

# Governmental Paternalism

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## Contents

Preface	7
Governmental Paternalism: Anachronism or Future Model of Enhancing Life?	9
Protective Governmental Paternalism: “Data Paternalism”	15
I. What is Protective Governmental Paternalism?	18
1. Governmental Paternalism	18
2. Protective Governmental Paternalism	22
3. Data Paternalism as an Example of Protective Paternalism	23
II. Phenomenology of Protective Paternalism in the GDPR and ePD	26
1. Invasive Paternalism	26
a) Prohibition Principle and Need for Formality	26
b) “Freely Given” Consent and the Necessity Requirement	28
c) Processing of Sensitive Personal Data and “Profiling”	30
2. Libertarian Paternalism	32
a) Privacy by Default	33
b) Providing Information	34
III. Data Paternalism as a Fundamental Rights Problem	36
1. A Specific Fundamental Right Against Data Paternalism?	39
a) Right to Disclose Personal Data	39
b) Right to Assess the Disclosure of Personal Data	39
d) Conclusion	45
2. Data Paternalism as Interference with Fundamental Rights	46
a) Invasive Paternalism	47
aa) Formal Consent Requirements	47
bb) Necessity Requirement	48
b) Libertarian Paternalism	48
aa) Privacy by Default	48
bb) Providing Information	49

*Contents*

IV. Justifying Data Paternalism	51
1. Specific Reasons for Data Paternalism	51
a) General Systematic Deficits of Human Decision Making?	51
b) Specific and Severe Threats to Personal Autonomy	54
2. Illuminating the Objective of Data Protection	55
3. Balancing Personal Autonomy and Data Protection	58
a) Citizen-State-Relations	58
b) Citizen-Citizen-Relations	59
V. Conclusion	62
Educational Governmental Paternalism: “Buying Social Responsibility”	65
I. What is Educational Governmental Paternalism?	68
1. Educational Governmental Paternalism	68
2. “Buying Social” as an Example of Educational Paternalism	72
II. Phenomenology of Educational Paternalism in the PPD	74
1. Strict “Must-Have” Requirements	75
a) Social Irresponsibility as a Ground for Exclusion	75
b) Social Contract Performance Conditions	76
c) Social Requirements in Technical Specifications	78
2. Softer “Nice-to-Have” Requirements	79
3. General Limitations of Social Requirements under the PPD	80
III. “Buying Social” – A Specific Fundamental Rights Problem?	81
1. Limiting the Tenderer’s Freedom of Occupation	81
2. Specific Protection Against “Expressive” Content of Law?	84
3. Protection Against Indirect Effects of “Expressive” Law?	87
4. Education as Justification for Interferences?	88
5. Two Specific Constitutional Requirements	93
a) Relevance of a Broad-Based Consensus	94
b) Consistency Principle	95
IV. Testing the Concept of “Buying Social”	96
1. More and Less Morality	96
2. Requirement of a Broad-Based Consensus	97
3. Consistency of “Buying Social”	99
V. Conclusion	102
Epilogue: The Future of Governmental Paternalism	105

## Preface

This book is the result of my work as an Early Career Scholar of the international and interdisciplinary *Enhancing Life Project* (ELP), launched by the University of Chicago in collaboration with the Ruhr University Bochum, and supported by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. The ELP enabled me to conduct independent research on my individual project from October 2015 to December 2016.

The overall aim of the ELP was to comprehensively explore the rich but widely unexamined aspirations of human beings that move persons and communities into the future.<sup>1</sup> 35 scholars from diverse academic backgrounds (Christian theology, religious studies, anthropology, communications and media studies, history, law, medicine, philosophy, political science, social work, and sociology) and from different countries and cultural contexts (including Germany, Iraq, Israel, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) were supported.<sup>2</sup> During three joint seminars in Banff, Canada (2015), Berlin, Germany (2016) and Chicago, United States (2017), I had the opportunity to exchange and collaborate with my fellow scholars and focus on our shared concern, i.e. developing the academic field of *Enhancing Life Studies* (ELS).

With my individual project on *Governmental Paternalism* I tried to find an answer to the big question “What is enhancing life?” by asking another question: *Who* should decide what an enhanced life actually is? Is it the government or is it the individual? For a (radical) libertarian, the answer would be simple. The individual gets to decide. If he or she wants to drink, smoke, gamble, it’s up to him or her to do so. But if you are a liberal or hold moderate political views, you would probably say that the government has certain responsibilities with respect to the wellbeing of its citizens.

I would like to thank my mentor *Martin Burgi*, who advised me to apply for the ELP in the first place, and – of course – the entire ELP team, including its Principal Investigators, *Günter Thomas* and *William Schwei-*

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1 See <http://enhancinglife.uchicago.edu/about/introduction-the-big-questions> for a detailed project description.

2 Cf. <http://enhancinglife.uchicago.edu/about>.

*Preface*

*ker*, as well as *Sara Bigger* (Project Director), *Markus Höfner* (Project Coordinator), *Heike Springhart* (Project Consultant) and all my fellow scholars for making everything happen. The ELP has truly enhanced my personal and academic life.

*Christoph Krönke*

Munich, June 2017