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A cannabis reader: global issues and local experiences

Perspectives on cannabis controversies, treatment and regulation in Europe

Editors

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Chapter 5

Cannabis users and their relation to Finnish society

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Setting the context

The great societal themes — power, status, wealth, religion, tolerance, class, mainstream culture, subcultures, generational divides, crime, respect for the law — all have a bearing on drug use and the way it is perceived. In Europe, in a similar way to consumption patterns, societal acceptance of cannabis use and perceptions of its users varies greatly across the continent.

As if to demonstrate the complexity of cannabis's role in society, the languages of Europe have spawned entire vocabularies to describe cannabis, its users, its paraphernalia and its cultural symbolism. Cannabis has many street names in all European languages. In English, dictionaries of cannabis slang run to several hundred terms. When crossing linguistic borders from Lisbon to Helsinki, a cannabis cigarette will be variously named a 'charro', 'porro', 'pétard', 'joint' or 'pind'. It may be associated with all kinds of youth tribes and subgroups, from surfers and skaters, through *okupas* and *pasotas*, *casseurs*, *hoodies*, *clubbers* and *kiffers*, *new bohemians* and *bobos*, to *rastas*, *hip-hoppers*, and — perhaps the core archetype — *hippies*. Yet cannabis will also be consumed by people who would consider themselves entirely mainstream, and not affiliated to any particular sociological groups.

In this chapter, we take an anthropological look at cannabis. Based on structured interviews with cannabis users, the author examines social attitudes to cannabis use in Finland. Subcategories of cannabis users are defined, and the author looks at reasons why people smoke cannabis and the meanings they attach to the substance. In including this case study in a European monograph, the EMCDDA does not suggest that

observations in the Finnish context will translate wholeheartedly to a wider Europe in which diversity, not homogeneity, is the norm.

Nonetheless, readers are likely to recognise many of the experiences, thoughts and ideas expressed by the interviewees. Numerous concepts bubble up to the surface: escapism, group affiliation and individuality, clandestine activity, fear of exclusion from employment, confrontation, rebellion and rejection, taboo-breaking, societal withdrawal and engagement. There are also interesting insights common to all societal subgroups: visible signals of affiliation to the group and adapting behaviour to fit when in a mainstream environment.

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Cannabis users and their relation to Finnish society

Taru Kekoni

Abstract

This article examines the relationship of Finnish cannabis users to society. A total of 35 cannabis users were interviewed for the study. The narrative modes that were identified, which interviewees employ to describe their relationship to Finnish society, included 'concealed use', 'open activism' and 'social withdrawal'.

In the narrative of 'concealed use' the cannabis user wishes to appear as an upholder of traditional values and conventional lifestyles, even though there is a hidden, 'deviant' behaviour in the background. The most significant denominators of the relationship to society are controls and mechanisms related to concealment. In the narrative of 'open activism' the relationship to society is constructed on the basis of an openly alternative lifestyle connected to cannabis use and the associated activism. In the 'social withdrawal' narrative, the user's relationship to society is characterised by experiences of being offended or excluded because of his or her cannabis use. Withdrawal may also be a personal choice to stay outside the constraints of social activity.

Background to cannabis use in Finland

Cannabis is the most frequently used illegal narcotic substance in Finland, though cannabis prevalence is low compared with the European average. According to information for 2004, lifetime prevalence in the age group 15–64 years was 12.9%, last year prevalence 2.9% and last month prevalence 1.6%. Judging by these figures, the maximum number of 'regular cannabis users' in Finland could be estimated at about 40 000. The majority of cannabis users are below 29 years of age, and two-thirds are male. As regards socio-economic status and marital status, cannabis use is most prevalent among students and unmarried or co-habiting persons, reflecting the young age of the majority of users. In terms of geography, cannabis use is clearly concentrated in the capital region around Helsinki and elsewhere in southern Finland. Overall, prevalence of use and experimentation with cannabis increased by about 50% from the mid-1990s to the 2000s, although in recent years the level of experimentation reported among school students has declined. Increases in regular use are estimated to have levelled off at the beginning of the 2000s (Hakkarainen and Metso, 2003). Cannabis use, home growing, possession, buying, importing and distribution are all criminalised

under Finnish law. The consequence of being caught using cannabis is most often a fine, although incarceration of up to 10 years is a possible penalty for cannabis-related crimes.

Seppälä and Mikkola (2004) consider that the cultural meaning of cannabis use in Finland is distributed along at least two distinct axes. On the one hand, cannabis does not possess a single homogeneous 'world of meaning', but different circles associate it with widely divergent 'meanings'. In addition to its symbolic value, cannabis has emerged as a kind of 'universal drug', with its use defined not only by different meanings related to subcultures, but also by loose and flexible mainstream meanings. On the other hand, cannabis use itself is associated with an abundance of tangible cultural products and paraphernalia, which is manifested, for example, by various implements for its use, by cannabis varieties and by historical and cultural stories linked to cannabis.

In their study of cannabis use from the viewpoint of research into social identity, Hammersley et al. (2001) note that cannabis users are connected to the surrounding society and the mainstream population in many ways. Nevertheless, their use of cannabis also requires the ability to manage an illegal activity carrying negative sanctions, including potential exclusion from arenas of social activity. This is equivalent to managing a hidden 'disability' (Goffman, 1963) or hidden deviancy (Becker, 1963) (cf. Young, 1999). There is a requirement that cannabis use is hidden from one set of people but revealed to another, to the right people under the right social circumstances. The social identity of the user is, in fact, shaped depending on the situation (Hammersley et al., 2001), and is a continuously evolving, dynamic characteristic.

Analysis and description of the data

This chapter examines the relationship of Finnish cannabis users to society, and the conditions under which the relationship is constructed. The users' 'relationship to society' is defined as the individual's experience of his or her own social status and the means by which this status is constructed and maintained in relationship to the mainstream population and social constraints. The questions posed were:

- In relation to personal cannabis use, how did the user perceive his or her relationship to the structures of surrounding society and the mainstream population?
- What meanings, behaviours and coping mechanisms do the cannabis users associate with their relationship to society?

The analysis combines the methodological approaches of grounded theory and narrative research. It aims to identify the narrative modes which cannabis users employ

in interviews to describe their relationship to Finnish society to the researcher. These narrative modes have been structured into concepts that have been categorised into ‘concealed use’, ‘open activism’ and ‘social withdrawal’. In the analysis of the data, it is considered possible to move between realistic and constructionist discourse (cf. Glassner and Loughlin, 1987: 34–35). The data reveal something of what actually happens but, at the same time, information is generated precisely in the research situation and for it (cf. Pösö 2004: 35–36).

A total of 35 cannabis users were interviewed for the study. Since the focus of interest was the ideological thinking and social activity related to cannabis use in more general terms, data collection was initiated by submitting an interview request to the electronic mailing list of the Finnish Cannabis Association. Leaflets containing a description of the study and the researcher’s contact data were also distributed during the Million Marijuana March in Tampere in the spring of 2003. The way in which data were collected has a clear effect on the selection of interviewees. The data were considerably affected by the recruitment of persons who use cannabis exclusively, or as their main drug. Because of this, the extensive group who use cannabis in addition to other drugs has been almost completely excluded from the data. On the other hand, it seems obvious that the data do not include people who deny using cannabis, people who use it only very occasionally and people who express very little (or no) ideological ‘choice’ in using cannabis.

The majority of the interviewees were men (23). The average age of the interviewees was 32 years, ranging from 19 to 56 years. The interviewees mainly lived in or near large cities in south and south-west Finland, but a few came from further north and smaller localities. All the interviewees contacted the researcher voluntarily.

‘Concealed use’ as the relationship to society

‘Concealed use’ is defined as the type of cannabis use and the associated relationship to society in which efforts are made to conceal use of cannabis from organisations and persons who might have a negative impact on the user’s social status if they learned about its use. Among the interviewees who described their relationship to society within a ‘concealed use’ narrative, nine were students in secondary or tertiary education, six were gainfully employed and one was unemployed at the time of interview. Among the total of 12 women in this study, 10 were placed in this category. The average age of the group members was 29.5 years, ranging from 19 to 47 years. The youngest interviewees belonged to this group. Two of the interviewees were married, seven were co-habiting and six were single, of whom one was divorced and one lived with his parents.

In terms of gender and employment, the figures for this group differ significantly from the statistical data available on Finnish cannabis users (see Hakkarainen and Metso, 2003). The narrative of 'concealed use' appears understandable in the light of the socio-economic situation of those who described their relationship to society within this narrative. In one way or another, being revealed as a cannabis user could endanger the relatively stable social status these interviewees had achieved, or could lead to unfortunate consequences for the family situation or other social relationships. 'Concealed use' has clear links with the 'hidden deviancy' behaviour described by Becker (1963). The person's behaviour deviates in some aspects from social rules and norms, and the behaviour is concealed from the mainstream population (Oinonen, 2002).

The general motives mentioned for 'concealed use' are the fear of losing one's job or study opportunity or, in general, the fear of being stigmatised if cannabis use becomes known to the employer or a teacher. The fear in itself is not groundless, for several interviewees had actually lost their jobs after being revealed as cannabis users. On the other hand, a significant cause for fear is that a projected course of study or work career would founder due to cannabis use if a narcotics crime were to be listed on the user's criminal record. In Finland, an extract of criminal records is required of persons applying for jobs with minor children, and one of the categories relevant to this occupation is crimes related to narcotics.

Another important motive for concealed use is the fear of being caught by the authorities. Besides an entry in their criminal records, the interviewees fear a house search or surveillance by the police. Interviewees with families also fear the intervention of the social services in family life if the parents are found to be using cannabis. The fear of being caught is most acutely linked to the buying of cannabis, which often brings the users in contact with 'actual' drug criminals. In fact, after becoming parents many interviewees have purposefully distanced themselves from criminal circles. Users do not necessarily want to give up cannabis because of their children, though all interviewed mothers did report that they had given it up during pregnancy and breast-feeding, and the solution adopted may be to grow cannabis either at home or at a friend's home.

Means of concealment

Cannabis users describe various ways in which concealment is practised and their relationship to society maintained. 'Not telling' as a means of concealment means that the use is hidden from most of one's acquaintances and only revealed to one's most intimate circle, who are themselves often users or otherwise approve of cannabis use. 'Not telling' is the easiest solution if one wants to avoid guilt-inducing or condemnatory reactions from third parties. Not telling is also relatively easy. Cannabis use is not a

general topic of conversation. On the contrary, several interviewees report that a kind of 'culture of silence' prevails both within families and in public.

'Controlling use' is another important means of concealment vis-à-vis the mainstream population. At the same time, it is a qualitative or quantitative check on the habit. Means of control may be related to the place and time of use, as well as to the mode and intensity of use. In most cases, use is reported to take place at home or in another private space, alone or with certain friends. Users also report that the time of use is significant in terms of how 'deviant' they consider their behaviour to be. Users mostly say that use is generally accepted in the evening, which is when the interviewees mostly reported using cannabis. Controlling use in order to be courteous and well mannered are also described. For instance, it is not considered appropriate to use cannabis in children's play areas, in non-smoking areas, or in situations where others may feel offended or confused because of it. These controls of use are described as 'gentlemen's agreements', whose purpose is not to reveal one's use to others, and also not to weaken the reputation of cannabis use in general any further.

'Not telling' may be experienced as an awkward solution, if one feels compelled to hide a part of one's life that is important for one's identity. In addition to relaxation or enjoyment, cannabis use may contain other meanings, which may be religious, ritual or otherwise strongly linked to one's world view (see, for example, Booth, 2003). In spite of this, it may be necessary to hide one's use to safeguard one's social status, and this may actually be experienced as the biggest problem related to cannabis use. For this reason, affiliation to cannabis culture may be indicated by various symbolic signals. Dreadlocks, or an exceptionally relaxed style of dress, may indicate membership to those who are able to read these symbolic messages. Cannabis use may also be referred to by using terms which outsiders may not understand in the context or by employing gestures which only another user can understand.

It has been noted within cultural criminology research (Ferrel, 2003) that deviant and criminal subcultures are becoming fragmented in a world of symbolic communication. Symbolic communication for cannabis users may partly depend on the desire to experience a community and belonging with other cannabis users, but also on practical needs and the usefulness of revealing oneself or another person as a user. The usefulness may be linked, for instance, to a desire to extend the established circle of users, perhaps with the interest of finding new channels of acquiring cannabis.

'Open activism'

Instead of concealment, the relationship to society of a cannabis user may also be based on 'open activism'. This denotes a relationship with the mainstream population

and social domains in which there is no attempt to hide cannabis use. Rather, there is a desire to bring the matter out into the open, as a topic of debate in both private and public spheres. In the 'open activism' narrative, the most important aspect of cannabis use in relation to social status is considered to be the desire to break the so-called 'culture of silence' surrounding cannabis use. In this context, the interviews also often refer to the taboo aspect of cannabis. The aim of 'open activists' is to bring cannabis, as a topic, from the marginal to the mainstream arenas. On the other hand, in the open activism narrative, openness is also manifested as the personal choice of individuals. Since the matter is strongly linked to the user's way of life, he or she does not want to keep it a secret, but rather shows honestly in all situations his or her personal attitude towards it.

Among the cannabis users interviewed, 13 were 'open activists'. They were all male. The average age of the group was 32.5 years, ranging from 21 to 56 years. Nine of the interviewees were employed at the time of the interview, two were unemployed, one was a secondary school student and one in civilian service (in lieu of conscripted military service). Eight of the interviewees were unmarried, two married, two co-habiting, and one was divorced. Their educational level varied from comprehensive school to university degrees, as in other groups. However, in this group the proportion of interviewees with university degrees was slightly higher than in the others: four out of the total of eight university graduates belonged to this group (three belonged to the 'concealed use group' and one to the 'withdrawal from society' group).

The desire to act as an active proponent of cannabis may be rooted in events in the person's biography, or may be a lifestyle choice. Some activists reported that they were motivated by events in their early childhood. For example, someone with alcoholic parents may view society's relatively permissive attitudes about alcohol and sharply condemnatory attitudes about cannabis as contradictory. This may lead to active defence of cannabis. Similarly, someone who has once been strongly labelled as a cannabis user and faced the consequences may be encouraged to become an open activist. Someone who has already served a prison sentence may feel that loss of social status is already complete, and that it is therefore relatively easy to become an activist.

By contrast, younger activists did not necessarily report alienating experiences related to cannabis use. For them, activism may be only one way of working towards a better and more liberated society. In this narrative, cannabis activism is viewed not so much as a discrete movement but more as a part of a 'culture of resistance' or a general lifestyle that attempts to call into question current values and to create a new, individual value base. It might include criticism of consumer behaviour and the global or national economy. Similarly, the unpleasant effects of continued concealment of cannabis use and the fact that cannabis has become increasingly important for one's lifestyle may have the result that even a younger user becomes an activist. In this narrative, even

being caught by the police may appear as positive, as was noted by an interviewee when describing this situation: ‘So I also thanked the police and said, like, “hey, this is great, now you know about me so I needn’t try to hide anything!”’

In the ‘open activism’ narrative, the relationship to society was described from the viewpoint of personal ideology and lifestyle more markedly than with the preceding group. For activists, personally defending cannabis as a positive substance, a medication and the raw material of various industries is so important that they are ready to jeopardise their own social status.

Means of open activism

As might be expected, open activists are more likely to be active members of a cannabis advocacy organisation than those belonging to the two other groups. For them, activity in organisations serves as a means of making their cannabis-related thinking and lifestyle more visible and also more acceptable in different social spheres. At the same time, it serves their needs for a community and for sharing experiences with like-minded people. Although the use of cannabis is not regarded personally as wrong or as a criminal activity, the culture constructed around it is constrained by the fact that cannabis use is nonetheless illegal.

Activist organisations strive to spread their message chiefly by means of information provided on their internet pages and through the discussion groups they maintain. Among activists, online media are regarded as very useful channels for disseminating information and promoting more favourable attitudes. By contrast, the Million Marijuana March introduced in 2001 in Finland is regarded as a slightly more dubious way of spreading the message of legalising cannabis. Some of the activists do not take part in the march, for they believe that it attracts stigma for both the participants and cannabis users in general. Finland’s longest-established association, the Finnish Cannabis Association (FCA), active since 1991, has been most assiduous among the cannabis organisations in attempting to establish dialogue with members of parliament and political decision-makers. The means used by FCA for this include position papers and press releases drafted as a result of membership and/or board meetings, which are distributed as widely as possible, including to members of parliament and other political actors. FCA was also consulted when Finland’s first national drug strategy was drawn up in 1997.

Cannabis activists are also prepared to discuss the topic in the arenas of their ‘opponents’ or the mainstream population, and in a manner approved by these opponents. In the open activism narrative, an important enabler of discussion with the mainstream population is the way in which the discussion is conducted. This involves

such concepts as 'adjustment to censorship' and 'orientation to the media'. These imply that it is important to present their message in a form that is not too aggressive towards general social attitudes to cannabis and does not directly offend anyone, not even those who oppose cannabis most strongly. The activists report that they achieve this by 'disguising' the message so that, for example, an item in the press may not even mention the word cannabis, but the attitudes involved are visible in the text in other ways. Another point stressed by interviewees was that the story needs to match the format of the particular media outlet to which it is offered.

The most infrequent means of activism in the interview data is the attempt to exert influence in mainstream arenas. In the data this primarily means activity in party or municipal politics, and defending cannabis together with other personal values in this context. One of the interviewees describes involvement in party politics as a means of open activism and as a personal cause:

It's like, they [cannabis use and becoming aware of its social status] have had a fairly strong impact on my, let's say, awakening, on becoming a conscious human being instead of a sleepwalker, so to speak. So I read the papers more carefully, looked for ways to make an impact, I even joined the party and went to the party convention. Incidentally, I even gave a speech at the convention. There are people there, too, who support legalisation, and, well, my three minutes were that, it was a reply to another speech, in which I mentioned that in my personal opinion people who can't distinguish say, marijuana from coke, then I think a person like that is incapable of taking decisions at all in this matter. Meaning, get informed, you guys, get informed.

Withdrawal from society

The third narrative mode is one in which cannabis users describe their relationship to society within the narrative of withdrawal from arenas of social activity. 'Withdrawal' may be explained as a personal choice, which is resorted to in order to avoid conflict with the authorities, or more generally, with condemnatory attitudes. On the other hand, withdrawal may also include strong elements of exclusion, whether economically from working life, socially from the mainstream population or judicially from the spheres of 'decent citizens'. In this case, withdrawal may be understood as social exclusion as defined by Young (1999). The withdrawal narrative may also be linked by a strong feeling of being mistreated by society, which is linked either to judicial conflicts or more generally to a feeling of losing one's 'human rights' and being shunned because of one's lifestyle.

Six cannabis users described their relationship to society within the social withdrawal narrative. Two of them were female, and the average age of the group was 36 years,

with actual ages varying from 26 to 50 years. Thus, those classified as belonging to this group were slightly older than those in the other groups. At the time of interview, one of the interviewees was employed, four were unemployed and one was on parental leave. Four group members had completed comprehensive school, one had a secondary-level qualification and one an almost complete university degree. The group included one co-habiting couple, one married person with minor children, one divorced and two unmarried single persons. An interesting distinguishing factor in the demographic data of the social withdrawal group is that they reported having started using cannabis considerably earlier than the other groups. The most commonly reported starting age in the interview data was around 20 years, but in this group the most general starting age was 13–15 years. The average age in Finland for starting the use of cannabis is about 16–18 years (Hakkarainen and Metso, 2003).

The interviewees within the ‘social withdrawal’ narrative reported problems with intoxicant use more frequently than interviewees in the other groups. They reported earlier problematic use of other illegal drugs, medications or alcohol, which had then been dropped as cannabis became the drug they chiefly used. One of the interviewees did not report earlier problematic use of other substances, but did report continuing experimental use of other illegal drugs. In this narrative, more clearly than in the other groups, interviewees suggested that earlier use of cannabis and also current cannabis use was linked, to some degree, to problems or addiction. The problems could be associated with social relationships and with the necessity of withdrawing from them, conflicts with the judiciary, family problems, health problems or difficulties in finding work. Many reported several of these problems. On the other hand, the interviewees could also have experienced addiction as a neutral or even a pleasant experience.

Within the ‘social withdrawal’ narrative, use was almost invariably justified from the viewpoint of maintaining mental balance and/or of mental health problems, mostly depression. The interviewees felt that cannabis use helped to ‘smooth the edges’ of an otherwise bumpy life or to ‘heal traumas’ created during one’s life. Several interviewees reported having used mood medication earlier for the same problems, but had felt that it was of no help or that it had caused severe addiction or other problems.

Two people within the ‘social withdrawal’ narrative reported that a significant factor for their habit was its medicinal impact on physical illnesses which had not been alleviated by any other medicine. Physical symptoms of varying severity (such as headache, flu, asthma, menstrual cramps, migraine, nausea, indigestion) were also reported as the cause of use in the other groups, but the social withdrawal narrative includes the interviewees who reported using cannabis primarily for medicinal reasons.

Withdrawal as a relationship to society

For these interviewees, social withdrawal primarily meant being excluded from society in one way or another and an experience of being labelled as criminal or otherwise unfit for society. Three people within this narrative talked about recent experiences of being caught by the police or customs. They had been charged with growing cannabis at home, driving under the influence of cannabis and with a crime related to the sale of cannabis products. A house search by the police and the subsequent sentence appears as one example of experienced social exclusion. A cannabis user recently sentenced for the sale of seeds describes the experience as one entailing severe exclusion, which also has unfortunate future consequences:

But now I've actually lost everything, in that I lost all the money I had and it's really difficult getting a job in Finland now that I've a record of drug crimes. And all the liquids that they found, fertilisers and spices, they were sent to the drug laboratory, and they took my photos, my employment certificates and all possible documents. They took my bank statements, my mobile phone and just everything ... And apparently they figured that I'm some drug Mafia man or something. And they just walked into my flat on the grounds that they wanted to see if I had any weapons and so on ...

This extract imparts a strong feeling of an experience of stigmatisation, apparent in such terms as 'drug Mafia man' used by the interviewee to describe himself through the eyes of the authorities. Becker (1963) noted that deviancy does not consist of the behaviour itself, but of the *stigmatisation as deviant* of a behaviour, as a result of the rules and norms of the mainstream population. Thus, a deviant person is a person labelled as such. According to Becker, stigmatisation is a two-directional process. With stigmatisation of the deviant, changes occur in the identity of the person and he or she also begins to feel excluded from society on the level of his or her identity.

More frequently than the other two, the 'social withdrawal' narrative describes the user's intimate circle as consisting mainly of other users. The circle may also include users of stronger drugs than cannabis or persons with links to the sale of cannabis and other criminal activity. This could naturally be caused simply by the fact that friends and acquaintances are generally selected from among people who uphold the same values and have the same hobbies. On the other hand, the mainstream population and old friends may also shut out a cannabis user if, for example, he or she is labelled as criminal or otherwise deviant. Clearly, more often than the other two, the narrative of social withdrawal is linked to unemployment.

Conclusions

Finnish cannabis users' relationship to society has been categorised into the narratives of 'concealed use', 'open activism' and 'social withdrawal'. The interviewees suggested that in Finland users of illegal drugs are often portrayed in black and white terms and assumed to exist outside domains of social activity, at the margin of society, where distinctive modes and motives of action are constructed for them. Cannabis use is not portrayed differently from use of other illegal substances. On the other hand, cannabis use in the present day may be seen as involving a diverse group of people — especially in the framework of relaxation or recreational use — and it is not necessarily regarded as having any impact on the conditions of a person's relationship to society.

A positive outcome of this study is to reach a set of cannabis users who have been invisible in Finnish drug research before. Reaching and researching hidden populations is one important role of qualitative drug research (Rhodes, 2000). To my knowledge, the relationship of cannabis users and cannabis use to society has previously not been researched or called into question in Finland or in any other European country. According to Rhodes (2000), both the nature of knowledge itself and the process by which it is acquired shape the lived experience and perceived meaning of drug use. Two key tenets of qualitative research are to describe the social meanings participants attach to drug use experiences and the social processes by which such meanings are created, reinforced and reproduced (Moore, 1993; Rhodes, 1995; Agar, 1997). An examination of Finnish cannabis users' relationship to society reveals how cannabis use is lived and interpreted through social interactions.

I have shed some light on the motives, means and ideologies attached to cannabis use in Finland. The study reveals the mechanisms and controls that are employed to make cannabis use possible in a social situation, an activity that carries a risk of relatively strict control policy and judicial sanctions. It also brings to light different ways of viewing society and the divergent positions in which people live. In addition, it reveals different meanings and contents in the internal culture of cannabis use, which may not be easily visible to the mainstream population and therefore unidentified by them.

When studying the use of drugs, one should bear in mind the thesis presented by Howard S. Becker (1970), concerning research on deviancy, according to which it is not the researcher's task to be involved in the value debate concerning the research topic, but simply to study deviancy as behaviour that is condemned by some and approved by others. The study of internal meanings of the culture of use and its relationship to society is one way of understanding cannabis users' way of regarding drug use and its meanings.

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