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ABSTRACT BOOK

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Self-Change: A review for people with drug-related disorders

This paper aims to review the literature on self-change or natural recovery for people with drug-related disorders or dual diagnosis. It explores the phenomenon and provides the background to improve a definition and make a contribution on major issues: Can we consider natural recovery as a reduction in the volume of drug used, as a reduction in the clinical signs of drug-related disorders? What is the time required before we can assume the stability of the phenomenon and the avoidance of relapses? These questions must be addressed considering empirical studies show that the majority of people with a problematic use of psychoactive substances never consult a physician, but that a substantial part does reach a state of remission. How can we understand this data? The review shows that natural recovery, observed on a range of serious drug-related disorders, happens more often with people with fewer intensity disorders and who have interpersonal resources. The literature shows limits on abstinence model and open natural recovery as a pathway out of addiction in which certain forms of consumption remain present (except in cases of severe problematic use where complete abstinence is mandatory). This review addresses questions on the capacity of mental health services to reach these populations and questions the current objectives of treatments. Finally, based on quantitative and qualitative studies, a summary of the principal instigating factors and the duration of remissions is proposed. In brief, this phenomenon shows drug-related disorders in a different light. Pathways of change are multiple and heterogeneous and may be found without calling for rehabilitation services. However, important gaps remain on the operational level of the concept and on the methods to reach this hidden population. Nevertheless, the main explanatory factors emphasize the determinism of the environment and more particularly, the negative consequences of consumption on health and on financial resources.

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Estimating entry to the use of hard drugs

Objectives: Models for drug-use trajectories illustrate how first time entry to, temporary and lasting cessation of and relapse into hard drug use are important elements in the overall picture of change in use of hard drugs over time. Estimating the total entry to hard drug use broadens the knowledge of the change in such use.

Methodology: The entry rate to hard drug use is defined as the sum of incident cases and relapses. Such figures are seldom available. The entry rate can, however, be estimated based on successive prevalence estimates and cessation rates. The international literature was less limited regarding estimates of prevalence, as well as temporary and lasting cessation rates for hard drug use, than regarding incidence and relapses

Significant results: The entry rate, as applied to the Norwegian case of intravenous drug use, was estimated by combining results from local studies on mortality and entry into substitution treatment, results from international longitudinal studies on lasting cessation, results with regard to temporary cessation from a Norwegian follow-up study among people in various types of treatment, as well as results from international studies. The entry rate increased from the mid-1980s to a peak in 2000, decreased up to 2003 and stabilized thereafter.

Conclusions: The entry rate supplies a useful tool for our understanding of drug situations and decision making regarding drug policies. More knowledge about cessation is essential for achieving more reliable estimates, however. Estimates of cessation rates are usually not calculated in published studies even when the data provides a basis for doing so. The focus is on factors enhancing or obstructing cessation, which of course represent highly relevant data in drug use research.

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Participation of research subjects in the research cycle

Participation in research of research subjects receives increasing attention of Dutch research funds. In this presentation I would like to highlight some issues related to this topic. No research results will be presented.

In social drug research, and particularly in qualitative research, researchers actually talk to research subjects, usually substance users and users of services. Researchers are interested in their behaviour and in the opinions and circumstances that could explain that behaviour. Seen from this perspective qualitative social drug research sincerely involves the perspective of the research subjects. Much of the social research we conduct, however, is commissioned by stake holders such as (local) governments, treatment institutions and care providers. The research questions we answer are drafted by them for the benefit of their policies. Seen from this perspective the involvement of research subjects becomes somewhat instrumental. Although we, as researchers, speak substance users and services users personally and openly, the issues at stake do not necessarily reflect their interests. We conduct the research to satisfy the needs of the organisation that commissions the research. This raises the question if participation of research subjects on a higher level is desirable, a level that provides influence on the research questions, data analysis, conclusions and recommendations? And if so, is this the responsibility of the researcher to organise this? And if so, what kind of participation model can we opt for?

In the presentation these and other questions will be addressed and some tentative answers will be provided and discussed.

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**Symbolic gender boundaries in news discourse on drinking and psychotropics
use: an analysis of the Swedish press debate 2000-2009**

Both alcohol and psychotropics are psychoactive substances, but with different cultural meanings and opposite gendered associations. Alcohol is a legal substance that people use for pleasure, and sometimes for self-medication. Psychotropics are medically prescribed drugs intended for treating, for example, depression, anxiety, and insomnia, but consumers also use them to induce various emotional effects (e.g., coldness). In addition, feminist researchers have shown that drinking used to be, and to some extent still is, a marker for masculinity, whereas psychotropics use has been a marker for femininity, in particular through evoking images of the housewife and, more common today, the depressed woman. Using qualitative, poststructuralist textual analysis, this paper examines how Swedish newspaper stories about alcohol and psychotropics draw symbolic gender boundaries and moral boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable consumption. One of the most important conclusions of this analysis is that such boundaries are drawn in different ways in newspaper stories about alcohol and psychotropics, respectively. However, there are also some significant similarities that inform our theoretical understanding of boundary-making processes related to gender, sexuality and acceptable/unacceptable consumption of psychoactive substances in the media. The study shows that boundaries acquire a heightened moral status in news stories that deal with (1) a topic related to cultural ideas about natural, essential gender difference, (2) where the cultural status of the psychoactive substance is linked to selfish and/or hedonistic motives, and (3) where innocent victims of consumption can be identified. Moreover, it shows that due to the linking of femininity to female bodies, and masculinity to male bodies, the newspaper stories in themselves do not undo binary gender boundaries. However, in the final section, the paper argues that the media can still play a role in challenging the discourse on binary gender and normative heterosexuality.

Keywords: gender, alcohol, psychotropics, culture, media, discourse, Sweden.

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Smoking weed like..? Self-presentations and cannabis use

The aim of this paper is to explore how young adults employ stories of cannabis in their self-presentations. The analysis is based on semi-structured interviews with 25 men and women (24-40 years) who have used cannabis frequently and for long periods, and who have either quit or reduced their smoking considerably at the time of the interview. The interviews explore the interviewees' drug related life histories, focusing on the role and meaning of cannabis use.

This paper focus on how talk about drug use is a requisite in the social construction of identity. Stories of personal drug use can be, and frequently are, told in several ways to communicate different meanings. The informants in this study are socially integrated cannabis users, but cannabis and other illicit drugs play an important role in their narratives about who they are. Their self-presentations balance the youth phase-, rebellion-, subculture-flavour of cannabis use with mainstream society's demands and ideals in complex ways. The stories of how they use cannabis work to portray them as independent, insubordinate, free-spirited, young at heart, fun-seeking, tough, willing to take risks, but also as careful, responsible, mature and smart.

A European dimension will be integrated in the analysis, by references to European literature on drug use in self-presentations/drug use and identity construction, e.g. De-Visser & Smith (2006), Järvinen (2000, 2001), Rødner (2005), Verkooijen, De Vries Nielsen (2007).

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Drug use among Belgian sex workers: a quantitative and qualitative study of 5 sectors in the sex industry

Drug use among sex workers has been the object of several studies in different parts of the world. Researchers have often focused on street sex workers, as a specifically vulnerable group, both as sex workers and as marginalized drug users. Studies have revealed a relatively high prevalence of cocaine, heroin and crack use, and of intravenous use among these samples. Patterns of drug use among street sex workers are also often associated with a work-score-use cycle as well as with sex-for-drugs exchanges. Empirical studies on drug use among sex workers in other scenes are scarce in the international literature, and in general non-existing in Belgium.

The Institute of Social Drug Research (Ghent University), the Centre for the Evaluation of Vaccination (University of Antwerp) and the department of Medical Sociology and Health Policy (University of Antwerp) have carried out a two-year study on drug use among female sex workers in Belgium (commissioned by the Federal Office for Science Policy). The study design included different methods: a) a quantitative survey among 528 female sex workers; b) qualitative interviews with

25 sex workers; and c) 5 focus groups in 5 different cities (Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, Liège and Charleroi) with experts in the field. Participants were recruited in 5 different cities using snowball sampling and privileged access interviewers (from organisations working with the target population). Sex workers were recruited from five different sectors: street prostitution, window prostitution, bar and club prostitution, private sex workers and escorts.

The main findings of this study, regarding patterns of drug use among sex workers, background characteristics of the sample, circumstances of sex work in these sectors, prevalence of dependence and 'problematic use' (according to the EMCDDA definition), and the use of treatment facilities by these sex workers, will be presented. The findings suggest a relatively high prevalence of drug use among all sex workers, but also significant differences between sectors. Qualitative data shed light on the experiences of these sex workers, and their views on drug use (and its relation with sex work, if any).

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The subjective effects of mephedrone and a typology of its users

Mephedrone (4-methylmethcathinone) has just entered the recreational drug market in the past four years (Psychonaut Web Mapping Research Group, 2009) yet it rapidly became one of the most popular synthetic drug. Besides, however it is also recognized as a popular substance among heroin dependent persons. Mephedrone can be classified as a *designer drug* or as a *legal high* (e.g. Gibbons & Zloh, 2010; Vardakou, Pistos & Spiliopoulou, 2011). Although we still don't know much about the dangers of this substance, it should be noted that recent articles reported fatalities linked to mephedrone use (e.g. Torrance & Cooper, 2010). The aim of our study was to (1) identify the characteristics of mephedrone use, to (2) reveal subjective and somatic effects of the substance, as well as to (3) try to identify types of users according to motivational background and other characteristics of use. Our sample consists of 80 mephedrone users who were recruited with snowball method. The applied questionnaire covered the topics of general substance use, conditions of the first mephedrone use (where, when, with whom, how), questions on current mephedrone use (the way of purchasing the substance, the forms of usage, or the typical somatic and subjective effects and after-effects of mephedrone). In their presentation the authors will provide detailed results on the subjective characteristics of this substance and also try to reveal a typology on the basis of different characteristics of the use.

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How to research emerging drug trends – A mixed-method approach to domestic cannabis cultivation

Exploration of emerging new trends in drug use and drug problems is one of the basic tasks set to the drug research community by the society. Task seems simple, but actually it has proved to be quite complicated. The illicit nature of drug use hides it from the eyes of the authorities, and as a sub-cultural, generational and global phenomenon it is changing all the time, at least in some aspects. Public registers and official statistics reach the phenomenon poorly. As the history of the modern drug problem has shown, a proper analysis of a new emerging trend may take time because it can be found only by collecting pieces of information from separate studies. A mixed-method approach can be seen as a way to produce a comprehensive, multi-dimensional picture of a new trend in one study.

This case study uses four different datasets to study the home growing of cannabis in Finland. Data from population surveys (Drinking Habits Survey 2008, N=2,593, response rate 69% and Drug Use Survey 2010, N=2,023, response rate 48%) are used to trace the consumption of different cannabis products, the prevalence of home growing as well as people's attitudes. Data from an online questionnaire among cannabis home growers (N=1,298) in spring 2009 and interviews with home growers (N=38) are used to draw a portrait of home growers and to describe their thinking. Diversified data enables us to answer e.g. following questions: What is the prevalence of home growing in Finland? How is cannabis grown in practice? What kind of people grow cannabis and why?

The results of the study indicate that, in line with European trends, the cannabis market in Finland is very much herbalized, and home growing allows people to overcome the problem of limited supply and to produce better quality cannabis than is available in the street markets at a lower cost. But, it is not just the volume of the home growing and a progressive import substitution that has changed; people's attitudes have changed as well. Consequently, social construction of cannabis problem is under re-evaluation and re-definition.

Emerging drug trends usually raise (drug) political interests. Roles of research findings and researchers will be discussed at the end of presentation.

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What are the meanings of cannabis cultivation?

The increase in domestic produced cannabis has raised the questions, who is growing cannabis and why? Several authors have constructed grower-typologies along the lines of production levels and motivation. On one side of the scale we find organized criminals that are seeking profit by operating large-scale cultivation sites, and on the other side we find small-scale ideological growers. In between we find large-scale growers making money by selling to a large group of friends. These growers make the dividing line between ideological and commercial cultivators blurry. The problem with placing large-scale ideological and social large-scale growers within traditional typologies is that these are often constructed as an extension of market analyses; thereby projecting growers as rational actors who try to maximize their ideological or financial goal. A different approach for understanding how and why someone grows cannabis is by exploring the repertoire of meaning and symbolic practice that dominates the milieu. By studying different ways growers combine ideals that seem to contradict each other, we might clarify how growers move between typologies, motives and production size, while they at the same time manage to see themselves, and appear to others as “authentic”. The major aim with the study is to reveal the importance of culture and cultural complexity on understanding how and why growers cultivate. Data is an ongoing, one-year, ethnographic fieldwork at a large-scale social and commercial grow-operation, as well as ethnographic fieldwork with seven small-scale cultivators and interviews with five former large-scale growers.

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Changing gender inequalities within the social context of initiations into heroin injection

Background: Existing European studies which examine the gendered differences and similarities of initiations into injecting drug use (IDU) tend to neglect the social context in which this event occurs. The qualitative studies completed tend to associate the word gender with women as opposed to both male and female users. Consequently, it is difficult to ascertain a consistent picture of the gendered differences and similarities of female and male IDUs during the initiations process. While recent developments in social environmental studies have sought to address some of these issues, this has not been applied to the Northern Ireland (NI) context. This paper seeks to bridge part of this gap in knowledge concerning gendered differences and similarities by comparing the social process of male and female injectors' initiations through focusing on 3 specific influences in this sequential process: personal relationships; peer injecting; and the injecting order.

Methodology: In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted primarily within the Belfast region in Northern Ireland (NI). In total, 54 current respondents (Males=35, Females=19) were interviewed and whose preferred route of drug administration was either sniffing (N=1), smoking (N=15), injecting (N=29), or smoking and injecting heroin (N=9). Interview data was supplemented with ethnographic data, including follow-up conversations with users and relevant key informants. It was the aim throughout to collate a community-based sample and multiple recruitment strategies were employed which sought to ensure that a diversity of experiences and behaviours would be generated and helped to overcome problems with accessing this hidden population.

Findings: There are both similarities and differences between the experiences of male and female IDUs within the 3 social contexts of initiations. While younger females were more prone to be influenced by an older IDU partner, some males also indicated that their personal relationships influenced their choice to initiate. Additionally, for both male and female users, having family members already involved in the injecting scene influenced their decision to commence injecting. Moreover, having previously smoked heroin in the presence of IDUs for both users, normalised injecting, hence the initiation. In terms of peer injecting, the majority of users reported that they only permitted a partner, family member or close friend to initiate them and frequently initiators' needed persuasion. In

regards to injecting order, differences were found between who the person was with: this was particularly so for female injectors. For instance, if females were being injected by females, they would predominantly be injected first and while this also occurred for males, the majority of males being in male company would be second in the injecting order.

Conclusions: These findings confirm previous studies emphasis on the power differentials which occur during the social context of the initiations process. However, they results also provide new insight into how some women in particular are very pro-active during the process which reverses previous conceptions of women as being powerless and passive during initiation. Importantly, the findings suggest a lot of similarities in male and female experiences of initiations and also suggest that men can be seen to be just as powerless and passive during certain stages of the initiations process as women. Overall, the findings delineate the need for further research which compares male and females experiences of the social context of initiations into IDU.

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The difference between us in a therapeutic community: comparing Portuguese and foreign users social characteristics and patterns of consumption

This presentation is part of a broader study focusing the life course biographies from ex-users of a therapeutic community who had been discharged. This therapeutic community have an international coverage and it's also located in Portugal. The methodological approach consisted in examining all the users' case files and posterior statistical analysis. Our aim is to understand the existence of a drug consumption geography, and the existence of different life styles associated to these patterns of consumption, according to the country of residence. In order to verify these hypotheses we will present a comparison between Portuguese and foreign users (manly Europeans) in two big analytic blocs:

1. Social, demographic, economical and judicial characteristics.
2. Consumption patterns of consumed substances.

In the first bloc is observed that the foreign users are younger, more educated, with a higher number of people living alone, and with a higher number of users with criminal record. In the second bloc we conclude that foreign users consume more frequently substances like cannabinoids, amphetamines, ecstasy, LSD and psycho-pharmaceuticals. These consumptions tend to occur earlier, but in shorter periods of time. These results confirm the existence of different patterns of consume for the same substances, according to the geographical origin of therapeutic community users.

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The balancing role of opium in the case of artists

The aim of our study is to analyze the interaction between psychoactive substance use and the artistic creative process. The creative process consists of two stages which contain both conscious and unconscious work. The first is the 'inspirational' phase in course of which the artist is above all passively present in the process. It shows many similarities with regressive processes in terms of id impulses and drives that are dominantly unconscious. The second one is called the 'elaborational' phase. What the artist 'passively' received in the first phase is in the second phase reconstructed and transformed to a comprehensible form. Therefore, artists have to face their unconscious processes and work with emotional material that is difficult to keep under control in the course of artistic creation. Bringing these contents of consciousness into the surface needs special sensitivity while working with them needs special control functions. Considering these mechanisms, psychoactive substances serve a double function in the case of artists. On the one hand, chemical substances may enhance the artists' sensitivity. On the other hand, they can help moderate the hypersensitivity and repress extreme emotions and burdensome contents of consciousness. On the basis of these theoretical considerations, the authors review and illustrate how the use of alcohol and opiates could have influenced the life and literary work of Edgar Allan Poe and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In both artists' case, the balancing role of the substances appears as a mediator among the various emotional states that are concomitant phenomena of artistic creation.

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Heavy drug users' experiences of the police control

The presentation offers preliminary findings of an ongoing study based on interviews with heavy drug users. They started using drugs in their youth at the turn of the 1960's-1970's during the emergence of the so-called first drug wave. The interviewees call themselves the Old School, distinguishing themselves from younger generation of Finnish users. So far 30 drug users from Helsinki Metropolitan Area have been interviewed, and at the time of the interviews they were 50–60 years of age. Three of them were women.

The public perception of a heavy drug user is strongly influenced by the views of authorities, mainly the police. In this study the focus is placed on the meanings given and the interpretations held by the Old School users themselves. The interviewees “talk back” and challenge the negative characterisations attached to their identity.

The interviews covered users' background, life course, how they got interested in drugs, as well as the control they have been submitted to. The interviewees have offered valuable information about the emergence of different drug cultures and also on the changes that have occurred in the drug market over the decades. Over the decades there have been a number of encounters with law enforcement authorities. In our presentation we will discuss what kind of effects criminal control has had on the users' life.

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Poly drug use - problem or norm?

Concepts are important in shaping policies and the practice interventions that follow from there. One area of increasing concern is the apparently new phenomenon of polydrug use subject of a monograph by the EMCDDA and the attentions of the ACMD.

The argument that poly drug use is a particular phenomenon and requires a particular approach, is we argue, fundamentally flawed. All drug use, we argue is poly drug use, but what the discussion around this allegedly new phenomenon signposts is the failure of drug treatment to move beyond the methadone fix, and secondly, to reignite the debate about drug problems afresh. For what the discussion of polydrug use replicates is the listing of drug dangers, as if when presented in previously unrecorded combinations the phenomenon has acquired a new character.

There are of course serious clinical concerns about the synergies affected by drug combinations and the ensuing health risks (alcohol and cocaine; opiates and tranquilizers) with implications for training say A&E staff and the design of public health messages.

Beyond the strictly utilitarian need for information on the physical effects, the emergence of not only new combinations, but also new substances, often in response to legislation as in the recent case of mephedrone in the UK, underlines how deeply entrenched the resort to chemical short cuts for reaching altered mental states has become in popular culture. Yet far from shifting the course of debate towards greater tolerance it has been presented as a novel phenomenon requiring new interventions. This proposition needs to be qualified. (i) the use of a wide range of substances, some illegal, some unknown, has become a normal repertoire of recreation (ii) many people are drug wise and choose their combinations in order to modulate effect and impact (iii) poly drug use is the norm, and the obsessive relationship with a single substance is the actual problem.

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Google as an epidemiologic instrument? Prediction and cross-national validation of cannabis use prevalence

Background: Google provides national and regional search volume indices (GSI) for different search terms, which have been used in earlier studies to predict epidemics (e.g. influenza) and economic events. Previous research shows that indirect questions about cannabis availability are strong proxies for its prevalence. Using both indirect indicators, we expected an enhanced prediction of cannabis use prevalence and insights into cross-national comparability of survey results.

Method: It was tested whether cannabis-related GSI are temporally and contextually consistent (reliability analysis) and can be used for prediction of national and regional cannabis prevalence rates (correlation, multiple linear regression). To test international comparability of survey results, indicators of response bias were integrated (regression, residual correlation). Data on cannabis use and availability were taken from the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) including the United States. Sensitivity analysis was performed using ESPAD data from 30 Italian provinces and seven German federal states.

Findings: Cannabis-related GSI were found to be highly reliable and constant over time showing a high correlation with national and regional cannabis prevalence rates. Combined with cannabis availability up to 94% of the variance in cannabis use prevalence rates could be explained. Indicators of response bias did not explain the difference between observed and predicted values.

Interpretation: Indirect sources of cannabis-related web behaviour and availability can be considered valid predictors due to GSI's objectivity (GSI) and both indicators' lower likelihood of deception. Corresponding prediction models showed no evidence for a substantial gradient in response biases (over- and underreporting) between countries and regions. Cannabis prevalence rates can therefore be regarded as comparable on a relative level. The suggested approach might be useful for synthetic estimation of drug use as well as other stigmatized behaviours and diseases.

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Differences in opioid maintenance treatment in Sweden

Opioid maintenance treatment (OMT) with methadone or buprenorphine has become one of the most common treatment modalities for opiate addiction. In Sweden this has been a controversial treatment model but is nowadays accepted. The treatment is regulated by The National Board of Health and Welfare (SOF 2009:27). The regulation stipulates that the treatment ought to be individualized and an individual care plan should be established for each patient. Despite the regulation OMT programs differ regarding ownership, size, educational level of the staff, additional services, social activities and relapse policies and control system.

The aim of the presentation is to describe differences in OMT programs and discuss implications on the system, program and individual level.

This presentation is based on a qualitative study conducted in southern Sweden. The empirical data derived from ten different OMT programs and is gathered through interviews with a stratified selection of staff and users aiming to cover differences regarding occupation, sex, age and length of experiences of OMT. Around 40 individuals have been interviewed.

The result shows the emergence of a diverging market regarding OMT in Sweden. Different actors have their view on design of the treatment. The differences concern ideology, the actual practice and medical aspects such as the extent to which methadone can be combined with benzodiazepines and /or alcohol use. The smaller, newer and private run programs, launches themselves as an alternative to the already established ones and a central argument is a greater amount of user orientation.

The regulatory system regarding OMT in combination with changes in the welfare system such as customer orientation and privatization means a new dynamic. One factor on the system level is the expanding interest in transparency and standardized criteria in order to approve the various programs. The programs must both meet the requirements and distinguish themselves from each other in order to get customers. They must also be able to handle the balance between getting legitimacy both from the official system and from the users. At the individual user level there seem to be a variety of programs which could be interpreted as a greater amount of freedom of choice but the question is to what degree this exists in practice.

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Drug Use among Homelessness Young People: A Longitudinal, Pathways Analysis

It is reasonably well established that drug use is commonplace among homeless youth. Much of the European and North American literature has concentrated on the *direction* of the relationship between drug use and homelessness among the young, that is, on seeking to establish drug use as a cause or a consequence of homelessness. Far less attention has focused on the intersection of homeless and drug 'careers', particularly over the period spanning adolescence to young adulthood. This paper seeks to partly redress this imbalance by exploring change in the drug use behaviour of a sample of homeless young people over a six-year period. The findings are drawn from a qualitative longitudinal study of homeless young people in Dublin, Ireland. Initiated in 2004, three waves of data collection (Phase I, 2004-05; Phase II, 2006; Phase III, 2009-10) have so far been completed. Forty young people, aged 14-23 years, were originally recruited to the study, with a retention rate of seventy-five and seventy percent for follow-up Phases II and III, respectively. The study's core method of data collection, the biographical interview, seeks to understand changing experience, behaviour and attitude over time and simultaneously gives a central place to the voices, meanings and interpretations of those who are heard.

The selected findings presented in this paper focus primarily on the relationship between the homeless and drug *pathways* of the study's young people. Their drug consumption patterns are examined alongside an analysis of their pathways into, through and out of homelessness. The interdependent connection between downward transitions in drug consumption and positive housing experiences, on the one hand, and upward transitions in drug use and chronic housing instability, on the other, are highlighted, as is the role of non-housing transitions, 'critical moments', and 'trigger' events. While the findings are complex and multi-dimensional – pointing, in many ways, to the extent to which homeless, drug and criminal 'careers' interact – they equally present a case for a conceptual shift towards a focus on *housing*, rather than homelessness, in attempting to explain change in the drug consumption patterns of young people who negotiate the experience and consequences of homelessness during the transition to adulthood.

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Heroin, Using and Turning Points; Forging a Path for Abstinence

Objectives and Methodology: This paper discusses how discontinuing heroin use develops during an individual's lifetime. The paper describes grounded theory generated through a qualitative study which explored treatment-seeking among heroin users. Interviews were undertaken with people (n=12) with recent or current experience of heroin dependence and drug service providers (9). Data was continuously collected and analysed using the methods of classic grounded theory including theoretical sampling, memoing, constant comparison and coding. A grounded theory of „forging a path for abstinence from heroin“ was developed.

Significant Results: The theory identifies critical events and factors contributing to „turning points“ in heroin users“ perceptions of subjective heroin use and persistence towards abstinence. The study points to the role of context and social capital in enabling and supporting change in heroin use trajectories towards abstinence. The study identifies that „getting clean“ is an ongoing concern of people who experience heroin dependence. This concern is responded to by a gradual process of „forging a path for abstinence from heroin“. This process takes place over a significant period of time, while heroin use is active. Forging a path for abstinence from heroin involves three key processes towards the discontinuation of heroin use. These are; **resolving** to stop using heroin; deciding how to stop using heroin (**navigating**), and **initiating** abstinence from heroin. When forging a path for abstinence, heroin users are living within subjective contexts with varying levels of the following complex resources; dependence knowledge; treatment awareness; treatment access, and alliance. Moving from „poor“ to „rich“ contexts of these resources are significant turning points in an individual“s perception of their heroin use and abstinence. Such turning points enable an individual to begin, maintain and sustain their path for abstinence from heroin. The presence of formal and informal alliance(s) within the social context of the person experiencing heroin dependence emerges as a significant factor in enabling the individual to begin and maintain the gradual process of forging a path for abstinence from heroin.

Conclusions: The theory of forging a path for abstinence from heroin describes the subjective complexity of moving towards discontinuation of heroin use. The theory describes social and contextual factors which enable change in perception of heroin use, recovery and treatment. The theory generated in this study increases understanding of why and how heroin users stop using the drug over the *long-*

term. The study supports the view that the concept of „turning points“ in the life course are valuable when applied to aspects of drug use such as cessation (Teruya and Hser., 2010).

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Embarking on Large-Scale Qualitative Research: Reaping the Benefits of Mixed Methods or Entering a Researcher's Nightmare?

Qualitative research is often conceptualized as inherently small-scale research, primarily conducted by a lone researcher enmeshed in extensive and long-term fieldwork or involving in-depth interviews with a small sample of 20 to 30 participants. In the study of alcohol or illicit drugs, traditionally this has often been in the form of ethnographies of both alcohol or drug-using subcultures. Such small-scale projects have produced important interpretive scholarship that focuses on the culture and meaning of alcohol and drug use in situated, embodied contexts. Larger-scale projects are often assumed to be solely the domain of quantitative researchers, using formalistic survey methods and descriptive or explanatory models.

In this paper, however, we will discuss qualitative research done on a comparatively larger scale—with in-depth qualitative interviews with hundreds of young alcohol and drug users, cumulatively involving thousands. Although this work incorporates some quantitative elements into the design, data collection, and analysis, the qualitative dimension and approach has nevertheless remained central. Larger-scale qualitative research shares some of the challenges and promises of smaller-scale qualitative work including understanding alcohol and drug consumption from an emic perspective, locating hard-to-reach populations, developing rapport with respondents, generating thick descriptions and a rich analysis, and examining the wider socio-cultural context as a central feature. However, there are additional challenges specific to the scale of qualitative research, which include data management, data overload and problems of handling large-scale data sets, time constraints in coding and analyzing data, and personnel issues including training, organizing and mentoring large research teams. Yet large samples can prove to be essential for enabling researchers to conduct comparative research, whether that be cross-national research undertaken by different teams or cross-cultural research looking at internal divisions and differences within diverse communities and cultures.

This paper will highlight some of the key challenges of this type of research, as well as the benefits and some of the strategies undertaken in conducting research on alcohol and drug issues among dance club attendees in three different countries – San Francisco, Hong Kong and Rotterdam. In so doing, we will examine the potential lessons to be learned from embarking on this type of qualitative research within a wider European perspective.

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Recreational drug use and the importance of getting high

My PhD project is a qualitative study based on interviews with 19 illicit drug users. I study the social context around illicit drug use – especially drug use that is defined as recreational drug use from the users point of view. The interviews focus what kind of experience the informants have with different drugs, how they feel the intoxication, and what they do when they are on drugs. How do they handle their illicit drug use and what does the drug use mean for them? I see gender, local culture, friendship, intoxication and young peoples knowledge about illicit drugs, as important elements in the social construction of illicit drug use and identity.

Intoxication seems to be most important for my informants that present themselves as recreational drug users. Some of them also believed that's an important difference between *them* and *others* (more abusive drug users). It seems as if they have strong ideas about how the intoxication should feel like (before trying a new drug) – and they try hard to get this feeling they have heard others talked or written about. LSD, “magic mushrooms” and salvia divinorum has given them experience they see as really different and exiting. They also talked about the joy of getting high with amphetamine, ecstasy, cannabis and heroine. They also shared bad experiences with illicit drugs. Some of them struggle to find words to describe the intoxication; both what they felt and what they liked about it. Some rather talk about what they did when they were high – for example that they really talked a lot, laught a lot, played games, wrote poems or just watched a movie or something. But still, they all talked about the importance of getting high and for some the intoxication was the main reason for taking the drugs.

For most of my informants the drug use took place when they were in their twenties – before they had work and/or family. It seems as they change their illicit drug use (quit it or use less), when they find it difficult to combine it with their other social life and commitments.

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Initial thoughts about the links between drug abuse and female prostitution in the 21st century

Two of the most serious social problems that exist nowadays in almost all societies are these of drug dependence and prostitution. The present paper will observe if there is any correlation between these two and to what extent drug dependence can lead to prostitution or vice versa. Moreover, it will try to deepen at the psychological factors of this multi-folded condition. The results may help us to understand the reasons of this “imperative need” for substance abuse, if there is actually any or if it is the people – as the “protectors”- who create it.

Previous studies have provided us some evidence that even though “whilst initial involvement in prostitution may serve as a means of supporting a serious drug habit, the psychological distress resulting from involvement in sex work leads to an increase in drug use, creating a downward cycle” (Young et al., 2000). Therefore, these two social problems – the prostitution and the drug abuse – appear to have an interdependent relationship that sometimes can lead to a continuous cycle. The main goal then is to understand the relationship addicted women built with the prostitution system and how this bond exceeds the restrictions settled by the regular psychological and behavioral conditions. The paper hypothesis will cover only the occasions in which there is close relation between drug abuse and prostitution no matter what comes first. Thus, initial point is considered the fact that there is interaction between female prostitution and drug abuse and an examination of the parameters follows.

The large number of the significant variables in the process, led to the use of qualitative methodology. As the direct contact with (addicted) prostitutes and drug addicted women was unachievable due to many complicated circumstances, different strategy was followed. That was to gather data indirectly through people related professionally- or in any other way directly -with drug addicted women who had practiced the prostitute’s vocation at least three times in the present or the past.

The results have proved the verity of the hypothesis testing, with the appearance of new significant parameters. Substantial data were retrieved on whether the woman had entered prostitution or became drug addicted through the influence of a man.

This field of research is very limited examined, mostly because of the difficulties that arise during the recruitment process. However, drug abuse and prostitution existed and continue to exist. Thus, it could be a great opportunity through this research to try to understand in depth the relationship between these

two and to offer some social policy potential solutions so as to decrease all the participating risks that follow both of them such as HIV, Hepatitis, or even psychological distresses.

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Not "just" public health. Ethnographic view on harm reduction policy and practices – the case of Finnish needle exchange services

Current understandings of harm reduction have emphasized the nature of harm reduction interventions as public work. This kind of a view is usually based on different kinds of programmatic texts circulated in the official harm reduction agenda as well as in the national and local level drug policy documents. The result has been a slightly distorted view of harm reduction as mere public health work as well as a neo-liberal technology of government that aims to transform drug users into "docile bodies" without any other more substantial or liberating purposes. The paper sheds light on the implementation of harm reduction philosophy by looking at the site-specific practices of one needle exchange program located in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The purpose in the investigation has been to give a voice to the frontline workers as well to the clients of the needle exchange services and in this way to diversify the picture of harm reduction as a drug policy orientation and social movement. The ethnographic method used in the paper brings out the various ways in which problem drug use is perceived and handled within harm reduction philosophy and the "official view" of harm reduction negotiated afresh. It turns out that harm reduction is rarely "just" public health work as it is an effort to grasp the manifold problems, physical, psychological and social, associated with problematic drug use. At the same time drug user's human worth takes a central place as a structuring principle in the development of services. In the presentation these features of harm reduction work are referred to as "new professionalism" that questions the old hierarchical view of client-professional relationships and strives for a new kind of partnerships and solidarities between the two groups. In the paper the Finnish case is discussed with the previous work done on concrete harm reduction practices in other parts of the world. With the help of this comparison the paper strives for a better understanding of harm reduction, which could serve the development of the harm reduction programs in the future.

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Similarities between Dutch and Brazilian Drug Policies?

Written policies for illicit-drugs have been reformed in developed and developing nations during the last 30 years, generally, to include a “public health” approach toward drugs. While in the EU the Netherlands had a strong lead on these changes, Brazil assumed this role in Latin America.

This research analyzes how social, health and police street level workers in the cities of Amsterdam, Netherlands, and Porto Alegre, Brazil, make illicit-drug policy happen in the streets. Policy is understood as a *process* (Colebatch, 2004), and local workers as policy makers (Lipsky, 1980; Long, 2001), as they have their own beliefs and deal with work environment constraints to put written policy into practice, shaping the way it happens on a daily basis. Therefore, research focuses on workers activities, beliefs towards illicit-drug use and their work environment. These factors are used to investigate collaboration between social, health and police workers, and to what extent *street* policy corresponds to *paper* policy.

Qualitative data is based on 6 months fieldwork in 2 districts, in each city. Fieldwork included observations, informal conversations and in-depth interviews with social, health and police workers during their daily activities assisting people who use drugs.

In both cities, workers perceived a number of constraints to put paper policy into practice, and despite very different cultural and drug use context, there were also similarities, besides differences, in perceived constraints. Main differences were related to work conditions and information exchange. While poor work conditions were most commonly mentioned by Brazilian workers, dilemmas regarding information exchange between workers were mentioned mainly by the Dutch. A common dilemma for Dutch and Brazilian workers was to what extent following rules when people who use drugs cannot fulfill them, and to what extent making rules flexible to include (or maintain) this population into the service.

Social, health and police workers beliefs about drugs are much more similar and public health oriented in Amsterdam than in Porto Alegre, where conceptions vary from public health to repression in all sectors. While in Amsterdam a good collaboration was built between social, health and police workers, in Porto Alegre police is not considered part of the network.

In both cases paper policy is partially related to street policy. Different stages of drug policy improvement and countries developing stages bring different

dilemmas for putting policy into practice. Common constraints, however, show that there might be some particularities related to drug policy field itself.

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“It's a duty to help others”. The importance of cannabis culture for cannabis markets

There are two established approaches to understand the cannabis economy. First, one can emphasize how cannabis, as any other illegal drug, is a particular good and how such market attracts particular actors. The way in which criminal milieus have their own logic will then be important, for example how they emphasize concepts such as ‘respect’ and ‘honor’, and how deviant or criminal subcultures influence mechanisms in the market. Second, the cannabis economy may be analyzed by viewing it as just like any other business. Sellers, for example, appears to be a rational entrepreneur, and a great deal of their activities can be understood in commercial terms. This approach is often embedded in a neoclassical economic perspective, focusing on how prices, outputs and income are the consequence of processes of supply and demand, often mediated through a hypothesized maximization of utility by central actors in accordance with rational choice theory.

This paper suggests a third way to analyze the cannabis economy. Data consist of extensive fieldwork and interviews with 20 street cannabis dealers and 40 qualitative interviews with cannabis dealers and smugglers from all layers in the economy. 60 interviews with cannabis users are also utilized to understand the economy seen from the buyers perspective. The point of departure is neither trade nor crime, but the symbolic meaning of the substance and the culture which influences users. For many cannabis sellers, earning money is a kind of taboo. Violence is also frowned on. The cannabis economy must therefore be understood as woven into special cultural practices and meanings. This is an unusual approach in studies of the illegal drugs economy. It is also unusual in studies of markets more generally. The paper presents three different markets: a) *the private market* on which selling takes place behind closed doors, usually from the dealer's own flat b) *the semi-public market* which is associated with clubs, pubs and cafés and c) *the public market* where selling takes place in public spaces, parks and streets. The main conclusion is that the *cannabis economy*, also the more organized part, cannot be understood without looking at the way it is interwoven with the ideology of *cannabis culture*. Such an approach is especially important to understand the private markets and small-scale cultivation of marijuana.

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Exploring humor in qualitative drug dealing research

“There is no more dangerous literary symptom than a temptation to write about wit and humor. It indicates the total loss of both.”

Bernard Shaw

Humor is often conveyed as lacking intellectual weight. Similar any attempt at explaining a joke runs the risk of killing it. Thus humor is often perceived as things which are just for pleasure and fun, and seen as aspects of communication which is empirically closed to social scientific study. And yet, humor has a unique and distinctively social character. It implies a social relationship, in form of a connection between self and others. However humor is not only a sign of closeness among friends, it's also an effective way of forging social bonds, even in situations not very conducive to closeness. It breaks the ice between strangers, unite people in different hierarchical positions, and can create a sense of shared conspiracy in the context of illicit activities.

Although humor is a vital part of everyday communication, it has to a large extent been neglected in qualitative studies on drug dealing. Drawing on empirical examples from interviews with imprisoned drug dealers, and on a theoretical framework developed by humor scholars, I explore the following four aspects of the drug dealers' use of humor:

1. The importance of a shared sense of humor in establishing rapport between the drug dealers and the researcher.
2. The importance of the drug dealers' humor as a moral tension reliever, creating a device to tackle issues of vulnerability, guilt and shame.
3. The importance of the drug dealers' humor as a means of transgressing social boundaries, which can cause offense as well as amusement. These transgressions create boundaries between insiders and outsiders, play with established hierarchies and often make the police and judicial system the butt of the jokes.
4. The importance of drug dealers' humor as an alternative world view, which operate side by side a conventional view, and which as the potential of providing the means for social resistance and empowerment, even in the context of imprisonment.

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The continuous development of monitoring new drugs online

Monitoring the internet in the field of new drugs/'legal highs' has potential for a number of research purposes such as – amongst others;

Identification of new drugs, trends and of potential health threats;

Indicator on supply & availability;

Interest or concern about new substances (drug users, civil society etc)

Discourse analysis

However with more than 250 million websites and 150 million blogs not to mention more than ½ a billion friends or pages in Facebook alone, then choices have to be made to narrow internet monitoring on new drugs/'legal highs' into a feasible exercise.

EMCDDA snapshots have as their objective to ascertain online availability of 'new drugs/legal highs' and the methodology to do so is continuously subject to review and improvement. Consequently, the 2011 EMCDDA snapshot was reviewed based on the experiences of 2010, and the 2012 EMCDDA snapshot will be reviewed based on the feedback on the 2011 exercise. Data for the snapshots is collected through a so-called snapshot reporting form.

EMCDDA snapshots are planned by a snapshot steering group and implemented by a snapshot operational group (who fills in the snapshot reporting form). After each snapshot exercise the operational group provides feedback which is submitted to the steering group, and an overall proposal for review is then drafted by the snapshot responsible (the author of this abstract).

The review of the 2011 EMCDDA snapshot exercise emphasised a number of improvement compared to the 2010 exercise which should be kept in future exercises such as carrying out the EMCDDA snapshots in a data lab setting rather than individually.

However, the review of the 2011 snapshot also pinpointed a number of points which should be subject to contemplation for improvement/change:

The ratio between online searching and filling in reporting form was around 50/50, but preferably most of the time should be spent on online searching (thereby properly using the language skills of the native speakers).

Archiving of sites would be beneficial for the exercise as more time could then be allocated to the online searching.

Search strings in English were generally found to be useful although equivalent translation to non-English languages was found to be a difficult exercise.

Other aspects and challenges of multilingual online monitoring in the fields of drugs will be presented and discussed, as will its added value of monitoring trends in the field of new drugs/'legal highs'.

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The pleasure dome

The concept of “high” is not well established and rather diffuse. In any case the “high” is dependent from diverse variables (e.g. type of drugs used, the user’s state and expectations, the environmental setting; social and cultural attitudes). It therefore is necessary to distinguish three dimensions,

1. The search for and the experience of highs on the individual level. This search depends from different psychological motivations and may even include a need for “near to death” experiences.
2. The experience of highs on the social level. In that frame the “high” becomes even more complex, since it becomes shaped by influences from the environment as well as from the expectancies of the individual drug users and of the social group.
3. The cultural level. The cultural interpretation of the meaning of the intoxicated state, especially in its relation to pleasure serves as an important frame.

Concerning methodology the contribution takes his position within the frame of cultural studies and of media research. Material used includes data from qualitative research as well as from experience reports, which can be found in the internet (e g EROWID).

To illustrate the benefits of examining the consumption of drugs as important in the social construction of identity and in its specific cultural frame the period of ecstasy-consumption in the context of the early days of the rave phenomenon is chosen. A revision of that special cultural situation in its historical context shows that it might well be understood as a partly subconscious reaction to the AIDS menace and that the special benefit of the ecstasy high coincided with other tendencies to avoid direct sexual contacts while upholding the need for lustful bodily experiences. At that time Michel Foucault brought forth a proposition that pointed exactly in that direction, giving the high a new shape and a new meaning. The look into the cultural meaning of the use of drugs within lifestyle populations reveals that probably that behaviour pattern can be functional in many ways. One rather still neglected possibility may be a protective, self controlling, regulating function. In the case of the dance culture the typical drug use probably initially helped to create a “pleasure dome” where the realms of bodily pleasure could be explored without engaging in (dangerous) sexual behaviour.

Conclusions: More efforts should be taken to observe not only the phenomena but also the meaning of behaviours like drug use in its special social and historical context. Attention should be directed at possibly self protective mechanisms steering behaviours which seem harmful or hazardous. Research on the impact of the media response on such trends is needed as well as empirical research to generate data to put the media produced image into perspective.

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Methods matter. Reflections on the study of the research – policy nexus in the Belgian cannabis law reform

The notion that research may be carried out expressly to influence policy is still controversial to many researchers. Some feel quite strongly that research should not be limited and directed by the demands of policy makers. They assume that more is accomplished when research is unfettered and free to follow its own directions. However, providing research for the benefit of policy makers and the needs of a society is equally legitimate. In particular, some drug researchers bemoan their lack of influence on drug policy, believing that policy would be improved if their research findings were more central in decision making.

After lengthy and difficult negotiations, policy recommendations to *de facto* depenalize the possession of cannabis for personal use were endorsed via the Belgian Law of 3 May 2003. The discussion about the new stipulations must be considered within the evolution in various European countries towards more tolerant policies regarding cannabis possession at the start of the twenty-first century (e.g. Switzerland, Spain, UK). In my research I aim to understand how ‘evidence’ was used in the development of the cannabis law reform in Belgium and which (f)actors were at play. Is the development of the 2003 Cannabis Act based on (scientific) input or, so called, ‘evidence-based’?

Extensive academic output, using a diversity of approaches and analytical frameworks, has sought to systematize knowledge (or research) utilization categories and strategies. Most authors hold a positivist view resulting in an assumption that the relation between knowledge and policy is linear, direct or problem solving and, to a certain extent, predictable. Scientific inquiry is seen as the core knowledge production process. I follow a critical, constructivist approach assuming that social reality is rather produced and reproduced through actions and interactions between (powerful) people and the ‘third community’ (e.g. media, interest groups).

This presentation will report on my considerations in developing (and testing) my methodological framework. Can I use existing frameworks for understanding my emphasis? Is it possible to measure utilization of research? What do we mean with ‘evidence-based’? Which qualitative or quantitative methods are best suited? In critically addressing these challenges, I will discuss some of the lessons I learned in order to establish a more ‘realistic’ understanding of the research-policy.

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Building a CV of (minor) transgressions: young tourists in Ibiza and Sunny Beach

Holidays at nightlife resorts play an important role in the lives of youth from many countries. For example, in Northern Europe, there is a long tradition of young people spending parts of their summer holidays at teeming, throbbing nightlife destinations in the south such as Ayia Napa in Cyprus, Faliraki in Greece, Ibiza in Spain, Rimini in Italy and Sunny Beach in Bulgaria.

The vast majority of the existing research on nightlife tourism is based on quantitative methods that have been designed to measure the extent of substance use, unsafe sex, fighting and other health risks among young travelers. The research shows almost unanimously that young people take greater risks when at nightlife resorts.

This paper examines stories of excess and debauchery that young travelers generate whilst abroad. Focus is on Danish tourists in Sunny Beach and British tourists in Ibiza. The paper is mainly based on qualitative data, most of which are on Danes. The methods include field observations for a total of three months and 54 interviews.

The paper argues that the young tourists use drugs not merely for the immediate pleasure of it, but also because they want to do something forbidden, something slightly out of the ordinary that they can tell to friends back home. The heavy substance use and associated risk behaviour creates memorable stories that bear witness to a youth rich in experimentation and out-there experiences. In other words, the drug consumption is not simply focused on the present, but also oriented towards future recognition and prestige. The paper draws on the ritual theory of Emile Durkheim.

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What you observe is not what there is: Severe problems when interpreting prevalence and prevalence changes

A common conviction in empirical research is that the effects of unsystematic errors balance each other out; i.e. that sample means converge towards the true value with increasing sample sizes. This assumption is generally very problematic and particularly unjustified in regard to dichotomous prevalence data. Enormous biases to expect under realistic assumptions, particularly when dealing with low prevalence phenomena like last year or last month prevalence of substance use other than cannabis, alcohol and nicotine, can be quantified with simple probability calculations. True prevalence rates can be derived from observed prevalence rates, provided sensitivity and specificity of the assessment procedure are known.

Closely related to this phenomenon is the problem of systematic spurious changes in prevalence, whenever the selection criterion is stochastically related to the dependent variable – unfortunately a common situation in therapy research as well.

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Barriers and pathways to substance abuse treatment for drug users from ethnic minority groups

Background: Substance abusers may experience various barriers to treatment, which are personal (e.g., feelings of shame, being homeless) and/or system-related (e.g., opening times, admission procedures, staff skills). Such treatment barriers are well-documented among specific populations such as drug abusing mothers, ethnic minority groups, ... As the concept 'ethnic minority' covers a large variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, we compared treatment utilization and medical consumption among various ethnic groups in Belgium and identified barriers/pathways to treatment which may be specific for some ethnic groups.

Methods: First, treatment utilization was analyzed, based on a representative sample of 2000 persons who presented for drug treatment in specialized treatment centers. Service utilization and medical consumption was monitored over a 2 year period. Five main ethnic groups were compared: drug users with their roots in Belgium (79.2%), Eastern Europe (2.4%), North Africa (7.5%), Turkey (2.4%) and Southern Europe (6.6%).

Second, we performed qualitative in-depth interviews with 15 drug users with North-African roots, 15 persons from Eastern Europe and 15 from Turkey. Interviews were held in-person with trained interviewers in four Belgian cities with a large immigrant population (Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent and Charleroi).

Results: The quantitative study revealed that ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in residential drug treatment, but utilize to the same or to an even larger extent outpatient drug treatment (including MMT), in particular service users coming from Eastern-Europe and Turkey. Visits to GPs and private psychiatrist are less prevalent among drug abusers from ethnic minority groups, and prescription rates for antidepressants are much lower, especially among Turkish drug users.

The qualitative interviews illustrate the large heterogeneity not only between, but also within ethnic groups. Barriers identified in one interview (e.g., lack of cultural sensitivity) appeared to be formulated as pathways to treatment in other interviews (e.g., offering 'halal' meals, provide time to pray, role of intercultural 'mediators'). Also, the role of treatment alternatives (such as marriage, holidays in country of origin, the role of the ethnic community) was often discussed, in

particular among Turkish and Moroccan drug users. Language barriers appear to be particularly common among Eastern European drug users.

Conclusion: Based on this qualitative and quantitative study, we can conclude that ethnic minority groups may experience substantial barriers to drug treatment, of which some can be easily met, while others require a different, inclusive approach which allows to deal with diversity and to tailor interventions at individuals specific needs.

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Modern drug situation in Russia and ways of its solution in terms of socio-economic changes

According to the Federal Service for Drug Control of drug users in the country exceeds 2.5 million and this figure is increasing annually. Of these, almost 90% use opiates. Today, Russia has become a key market for Afghan heroin. There is a growing so-called "pharmacy" drugs - purchase drugs at pharmacies, from which later made drugs more toxic than heroin.

As practice shows, are used in Russia at the present time, forms and methods of combating drug addiction are not able to adequately society to solve the problem of high levels of drug consumption. In these circumstances, there is a need to move a new, comprehensive anti-drug model, which focuses on the dominant work with the demand for drugs.

The current situation does not meet the Government of the Russian Federation and the results of last April 18, 2011 meeting of the Presidium of the State Council in Irkutsk on the issue of growth in drug use involving young people, a list of instructions was submitted by the President to the relevant ministries and services. A model of restrictive drug policy, according to experts, is the best for Russia to implement.

With a restrictive position addict - is a sick person who needs different forms of treatment and reintegration into society. This model of social control is most appropriately applied in Sweden, partly in France and Greece.

Earlier, Russia dominated the liberal approach, which led the country to drug epidemics.

Today, one of the main strategic objectives of the President of Russia to the State anti-drug committee was the creation of a national system of drug rehabilitation, and law enforcement in their entry into treatment and rehabilitation programs. Plans to establish a more serious degree of responsibility for systematic non-medical use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as the possibility of using as a primary or alternative form of punishment for the perpetrators of minor offenses related to drugs, the duty to perform medical and rehabilitative procedures for getting rid of drug addiction.

Social orientation restrictive strategy allows us to consider it the most promising for use in the Russian Federation.

However, please note that Russia, unlike most developed countries, at present there is practically no state system for drug rehabilitation. The main agencies that implement programs of psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration into society, are non-governmental organizations - public and religious associations.

In this regard, particular attention of government anti-drug services in the near future will be drawn to international experience to establish mechanisms for such cooperation, standardization and certification of this type of service, bringing them to the level of international quality. The development of this area is of strategic importance for Russia, and requires the use of scientific methods of the resource, not only Russian but also international organizations, as well as an increase in drug use here generates a constant flow of drug trafficking through the other States and international drug trade.

To date, international cooperation in this area is underdeveloped and it must be developed using the experience of other countries to create the most appropriate mechanisms for the situation of national drug policy.

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Being High and Being Healed: Reflections on Identity and Altered States of Consciousness by People who Use Cannabis, Magic Mushrooms and other Psychedelics as Medicine

Objectives: Although cannabis, magic mushrooms and other psychedelic substances have a history of use as medicines in a variety of cultural contexts, their ability to alter human consciousness is currently their most salient and controversial characteristic. The appreciation of a cannabis “high” or a psychedelic experience appears to be socially learned and many users perceive an overlap of medicinal and mind-altering effects. In this paper we consider how the experience of medicinal/therapeutic benefits from psychedelic (and other) states of consciousness, underlies a sense of shared identity among regular users of these drugs that is distinct from (and often in conflict with) the rest of society.

Methodology: Our data come from a structured online survey of 78 cannabis users and online qualitative interviews with 23 users of magic mushrooms and other psychedelic drugs. The survey was done as part of a final year BSc Medical Anthropology dissertation project and respondents were self-selected cannabis users from a hidden online population. The survey was hosted by and respondents were recruited through the University of Kent Student Psychedelics Society. Participants in the qualitative study were recruited through the “Grow Report” internet forum, as part of an ongoing virtual ethnography project.

Results: Preliminary findings suggest that benefits of the regular use of cannabis, magic mushrooms and other psychedelic drugs are associated with broad, holistic definitions of health and healing. Although regular users may initially experiment with psychedelic drugs due to a hedonistic desire to “get high,” persistent use seems to be sustained by the development of more mindful and/or spiritual motivations for altering consciousness to maximize wellbeing. The regular experience of altered states of consciousness and practical knowledge of their healing effects distinguish users of cannabis, magic mushrooms and other psychedelics from others who are not in the know.

Discussion and Conclusions: Although the altered states of consciousness induced by cannabis, magic mushrooms and other psychedelic drugs are often characterized in mainstream media as varieties of intoxication, users themselves may interpret them very differently. These altered states may be desired for purposes of self-exploration, spiritual discovery and psychosomatic balancing that

contribute to a holistic sense of health and wellbeing. Denial of the healing benefits of being high may be part of the reason why social prohibitions against such conscious states seems to do more harm than good.

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The Punishment of Drugs Offenders

A large proportion of the prison population in England and Wales are dependent on the illicit drugs heroin and/or crack cocaine on entry into prison. This paper reports findings from a study examining the punishment of drugs offenders. From observations conducted in different London magistrates' courts it draws attention to the largely petty offences 'problem drugs users' are convicted for, such as the shoplifting of low value items and the possession of small quantities of drugs. The types of punishments handed out for the crimes committed are discussed, such as fines, exclusion orders, curfews, electronic tagging and imprisonment and questions whether the resultant punishments go anyway towards addressing the cycle of drugs- related offending these individuals are caught up in. It argues that the rehabilitative objectives of punishment are sometimes evident in the summing up of the case and the sentence being passed, but punishments are also punitive, futile, and inevitably enhance the social and economic marginalisation of problem drugs used.

The paper reflects on the method of criminal court based observations to gather this type of information and suggests it offers rich research material on the nature of drugs related criminal activity being prosecuted in the courts, the attributes of those being prosecuted and the depriving penalties being dispensed.

The paper will refer to European level policy on the punishment of drugs offenders in order to situate the London-based findings within a broader drugs policy context. Reflections will be offered on whether the current national drugs policy, which endeavours to facilitate problem drugs users into health treatment regimes is being reflected in the processes and decisions being made in the courts. 'Some governments choose to pursue law enforcement oriented domestic drug control policies that rely more heavily on incarceration' (Bewley-Taylor *et al*, 2009).

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When Respondent-Driven turns into Interviewer-Driven Sampling Selection and Interviewing Challenges in a Larger Qualitative-Quantitative Study on Drug Distribution among Recreational Users

Objectives: The author reports on an ongoing study on “social supply” and small-scale trade of illegal drugs. In addition to the substantial goals, an important methodological objective is the testing of “Respondent-Driven Sampling” (Heckathorn 1997) among socially integrated drug users.

Methodology: Motivations, careers and contexts of drug use and drug distribution as well as structures of small-scale trade and “social supply” networks of recreational users are examined using semi-structured focused interviews, followed by a standardised questionnaire. The data will be analysed using qualitative content analysis and usual statistical procedures. The theoretical framework includes the concept of informal economy and the criminal career approach.

Results: Since the beginning of the study, 74 persons have been interviewed about their history of drug use and their experiences in buying and selling illegal substances in particular. The sample ranges from occasional users with no active experience in distributing drugs up to professional mid-scale dealers. The presentation focuses on experiences with the sampling technique. Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) did not work out to be very fruitful for the recruitment of the targeted population: once interviewed, most of the respondents made no active efforts to refer other interviewees. Particularly when looking at the activity of fieldworkers, the sampling method turned into mere Snowball Sampling.

Conclusions: In previous social drug research, RDS was mainly applied to compulsive, problematic drug users (e.g., Frost et al. 2006, Stormer et al. 2006, Houwing et al. 2011). These populations differ from the respondents of the study being presented, as the vast majority has already been “officially” stigmatised by various authorities (e.g. police, social services, treatment facilities) – which, in effect, increases the willingness to talk to strangers about their illegal activities. In private settings of socially integrated users, worries about reputation are

considerably more relevant. Thus, trust building measures, mainly the direct and close contact between interviewer and respondent are much more important than in marginalised groups. Moreover, the financial reward for the referral of new interviewees doesn't outweigh concerns regarding anonymity.

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Strategies of drug users to avoid infection with hepatitis C – Results from five European countries

In a recent European project on HCV prevention among young drug users one component focuses on risk behaviour. For this purpose a special group of drug users are asked for their drug use behaviour, their rituals concerning potential risks of infectious diseases and individual strategies to avoid becoming infected with hepatitis C. The target group for this study are drug users who a) are not older than 35 years, b) are HCV-negative and c) use regularly either opiates, cocaine or amphetamines. It is planned to ask 100 drug users according to this definition of inclusion criteria by using face-to-face questionnaires in each of the five cooperating cities which is – beside Hamburg – Athens, Amsterdam, Barcelona and Vilnius. Up to now the survey has not been finalised; this is expected for the end of July this year. However, one first preliminary result is, that this specific target group does not seem to represent a considerable part of the regular or addicted drug users.

The presentation will concentrate on the results of the survey as regards drug use patterns, risk reduction behaviour and knowledge on hepatitis C in five European cities. The drug users' strategies to prevent from HCV infection will be worked out on the basis of the empirical data and differences between the cities will be discussed.