positive and negative neutralization by means of terms from a symbolic economy. Conversion of symbolic capital is one of them. Such conversion particularly applies to the attempts we may make to justify deviant acts: we try to convert deviant capital into a kind of capital that is morally more acceptable. On the basis of Arne`s arguments in his conversation with Guri, however, we can see how the convertibility may be questioned by others.

The next section is predominantly about positive neutralizations as Maruna & Copes (2005) have described them.

- *"I did so much shit before": Before-and-now stories as positive neutralization*

A tendency in the material that was apparent to me already in early phase of analysis was that it contained a wide range of stories in which participants compared the present with life before. The following excerpt, in which Magnus is speaking, is just one among many examples of accounts that seemed to aim at establishing a genuine contrast between the former and the current self:

> "*I remember before, I only used ADHD as an excuse to cause shit... (…) Then, when I think about it now, I think that fucking hell I was so childish... and if people use their situations as a reason, then they are fucking sick...*"

Such stories are already known from literature on ex-offenders (Maruna & Copes, op cit.). Other relevant literature also provides examples of it. Authors refer to the phenomenon under different headlines. In literature on rehabilitation from statuses including dependency on alcohol, drugs, binge eating, smoking, sex and gambling, the stories have been called "growth stories" (Hanninen & Koski-Jannes, 1999). By "growth stories", those authors mean stories that may explain identity shifts. They identified plot types in the stories of people in rehabilitation from alcohol misuse that gave an account for the transformation from victim to agent.

I have in the current context preferred to label the phenomenon as "before-and-now" stories because this label may cover a broader range of situations than merely recovery stories. Whereas recovering individuals have already reached a considerable level of consciousness and determinedness and may tell the stories in order to further constitute a new and better self, participants in the current study seemed to use them in ways that were slightly more indeterminable. The stories could, for instance, be used as a delay for the final conclusion about life direction. To the extent that those stories that contrast the previous experience with present insights have the function of neutralizing guilt, we may all the same talk about positive neutralization (Maruna & Copes, 2005).

Especially the shift from victim to agent that Hanninen and Koski-Jannes (op cit.) have described seems to be a plot that fits those demands that impose themselves on individuals in contemporary society. The significance in the present era of agency in relation to crime, for instance, has been broadly exploited in restorative justice (Shenk & Zehr, 2001). Authors representing research on drug use first and foremost underscore that a before vs. now focus is fruitful because it may sharpen the attention towards the often complicated processes that lie behind both increase and decrease of such use (Teruya & Hser, 2010).

In the current data material, narratives that seemed to fulfil the purpose of before-and-now stories differed with regard to plot types. Examples of frequently occurring plots were the *victim vs. agent- plot*, the *irresponsible vs. responsible- plot* and the *childish vs. "adultish"- plot*. All the mentioned plots drew on predominant discourse in late modernity. They also drew on material in the immediate cultural context. In the excerpt with Magnus above, who

proclaimed that he had been childish by using ADHD as an excuse for bad behaviour, the direct use in the excerpt of the words "before" and "now" and the shift between the tenses (the imperfect and the present tense) efficiently contributes to the shaping of a dramaturgical contrast. In the excerpt, we may also recognize the childish vs. "adultish" dichotomy and the transformation of the contrast between "sick" and "healthy".

The following excerpt is from a focus group discussion around the issue of why some seem to enjoy taking drugs. Here, a before-and-now kind of plot with regard to drug use is being created:

Agnar:	*They get high; they certainly think it's lovely to get high…*
Moderator:	*Certainly … there's got be something good about it …*
Agnar:	*Yeah…*
Tore:	*The only time I tried it …*
Moderator:	*Yeah?*
Tore:	*I wouldn`t insist that being high was especially lovely…*
Moderator:	*No? …*
Tore:	*Everything was just… weird… you could see everything…it was supposed to be fun, but it was only half fun…it wasn`t …eh…everything was weird.*

Here, the contrast between good and evil is portrayed by means of the difference in meaning between "lovely" on the one hand and "weird" on the other. Also the understatement *"I wouldn't insist that being high was especially lovely"* seems to have a powerful narrative effect.

Actually, the content of this story may be viewed in two ways, as a genuine turning point with regard to either illegal drug trying or with regard to how the agent would like to appear. As previously noted, turning points have been described as a *"heterogeneous range of lasting changes in psychological functioning"* (Rutter, 1996). Therefore, we may get a sense that there is something "constructed" about stories in which the contrast between before-and-now is very sharp. Especially in the light of the rapidly shifting character within the current historical epoch, it may be less easy to believe that "turning points" in terms of pure conversion really exist (Sampson & Laub, 2005). Substance user trajectories in the current epoch do not always follow an obvious pattern or a hidden meaning (see Aldridge et al., 2011). Rather, one may to a greater extent than previously go in and out of a drug career (Baer et al., 1998), and presumably on a more arbitrary basis.

Anyhow, Hanninen & Koski-Jannes (1999) stress the importance of encouraging growth stories even when the stories sometimes push things to extremes. One simply has to look behind certain tendencies of exaggeration or simplifications of reality. The concept "creative self-deception" (Claezon, 1996) seems to be in line with that viewpoint. All the cited authors accentuate that if positive effects are to be achieved, and such as positive neutralization and creative self-deceptions are to emerge, a climate that allows for restoration and agency is required.

171

In the following excerpt we, in contrast to the examples above, find no clear plot although this excerpt also contains a temporal distance to something. Arne, who is speaking, makes a contrast between self before and self at the present:

> *I did so much shit before, right... and I was in.... I was in the wrong environment you know...*
> *(...) Really the wrong crowd and that... or they* (the peers) *had found a different path... (...) I*
> *mean, they were on the right path, but then they turned... (...) I kinda was dragged in to it...,*
> *then I turned around again..., and my friends continued that* (the opposite) *way... (…)*
> *Regardless of how many that were smoking weed around me, I was determined I wouldn't do*
> *it, and I managed for almost two years…*

In the excerpt, "right path" is for instance contrasted with "wrong crowd" or "different path" and "dragged into" as a passive, victimizing form is contrasted with "turned around" which is a more agentic expression. In the last passage however we are presented to the terms "determined" and "managed", both of which tend to contrast or even mitigate the fact that the protagonist, in spite of his ambitions to stay "clean" gave in after two years of resistance. As the plot is not clear, we remain a bit puzzled about where Arne actually falls now on the axis system of Figure 1. He does not ascribe a heroic position to himself. Rather than being a testimony of full-fledged recovery, his account is an account of being on the narrow path without perhaps having arrived at the desired point yet. Regardless of the level of determinedness, however, Arne`s before-and-now accounts seem to merit the label "positive neutralization" as long as it may compensate for unpleasant truths in the past and tend to release him from guilt feelings. Both of those criteria are according to Maruna & Copes (op cit.) important criteria for a neutralization being positive. Once having started a more reflected and determined process of life shaping, like some participants already had done, the need to be relieved from guilt by making before-and-now stories may increase.

Thus, even if the before-and-now accounts in the current material seldom were clear-cut conversion stories and did not discern deviance from normalcy in a "black and white" manner, also participants in a more unclear position with regard to substances and crime could exploit the positive effect of before-and-now stories.

Knut, for instance, had no immediate plans to change his substance use habits. In a sequence, which is referred elsewhere in this part of the thesis, he therefore had recourse to an escape maneuver when the topic about his drug-using self was brought up. Yet, it was possible for him to regret other deviant activity he had been involved in and that was at a longer temporal distance. When the topic of bullying spontaneously emerged in Knut`s group, he, for instance, is telling the following episode:

Knut:	*Like at primary school…people were bullied all the time…*
Moderator:	*Hm.*
Knut:	*Yeah, and I did a lot of bullying...*
Moderator:	*Whom did you bully then?*
Knut:	(Tells about a boy in his class)*... like... he was somewhat girly...*
(...)	
Co-moderator:	*Do you feel bad for it now?*

Knut:	*(…) Yeah; I do regret it, you know… (…)… I got up in class and told him I was sorry….*

As stressed above, the story is no real before-and-now story, in the sense that a present, improved self is delineated. Yet, the criterion related to positive neutralizations that there has to be a certain temporal distance between the storytelling and the guilt-evoking episode is all the same met. Although Knut regretted the bullying already in the past, he by repeating his regret here and now, *"I do regret it, you know",* gets an extra chance to liberate himself from the episode. Perhaps he may also liberate himself from other guilt. By blaming himself directly, he represents an exception. According to Maruna & Copes (op cit.), self is seldom directly blamed in stories of this kind. Without the direct question from the co-moderator, it is not certain that the self-blame might have occurred. Then the school mate`s being girly could have served as a more neutral neutralization, implying externalization of guilt to a greater extent.

Marina & Copes stress that before-and-now stories also represent a possibility for the agents to see themselves as responsible for *solutions.* Knut, by telling about the solution he found in the past, namely to get up in class and say he was sorry most probably will stimulate a sense of empowerment. For all we know it may even initiate more profound reflections of relevance for life shaping.

On the whole, the significance of epoch-making events, whether they are for the better or worse is most likely to become obvious in retrospect (Hutchison, 2005). Thus, a story of how things went wrong in the past may also have a positive function for further life shaping even when the present is not "smartened up" and no solutions are provided:

Marit:	*In year 8 I managed quite well, actually….until the end of year 8 …(Then) it started to get …I didn't do my homework, I didn't listen to the teacher, I sneered and was cheeky and things like that….*
Moderator:	*Yeah?*
Marit:	*and I just didn't give a damn…and in year 9, I stayed away from school seventy per cent of the time…seventy or sixty per cent …so, I had to leave school….*
Moderator:	*All because of your absence?*
Marit:	*Not just that…*
Mette:	*The first half year of the ninth grade I think I was at school one week in all...*

If we look closely at the sequence we may catch a glimpse of liberation from guilt even here. For instance, even though there is no articulated elevation of the present state, it may all the same be implied in the sense that things were even worse before. Besides, Marit's description of the abrupt change that occurred seemingly beyond her control, as if an infectious disease suddenly broke out, also could be a way of mitigating guilt or shame. According to Maruna & Copes, (op cit.) powerlessness in the first place is a prerequisite for the restoring of a new self. Agency is basing itself on vulnerability and victimization.

In restorative justice, one has acknowledged this principle in a very marked way (Shenk & Zehr, 2001). The offender may create a space that allows him or her to excuse his or herself in the first place without having to directly apologize. According to these authors, the offender is likely to take responsibility for the offense after the initiate opportunity they get to provide insight into the somewhat complex everyday mechanisms that usually are involved in minor delinquency.

I hope that I, by means of the above examples, have succeeded in conveying that a predominantly embodied moral indeterminacy is after all qualitatively different from deliberate moral deviance.

- *"I am good": Self- confidence or "invincibility" as a risk denial maneuver*

Self-confidence as an element in Peretti-Watel`s risk denial theory, which I described above, may best be explained as the trust in one's own capacity to avoid, master or overcome risky situations: *"I never pass out", "I never drink booze".* Like other maneuvers, also this kind of maneuver bases itself on the need to get some relief from guilt feelings. As there is no one to blame but one's self for acting against better judgment, one may for instance obtain relief by referring to an anonymous other. The utterance "I never pass out", for instance, suggests that an implicit comparison with someone else is made.

In the current study, episodes were identified in which one tried to appear as more invulnerable and invincible than peers were, for instance when it came to such as involvement in substance trials. With an unsuccessful other as a backdrop, one's own excellence with regard to risk control or capacity for keeping safe becomes more apparent. The following sequence contains several elements of such self-confidence. The sequence started with a story about a student at the same school as the group members who had passed out after having taken snuff[28] for the first time:

Arne:	*He was lying on the ground, he did…for two hours…*
Gunnar:	*Yeah, after having a piece of snuff …he was lying at the playground…*
Guri:	*Then he puts up with very little …*
Arne:	*Sure!*
Guri:	*With what did you mix that snuff? …..*
Arne:	*I just gave him plain General Rød-mix* (snuff brand) ….
Guri:	*Shame on him … even I did not become like that the first time I tried…*
Arne:	*Another one, he did it* (passed out?) *on the floor at the shopping mall…*
Guri:	*Well, I use snuff …but I did not pass out when I tried it the first time…*
Molly:	*I didn`t either.*
Gunnar:	*You might not pass out the first time, you see, it might happen the second time, or the third time …all of a sudden…*
Moderator:	*(…) Is there anything else that it`s important to mention… that makes… that makes you stop and think, makes you careful… any other dangers?*
Guri:	*Dope and that… (…)*
Moderator:	*Yeah?*

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[28] Tobacco to put under the upper lip instead of smoking it and which is illegal for minors, but not for adults.

Guri:	*You have to stay away…*
Arne:	*Drugs…*
Guri:	*I've done it, I've stayed away from it! I'm good!*
Arne:	Me too…
Molly:	*Me too*
Gunnar:	*Me too*
Guri/Molly:	*(laughs)*
Arne:	*You laughing about Gunnar…*
Gunnar:	*What?*
Guri:	(addressing Gunnar): *I know you haven't managed to stay away you see….*
Molly:	*Yeah everyone knows…*
Gunnar:	*I haven`t managed?*
Arne:	*Have you never touched drugs?*
Molly:	*Well, we've only seen it at school… you turned up…*
Gunnar:	*Yeah, yeah … at school…*
Guri:	*Yeah you were all green-faced one day… please…*
Gunnar:	*That was just after taking some snuff….*

As suggested several times, both transgression of emotional boundaries and keeping risk under control are strong impulses in consumer society that have to be integrated in some way or other. One may overcome this contradiction by means of "edgework" (Lyng, 1990, Reith, 2005) in which the individual, when one has achieved a sense of control over risks appears as a sovereign actor who has achieved a sense of *"invincibility, exhilaration, superhuman strength and ability"* (Reith, op cit.).

Both the self-confidence that Peretti-Watel has described, and edgework as described by the authors cited above, seems to fetch support in currents in consumer society that "calls forth the ego" (Reith`s expression). Therefore, the two phenomena may be difficult to discern from each other at first sight. Self-confidence, despite its somewhat exaggerated shape, may even be viewed as a positive kind of neutralization because it tends to turn defeats into triumphs and thus puts emphasis on agency. Besides, both self-confidence and edgework are frequently in use by "ordinary" people because both the phenomena correspond to typical social claims embedded in consumerism. Yet, in contrast to edgework, self-confidence represents an exaggerated truth about one's own capacity. According to Lyng, edgework is the result of skilled planning and therefore represents genuine control over risk.

In addition, the self-confidence under-communicates less successful aspects of self and thus may assist the individual in staying indeterminate. Before-and-now stories tend to stretch beyond that indeterminacy. The depiction of one`s own unrivalled capacity of tackling risk would not have made sense without reference to the more or less anonymous and unsuccessful other. Thus, to the extent that distinction between the concepts is important, self-confidence appears as more of a directionless neutralization than a positive one.

175

- *"Just look at them drunkards on heroine": Scapegoating and comparison between risks as risk denial maneuvers*

An aspect of the material that seems to fit the risk denial framework and the phenomenon of scapegoating is the tendency to explicitly portray certain other risk-taking populations as the real risk persons instead of one's self. In the material, there were, for instance, several examples of the tendency to create distance between self and others by pointing to peers who were less successful with regard to rule breaking / delinquency or substance use and who were dependent on professional help. It seemed particularly important to create distance to peers who had been enrolled in institutions. The excerpt below stems from a discussion that emerged spontaneously in one of the groups around "the risks next door" and which was about a period in which many youths in the current neighbourhood developed certain problems with drugs:

Pelle: *All of them have actually been sent off now, to an orphanage…*
Ada: *No, that is not right, not all….those who are in Year 2 at upper secondary*
               now, a lot of them still take hash…

Ada by providing some additional information partially tends to crack the myth that the less successful are a kind of "different species". Actually, some of them still live nearby. As we can also see from the use of the term *"orphanage"*, scapegoating bases itself on rumours and stereotypes rather than on accurate information. Orphanages have hardly ever been employed as rehabilitation measures for teenagers with drug problems unless they really have been orphans. Yet, one could perhaps not expect that teenagers to have a real overview over available treatment facilities even for youths at their age. The average adults probably do not possess that kind of knowledge either. Excerpts that will be provided later on suggest that strong myths exist about such phenomena. The inaccuracy therefore does not seem to be a big point here.

Still, in the cases in which former peers had been sent away there seemed to be little contact and rather disinterest than interest in how they were doing, in spite of having stuck together during school hours and having had the same problems with enduring school. Tore, for instance, had once been part of a group of students who spent more school hours in the corridor than inside the classroom.

Co-moderator: *You were more people in that gang who had been in trouble?*
Tore: *Yes!*
Co-moderator: *You talked about it* (the trouble) *in that group?*
Tore: *No, we just were sitting there, smoking….*
Co-moderator: *So you did not reflect on the fact that you all had been in trouble, in a way?*
Tore: *No…*
Agnar: *Ha-ha…*
Co-moderator: *Did you talk about the future, then? What you were going to do later on and*
               things like that…
Tore: *No…two of them are like…in a drug institute damn far* (away) *…somewhere,*
               so …
Moderator: *Hm…so …after all everything turned out ok, then …*
Tore: *Turned out ok? They started taking drugs and were sent to* (name of place)
Moderator: *Yeah, but now, then…..isn`t it* (the measure) *helpful to them?*
Tore: *I don`t know, I haven't talked to them afterwards…*

176

Not least, the emotional distance that Tore is creating to peers with whom he previously had a fellowship is worth noting. Even more classical scapegoating could however be observed in the following excerpt with Torill, a participant who as noted before had described herself as strongly tied to a group of deviant peers:

Torill:	*I have… I have always said that I never, never, **never** … will try heroin …*
Moderator:	*No?*
Torill:	*Never!*
Moderator:	*Hm… What is it that`s frightening with it, then?*
Torill:	*Well, you could just look at those drunkards in town that are on heroin …*

Interestingly, Toril in spite of her affiliation to a deviant environment still needs to distinguish self from "addicts". Scapegoating needs not merely be a kind of maneuver that allows for excuses for deviant acts to escape attention. It may also represent some of the positive potentiality that I pointed to in relation to "domestic identification": one mobilizes a will to make things different based on personal experience or easily observable phenomena and tendencies "next door".

 "Justification by comparison" (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003), or "comparison between risks", which is Peretti-Watel`s preferred label on the phenomenon, seems to be closely related to the tendency to scapegoat other risk groups. Actually, one may doubt whether the distinction is purposeful at all. The phenomenon refers as previously noted to the tendency to conclude that the risk attached to activities oneself is involved in are less risky that the risk implied in activities that others are involved in. In relation to substance use, the classical example of comparison between risks is, as mentioned, the emphasis put by cannabis users on cannabis as healthier than alcohol, all else considered. However, as noted in Norwegian research on this phenomenon, youths in general may also neutralize the risks implied in alcohol consumption by overestimating the dangerousness of drugs (Pape et al., 2006). The cited authors accentuate how such endeavors reflect prevailing discourses in normative society, in which the effects of respectively alcohol and drugs are sharply dichotomized, mostly in favor of alcohol.

According to Peretti-Watel, cannabis users also scapegoat "hard-drug users" in order to escape the "risky" label. Even well-established problem substance users are socially more precautious than previously, and fear the potentiality of being characterized by the most adverse labels. An example of the latter tendency is the concept of "druggie", which in English usage is meant to contrast the morally more questioned concept of "junkie" (Hillier, Dempsey, & Harrison, 1999). Tendencies of prudentiality (Reith, 2004 a) may even become stronger when the prevalence of cannabis consumption and use of other drugs is in decrease, as has been the case in Norwegian society for some years now (Vedøy & Skretting, 2009).

Like other forms of neutralization and risk denial, the phenomenon of comparison between risks is not limited to the indeterminate space. Because of the social sanctions attached to general risk-taking activity in contemporary society, comparisons between risks are widespread, far beyond defined risk groups. As underscored by Skårner & Månsson (2008),

what most of us who use substances have in common, regardless of substance or substance use pattern, is to avoid identification with the addict. Some very fine distinctions between categories emerge on that background, which represent significant value difference in the symbolic market.

Summary on neutralization:

The bottom line of this subsection on neutralization is that consciousness towards it, being it in the classical or in more updated forms like risk denial and positive or neutral neutralization may provide a more differentiated insight into the maneuvers in the indeterminate space and the practical reason that is underpinning them. Neutralization may undoubtedly be an indication of the will to conform to moral standard norms although the capacity to do so may be preliminarily reduced. Neutralization may even be healthy. On the other hand, neutralization may also contribute to a prolonged stay in the morally indeterminate space and could ultimately entail a more persistent kind of deviance. It is difficult to determine when neutralization changes from being a protection against further deviance and marginalization, and becomes a factor that promotes it (Maruna & Copes, 2005). In order to avoid premature conclusions around any of these potentialities we need to have a pragmatic view on maneuvers of this kind.

As the current study participants constituted a differentiated group with regard to deviance from standard moral norms the vague and negotiable distinction between positive and neutral (or directionless) neutralization on the one hand and negative neutralization on the other provides fruitful insight into those nuances. Not least, for target groups of prevention, capacity to identify neutralization in its different, but far from deadlocked shapes may positively stimulate reflection around further direction in life.

- *"I've got a friend who is in deep shit": Evasiveness as a maneuver between relative normalcy and relative deviance*

Whereas neutralization has the purpose of "exploiting" the options involved in a morally indeterminable status, evasiveness or "escapism" seems to be more likely when the deviance has become indisputable and the effects of it are beginning to assert themselves on the individual at issue in a more apparent way. One no longer thinks it makes much sense to neutralize involvement in risky or deviant activity. All the same, one tries to avoid focus on such involvement. Speaking frankly about it may be unpleasant. It may also implicate a commitment one is not ready to make in the first place. Certainly, one may also find it unpleasant to speak about it because of the condemnation or even sanctions it may entail.

Knut, by having developed a relatively regular use of cannabis, seemed to be in a situation in which such use was relatively overt. Evasiveness or escapism in his case seemed to be an alternative to the more determined judgments about his own deviance. He is certainly aware that his cannabis smoking is about to worsen his health, but the need to make commitments

about change seems to be frightening to the extent that the sequence ends with an abrupt change of topic, : The impression that Knut is leaving here, is therefore that he might not be ready for change right now. [29]

Knut:	(about his own cannabis smoking) *well… I realize… I have to scale down …*
Moderator:	*M-m…*
Knut:	*It is not healthy …*
Moderator*:*	*(…) the fact that you don't tell anybody who probably might have helped you* (referring to a previous sequence) *…that …eh…I don't quite get why so? …*
Knut:	*Pride…I don't know…I don't wanna change, you know... Oh! I have a question!*
Moderator:	*Yes?*
Knut:	*I've got a friend who is in deep shit (…). She is dependent …my god …she is so young and has withdrawal trouble when she stops drinking (…) …and I don't manage to make her understand that she will peg out before summer vacation if she goes on drinking every day. So…isn't there a kind of…free mental help service…psychologists…arrangements... for such people…?*

In the journal article (Juberg, 2011) I described Knut`s maneuver as *"drawing attention away from self",* but I have found that merely "evasiveness" is a less mystifying label. "Evasiveness" could apply to the behaviour of all of us at times and carries fewer of those connotations of "ego-weakness", or other characteristics that are predominantly psychogenic than does *"drawing attention away from self".*

Indeed, the relative normalization of such as cannabis use may have made it easier for users of the substance to think of themselves as relatively non-marginalized and to use such as cannabis more openly. In contrast to the marijuana users that Becker (1973) described in his qualitative study from the 1960s, who first when they felt beyond reach of condemners managed to really devote to the use, today's cannabis users are often socially integrated in the so-called normative population. That is, they surround themselves by people who may understand and accept the use, but who all the same may be sceptical to it because of the potential harms that may be involved in it (Aldridge et al., 2011). Yet, the need for users of illegal substances to hide away may perhaps never be outweighed by that kind of normalization processes that has been going on in recent decades in many Western, relatively drug-liberal countries (Hathaway, 2011, 2004).

In the subsequent sequence for instance, Geir is addressing how he is caught up in a dilemma at home. He thinks that his father, who seems to represent "the classical condemner", knows that he is smoking cannabis relatively regularly. At least, the father is frequently asking questions about it. Now Geir is curious about how his father actually would be inclined to judge the smoking if it came to the fore, but does not dare to ask direct questions about it. The concrete occasion that Geir's reflections in the below sequence derived from was an occasion in which his father stopped by a place where Geir kept a lump of hash. The lump was in principle visible to all passers-by. Geir is convinced that his father must have seen the lump:

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[29] This example has also been provided in the journal article on the material (Juberg, 2011).

Geir:	*I'm sure, I'm sure...that he saw it...*
Moderator:	*Yeah...*
Geir:	*Then he left.... but I don't get why he didn't say anything at all...*
Moderator:	*No...Hmm....well...what do you think then?*
Geir:	*Well, I don't know...no, but... I think.... I guess he knows I smoke....*
Moderator:	*Do you think he knows but doesn't want to know... if you know what I mean?*
Geir:	*Yeah, that's what I was thinking....*
Moderator:	*Yeah...*
Geir:	*(...)...he kind of says: you shouldn't smoke weed.... do you smoke weed? ....* (He keeps) *asking that sort of question... like… lots of time...and I say no of course...*
Moderator:	*Ehh ... yeah... it might be that he.... eh...thinks what he thinks, but then.... he feels he has to ask, even though you say no, it demonstrates that he's....*
Geir:	*But he fucking saw it, he must have... (...) And he knows... (...) so why the hell; why won't he say anything?*
Moderator:	*Eh...would you have wanted him to say anything?*
Geir:	*Yeah ... (...)... It would have been better to know what he's thinking than...*
Moderator:	*But... is it still impossible to start asking like:* *"Did you see anything special the other day?" Can you do it like that or?*
Geir:	*Well ...then I will make a fool of myself... (...)I don't fucking know if he wants to know or if he's just "living in denial" as they say...*

The excerpt may fully demonstrate the shamefulness that one often attaches to substance use and misuse. Even in contact with their next of kin, young substance users are willing to go far in order to hide their use from them. Such things as telling lies about the use has, according to young problem substance users, the purpose of protecting next of kin against disappointment (Tronvoll & Pedersen, 2009). Such protection is what Nils emphasizes when he explains why he does not always tell the whole truth at home:

Nils:	*I frankly tell everything as it is ...*
Moderator:	*Yeah? ...*
Nils:	*Except from my smoking* (of cannabis, most probaly) …
Moderator:	*Aha… but what is the reason for you to hold back certain things, then?*
Nils:	*Well, I don't wanna disappoint my parents ....*

On the whole, direct speech seems to be unthinkable to Nils to the extent that a quite special kind of logic based on evasiveness arises:

| Moderator: | *If you were in the role as parent ...eh…and suspected that your son or daughter were using hash or other things you were worried about…what…how would you have chosen to approach it ?* |
| Nils: | *I would have…if I could find out by looking at my child that he had been smoking hash, I would have visited a friend I knew was selling it... then I had bought a gram or two from him...and then I`d sit down and smoke before him. Thereafter I would have asked: do you want some puffs? And if he had said "yes", no ...I mean "no"; he does it, for sure ...* |

A continuous interplay between "prudentiality", a culture of secrecy due to illicitness of cannabis use and the evasiveness, which one has learned to acquire over time, may contribute to the creation of myths. Not only are there myths around the effects that accompany the drug

use. In addition, things that one hears through the grapevine about related phenomena are taken as scientific evidence. Secrecy, myth creation and suspicion even tend to reinforce each other and to constitute a vicious circle. Because myths are strong, being evasive or furtive about one's own user practices may appear to the single youth as a better option after all than direct speech.

Based on the excerpt below, we may better understand why. As previously noted, certain myths about treatment methods that have little to do with contemporary reality seem to be tenacious.

Nils:	*I have been asked questions about the strangest things ...whether I have been involved in both this and that...and I have explained next to everything ...and they* (his parents) *have been checking if I have been injecting and stuff like that.*
Moderator:	*Aha, so that is what they first and foremost are thinking about ...*
Nils:	*Yeah (...) they have been looking for needles ...*
Geir:	(trying to say something)
Nils:	*Yeah ... my mom could see that my blood vessels were standing up, and then she started turning my arm all around like this* (demonstrating) *...she examined it really carefully, and ...* (···) *the neighbours have said that if I am caught for something, then they will have to send me ... into an orphanage...*
Moderator:	*Hm ...*
Nils:	*I have* (actually) *been caught for a lot of other things as well, so...*
Moderator:	*H-hm ... what is "a lot of other things, then? "*
Nils:	*Vandalism and stuff ...*

It seems relevant to relate the concept of "moral panic" (Cohen, 2011) to this account. The concept according to Cohen first and foremost refers to the tendency in media and populist discourse to make generalized truths out of empirically atypical examples of phenomena apt at evoking moral engagement. The portraying of youthful illegal substance use as infectious is, for instance, a phenomenon that often may be observed in the press in spite of such notions having a weak empirical basis (Sandberg & Pedersen, 2008).

A normative climate like the contemporary, which seems ready to label people as adverse on short notice just as soon as something appears morally adverse or indeterminable at minimum, makes further life shaping complex for adolescents who find themselves in a morally indeterminate space.

- *"As long as it doesn`t affect me": Normalization and differentiation as a tendency in the indeterminate space*

Classical neutralization, risk denial or evasiveness are all of them maneuvers that are based on the assumption of a "moral majority" which judges about "right" and "wrong" with regard to substance use and abidance of the law. As underscored several times above, these maneuvers may be valuable in a life shaping perspective because they assist at avoiding condemnation in the larger social space. However, those processes of normalization and differentiation that are

a product of certain processes going on in consumer society also seemed to have impact on the way in which the current study participants were maneuvering. It could at times be difficult to distinguish between them.

On the background of the considerations presented above it is not immediately given that there always was a need for participants to excuse themselves in terms of classical neutralization or risk denial or for justification of their own practices for that matter. Petter's tolerant attitude in the subsequent excerpt is a relatively common attitude today, in spite of certain indications that the moral climate is tightening:

Petter: (Addressing the others in the group) *so I don't get it.... Why would*
                  people do drugs really?... it`s like…
Moderator: *There's a lot of people that… eh… think it's ok though…*
Petter: *Yeah, it might be…*
Moderator: *So* (you think) *that's them… their…*
Petter: *Yeah…*
Moderator: *…business?*
Petter: *That's totally up to them (....)… as long as it doesn't affect me…*

On the whole, the sharp frontlines that the normalization debate was characterized by at the turn of the millennium seem recently to have become more nuanced (Measham & Shiner, 2009). There is nothing that is absolutely normal, and nothing which is absolutely deviant. Besides, the "moral majority", who has the privilege to distinguish "right" from "wrong" is not necessarily stable under all circumstances with regard to how the norm issues treated here are viewed (Hathaway, 2004). On the contrary, there seems to be relative consensus that the way in which another views certain substance user practices may differ from situation to situation and from context to context (Room, 2005). Consequently, many of the most active young substance users tend to consider the appropriateness of certain practices against occasion and context, and distinguish carefully between contexts that could view the use as illegal and undesirable on the one hand and more accommodative environments on the other (Hathaway, op cit.). In certain cultural contexts, like the British, this also involves consideration of which substances fit which situations; teenagers use alcohol and cannabis for the home scene, amphetamines and alco-pops for club settings etc. (Aldridge et al, 2011).

As noted by the latter authors, however, it is not only patterns of substance *use* that have become differentiated users have too. Even abstainers from alcohol or other substances may not merely base their conclusions on classical arguments anymore. They, for instance, often refer to newer and more complex reasons when explaining why they refrain from such use (op cit.). A consequence of the increasing differentiation is that old dichotomies like right versus wrong, evil versus good are about to fall. The myth of the evil drug dealer and his innocent victim is an example of a myth based on such dichotomies that in recent years has cracked (Sandberg, 2009). The fact that cannabis rather is distributed within a circle of friends contributes to the de-dichotomization:

Moderator: (directed to Geir regarding his use of cananbis): … *is there*
                  anyone you… around you to whom you can apply if you want

182

	to decrease your smoking?
Knut:	*Good God ... if I`d say to my mates: "I am going to quit"...*
	Then... (Or) "No, don't sell me anything, don't help me and stuff"...
	then they would support me, you know... they would respect me...
Moderator:	*Hmm*
Knut:	*But I could go home and (...)... and buy (the stuff) ... somewhere*
	else ... if I had wanted to...

Whereas "hard-core" criminals still meet expectations of absolute loyalty and even fear reprisal for deviance from the criminal norm to the extent that they also use neutralization techniques (Topalli, 2005), the gang concept in terms of a "home" for likeminded seems to have no absolute relevance for youths in the indeterminate space that this thesis is exploring:

Guest- moderator:	(addressing Kjell) *....But is it the people you hang with that*
	decide?
Kjell:	*It is different people you know...*
Guest -moderator:	*Yeah? ....*
Kjell:	*I'm not just part of one group, though....*
Guest moderator:	*Well ...there are some you hang out with more than others...?*
Kjell:	*Yeah, mates with the same interests and stuff...*

There are many indications that the phenomenon of "peer pressure" has lost its topicality in today`s world (see for instance Hathaway, 2004). Some research projects conclude that so-called ex-triers as well as occasional substance users may keep up with friends that are still involved in illegal use without being negatively affected by it (Aldridge et al., 2011). Yet, conclusions from both epidemiological and qualitative research on the topic differ. Some researchers point to its irrelevance in certain situations (Boys et al., 2000), whereas others point to how its influence on drug initiation tends to decline with age (McIntosh, MacDonald, & McKeganey, 2006).

Yet, we may also interpret statements on independence from peer pressure as risk denial in the sense Peretti-Watel (2003) has described it. If one affiliates with deviant peers, particularly when they are more "far gone" than one's self, one has to demonstrate that one is aware of the risk for the adverse development it may implicate, but at the same time deny its effect on oneself. It might simply be that one feels the urge to say: *"It may be risky for some but not for me" or "I know it is risky, but I am strong enough to bear it without getting involved"*. Thereby, one may anticipate critique in a relatively efficient way. The following excerpt is apt to spread confusion about "what is what", something which may be quite realistic and typical of current tendencies:

Trond:	*Most of those who I know... they have into the wrong crowd...*
Kjell:	*Mm... But I haven't got any problems like that, though!*
Trond:	(Continues his argumentation) *the wrong group of people...*
	with which they shouldn't... Imagine the wrong crowd... (it`s) like someone
	makes them do it.... it is like...
Guest moderator:	*Pressure?*
Trond:	*yeah it's like... If you say "no", then...right?*
Guest moderator:	*...then you are out, or...?*
Trond:	*Yeah, then you're out, you know. And then we could say... you kinda really*

	want to be in that group... in that group which you (really) *wanted to hang out with...* (But) *in that group no one wants you to stay... cuz you... So, then it has to be so (that) you become a bouncing ball... and you just have to do what the group does so that they will accept you...*
Guest moderator:	*Or you may step back....*
Trond:	*Yeah.... (...)*
Kjell:	*What's "wrong people"?*
Trond:	*People who already have made a mess of things ...*
Kjell:	*Well, then I only mix with wrong people...*
Trond:	*Well, of course it's up to you...*
Kjell:	(Continues the interrupted phrase) *...it still doesn't mean that I'm doing it* (taking drugs) *... (...) No problem having a load of pals that smoke weed ...*
Trond:	*And then there are many who lack the ability to say no ... and are offered smoke* (hash) *and then .... "yes, I'll take it" ... you see? They do it to feel safer ...and more self- confident... in that environment ...in order to ....*
Kjell:	*I don't smoke...*
Trond:	*You are special!*
Kjell:	*That might be ...Anyway, **I** don't do it …* (original emphasis)

Most likely, a majority of people would agree with Trond that Kjell's affiliation in more or less deviant social fields is hazardous. Peer-pressure theory still has a strong position in populist discourse, and may also reflect everyday experience.

Thus, Kjell's attitude viewed from that angle constitutes an example of self-confidence in the way Peretti-Watel has described it. Another possibility is that Kjell describes it as it is.   What we could conclude on the basis on this uncertainty is that professionals who communicate with youths about their somewhat hazardous affiliations cannot be certain about the negative impact of peers on initiation and continuation.

In my view, what the above excerpt primarily tends to provide is an interesting insight into how lay and expert discourse merge. Not only in the sense that lay people appropriate and modify scientific concepts and theories, but lay people may also appropriate different notions that are based on diverging scientific results. The two participants in the above sequence not only represent two different but concurrent lay discourses, they also advocate two different but concurrent scientific discourses. As long as we discuss them openly with "at risk" adolescents, consciousness about the phenomenon may become enhanced.

In the next excerpt, it is underscored that one also has to accept a person's own responsibility for being treated as "normal":

Trond:	*Like…if people kinda think that that guy over there he`s got ADHD:* (and they say) *"Hey, you-you`ve got ADHD; problem kid, aren`t you"People make us to something we do not want to become…we have to think…. "Ok, how can I start this conversation, how can I act to not get labelled that way…How to be normal?*
Kjell:	*Yeah…*

As previously stated, the normal cannot easily be distinguished from the deviant in adolescence. Normalization tendencies add to that difficulty.

- *Indeterminacy in adolescence vs. moral indeterminacy*

In the current material, it could sometimes also be difficult to distinguish the maneuvers that were directionless or inconsistent merely because of a delayed decision about direction in life, and the kind of indeterminacy that is typical in adolescence and which is owing to lack of the experience that usually comes with age. Normally, adolescent indeterminacy is grounded in the fear of making a fool of oneself and aims at securing one`s retreat (Hauge, 1980). This may be confusingly similar to neutralization and risk denial maneuvers.

Arne in the example below, for instance, primarily seems to exhibit classical teenager awkwardness. Within the very same sequence, he shifts from one version to an opposite version regarding how he responded to snuff the first time he tried it:

Arne:	***When I started around Year 6, I was sick all over…the first time.***
Guri:	*Once I had 'snuff' in a pouch under my lip* (is showing it) *and I swallowed what came out of the pouch …*
Gunnar:	*But you …*
Guri:	*Like, it was the same as swallowing normal 'snuff'… and I was so sick …*
Molly:	*I've never been sick, ever…*
Arne:	***I've never been sick either***… (My emphasis)

There were also indications that participants, presumably because of lack of experience, were highly tentative in their search for a path through the fairly intimate, but unpredictable interplay that is suggested to exist between social statuses, socioeconomic factors, drinking styles and how other people tend to receive such styles (Room, 2005 a). How to tackle this somewhat unpredictable interplay is not evident to anyone and a certain inconsistency seems inevitable regardless of age group. Yet, adolescence-induced inconsistency may add to general inconsistency. Nils, for instance, when he was to account for his drinking habits on a night out seems to reflect this:

Nils:	*I stop* (drinking) *after having drunk half a litre of …eh…vodka…*
Moderator:	*You simply have had enough then, or have you decided* (to stop) *beforehand?*
Nils:	*I usually decide beforehand… (…).*
Geir:	(addressing Nils) *don't you think it depends...what if you are really pissed...and somebody shows up with a bottle… I bet you drink.*
Nils:	*Yeah…*
Geir:	*Yeah (…)*
Nils:	*I have been lying in the downtown streets and…been vomiting and stuff...yeah…*
Geir:	*Yeah …*
Nils:	*After having been at a party at* (name of an outdoor area) *…you are on your way home and try to catch the late night bus …then you completely lose your balance, and then you just lie there…(…) It has happened to me a lot of times…*

185

At least in theory, the two of us that constituted Nils` audience on the referred occasion represented two partying styles that were diametrically opposite. Nils probably viewed me, by virtue of being an adult and a moderator, as an exponent of mainstream society. In the encounter with mainstream society, he seems to appear as moderate and responsible as possible. My initial question also invites moderation and responsibility a bit. Towards Geir, in contrast, who in Nils' eyes probably represents evidenced knowledge about drinking practices in those social fields that Nils belongs to, there is no escape with regard to "telling how it really is". Yet, I could neither exclude the potentiality that Nils is exaggerating the account about how "pissed" he gets just because Geir is part of the audience. As suggested previously, "headless" drinking to annihilation, or at least to "footlessness", may even in consumer society in which reason and pleasure merge have a positive symbolic status among Norwegian youths.

When immaturity and moral indeterminacy tend to converge in this way, only further exploration in collaboration with the adolescent at issue may shed light on the issue around "what is what". For all we know, although not overly probable, Nils has already developed problem alcohol use and does not quite tackle how to stop when he has first started to drink on a night out; something that he, if so, tries to hide in the first place. Or, he is just a socially immature teenager.

As we may observe in the excerpt that was referred above, the focus group method is particularly apt at demonstrating this kind of inconsistency because of the likeliness that the validity of utterances is continuously tested. In the next subsection I will go further into how the focus group method contributed to the generation of data.

Momentary reflections: Focus groups as a means of getting from thoughtlessness to a more determined life direction

In the section on method, I touched on the epistemological difficulties related to reflection and articulation of abstract thought. Almost any question or prompt that required reflection skills seemed to generally fall on dry ground in communication with the current study participants. Both Arendt (1971) with the concept of "thoughtlessness" and Bourdieu (1998) with the concept of practical reason seem to support the idea that becoming reflective and articulate is not an everyday occurrence. Far too often, however, being reflective has been described as a skill that only is achieved by means of purposeful and strategic action (Ixer, 1999). "Just do it" ideologies reflect this, and still seem to have strong impact on contemporary mind-sets (Garrett, 2004).

In the part on methods, I described the focus group method as an epistemological solution to such problems of moving from non-reflection or halfway articulation to reflection that is more conscious. However, also the advantages of the methods in a life shaping perspective have been broadly reported in focus group literature. Among other things, the method has been described as a method that allows for *"identity work here and now"* (Demant, 2007).

The reason why the focus group may fulfill the purpose of life shaping is that when we hear others speak we may; for instance, remember something to be proud of in the past and which is apt at nourishing our respectable selves. To the same extent as language is the conveyer of those cultural expectations that keep people in check, suppress people, language also has a liberating potential. By the concept of *conscientization*[30]*,* Freire (1977) has elicited the process that may liberate people by means of language. As such, *conscientization* combines self-reflection with self-realization. The focus group process when used in a life-shaping concept may function in the same way.

In spite of these advantages of the focus group, however, one of the major reasons why the impact on the focus group process on sense-making and learning processes all the same has been disregarded (see for instance Wibeck et al., 2007) may probably be found in the conventional misunderstandings about how consciousness and language are interrelated.

Conventional theory on the relation between language and thought tends to assume that consciousness becomes before language. A consequence of this assumption is that participants in a focus group meet other members with a set of ready-made thoughts and already articulated opinions. The group process per se is on that background not of particular interest.

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[30]Based on the Portuguese concept "Conscientizacão" – which according to online sources means "critical consciousness", developed within the versions of Marxist theory that focus on perception and exposure of social and political contradictions www.wordnik.com/ words /conscientization, www.reference.com/ browse/conscientization.

In a perspective on language that is in line with Bakhtin (Holquist, 2002) and Vygotsky (Vygotskij & Kozulin, 2001) however, the focus group may rather be viewed as a workshop for thought. Bakhtin as well as Vygotsky (op cit.) accentuate that thinking is *shaped* through the sharing of words. In this perspective, speech may simply function as a tool for thought *before* we have made real conscious attempts at sense-making (Wertsch, 1985).

In the further exploration of dialogical elements from the current material, I will particularly emphasize the interrelatedness between the sharing of a common cultural ground and individual life shaping. This is, however, an aspect which is closely related to the idea of language as a tool for thought.

As noted by Bakhtin, consciousness has a dialogical structure:

> *Meaning comes about in the individual psyche and in shared social experience through the meaning of the sign. Every sign is a link in the great chain comprising all other signs – breaks in that chain do not exist* (Bakhtin in Holquist, 2002:49).

In this perspective, peers who participate in a focus group may assist each other in understanding abstract phenomena. This aspect is not least implied in the concept "apprenticeship of thinking" (Rogoff, 1990).

Also, Bakhtin's concept of "answerability" (Holquist, 2002:61) is a salient concept when it comes to a deeper understanding of how the focus group may assist in creating a more reflective perspective on life. Bakhtin (op cit.) has explained it in the following way: When we speak, we operate at the border of what is said and not said. What we expect comes next is based on the cultural experience which we more or less share with our co-speakers. We may thus look for those elements in the language that may assist us in our personalization of cultural impulses even before a sentence is pronounced. The exact content of those elements that we recognize when we listen to others plays a somewhat inferior role. There may merely be something about the rhythm or some syllables in the language that put us into contact with the "cultural bank" (Ferrell et al., 2008) we draw on when we make sense of phenomena and events. This dynamic may be illustrated by means of the following excerpt:

Ida: *I use to see my mom …*
Ada: *I use to see my dad…*
Pelle: *Me and my dad, we are having boy's nights*
Ada: *Me and my dad we do not function together*
Pelle: *I may say the same; I do not function together with my dad, either,*
       but I'll give him a break…

Because the elements in the above phrases are relatively alike, the communication in the above excerpt may appear as mere repetition or copying at first sight. There is for instance a strong element of imitation in the excerpt, which creates a suggestive kind of rhythm.

Yet, common sense has been deluded at this point, according to Vygotsky. Even the simplest utterance is in reality a process in which there is no constant correspondence between the sign and its significance (Vygotsky & Kozulin, 2001).

Everyday conversation is to a considerable extent full of hints, rather than of fully articulated phrases. Even when we base ourselves on hints that are partially communicated merely through an unaccomplished, outward form of the word, a certain transcendence of the private worlds of the interlocutors is all the same likely to occur (See also Wertsch, 1985).

As the excerpt tends to demonstrate, not only the form is shared, but there are also similarities with regard to content. Probably all three of those participants had been through life events that had put family relations to a test. Recognition might have strengthened the continued focus on family relations in the current situation. Yet, even when situations in the domestic spheres of the interlocutors are similar, we hardly speak of a sharing in the sense that the persons involved take each other's perspectives. The "I" according to Bakhtin is both unique and has an unfinished nature (Holquist, 2002:26).

Yet, although the "I" is viewed by Bakhtin as unique, it is a basic thought in his works that we can only fully understand ourselves in relation to others. It is therefore, as noted by Gadamer (2004) that language has got the capacity to "understand" phenomena so to speak on our behalf.

Thus, idiosyncrasy and fellowship, content and form all tend to merge with each other. On the one hand, the cyclical, spiralling process that characterizes communication in focus groups implies that participants appropriate culture in fairly idiosyncratic ways (Chui & Knight, 1999). In that process, those parts of our knowledge that are in everyday use are connected with those parts of our knowledge that are *"buried at the margins of one's awareness"* (Rogoff, 1990). Overall, there seems to be a continuous, active transition between collaboration on the one hand and independent appropriation of the collaboration on the other hand in a dialogue like this (Wertsch, op cit.).

Certainly, the conversation that is going on in the referred excerpt is an extreme example of focus group conversation. Neither focus group conversation nor everyday conversation usually has the same kind of intensive dynamic as demonstrated here. The excerpt may all the same illustrate that the powerful effect of arbitrariness with regard to content that the rhythm brings about may protect against homogeneity and stimulate heterogeneity to a considerable extent.

An inevitable aspect of speech is also that it is oriented towards ends. As long as speech is not yet completed, it is dominated by "a drive to meaning" Holquist (2002:24). However, because "consensus" seldom is the aim of conversation but rather individual problem solving, better terms have to be found on the collaborative part of language. It for instance seems more appropriate to speak of a *"fusion of horizons"* (Gadamer, 2004:370) than of consensus.

Certainly, the fusion of horizons that may occur in a focus group with adolescents who stay in-between relative normalcy and relative deviance may entail identification with those parts of their behavioral repertoire that are oriented towards opposition and conflict with the surrounding society. In the following sequence, Magnus and Terje brought up how conflicts with teachers may make life miserable at times:

Magnus: *Well you know….don't give it too much thought. Them teachers…*
some are just so rude… like one a teacher at primary school
(…) He strangled me…was lifting me…
Terje: *Eh?*
Magnus: *That teacher strangled me… then…*
Terje: *I lifted my teacher… One of them big ones, you know…*
you know how it went; I just smacked that fucker…
Magnus: *The teacher? Wow, you`re kidding?*
Terje: *I remember once he lifted me… and walked me down the hall….*
Magnus: *… once upon a time…the same teacher; he used to sit on*
me if I went mental….
Terje: *Yeah that is what happened to me in primary school…*

As pointed to in the section about "risks in the neighbourhood", for instance, talk about violence and common enemies, although sometimes on the edge of the respectable, may have their function of consolidating relationships of a kind that assist young people in their life shaping processes, provided that talk about it is guided to a certain extent. Also in relation to school stories on violence, it may be difficult to discern between the aggressor and the victim. Teachers bullying students is, for instance, a documented problem (Delfabbro et al., 2006). When the interactivity implied in the method is promoted, participants may therefore empower each other both with regard to sense making and learning (Wibeck et al., 2007). Also in the case with Magnus and Terje, the somewhat "oppositional" dialogue that is referred above proved to turn into a dialogue that stimulated the sharing of how to tackle both anger and a sense of unjustness. As such, it also implies comfort.

Terje: *Something I have taught myself, in the course of time* (is) *not*
to feel sorry about things. In primary school, I felt sorry for things,
and then you little by little perhaps get a little bullied, ok?
…..in lower secondary school, then I stopped (feeling sorry).
I never had any problems with bullying and stuff in lower secondary
school …and I don`t have it now, either (upper secondary) *…*
but of course… if they are irritating … (…)
Magnus*: Do you know? I have been bullied since Year 7. I freak out fucking*
easily and then I have ADHD in addition, I don't know …I just…
(…) well, I get scared as shit … (but) *I just run, yes I do, just walk*
away from the situation, you know.

Another example of the fact that the focus group could be a workshop for life shaping in which both group members and moderators may be involved is provided below. It is from a discussion that emerged after Geir had shared his confusion around the fact that his father did not ask further about the lump of hash he had allegedly seen. The collaborative effort to make sense of the episode with Geir's father started with a hypothesis launched by Nils about

disappointment as a possible explanation of why the father did not follow up the situation with further questions:

Nils: (Taking the perspective of Geir's father)... *if you are disappointed you do not say anything at all....*

Geir: *Hmmm… maybe. How can I get him to say what he really means, then? Any ideas?*

Moderator: *Do you mean to dupe him to express his thoughts, or?*

Geir: (I `ll do) *whatever required…. But help me avoid being straight to the point about it, like "By the way, you saw the lump in our house recently, didn't you …? "*

Moderator: *Hm… you want to avoid that?*

Geir: *Yes!*

Moderator: *You may depart from the present …* (your plan is) *that you are to continue to go to school for a while ….what does he think? You can ask… some...*

Geir: *Yes, he….*

Moderator: *…what he thinks is needed for you to manage your future (*at school)

Geir: *Yes! Hell…"what is needed … what do you think is needed" … hm, that was a smart one … Then I`ll force him into a little corner …(...) he will think it is worthwhile being honest!*

Moderator: *Yeah… but what if he still does not prefer to speak out frankly? … Eh… what do you do then?*

Geir: *Then I`ll say: "don`t lie to me"(…) that one: «don't lie to me "; it usually works so fucking well ….then you just give a hint…you don`t say" what the hell: your` e lying to me!! "…I just say: ….Hey there…stop lying to me" (…) you just look him right through* (his eyes?) *… cuz you **know** he`s lying to you ….*

Moderator: *Ok, then you perhaps have a strategy, all the same, then ….*

Geir: *…I'll give it a try …*

Moderator: *Yes!*

Geir: *Thanks a lot!*

As we can see from this excerpt, the dialogue takes some directions that in many ways appear as casual. For instance, the dialogue though seemingly aimless moves on from collaborative exploration of reasons why to an individual making of a strategy. Something was said that all of a sudden seemed to make sense to Geir, although perhaps none of us could identify exactly what it was. Most probably a phrase or a word might have reminded him of something already experienced and familiar. From there he could move to the making of a plan, which implied to move from the familiar to something relatively unknown. Overall, the reflective capacity of the participants, at least as far as Geir is concerned, seems to be strengthened by means of the collaborative sense-making. As long as we do not look for a particular order, we may be able to sense it in some way or other.

If we accept this premise of arbitrariness, a move from a relatively stagnant position to a more determined way of life shaping may be short. Yet, exactly how we arrive there is above all of an unpredictable and hard- to- capture issue.

Arendt (op cit.), when describing how reason is implied in those moments in which we are liberated from the spatial and temporal concepts that tend to bind up our habitual thinking,

does not, for instance, give any clue into how we arrive at a more reflective modus. Her agenda is rather to explain what happens when we from time to time profoundly *reflect*. Probably her lack of emphasis on the process towards a greater extent of reflexivity is because the process is hard to describe in terms that are more general. The question is also whether such description is feasible or epistemologically appropriate to ask for. According to Arendt (op cit.), our thinking in those moments when we perceive ourselves as in control of both past and future have not got any hidden purpose. The idea that there is a hidden purpose behind any act stems from a kind of thought that rather belongs to a Newtonian epistemology.

Like the other thinkers that I presented in the initial paragraphs of this subsection, also Bourdieu has assumed that the move from the person we are at the present and to the person we tend to become is highly related to language as a liberating tool. When we still are the one we used to be, we tend to determine ourselves by certain *"practical acts of cognition"* which, in their turn, correspond to certain rules and regularities in those social fields in which we have foothold (Bourdieu, 2004:44). However, as we are dealing with no one-to-one relationship between structure and agency, language may mean a chance of renewal of established relations and constellations of power. However, Bourdieu does not explain *how* the renewal occurs either. The closest we get, is probably to the inherent validation of each other's speech that is implied in the focus group method. We are constantly put under the "threat" of being revealed as not in line with our strongest evaluations, something that is apt at evoking a sense of shame in most people.

The previously referred passage in which Guri made a genuine judgment around her own habit of shoplifting is one of the relatively few passages in the current material that links the maneuvers in the indeterminate space with moments of more profound reflection around direction in life. In the passage, Guri made a judgment of the kind which Taylor (1995) would have characterized as "strong": *"but when I think about it now….it just wasn't worth it (…) it`s better to quit than to keep doing it"*. "Strong" in this sense means a kind of judgment that concerns our most profound principles for life shaping; as whether we should go on stealing vs. becoming law-abiding etc. Weak judgments in contrast concern relatively similar daily life phenomena: like where to spend our vacation when we have more options, or which shirt brand to choose.

The judgment that Guri made emerged during the discussion between Guri and Arne whether security guards represent the required competence for revealing shoplifting or not. We may use it as an example once more in order to study the leap from non-direction and non-reflection to more conscious reflection. It could, for instance, be the validation that Guri and Arne are making of each other`s utterances that prepared the ground for that judgment.

As demonstrated in the passage, Guri was not ready to regret the stealing fully. Rather she tended to neutralize its effects by problemizing the competence of the security staff. Guri also emphasized that the delivery of the stolen goods back to the store did *not* happen on her initiative. When I revisit the sequence, I continue from that point on where Guri describes the settlement for the stolen goods as weakness:

Moderator:	(Addressing Guri about the story on how she had changed): *I just have to ask you about a thing that has to do with* (your wish to) *becoming a security guard. Does* (this wish) *mean that you actually want to prevent shoplifting from occurring, or do you want it* (to become a guard) *because you should like to get at the front edge with the kids* (meaning: to be smarter than them).
Guri:	*Well, both actually, cuz* (...) *it was a good feeling to have something expensive and brand new. But when I think about it now....it just wasn't worth it (...). It`s better to quit than to keep doing it, cuz I saw this woman; she might have been around 30, stealing sweets ....at the corner shops with her boyfriend ... I was like... oh my god, I was so embarrassed for everything you know, so many keep stealing till they are like…*

Even here, dealing with a phrase that ended up in a strong evaluation, we have no clear clues that may help us understand how Guri all of a sudden became conscious about life direction in the middle of a sequence in which she did not at all seem sure about her motives. Instead of spending effort on identification of "triggers", it seems as if the only solution is to have trust in those dynamics that are embedded in the dialogue although they work in an unpredictable manner. According to Ixer (1999), sooner or later, meta-cognitive moments inevitably occur in social encounters.

Thus, even if we, according to Bakhtin, do not "share" thoughts in the sense that we fully may take the perspective of the other, we simply need others to develop better judgement. Even in queer theory in which uniqueness is emphasized as the foundation stone of identity performance (Turner, 2000); similarities or commonalities are counted in order to become recognizable to others.

A sequence with Trond and Kjell may demonstrate how the focus group dialogue contributes solidarity of the kind that may consolidate uniqueness:

Trond:	*A little funny, for me and for him* (Kjell) *is… that we can… we understand each other much better* (now?) *.... (..)* *I can* (addressing Kjell)*....like…this is not about pointing you out, but I remember when* (talking about a previous episode) *I could tell, he… he was…. like … he was so angry I couldn't be bothered to talk to him…*
Kjell:	*Ha-ha…*
Trond*:*	*I think he needed some time to himself….*
Moderator:	*He looked like you sometimes feel…?*
Trond:	*Yeah, like the way I recognize myself…*
Kjell:	*You recognize yourself in me…*

As we also may see from the next excerpt, reflexivity in a dialogical perspective is something fundamentally different from the endeavour of *"self-reflection"*. Instead of "self-reflection" we are dealing with an "assisted" kind of reflexivity. We are not operating with one active

performer and one passive listener in any of the situations. We shape each other through dialogue:

Agnar: (about Tore) *...he was so grumpy...*
Tore: *I was sitting there from 3 pm to like 5-6 in the morning, then*
                  I went to bed and got up at 08.30 am, got the bus at 8.50
                  ...it was the same...the same routine....
Co-moderator: *How was it at school, then...?*
Tore: (I was) *tired, fucking tired....so I didn't ...I didn`t get a lot of*
                  sleep, to be fair
Ivar: *He used all the memory on his PC ...that takes some effort ...*
                  (Addressing Agnar): *Like you used to be...*
Tore: *Well, but I got past it, he is still there...*
Ivar: (addressing Agnar) *Yeah but now you get to see how it is, just...*
Agnar: *Yeah, Tore, I need help...*

For such reasons, elements from the dialogue, being it rudiments of talk or more completed discussions, also became a part of the analysis of maneuvers in the indeterminate space that this thesis is about.

VII) Final discussion/ implications for practice

Flashback on the aim of the thesis

In this thesis, I have aimed at contributing to a timelier and more appropriate conceptual framework for substance and crime prevention towards indicated adolescents (16-18).

The empirical basis for the thesis is a focus group material where 17 adolescents between 16 and 18 years of age contributed. They largely fit the criteria for "indicated" or "secondary" substance and crime prevention. I explored how those adolescents made sense of their maneuvering in areas of significance for future wellbeing, with a particular focus on substance use practices and abidance of the law.

By "timely" I, in this context, mean to take into account the increasing complexity and ever-shifting nature of society that consumerism has brought about. The predominating prevention practices of the last two or three decades have in contrast based themselves on premises that in my view better fitted within the more universally constituted and invariable industrialist society. An example of premises stemming from the industrialist era is that the life course is predictable and that expert conceptualizations range over target group conceptualizations as a basis for professional preventive effort.

I assumed that adolescents who find themselves in a morally indeterminate space with regard to substance use and abidance of the law may in a perspective with a major emphasis on predictability and invariability be interpreted as more "far gone" than they really are.

As a consequence of the intention to be timely, I established a framework for analysis of the material that combined elements from theory on late modern life shaping and social theory on how consumerism has affected social constraint. The material has all the same been discussed in the light of theory elements derived from discourse on risk as predictable.

Based on tendencies in the current data material, my conclusion is that if prevention practices do not reflect the increased emphasis on agency and complexity in contemporary society, fruitful communication between prevention workers and adolescents around essential life shaping issues may be blocked.

Tentative maneuvers in an indeterminate space

Participant maneuvers and participant conceptualizations were explored along two dimensions: one spatial-temporal dimension and one relational dimension. Along the spatial - temporal dimension, I scrutinized how participants related to the future, both generally and in relation to the risk implied in many of their daily life arrangements. I also paid attention to how they seemed to experience their space of opportunity and how they exploited their objective life chances. Along the relational dimension, I predominantly explored how the study participants related to standard norm sets on substance use and abidance of the law on the one hand, and to more deviant norm sets on the other.

With regard to temporal orientation, attempts in the current study at having participants create pictures of their future merely *"out of the blue"* tended to fail. Moreover, participants did not seem to link their own involvement in risk prone activities with negative future outcomes. Thereby, they did not succeed in meeting the most central assumptions involved in the discourse on risk as calculable and predictable. According to such discourse, which shapes the predominant basis for contemporary prevention effort, a link between present and future is salient because any step which is made in the present will be of vital importance for future wellbeing. In addition, the fruits of present efforts and sacrifices may only be fully harvested in the future.

The participants predominantly also seemed to lack a determined direction in life. At the same time as they pointed to the rich opportunities that still exist in the Norwegian welfare society for avoiding situations that they spoke of with contempt, like ending up as an "addict", being dependent on welfare benefit, etc., their own imageries were relatively few of where a positive exploitation of life chances could lead them. Besides, they seemed to ignore the fact that their present lifestyle choices could entail dependency on the system. The lack of foresight in this area particularly runs counter to life shaping ideals in late modernity, often described as *"self-efficacy", "self-regulation", etc.* (See Frønes & Strømme, 2010).

Interestingly, and in contrast to the ignorance of long-term risk on their own behalf, however, participants seemed to assume a link between present risk prone arrangements and negative outcomes on behalf of peers that they worried about. Moreover, they identified a wide range of short-term risks and dangers that could affect them in their everyday environment. At some level, thus, participants nonetheless counted on risk discourse, but not in relation to the aspect that is ranged as most important with that discourse.

Also with regard to substance use and abidance of the law a discrepancy was identified. Participants largely seemed to identify with mainstream standard moral norms with regard to substance use and abidance of the law. They on certain occasions could speak in a critical voice about rule breaking. Nevertheless, they at the same tried to minimize the effects of their own heavy drinking, experimentation with illicit substance use, or petty crime and

tended to be evasive. Examples of this inconsistency are that they could keep up affiliation with more deviant youths at the same time as they took exceptions to the most deviant life styles. The tendency seemed to be rooted in the shame that largely is attached to risk prone activity in contemporary society. Few want a reputation as a bad person.

However, there were also certain indications in the material that participants could feel attracted or fascinated by certain aspects of the deviant acts, even though they condemned such acts on a mere theoretical basis.

Thus, the participants largely left a vague impression with regard to both substance use and abidance of the law, and with regard to how they exploited their objective space of opportunity. The tendencies described above have been identified in other research as well and seem in many respects to apply to both "at risk" and "ordinary" youth.

Although the observed vagueness may be negative both in a perspective of prediction and in a contingency perspective, the views on how fatal it is seem to be dependent on the perspective from which we view the described phenomena. The adolescents in question could, for instance, be viewed as either "ordinary" or "high risk" youths or as a combination of the two.

Even though the distinction line between "ordinary" and "at risk" youths is difficult to draw, a view of the young participants as extraordinary is often observed. Both with regard to use of substances and in other respects their "at risk" aspects overshadow their "ordinary" aspects. In spite of being well intentioned in its original idea, "at risk" discourse may for such reasons leave "at risk" youths with a negative symbolic categorization of self. "Disrespectful" or "careless" are examples of those negative symbolic categorizations that are most likely to be imposed on the self in consumer society. When viewed in this way, avoidance of the risk label in relation to self is rather a product than a reason for the labeling as disrespectable.

If prevention workers do not question the appropriateness of risk assessment while the potentially reprehensible acts still have not become persistent, a downward spiraling negative self-regard may be the result. Once having been categorized, navigation through the normative landscape is fairly constrained.

The tendencies that were observed in the current material do not evoke the same kind of worry in a perspective of late modern theory. Late modern theory on temporal orientation and life shaping implies that future is unpredictable and that risk is a highly differentiated and context-dependent phenomenon. Discontinuity of problematic behaviors is as likely as their un-reflected continuity. Because of the high extent of differentiation, the only person that is capable of identifying risk and of exerting risk control is the single agent.

However, late modern theory on social constraint, in terms of symbolic economy, represents a necessary supplement to mere late modern theory on life shaping and future contingency. It provides a more profound explanation of human action as primarily embodied and non-calculative. Besides, one may by means of it be more able to consider that few people relate to

197

risk according to "at risk" discourse. One may also better grasp that consistency is not a widespread mode of operating in the social field, and that most people have lower life shaping ambitions than assumed in late modern theory. Symbolic power often has an arbitrary basis. Last, but not least one may in light of symbolic power realize that their epidemiological status with regard to future risk simply is vague, and not determinable in the negative sense. "Vague" in this sense means that it was difficult both to pathologize and to normalize the participants.

Limitations of the study: How far could the conclusions be drawn?

How universal and transferrable to other contexts or points in time are the data?

Because one ambition behind the study was to be explorative and to be producing as rich, qualitative data as possible, I selected the participants strategically. Generalization to the whole population in the strictest statistical sense was never an aim so systematic randomization as a selection method was therefore out of question. However, the issue whether I could draw conclusions about the current data beyond the very boundaries of the current sample is all the same important. The answer to the question though, is not very conclusive.

On the one hand, trends in the current data are viewed against conclusions from other research literature with the same kind of target group and that stem from approximately the same cultural context. It is a claim in a pragmatic-reflexive research that scholastic concepts and practical reason complement each other as much as possible in order to be objectified. The phenomena that emerge within an utterance or in a sequence of conversation are, as a part of analysis, detached from the very specific context in which they have arisen. Thereafter, one describes them by means of those scholastically derived concepts that seem appropriate in the context. The utterance or sequence may thus evoke recognition and provide meaning beyond the very concrete participant group. Although we can never speak of a *direct* correspondence between the current data and other populations, any single dialogue or comment may carry rich information to the extent that it points beyond the concrete individuals involved in a study. They are "*a special case of what is possible within the logic of the social world*" (see Bourdieu, 1998:2). All the same, the data primarily represent a basis for creation of new questions and reflections, and are to a lesser extent meant to produce stable answers.

On the other hand, we could hardly capture the practical reality implied in a data set by means of rules, norms or causal models (see also Sulkunen, 2009). It is, for instance, an assumption in existential philosophy that if we make "being" into something abstract we miss the essence of it (May, 1971). According to such assumptions, focus should not be on *«has been"* or on fixed categories, but on"*dasein"* (op cit.) Bourdieu (2005) among others has therefore warned against the fallacy of making conclusions about phenomena that at first glance seem equivalent and comparable across contexts. A cross-sectional glance may simply isolate the phenomena from those broader systems or structures from which they derive.

Even when we deal with culturally homogenous groups, something that often is the case in focus group studies; we must have in mind that the single participants appropriate the common culture in highly personalized ways (Hydén & Bülow, 2003). Besides, each individual also affiliates to several social fields at the same time (Bourdieu, 1992), something which entails differentiated practices also *within* the individual.

The participants of the current study, in spite of meeting certain common selection criteria, represented after all different social fields and different distribution of those capital forms that Bourdieu (1986) has described, namely cultural, social and economic capital. "Symbolic capital" in this sense refers to the scarce goods, which those who set the tone in the different social fields hold as the most attractive. Access to prevailing symbolic capital in larger society could differ among participants

All conclusions based on assumptions of a "group truth" may therefore be misleading. When formulations like "participants tended to ", "participants were" etc. have been employed the aim has been to indicate certain shared trends of meaning making among youths in the sample.

Limitations with regard to data temporal validity

However, also the fact that the world is complex and rapidly shifting may mean that the data have limited validity beyond the concrete context. Besides, in relation to the concrete study in question I engendered the data within a very limited period in time. In principle, I know nothing about how the participants in the sample maneuvered beyond that period.

Just because data merely capture meaning making at a certain point in history, it could certainly have been fruitful with regard to validity for professional practice if the study had followed the current participants for a longer period in time. Qualitative follow-up studies seem to be relatively rare, but all the same valuable (see for instance Caledon, 1996). To meet them again as young adults could for, instance, also have provided interesting information. With basis in a longitudinal design, I could have studied the impact of society's ever shifting nature at the same time as I could have identified those tendencies that kept stable over time.

If re-encounters with participants had been possible, one could also have explored whether they in their manoeuvring and meaning-making were still indeterminable with regard to substance use and abidance of the law, significantly more deviant than in the general population or predominantly in line with "normal" tendencies, and how this varied between individuals. Moreover, I could have tried to produce more qualitative data on the "eternal" question of exactly which adolescents who are likely to proceed to statuses that are more deviant. The latter research issue would probably have required a somewhat different design, although still being based on in–depth exploration of cases. In addition, a long-term perspective on data could have contributed to a clearer picture and a deeper understanding of the purpose of the manoeuvres in the indeterminate space. Yet, this kind of effort would hardly have been feasible within the frames of a PhD project. The endeavour of going into depth with a limited number of cases, which is the most appropriate approach when complex social phenomena are to be explored (Yin, 2009), is highly resource demanding, even on a cross-sectional basis.

Tentativeness as a principal concept to characterize manoeuvres in the morally indeterminate space

It has been suggested several times above that we do not know where the distinction line between "normal" and "deviant" is running and will probably never know. One of the most important qualifications that social workers or other professionals involved in prevention work of this kind could have is thus the capacity to remain in this uncertainty without ending up in either "laissez-faire" positions or in positions based on absolute certainty.

An apparent tendency in the current data material was, as the above summary may indicate, that participant maneuvering often seemed to be highly tentative. To a considerable extent, being tentative is appreciated in consumer society. Baumann (2007) among others has underscored the need to exert the *"readiness to change at short notice"* and Giddens (1991) has described late modern life shaping as the capacity to consider emerging potentialities in a tentative and flexible way.

 Yet, the maneuvering of the current participants was most often tentative in the sense that it lacked any decisive direction. It seemed as if the consciousness that is required for becoming a respected person was not necessarily immediately accessible. Because the future seemed opaque and the further direction somewhat obscured, the current participants were rather open to tentatively testing out all activities or arrangements that could immediately appear as attractive or feasible, although they might have second thoughts about them later on.

As noted in the previous discussion of the data, although having no direction may entail deteriorated wellbeing in the future tentativeness in the described sense is not primarily an indication of an already ongoing slippage into hardened deviance. It may rather serve as a protection against such slippage or as a delay of a more determined direction in the sense that one is open to a wide range of life arrangements whether of the deviant or the more conformed kind. Tentativeness may even represent the first attempts at finding one`s way within the prevailing expectations of the morally appropriate.

Tentativeness in relation to other life shaping concepts

Tentativeness when used in this thesis is thus nothing but a term or metaphor for those more or less directionless and non-reflected maneuvers that I observed in the current material and that could not be categorized as more deliberate and rationally planned deviance from standard norms. The term "tentativeness" could have been substituted by other and better-known concepts. Matza's concept "Drift" (see Matza, 1964) seems to be the closest. Yet, it has been disputed whether the concept of "Drift" really expresses directionless-ness. As directionless-ness was a strong tendency in the current data, the ambiguity of the concept is the main reason why I did not find it appropriate.

Lexical information about the etymology of "tentativeness"[31] seems to support my immediate assumption that the term spans from the embodied to more conscious aspects of action. In the journal article on the current data material (Juberg, 2011) I described how participants **tent**atively moved between passive subjugation to a specific **tend**ency on the one hand to a more explicit and determined in**tent**ion on the other.

The formulation "non-directional, but intentional" in relation to my description of "tentativeness" in the article could be misleading. In the article, I also somewhat misleadingly employed the term "positioning". Both terms have strong connotations of something exclusively rational. What I meant to express was that there is a future utility involved in any life arrangement, even when we do not exactly know where we are heading. Neither in this thesis have I used tentativeness as a rational kind of orientation.

Because the described significance of tentativeness opposes rationalist notions of life shaping, it seems to fit the timelier framework of conceptualization for prevention effort towards youth in the morally indeterminate space. According to Beck (2009) for instance, emphasis on choice and trade-off considerations may fit within market economy, but not with the demands implied in late modern life shaping. Any *"just do it"* or *"just say no"* ideology[32] of the kind that in recent years has heavily influenced much prevention practice seems thus counterproductive. Rather, the predominantly implicit character of how the individual operates in the social space when it comes to "doing the right thing" must be acknowledged. To a certain extent, tentativeness also reflects the described change in ideological premises that consumer society has brought about with regard to how risk is viewed. Risk in consumer society is more all evasive but also more differentiated than risk in industrialism. One must combat it in ways that are more flexible and not least, more idiosyncratic.

Beck (op cit.) has suggested that the wisdom that is required for tackling of non-calculability will gain increased influence in the future.

Because the term tentativeness is relatively ambiguous, and therefore may be interpreted in more ways, it seems necessary to discuss it against more theoretically based concepts like *"practical reason"* and the judgment implied in *"phronesis"*. It also seems crucial to ask what the difference between these terms really is.

Like tentativeness, both *"practical reason"* and *"phronesis"* oppose the rationalist assumption of calculability and the assumption that single cases may constitute general rules. Rather than being rule-based, practical reason may, for instance, imply *"systematically developed forms of everyday understanding"* and reflect the dynamic, normative character of social episodes that the single agent captures and conceptualizes (Brinkmann, 2007). This seems close to how Flyvbjerg (2009) has described *"phronesis":* it refers to the profound relation that each person has got to society while acting. A sound life and "normal" life

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[31] The term derives from the Latin *tentativus* ("trying, testing") See http://www.ordsiden.no/ordbok. php?ordbok=tentative (06.12.2010). http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/tentative(06.12.2010). en.wiktionary.org/wiki/tentative (06.12.2010)**.**
[32] See explicit references in relation to those expressions in previous part of the thesis.

shaping process implies flexibility, but this is a flexibility that may not be prescribed. Once in possession of *phronesis*, however, one knows how to behave under shifting circumstances (op cit.).

Hence, both practical reason and *"phronesis"* have a normative character. Implicit in them is the acknowledgement of the strong drive in all people towards being understood and acknowledged by people in one`s closest environments. *"Doing the right thing"* or "*doing the socially appropriate*" is the key to such acknowledgement. Although the drive to do the right thing seems to be deeply embedded in the human nature, tentativeness leaves the spectator more doubtful with regard to orientation towards the norm.

Although there is an apparent kinship between "practical reason" and "*phronesis*", I do not discuss "phronesis" further. Its primary function is as I view it to designate that kind of knowledge that theoretical or practical terms cannot capture. I will therefore go on by merely discussing practical reason and tentativeness in opposition to each other.

Like other authors who have written about practical reason, also Bourdieu (1998) has described the phenomenon as broader as and fresher than the reality that scientific rules and scholastically derived concepts convey. One may say that practical reason represents a more implicit version of what a theorist expresses in a more scientific and explicit way (Brinkmann, op cit.).

Bourdieu (op cit.), among other things, accentuates how practical reason because of its embodied character distinguishes itself from utilitarian theory. Utilitarian theory assumes that agents always have an aim and that any action constitutes a calculated part of a larger individual project.

Actually, practical reason may appear as embodied and self-evident to the extent that it is only by means of exploration of its etymological and ontological origin that the more explicit sense behind its use may be revealed or objectified (Marthinsen, 2003:3-4). Exactly because of this dynamic, a discrepancy may develop over time between everyday practices on the one hand and their original practical necessity on the other. In the end, one merely adjusts to the norm without further reflection, even in those cases when it is not individually beneficial. Historically inherited structures, which the language both mediates and modifies, influence what people view at any given time as "*the right thing"* (op cit.).

Inherent in practical reason is thus also that it stretches itself towards what, at any given time, is conceived of as normal and desirable in the larger social fields as the product of a tacit social "contract". When the participants in the current study spontaneously pointed to life arrangements that most people in consumer society hold as important, or when they more implicitly referred to such arrangements practical reason was involved. The phenomenon "positive neutralization" that I touched on in the section about maneuvers along the horizontal dimension is, not least, interesting in this respect. .

Yet, there is also an apparent distinction between *"tentativeness"* and *"practical reason"*. Instead of merely stretching towards mainstream life arrangements, exertion of tentativeness also encompasses an openness towards any mode of life shaping, regardless of its being "normal" or "deviant". Since there is evidence that future possibility often is perceived as obscured in adolescence and the consequences of illegal or harmful substance use or rule breaking have not been thoroughly reflected on, deviant or "grey zone" activity may even appear as equally or even more attractive than modes that are more normalized.

Such a pattern is among the factors which makes the space that the current adolescents found themselves in indeterminable. Matza has described this indeterminability in his work "Drift". An individual who stays between relative normalcy and relative deviance is *"neither committed nor compelled to deeds nor choosing them"* (Matza, 1964:28).

Nonetheless, some of those life arrangements that the tentative agent considers and that at first sight appear as the most attractive or accessible may have consequences that prevent broader social inclusion and recognition.

The remaining discussion of this final part of the thesis will revolve around tentativeness as an appropriate metaphor or recurring theme for understanding of the maneuvres of youth in the morally indeterminate space and of how such understanding may assist the youth in determining their direction.

Why is prevention in relation to tentative adolescents warranted?

As noted in the introductory paragraphs of the thesis, epidemiologists warn against measures that define prevention in relation to adolescents in the current age group. Few negative tendencies are really deadlocked at that stage in life. Health promotion is viewed as the only acceptable professional effort. Yet, promotion has a relatively unspecific character. In my opinion, a specific focus both on the upward and sideways aspect of life shaping is needed in communication with the youths. The reason why most of the current participants experienced a drop in their share value in the symbolic market primarily seemed to be that they both had violated respectability notions in a more visible way than many others and that they had modest future ambitions. Being tentative with regard to norm orientation and future orientation is hardly possible in the narrow normative climate of contemporary society without suffering social exclusion. Thus, it is merely the negative symbolic status that is imposed on youths in the morally indeterminate space that makes prevention effort towards them warrantable. One may resign from respectable society, but it is in principle impossible to resign from the symbolic market.

Implications of tentativeness as a key term for practice

According to Bourdieu (1998:79), it is an aim in human relations to *" defuse this sort of hold that social games have on socialized agents."* Yet, such defusing is difficult because it cannot occur in terms of the "conversion" of consciousness that is assumed as "natural" in utilitarian philosophy (op cit.). Thus, despite the heavy emphasis on reflection and positive exploitation of life chances in contemporary society, people`s capacity for being reflective in their life shaping processes is, all the same, over-praised (Ixer, 1999). In the works of Bourdieu, the move from a bounded to a liberated mind is rather to be compared to the processes of increased consciousness implied in psychoanalysis (Wilken, 2008).

The overall aim of prevention that aims at promoting individual judgment is therefore to facilitate the process from unconscious to conscious in communication with indicated adolescents.

In the subsequent paragraphs, I will try to single out certain principles that seem apt at facilitating the leap from unconscious to conscious in communication with indicated adolescents and that have support both in the current data material as well as in relevant literature. The following principles seemed particularly relevant:

- Establishing the domestic sphere as the basis for prevention practice
- Allowing for non-calculability, ambiguity and un-determinability
- Dialogical practices as facilitators of life shaping processes
- Allowing for access to work life and other meaningful activity

These principles may also be viewed as interrelated to a considerable extent.

Establishing the domestic sphere as the basis for prevention practice

If we, in the focus groups of the current study, had not started the group discussions with questions revolving around the "risks next door", participants could probably have felt "alienated" and only provided superficial everyday examples. When future is experienced as remote and opaque, such prompts only poorly capture the totality of everyday life experience.

Yet, how to make participants talk was not the only concern with regard to the choice of starting with participants` home sphere. In addition, considerations of a more philosophical kind were involved. Freire (1977:163-164) has, for instance, stated that the totality of human experience must be involved in order to promote a more conscious direction in life. Sorrows and doubts, hopes, self-perceptions, fatalisms and oppositions are all of them elements that constitute the totality (op cit.). According to Freire, revolutionary leaders have often forgotten to consider such totality of human experience in striving for societal change and have thus suffered defeat.

In contemporary literature there seems to be relative consensus across research paradigms that conventional "educational" prevention practices are of less worth than those practices based on the experiences that young people acquire in their spare time. All the same, substance prevention has until recently most often been developed and exerted within educational settings. Some suggest that this apparent tendency to stick to school-based programs which are educational and instructive in their form may explain why substance prevention generally has been of a limited value (Room, 2005 b). The totality of life shaping processes that also includes appropriation of the implicit rules for such as alcohol use can only be captured in adolescents` leisure environments (op cit.). Not least, party settings must be viewed as a legitimate part of adolescents' leisure time, as they provide a wide range of opportunities for preparation to adult life (Demant & Østergaard, 2007).

Late modern pedagogics tend to accentuate that "learning for life" is not about transmission of knowledge but the result of a transformation process that continuously goes on between individuals within the same cultural and historical context (Lawrence & Valsiner, 1993). No single element in such a process can be made completely explicit, isolated or prescribed.

Not least, culturally oriented theories on the development of crime and substance user careers seem to have adopted this kind of pedagogic thinking. Frønes (2006), for instance, has emphasized how the peer group distinguishes itself from school settings or from the family when it comes to "learning for life". The implicit learning processes that go on in the family and that aim at achieving a kind of lifestyle that promotes social inclusion and general wellbeing certainly has its value. Yet, they are based on tradition and are governed by universal and linear principles. To youth in an individualist society they may therefore appear of lesser value. As indicated also in a previous reference to Frønes (op cit.), it is the peer group that constitutes the major venue for appropriation of those implicit rules that matter for a positive life shaping. The learning that takes place within the peer group bases itself on the complexity of contemporary society and therefore appears as more trustworthy to adolescents. It also has quite another impact on them. This implies an upgrading of the peer group as a positive source for life shaping.

In line with this, the evidence is growing that the peer group often serves as a buffer against norm deviance or functions as a source for taking action in line with prevailing norms (Calvó-Armengol & Jackson, 2010; Dumas, Ellis, & Wolfe, 2012; Pozzoli & Gini, 2010). Therefore, prevention practices that encompass peers may assist adolescents in grasping their life chances within the normative fellowship and facilitate a more self-actualizing way of life shaping. Yet, it requires a certain level of adult guidance.

Allowing for non-calculability, ambiguity and un-determinability

Although the evidence is strong that the life shaping process is as much horizontal as linear, the utilitarian belief is strong that life trajectories inevitably are oriented towards some kind of calculated pay-off far ahead. Therefore, the vague future projects of the current participants and the fact that they did not actively exert future planning may appear negative on a utilitarian basis.

By doing so, one ignores the fact that one cannot *calculate* correspondence between objective probability for development of positive life chances and subjective chance of success (Bourdieu, 2005). Although tentativeness does not imply the same commitment to standard norms as practical reason, also tentativeness in this perspective implies an opportunity for a more determined direction in life. One just has to pick up some of the clues that are implied in it for a more determined direction and as much as possible view those clues in the light of contingency.

For instance, certain short moments of reflection occurred during focus group sessions that seemed to bridge directionless tentativeness with the reflectedness that is needed in order to meet late modern life conditions. In those moments, among other things, the relative boundary between the normal and the deviant and the consequences of each seemed to occur to participants in novel ways.

Although not very explanatory, I provide below an integrated and simplified version of the previously presented figures 1 and 2. The figure is a close-up excerpt of the inner space of the original figure, which I previously called "the indeterminate space", but which I here describe as "the tentative space" of individual judgment:
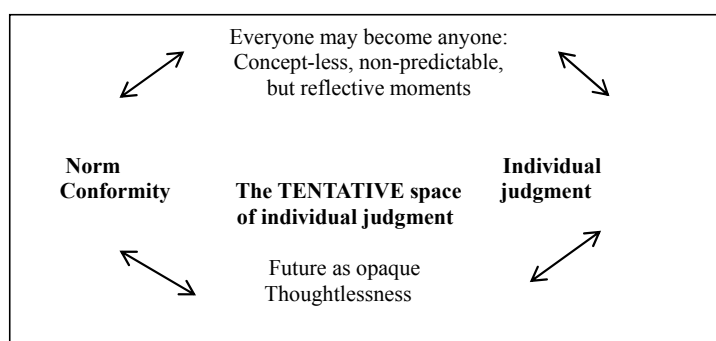

Figure 3: The tentative space of individual judgment

The figure is particularly meant to illustrate the momentary basis for renewal that also was suggested in the section where I discussed and presented data from the focus groups.

The tendencies to seize the moment that were after all observed in the current data are not sensational in a late modern perspective on time. Since present and future are viewed as integrated and thus haves become *"within reach of human agency"* (Reith, 2004 a), each moment, although occurring on a seemingly arbitrary basis may in the principle be not only a moment of continuation but also of renewal. Bakhtin (1993), in particular, has accentuated the significance of the *"only-once-occurring"* moments for a life shaping in line with the ethical principles that most people share. Even the future utility implied in consumerist principles like *"everyone may become anyone"* and *"what`s in it for me"* are in this perspective of contingency best met on a moment-to-moment basis. Thus, the short moments of reflection in the current data suggest that there is continuity rather than discontinuity between directionless and unconscious tentativeness on the one hand and the kind of individual judgment that is more conscious on the other.

A prerequisite for this leap from tentative to reflected to occur seems to be that one, instead of disregarding the directionless-ness implied in tentativeness, may look for those attempts at "making the best out of it" that it after all implies. Being an indeterminable somebody is probably less risky in the social sense of the term than being an apparently negative somebody.

For instance, participants of the current study predominantly seemed to spend most of their energy on appearing as indeterminable as possible out of the fear to otherwise being viewed as an "addict" or a "criminal". This may indicate hope.

When one is accepting the potentialities implied in tentativeness one may also discover that the rationalist expectation towards everyday conversation to be straightforward and logical is unrealistic. Any recording of everyday speech may, however, reveal the wide range of contradictions and inconsistencies implied in the way most people speak. This kind of tendency was also apparent in the transcripts from audio-recordings that the current data analysis based itself on.

Once being aware of the normalcy of being non-calculative and ambiguous, it is crucial to develop a mode of communication with "at risk" youths that does not pinpoint the conversation on a premature basis. Rather, one must broaden those opportunities for interpretation that the language contains, and have time and capacity enough for a continued communication when the youths start to talk about the things that really engage them right now without imposing premature evaluations on them. The current data suggest that they even make trade-off evaluations relatively frequently when the communicative situations allow for it. I will go more into detail on the potentiality implied in dialogue to enhance reflection in a subsequent subsection.

Yet, there is no reason to over-identify with or romanticize directionless tentativeness. If the

aim is a more determined direction in life, reinforcement of ambiguity must be avoided in the end. Youths in the same situation as those youths who participated in the current study merit sufficient assistance in order not to end up in statuses in which problems are more difficult to handle.

Dialogical practices as facilitators of life shaping processes

Most theory that stems from the linguistic turn counts on language as the primary factor for mediation of such reflective moments. Therefore, as also emphasized in the previous subsection on allowance of ambiguity one should never underestimate the role of language for facilitating the leap from predominantly embodied tentativeness to more reflected modes. Society in this perspective is present in the language, and we can hardly get any closer to the cultural expectations that are "posed for the adolescent" (See Vygotsky, 1987) than by means of language.

During group sessions in the current study, the asking of follow-up questions or putting words into play in other ways proved to make a difference with regard to a more profound understanding of the practical sense behind participant maneuvering. A *"yeah?"* as a moderator response to a statement, for instance, often proved to be sufficient enough for bringing conversation onto more reflected levels, at least on a momentary basis. Probably, the *"yeah?"* served as a hint that signalized curiosity and faith that the youth has something sensible to bring.

Inspired by Bhaktin's concept of dialogism, and in line with Frønes` conclusions about adolescent communication, Seikkula (2000) has emphasized how monologues tend to base themselves on timeless truths and questions that require clear answers. Dialogues, in contrast, may convey personal development or change. This may be ascribed to the fact that man is inherently social (op cit.). According to Seikkula, who has primarily developed his use of dialogues for the therapy context, one must create a dialogical climate if conventional practices have not provided such a climate from the outset. The climate does not necessarily shape itself. Conscious use of dialogue within treatment contexts indicates that those phenomena and themes that tend to emerge are of a kind that are of salient worth for the further life course (op cit.). In the subsection on lifestyle and social constraint, I have suggested that the more those topics were allowed for that appealed to participants' immediate devotion, the more existential the topics became.

The data analysis also indicated that conversation in focus groups is not only an appropriate research method that is apt at capturing non-reflected and unarticulated knowledge. The focus group method also seems to have certain inherent propensities that facilitate the bridging between tentativeness and more determined maneuvers in the social space. There are, for instance, some apparent reasons why focus groups in which teenagers exchange ideas have been described as *"identity work here and now"* (Demant, 2007). In particular, the focus group may provide a unique possibility for exploitation of the horizontally oriented way

in which adolescents approach life-shaping issues in communication with each other (see Frønes, 2006).

Hence, given skilful composition and avoidance of the most sensitive or private topics, the principles implied in the focus group could be used as a part of professional prevention. Certainly, there is no guarantee that free speech of the kind that is encouraged in a research setting may be allowed for if the prevention effort is carried out within educative systems. There, the aim is most often to exert behaviour control at some level. A prerequisite for successful focus group work in prevention is therefore that the exchange between members in such groups may go on relatively uncensored and that ambiguity with regard to substance use and abidance of the law remains unsanctioned. Outreach social work seems to be the setting in which focus group as a method is most feasible. Yet, also school nurses, school social workers or vocational advisers who have permission from their administrations to allow for tentativeness would probably find that the principles that focus groups are based on are valuable.

Does indicated prevention based on dialogue, nudging and scaffolding have something in common?

The above suggested principles for a prevention practice which acknowledges non-calculability, but aims at more conscious judgment, may in many ways be summed up by the concept of "nudging" (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

Nudging is a practice that has recently gained much attention. It, according to the cited authors, opposes "pure" rationalism and the idealized emphasis on free choice in consumerist theory. These authors, for instance, assumed that we do not always make those choices that according to theory on strategic action could yield most pay-off in the end. Most of us rather tend to avoid long-term planning and delay of gratification, although we all wish the best for ourselves in the end. By acknowledging such "weaknesses" nudging, according to Thaler and Sunstein, unifies paternalism and libertinism. Free choice is emphasized as a basis for human action at the same time as it is acknowledged that contemporary society may need "choice architects" who in indirect ways try to influence people's chances of obtaining lives that are more in line with prevailing conceptions of health and "the good life". In this respect, nudging may also be described as a soft kind of paternalism (op cit.). A classical example of nudging practices provided by Thaler and Sunstein is the placing of healthy foods at eye level (and probably near the checkout counter) in supermarkets.

At least in this respect, the cited authors tend to acknowledge that power exertion in contemporary society has taken on a subtle shape and that it lacks an identifiable source. One also seems to assume that the development towards increased individualism makes people insusceptible to external instructions or control. At least people like to think that they exert a highly individualized kind of judgment.

Besides, the conceptualization of future as an inaccessible and unpredictable aspect of being is visible also in the theory on nudging. Deterring future scenarios around negative outcomes of health neglect have little appeal within such a frame of reference. Nudging thus seems to base itself on the same tacit agreement as "practical reason".

One could probably also have concluded that the phenomenon of nudging may be implied in the processes in which patterns that are more deviant are adopted. As noted previously, the ways in which youths may become involved in problem substance use tend to base themselves on the same kind of premises as nudging. It is a non-calculative process, and not the result of explicit planning or persuasion. Culturally oriented empirical studies on how substance user practices are appropriated also suggest that they who search for a rational and hidden meaning behind substance user practices may search in vain (see Aldridge et al., 2011). Rather, substance user practices tend to be *"neither pre-planned nor rationally reasoned"* (Schulenberg & Maggs, 2001). Likewise, criminology literature suggests crime ideology and crime practice among youths seems to be intercepted rather than instructed (Ericsson et al., 1994).

Yet, the concept with its kinship to paternalistic ideas seems to be unambiguously oriented towards the normative. Therefore, the use of nudging in relation to processes of tentative or more persistent deviance does not seem appropriate.

The concept with its emphasis on development as a collaborative project may even be considered as a consumerist version of the far more known concept from pedagogy of "scaffolding". Lexically, scaffolding refers to a *"temporary arrangement erected around a building for convenience of workers"*. [33] In pedagogics inspired by Vygotsky (1987, 1978) scaffolding rather means the teacher`s facilitation of children and adolescents` self-directed learning. Whereas the learner is left the major responsibility for own learning, the teacher both in person and in other ways provides culturally constituted tools by means of which the learner may appropriate the culture.

Scaffolding is closely related to the Vygotsky concept *"zone of the proximate development"* (ZPD), a concept which has got centrality in the cited works when it comes to how higher mental capacities develop in children and adolescents. The learner is encouraged and gets help to go beyond his or her current intellectual capacity. The collaborative effort implied in the concept is viewed as a prerequisite for agency. It mediates between the culture and the individual. Only in this theoretical context does the concept of scaffolding make pedagogical sense (Verenikina, 2004). There has according to the cited author been a tendency to employ the concept somewhat uncritically.

As suggested in the section on the data from the present study, both the focus group method and the one-to-one-talk that occurs in counseling possess the capacity to stimulate the process

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[33] Thesaurus Legend: Synonyms Related Words Antonyms Based on WordNet 3.0. Farlex clipart collection. © 2003-2012 Princeton University, Farlex Inc. http://www.thefreedictionary.com/scaffolding

towards more abstract thinking[34] and a more conscious attitude towards life, and could therefore also be viewed as a kind of "scaffolding". Not least, such communication mediates between individual and culture, agency and structure. The speakers in a focus group session, for instance, appropriate certain recurring themes from the assembly of cultural meaning that the speakers share. On that basis, each speaker may design solutions that fit the specific social context to which the individual belongs and the distribution of symbolic capital that is most legitimate there.
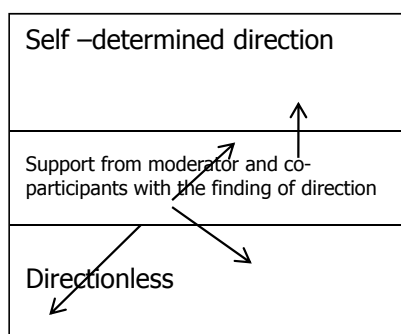
Fig 4: The zone of the proximate development in relation to the task of finding a more determined life direction.

Promotion of meaningful activity as a supplement to verbal communication

The fact that the scope of this thesis is limited to the making of a conceptualization framework for prevention effort does not mean that the more concrete measures are not important. Rather, promotion of meaningful activity as a supplement to verbal communication between adolescents and adults or between adolescents *is* of decisive value. Education and work life attendance has been emphasized in identity theory as a significant factor for identity shaping processes (see also Erikson, 1980). Therefore, some comments on this topic seem necessary. Vygotsky, based on the historical cultural tradition within pedagogy and psychology, has, for instance, underscored the decisive impact that solving of relevant task may have on adolescents` life shaping.

Thus, the sources that set the maturation process in action are primarily to be found in the societal demands on the adolescent:

> *It is precisely this emerging task, need or goal that is posed for the adolescent by the surrounding social environment that impels and forces him to make his decisive step of the development of his thinking* (Vygotsky, 1987:132).

Here we can see how individual development may take a leap forwards when the tasks one is expected to solve meet the potentialities that the adolescent possesses for stretching beyond

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[34] Dictionary of Collective Nouns and Group Terms. Copyright 2008 The Gale Group, Inc. All rights reserved./ http://www.thefreedictionary.com/scaffolding

the current development zone. This is a process which, not least, goes on at the neurocognitive level. According to Vygotsky, when one is solving tasks that are culturally adequate, the content and the form of the language gets integrated. These are two aspects both of which are needed for development of abstract thinking. The capacity of more abstract thinking in turn shapes the ground for life shaping in the broader sense.

In a world in which work life attendance is delayed, one has to compensate for the lack of life experience that in earlier times was provided through early work attendance or easily accessible apprenticeship. Because of the delay in work life attendance both neurocognitive stimulation of the capacity for abstract thinking and the self-shaping attempts that follow in the wake of it tend to lose some of its basis. The possibility for accomplishment of meaningful tasks is missing. Meaning and thus direction is first possible when an activity is able to meet individual needs. People are rarely aware of what they need without being involved in activities that may provide meaning (See also Leontiev, 2002, Minken, 1998). Skilfully facilitated education and career advice provision are therefore crucial measures in relation to youths who seem to have no firm foothold in any social field and who have got a sense of future as opaque. Some of those units that recruited participants for the current study had fully understood this, and had designed a practice in line with it. They involved at risk adolescents in meaningful activities that could aid them in taking up a more determined direction in life without directly enforcing them.

Not only education but also meaningful spare time activities of the kind that may prepare for the role of becoming adults fulfill such functions.

I hope that the attempt this final discussion represents at underscoring the need to view embodied and conscious life shaping endeavors in conjunction may bring fruitful inspiration to prevention in the future. Most of the tendencies have been observed before and theories have been made about them, but whereas many practices exist that are in line with the outlined principles, contemporary prevention ideology only scarcely considers it.

There therefore seems to be a need for further research to have a focus on individual judgment as a tool in prevention.

Conclusion:

As life shaping more than ever has become an individual responsibility, there are particularly three imperatives or challenges that have to be incorporated in future substance and crime prevention.

Firstly, it is imperative to question those discourses on risk that may entail negative symbolic categorizations. Secondly, youths should be challenged in taking the steps necessary for a more determinate direction in life. Finally, professionals need to assist youths in the development of the judgment required for being included in society.

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Attachments:

Forespørsel om deltakelse i prosjektet **"Innsyn i framtida":**

Kjære leser:

Jeg heter Anne Juberg og stipendiat ved Regionsenter for barn og unges psykiske helse (del av NTNU), og leder forskningsprosjektet **"Innsyn i framtida"** – rettet mot ungdom i aldersgruppen 16-18 år som kan tenkes å være i faresonen for å utvikle problemer, for eksempel med rusmidler, psykisk helse eller andre livsproblemer i framtida, og som voksne derfor er bekymret for. Prosjektet inngår i doktorgradsarbeidet mitt.

Hvorfor, Hva og Hvordan:

"Å være i faresonen" betyr å stå på et sted der det ennå er mulig å hindre eventuelle problemer å utvikle seg, eller å hindre at mindre problemer blir store problemer. Ungdommer som kan vurderes å være i faresonen har gjerne tanker og erfaringer som det vil være viktig å få innblikk i for fagfolk som driver med forebygging.

Prosjektet tar sikte på å bidra til innsikt i:
1) Hvordan ungdommene ser for seg framtida
2) Hvordan ungdommene ønsker å framstå og på hvilken måte det kommer fram i samtale med andre.
3) Hvor opptatt ungdommene er pr.i dag av å gjøre framtida mest mulig problemfri.
4) Hva som kan være viktigere eller mer verdifullt for ungdommene akkurat nå enn å tenke på framtida.

Dette er spørsmål som har vært lite belyst i forskning hittil.
De 4 temaene skal diskuteres i små grupper av ungdommer som fortrinnsvis kjenner hverandre litt fra før våren/ høsten 2007. Hver gruppe møtes 3 – 4 ganger, i et lokale i ungdommenes fritidsmiljø, og ledes av undertegnede og en prosjektmedarbeider.

Hva slags personlig utbytte kan deltakere få av å være med?

Vi legger vekt på at det skal være meningsfullt å delta for aktuelle ungdommer i prosjektet. Det personlige utbyttet kan for eksempel være:
- Anledning til å komme med synspunkter og bli hørt.
- Mulighet til å påvirke at tiltak fra det offentlige rettet mot ungdom i faresonen blir mer i tråd med hva ungdom i faresonen tenker.
- Erfaring som medforsker, og kanskje noen a-ha-opplevelser. En blir med på å utforske et område det er lite kunnskap om fra før.

Dessuten er det mulighet for at en kan bli inspirert til å tenke enda mer framover når det gjelder eget liv.

Godtgjøring:

Alle som deltar får et gavekort i en musikkforretning. I tillegg serverer vi mat på hvert møte, for å gjøre rammen rundt gruppediskusjonene hyggeligst mulig. Godtgjøring ut over dette inngår ikke.

mer viktig info på neste side:

234

Hva foregår under gruppediskusjonene?

I gruppediskusjonene vil vi holde oss til de 4 hovedspørsmålene på forrige side, belyst på forskjellige måter. Det er vårt ansvar som gruppeledere å styre gruppediskusjonene slik at det blir disse temaene, og ikke temaer som angår rent private forhold som fokuseres. **I tillegg:** Hver gruppedeltaker blir på det 3. møtet bedt om å fylle ut et standardskjema: "Selvrapportskjema for ungdom i alderen 11- 18 år". (Youth Self Report). Skjemaet skal besvares enkeltvis og anonymt. Det vil ta 20 – 30 minutter. Opplysningene bruker vi til å finne ut om deltakergruppa svarer til det som innen forskning og behandling er vanlig å regne som "ungdom i faresonen".

Hvordan er deltakere forsøkt rekruttert?

Kommunalt ansatte som driver oppsøkende arbeid blant ungdom eller jobber i andre tiltak for ungdom har tatt på seg å finne aktuelle deltakere. Flyeren som dere har fått tilsendt, er blitt brukt i den sammenhengen.

Hvem kan delta:

Alle ungdommer mellom 16 og 18 år kan delta som har lyst til å være med, som har samtykke fra foreldre eller foresatte, og som enten selv mener de er i faresonen for å utvikle ulike problemer, for eksempel knyttet til bruk av rusmidler (alkohol og/ eller andre rusmidler), eller som av andre (for eksempel foreldre eller andre voksne) er vurdert å være det. Det finnes mange grunner til at en kommer i faresonen, og ulike meninger om *når* en er det. Hvis det fortsatt er usikkerhet om hvem som kan delta, ta kontakt med undertegnede.

Deltakelsen er frivillig:

All deltakelse skal være absolutt frivillig. Enhver skal kunne trekke seg når som helst, uten å måtte oppgi noen grunn. Data som angår dem som trekker seg, kan slettes hvis det er ønskelig.

Tilbud om enkeltintervjuer:

Alle deltakere vil få tilbud om å bli intervjuet enkeltvis etter at gruppediskusjonene er avsluttet.

Eventuell risiko ved å delta:

Gruppediskusjonene skal være mer orientert mot muligheter enn problemer, og fortrinnsvis dreie seg om fellestrekk ved det å være i faresonen. Likevel kan måten gruppediskusjonene er lagt opp på, sette i gang mange tankeprosesser og følelser hos den enkelte deltaker. Noen vil kanskje komme til å ønske noen å snakke med etterpå.

Tilbud om annen oppfølging etter gruppediskusjonene:

Dersom deltakere under eller etter prosjektet føler trang til å drøfte personlige ting med en fagperson, står den kommunalt ansatte som har spurt dem om å være med i prosjektet, parat til å ta en samtale, og kan også bistå med evt. henvisning til spesialisthelsetjenester (slik som Barne og Ungdomspsykiatrien) dersom det er ønskelig. Vedkommende kan kontaktes direkte, eller gjennom oss som leder prosjektet.

Behandling av data/ avidentifisering/ offentliggjøring av resultater:

Både prosjektleder og assistent har taushetsplikt, også i forhold til den som har rekruttert deltakere. Vi er pålagt å oppbevare data nedlåst og utilgjengelig for andre. Vi må bruke lydopptaker under alle intervjuer og diskusjoner for å huske helheten i det som blir sagt. Prosjektet skal være avsluttet seinest i oktober 2009. Da vil alle data (lydbånd/ utskrifter) bli slettet. Det vil bli laget en kortfattet rapport/ brosjyre om de viktigste funnene i prosjektet. Den vil bli sendt ut til alle deltakere og deres foreldre/ foresatte. I tillegg vil tre artikler om prosjektet bli publisert i internasjonale/ nordiske tidsskrift. Ingen uvedkommende skal kunne kjenne igjen noen verken i brosjyren eller i artiklene.

Finansiering og godkjenning:

Prosjektet er finansiert av Regionsenter for barn og unges psykiske helse gjennom midler fra Sosial – og helsedirektoratet. Prosjektet er tilrådd av Regional komité for medisinsk forskningsetikk (REK),

som har vurdert frivillighet, samtykke, nytten av prosjektet sett i forhold til deltakernes personvern m.v. Prosjektet er dessuten vurdert og tilrådd av Personvernombudet for forskning ved Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelige datatjeneste – som spesielt har vurdert prosjektet i forhold til hvordan data skal behandles og oppbevares.

Fortsatt noe du lurer på? Ring gjerne undertegnede på tlf. nr. nedenfor eller send mail, for ytterligere opplysninger om prosjektet, eller for å gjøre en nærmere avtale.

Vennlig hilsen
Anne Juberg
Stipendiat / prosjektleder
RBUP – NTNU -   Tlf. 73590157 / 90129033: E- post: anne.juberg@ntnu.no

Samtykkeskjema:

Prosjektets navn og tema:

"Innsyn i framtida" Hvordan ungdommer i alderen 16-18, som vurderes å være i fare for å utvikle psykososiale problemer i tilknytning til bruk av alkohol og andre rusmidler, tenker og innretter seg rundt forhold som berører livskvalitet i det framtidige voksenlivet**.**

Samtykke-erklæring:

Jeg har lest orienteringsskrivet og har hatt anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker i å delta i dette prosjektet.

Sted :   Dato   /   - 2007

…………………………………………………………
Underskrift - deltaker

Jeg har lest orienteringsskrivet og har hatt anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker i at ………………………………..deltar i dette prosjektet.
                        Navn på deltaker

………………………………………………………….
Underskrift - foresatte

Retur til prosjektleder:
Samtykkeerklæringen sendes i vedlagte frankerte konvolutt, og returneres til prosjektleder på følgende adresse:

Anne Juberg
RBUP – Medisinsk – teknisk forskningssenter, 7489 TRONDHEIM

Reviewed and simplified interview guide

1. **Group - meeting:** *Most felt risks. Values. Future imaginary.*
Ex: Definitions of good days, bad days, tolerance of other people`s behaviour in relation to certain phenomena, what could we stand without experiencing a deteriorated life situation, dreams and plans for the future.

What is a good day – a good life, etc.?
What is acceptable /not acceptable related to harassment, drug and alcohol abuse, importunate others, violence?
How do mental problems manifest in young people?
Thinkable causes?
What is the point of using alcohol / other substances?
How much do alcohol and other substances affect the everyday life of young people?
Why do some young people use alcohol and substances in a harmful way?
What is required in order to be included in current peer groups?
What makes you loose respect for other people?
How do you like the future to look like: Dreams and plans?

2. **Group - meeting:** *Personal aspirations. Social practices Values.*
Dreams and plans in the light of the present:
Exploration of the concept of adulthood
Exploration of common values in society.

More concrete exchange of the plans and dreams of the participants: which are dreams and which are plans (if distinguishable)?
How are the plans and dreams related to how you act at the moment?
Personal resources of participants - examples
What is a"typical" Saturday (Friday) night (what did you do last Saturday/ Friday)
What is a "typical" ordinary night?
What do most people regard as important in life? /What are most "common" lifestyles?
How far into the future is it possible to think?
What is it like to be "grown up"   - how does the life of adults look like?
When does "the adult life "start?
Current risk factors for the peer – group the participants identify with (to the extent this is not covered in meeting 1)
Where on a risk scale from low risk to high risk would participants place themselves?
In the hindsight of your life so far: Advice you would give to younger siblings or someone else you care about
Turning points in life – examples

3. Meeting: *The future related to the present. The path forwards.*
What elements are important in getting further in life? / To get where they want Advice from participants on the concept.

What is needed of own efforts to get where you want?
What kind of support from others is important?
Associations related to the word «help". If the measure they are involved in is not "help" how is it defined?
How do they choose to communicate to others that adults are concerned about them or that they "taken care of" by authorities? (If appropriate)
What could be the reasons why some adolescents do not seek help in spite of evident risk situations?
Examples of peer support.
What are the particular contributions of / which qualifications do adolescents that has already have been through some tough challenges possess – compared to peers in the normal population?
Advice to the group moderators from participants: What could be done to adjust /refine the project?

Påstander utviklet av fagfolk til bruk i fokusgruppene som inngikk i studien.
Statements / prompts developed by professionals in relation to the current study for focus group purposes:

- Ungdom i målgruppa lever her og nå, og er ikke bekymret for framtida.
- *Youths in the target group are oriented towards the present and are not worried about the future*
- Når ungdom i målgruppa blir 16 år, begynner de å tenke mer på framtida.
- *When youths in the target group become 16 years of age, they start thinking more about future*
- Når jenter i målgruppa tenker framover, tenker de mest på å få kjæreste – mann og barn
- *When girls in the target group are thinking forwards, they are primarily cocerned about having a special friend or husband and children.*
- Spesielt gutter søker ei framtid som gir en annen mening enn livet til "vanlige voksne".
- *Particularly boys are seeking to get a future which provides another meaning than the life of «ordinary adults»*
- Ungdom i målgruppa synes "vellykkede voksne" bare er opptatt av fasade
- *Youths in the target group think «sucessful adults» care about nothing but façade.*
- Noen i målgruppa prøver rusmidler for å virke interessante og "annerledes", andre i målgruppa ruser seg av mer personlige grunner
- *Some youths in the target group are trying drugs in order to appear as interesting and "different"while others are taking drugs for more personal motives.*
- Alle på et klassetrinn eller på en skole vet hvem som ruser seg mer enn "vanlig" – men de som ruser seg synes at det er litt ok at andre vet det
- *Everybody belonging to the same grade at school know who those youths are who use substances to a greater extent than the average, and those youths do not mind that others know about it.*
- Ungdom i målgruppa pendler mellom håp og tvil
- *Youths in the target group «oscillate» between hope and doubt*
- Mange i mågruppa vil bli psykolog, sosialarbeider osv.
- *A considerable number of youths in the target group want to be social workers or psychologists etc.*
- Når mange vil bli psykolog, sosialarbeider osv. er det fordi de de kjenner som er det, er voksenpersoner det går an å ha som et slags forbilde
- *The reason why many youths in the target group want to become psychologist, social worker etc. is that those representatives for those professions that they know serve as models*
- Ungdom i målgruppa er urealistisk
- *Youths in the target group are unrealistic*
- Ungdom i målgruppa synes at andre gjør problemene større enn de egentlig er.
- *Youths in the target group think that other view problems as larger than they really are*
- Ungdom i målgruppa tenker at drømmer er viktig å ha.
- *Youths in the target group think that it is important to have dreams.*
- Ungdom i målgruppa er ikke bekymret for rusmiddelproblemer i framtida
- *Youths in the target group are not concerned about potential future problems with substances*
- Vi har et tøft samfunn for ungdom å vokse opp i.
- *We have a society which is tough for youth to grow up in.*
- Det kreves mye av ungdom, og det må være vanskelig
- *Much is demanded from youths and that must be hard to tackle.*
- Det er forskjell på hvordan ungdom i målgruppa innerst inne tenker og hva det ser ut som når de er sammen med andre
- *The difference is great between the inner thoughts of youths in the target group and the way in which they appear when they communicate with other people*
- Ungdom med problemer finner hverandre
- *Youths with problems tend to get together*
- Ungdom i målgruppa ufarliggjør rusmiddelbruk
- *Youths in the target group minimalize their risk related to their use of substances*
- Ungdom i målgruppa kan synes at framtida ser håpløs ut, men ikke på grunn av rusproblemer.
- *Youths in the target group may think that the future may appear as hopeless, but not because of potential substance problems*

Table 1: YSR scores by gender compared to YSR norm (USA) [1]

	Girls	Boys	Normative	
			Girls	Boys
	N =7	N= 10		
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Total Problems	68.8 (31.9)	53.5 (17.3)	37.9(21.9)	33.4 (19.2)
Internalizing Problems	17.0(16.0)	10.9 (5.3)	11.6(8.0)	8.3 (6.3)
Externalizing Problems	22.9(12.5)	21.34 (10.7)	9.9 (7.3)	9.8 (6.8)
Withdrawn	4.7 (4.0)	3.8 (2.05)	3.1 (2.5)	2.7 (2.4)
Somatic Complaints	6.9 (6.9)	2.6 (2.5)	3.4 (3.0)	2.3 (2.2)
Anxious/ depressed	5.4 (6.5)	4.5 (2.6)	5.1 (4.0)	3.4 (3.0)
Social Problems	5.8 (4.1)	3.6 (2.1)	3.2 (2.7)	2.9 (2.7)
Thought Problems	8.1 (5.4)	4.7 (2.5)	3.7 (3.3)	3.1 (2.8)
Attention Problems	8.1 (3.4)	7.7 (2.3)	4.6 (3.2)	4.9 (3.1)
Rule breaking behaviour	9.4 (4.5)	10.4 (5.4)	3.5 (3.4)	3.8 (3.3)
Aggressive behaviour	13.4 (8.1)	10.9 (6.3)	6.5 (4.7)	6.0 (4.2)

Missing: 1

[1]Achenbach, T.M. and Rescorla, L.A., (2001). *ASEBA School -Age Forms and Profiles: Youth Self Report*. Burlington VT: Library of Congress.

Table 2: YSR scores by gender compared to Northern Norway norm [2], 15 – 18 years by gender

	Girls	Boys	Normative	
			Girls	Boys
	N =7	N= 10	N=1395	N=1252
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Total Problems	68.8 (31.9)	53.5 (17.3)	47.2 (19.3)	40.9 (19.4)
Internalizing Problems	17.0(16.0)	10.9(5.3)	15.7 (8.6)	11.0 (7.2)
Externalizing Problems	22.9(12.5)	21.34(10.7)	13.8(6.1)	14.2 (7.5)
Withdrawn	4.7 (4.0)	3.8 (2.05)	4.5(2.2)	3.8 (2.2)
Somatic Complaints	6.9 (6.9)	2.6 (2.5)	3.8(3.1)	2.2 (2.4)
Anxious/ depressed	5.4 (6.5)	4.5 (2.6)	7.8(5.4)	5.3 (4.4)
Social Problems	5.8 (4.1)	3.6 (2.1)	2.5(1.8)	2.5 (1.9)
Thought Problems	8.1 (5.4)	4.7 (2.5)	2.4(2.3)	2.1 (2.3)
Attention Problems	8.1 (3.4)	7.7 (2.3)	6.0(2.9)	5.1 (2.9)
Rule breaking behaviour	9.4 (4.5)	10.4 (5.4)	4.7(2.7)	5.2 (3.0)
Aggressive behaviour	13.4 (8.1)	10.9 (6.3)	9.1(4.3)	9.0 (5.3)

Missing: 1

Kvernmo, S.E., (1999). 'North Norwegian adolescents in a multiethnic context: a study of emotional and behavioural problems, ethnic identity and acculturation attitudes in Sami, Kven and Norwegian adolescents '. *Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine.* Tromsø: University of Tromsø.

***Table 3: YSR – scores by gender compared to total score in clinical sample 12- 18 years -
Northern Norway[3]***

	Girls	Boys	Clinical Both genders
	N =7	N= 10	N=129
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean
Total Problems	68.8 (31.9)	53.5 (17.3)	62.43
Internalizing Problems	17.0(16.0)	10.9(5.3)	22.20
Externalizing Problems	22.9(12.5)	21.34(10.7)	17.26
Withdrawn	4.7 (4.0)	3.8 (2.05)	5.24
Somatic Complaints	6.9 (6.9)	2.6 (2.5)	5.66
Anxious/ depressed	5.4 (6.5)	4.5 (2.6)	12.41
Social Problems	5.8 (4.1)	3.6 (2.1)	2.95
Thought Problems	8.1 (5.4)	4.7 (2.5)	3.96
Attention Problems	8.1 (3.4)	7.7 (2.3)	7.18
Rule breaking behaviour	9.4 (4.5)	10.4 (5.4)	5.95
Aggressive behaviour	13.4 (8.1)	10.9 (6.3)	11.30

Clinical sample: Adolescents (N = 129) aged 12 – 18 from Nordland fylke referred to outpatient mental health
clinics: June 2000 through 2001.

3: Reigstad, B., (2007). 'Adolescents in specialty mental health services (BUP): time trends, referral problems,
and co - occuring conditions'. *Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management - Department of
Psychology*. Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology.