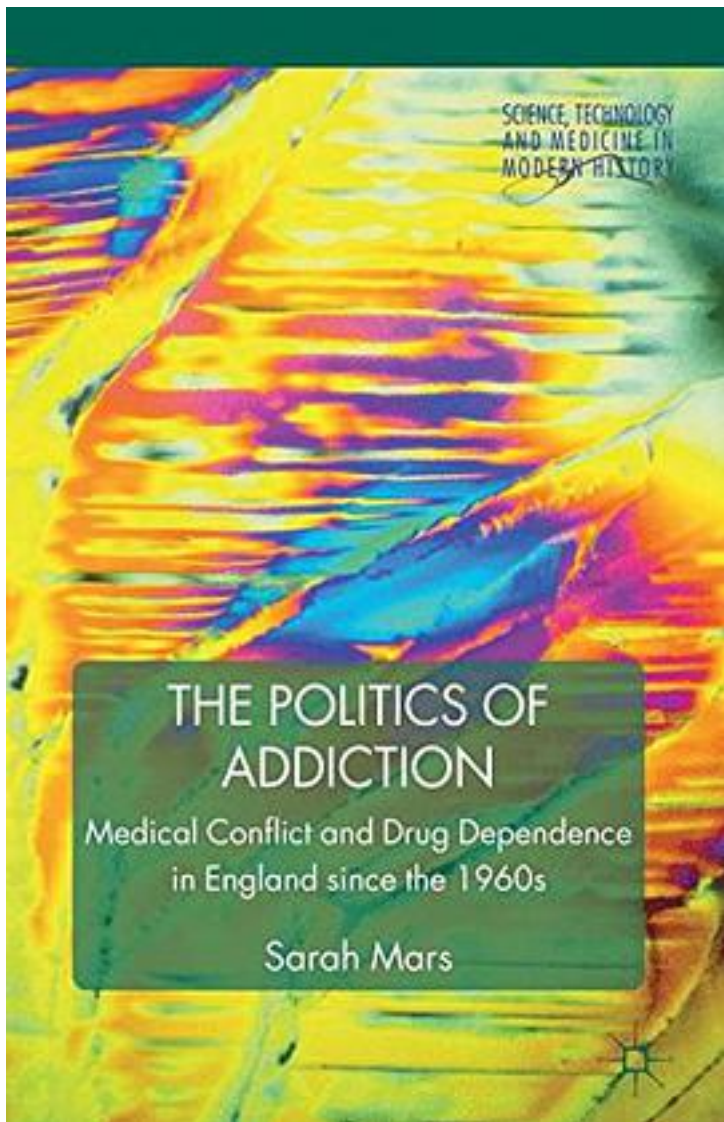


The Politics of Addiction



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In the 1980s, after a period of peaceful co-existence, a bitter conflict arose between National Health Service psychiatrists and private doctors treating drug addiction. Continuing into the twenty-first century, the battle ended with most private addiction doctors being struck from the medical register. This book examines how the conflict played out and what weapons were used by each side. The contrasting organizational structures of the private and public doctors and the changing policy context help to explain why one side triumphed and the other succumbed to extensive medical discipline. Personalities also played an important part: senior civil servants took a major role in shaping British policy to their own privately held beliefs and turnover in these posts significantly affected attempts to regulate private doctors. Based on 55 oral history interviews with key players and private prescribers as well as previously undisclosed documents, The Politics of Addiction gives a detached, historical analysis of this polarised debate.

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