

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Understanding Cannabis Reclassification
in the United Kingdom 2002-2004

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor in Management
in the University of Hull

by

Beatriz Acevedo Holguin
B.Eng (Industrial) M.A. (Sociology), M.B.A

May, 2007

Summary of Thesis submitted for PhD degree in Management

By Beatriz Acevedo Holguin

On

Understanding Cannabis Re-classification in the United Kingdom
2002-2004

In 2002 the British government announced that illicit drugs legislation would be reformed by downgrading cannabis from Class B to Class C in the Misuse of Drugs Act of 1971. This process, commonly known as the re-classification of cannabis, represents a significant reform in the approach to drugs policy in the United Kingdom. This thesis concerns an understanding of the process of policy making in relation to cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom, during the period of 2002 to 2004. By using both a post-structuralist approach based on the work of Michel Foucault and some tools from Systems Thinking Methodologies, this dissertation analyses the different events, discourses, opinions and dynamics involved in the process of cannabis policy making in the British context.

This thesis makes important contributions in the field of drugs policy research and the area of systems thinking: In the area of drugs policy research, this dissertation develops certain ideas regarding the social construction of the drugs problem, by answering to the following questions: (1) How are discourses on cannabis produced; (2) How do particular discourses become more relevant than others in the final decision on cannabis re-classification; (3) What are the implications of cannabis re-classification in the definition of the 'problem' of cannabis and the characterisation of subjects who might experience these problems. In addition, this dissertation proposes an original way of combining the work of Michel Foucault with the selective use of some stages in Peter Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology.

Keywords: Cannabis, United Kingdom, Cannabis Re-classification, Soft Systems Methodology, post-structuralism, Foucault, Checkland.

*To my family
Aldemar, Eugenia and Alexandra*

*To my beloved husband
Charles Robbins*

For their unconditional faith in this adventure

Acknowledgements

I would need more than one page to acknowledge all of the people who have accompanied me during this journey - this is merely a symbolic way of thanking them for their support, ideas, encouragement, and comments.

Thanks to: my supervisor, Professor Michael Jackson, who first believed in this research project and advised me during the PhD process; to my examiners: Dr. Néstor Valero-Silva and Dr. Amanda Gregory, whose comments improved the final result presented in this document; to my second supervisor, Dr. Richard Common, for his constant company and support, and to Paddy Long, for her collaboration in the polishing of this thesis.

In Colombia, to my dear friend Ana Maria Carreira for sharing the process of writing our Doctoral theses. To my mentor Gustavo Gonzalez - 'el Gato' - who taught me the value of perseverance. To my dear Diana Uribe, for her constant reminder of history and cosmic events.

Thanks to Tamar Prado; Doris Ochoa and Mario Hernández; Eliana Iannini; Claudia Piedad Godoy; Estrella de los Ríos; Adriana Tobón; Gloria Hoyos; Jorge Valderrama; Francisco Diaz-Granados; Oz Polo; Juan Daniel Gómez and Rafael Ramírez. Their emails, letters, cards, phone-calls, and occasional visits brightened up the time of my writing.

In the United Kingdom: to my friends, Marianna Afanassieva; Claire Griffiths; Cecilia Loureiro-Koechlin and Jose Rodrigo Cordoba; Jean Kellie and Brian Milson; Jeff Smith; Brian Parsons; Federico Fornnaguera, Sam Warren; Jo Brewis; Easter Star and Pork Records. With special gratitude to Andria Efthimiou-Mordaunt and her magic wand for networks and contacts. In the Netherlands, where this venture began, thanks to Peter Cohen; EricFromberg; Eduardo Tovar and Pinar Coskun; and my colleagues from the Transnational Institute, Amsterdam: Tom Blickmann; Amira Armenta and Martin Jelsma.

To those on both sides of the Atlantic, my infinite gratitude.

The truth is that history could have been
written in many different ways.

History of the Siege of Lisbon.
Jose Saramago.

It would be wrong to say that the soul is
an illusion, or an ideological effect. On
the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is
produced permanently around, on, within
the body by the functioning of a power
that is exercised on those punished –
and, in a more general way, on those
one supervises, trains and corrects, over
madmen, children at home and at
school, the colonized, over those who
are stuck at a machine and supervised
for the rest of their lives.

Discipline and Punish
Michel Foucault (1991a: 29)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	9
1.1.	Definition of the research issue.....	11
1.2.	Tradition and development in drug research.....	18
1.3.	Conceptual and methodological pillars of this research	22
1.4.	Research questions.....	30
1.5.	Original contributions of this research.....	31
1.6.	Content of the Dissertation	35
CHAPTER 2	DRUGS POLICY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM	39
2.1.	Drugs in the nineteenth-century: vices and temperance	41
2.2.	1900-1950: The British system of drug control.....	46
2.3.	1960: Times are a-changing	53
2.4.	1970-1980: Junkies, traffickers and the War on Drugs.....	56
2.5.	1990-2000: British drug policy and the New Labour Party	62
2.6.	Conclusions.....	68
CHAPTER 3	DRUGS POLICY RESEARCH	71
3.1.	The origin and evolution of drugs research.....	73
3.2.	Key aspects for researching about drugs and drugs policy	78
3.2.1.	'The American disease': the origin of Prohibition	79
3.2.2.	'The Club of the Gentleman': International drug policy.....	81
3.2.3.	'Becoming a marijuana user': deviance and moral panics	83
3.3.	Drugs policy research in the United Kingdom	86
3.3.1.	The historical approach to drugs policy research	86
3.3.2.	Drugs, crime and international aspects	87
3.3.3.	Policy analysis and drugs policy research	89
3.3.4.	Management studies and drugs policy research	92
3.4.	Cannabis policy research	94
3.5.	Conclusions.....	97
CHAPTER 4	EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY	99

4.1. Epistemological issues in drugs policy research	101
4.1.1. Paradigms in social research.....	101
4.1.2. Sociological paradigms and drugs policy research	107
4.2. Methodological considerations and Systems Thinking.....	109
4.3. Soft Systems Methodology	112
4.3.1. Methodology outlined.....	117
4.4. Criticisms of Soft Systems Methodology	123
4.5. Conclusions.....	125
CHAPTER 5 DISCOURSES ON CANNABIS.....	128
5.1. Rich Picture: What is Cannabis?	130
5.1.1. Cannabis: The Plant	131
5.1.2. Cannabis: The Drug.....	134
5.1.3. Historical Background.....	137
5.1.4. Speaking about cannabis: Interviews and stakeholders.....	146
5.2. Relevant systems	156
5.2.1. Identifying systems relevant to cannabis	156
5.2.2. Naming relevant systems.....	159
5.3. Root Definitions	163
5.3.1. Ritual use of cannabis.....	164
5.3.2. Recreational use of cannabis	169
5.3.2. The medicinal use of cannabis	173
5.3.4. Economic uses of cannabis	177
5.3.5. Prohibition: Cannabis use as a deviant practice.....	182
5.3.6. Criminalisation: Cannabis as a crime	187
5.3.7. Treatment: Cannabis as a disease	191
5.3.8. Public Policy: Cannabis as a social problem	195
5.3.9. Summary.....	199
5.4. Power issues emerging from the research process	199
5.4.1. Interviews, data collection, and emerging issues	200
5.4.2. Power issues in the works of Checkland and Foucault	207
5.5. Synthesis and conclusions	212
CHAPTER 6 CANNABIS POLICY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM	217
6.1. Historical Background.....	219
6.1.1. The Wooton Report and the 'pot lobby'	220
6.1.2. Cannabis discussion: the first thirty years	225
6.2. The Re-classification of Cannabis in the United Kingdom.....	229
6.2.2. Influential documents in drugs policy making	231
6.2.3. Media Analysis.....	248
6.2.4. Other Stakeholders	259
6.3. Synthesis.....	265
6.4. Conclusions.....	270

CHAPTER 7 A POST-STRUCTURALIST APPROACH.....	273
7.1. Contributions of Soft Systems Methodology: A reminder	275
7.2. Introducing Foucault's work	276
7.2.1. A History of the Present	278
7.2.2. Archaeology	283
7.2.3. Genealogy	286
7.2.4. The notion of ' <i>dispositif</i> '	292
7.2.5. Criticisms of Foucault.....	296
7.2.6. Considerations for this research	298
7.3. Foucault and contemporary drugs research.....	300
7.3.1. Normalising inebriation: the discovery of addiction	302
7.3.2. Defining the drugs user.....	305
7.3.3. Drugs policy and 'governmentality'	308
7.4. A Post-Structuralist approach to cannabis re-classification.....	310
7.4.1. Root Definitions and archaeology.....	310
7.4.2. Key aspects in a genealogy of cannabis re-classification	313
7.4.3. The ' <i>dispositif</i> ' of cannabis re-classification.....	316
7.5. Synthesis and conclusions	317
CHAPTER 8 A GENEALOGY OF CANNABIS RE-CLASSIFICATION	320
8.1. The problem: from public policy to criminality	322
8.2. Visibility: actors and discourses	325
8.2.1 Background: Discussion of cannabis policy 2002-2003	325
8.2.2. The re-classification of Cannabis: 15-30 January 2004	327
8.2.3. Synthesis.....	329
8.3. Discontinuities, divergences and contours	335
8.3.1. The power of arrest.....	335
8.3.2. Socio-political context	338
8.3.3. An economy of punishment	342
8.4. The <i>dispositif</i> of cannabis	347
8.4.1. The problematisation of cannabis: power and knowledge.....	347
8.4.2. Creating the cannabis user: the subject	351
8.4.3. The efficiency of cannabis re-classification	355
8.5. Final Remarks	356
CHAPTER 9 SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS	359
9.1. Contribution to this dissertation of the use of the work of Foucault and of Checkland.	360
9.1.1. Epistemological Foundations.....	362
9.1.2. An 'archaeology' of cannabis re-classification using some stages of Soft Systems Methodology	366
9.1.3. A 'Genealogy' of cannabis re-classification: divergences and contours.....	369
9.1.4. The <i>dispositif</i> deciphered	372
9.1.5. Synthesis.....	374

9.2. Research questions answered.....	377
9.2.1. How are discourses on cannabis produced?	377
9.2.2. How do particular discourses become more relevant than others in the final decision on cannabis re-classification?	380
9.2.3. What are the implications of cannabis re-classification for the definition of the 'problem' of cannabis and the characterisation of subjects who might experience this problem?	383
9.2.4. Further comments: Implications of the re-classification of cannabis for drugs policy in the United Kingdom.....	387
9.3. Personal remarks	389

REFERENCES	392
-------------------------	------------

APPENDIX 1	412
-------------------------	------------

APPENDIX 2	413
-------------------------	------------

APPENDIX 3	419
-------------------------	------------

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1	Four Paradigms in Social Research.....	105
Fig. 2	Three stages of Soft Systems Methodology used in this research.....	119
Fig. 3	Varieties of the plant Cannabis.....	133
Fig. 4	Industrial Uses of Cannabis.....	134
Fig. 5	Representation of Discourses on Cannabis.....	158
Fig. 6	Eight Discourses on Cannabis.....	162
Fig. 7	Discourses on Cannabis (2002-2003).....	250
Fig. 8	Discourses on Cannabis (January 15-30, 2004).....	253
Fig. 9	The <i>Dispositif</i>	295

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

It is well acknowledged that illegal drugs represent a problem for Western societies. Within this group of illegal drugs, cannabis seems to be the most popular of all. The British Crime Survey 2003/2004 revealed that 10.8 per cent of the respondents aged 16-54 have tried cannabis in the past year (Chivite-Mathews, N. *et al.*, 2005: 20). In the previous survey in 2000/2001, 27 per cent of respondents aged 16-54 have tried cannabis once at least in their lives (Ramsay, M. *et al.*, 2001: 14).

Because of its illegal status, possession and supply of cannabis are penalised by the British criminal justice system. It is assumed that cannabis is linked to anti-social behaviour, crime and mental and physical illnesses (e.g. schizophrenia and some forms of cancer). However, the increasing consumption suggests that there must be other purposes to which the use of this substance is relevant.

As a consequence of the divergent world-views about cannabis, the legal situation of this substance has been widely debated. Medical practitioners, researchers, campaigners, police officers, artists, politicians, and certain other social groups have referred to the necessity for reviewing the legislation on cannabis; some advocate for less severe penalties regarding cannabis possession, whereas others promote the reinforcement of punishment in order to remove the menace represented by cannabis and all of the other illegal drugs for society (e.g. cocaine, heroin, etc.).

This discussion has increasingly been publicised during recent years in the context of British drug policy. The debate has focused on the evaluation of a possible re-classification of cannabis within the British legislation, and the effects of this change in terms of penalties associated with its use.

Taking into account the significance of such discussion, this research aims to explore more deeply the process of drug policy making; in particular, about the policy as regards the use and supply of cannabis in the United Kingdom. Due to the extensive information related to drug policy, it is suggested to limit the analysis to a particular topic to a certain historical period. In consequence, this research focuses on the process commonly known as 'cannabis reclassification' in the period 2002-2004, when this decision was widely discussed in the British political context.

As an introduction to the dissertation, this chapter aims both to present and to synthesise the main aspects to be developed in this investigation. The following sections thus provide a general account of that which will be developed. Consequently, the first section refers to the specific research problem to be investigated, and its relevance to academics and to policy makers.

The second section describes briefly the characteristics of the drug policy in the United Kingdom, and how it has been studied by different disciplines. Against this brief background, the third section proposes the way in which this research plans to address the case study through pointing out the general purpose of the investigation and the research questions derived from there.

The fourth section continues by presenting aspects considered original in this research, in terms of its contribution to the discipline of drug research, as well as to the methodologies and conceptual frameworks proposed here. Finally, the fifth section summarises the content of the different chapters in this dissertation.

1.1. Definition of the research issue

This investigation focuses on the analysis of British drug policy, specifically, as regards the case of cannabis during the period 2002-2004. As mentioned above, the debate on cannabis has pointed out the necessity of reviewing its legal status. In the United Kingdom, the drug policy is based on the classification of illegal drugs based on their respective levels of harm, potential and actual. This classification has been established by the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971, which includes a number of controlled substances classified into three groups as follows¹:

CLASS	INCLUDING (amongst others)	PENALTIES FOR POSSESSION	PENALTIES FOR SUPPLY
A	Cocaine, crack cocaine, ecstasy and related compounds, heroin, LSD, 'magic mushrooms' or psilocybin, methadone, morphine and opium	Seven years' imprisonment or unlimited fine	Life imprisonment or unlimited fine
B	Amphetamines, barbiturates and codeine Cannabis (herbal and resin)	Five years' imprisonment or unlimited fine	Fourteen years' imprisonment or unlimited fine
C	Anabolic steroids, benzodiazepines and bupronorphine. Minor tranquillisers are classified as C, yet possession is illegal without a prescription	Two years' imprisonment or fine	Five years' imprisonment or fine

Although cannabis has been a controlled substance in Britain since the 1920s, it was not considered a serious problem for British society. In fact, prior to the Misuse of Drugs Act of 1971, the British government had developed a particular approach to drugs, commonly known as the 'British System'. Briefly, this system allows medical doctors to prescribe certain controlled substances, while it also considers that illegal drugs offences must be dealt with by the criminal justice system (Berridge, V., 2005; Stimson, G.V. and Lart, R., 2005).

¹ This classification is prior to cannabis re-classification in 2004. Further amendments have been made to this Act since 2004.

It can generally be stated that British drug policy has been configured as a power relationship between a medical approach and an increasing criminalistic view on certain problems associated to some drugs supported by the Home Office and the Criminal Justice System. As will be presented in this dissertation, this is a dynamic process in which the views of drug use as either a matter of addiction or as a criminal issue tend to interplay and thus to inform drug policy decisions. Similarly, the debate on cannabis re-classification may be considered as a reconfiguration of the definitions of both the problem of cannabis, and of the subject who may experience this problem.

This process can be illustrated by examining the evolution of the regulations regarding drugs during the twentieth century. They reflect the changing definition of the problem regarding drugs, and the different strategies with which to address it.

For example, prior to the 1960s, the most problematic illicit drug was heroin, which was controlled by the British system of medical prescription and treatment to addicts (Dorn, N. and South, N., 1987; Judson, H.F., 1974). However, changes in the pattern of drug use during the 1960s, and particularly the increasing consumption of substances such as cannabis and some hallucinogens by young people, prompted the revision of the previous approach (Bewley, T., 2005).

Puzzled by the changes in the pattern of consumption and influenced by mass media and concerned families, the British government developed a more 'criminalistic' approach to drug use (Bean, P., 1974). Particularly, the use of cannabis amongst young people was perceived as a threat to social values (Young, J., 1971). This perception has remained as the main argument in favour of outlawing cannabis, in addition to the emphasis on the alleged links between cannabis use and crime (Inciardi, J., 1981).

In order to provide evidence about these problematic consequences of cannabis use, a number of committees of experts were appointed for gathering scientific evidence regarding the harmfulness and the extent of the use of certain controlled substances. For instance, in the case of cannabis, an Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence was conformed in 1967 to evaluate what should be done in this matter. The Committee's conclusions were presented in what is commonly known as the Wooton Report; they suggested decriminalising the use of cannabis, taking into account its relative level of harmfulness (A.C.D.D., 1969). These recommendations notwithstanding, the British government opted for a severe approach to drug use, reflected in the legislation in the reinforcement of penalties for drug use and supply. As a result of a complex process of debate and negotiation, new legislation on drugs was put into place and cannabis was included as a Class B drug in the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971.

After this decision, the issue of cannabis has remained a matter for controversy. The British government has indeed introduced major controls and penalties in the legislation; yet, a number of initiatives have tried to stimulate a revision of the legislation. It has been argued that the popularity of the substance and its relative level of harmfulness do not correspond to the severity of the penalties incurred for its use, possession and/or supply. As a matter of fact, cannabis is the most widely consumed illicit drug amongst a diverse range of people in the United Kingdom. Recent reports have emphasised the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes (Coomber, R. *et al.*, 2003), and also the use of cannabis as part of the youth culture and practices of 'time out' and recreation (Pape, H. and Rossow, I., 2004; Parker, H. *et al.*, 1998; Parker, H. *et al.*, 2002).

In spite of the increasing use of cannabis in society the British legislation has not been altered for many years. Almost thirty years passed before the Government considered the possibility of reviewing its legislation regarding cannabis. By the 1990s - and after the second victory of New

Labour Party in the General Election - the issue of drug policy became a matter for public discussion.

During the same period, certain other institutions were considering the case of cannabis. For example, an independent report by the Police Foundation published in 1999 recommended the possibility of changing the legal status of cannabis by downgrading it from Class B to Class C (Runciman, R., 1999). In their view, the re-classification of cannabis could aim to prevent the criminalisation of a number of otherwise law-abiding citizens, who use cannabis for medical or recreational reasons.

This recommendation, as proposed in the Police Foundation report and discussed in the different political spheres, challenged the status of criminalising cannabis offences. The core of the re-classification as proposed initially was to counteract the power of arrest for cannabis offences. Indeed, the re-classification was also evaluated as a possible means of using resources in an efficient manner; and that resources used to prosecute cannabis offenders could have been redirected to fight more dangerous drugs, such as Class A drugs. This recommendation as originally proposed by these reports was initially considered by the British government when they announced a possible change in the legislation.

Following the second victory of the New Labour party in the polls in 2001, the then Home Secretary - David Blunkett - announced that he would be considering this proposal. In consequence, he asked the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs for their advice on the legal status of cannabis in relation to its harmfulness and its associated penalties (A.C.M.D., 2002). This proposal was also discussed in the House of Commons, who supported the re-classification as a way of pursuing an efficient and updated drug policy (Home Department, 2002).

As a result of different discussions at the political and social levels, cannabis was officially re-classified from Class B to Class C on 29 January 2004. However, the effects of this measure were not as had originally

been proposed. In fact, the re-classification went far beyond merely neutralising the power of arrest by the police and in this way diminishing the severity of penalties for its use and supply; one result was that re-classification made of cannabis a 'class of its own'. In summary, the effects of re-classification as stated in the final decision to be implemented from January 29, 2004 were: Penalties for possession of cannabis decreased from a maximum of five years' to two years' imprisonment; however, penalties for supplying cannabis and including some other Class C drugs remained at a maximum of fourteen years' imprisonment. As emphasised by the British government, cannabis is still illegal, and it is an arrestable offence and one that can be aggravated in certain circumstances (A.C.P.O., 2003).

Because the decision was highly controversial, it seems that the re-classification evidenced the polarisation of opinions about this topic. As will be presented in this dissertation, the discussion of cannabis re-classification has contributed to the crystallising of many of the opinions that are normally limited to specific environments. For instance, evidence emerged that a significant majority of groups in British society opposed the measure. They argued that the decision regarding the re-classification of cannabis to a lower level would send the wrong message to young people, who would thus be tempted to use this substance and may go on to experiment with more dangerous drugs. On the other hand, a significant group has welcomed the idea as a step in the revision of cannabis legislation, yet they argue for further reforms regarding the medicinal and recreational uses of cannabis.

In this debate, it is necessary to inquire into the role played by these different actors and opinions in the policy-making process regarding cannabis. During the almost two years of discussion on this matter, different world-views about this topic have been put forward and debated. The controversy about cannabis is nothing new, and it can in fact be taken as an illustration of the constantly changing perceptions of this and other substances throughout history.

In the case of cannabis, it has been said that British as well as other European countries learned about its uses through their contact with Eastern cultures in Asia. From travellers' accounts, and later on from some scientific investigations, cannabis has been described as a potential medicine; also, it has been considered a dangerous intoxicant (Berridge, V. and Edwards, G., 1981; Mills, J., 2003). The situation of cannabis, as well as opium and other substances, in the legal framework changed dramatically during the twentieth century. From being considered 'remedies', some of these substances became 'poisons' requiring regulation, even prohibition. By means of a number of International Conventions² called by the American Government and attended by a number of Western countries, those substances were proscribed and their use and production limited (Bruun, K. *et al.*, 1975; McAllister, W.B., 2000).

In relation to this, it could be asked how the appreciation of these substances changed so dramatically; moreover, how these perceptions about cannabis, opium and cocaine became attached to the idea of 'poisonous drugs' considered constituting a menace to social values, whereas they also represent valuable medicines of restricted use.

A possible answer to these questions can be traced in the emergence of a problematic situation around 'drugs', considering not only the pharmacological properties of those substances, but mainly the way in which the practice of drug use has become a 'problem' in need of regulation. A brief look to the connotation of the term 'drug' defines it as either a remedy or a poison, a factor in itself illustrating the ambivalence and sometimes contradictory meanings.

² In 1909 the United States convened the First Conference on Opium in Shanghai (China) aimed to regulate the production of opium from the different colonies. Three years later, at the end of 1912 and beginning of 1913, the Second Conference on Opium was held in The Hague. The Agreements reached there were to be consolidated in the Second Opium Conference in the Geneva Convention, in 1925. In all of these conferences, the role of the United States was crucial in defining the current policy on 'Prohibition'. After the Second World War and under the dominant influence of the American government, those Agreements were extended to a large number of countries, wishing to belong to the international community. For a detailed account of the conformation of the international system of drug control, see Bruun, K., Pan, L. and Rexed, I., (1975) *The Gentleman's Club: International Control of Drugs and Alcohol*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. See Chapter Two: Drugs Policy in the United Kingdom.

The Chambers Dictionary (1993) provides the following definition:

drug, n. any substance used in the composition of medicine to cure, diagnose or prevent disease; a narcotic substance, esp an addictive one; a poisonous or stupefying substance; something one is intoxicated by or craves for.

It can be noted that the definition designates 'drug' in the medical context, yet further etymology of the term is found in the noun '*pharmakon*', which also defines a drug as being either a 'remedy' or a 'poison'. Derrida (1981) pointed out that a deconstruction of the term '*pharmakon*', as linked to our current meaning of the term 'drug', may explain its ambivalence:

This *pharmakon*, this 'medicine', this philtre, which acts as both remedy and poison, already introduces itself into the body of the discourse with all its ambivalence. This charm, this spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be – alternately or simultaneously - beneficent or maleficent. The *pharmakon* would be a substance - with all that that word can connote in terms of matter with occult virtues, cryptic depths refusing to submit their ambivalence to analysis, already paving the way for alchemy.... (Derrida, J., 1981: 70)

In a similar way, cannabis as a drug is appreciated by some as a 'poison'; for others, cannabis is regarded as a 'remedy'. Such ambivalence is replicated in the diverse opinions expressed in the discussion when the debate about cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom arises.

For the purposes of this research, it can be argued that the decision to re-classify cannabis should be considered in relation to the changing perceptions of and knowledge regarding cannabis use as a problem. Indeed, it is suggested that these views could have influenced the political decision on cannabis re-classification. In synthesis, the interest of this research is to analyse how the decision about cannabis re-classification was produced, supported and implemented in the period of 2002-2004, taking into account the different perceptions, views, and opinions debated in the public arena.

In order to start this investigation, it is important to consider previous developments in the area of drug policy research, firstly, as a discipline and secondly, in the British context. The next section presents some important considerations for the development of this dissertation in relation to the tradition and practice of drug research.

1.2. Tradition and development in drug research

As is presented in this dissertation, it is feasible to argue that the interest in drugs has emerged in parallel to the 'discovery' of those substances by Western societies. The main approach to this phenomenon was developed by medical practitioners at the end of the nineteenth century (Berridge, V., 1988), given the particular characteristics of the British model of drug control.

The study of drugs was influenced by the medical approach and was thus closely linked to the studies of alcohol and alcoholism. From there, drug research inherited the assumptions of the disease model of addiction. Medical science, which had constituted the main source of knowledge about drug use, has, as a consequence, traditionally been responsible for explaining drug use (Davies, J.B., 1997).

However, it has been argued that 'drug research' as a distinct realm for social science emerged during the 1960s (Agar, M., 2002). One possible answer is the increasing complexity of the drug phenomena during that decade. The former explanation based on the disease model of addiction needed to be complemented by the participation of diverse disciplines from the fields of social science, economics, and politics. The literature consulted in this thesis shows how both in America and in Europe, research into illicit drugs has produced an important body of work, creating new methodologies in and theories and knowledge of this matter.

The medical approach to drugs based on the model of addiction as a disease has in Britain produced a number of epidemiological studies. The studies have emphasised a positivistic view of drug problems, and have explained such practice through medical and psychological aspects regarding their use (Berridge, V., 1990). With the increasing complexity of drug issues, the medical explanation has proved insufficient, thus different disciplines from social sciences have enhanced an understanding of them. Such changes gave way to a non-positivistic approach in which the role of the social, cultural and economic aspects of drug use was included in the analysis.

The effects of this shift in the epistemology of drug issues had an impact on the way in which research was conducted. In methodological terms, attention has been paid to the socio-economic settings of drug use; ethnographic methods, as well as action research, were implemented in this field. For instance, some American anthropologists contributed to the development of qualitative methods and ethnographic practice, where the emphasis was on the cultural aspects of drug use (Agar, M., 2002; Bourgois, P., 2002; Sterk, C.E., 2003). Another consequence of this shift in the consideration of drugs issues has been the inclusion of the historical perspective in understanding the different uses of these substances across time (Berridge, V., 1988). For example, a number of studies have explored the ancient presence of 'substances' in the history of humankind; revealing ancient practices of drug use connected to rituals, myths and religions (Barber, B., 1967; Eliade, M., 1994; Furst, P., 1972a; Jay, M., 2002; Walton, S., 2001; Wasson, G., 1970).

At the level of sociological studies, it was revealed that the problematisation of drug use is related to its interpretation as a deviant practice. In particular, the work of Howard Becker (1953; 1963) demonstrated how certain social agents define a practice as being 'deviant' or as undesirable based on a moral, legislative or personal basis. At the same time, the group defined as 'deviant' responds to this labelling by incorporating and learning about the 'deviant' practices it supposedly

represents. In the case of cannabis, Becker's work explains the process of 'becoming a marijuana user' by the interrelation of both external and internal aspects converging in this practice.

Building on Becker's work, several developments in sociology and criminology have highlighted the relationship between moral panic and the process of labelling 'drug use' as a deviant practice (Duster, T., 1970; Gusfield, J.R., 1963). This notion has been widely explored by Stanley Cohen (Cohen, S., 1972; Cohen, S., and Young, J., 1982) and Jock Young, by analysing the process of labelling young people using drugs as 'folk devils' or 'outsiders'.

In the past twenty years, i.e., since the mid-1980s, a number of studies have addressed the complexity of the drug problem by diversifying the study of drugs, not only as a medical or social matter, but including different aspects of its multiple manifestations. For example, it is argued that drugs can be considered as 'social constructions'; therefore, the study of drug policies in particular countries must incorporate the understanding of social and cultural conditions influencing these constructions (Cohen, P., 1990). Following this idea, some researchers have addressed the issue of social constructions regarding the interrelation of historical conditions, discursive formations and the dynamics of power and knowledge involved in the 'problematization' of drug use (Reinerman, C., 2005). For instance, some argued that certain notions such as 'addiction' must be understood through taking into account the ways in which different disciplines exert their power in the definition of this condition (see Levine, H., 1978). Furthermore, certain researchers have addressed the implications of defining problems and subjects considering both historical conditions and the dynamics of power and knowledge in relation to drugs use, using a post-Structuralist approach and based on the work of Michel Foucault (Zibell, J.E., 2004; Duff, C., 2004; Giulianotti, R., 1997).

On the other hand, a number of writings have considered the international character of drug problems, responding to the necessity of including

different disciplines in the understanding of the topic. In summary, the field of drug research has acknowledged the complexity of this topic, taking into account the socio-cultural dimension, as well as economic and political factors.³ At the international level, the topic of cannabis has been also explored in comparative analysis of different legislations on this matter in some European countries (van het Loo, M., *et al.*, 2003; Dorn, N. and Jamieson, A., 2000).

In the particular case of cannabis, the debate on its re-classification has encouraged the production of some studies in this area. During the last five years, different reports have addressed the dynamics of cannabis use and supply. Apart from the comprehensive report by the Police Foundation (Runciman, R., 1999), mentioned before, other studies have revealed that the home production of cannabis represents a substantial proportion of the market (Hough, M. *et al.*, 2003). In regard to the process of re-classifying cannabis, there have been few reports aiming to explain the implications of this measure. For example, a Briefing Paper from the Beckley Foundation and Drugscope synthesises the process and effects of cannabis re-classification (Trace, M. *et al.*, 2004). In a more detailed study, May T., *et al.* (2000) investigate different attitudes and practices regarding cannabis implemented by different police forces across the country. They focus on the role of the Police, as one of the most important actors in the implementation and regularisation of cannabis policy. Recently, this approach has been updated by analysing the impact of cannabis re-classification on Police warnings, arrests and informal action in England and Wales (Warburton, H., *et al.*, 2005)

Nevertheless, and perhaps because of the immediacy of this process, cannabis re-classification has remained mainly a matter of public opinion and superficial analysis, yet academic research may contribute to its better

³ Some examples illustrate the type of studies and aspects studied by drug researchers: There are, for instance: international works on drug policy (Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1996); comparative studies about treatment (Klingemann, H. and Hunt, G., 1998); British drug policy making (Berridge, V., 1990; Strang, J. and Gossop, M., 2005; Whynes, D., 1991); uses of drugs in history and cultures (Courtwright, D., 2001; Goodman, J. *et al.*, 1995; Räscher, C., 1998; Schultes, P. and Hoffman, A., 1979; Walton, S., 2001); the alleged relation between drug use and crime (Bean, P., 2002; Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1991; Inciardi, J., 1981), and some aspects related to the reduction of harm and the consideration of HIV/AIDS (Inciardi, J. and Harrison, L., 2000).

understanding. This dissertation represents a comprehensive understanding of how the decision on re-classifying cannabis was taken by approaching the diversity of opinions about this topic and explaining how these perceptions have influenced the political decision expressed by cannabis re-classification.

In fact, this research draws upon a tradition of drugs research by adding both a conceptual and methodological contribution to this field. As stated in this section, drug research is a dynamic, interdisciplinary and multifaceted field. It is also a challenging realm, in which alternative views can add to a fuller understanding of drug issues. However, given that it is an extensive and complex issue, it is necessary to define borders and limits, and to establish the aims for any research. The following section presents the conceptual framework and methodological considerations to be included in this dissertation.

1.3. Conceptual and methodological pillars of this research

As demonstrated in the previous section, recent developments on drug policy research have highlighted the importance of considering different levels in the understanding of drugs policy making. British researchers have, amongst many others, emphasised the following aspects:

- a.) the historical perspective in drug research (Berridge, V., 1988; 1989; 1999; Mills, 2003);
- b.) consideration of the different actors and worldviews involved in the definition of the problem of illicit drugs (Davis, J.B., 1997; Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1996; Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1992),
- c.) the necessity of identifying the particular characteristics of drug policy of a country in a defined period (Stimson, G.V., 1987), and

d.) the importance of understanding the social and international context (McAllister, W., 2000; Dorn, N., *et al.*, 1996; Coomber, R., 1994; Stimson, G. and Lart, R., 2005)

Compiling a practical drug policy is a dynamic and changing process, which includes many and sometimes opposing views on the definition of the 'drug problems'. As will be illustrated in this dissertation, the way in which drug policy is formulated and implemented involves many actors, disciplines, institutions, and interests. In this process, different opinions are expressed in relation to the definition of a problem and the way in which it should be addressed. Moreover, drug policy is linked to a wider context of social policy, related to allocation of resources and political debate, embedded in certain historical conditions.

In consequence, it can be said that there is no one single definition of the 'drug problem'. There can in fact be many 'realities' of the drug problem, determined by any one appreciation of the situation in any one particular historical moment. For example, what was considered a medicine in the nineteenth century is, in the twentieth, evaluated as a dangerous drug, as illustrated with the case of cannabis. This changing definition of drug problems can be at least partially explained through arguing that drugs are 'social constructions', and are thus determined by the influence of certain social groups (Cohen, P., 1990). Furthermore, it would be desirable to know how these notions are 'constructed' and the implications in terms of policies and regulations regarding the definition of problems and those subjects experiencing those problems. These will be the questions central to this investigation.

The starting point of this research is, given these considerations, to delineate the nature of the 'reality' to be studied. As presented above, it is possible to start this research by assuming 'drugs' as 'substances' to be studied and described, and of which the constituent elements can be identified. Such an empirical approach is characteristic of certain sciences such as pharmacology, biology or chemistry. However, the current

research is located in the social sciences and the starting point may therefore differ. As an alternative, it is possible to propose starting the research from another perspective, in which the changing characterisation of drug problems as a matter of policy making is considered.

In consequence, dynamic aspects that in a particular time in history converge to produce certain definition of the 'drug problem' or in this particular case, a 'cannabis problem', are under discussion. Indeed, this changing definition is reflected in different discursive formulations expressed by diverse agencies, institutions, disciplines, and actors in society: in other words, that drugs and drug policy are not static aspects of the reality, but are subject to a process of change and are thus interconnected to other social characteristics related to any one particular historical moment.

By taking into account the previous considerations, this research proposes to focus on the particular event of cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom, in the period 2002-2004, as an illustrative case of drug policy making in a Western society. In this way, it will be possible to analyse the ways in which the problem of cannabis is being defined by means of the political documents, the social opinion and the regulations. Indeed, considering the dynamic characteristic of these aspects, a non-positivistic approach to this matter may offer interesting insights into the understanding of drug policy-making processes.

The challenge for this research is thus to find a methodological framework in which this non-positivistic view of reality and the role of different views on cannabis are included. Taking into account that drug policy making is a complex topic in which issues of power and knowledge play a crucial role in defining what constitutes the 'drug problem' and then how it must be addressed; the framework adopted here must consider the dynamics between power and knowledge and their implications in the definitions of both 'problems' and 'subjects'.

Amongst many ways, it is proposed to focus on the diversity and dynamism of 'discourses' - expressing different perceptions and opinions - about cannabis and its re-classification. In consequence, the methodology needs to answer questions about how different discourses on cannabis do influence the process of policy making; or why some discourses about cannabis are prevalent over others; or moreover, how these discourses are produced. A possible alternative to addressing these questions is to adopt some ideas from the work of Michel Foucault. A brief introduction to his work will provide some of the clues for this decision.

Foucault was interested in studying the process of the normalisation of human life that characterises contemporary Western society. Throughout his investigations about "the different modes which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1983: 208), he analyses how a particular discursive complex of statement, formation, and practice constitutes subjectivity in relation to power and knowledge. For the purposes of this research, Foucault's ideas may help in the understanding of how certain problems are constructed in a configuration of power and knowledge, and how this configuration defines subjects. This can be explained as follows:

Drug policy can be understood as way of regulating a human practice of 'drug use'. This process is manifested in regulations, legislation and institutions, and is supported by specific knowledge. In the particular case of cannabis, it is possible to understand cannabis re-classification as a way of regulating the practice of cannabis use, which is perceived as being problematic for some groups in society. This is a dynamic process that involves different disciplines, agencies and institutions, expressing their concern about the cannabis problem by means of diverse discursive formations, within a certain historical moment.

As an introduction to a later chapter on Foucault's work⁴, it is possible to describe his approach to the understanding of these processes of

normalisation through using the references of Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983). They explain Foucault's approach by calling it "interpretive analytics", which combines both "archaeological" and "genealogical" stages. These stages were developed through time in Foucault's oeuvre. For instance, the "archaeological" stage was developed in Foucault's earlier books such as *Madness and Civilisation* (1972), *Birth of the Clinic* (1973), and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1975). In the first two works, Foucault focused on institutions - the Asylum and the Clinic - to reveal the role of professions, authority and knowledge in the creation of a certain 'problematic'. Later on, in writings such as *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, and due to some theoretical problems found in his earlier approach, Foucault developed the "genealogical" stage of his method of historical analysis, which focus on the role of *power relations* in contemporary society.

In synthesis, Foucault is interested in finding out how certain situations of human life become 'problems' to be studied, defined or analysed. In doing so, he approached history as the source for 'archaeological' material to be complemented by the 'genealogy'. In simple terms, it is possible to say that archaeology refers to the work of collecting facts in the form of statements - discourses - representations or expressions of a particular situation (or problem) during a period of time. The idea, based on his approach, is to collect those statements while making no judgement as to their truthfulness or whether they make sense. Instead, Foucault proposed to treat what is said in the human sciences as a 'discourse-object' (Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., 1983: xiv). As a result, the information collected by the 'archaeology' represents an expression of the configuration of a problem.

⁴ See Chapter 7: A post-structuralist approach.

Nevertheless, Foucault did not provide a unique method or formula to apply to the archaeology. In his books it is possible to see that he collected different statements or discourses about a particular problematic, e.g., madness, illness, or sexuality, without trying either to interpret them or to analyse them. Instead, he suggests keeping them as 'objects' that express a problematic (Cohan, S. and Shires, L., 1998). There must thus be different ways of collecting these discourses while bearing in mind Foucault's recommendations. Among the many possible ways of collecting these discourses, this thesis proposes to use some stages from Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) in order to identify a number of different statements or world-views about a particular situation. As will be explained later, this selective use of SSM allows the identification of many different and diverse world-views about a particular situation without trying to judge them or verify their truthfulness. In Checkland's terms they are part of the rich picture of the situation, and they may indicate certain 'relevant systems' in the characterisation of a problem.

This selective use of some stages of SSM is an original contribution of this thesis, because it illustrates pragmatically how to use some stages of Checkland's SSM as a supportive technique in a post-Structuralist analysis of drugs policy making. In particular, it will be demonstrated that this selective use of SSM may be considered as a means for accomplishing the 'archaeology' in Foucault's interpretive analytics.

Briefly, it is possible to describe how the selective use of some stages of Soft Systems Methodology can effectively provide a suitable way of both identifying 'discourses' and organising them in an 'archaeological' fashion. As expressed by many, Soft Systems Methodology represents a valuable tool when approaching ill-defined situations where multiple views of the elements are involved (Checkland, 1999; Jackson, 2000). For the particular case of the debate on cannabis policy, the use of this methodology seeks the identification of different and diverse 'discourses'

on cannabis and cannabis re-classification. It will thus be possible to learn about the multiplicity and variety of those discourses, as well as some of the actors and knowledge behind them. In short, this particular application will demonstrate that the selective use of SSM can produce a tool to 'organise' the extensive information related to cannabis reclassification, providing an initial map towards understanding *what is said* regarding cannabis and cannabis re-classification. Three reasons explain why the selective use of some stages of SSM can be considered a supportive technique for the archaeology phase in Foucault's interpretive analytics:

First of all, SSM acknowledges that there can be different views on a problem, and its aim is to identify such world views. Based on those different world views, this methodology proposes to identify those 'root definitions' of the situation that may serve as models in organising diverse information. Secondly, in the context of this research, these root definitions are equated to the notion of 'discourses', mainly because they represent *what is said* regarding cannabis in the context of the public debate. Therefore, this approach will comply with the emphasis suggested by Foucault of identifying 'discourses' about a particular situation yet without judging or interpreting it. Thirdly, this selective use of SSM can be limited to a specific period of time, in this case, the period 2002 - 2004 when the different opinions on cannabis have emerged through the debate on its re-classification. To summarise: the current thesis demonstrates that the proposed use of SSM in this research effectively provides *a way* of accomplishing the 'archaeology' through organising extensive information on cannabis in the form of 'discourses'.

On the other hand, Foucault acknowledged that the 'archaeology' in itself is insufficient to answer questions about how those discourses emerge, and how one or a group of them can take prevalence over others. During the development of his work, this technique will be not only refined but also challenged. In addition to the archaeology, Foucault formulates additional questions: How are those discourses produced? What role do they play in society? In response to that, Foucault developed the

'genealogy' aiming to understand the dynamics between the production of 'discourses' or knowledge about a particular situation (collected by the archaeology) and its relationship with the exercise of power. This is a crucial aspect of his work, because what Foucault did was to re-define 'power' in relation to 'knowledge', both acting as a single entity. In his words:

We should admit ... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, M., 1991a: 27-28)

In brief, Foucault proposed genealogy as a way of analysing power relationships. While in doing so, he did not reject archaeology: he suggests complementing it by questioning the emergence of those discourses. In fact, he proposes that archaeology can provide the material for the genealogy. Hence, genealogy aims to reveal the hidden origin of discourses, the material context in which they emerge, and the ways in which they may favour particular interests. In this sense, genealogy becomes the dominant stage of his method of historical analysis while archaeology, as a technique, serves it (Valero-Silva, N., 2004).

In this research, the main questions are related to the emergence and production of different discourses on cannabis and their effect on the process of drug policy making (i.e., cannabis re-classification). Thereby, it is possible to analyse the main discourses on cannabis during the period 2002-2004, and to ask how different actors and disciplines define the problem and the implications of these opinions in the final decision of cannabis re-classification. In this task and following Foucault's interpretive analytics, the current research does not aim to verify the truthfulness of those discourses, or even if they make sense, but to reveal how the interplay of those discourses determines cannabis policy in the United Kingdom. The next section will specify the research questions guiding this discussion.

1.4. Research questions

The main purpose of this dissertation is to understand drug policy making with particular reference to cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom. This purpose can be illustrated in three research questions, as follows:

1. How are discourses on cannabis produced?
2. How do particular discourses become more relevant than others in the final decision on cannabis re-classification?
3. What are the implications of cannabis re-classification in the definition of the 'problem' of cannabis and the characterisation of subjects who might experience these problems?

As a methodological reflection, this research is interested in providing a way of tackling the archaeological stage in Foucault's approach by proposing the selective use of some stages of Soft Systems Methodology. In this sense, a secondary question can be formulated as follows:

4. How useful are parts of the Soft Systems Methodology in organising different discourses related to cannabis policy making, in terms of Foucault's archaeology?

The complexity of this topic will be addressed through the development of these research questions; explanations as to the way decisions on policy making are made, based on the case of cannabis, will be provided. In addition, it is expected that this research provides some original contributions on two levels: firstly, in relation to the understanding of drug policy issues; and secondly, in the methodological aspects related to the selective use of some stages of SSM as a way of supporting a

Foucauldian approach in the understanding of drugs policy making. These contributions are summarised in the next section.

1.5. Original contributions of this research

The specificity of this research relies on the possibility of studying in real time one particular aspect of drug policy making in the United Kingdom. By focusing on the re-classification of cannabis in the United Kingdom during the period 2002-2004, it is possible to reveal some of the dynamics involved in the process of drug policy making, in this specific period and in its historical context. As an original contribution, the current research uses some of the notions of Michel Foucault towards furthering the investigation and answering the research questions. In addition, it addresses methodological issues in this approach by suggesting a practical way of using some stages of SSM as a supportive technique for identifying different discourses on cannabis and its re-classification, hence proposing an original means of applying the archaeology according to Foucault's interpretive analytics ⁵.

It is possible in general to expect original contributions from this research to the field of drug policy research and the understanding of contemporary drug policy making processes. The aspects can be identified as follows:

Firstly, this research is original because it provides a comprehensive understanding of the case of cannabis re-classification analysed during the period 2002-2004. As mentioned before, this debate constitutes a dynamic picture in which multiple discourses emerge and are crystallised in the political decision on cannabis.

⁵ The possibility of understanding Foucault's interpretive analytics in relation to some systems methodologies is initially proposed by Valero-Silva (1998), however, a practical application of this suggestion represents the original contribution of this thesis. This collaboration is also presented in a conference paper by the author and Valero-Silva (Acevedo and Valero-Silva, 2005)

Those discourses normally concealed within closed groups and discussions emerge in the context of the discussion of cannabis re-classification, and are expressed in reports, opinions, news, statements, official documents, independent reports, interviews, debates, and random conversations. This research, as a matter of fact, goes beyond the documents and public statements by interviewing actors and people who are not represented in the mass media. As will be shown later, the process of investigation included conversations with and access to a network of campaigners, activists, users, and other experts in the field of cannabis. This, in itself, constitutes an exceptional contribution of the thesis while revealing those hidden voices that remain invisible in public reports and other mainstream media.⁶

It was mentioned before that some studies have addressed the event of re-classification, yet their approaches differ from that adopted in the current research. While some have approached the re-classification synthetically, providing facts and a certain level of analysis of the decision in relation to British drug policy (Trace, M. *et al.*, 2004), certain other sources have analysed the role of a particular institution (e.g., the Police) in the process of policy making, as well as the implementation of policy prior to and after the re-classification (May, T. *et al.*, 2002; Warburton, H. *et al.*, 2005).

However important as these works have been in the analysis of cannabis re-classification, this thesis has taken another path: in particular, it addresses the processes by which certain discourses on cannabis can influence the policy-making process, and the final decisions are questioned. The task is performed through an in-depth analysis of official documents, media messages, and the opinions of different stakeholders.

⁶ See Appendix 3: Summary of interviews and conversations for this research. A further explanation of the process of selection of these interviews and the different world-views explored will be presented in Chapter 5: Discourses on Cannabis.

Here, the analysis is not limited to one institution; it considers a wider context of cannabis policy in which different actors, institutions, and disciplines play a role in the policy-making process. In fact, by analysing those discourses it is possible to understand how different perspectives define 'the problem of cannabis' and how they may eventually influence political decisions. Here, the aim is not to determine whether these discourses are 'true', or even if they make sense. The purpose is to reveal how those discourses are produced and what role they play in the policy-making process.

Secondly, this research contributes to the general field of drug policy research by using the methodological and conceptual framework provided by Michel Foucault. As explained above, a few researchers have utilised Foucault's contributions to the understanding of certain processes of normalisation, such as the regularisation of cannabis use. The most explicit reference using Foucault's ideas was proposed by Harry Levine in 1978, when studying the origins of the concept of 'alcoholism'. From this time, very little work has been done in applying Foucault's ideas in the understanding of drugs as social constructions. Again, a few researchers have utilised his concepts selectively while defining certain drug use as a practice of the self (Duff, C., 2004) or in the analysis of changes in the configuration of power between treatment agencies and drug users in a neo-Liberal context (Zibell, J.E., 2004).

Nonetheless, no comprehensive research using these ideas for drug policy analysis had previously been developed. In response to the opportunity represented by the debate on cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom, the current author explores a dynamic reality through aiming to write a 'history of the present'. It is not just the recompilation of dates and events in chronological fashion; instead, by using theories selected from those of Foucault, the research attempts to question the emergence of a certain problematisation in the case of cannabis at this particular moment in British history. The purpose involves not only the consideration of the facts related to the re-classification; it also examines

the environment in which the event is produced, including its social, economic, cultural, and political aspects. It goes further in identifying divergences and contours in relation to other concerns in British society. In other words, the analysis is not limited to the re-classification itself: it aims to understand how this event represents a form of regulating practices related to drug use in Western societies.

Thirdly, the dissertation represents the pragmatic application of certain ideas regarding the possibility of including a post-Structuralist approach in the development of systems thinking and methodologies. In particular, this research will show that Soft Systems Methodology can be used as a tool for the 'archaeology' in terms of Michel Foucault's interpretive analytics. This is an original contribution in methodological terms, one that has not been examined before. Although some theorists in the systems thinking realm have pointed out the possibility of enriching certain systems approaches with the work of Foucault (for example, Flood, R., and Jackson, M., 1991; Jackson, M., 2000; Ulrich, W., 1983; Valero-Silva, N., 1998), very little work has been done on the practical application of those recommendations. This thesis, therefore, demonstrates that it is indeed possible to enrich the realm of drug policy analysis through applying Foucault's ideas, supported by the selective use of some stages in SSM, and it is unique in illustrating how this can be achieved in practice.

Finally, given that the current writing represents an original contribution to the understanding of drug policy issues, it is anticipated that it could be of considerable interest to the academic community. This research aims, however, to expand beyond academic boundaries by addressing contemporary issues for policy makers and researchers in the drug field. It is anticipated that the research will offer a significant contribution to the tradition of drug policy research by suggesting an alternative means of studying drug policy issues. This time, the proposal comes from managerial studies, a discipline barely explored in relation to the area of drug policies. The use of post-Structuralist ideas, supported by a selective

use of some stages in Soft Systems Methodology, represents an innovative path for further research in this area.

In order to achieve these objectives and to respond to the research questions, the following section presents the content of the dissertation in terms of its chapters.

1.6. Content of the Dissertation

The sequence of the chapters in the thesis is determined by the process of investigation and exploration of the research topic. As a consequence, the different chapters address the complexity of the research topic, including the questions and challenges experienced by the researcher through time: in other words, the organisation of the document aims to describe the 'journey' of the investigation, embracing challenges and questions that were posed in the process.

The first chapter, as has already been seen, presents the research and its purposes. It has included a general description of the context of the research, the original contributions of the dissertation, the research questions, the conceptual and methodological pillars for this research, and a description of the organisation of the dissertation in terms of chapters.

Chapter Two describes the main characteristics of the drug policy in the context of the United Kingdom. It will assume an historical perspective, highlighting the way in which the 'drug problem' has been defined and how different institutions and agencies have tackled it. In particular, this chapter will point out changes during the last ten years of the British drug policy, in the context of a managerial approach to public administration. Finally, it will introduce the case of the cannabis policy and provide the background to the re-classification of cannabis in 2004.

Chapter Three describes what has been done in drug policy understanding, addressing the epistemological and methodological aspects to be considered in drug policy research. In addition, this chapter will present the main works on which this research is based, and as a consequence it will establish the basis for the epistemological considerations in this research.

Chapter Four offers the conceptual and methodological aspects of the work. The reasons why this research relies on a non-positivistic paradigm will be argued and certain aspects related to the selective use of some parts of Soft Systems Methodology as a supportive technique to this research will be discussed. The discussion will not provide an orthodox or dogmatic application of SSM; instead, what is proposed here is a particular interpretation of the methodology's principles and rationalities where these are functional to the general purpose of the work.

Chapter Five approaches the extensive information regarding cannabis by using some stages of SSM. It starts with a particular interpretation of what constitutes a rich picture of cannabis, including the historical, biological, pharmacological, and sociological aspects of cannabis. This rich picture will, furthermore, reveal aspects of the research process in terms of the type and quality of the interviews for this research, the diversity of actors and experts consulted, and the multiple discourses associated with these experts. From there, it will be possible to identify some relevant systems in the form of discourses about cannabis. Then, the third stage of building root definitions will be developed, by identifying the underlying world-views in the different considerations of cannabis. Based on this selective use of SSM, a particular means of accomplishing the archaeology of the discourses on cannabis will be presented. Finally, based on the material gathered from the interviews certain issues related to power will emerge. This chapter has, therefore, to address the approaches that may be offered by Checkland's SSM and Foucault's interpretive analytics in the explanation of power.

Chapter Six aims to approach the actual debate on cannabis re-classification with the discourses obtained by using some parts of Soft Systems Methodology. In particular, it is expected that the discourses serve as analytical tool in organising different arguments in the socio-political discussion about cannabis reclassification.

The material to be analysed in this dissertation is based on:

1. Official reports produced by the Government regarding cannabis in relation to its reclassification;
2. Media analysis of approximately 150 media messages or news regarding cannabis re-classification during the period of July 2002 to March 2004, and
3. Twenty-five semi-structured interviews about cannabis re-classification with different experts on cannabis. As mentioned above, these interviews include those with individuals who are not necessarily highlighted in the mainstream context yet have relevant, significant opinions to express about this topic.

A review of the material analysed in this research honours Foucault's recommendation of an equal assessment of all of these voices. For instance, the opinion of a policy maker or a senior policeman will be contrasted with the opinion of a user or a campaigner, and the voices of each and every expert will be given equal weight. As Foucault has stated, all of these statements correspond to his notion of 'expert', by which he means those who have something to 'say' about the topic, regardless of their position in the power structure or the actual knowledge they represent.

After this, Chapter Seven addresses specifically the research questions by using some aspects from the work of the Michel Foucault. Therefore, his work regarding the dynamics of power/knowledge and the understanding of the subject will be considered. Special emphasis will be laid on explaining the stages of 'archaeology' and 'genealogy'. As a result of this

chapter, it will be demonstrated that Soft Systems Methodology can provide a way of carrying out the 'archaeology' following Foucault's ideas, to be complemented with a 'genealogical' analysis. Some clues will be provided towards developing this genealogical analysis.

Chapter Eight will develop a genealogical analysis of cannabis re-classification. The chapter aims to analyse how the decision to re-classify cannabis was taken, by considering the different discourses, the dynamics of power and knowledge, and the diverse interests involved in this political process. In particular, Chapter Eight will analyse the gaps between the original proposal of re-classifying cannabis, and the final decision taken in relation to the actual effects of re-classification in the capacity for arrest for cannabis-related offences. In addition, comment will be offered on some social, cultural, and political aspects, which can provide clues for the understanding of the historical context in which cannabis re-classification is produced.

Chapter Nine presents the outcomes of the overall dissertation, aiming to answer the proposed research questions. In addition, this chapter includes some conclusions in terms of drug policy making, the advantages of a Post-Structuralist approach in drug policy analysis, and the methodological outcomes in using some aspects of SSM as part of the archaeological stage in Foucault's work. This chapter presents certain conclusions regarding the particular case of cannabis re-classification and selected insights regarding the implications of this decision for overall drug policy making in Britain. Finally, it includes some personal opinions and proposed future studies based on this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2 DRUGS POLICY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

This chapter describes some of the main features of the British drugs policy. It includes a review of the origin of drugs regulations in the late nineteenth century, and the evolution of British drugs policy during the last (twentieth) century up to now. The following analysis of the drug policy in Britain is based on the seminal works of researchers and historians regarding the origin and development of drugs policy at the national and international levels, including Bean, P., 1974, 2002; Berridge, V., 2005; Berridge, V. and Edwards, G., 1981; Mills, J., 2003; Dorn, N. and South, N., 1987; Edwards, G., 1989; Edwards, G. *et al.*, 1993; Murji, K., 1998; Stimson, G.V. and Lart, R., 2005; and Strang, J. and Gossop, M., 2005. In particular, the regulations concerning cannabis, as the focal point of this research, will be emphasised.

In this chapter, it will be argued that the interest of the government in regulating drug-related activities can be explained in relation to the social perception of these practices. In addition, the development of drugs policies is influenced by some other social policies, as well as by the international context. In general, it is possible to say that the process of policy making interprets those social perceptions, by defining firstly, the issues around both drugs and drug users and secondly, the institutions that are responsible for addressing these issues.

In order to develop the discussion, this chapter will identify the following elements in the description of British drugs policy: the type of regulations produced regarding drugs; the main social perceptions regarding drug use and drug users, and the national and international contexts influencing the drugs policy. These aspects will be presented chronologically, expressed in the following sections.

In the first section, the emerging perception of drug use by nineteenth-century England will be considered. At that time there was a booming trade in certain substances imported from the East, which began to be used as miraculous medicines and also as inebriants. This section includes some of the social perceptions in Victorian times that could have shaped current opinion of drug use and inebriation as their being undesirable vices.

Following the historical thread, the second section addresses the earliest part of the twentieth century, and the establishment of different ways of controlling drug use. It includes not only the internal regulations, but also the new contexts for drug control established by certain International Conventions. In particular, this section will highlight the origin and development of the British system of drug control. The system will characterise the British approach to drugs during the first half of the twentieth century; furthermore, it defines drugs problems from a dual perspective: medical practitioners can prescribe certain controlled substances while, at the same time, the significant criminalisation of drug-related activities is pursued.

The third section emphasises the changes in the pattern of the consumption of drugs during the 1960s, when increasing drug use was experienced by British youngsters. Puzzled by these practices and considering other socio-political aspects, the British government prompted a revision of the drugs regulations. As a consequence, drug use was defined as a social problem to be addressed by the Criminal Justice system.

The fourth section includes some characteristics in drug taking during the 1970s and 1980s, and the establishment of an identifiable body of regulations regarding drug control in Britain. Here, the main emphasis is on the way drug trafficking became the focal problem in relation to drugs; and how Britain joined the War on Drugs declared by the American Government in the 1980s.

Nearing the recent past, the fifth section reviews the main legislative measures implemented during the 1990s, and the legacy of the Conservative government in drugs policy. It will be argued that the bases of the New Labour Party's drugs policy were defined in those regulations. In addition, this section lays particular emphasis on the international aspects regarding some efforts to harmonise drugs policies at the European level.

Finally, the sixth section presents some conclusions in relation to the main features of British drugs policy to be taken into account in this research.

2.1. Drugs in the nineteenth-century: vices and temperance

It is argued that the relationship of the British with drugs dates from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when travellers and officials learned about the use of certain substances by Eastern cultures (Berridge, V. and Edwards, G., 1981; Courtwright, D., 2001; Mills, J., 2003). Although substances such as opium and cannabis had been part of the pharmacopoeia in the Greek and Roman cultures (Butrica, J.L., 2002), as well as widely used in the Middle Ages (Crawford, V., 2002), British travellers found that these substances could be used as medicines; also, however, they were powerful inebriants used by certain cultural groups.

During the nineteenth century, opium enjoyed a buoyant trade controlled by brokers in London who imported the substance from Turkey (Berridge, V. and Edwards, G., 1981). This substance was used mainly for medical reasons, although the British experience in China had demonstrated the addictive effects of this substance on the population. Nevertheless, the only evident concern of medical doctors in relation to opium use was related to its level of risk of poisoning the consumer (Stimson, G.V. and

Oppenheimer, E., 1982). As a consequence, some of the earlier regulations on opium and other substances were aimed at establishing a system of pharmaceutical control over drugs.⁷

During the same period, the main preoccupations for Victorian society were related to drunkards, prostitution, idleness and beggars (MacGregor, S., 2001). In this context, and given that opium was mostly used by those in the middle and upper classes, its consumption was evaluated as a 'minor vice or a bad habit' (Stimson, G.V. and Oppenheimer, E., 1982: 18).

In contrast, 'alcoholism' was defined as a social concern for many groups in British society. This concern was also shared in the United States of America, where a number of groups advocated a social reform in which alcohol and inebriation were eradicated (Levine, H.G. 1978; Musto, D., 1973). These temperance campaigners considered that inebriation ran contrary to American values not only at the moral level, but also in the context of the emerging industrialisation of the country (Rumbarger, J., 1989). At the political level these views determined the American approach to drugs, which were to become influential in the international arena.⁸

In both countries (the UK and the USA), effecting the proscription of alcohol and the practice of inebriation became a crusade for temperance campaigners. Nevertheless, in Britain the process of proscribing alcohol and other drug use took a different route. Some authors argue that the proscription of the use of certain drugs varied according to the class system in Britain (Stimson and Oppenheimer, 1982).

⁷ Stimson and Oppenheimer (1982) claimed that the poisoning aspect was argued publicly around 1819 as the case in favour of the regulation of drugs. The Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain was established in 1841 to define a realm for the pharmaceutical profession. It is not surprising that the issue of controlling the free trade in drugs and self-medication became an important aim in their agenda. See also Berridge, V., (2005; 1990).

⁸ Peter Cohen (1990) analyses the historical context in the American prohibitionist approach to drugs as a combination of three factors: first, the consideration of drug use as a menace to the WASP (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant) ideal of American society; second, as a way of furthering commercial interests in East Asia; and third, as a way of limiting the professional field of medical practitioners and pharmacists in a time of self-medication. See Cohen, P., (1990) *Drugs as a Social Construct*. Dissertation, Universiteit van Amsterdam, <http://www.cedro-uva.org/lib/cohen.drugs.toc.html>. Accessed December 2005.

In this way, opium use was considered a private matter for certain groups within the British population. On the contrary, the problem of drunkards was considered an undesirable and immoral vice to be blamed for the social decline (Conrad, P. and Schneider, J., 1980). At a time when poverty was associated with a preoccupation with idleness, the use of alcohol among the working-class population was inevitably related to their alleged moral weakness (Gould, A., 2001).

However, this perception of differential drug use changed at the end of the nineteenth century when the convergence of political and social issues re-defined the drug problem. Then, the use of substances in the colonies started to be discussed in the political debate. Opium and cannabis, which had been part of the cultural traditions in China and India, respectively, were subject to moral suspicion by missionaries and temperance campaigners living in the colonies (Musto, D., 1973; Walton, S., 2001). For instance, it was argued that the Indian asylums were full of cannabis users and that the trade in this substance should be controlled (Mills, J., 2000).

At the same time, certain other accounts of these substances emphasised their medical properties. In particular, cannabis was regarded as a wonder-medicine by some scientists, and the cure for multiple maladies (O'Shaughnessy, W., 1842). In England and other parts of Europe, such as in France, cannabis was being widely used by artists and medical practitioners as a vehicle for exploring the human mind and imagination (Haining, P., 1975; Hughes, J., 1999).

In response to the increasing discussion on the positive or negative aspects of cannabis and opium use in the colonies, two Commissions were set up to gather and disseminate information about these claims. The Indian Hemp Royal Commission and the Royal Commission on Opium worked for almost two years in the compilation of evidence about the uses and effects of cannabis and opium. Both groups comprised prominent figures, scientific and public officials who were charged with the

task of answering the claims against those substances (Berridge, V., 1989a; Mills, J., 2003).

In the case of cannabis, the Indian Hemp Royal Commission focused on the question about the links between cannabis and madness.⁹ As a result of almost two years of investigation in different regions of India, the Commissioners stated that 'moderate use of hemp drugs produces no injurious effects on the mind'. However, they also concluded that 'it appears that the excessive use of hemp drugs may, especially in cases where there is any weakness or hereditary predisposition, induce insanity'.¹⁰

On the other hand, the Royal Commission on Opium (1895) stated that the 'dangers have been exaggerated'. This assertion seems to have favoured the fact that opium was still an important economic venture and its use by certain groups of the British population had not been yet socially proscribed (Conrad, P. and Schneider, J., 1980: 118).

From this brief summary of information about drugs in the nineteenth century, some interesting aspects may be indicated for this research. It has been noted that the appreciation of certain substances or drugs has changed through different historical periods. Thus, substances initially regarded as an economic entity or a medical remedy began to become associated with the 'undesirable' practices of inebriation and other vices. In response to these claims, the British government appointed a number of independent Commissions in order to resolve the controversy between the economic interests, on the one hand, and the moral aspects, on the other, of these substances.

⁹ Mills analyses the claims in relation to cannabis and madness as a strategy by which the British government would gain control in the colonies. Asylums, hospitals, schools, and other institutions were aimed to discipline the colonies. Therefore, the accusation of cannabis use and madness was linked to the colonial perception of the barbarism of the natives' practices. See Mills, J., (2000). *Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

¹⁰ Report of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission (IHDC), III. 263-265. Cited in Mills, J. (2003). *Cannabis Britannica: Empire Trade and Prohibition 1800-1928*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.119.

In other words, it may be claimed that the definition of 'drug problems' has been influenced by the participation of different groups in British society. Therefore, temperance campaigners, medical practitioners, and the appointed Commissions have contributed towards defining the problem of drugs and, in consequence, the means of addressing it.

In particular, it is important to note the role of the medical profession and its influence on the public perception of drug and alcohol problems. Prior to the medical consideration, alcohol problems were defined as the 'moral failure' of many in the working class. This perception altered when the medical profession provided an explanation in which alcohol habituation could be considered a medical condition (Conrad and Schneider, 1980).

As described by Berridge (1989a), the 'problem' of alcohol became a consideration for the medical profession in Britain, through the formation of the Society for the Study and Cure of Inebriety in 1884. In his inaugural speech, Dr. Norman Kerr, first President of the Society, defined alcohol habituation as a medical disease related to addiction. However, as Berridge notes, this idea is not just a progressive step away from science, but it embodies the medical control of an already sanctioned practice:

Their humanitarianism is neither in doubt, nor their desire to subject the drunkard or opium inebriate to a more human control. But we can also see that their views were socially constructed, that disease and science were no more objective than the moral opprobrium they ostensibly replaced. (Berridge, V. 1989a: 27)

Another explanation regarding the increasing role of medical practitioners in the regulation of drug use is related to the control of self-medication (Stimson and Oppenheimer, 1982). Given the availability of different substances, the boundary between medical practitioners and chemists was rather unclear. In the search for professional status, medical practitioners and pharmacists sought to establish a system of pharmaceutical control to ensure their monopoly over the medication, and over the distribution of a number of substances. As a consequence, some regulations at the end of the nineteenth century were formulated to control

the distribution of certain substances. For example, the 1868 Pharmacy Act controlled the distribution of opium, and later on, in 1908, the Poisons and Pharmacy Act extended those controls to include coca and cocaine.

Definition of the drugs problem became, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the responsibility of the medical profession as a consequence of their predominant role. They adopted the disease model of addiction regarding alcohol and other substances, and this also subsumed their other sorts of interests, as presented before. At the same time, the influence of Temperance Movements created a perception about drug and alcohol use as their being unacceptable vices in Victorian society.

The influence of both temperance campaigners and the medical profession in the early days of consolidating a drugs policy would reach maturity in the following century. The drugs problem is therefore defined ambiguously as a medical problem in relation to the disease model of addiction while, at the same time, it was to become considered an undesirable vice or a moral weakness. In particular, the latter approach to drug use would be reinforced with the international conventions proscribing certain drug use through the measure of prohibition. In Britain, the significant involvement of the government in penalising drug use would influence the development of the British system of drug control. This system will be described in the subsequent section.

2.2. 1900-1950: The British system of drug control

With the arrival of the twentieth century, the political scenario began to change; severe controls on drugs were implemented. One important aspect of this increasing control over drugs was related to the influence of the United States and the International Conventions on Drugs (Shanghai, 1909 and The Hague, 1913), advocating international regulation on opium

and other substances such as coca and cocaine (Bruun, K. *et al.*, 1975).¹¹ A number of countries, including the United Kingdom, agreed to establish domestic controls over the production and distribution of these substances. Nevertheless, the economic significance of the distribution of opium for Britain and other European countries delayed the implementation of these controls.

In contrast, the issue of drugs became for the American government a prominent political issue, due to their interest in entering the Chinese market. The issue of opium was interpreted as constituting a major problem for Chinese society, and therefore a crusade against it was perceived as an appropriate political aspect to gain the sympathy of the Chinese government (Musto, D., 1973).

In the European context the concerns at that moment were quite different. In fact, World War I (1914-1918) compromised the political efforts and economic resources of many European nations, including Britain. Coincidentally, the Great War has evidenced the use of cocaine amongst the troops. This practice, commonly known as the 'army disease', was considered a threat to the military status of the British economic and military position (Page, R., 2001). In response to this menace, the 1916 Defence of Realm Regulation criminalised the possession of opium or cocaine without a doctor's prescription (Bean, P., 1974).

The close involvement of the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice in relation to the control of drugs and drug use became possible as a result of this initial criminalisation of drug issues. In addition, the social acceptability of drug use was in decline, and opium and morphine use began to be perceived as an undesirable vice (Gould, A., 2001). The

¹¹ A number of International Conventions on Opium and other substances were convened by the United States of America. The original aim was to control and limit the production and distribution of substances such as opium and cocaine; these international conventions soon became the international mechanism to regulate different substances. With the changes in geopolitical configuration, the American approach to drugs, based on a prohibitionist view of drug use, gained world-wide predominance. After World War II, these regulations were adopted by all of the countries participating in the global organisations: the League of Nations, and the United Nations. For more information about these Agreements see McAllister, W.B., (2000) *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: An International History*. London: Routledge.

Home Office was keen on supporting this view, since it superseded the established authority of medical practitioners on drugs issues in favour of the large-scale penalisation of the vicious aspects of drug use (Berridge, V., 2005).

This tension between the medical approach and the 'criminalising' view of drug use was present in the discussions at governmental level. In response to this debate, a commission of experts was convened in order for its members to redefine the problems related to drugs. The President of the Royal Society of Physicians chaired the Commission, known as the Rolleston Committee (1926), yet it seemed that the medical profession was losing ground in their control of drug problems. On the other hand, 'the Home Office appeared to be attracted by penal policy initiatives in the United States' (Berridge, V., 2005: 12), a perspective supported by the social view on drug use as an undesirable practice that should be punished:

In the 1920s the question of a penal reaction appeared with particular force. At a time of post-war social dislocation, drugs provided a convenient scapegoat. Britain had passed its first Dangerous Drugs Act in 1920 but this, it seemed, was not enough. The resultant Dangerous Drugs Act of 1923 was a significant advance toward a penal policy, giving increased power of search and longer sentences. (Berridge, V., 1989a: 28)

As a consequence of the Rolleston Committee's findings, it was agreed that doctors would keep their right to prescribe controlled substances, but that the Home Office would be allowed to implement their penal measures on those who were not being treated within the medical system. In addition, it was stated that medical doctors should keep detailed records of their prescriptions, and that these would be monitored by the government. This agreement is the origin of what is called the 'British system' of drug control; meaning a medical-penal alliance, in which doctors were pressed

to concede their monopoly of both the knowledge and administration of drug problems, towards an increasing penalisation of drug use.¹²

The Rolleston Committee's Report was an affirmation of the disease model of addiction, in which addicts were defined as 'victims of morbid and overpowering craving' (Stimson, G.V. and Oppenheimer, E., 1982); however, a number of people were nevertheless sent to prison for the unauthorised possession of dangerous drugs.

In addition to the Rolleston Committee and the establishment of this British System of drug control, other aspects must be taken into account in this period. As mentioned before, a number of International Conventions - called by the United States and attended by a number of countries - were dictating controls over opium and other drugs. Their influence in the political arena gained prominence in the post-war context, also because of the increasing dependence of some European countries on American resources.

The Second Opium Conference in Geneva (1926) consolidated many of the agreements of the previous conferences; furthermore, it introduced a new substance in the list of illicit drugs: cannabis. Cannabis was not, however, the main topic of discussion at that conference. Despite the reluctance of the British delegation in considering its case, the Egyptian diplomat managed to make his point in the plenary session. His argument in favour of control of this 'scourge in addition to opium' evoked welcoming support from other countries (Mills, J., 2003: 171).

Mills' analysis shows that the argument of the Egyptian diplomat echoed the general view of the United States regarding drugs; the delegate's proposal to include cannabis as a drug to be controlled served some other

¹² For further analysis of the origin of the British System see Stimson, G.V. and Lart, R., (2005) 'The relationship between the state and local practices in the development of national policy on drugs between 1920-1990' and Berridge, V., (2005) 'The "British System" and its history: Myth and Reality', both in *Heroin Addiction in Britain, Volume 1 Origins and Evolution* Strang, J. and Gossop, M., eds., Abingdon: Routledge; Whynes, D. and Bean, P., (eds.) (1991) *Policing and Prescribing: The British System of Drug Control*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Academic and Professional Ltd.

political purposes. Finally, cannabis was included as an illegal substance. This took place after minimal examination of the arguments supporting this inclusion.

For the British, cannabis was not considered a 'problem', mainly because social attention was focused on the problem of opium and cocaine in relation to immigrant communities.¹³ In fact, during the early decades of the twentieth century, drug users in Britain were considered to be sick people in need of medical attention. In addition, due to the fact that most of the 'drug addicts' belonged to the medical profession, drug habituation was seen as a form of occupational hazard.

Indeed, the Rolleston Committee had determined that medical practitioners should keep control over drugs-related practices. In the context of a nascent social policy inspired by Keynesian and Fabian ideas regarding 'benevolent forms of state Welfarism',¹⁴ reaching an accommodation between the State's and the medical world's differing perspectives on drug problems was seen as the optimum alternative for dealing with this type of problem.

In consequence, in the 1920s-1930s, the debate over illicit drug use promoted by the International Conventions was held in the Department of Health at the Home Office. The discussion was not necessarily political, since doctors seemed to have control over the situation. Indeed, as some researchers explain, there was less immediate concern about the consumption of certain drugs, mainly because the opium users came mainly from the medical profession and as such they represented little threat to the order of values (Bean, P., 1974: 21).

¹³ By the 1930s British newspapers reported the case of 'innocent young white women being seduced by evil Orientals with the aid of opium and cocaine'; this type of news fuelled social disapproval of those substances. Gould, A., (2001) 'Drugs and Drug Misuse' in May, M., Page, R. and Brunsdon, E., eds., *Understanding Social Problems: Issues in Social Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell

¹⁴ For a revision of social policy throughout the century see Page, R., (2001) 'The exploration of social problems in the field of social policy' in May, M., Page, R. and Brunsdon, E., eds., *Understanding Social Problems: Issues in Social Policy*. Oxford: Blackwell.

In contrast, on the other side of the Atlantic, the measures against drugs and alcohol had become a prominent social and political issue. In 1919 the American government created the Volstead Law of Alcohol Prohibition. With this and other measures, the prohibition of drugs and the proscription of alcoholism were finding their place in the institutional structure (Gusfield, J.R., 1963). In particular, drugs became a Federal issue, and as a consequence a greater number of agencies with increased powers were created during this period (Musto, D., 1973).

Amongst those agencies, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, directed by Harry Anslinger, focused its attention on the issue of cannabis or marijuana. Anslinger led a campaign against cannabis based on allegations of its links with criminal and violent behaviour.

The campaign is normally referred to as the 'reefer madness' campaign and it claimed, amongst other factors, that cannabis was a 'sexual stimulant that removed civilised inhibitions' (Anslinger, H. and Ryley Cooper, C., 1937). The use of cannabis was associated with migrant communities from Mexico, and in this way the association of cannabis with alien practices was produced and reinforced (Musto, D., 1973).

A similar kind of fear regarding migrant communities and their use of drugs began to develop in Britain upon the arrival of West Indian, Asian and African communities during the late 1940s. In that decade, the number of prosecutions for drugs increased, and the use of substances such as marijuana was associated with Jamaican communities and some Bohemian groups of musicians on the London scene. However, drug use became appealing to the indigenous population, and an increasing number of white male and female drug users was reported by newspapers (Yates, R., 2002).

In the particular case of cannabis, some contemporary authors in Britain argued that the use of this substance represented a real menace for social values. Because cannabis released inhibitions, it was therefore quite

possible that a person under the influence could betray his/her principles, leading to discredit and dishonour (Johnson, D., 1952).

To summarise: these considerations played an important role in the definition of drugs-related problems. Whereas in the 1920s and 1930s medical practitioners had been prominent when treating drug problems as a matter of addiction, the 1950s defined drugs as a social and criminal problem. Although drug problems did not seem to be similar to those experienced in the United States, a significant number of addicts began to be reported.

With the creation of a British Welfare State at the end of the 1940s, drug use became a problem to be treated by governmental institutions, such as the National Health Service. In addition, drug use as a social and criminal issue gained prominence in the British media. Newspapers around the mid-1950s reported the increasing use of cannabis and heroin by the white population.

However, at the level of public policy, the situation continued to adhere to the ideas of the Rolleston Committee, thus to regard addiction as a medical matter. The number of problematic heroin users was not in fact comparable with the situation in the United States, in which prohibition seems to have exacerbated the problem.¹⁵ The distribution and use of heroin were controlled in Britain by medical practitioners, and this system may here have delayed the epidemic consequences experienced in America (Judson, H.F., 1974).

Nevertheless, at the end of the 1950s the predominant social perception was that drug use should be addressed as a criminal matter, and that tighter controls should deter the increasing use of drugs amongst certain

¹⁵ In 1956 legislation approved the death penalty for supplying heroin. Some other laws during the 1950s, such as the Boggs Law (1953), increased penalties for using narcotic drugs. In general, America was consolidating its Prohibitionist view on drugs, which would influence the International Agreements and the compulsory ratification of such conventions in the new political order through the League of Nations (after World War I) and the United Nations (after World War II). All of these treaties were unified in the Single Convention on Narcotics in 1961. See McAllister, W.B., (2000). *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: An International History*. London: Routledge.

groups in the British population. The 1960s would see the re-evaluation of the Rolleston Committee's approach to drugs, and the adoption of a different definition of drug problems, as well as of the institutions and strategies responsible for tackling them. The next section of this thesis will analyse the consequences of the 1960s in the consideration of drug problems in Britain.

2.3. 1960: Times are a-changing

Having recovered from the effects of World War II, the 1960s portrayed the post-war optimism and the relative economic buoyancy of Western societies. Nevertheless, society - and in particular young people - was proclaiming that 'times were changing'. A new search for spirituality and cultural expressions included experimentation with mind-altering substances.

In the view of institutions and traditional values, the new patterns of consumption were perceived as a practice defiant of the social order. The drug user was no longer a sick person in need of treatment; the search for pleasure demonstrated a different aspect from the old medical approach (Bewley, T., 2005).

As a consequence of institutional changes, and the consolidation of the National Health Service, in addition to the increasing concern about drug use, the 1960s started with a revision of the regulations on drugs. In 1961, the Brain Committee, chaired by Sir Russell Brain, former President of the Royal College of Physicians, was commissioned by the government to assess the magnitude of drugs problems in British society. In particular, heroin problems seemed to have soared in the few years leading up to the Brain Committee.

However, the Brain Report in 1961 reported a minor incidence of drug problems and stated that addiction should remain a medical matter. Following the disease model of the Rolleston Committee, the Brain Report introduced a minor change in the disease consideration of drug problems, by specifying that 'addiction should be regarded as an expression of mental disorder rather than a form of criminal behaviour' (HMSO, 1961).

Newspapers and the media nevertheless continued to report drug problems. Attention was directed towards cannabis and amphetamines, also called "pep pills". On the other hand, the psychiatric profession was taking over diagnosing and defining drug problems; soon, the use of amphetamines and cannabis was being associated with mental health (Stimson, G.V. and Oppenheimer, E., 1982: 44).

These pressures prompted a revision of the recommendations of the First Brain Committee, and a second meeting was organised in 1965. The report of the second Brain Committee stated that the system of drug control should remain in the hands of the medical profession, yet changed the definition of drug problems by stating that 'addiction [was] a socially infectious condition and its notification may offer a means for epidemiological assessment and control' (HMSO, 1965: 8).

This statement emphasised a controlling role for the medical profession which, prior to the 1960s, was directed only to provide treatment. As a consequence of the Second Brain Committee, the basic tenets of the medical control over drugs were retained, while the prescription of heroin and cocaine would require a special licence issued by the Home Office. Licences would normally only be granted to psychiatrists working in special treatment units, called Drug Dependency Units, more commonly referred to as 'the Clinics' (cf. Yates, R., 2002: 116).

The clinics allowed an emergent group of professionals to establish their domain in the treatment of drug addiction. Voluntary agencies that had been treating drug addiction since the 1960s began to figure besides

medical doctors in the policy debate. Both the involvement of the Home Office and the role of voluntary agencies in addressing drug problems started challenging the monopoly of medical practitioners in this area.

On the other hand, some Bohemian groups began to regard drug use as 'a paramount position ideologically and morally buttressed against the criticism of the outside world' (Young, J., 1971: 143). In fact, drug use was no longer the problem of a certain type of people, normally middle-class housewives or members of the medical profession. Instead, a new type of drug user started to use illicit drugs for 'social, recreational and hedonistic purposes' (Bewley, T., 2005: 44). In this approach, drug use became associated with a 'rampant hedonism [...] both fascinating and sinister' (cf. Plant, M., 1987: 5).

In this hedonistic practice, many younger people chose cannabis as their favourite drug; cannabis came to symbolise the difference between that group and the rest of society. As a consequence, mainstream society began to perceive cannabis as the source of all evils, and it was thought that by eliminating the drug, this might lead to the alleviation of social disharmony and would preserve the old order (Musto, D., 1973: 245).

The negative connotation of marijuana was fuelled by the link, mentioned above, to migrant communities¹⁶ and also by conspiracy theories, in which cannabis was allegedly part of a Communist plot against Western societies.¹⁷

At the level of legislation, the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1965 included cannabis on the list of controlled substances, and the penalties for its possession and supply sometimes outweighed those imposed for heroin offences¹⁸. Cannabis became a symbol for what was both hated and idealised by those respective groups in society. Cannabis became a

¹⁶ See Kohn, M. (1992). *Dope Girls: The Birth of the British Drug Underground*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

¹⁷ See Johnson, D. (1952). *Indian Hemp: A Social Menace*. London: Christopher Johnson.

¹⁸ The maximum penalty for possession was ten years' imprisonment plus a fine of one thousand pounds.

political and generational issue not just in the United Kingdom, but also in the United States and other West European countries.¹⁹

In general, it is possible to say that from the 1960s onwards, drug policy - as have many other social policies - has come under increasing institutional control. Indeed, it is a controversial political issue: the main trend has been to address drug problems from a criminalistic approach.

The evolution of the drug policy during this period was also affected by a change in the image of the drug taker and the definition of the drug problem. Hence, from the 'happy hippie' of the 1960s, by the 1970s a new drug taker labelled as an 'urban junkie' filled social anxieties about drug use. In addition, the victory of Margaret Thatcher in the General Election in 1979 initiated a new era in the relationship between the State and British society.

The following section describes the main effects of these social and political changes in the consideration of drug problems and the configuration of a new drug policy in the United Kingdom during the 1970s and 1980s.

2.4. 1970-1980: Junkies, traffickers and the War on Drugs

After the 1960s and its changing times, the 1970s saw the consolidation of the emerging drug policy in the United Kingdom. In 1971, the Misuse of Drugs Act created the legal framework for the development of a British drug policy. This Act classified a number of illegal substances based on their level of harmfulness, according to which it determined penalties for consumption and supply. As Gould (1998) has stated, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is committed to an increasingly criminalistic approach, since it

¹⁹ A further analysis of the legislation on cannabis will be presented in Chapter 6, when addressing the particular aspects of cannabis reclassification. Now, however, it is important to note the social perception of this substance, and the consequences for the development of British drug policy.

established penalties and a classification of offences regarding the class of drugs.²⁰

In terms of social concerns, this decade was characterised by a strong critique of the Welfare State. It was argued that the State had failed in its promises of welfare and prosperity for the British population (cf. Page, R., 2001: 21). It was denounced as counting amongst the consequences of its failure the fact that young urban groups were sometimes excluded from the labour process and the education system. The reactions to this situation of exclusion involved a number of social responses, including changes in the patterns of drug use and the type of drug used by these groups.

For example, some groups of young people, such as punks, opted for new ways of intoxication. They chose the practice of 'glue sniffing' instead of using cannabis or LSD - which had been regarded as the symbol of the spiritual journey of the 1960s (Yates, R., 2002: 117). During the same period, heroin became the drug of choice for some of these groups.

Social concern about heroin use reached its climax in 1979, when evidence of 'smack cities' caused an outbreak of focus amongst politicians and social groups. Five years later, in 1984, the nation had become seriously alarmed about heroin. MacGregor (1989: 3) explains how the public debate concentrated firstly on drawing attention to the issue, defining drugs as an 'alarming problem, a crisis, an epidemic, even as a plague [...] it then moved on to try to explain it.'

Two types of accounts in relation to the emergence of drug problems were offered: on the one hand, the 'Right' (traditionally, the Conservatives) placed the responsibility for the drug problem on what can be named the

²⁰ In the same decade, the drugs problem was addressed at the local level through the creation of Local Advisory Committees, relying on community-based services. Some other legislation was enacted during the 1970s. In 1972 the Road Traffic Act included testing drivers for other substances in addition to alcohol. Further, in 1979, the Customs and Excise Management Act addressed the issue of trafficking. See also Gould, A., (2001) 'Drugs and Drug Misuse' in May, M., Page, R. and Brunsdon, E., eds., *Understanding Social Problems: Issues in Social Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell.

'external enemy', i.e., traffickers and dealers from distant places responsible for inducing the epidemic. On the other hand, the 'Left' (Socialists) pointed out the conditions of deprivation and unemployment in those cities, whereby the government had failed to meet the needs of the young unemployed people of the inner cities (cf. MacGregor, S., 1989: 3).

As a consequence of the political debate, a number of governmental measures at the political and budgetary level were implemented. Firstly, the budget for drug problems was increased from £2 million in 1982 to almost £18 million in 1984 (MacGregor, S., 1989). Secondly, there was a significant expansion of treatment services, and sixty per cent of the budget was directed towards new community services. Thirdly, emphasis on drug treatment was placed at the local and regional level, by stressing the role of the clinics (Drug Dependence Units or DDU) and the consolidation of Regional Health Authorities and the Regional Drug Problem Teams (Yates, R., 2002).

On the other hand, the 'drug problem' began to be defined not only as a medical matter; the issues of criminality and security were increasingly present in the public debate. Bean describes this relationship as a 'marriage between treatment and criminal justice' (Bean, P., 2002: 60). Two effects of this 'marriage' serve to illustrate this new definition of the drug problem.

Firstly, during these two decades (the 1970s and 1980s) medical opinion was included as part of the advice of the government and Parliament, who favoured a criminalising approach to drugs (Stimson, G.V., 1987: 484). However, the Conservative government emphasised the role of individuals as constituting a response to social problems. In consequence, the focus on drug policy, similarly to other social policies, was located at the level of individual responsibility and local organisations.²¹ As a consequence, a significant amount of resources in drug treatment was given to specialists

and community-based organisations, instead of to the medical practitioners.

Secondly, while services were expanded at the local level, at the national and international level, major penalties and social condemnation were applied to drugs-related problems (MacGregor, S. and Smith, L., 1998). In particular, a new enemy became the source of all evils: the drug trafficker.

The drug trafficker embodied not only the 'evil' of drug problems; furthermore, it focused the attention on an 'alien' menace, far removed from the usual suspects. As some researchers argue, this 'suitable enemy' justified the increasing role of enforcement activities in the British drug policy while, at the same time, it helped to shape the 'law and order' mandate of the 1980s (Green, P., 1998).

The personality of the subject involved in drugs was also transformed as a consequence of these changes in the definition of the issue. As analysed by Dorn *et al.* (1991), drug users in the 1980s are described as being typically weak personalities, living in a deprived environment, and misled by their wayward peers of unscrupulous pushers²². Theirs was a medical problem requiring treatment or counselling. Drug pushers / dealers / suppliers, on the other hand, occupied a very different ideological terrain, typically described as an being evil, cold-blooded, ruthless murderer with a complete disdain for human life²³. In other words:

The drug trafficker, linked ideologically and punitively with the terrorist, becomes a pariah by the 1980s (Green, P., 1998: 116).

²¹ The emphasis on resituating responsibility to the local level through community partnerships was part of a wider agenda of State reforms in the Thatcher era. For a summary of these reforms in the public sector please refer to Flynn, N. (1997). *Public Sector Management*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf.

²² By stigmatising the drugs trafficker, the drugs user was defined in a different way. In consequence, the 'sick person' of the 1960s was superseded by the 'problem drug taker' in the 1980s. (Stimson, 1987:477) In general, the current term to define drugs takers is 'drugs misuser', which represents a middle point between the sick person and the criminal, yet still leaves wide room for controlling measures by the medical and penal authorities.

²³ Cited in Green, P., *ibid.*, 1998: 113.

This figure of the 'external enemy' turned out to be quite useful in the justification of a manifest War on Drugs. In America, the Reagan government had declared a war against drugs, considering drug trafficking to be a security matter. In a live television address to the nation on 14 September 1986, President and Mrs. Reagan announced their crusade against drugs.²⁴ They called for a war on drugs directed against drug dealers 'who are killing America and terrorising it'.²⁵

Although the dynamics of consumption are influenced by the availability and price of illegal drugs,²⁶ the association between the drug trafficker and the terrorist became a mark of the 1980s War on Drugs. This view was shared and reinforced in Britain by the Thatcher government. Substantial resources were therefore given to finance increased law enforcement and activities against drug trafficking.

For example, the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 focused on the issues of trafficking resources by seizing their assets. The extensive powers of the Act have been described as 'draconian', yet it is clear that the war on drugs has been the key force driving legislation and enforcement responses (Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1992).

At the institutional level, this approach to drug problems produced a shift in responsibilities among different agencies and governmental levels. From the 1980s onwards, national government was responsible for combating drug trafficking, whereas the local level was in charge of dealing with the problems of drug use: prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. It has been

²⁴ Other political reasons might have been in response to the highly visible anti-drug crusade of Nancy Reagan. It seemed that her participation in the campaign was part of a strategy to negate public criticism of her spending thousands of dollars on 'new china for the White House, lavish galas for wealthy friends, and high fashion evening gowns, at a time where her husband's economic policies had induced a sharp recession'. See Reinerman, C. and Levine, H.G., (1995) 'The Crack Attack: America's Latest Drug Scare: 1986-1992' in Best, J., ed., *Images of Issues: Typifying Contemporary Social Problems*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

²⁵ Cited in Mac Gregor, S. (eds.) (1989) *Drugs and British Society: Responses to a Social Problem in the Eighties* London and New York: Routledge. p. 7.

²⁶ With the increasing demand for illegal drugs, drug traffickers saw a profitable activity not only in the distribution of drugs such as cannabis, but also in the demand for other substances such as cocaine and heroin. An analysis of the patterns of production is an important aspect to be considered. Nevertheless, this research is limited to the main characteristics of the British context as a predominant consumer country, rather than as a producer country. For information about the dynamics of production see Thouni, F.E., (2003) *Illegal Drugs, Economy, and Society in the Andes*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, and McCoy, A., (1972) *Politics of Heroin in South Asia*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers.

argued that this division has provoked a fissure in the language of government and its actions, because the discourse is increasingly separated from the reality of practice at local and regional levels (Turner, D., 1991: 183)

A dramatic illustration of this divergence between the local and national level is provided by the emergence of a new crisis in the drugs scene. By the mid-nineteen-eighties the devastating effects of AIDS/HIV struck the drug-user population, particularly those of injectable drugs such as heroin and cocaine. While central government was insisting on the War on Drugs, community-based organisations and the voluntary sector were dealing with the reality of proscribed drug use as an aggravating factor in the rapid expansion of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Robertson, J.R., 2005).

As a response to limit the spread of HIV/AIDS among drug users, these organisations opted for an alternative approach regarding the control of drug use. The approach is usually known as 'harm reduction'; it recognises that certain types of drug use cannot easily be halted. Therefore, instead of insisting on marginalising this type of drug use, harm reductionists seek to minimise its negative effects. In relation to HIV/AIDS in drug injection practices, the emphasis was on prevention and treatment rather than on the proscription and criminalisation of drug practices (Turner, D., 2005)²⁷.

Some researchers have pointed to the fact that the epidemic of HIV/AIDS and the harm reduction approach have contributed to the development of more realistic drug policies in the United Kingdom and other countries in Europe (Berridge, V., 1992; Stimson, G.V., 1990). Harm reduction proposes an alternative means of dealing with drug problems, in stark

²⁷ 'Harm reduction' was the term encompassing a number of measures directed towards minimising the harm caused by using drugs in an unsafe way. It implicitly acknowledged that sometimes drugs users either do not wish to or are unable to stop using, yet they are incurring risks in the contexts of illegality and proscription. The idea was thus to provide better conditions to drug use, such as needle exchange. For a description of the beginning of the Harm Reduction approach see McDermott, P., (2005) 'The Great Mersey Experiment: The Birth of Harm Reduction' in Strang, J. and Gossop, M., eds., *Heroin Addiction and the British System Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*. Abingdon: Routledge.

contrast to criminalisation, taking on the challenge of attempting to attain a drug-free society.

Despite the lessons learned from the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the relative success of harm reduction measures in dealing with drug problems, the 1980s saw an 'over-politicisation' of the drugs policy in the United Kingdom. Inspired by the rhetoric of the War on Drugs, the British government justified a more severe drug policy. For example, the government's strategy Tackling Drug Misuse (1985; 1988) reflects this politicisation, by giving prevalence to the enforcement and penalisation of drugs-related offences (Green, P., 1998). In the political discussion following the publication of this document, certain experts (e.g., medical practitioners, specialists and researchers) were excluded from the discussion, whereas politicians became its foremost protagonists.

In summary, the legacy of the Conservative government regarding drug policy has resulted in the widespread criminalisation of drug issues. Consequently, increasingly severe sentences for drugs-related offences were pursued by the police during the 1990s. In conclusion, it is possible to state that the Conservative government formulated the basis for the current drug policy, and provides the foundations for New Labour's strategy in this matter.

The next section will address the continuity of the Conservative approach to drugs in the context of the New Labour Party: how this new government re-interpreted the social demand for drugs legislation, and the foundations of the crusade against the drugs of previous decades.

2.5. 1990-2000: British drug policy and the New Labour Party

As mentioned above, the Thatcher government pointed out the problems connected with the State's intervention in the public sphere. Their argument was that this intervention was misguided because 'it acted to

deny self responsibility and violated individual rights'. However, the same government argued that:

[C]riminal justice required a major intervention from the State and its police instruments. As a consequence, between 1982 and 1990 the total expenditure on police, prisons, probation and the courts increased by over 70 per cent, an increase without parallel elsewhere in the public sector (McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J., 1994: 115).

In relation to this divergence between the individual's and the State's respective areas of responsibility on social issues, British drug policy experienced a two-fold effect. On the one hand, some groups in the Conservative government emphasised the necessity of being tough on drugs by increasing resources for enforcement and for the criminalisation of drug offences. On the other hand, there were some 'new realists' who argued for closer focus on 'what works' measures, such as harm reduction and prevention, considered as less expensive and probably more effective than the costly war on drugs (cf. Murji, K., 1998: 143).

Although these tendencies were widely discussed in the public debate, at the pragmatic level of policy making the effect was quite the opposite. During the 1990s there was a proliferation of legislation empowering the police and the criminal justice system. For instance, the courts were encouraged to hand down longer sentences and a large-scale prison building programme was initiated. In short, this decade saw a consolidation of the legislation on drugs from a criminalist point of view.²⁸

In the same decade, the search for a coordinated approach in British drug policy resulted in the formulation of the strategy 'Tackling Drugs Together: A Strategy for England 1995-1998' (HM Government, 1995). The strategy was aimed to 'take effective action by vigorous law enforcement,

²⁸ The Criminal Justice Act, 1991, encouraged treatment for drug related offenders; the same act in 1993 included asset confiscation in drugs related crimes. In 1994 the Drug Trafficking Act was produced and the same year the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act introduced powers for drug testing. Three years later, the Crime and Disorder Act 1997 included mandatory minimum sentences for repeat drug offences.

accessible treatment and a new emphasis on education and prevention'. Besides the criminalistic approach, issues such as community partnership, the multi-agency approach and coordination of activities had already been put in place by different institutions in the drug policy administration.

A number of changes were implemented based on this coordinated strategy. For example, 150 Drug Action Teams (DATs) were established in order to work at the regional and local levels. In addition, a National Treatment Agency (NTA) was created in order to coordinate the aspects related to treatment in the British drug policy. Finally, a Drug Prevention Initiative (DPI) directed the strategic aspects of the policy in terms of education and prevention.

Those initiatives were supported by earlier initiatives tried by institutions in some regions in England. For instance, in 1991, Operation Welwyn in London had given prominence to the role of community-based organisations in dealing with drugs-related criminality (Lee, M., 1996). Other initiatives emphasised the role of the community and also individual responsibility in cooperative social services. In other words, the strategy on drugs formalised what was already happening in the practice across different agencies and administrative levels.

In addition, further changes at the level of public policy were introduced into the area of drug policy. In particular, some managerial ideas began to be included in the general approach to public administration. This approach, commonly known as New Public Management, encompasses a number of initiatives implemented during the Conservative government (Common, R., 2001). In relation to drug policy, it is possible to argue that these principles could have influenced the traditional view of drug policy issues (Acevedo, B. and Common, R., 2004).

One of those changes is related to the transformation in the perception of the drug user. Zibbell analyses the role of the drug user by emphasising the fact that, under this neo-liberal approach, the drug user became 'a

customer who can make responsible choices with regard to his or her health' (Zibbell, J.E., 2004: 59).²⁹

However, due to the rapid proliferation of drug practices, other problems emerged during the 1990s. Whereas the attention of the police and society was at its peak about crack cocaine and heroin, young people entertained themselves with Ecstasy and amphetamines linked to the 'rave' scene and 'acid house'; this was a new type of drug user, searching for pleasure associated with dance and music (Hinchliff, S., 2001).

Given the principles of management and the investment in measures of 'what works', the emergence of this category of non-problematic user has presented a new challenge for the criminalist approach in drug policy. In fact, the acknowledgement of the existence of this otherwise law-abiding citizen who uses drugs for recreational purposes seems to have permeated the formulation of drug policy³⁰ (Pape, H. and Rossow, I., 2004; Parker, H. *et al.*, 1998; Parker, H. *et al.*, 2002). Interestingly, it is possible to argue that the new paradigm of public sector management has opened a space in which to include consideration of the 'recreational' use of drugs. In particular, this inclusion is possible when evaluating the real efficacy and efficiency of drug policy initiatives (Acevedo, B. and Common, R., 2004).

With the victory of the New Labour party in 1997, the principles of Thatcherism - far from being abandoned - were revisited in a new 'third way'. As argued by some researchers on public policy, "the processes of managerialisation were not only warmly embraced, but under the rubric of modernisation" (McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J., 2000: 182).

²⁹ This change in the role of the drug user will be analysed in detail in Chapter 8. A Genealogy of Cannabis Re-classification.

³⁰ The term 'recreational use' has been adopted to describe the non-problematic use of drugs. Recreational use of substances had been the watermark during the 1960s and the search for pleasure defined a purposeful activity in drug use. See Fort, J., (1969) *The Pleasure Seekers: The Drug Crisis, Youth and Society*, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company; Goode, E., (1970) *The Marijuana Smokers*, New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers. The term is also related to the kind of drug use that is part of a normalized process of socialisation in certain age. See Parker, H., Aldridge, J. and Measham, H., (1998) *Illegal Leisure: The Normalization of Adolescent Recreational Drug Use*. London: Routledge.

In relation to drug policy, this 'managerialisation' of policy making has produced a number of initiatives in reforms to the current approach to drugs. As stated by Marlow, this has had an effect mainly in the institutional distribution of drug policy issues, rather than there being a real review of the core of drug policy in relation to drug prohibition:

With the election of a Labour government in 1997, drugs were moved to the centre of the political stage. Drugs policy was to be 'joined up' in the sense that a holistic multi-agency approach was to be adopted. Intervention was to be 'evidence-based' and closely monitored to ensure that it constitutes 'best value'. (Marlow, A., 1999: 1)

As a matter of fact, it is possible to argue that New Labour has adopted and re-named some of the Conservative government's experience in drugs policy making. For example, New Labour draws upon the previous drugs policy of 1995 by calling it: Tackling Drugs Together for a Better Britain (HM Government, 1998). This strategy maintained the main principles of the previous document while adding other, experimental, aspects.

The structure of the Drug Action Teams was, according to this strategy, to be maintained, while a new unit in the Cabinet Office was due to coordinate the efforts in drugs policy. The United Kingdom Anti-Drugs Coordinating Unit (UKADCU, with a 'Drugs Czar' as its head) became responsible for the coordination of drugs policy issues, which had previously been subsumed under the duties of the Home Office. It seems that the creation of this unit, commonly known as the Czar's Office, was based on the paradigm of 'specific task force', but also it reveals the 'adoption' of some American ideas regarding the management of drugs issues (McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J., 2000). Nevertheless, the Czar's Office had a very short life, and responsibilities for the issue of drugs were resumed by the Home Office in 2001 after the second victory of New Labour.

Some other similarities to the American approach to public policy can be appreciated in the case of the drugs policy in Britain. For instance, it is possible to see how the drugs policy in the United Kingdom has experienced changes in the structure of the State, in relation to a managerial approach to public administration. From the late 1980s and 1990s, reformers across the Atlantic have advocated in favour of the introduction of managerial principles in public administration (Flynn, N., 1997).

However, those processes are not just simple administrative reorganisations or fashionable trends in public administration, but:

[W]hat is taking place is a deeper ideological process of managerialization which is transforming relationships of power culture, control and accountability. (Clarke, J. *et al.*, 1994: 3)

The influence of the managerialisation of British drug policies should not be underestimated. In fact, as argued by Murji (1998), this managerial framework in the criminal justice system has overtaken many of the issues related to drugs policy making. In other words, notions such as efficiency, best value, and customer service, associated with the private sector, have been incorporated into the discussions about drugs policy in the United Kingdom.

In this context, the proposal of the Home Secretary in 2001 to revise the classification and therefore legislation of cannabis was interpreted as another example of the managerial approach in drugs policy issues. His argument, as will be analysed in Chapter Six, included aspects of saving resources in an effort to optimise the actions of police on the streets in relation to drugs. The announcement was, furthermore, interpreted as a response to the social pressure from some groups for the revision of cannabis legislation. In particular, a number of initiatives and reports had brought up the topic of cannabis within the discussion of the drugs policy in the new century.

The decision to review cannabis classification must be understood in the context of the drugs policy and its development over the past century. Although some of the recent developments in drugs policy making in Britain have been furthered during the last thirty years, it is important to consider the wider historical context in which the drugs policy has evolved. Some conclusions in relation to the evolution of British drug policy will be presented in the next section.

2.6. Conclusions

In this chapter, it has been demonstrated that the drugs policy in the United Kingdom is a complex process of negotiation between different actors, disciplines and interests. As part of British social policy, the understanding of drugs regulations and strategies must take into account the main political aspects regarding this area.

The way in which drugs policy has been influenced by the social perceptions on the topic of drugs expressed in the media and social fora has been outlined. These perceptions are interpreted by policy makers in terms of regulations and legislation; they are also influenced by the context of social policy in certain periods of British history. It has further been argued that many of the perceptions regarding drugs tend to be shared with other Western countries: in particular, the American approach to drugs has been influential in drugs policy making around the world, due to the formalisation of their ideas through a number of international agreements and other instruments.

In this analysis, a number of actors, institutions, instances and agencies which eventually combine to determine the course of drugs policy have been defined. The interplay of these elements delineates the nature of the 'drugs problem' and the 'drug user' in certain historical periods. For example, what was perceived as a 'bad habit' in the nineteenth century in relation to opium consumption became a matter for political discussion

towards the end of the era. In response to the influence of Temperance campaigners, practices involving inebriation became a matter for proscription, opening the path to the further criminalisation of those practices. In addition to the social perception of drug practices, the manner in which the influence of the medical profession has defined drug problems within the disease model of addiction has been described.

In contrast, the strenuous intervention of the central government and criminal justice institutions has favoured a criminalist approach to drugs. This ambiguous view of drug problems – as both a medical and a criminal problem - has been a characteristic element in the British approach to drugs policy.

This chapter has described along with the roles of institutions and disciplines, some of the international aspects in the formulation of drugs policy. As mentioned before, the American influence has been present in different aspects of British drugs policy. Apart from the American influence in the establishment of International Conventions regulating a number of substances, a significant coincidence between Britain and the United States was evidenced by the declaration by both governments of a War on Drugs during the 1980s. According to this view, drugs are considered a matter of national security, and the definition of the drugs problem has introduced a new actor: the drugs trafficker. Indeed, such a view has allowed the definition of the drug user as a weak-willed individual, with the source of the 'evil' located in the persona of the 'drugs trafficker'. This approach has helped to confirm some of the aspects of the British system of the medical control of drugs problems. However, the criminal approach is widely justified when defining the drug trafficker as a menace to national stability. Both views are relevant in the understanding of current drugs policies in the United Kingdom.

Due to the changing nature of drug consumption, this chapter has analysed different contexts and types of drug use. It has been suggested that each decade seems to bring its drug of choice. For example, some

young people in the 1960s chose cannabis and LSD as part of their spiritual exploration, whereas others in the 1970s chose the practice of 'glue sniffing' and heroin consumption.

The fact that that current programmes within drugs policy implemented under the New Labour party are in fact part of governmental dynamics established during the time of the Conservative government has been demonstrated. For example, the current strategy of Tackling Drugs Together for a Better Britain can be understood as an enhancement of the previous strategy in 1995: Tackling Drugs Together. It may, though, be claimed that New Labour has developed the managerial principles of efficiency and efficacy in relation to the practical aspects of their drugs policy. Nevertheless, the main discourse of the War on Drugs and the perception of drugs as a 'menace' or as a 'scourge' remain firmly rooted in the political approach to drug problems.

It is possible to summarise by stating that the drugs policy in Britain is a dynamic field determined by the influence of different interests, institutions, disciplines, and actors. In addition, the drugs policy cannot be studied in isolation from the wider processes in social policy in Britain.

Finally, as presented here, the interest of academics and scholars in the drugs policy began to emerge during the 1960s, when other disciplines apart from medicine took an interest in the understanding of drugs phenomena. The next chapter will describe how drugs policy research has evolved over the last five decades; it considers the main perspectives and epistemological considerations in drugs policy research.

CHAPTER 3 DRUGS POLICY RESEARCH

In the previous chapter, the way in which the government's drugs policy has evolved in the context of the United Kingdom has been described. It was emphasised that the drugs policy and regulations originated as a response to the social perceptions of drug problems within a certain historical period. Similarly, it is possible to say that various aspects of research into drugs have, as a topic of interest for academics, developed in parallel to drugs policy changes. As will be presented in this chapter, drugs policy research has a relatively recent history and is still a matter for continuing development.

In the context of the development of the drugs policy in Britain, as well as in other Western countries, it is possible to argue that the production of knowledge about drugs has evolved according to the differing concerns in certain historical moments. For example, whereas the nineteenth century favoured a medical approach to drugs, changes in the pattern of drug consumption and other circumstances opened the way for the inclusion of other disciplines. Apart from the medical view regarding drug problems as a matter of addiction, some additional explanations - related to socio-economic conditions and cultural contexts - furthered a more interpretive approach to drugs.

In the particular area of drugs policy research, it may be stated that interest in the drugs policy has focused on two main aspects: firstly, the historical processes of drug regulations in particular countries or geographical areas, and secondly, the international dimension of drugs policies and the different aspects of the drugs phenomenon across the world.

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the main approaches in the study of drugs policy issues. It considers the historical development of knowledge related to drugs, including the particular

characteristics of drugs policy research in the context of the United Kingdom. This review is expected to provide the basis for the subsequent chapter as concerns the epistemological and methodological aspects of this dissertation.

A brief overview of the sections is herewith presented:

The first section comprises an overview of how the stimulation and thus dispersal of knowledge about drugs have evolved in relation to the different definitions of drugs problems through history. Hence, this section presents a review of the diverse disciplines and approaches involved in the consideration of drugs research. The emphasis in this section is on revealing the epistemological underpinnings of the different explanations regarding drugs problems in relation to each particular realm of drugs policy issues.

The second section explores certain significant references in the literature on the drugs policy. This section contains some of the foundations in the tradition of drugs policy research, including topics such as the origin of drugs prohibition and the contributions of American drug research; the study of the international aspects of drug control; and the introduction of the social sciences into the understanding of the ways in which practices associated with drug use become socially proscribed.

The third section focuses on the specific milieu of drugs policy research in the United Kingdom. The aim of this section is to demonstrate an awareness of the relevant literature in the British tradition of drug research. Aspects such as the historical consideration in drugs policy research; the influence of criminological studies in this area, and the recent developments in relation to the study of international drugs policy are addressed in this section. In addition, the contribution of non-traditional disciplines in their studies of drugs will be highlighted. For instance, this section considers the potential contributions of social policy analysis and management studies in the understanding of drugs policy issues.

From this broad exploration, the aspects related to the particular study of cannabis policy are addressed in the fourth section. In particular, some recent documents concerned with the analysis of the decision on cannabis re-classification are cited.

Finally, the last section presents conclusions in terms of the contribution of this research to the tradition of drugs policy studies, and how it was planned as a response to the challenges posed by other researchers in relation to contemporary drug policy issues.

3.1. The origin and evolution of drugs research

It has been argued that the origin and evolution of drug research has developed according to the changing definition of the 'drug problems' throughout the last century (Berridge, V., 1990; Stimson, G.V. and Lart, R., 2005; Strang, J. and Gossop, M., 2005). In consequence, it is possible to trace the development of drugs research by analysing the different changes in the consideration of drugs problems from an historical perspective.

As described in the last chapter, the first shift in the consideration of drug problems is produced in the nineteenth century. Then, the moral evaluation of drugs use and inebriation, supported by Temperance Campaigners, was challenged by the view of medical practitioners in relation to drug habituation. The consequence of this variation was the contemporary notion of drug use as a problem of addiction. The model of addiction served to explain the problems related to drugs use, as well as to the possible ways of treating them. This model has been the main referent when researching drugs. In this sense, it is not surprising that the

British Journal of Addiction has been the longest established journal in the field of drugs research (Berridge, V., 1985).³¹

The perception of addiction as a disease and subsequently as an epidemic has dominated the discussion about drugs problems during the twentieth century (Reinarman, C., 2005). In general this approach has favoured an epidemiological model in drug research. The approach is supported by a positivist view on drugs problems, whereby the methodologies used are largely quantitative (Giggs, J., 1991).

In the United Kingdom the medical view of addiction has been supported by the agreements from the Rolleston Committee (1926), which may be said to have founded a medico-penal approach to drugs policy in the United Kingdom.³² As was explained above, the Rolleston system determined the prevalence of medical investigations in the proliferation of knowledge of drugs. However, it was also mentioned that the Home Office was in charge of the practical aspects of penalising drugs use. In this way, medical knowledge has been complemented by a criminological approach in the understanding of drug practices.³³

In general, most of the twentieth century can be claimed as forming the main model for studying drugs, based on the medical approach to addiction. It was acknowledged that addiction occurred in the brain; hence, positivistic science in the areas of medicine, psychology, neurology, and psychiatry could provide most of the explanations for this pathology (Reinarman, C., 2005).

³¹ In fact, a number of publications about drug problems belong to the medical profession; including areas such as psychology, psychiatry and human behaviour. A brief overview shows that the main journals on drug use are related to medical science. Among these, the *British Medical Journal*, the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, the *British Journal of Psychology*, and similar journals in America and Australia have explored this topic. In particular, many publications are directed to the topic of addiction, for example, the *Journal of Social Work Practice of Addictions*, the *Journal of Addictive Behaviors*, and the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*.

³² See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.

³³ Similarly to the medical profession, criminologists also have produced considerable information on drugs issues. Following the previous example, many of the journals consulted in this literature review of drugs policy include publications such as the *Journal of Drug Issues* (attached to the criminological studies in University of Florida); the *British Journal of Criminology* and the *Probation Journal*.

Contestation of such a monopoly in the proliferation of knowledge of drugs began around the 1960s, when changes in the pattern of consumption and the ways in which drugs were used during this decade posed new questions for researchers. Social and cultural aspects began to be taken into account in the description of the settings and practices for drug use. In America and Europe, sociologists and anthropologists furthered interesting studies on drugs use and distribution, research that has been influential on the tradition of drugs research.

In particular, the work of sociologist Howard Becker (1953; 1963, 1977) has established a new path for drugs research. In his groundbreaking work on cannabis use, Becker (1953) suggests that the effects of cannabis are not predetermined exclusively by the pharmacological properties of the substance, but that the influence of the peer group plays an important role in appreciating and describing the effects of the substance. Other researchers also questioned the idea of addiction as a taken-for-granted concept used in order to justify certain public policies, such as in the case of policies regulating alcohol and treating alcoholism (Seeley, J.R., 1962).

As a consequence of these and other important critiques of the model of addiction, drugs research started incorporating other disciplines and methodologies into the study of drug use. The participation of alternative disciplines outside traditional medicine highlighted some of the contextual aspects of drugs use. For instance, it was suggested that the economic conditions of poverty and deprivation are linked with problematic drug use in some social groups (Pearson, G., 2001).³⁴

³⁴ The sociological contribution was to enhance the scope of understanding drug use, not just as an 'individual' practice, but as a practice linked with a social context. Hypotheses about drug taking and drug taker's background were associated to deprivation and poverty conditions, therefore, the association with economic patterns or conditions. See Hough, M., (1996) 'Drug Misusers and the Criminal Justice System: A Review of the Literature' in *Drug Prevention Initiative*, 18. London: Home Office. <http://www.drugs.gov.uk/ReportsandPublications/-DPIResearch/1033751402/1033751431.pdf> Accessed 1/07/05.

From an historical perspective, a number of innovative studies into the origin of drug consumption have revealed that drugs constitute an essential part of the history of humankind.³⁵ A growing group of anthropologists, sociologists, literary scholars, and historians have produced comprehensive studies on the presence of 'drugs' in different cultures throughout history (Abel, E., 1980; Barber, B., 1967; Blum, R.H., 1969; Boon, M., 2002; Davenport-Hines, R., 2004; Escohotado, A., 1998; Goodman, J. *et al.*, 1995; Haining, P., 1975; Jay, M., 2002, and Plant, M., 1987). As a consequence, a considerable proportion of information on drugs has emphasised the manifold aspects of their consumption as part of practices related to medicine, religion, rituals, and other ancient, traditional experiences (Crawford, V., 2002; Eliade, M., 1964; Emboden, W.J., 1972c; Goodman, J. *et al.*, 1995; McKeena, T., 1992; Merlin, M., 1972, and Rätsch, C., 1998).

The production of these works encouraged questions about the origin of the proscription of drugs. If drugs have indeed long been within the human experience, it could be asked why they have become a 'problem' for modern societies. Some responses to this 'problematization' came from perceptions regarding the 'the social construction of reality' (Berger, P. and Luckman, T., 1967). Following this line of thought, scholars such as Becker (1963); Gusfield (1963); Duster (1970); S. Cohen (1972); Dorn (1978); Levine (1978) and Cohen (1990) have in their respective evaluations furthered the notion of drugs in relation to social constructs and moral aspects.

³⁵ As well as contemporary academic studies into drug use, other accounts of drugs were produced during the nineteenth century. Literary references, too, to the use of and experimentation with substances have become an important historical reference. See for example: De Quincey, T., (1997 [orig. 1821]) *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Berkshire: Penguin Popular Classics; Ludlow, F.H., (1857) *The Hashish Eater: Being Passages from the Life of a Pythagorean*, New York: Harper; Cooke, M., (1997 [orig. 1860]) *The Seven Sisters of Sleep*, Rochester: Park Street Press. Certain works have compiled the experiences of writers and artists with different substances. See Haining, P., (ed.) (1975) *The Hashish Club. An Anthology of Drug Literature*, London: Peter Owen; Boon, M., (2002) *The Road of Excess: A History of Writers on Drugs*, Harvard: Harvard University Press; Jay, M., (2002) *Emperors of Dreams: Drugs in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Dedalus, Ltd; Plant, S., (1999) *Writing on Drugs*, London: Faber and Faber Publications.

Finally, the expansion of the boundaries of research into drugs also brought a number of innovations in the way in which the research was conducted. In particular, the contribution of American social anthropology has highlighted ethnography and qualitative techniques as major tools in drug research (Agar, M., 1973; Sterk, C.E., 2003).³⁶ Both ethnographic and qualitative research have been widely applied in understanding drugs problems.

To summarise: two main types of investigations into drugs can be distinguished. The division can be established according to the ontological and epistemological considerations of drugs. On the one hand, drugs are considered inherently problematic and therefore drugs research aims to provide explanations for the reasons why people use drugs. For example, medical research focusing on the effect of drugs on human health assumes that drugs are *per se* problematic. In contrast, the problematic nature of drugs is questioned by suggesting that drugs are socially constructed. It is thus proposed that drug research should focus on the understanding of the contexts and conditions regarding the drugs phenomenon. For instance, this view is concerned with the historical perspective and can assume an interpretative approach in relation to drug problems.

Both approaches may favour a positivistic or a non-positivistic approach. In fact, the categories here described are not mutually exclusive: they tend to overlap, and to collaborate. For example, it may occur that an epidemiological study is complemented by ethnographic accounts of drugs use within a certain population, or that a history of drug prohibition makes use of surveys and other quantitative tools.

³⁶ Examples from the United States include *The Portraits from a Shooting Gallery* ([Fiddle, 1967]); *Ripping and Running: A Formal Ethnography of Urban Heroin Addicts* ([Agar, 1973]); *Careers in Dope* ([Waldorf, 1973]); *Women on Heroin* ([Rosenbaum, 1981]); *Wheeling and Dealing: An Ethnography of an Upper Level Drug Dealing and Smuggling Community* ([Adler, 1985]); *Pathways from Heroin Addiction: Recovery without Treatment* ([Biernacki, 1986]); *The Cocaine Kids* ([Williams, 1989]); *Shooting Dope: Career Patterns of Hard-Core Heroin Users* ([Faupel, 1991]); *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* ([Bourgois, 1995]); *Sexed Work: Gender, Race and Resistance in a Brooklyn Drug Market* ([Maher, 1997]), and *Fast Lives: Women Who Use Crack Cocaine* ([Sterk, 1999]).

The path opened by these new considerations in drugs research has allowed the incorporation of alternative methods of understanding drug policy issues. For instance, some tendencies in drugs policy research have focused on the origin and development of different forms of legislation in particular countries or regions. In particular, emphasis has been laid on the study of the international aspects of drug control. Other researchers have considered the drug policy within a wider scope of social aspects: the construct of drugs relation to crime and images of deviance. The following section presents an overview of these main topics in contemporary drugs policy research, as a detailed *locus* for the development of this dissertation.

3.2. Key aspects for researching about drugs and drugs policy

Changes in the study of drugs developed after the 1960s brought a series of innovations in the way the drug policy can be understood. As mentioned above, one of the main consequences for drugs research has been to consider drugs as social constructs, determined by the configurations of particular interests under certain historical conditions. This approach has enhanced the view on drug policy research. This section focuses on this way of understanding drugs and drug policy as social constructions, in which three main topics can be identified:

First, some researchers began to question the emergence of the drugs policies concerning the current prohibition of drugs. In this line of investigation, some pieces of research have been directed towards understanding the influence of the American approach to drugs and the role of international conventions in the worldwide perception of drug problems.

A second aspect to be examined in this area is the question of the processes by which drug use was defined as being deviant practice, and how drugs users became perceived as 'deviant' to certain others in the social order. According to this line of study, a third topic has emerged regarding the perception of a non-problematic use of drugs, or non-addictive drugs use. In particular, attention has been given to the issues of recreational and medical use of certain substances, such as ecstasy and cannabis.

These references will be developed in the following sub-sections.

3.2.1. 'The American disease': the origin of Prohibition

The analysis of the drugs policy from an historical perspective has characterised a number of studies in drugs policy research. One of the most important works on this matter was developed by David Musto (1973) through his analysing the origins of the drugs policy in the United States. Musto's work remains the most extensive such historical account. Musto states that the origins of the narcotics control in America can be linked to the values and attitudes of a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant society (WASP), in which drug use (including alcohol) was perceived as being a display of moral weakness or as an alien practice needing proscription. On the other hand, this author reveals the complex wealth of political and economic interests behind the problematisation of drugs in American society. The commercial interests of America in the East, and the role of Federal agencies responsible for the issue of drugs, could, for instance, have justified the increasing regulation at the national and international levels in the practices of drug use and trade.³⁷

³⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, there was a confluence of factors in relation to the role of the American government in the International Conventions. Drugs were identified as a common purpose in order for America to gain the sympathy of the Chinese government. At the same time, the free market in drugs represented a threat to the professional interests of doctors and pharmacists.

This historical approach has been followed by other authors such as Clark (1976) in his interpretation of American Prohibitionism as being linked with traditional values and morals. In addition, Rumbarger (1989) has highlighted the links between the Temperance Movement against alcohol and the economic interests in the industrialisation of America in the eighteenth century.

These studies have in general revealed that drugs policy does not only obey a desire to improve public health; it also conveys certain economic and political interests in the control of drug practices. The critical approach to drug policy has been a constant presence in analyses of the history of policies regarding drugs. The work of Harry Levine (1978) includes explicitly the work of Michel Foucault in understanding the origin of the idea of addiction as a way of controlling medical practices related to intoxication and inebriation.³⁸

More recently, the work of Caroline Acker (2001) has demonstrated how the construction of addiction in the early twentieth century was strongly influenced by the professional concerns of psychiatrists seeking to increase their medical authority. The ambitions of these professionals and the increasing role of Federal agencies in the regulation of drug use have created the notion of the 'American junkie' as a social evil in that society.

In general, the tradition of research into drugs in America has been prolific in analysing the origin of drug policies and the perception of drugs in the WASP culture. They have therefore developed a number of interdisciplinary studies on drugs. Among many others, two can be cited here: firstly, the comprehensive study of drug policy from a psychological and sociological approach in Brickle and De Grandpre (1996); secondly, the work of Tracy and Acker (2004) in a critical analysis of the history of alcohol and drugs in the American context.

³⁸ Levine's work will be described in detail in Chapter 7, Section. 7.3.

Another function that has become a concern for researchers in America and Europe concerns the economic aspects of drug trafficking. In particular, Reuter and MacCoun have established a path for drugs policy research regarding the economic and the international aspects of drug trafficking (Reuter, P. and Kleinman, M.A., 1986; Reuter, P. and MacCoun, R., 2001)

In brief, the interest in exploring the American drug policy lies in American influence over the current international system of drug control, ratified by International Conventions. As presented in the last chapter, the American attitude toward drug use has permeated certain other policies in Western countries: not only in terms of principles, but also in the replication of institutions and strategies in their crusade against drugs.

The following sub-section presents some of the developments in the understanding of the international aspects of drugs control, as a second important reference in contemporary drugs research.

3.2.2. 'The Club of the Gentleman': International drug policy

Several authors have explored the origin of the international system of drugs regulation. One of the pioneering works in this area was produced in the mid-1970s by Bruun, Pan and Rexed (1975). They revealed how the principles of the American approach to drugs permeated the League of Nations and the international agencies for drug control (e.g., the International Narcotics Control Board or INCB). The authors point out that, under the auspices of a 'group of gentlemen', the drugs policy has inherited their paternalistic view of drugs problems. However, as Dorn (1978) noted, their careful and well documented writing failed to consider the origin of drug policies as social constructs. Instead, Dorn suggests that research into drug policy should examine some of the economic, political,

social, and cultural environments in which decisions about drugs are made.

In response to Dorn's suggestion, the work of McAllister (2000) is an extensive historical account of the main processes that provided the origins of the current international system of drugs control. Here, McAllister reveals how processes in drug policy are neither linear nor rational, but are woven as a thread of contingencies. He also draws attention to the aspect of the social perceptions of drugs use which influence drug policy decisions, including at the international level. Finally, his analysis emphasises the political interests underlying the Agreements, and how the conventions became the arena in which power and influences are exercised.

More recently and in the context of international integration, several studies have analysed the coordination of drug policies in supra-national organisations such as the European Union (Boekhout Van Solinge, T., 2002; 2005; Dorn, N. and Jamieson, A., 2000; Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1996). With the increasing globalisation and integration of countries and regions, the topic of drug policy harmonisation has become a question for researchers and policy makers (Chen, S. and Skidelsky, E., 2001; Derks, J. *et al.*, 1999). The complexities of the drugs problem, its international character and the necessity for including different disciplines have combined to stimulate important collaboration between researchers of different nationalities and disciplines. In fact, many of the works related to drugs research are produced in edited books and interdisciplinary approaches to particular topics.³⁹

³⁹ Some examples can illustrate this tendency: Klingemann, H. and Hunt, G. (eds.) (1998) *Drug Treatment Systems in an International Perspective: Drugs, Demons, and Delinquents*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications; Dorn, N., Jepsen, J. and Savona, E.E. (1996) *European Drug Policies and Enforcement*, London: Macmillan Press. Ltd.; 'British drug policy making', in Strang, J. and Gossop, M., (eds.) (2005) *Heroin Addiction and the British System Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*, Abingdon: Routledge; *History of Drugs*, Goodman, J., Lovejoy, P. and Sheratt, A. (1995) *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology*, London: Routledge.; *Social and Cultural Aspects in Drug Use* Coomber, R. (Eds.) (1994) *Drugs and Drug Use in Society: A critical Reader* Dartford, Kent: Greenwich University Press; *harm reduction* Inciardi, J. and Harrison, L. (Eds.) (2000) *Harm reduction: national and international perspectives* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.; *perspectives on drug policy* Bickel, W. K. and De Grandpre, R. (Eds.) (1996) *Drug Policy and Human Nature. Psychological perspectives on the prevention, management and Treatment of Illicit Drug Abuse* New York: Plenum Press; etc.

To summarise: it may be stated that studies about the international aspects of the drug policy have contributed to enhancing the scope in drugs research by including several perspectives regarding the drug problem.

Many of these works have analysed the macro-aspects of drugs policy, whereas others have concentrated on the sociological aspects of drugs. In particular, some have been concerned with the social construction of drugs problems in specific cultures at certain historical moments. The next section presents an overview of this type of study: focusing on the processes through which drugs have been linked to deviance and crime in contemporary Western societies.

3.2.3. 'Becoming a marijuana user': deviance and moral panics

Given the fact that drugs have long been part of the human experience, the question of how they have become considered 'negative' practices has been a concern to academics and researchers. These approaches promoted questions about processes by which the practices of drug use become proscribed or condemned in certain historical periods.

Following this line of thought, the work of Becker (1953; 1963) opened a new path for drug research. He suggested that the practice of cannabis use is defined as a deviant behaviour by a complex process of labelling. In particular, he argued that there are internal and external aspects to the construction of the 'marijuana user' as a problematic subject. In his view, there are some internal processes in which the subject learns about cannabis use as a practice within a 'group' that itself can be considered one comprised of 'outsiders'. In addition, Becker stated that the negative perception of drugs use is influenced by what he called 'moral

entrepreneurs' responsible for defining which practices are considered deviant or problematic in a specific society.⁴⁰

The influence of this view regarding the construction of problems concerned with drugs use has influenced a number of studies. Some authors have followed the idea of socially constructed problems in relation to drugs use, where moral values and ideology play an important role both in the definition of drugs problems and in socio-political attitudes toward drugs use and drugs users; these include Barber, B., 1967; Bean, P., 1974; Duster, T., 1970; Gusfield, J.R., 1963; Lidz, C.W. and Walker, A., 1980, and Rock, P. and McIntosh, M., 1974.

In relation to the 'moralistic' aspects in the evaluation of drug use, British sociologist Stanley Cohen (1972) developed the term 'moral panic' in explaining how certain phenomena become problematic as regards the social order. In particular, he analysed how drugs emerged as a threat to societal values and interests. 'Moral panic', therefore, can be defined as:

[A] condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the media ... socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions... (Cohen, S., 1972: 9)

Following Cohen's ideas, Jock Young analysed the process in which 'drug takers' are regarded as 'folk devils' (Cohen, S. and Young, J., 1981). In this process there are mechanisms of social control, with moral entrepreneurship defining what represents moral panic in a particular moment or society.

Furthermore, Young argued that drugs policy tends to act as an amplifier of deviance, because it focuses the attention on what is already perceived as a threat by its having identified a particular deviant group (Young, J., 1977). These authors have also analysed the role of the mass media in

⁴⁰ The work of Becker will be addressed later in this dissertation. See Chapter 7, Section 7.3.2. Defining the drugs user.

the construction of social issues such as drugs (Cohen, S. and Young, J. 1984).

These ideas have influenced drugs research by revealing historical aspects in the proscription of drug use. By including notions such as social control, moral panic, folk devils, moral entrepreneurs, and constructions of deviance, it has been possible to introduce a greater number of interpretative views on drug research. Other works have emphasised the role of politics in drugs prohibition and the processes of marginalisation behind drugs use proscription. For instance, the psychiatrist Thomas Szasz (1994 (orig. 1972)) argues that 'while addiction is ostensibly a medical and pharmacological problem, actually it is a moral and political problem, legitimised by social tradition and scientific judgement'. In the United Kingdom, as well as Cohen and Young, the work of J.B. Davies (1997) represents a critical approach to the notions of addiction, the role of medical practitioners, and some epistemological and methodological aspects in the study of addictive behaviours.

In summary: many of the consequences of shifting towards a more interpretative approach to drugs research are related to the question about the origin of the current attitude to drugs. As presented in this section, it has been argued that some clues towards answering these questions must be found in the American approach to drugs, and the role played by this approach in the international system of drugs policy. In addition, the interpretative paradigm in drugs research has allowed the development of ideas in relation to the social construction of 'drugs', with the processes of labelling drugs use as a 'deviant' practice and drug users as 'folk devils'. Although these topics can be considered commonplaces in contemporary drugs research, some particularities proper to the context of the United Kingdom must be considered in this review. The next section presents some aspects of drugs research developed in the United Kingdom to be considered in this dissertation.

3.3. Drugs policy research in the United Kingdom

The development of drugs policy research around the world has been influenced by important insights from the British tradition on drug studies. In this section some of these contributions will be highlighted in relation to the general field of drugs policy research, especially in the particular consideration of this investigation regarding cannabis policy in the United Kingdom.

3.3.1. The historical approach to drugs policy research

When exploring British works on drugs research, it is interesting to note the emphasis on the 'historical' aspects in the study of drugs phenomena. In particular, many researchers have emphasised the importance of the historical context in the consideration of drugs policy in the United Kingdom. Amongst many others, the work of Virginia Berridge regarding the origins of the politics of opium and the origins of the British system throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has become an important insight into the British approach to drug policy research (Berridge, V., 1992; 1999; 2003; 2005; Berridge, V. and Edwards, G., 1981).

Many of the studies cited in this research have considered the historical context as the source for answering questions about the current approach to drugs. In addition, due to the dynamic characteristic of drugs phenomenon in the United Kingdom, as well as in other parts of the world, British research has retained an updated approach to these dynamics, considering the particular expressions of the drugs problem in the British context. In consequence, a number of important studies have focused on the problems of opium and heroin, due to their impact on British society.

By exploring particular substances, researchers have been able to analyse further aspects of British drugs policy.

For instance, the process of problematisation of heroin addiction in Britain, emphasising the influence of the medical approach in the current policy on drugs, has been analysed. The studies constitute an important reference in the analysis of the historical conditions, the interests and disciplines influencing the development of the drugs policy in the United Kingdom (Stimson, G.V., 1990; 2000; Stimson, G.V. and Lart, R., 2005; Stimson, G.V. and Oppenheimer, E., 1982; Strang, J. and Gossop, M., 2005).

Another prominent topic has been the documentation of drugs policies throughout time. For instance, the experience of Harm Reduction in dealing with HIV/AIDS in injecting drug users has been widely documented, and it has laid the way for alternative views on tackling drug use (Inciardi, J. and Harrison, L., 2000; McDemrott, P., 2005; Stimson, G.V., 1990).

Nevertheless, the characteristics of the British drugs policy favouring a criminalist approach to drugs must be considered as an important influence on drugs policy research. As will be presented in the next subsection, the analysis of this criminalist approach to drugs has produced a number of interesting studies on research into the British drugs policy.

3.3.2. Drugs, crime and international aspects

The alleged links between drugs and crime has supported the major intervention of criminal justice institutions. Although the medical approach to prescribing drugs has tempered the criminalisation of drugs, the agreements established by the Rolleston Committee (1926) allowed significant room for a penal approach to drugs. Throughout the

development of drugs regulations in the United Kingdom, the penal approach to drugs use has increased to the point that the practice is usually connected to crime and violence. In this context, it is not surprising that the main source of data about drugs use come from the British Crime Survey.

In Britain, the work of Philip Bean has contributed to the revision of the drugs and crime connection and its implications for policy making. Over the last thirty years, Bean has studied the origin of drugs policies in Britain, in the framework of social control (1974). His recent studies have pointed out the increasing criminalisation of drugs within official policy and particularly the proliferation of legal measures during the 1990s (Bean, P., 2002; Whynes, D., 1991).

As mentioned in the last chapter, changes in the configuration of the drug dynamics during the 1980s produced a change in the scope for research. In particular, issues regarding drug trafficking began to attract the attention of researchers and academics. In terms of development of a suitable approach in the study of drug policy at the national and international level, the role of British researchers such as Nicholas Dorn, Nigel South and Karim Murji must be mentioned⁴¹. In their collaborative study of the drugs policy in Europe in relation to drug trafficking they have emphasised the necessity of working in interdisciplinary groups.⁴² Finally, British researchers have begun to be interested in drugs policies within the framework of the policies on crime and punishment. For instance, Matthews and Young (2003) analyse the case of the New Labour approach to crime related to social policy on exclusion and poverty.

⁴¹ At the individual level, these researchers have explored a number of topics in drugs policy research including socio-political aspects, cultural considerations and up-to-date studies about particular problems and substances. For example, in the more specific area of cultural aspects of drugs policy, South and Coomber have edited an interesting work on the different cultural perceptions of drug use and its effects on drug policy. South, N. and Coomber, R., (eds.) (2004) *Drug Use and Cultural Contexts 'beyond the West': Tradition, Change and Post-colonialism.* London: Free Association Books

⁴² See for example collaborative works such as Dorn, N., Murji, K. and South, N. (1992). *Traffickers: Drug Markets and Law Enforcement.* London: Routledge, Dorn, N. and South, N. (Eds.) (1987) *A Land Fit for Heroin?: Drug Policies, Prevention and Practice,* Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.

In general, some of the researchers cited have stressed the importance of considering the drugs policy as part of a wider context of social policy in the United Kingdom. The following section will address the particular aspects of social policy analysis that can be considered in this research.

3.3.3. Policy analysis and drugs policy research

As presented in the last chapter, the analysis of the drugs policy in the United Kingdom is closely linked to the development of social policies throughout the twentieth century. As some researchers have argued, the drugs policy must be studied in relation to social policy and wider changes in the context of government in Britain (Stimson, G.V. and Lart, R., 2005: 177). It would thus be interesting to explore some of the theoretical frameworks for policy analysis.

It is important to define public policy and social policy. Drawing upon Parsons (1995), public policy focuses on what Dewey (1927) once expressed as 'the public and its problems'. Further:

It is concerned with how issues and problems come to be defined and constructed and how they are placed on the political and policy agenda. But it is also the study of 'how, why and to what effect governments pursue particular courses of action and in action' (Heidenheimer et al. , 1990: 3) or as Dye puts it with 'what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes'. (Dye, 1976:1)⁴³

The study of public policy, commonly known as policy analysis, includes the consideration of areas such as social policy, security, economy, industry, etc.. Public policy can be expressed by legislation, government

⁴³ Cited in Parsons, W. (1995) *Public Policy: an Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis*. Aldershot. Edward Elgar Publishers. Pp. xv

funded and sponsored programmes, and other political decisions. Due to the variety of areas involved in public policy analysis, an interdisciplinary approach may enhance its understanding. In this sense, Wildavsky's definition of policy analysis suggests a wider approach in which different perspectives can participate. In his words:

Policy analysis is an applied sub-field whose content cannot be determined by disciplinary boundaries but by whatever appears appropriate to the circumstances of the time and the nature of the problem. (Wildavsky, 1979: 15)

Amongst the topics concerning public policy, social policy sometimes appears as an extensive area itself. Within the British tradition, social policy has occupied an important place in the consideration of public policies related to the provision of welfare services. Areas such as education, health, housing and employment, are included in social policy. Alcock clarifies the particular relationship between social policy and its study, based on the influence that Fabian ideas had both in the formulation of social policy in nineteenth century Britain, and in the academic foundation of social policy schools.⁴⁴ This association is, for Alcock, the main explanation for the British approach to social policy and its study, which is not limited to disciplines such as sociology, or economics:

Where social policy differs from sociology is in its specific focus upon the development and implementation of policy measures in order to influence the social circumstances of individuals rather than the more general study of those social circumstances themselves. Within the British social policy tradition in particular, what has also distinguished social policy from other social science disciplines has been its specific, and driving concern not merely to understand the world, but also to change it. In this tradition social policy is not only a *descriptive* discipline, it is also a *prescriptive* one. (Alcock, P. 1996: 4)

⁴⁴ Alcock explains: 'The Fabian Society was formed in 1885, under the leading guidance of Sydney and Beatrice Webb. They were firm believers that collective provision of welfare through the state was an essential and inevitable, development within British capitalist society.' They were quite influential both at the governmental level, but also, at the academic level, since they also founded the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1912, by a merging with the Charity Organisation Society (COS). This, and other aspects may explain the direction of governmental actions regarding welfarism which have characterised British social policy during the most of twentieth century. Alcock, P. (1996) *Social Policy in Britain*. London. MacMillan. Pp. 5-6

In relation to the particular topic of drugs policy, it has been suggested to study it within the realm of social policy (Edwards, G., 1989). In this sense, two concepts will be presented in this review as possible paths for exploration: firstly, aspects related to the social construction of issues to be regulated by policy; secondly, the concept of policy networks and their application in understanding the interaction of different and diverse institutions in drugs policy making.

The area of policy analysis represents an interesting source of concepts and methodologies through which to analyse drugs policy. In particular, some policy analysts have explored the process by which certain social problems are 'created' rather than 'discovered' (May, M. *et al.*, 2001: xiv). For instance, Clarke (2001) emphasises that there are two different ways of understanding social problems: realistic and constructionist.

This duality also describes the different approaches when studying drugs policy and drug problems, as stated in the first section of this chapter.

In terms of drugs policy analysis the concepts of governance, partnership and networks can help to understand the different elements present in policy making and policy implementation (Wälti, S. *et al.*, 2004).⁴⁵ At the level of policy analysis, relevant conceptual and theoretical frameworks can contribute to the understanding of drug policy making (Acevedo, B. and Common, R., 2004). In particular, the work of Duke (2003) is a comprehensive study by using policy analysis concepts to understand the way the drugs policy is developed in relation to prisons, as a recent feature on penal policy during the 1990s. She argues that policy networks approaches emphasise the interaction and patterns of association between various actors in particular policy area (p.9). The concepts of

⁴⁵ In this work Wälti *et al.* explore the Swiss drugs policy using those concepts, questioning how democratic the drugs policy in the Swiss style of government can be, and when the participation of user is mediated by practitioners or other professionals. The relevance for this literature review of their approach concerns the use of concepts of public policy analysis, and particularly some of the aspects of recent changes in public management. For example, concepts such as governance, participation, the multi-agency approach, etc., may be quoted in the analysis of contemporary policies in Western governments.

policy networks or policy communities have enjoyed acceptance and popularity amongst scholars of public management in describing the complexity of the policy processes in modern states. Rhodes (1997) defines a policy network as a cluster or complex of organisations connected to one another by resources dependencies. In general, it is possible to say that a deeper investigation of the area of social policy and policy analysis may provide interesting insights into drugs policy analysis.⁴⁶

Making use of these ideas, it is possible to gain an understanding of how a drugs policy comes into being, taking into account the number of agencies involved, the variety of actors and the budgetary implications of these decisions. Nevertheless, the issue of a drugs policy in relation to public administration has not yet become a matter for widespread research amongst scholars within related disciplines such as political science and management studies.

The following sub-section focuses on the possibilities that managerial studies can provide for this research.

3.3.4. Management studies and drugs policy research

Apart from the mentioned studies about drug policy produced by criminology, sociology or anthropology, it may be claimed that this area has not been fully explored in the management studies realm. Although there has been some research about the use of drugs amongst employees, the focus has been on drug testing, and how the organisations respond to employee drug taking (Brewis, J. *et al.*, 2005; Eckersley, E.K. and Williams, D., 1999). Traditionally, this topic has been tackled by the

⁴⁶ For further information about the use of these concepts in drug policy analysis, please refer to Acevedo, B & Common, R (2006): *Governance and the management of networks in the Public sector: Drugs Policy in the United Kingdom and the case of Cannabis reclassification. Public Management Review.* September 2006. Vol. 8 Number 3. pp. 395-414.

organisations from a Health and Safety perspective. Nonetheless, there has been an increasing interest about the costs and benefits of drug testing in the organisation, as well as the ethical aspects involved in this practice (Roberts, M. *et al.*, 2004).

The area of management can, however, offer interesting insights into the multidisciplinary approach suggested by contemporary drugs researchers. The interest in pursuing a dissertation in Management Studies by focusing on drugs policy corresponds to the interest in including the perspectives of different disciplines. It is, in the current thesis, held that managerial studies can offer an alternative approach to understanding drugs policy issues; in particular, it will be demonstrated how a selective use of Soft Systems Methodology can effectively support certain stages in Foucault's interpretive analytics.

As will be presented in the subsequent chapter, Soft Systems Methodology is a particular approach that has been used for a number of functions in industry, institutional development, and problem solving. For the purposes of the current investigation, the researcher is interested in particular use of some stages of this methodology, which attending its general principles and rationale, represents an original application. As will be presented later, the selection of SSM obeys to its potential to deal with dynamic processes, where diverse perceptions of the situation are involved.⁴⁷

However, the purpose of mentioning the managerial approach in this section is to introduce the discipline from which this dissertation is proposed. The participation of different disciplines can, as mentioned before, enhance the understanding of drugs policy issues. It is considered that although the interest in drugs policy from a managerial approach is only now being developed, there are many opportunities to explore in this field in relation to drugs policy.

⁴⁷ See Chapter 4: Epistemological and Methodological Aspects

The proposal to analyse cannabis policy by using certain tools from soft systems methodology as a supportive device for a post-structuralist approach, represents an original contribution of this research.

The following section will describe a few of the main references in the study of cannabis, highlighting some of the main studies on cannabis policy making and especially the case of cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom.

3.4. Cannabis policy research

The literature regarding cannabis deserves an entire chapter due to the proliferation of works and different perspectives on this topic. One of the contributions of this research is in fact to determine a suitable methodology through which to approach the massive amount of literature and references to this specific substance.⁴⁸

The literature review on cannabis policy will, in constituting a brief summary, focus mainly on those studies produced in and related to the United Kingdom. In this way, three main sources will be addressed: (1) government reports; (2) historical accounts of cannabis, and (3) documents related to cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom. Scientific research into cannabis is quite extensive yet, because of its level of specialisation, it is not included in this review; however, it will be considered as a fundamental contribution to the analysis of this research.

Interestingly, the major source of knowledge about cannabis has come from government commissions in the United Kingdom. One of the earliest studies of cannabis was the Indian Hemp Drug Commission, which

⁴⁸ See Chapter 5: Discourses about Cannabis.

published its report in 1894.⁴⁹ Almost sixty years later, a second report focusing on cannabis represented an important further source of information. The Wooton Report was commissioned to answer the concerns about an increasing consumption of cannabis and lysergic acid diethylamide – LSD - among the British drugs using population (ACDD, 1968).

An independent inquiry related to cannabis and the legislation was commissioned by the Police Foundation (Runciman, R., 1999). The study aimed in particular to review the effectiveness of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; it sought to assess this Act in relation to contemporary patterns of consumption of cannabis in British society. There are, in addition to the British reports commissioned by the Government, a number of documents in relation to international cannabis policy. For example, it is important to mention the comparative analysis, produced by the RAND Corporation in Europe, of cannabis (Van het Loo, M. *et al.*, 2003) and the work of Drugscope (Dorn, N. and Jamieson, A., 2000), in a wider comparison of drugs legislation in Europe related to the international conventions on drugs control.⁵⁰

On the second group, there have been important investigations from an historical approach to the history of cannabis. A massive amount of literature can be found in relation to the history of this substance (Abel, E., 1980; Brownlee, N., 2003; Davenport-Hines, R., 2004; Green, J., 2005; Grinspoon, L., 1971; Hayes, G. and Shapiro, H., 1998; Matthews, P., 1999; Merlin, M., 1972; Sloman, L.R., 1979; Zimmer, L. and Morgan, J., 1997).

⁴⁹ See Chapter 2: The Context of Drug Policy in the United Kingdom. Section 2.1. See also Mills, J. (2003) *Cannabis Britannica: Empire Trade and Prohibition 1800-1928*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.119.

⁵⁰ The International study of cannabis policies in Europe developed by van het Loo *et al* uses an analytical framework based on the work by MacCoun and Reuter: Reuter, P. and MacCoun, R. (2001) "Evaluating alternative cannabis regimes" in *British Journal of Psychiatry* (178) 123-128, in which they examined three questions: (a) to what extent does implemented policy differ from formal policy?; (b) to what extent does policy have an impact on the prevalence of cannabis use?; and (c) which consequences does cannabis policy have for individual users and for society as a whole? (p.ix). This framework is quite useful when understanding the implementation of cannabis policies, and it constitutes an important reference for approaching the international aspects of cannabis policies around Europe. However, the current research is focused on the earlier process in which discourses about cannabis are produced and their influence on the conformation of the 'cannabis problem'.

The recent work of James Mills (2003) about the history of cannabis in the United Kingdom represents a detailed and rigorous historical documentation of the relationship between Britain and cannabis in the period 1800 to 1928.

In relation to the topic of the current research, the event of re-classification has prompted the production of an important analysis of this decision. The document recommending the downgrading of cannabis by the Advisory Council on Misuse of Drugs should be mentioned (ACMD, 2002). At the level of policy analysis, two reports are significant: *Times are A-changing* (May, T. *et al.*, 2002), and a brief report on cannabis re-classification produced by Drugscope and the Beckley Foundation (Trace, M. *et al.*, 2004).

The study by May *et al.* (2002) represents a valuable resource for understanding the context of cannabis re-classification at the street level of implementation. The authors assemble a description of the policy on the policing of cannabis within the police force. They recorded, based on a number of interviews, observations and analysis, how police effectively decide whether or not to apply the legislation on cannabis. In more recent evaluations of re-classification, they argue that re-classification was *de facto* already in place through the discretionary action of policemen in the street when dealing with cannabis offences (Warburton, H. *et al.*, 2005).

On the other hand, the study by Trace *et al.* (2004) gives a synthetic summary of the implications of the re-classification of cannabis. Interestingly, they argue that cannabis re-classification should not be understood as constituting a step towards a liberal approach to drugs policy; they propose instead to consider many of the possible reasons for the decision on re-classification within a wider political analysis.

However important those writings may be in the understanding of cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom, the current thesis takes a

different approach to the case study. This investigation is neither focused on one institution, e.g., the Police, nor is it a synthesis of the contextual aspects and consequences of the re-classification. Instead, the research aims at understanding the different conditions and opinions related to this decision, while analysing the historical conditions and discursive formations in relation to the process of policy making. In addition, it analyses the ways in which such a political decision can eventually change the definition of the cannabis issue and the characterisation of the cannabis user.

Given these reflections and the issues emerging from the literature review on drugs policy research, the next section will present some conclusions derived from this literature review and challenges to be addressed in this dissertation.

3.5. Conclusions

The contribution of important researchers in the context of drugs policy research is an important insight for the development of this research. This section synthesises the most relevant aspects to be taken into account in this investigation.

First of all, this research acknowledges that the topic of drugs is a complex and dynamic matter, one that can be influenced by social and cultural conditions in a particular political context. This consideration can influence both the epistemological aspects in the understanding of the research subject and the methodology to be applied. For instance, if it is assumed that drugs are socially constructed, the methodology selected should thus consider the variety of perceptions and opinions regarding drugs policy making.

Secondly, the topic of drugs is interdependent with wider and interconnected aspects. As has been presented in this chapter, it is not possible to separate the drugs policy from further issues in social policy in the British context. In addition, the analysis needs to incorporate some of the discussions held at international level. It will be important, because of the amount of material regarding these two aspects, to limit the nature of the references to these conditions, while determining a means of presenting those aspects in a coherent fashion.

Thirdly, it is important to consider that drug research is an on-going topic and, in consequence, it is possible to propose some innovations in its study. The current thesis addresses the questions and advances made by drugs policy researchers, thus notions such as the consideration of an historical approach, in addition to a question about the given concepts of 'addiction' or 'prohibition', will be incorporated into this research.

Finally, it is acknowledged that the case of cannabis re-classification provides an interesting field for furthering drugs policy research. This research aims to document and analyse this case in the present time. It has also been presented that this dissertation will use a post-structuralist approach based on the ideas of Michel Foucault. In this pursue a selective use of some stages in soft systems methodology is oriented to support this wider approach, particularly in relation to the 'archaeological stage'. Thus, the combination of certain use of SSM in the 'archaeology' of discourses about cannabis, complemented with a genealogical analysis can contribute to the understanding of cannabis policy making in the United Kingdom.

The consideration of the above elements will influence both the epistemological and the methodological aspects of this research. The next chapter will present these aspects and their developments where these are relevant to the aims of the thesis.

In the last chapter the way drug policy research has been developed according to changes in the problematisation of drugs in Western societies, and in the United Kingdom, has been described. It was stated that drugs policy research is an on-going field of which the complexity represents a challenge for academic and policy makers. The dynamism of the drugs phenomenon, the changing legislation, and the interdependence of national and international drug policies must be taken into account when addressing the nature of the drugs policy and the ways through which it can be studied.

This chapter presents the epistemological and methodological issues to be considered as the basis for this thesis. It seeks to respond to some of the challenges posed by contemporary drugs research while focusing on the case of cannabis policy in the United Kingdom. In relation to that, the previous chapter has shown that, historically, drugs research has been a field for medical studies favouring a positivist approach to the issues of addiction. It was also stated how other disciplines from social sciences have proposed a non-positivistic approach in understanding illicit drugs phenomena.

The current chapter both takes into account these approaches in drugs policy research and presents important considerations regarding the selection of the methodology to be used in the thesis. As suggested in the last chapter, amongst the myriad of possibilities, the selective use of soft systems methodology can represent a suitable means of organising the amount of information related to cannabis and the debate on its re-classification. Consequently, this chapter will explain the particular approach to Soft Systems Methodology in the context of this investigation and its research questions. Chapter Four is therefore divided into the following sections:

In the first section, an overview of the possible ways of addressing this research will be presented, based on the sociological paradigms discussed by Burrell and Morgan (1979) in relation to organisational analysis. They provide the comprehensive framework for four paradigms of the analysis of social life. The paradigms will be briefly described in order to locate the initial approach to this research. By relating these paradigms with the initial considerations of drugs policy research and the characteristics of the case study, a selection of one of these paradigms will be made. Specifically, it is suggested that an *interpretive* paradigm can be an interesting means of beginning the exploration of the topic, for which reasons justifying the decision are provided.

The second section concerns the methodological consequences of initiating this research from an *interpretive* paradigm, taking into account the diverse and changing perceptions on cannabis in society. As mentioned above, it is suggested that a selective use of Soft Systems Methodology can represent an appropriate way of organising the extensive information about cannabis and the public discussion on its reclassification. In this section, the epistemological foundations of Soft Systems Methodology in relation to the wider realm of Systems Thinking and the *interpretive* paradigm will be described.

The third section outlines the main aspects of the Soft Systems Methodology. For the aims of approaching the case study, only selected stages of the methodology will be used. Therefore, this section describes in detail the stages to be applied, and it synthesises the potentialities of this approach in relation to the purpose of this research.

The fourth section presents a review of the main criticisms made of Soft Systems Methodology when dealing with political issues in which power is a central component. The main purpose of this section is to distinguish between the potentialities of Soft Systems Methodology, on the one hand, and the aspects that cannot be addressed this methodology, on the other. In this way, the scope of using SSM for this research will be clarified.

Finally, some conclusions are presented.

4.1. Epistemological issues in drugs policy research

4.1.1. Paradigms in social research

When researching any aspect of social life, questions about the nature of its reality and how is possible to understand it arise. The issues correspond to the notions of *ontology* and *epistemology*. *Ontology* refers to the question of whether the 'reality' to be investigated is independent of the individual's perception, or whether it is a product of one's mind (Burrell, G. and Morgan, G., 1979: 1).

In the former approach, the nature of reality is said to be *objective* (realism). This is the means of studying the natural and physical sciences, where it is assumed that the 'reality' exists by itself, without the intervention of the human mind. On the other hand, when it is considered that reality is a product of interpretation by the observer, its perception is said to be *subjective*; thus, in consequence, what may remain are merely *ideas* about that reality (idealism).

The development of these questions has important implications for the process of attaining knowledge about a particular aspect of social life. This constitutes what is called *epistemology*: it refers to the different assumptions about the nature of social life that may determine the ways in which knowledge about that reality can be obtained.

In the explanation provided by Burrell and Morgan (1979), the adoption of one or other view of reality (objective or subjective) has important implications regarding the epistemology of the social world. For example, if social research treats the social world as the natural world - as being a

hard, external, objective reality - then it is probable that the researcher focuses upon an analysis of relationships and regularities between the various elements of the situation analysed (p.2). In this approach, the aim of the research is to reveal universal laws explaining the reality being observed, thus the knowledge of the social world is approached from a *positivist* perspective.

In contrast, if it is considered that the subjective experience of the individuals is able to create the social world, the main concern for the researcher is related to an understanding of the way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds him/herself. In methodological terms, this approach to reality may adopt a 'non-positivist' position, in the sense that the positivist means are replaced by other approaches to reality (Burrell, G. and Morgan, G., 1979: 3).

Whether a 'realist' or a 'subjectivist' approach to reality is adopted, it must be borne in mind that this assumption has important implications when selecting a methodology. A brief description of the implications serves to illustrate this claim. In the realist approach, it is argued that the social world may be learned and described in the same way as is the physical world. The scientific method - causality, explanation and prediction - is appropriate for determining and describing social and physical aspects (Williams, M. and May, T., 1996: 82). In the particular case of the social realm, the researcher is working within an observable social reality; the product of such research will thus be the derivation of a 'law' or law-like generalisations similar to those produced by physical and natural scientists: in other words, this is a positivist approach to the social world. In addition, this assumption signifies that the researcher is an objective analyst and interpreter of a tangible social reality (Remenyi, D. *et al.*, 1998: 32-33).

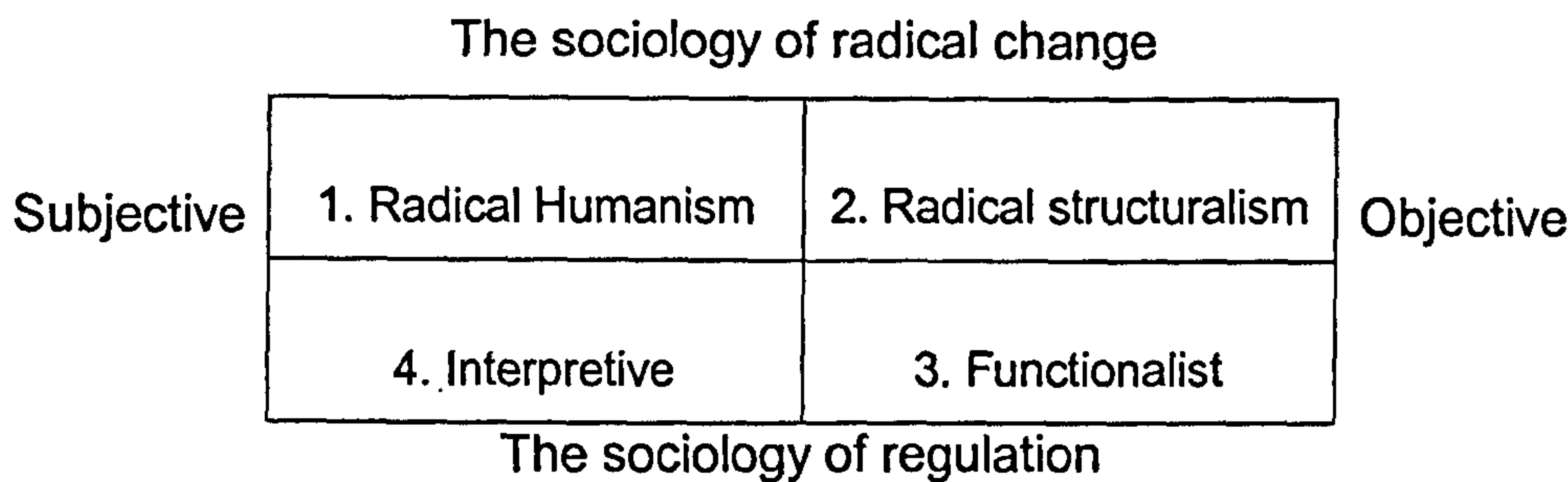
The question of the nature of reality from the point of view of the subject who perceives it will, in contrast, lead to what is known as 'subjectivism'.

Here, it is argued that due to the impossibility of truly knowing the real world, the only way is to have an *idea* of it. In this school of thought, the influence of the philosopher Kant provided the basis for the development of what is called 'idealism'. He maintained that although sense impressions provide the raw material for our empirical knowledge, our ability to reason is responsible for ordering and organising that knowledge (Williams, M. and May, T., 1996: 19).

In addition to the ontological and epistemological considerations, and their relation to methodology, Burrell and Morgan (1979) include a further analysis of the scope of sociological studies. They analyse the interest of sociologists regarding the notions of 'order' and 'conflict' in society and identify two streams. In the former, sociologists have explored the cohesion of society in relation to social *order*. The classic work of Durkheim (1971) is included in this category. On the other hand, some sociologists have furthered the work of Marx (1928) where this is concerned with the aspects of *conflict* in relation to social class divisions and labour structures. It is argued by Burrell and Morgan that these two streams have developed different approaches in the field of sociological studies. They suggest the introduction of the notions of 'regulation' and 'radical change' to describe these two tendencies. Although Burrell and Morgan emphasise that this is a 'rough and extreme' form of division, the utility of these two ends must be understood as 'ideal types' describing particular tendencies in social research (Burrell, G. and Morgan, G., 1979: 17).

The next step is to use the ideas of 'regulation' and 'radical change', in combination within sociology to bridge the dichotomy between realism and subjectivism, to propose a matrix in which these aspects produce four paradigms in social research. The following figure illustrates the paradigms:

Figure 1: Four Paradigms in Social Research
(Based on Burrell and Morgan, 1979)



Adapted from Burrell and Morgan (1979:22)

On the vertical axis of the grid, there is a tension between the ‘sociology of radical change’ and the ‘sociology of regulation’, emphasising the interest in ‘conflict’ and ‘control’ mentioned above. When combining the horizontal axis, subjectivism-objectivism, with the vertical one, four paradigms have been derived: functionalist, interpretive, radical structuralism and radical humanist (Burrell, G. and Morgan, G., 1979: 25).

The paradigms can be considered as a schematic frame of reference for identifying different ways in which social research can be conducted. For example, in the first quadrant, ‘*radical humanism*’, a view of reality as dependent on the point of view of the individual (subjective) is developed alongside an interest in the emancipation of the human being (conflict). In the second quadrant, ‘*radical structuralism*’, it is assumed that reality is objective, and the interest of the researcher is to identify the structures of conflict.

In contrast, the sociology of regulation is orientated to discover the ways society or social groups are organised; it seeks regularities and forms of cohesion (control). The researcher assuming an objective view of reality aims to explain how society functions, providing rational explanations of social affairs. This is the *functionalist* paradigm.

The *interpretive* paradigm, however, assumes that reality is subjective; hence, the researcher will try to obtain an understanding of the subjectively created social world in terms of an ongoing process. In other words, researchers into this paradigm tend to interpret the ways individuals and groups create social order in the form of policies, institutions or social practices.

As will be seen in the next section, the current thesis is interested in the sociological foundations of the interpretive approach and its possibilities for addressing the case of the drugs policy. The main reason for this is the researcher's approach of understanding drugs and drugs policy as social constructions. This approach is supported by different scholars and researchers interested in drugs policy (Cohen, P., 1990; Levine, H., 1978; Reinerman, C., 2005). Furthermore, in developing the general assumptions of the interpretive paradigm a number of important philosophical developments should be cited here. For instance: the phenomenology of Husserl and Schutz, and the hermeneutic ideas of Dilthey. These aspects provide important insights for this research and in consequence they will briefly be explained.

Husserl, at the end of the nineteenth century, developed an alternative approach to the study of social life in which the emphasis of social knowledge should focus on *meaning* rather than on causal explanations of human behaviour. This view is known as 'phenomenology' and is concerned with the structures and workings of human consciousness. Its basic assumption is that the world we live in is created by consciousness, in our heads. In addition, phenomenology sees meanings – norms, values, beliefs, etc. - as the central focus of the sociological enterprise (Craib, I., 1992).⁵¹

⁵¹ However, it is argued by Craib that phenomenological sociology has lost some of the best insights of the phenomenological philosophers, who concerned themselves with a much wider range of experience – emotions, imagination, and hallucination. See Craib, I., (1992) *Modern Social Theory: From Parsons to Habermas*, Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Another important aspect of the interpretive paradigm is its consideration that social reality cannot be perceived directly, yet the researcher can *interpret* it. Here, it is important to point out the tradition of hermeneutics, particularly the work of Dilthey, who opened an alternative direction for sociology. He suggested considering the '*hermeneutic*' practice of interpretation as an alternative to the positivist view in social studies. He disagreed with the notion that laws, as in the world of physics, also governed human behaviour. In contrast, he argued that in order to understand human behaviour it must be *interpreted* according to people's actual intentions (Jackson, M.C., 2000: 60). In this process, human beings build their own '*Weltanschauung*' (world-view) based on their views and evaluations of previous experiences.

A third author to be mentioned here is Max Weber who, drawing upon the work of Dilthey, distinguished sociology as the science of understanding. The work of Max Weber is acknowledged as seminal in the definition of sociology: "a science, which attempts the *interpretative* understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effects" (Weber, M., 1968: 4).

A fourth and final source must be mentioned in the context of the interpretive approach. Alfred Schutz (1972) was concerned with combining the insights of phenomenology and of sociology through a philosophical criticism of the work of Max Weber. Schutz attempted to show how people build their knowledge of the social world. He argued that this process goes through two basic steps: 'typification', which involves the building up of classes of experience through their similarity, after which comes the creation of a 'meaning context' or sets of criteria for organising our experience into a meaningful world and stocks of knowledge (Craib, I., 1992: 99).

To summarise: the interpretive paradigm embraces a number of interesting approaches in social research. They are related to the philosophical streams of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Similarly to

other aspects of social life, this paradigm has also influenced the consideration of drugs, in particular, the development of drugs policy research. In fact, similar questions about the nature of reality must be applied when carrying out research into drugs and drugs policy.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is possible to formulate questions about the nature of the reality and the way of obtaining knowledge about it. For instance, one might ask: Do 'drugs' have an independent reality from the observer's approach? Are 'drugs' determined by the interpretation made by some individuals and policy makers of their positive or negative effects? The scope of the researcher produces, furthermore, questions such as: Will this research contribute towards revealing the elements of conflict or disagreement amongst different approaches to 'drugs'? Should the research concern itself with the regulative practices that give rise to particular political decisions with the aim of controlling drug practices?

The following section will address these questions by applying the four paradigms proposed by Burrell and Morgan as the general framework through which to initiate this investigation.

4.1.2. Sociological paradigms and drugs policy research

As presented in the previous chapter, questions about the nature of drugs reality have determined the way in which drugs research has been conducted. For example, the medical approach to drugs use as a matter of addiction has favoured a scientific approach to their study. In contrast, alternative considerations about the cultural and social settings in which drugs are used have welcome the contribution of the social sciences.

In terms of drugs policy research, one of the main concerns for researchers and scholars is to determine the origin of the current approach to drugs prohibition, and the historical conditions that have

supported this view. Although different drugs have particular pharmacological properties altering the bodies and minds of their users, what is interesting is to find out why some substances are the subject of restrictive regulation (e.g., illegal drugs such as cannabis and opium), whereas other equally harmful substances are available in the legal context (e.g., alcohol and tobacco).

In the case of cannabis policy in the United Kingdom, this thesis has pointed out its purpose of determining the origins of and grounds for the decision on reclassification, given the historical conditions, the discourses supporting different views of the issue, and the relationships between the cannabis policy and other aspects of social and international policy.

It may be claimed in response to some of these considerations that a non-positivist approach may offer an interesting path to explore. In particular, it is suggested that the interpretive paradigm can be a suitable way of initiating this investigation and answering certain of the research questions.

This decision is not only supported by the personal choice of the researcher, but it also draws upon the consideration of the main topics in contemporary drugs research. When assuming that the drugs policy is a dynamic and changing field influenced by the social constructions regarding a certain type of substances, the *interpretive paradigm* represents a suitable starting point from where the task of enhancing our understanding of the drugs policy can be pursued. Other reasons may be provided for this selection.

Firstly, the interpretive paradigm stresses the importance of subjective experience in the construction of social realities. As presented in the previous chapter, the interest of some researchers has focused on the way certain practices related to drug use are being interpreted as problematic in Western societies. Whereas some regard illegal drugs such as opium and cannabis as remedies for multiple maladies, (such as

muscular dystrophy, and other physical pain) other perceptions have evaluated them in negative terms in relation to their harmfulness (addiction, and other physical and mental consequences) to human health and the social order. Although both opinions refer to the same substances, the results of one approach can change completely the perceived 'reality' of those drugs.

Secondly, the interpretive paradigm underlines the possibility of determining the process of regulating social practices, such as drug use. For instance, the regulation of drug use *via* prohibition can be praised or opposed by different actors; however, the present thesis is attached to none of these opinions, as the purpose of this research is to understand how those different appreciations can play a role in the regulation of cannabis, in the case of the United Kingdom.

Finally, the interpretive approach allows the researcher to consider a wide range of methodologies, including some aspects from Soft Systems Methodology. As will be presented in the next section, Soft Systems Methodology as part of the development of Systems Thinking represents a suitable way of addressing the diversity of perceptions and world-views on drug policy and particularly in relation to cannabis and its re-classification. In the next section, an overview of the foundations of Soft Systems Methodology within the development of Systems Thinking will be provided.

4.2. Methodological considerations and Systems Thinking

'Systems' is such a widely used term that it sometimes seems to lose meaning, due to the variety of denominations and contexts in which it is applied. The influence of this concept has permeated a number of disciplines from engineering to biology passing through social sciences. Flood and Jackson provide a basic definition of 'system':

A system consists of a number of elements and the relationships between the elements. A richly interactive group of elements can be separated from those in which few and/or weak interaction occurs. This can be achieved by drawing a boundary around the richly interactive group. The system identified by a boundary will have inputs and outputs which may be physical or abstract. (Flood, R. and Jackson, M.C., 1991: 5)

Throughout the twentieth century the concept of 'system' has gained prominence in different realms of natural and social sciences. In America, Talcott Parsons (1960) attempted to construct a systems model through which to analyse the elements of the social world. It consisted of a combination of aspects of the notion that social systems are made up of the interaction of individuals (Jackson, M.C., 2000: 56).

However, biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) provided a general framework for systems thinking. His 'general systems theory' was premised on the idea that it is possible to offer a common systems language for all of the various scientific communities. Through this language, it was suggested that scientists could transcend the limitations of their fragmentary disciplines, while still preserving their own knowledge (see Midgley, G., 2000: 34).

Although the work of von Bertalanffy has been acknowledged as a cornerstone of the tradition of systems thinking, other authors developed a pragmatic approach to systems. During the post-WWII period, researchers such as C.W. Churchman and R. Ackoff (1957) furthered the notion of systems in the development of Operational Research (OR). It is argued that OR had its origins in the United Kingdom and it quickly spread to the United States (Jackson, M.C., 2000: 128). In both countries OR found many applications; it played an important role in the post-war reconstruction of industrial production in the United Kingdom, and in the increase in industrial efficiency in the United States.⁵²

⁵² *Idem.* p.128

Due to the multiple applications of the notion of systems in productive settings, systems thinking began to be associated with industrial research and, later on, with management studies (Valero-Silva, N., 1998). Systems thinking in its first phase provided a framework where both internal and external aspects of the organisation could come together in a dynamic way. This approach is known as 'Hard' systems thinking. Its major characteristic is that disciplines such as OR tried to include in a mathematical model the myriad of interacting variables that arise in problem contexts that seem to affect the system itself (Jackson, M.C., 2000: 97).

Following the success of systems thinking in the analysis of industrial processes, it was thought that systems ideas could be applied in the social context. However, as argued by Checkland:

It was not always noticed that these problems could not necessarily be formulated as hard problems. The results were disappointing, and this in turn led to polemic criticism of the whole idea of making the transfer. (1981: 4)

In fact, pioneers of Operational Research (OR) became disappointed with the course of systems thinking in analysing the social world. For example, Churchman (1971) argued that the original intention of developing a holistic, interdisciplinary, experimental science from systems thinking directed towards addressing problems in the social system was being betrayed.⁵³ As a consequence, other researchers, such as Ackoff (1979), joined Churchman in the exploration of alternatives to this 'hard systems thinking' by including subjective aspects of the human experience. In particular, Churchman stressed the necessity of considering different 'world-views' in the consideration of any situation (Churchman, C.W., 1979). This concept of 'world-views' or *Weltanschauungen* is an important notion in the development of soft systems methodology (Checkland, P. and Casar, A., 1986; Checkland, P. and Scholes, J., 1990).

⁵³ Cited in Jackson, 2000: 222

It can thus be claimed that limitations of the 'hard systems approach' when analysing the social world led to new developments in the systems thinking realm. As an answer, a second wave of systems thinking, called Soft Systems Thinking, started to consider the role of the subject and the different perceptions of a particular situation. This approach was supported by an interpretive view of reality. The next section describes the main ideas of this wave in Systems Thinking, focusing particularly on its methodological aspects.

4.3. Soft Systems Methodology

As presented before, the reaction against the rigidity of 'hard systems' in dealing with human aspects of social life was called 'soft systems'. Recalling the reaction of system thinkers such as Churchman, it is possible to highlight a shift in the use of the *systems* notion. For him and other systems thinkers in this wave, the idea that the real world behaves as a system is questionable. Instead, they suggest that 'systems' are in the mind of the observer rather than in the real world. A model can therefore capture only one possible perception of the nature of a system. Objectivity may derive only from open debate among holders of many different perspectives or world-views (*Weltanschauungen*).⁵⁴

As a consequence, 'systems' were no longer seen as constituting an entity in the real world. This use of the term will be a basic distinction in respect of the positivist view of the hard systems approach criticised by Churchman (1970) and Ackoff (1979).⁵⁵ The work of Peter Checkland furthered these ideas in terms of a comprehensive methodology called Soft Systems Methodology –SSM (1993; 1994; 1999).

⁵⁴ Jackson, 2000: 224.

⁵⁵ In Management, this movement gave birth to various soft systems methodologies for solving organisational problems. They include "interactive management", "interactive planning", "social systems design", "strategic assumption surfacing and testing", and "soft systems methodology". See Jackson, M.C., (2000) *Systems Approach to Management*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

In his Soft Systems Methodology, Checkland considers the dynamic definition of problematic situations, based on the perceptions or world-views of those who are involved in those situations. In looking at the '*human activity system*' Checkland argues that 'there will thus never be a single (testable) account of a human activity system, only a set of possible accounts all valid according to particular *Weltanschauungen* (world-views) (Checkland, P., 1981: 14-15).

It is argued, in relation to some sociological traditions, that Soft Systems Methodology especially:

[I]s closer to the interpretive sociology of Weber than the functionalism of Durkheim, and to the phenomenology of Husserl and Schutz, and the hermeneutics of Dilthey, than to the positivist approach. Checkland rightly argues, therefore, that the social theory implicit in his methodology is interpretive rather than functionalist, and that its underlying philosophical base is in phenomenology rather than positivism (see Jackson, M.C., 2000: 248).

From this brief reference to the epistemological aspects underpinning Soft Systems Methodology it may be asserted that it corresponds to the interpretive approach selected initially for this research. The interpretive paradigm is also a suitable way of addressing the questions into the nature of drugs policy and the means of obtaining knowledge about it. This research acknowledges that different appreciations of cannabis could have influenced its regulation, and that an interpretive approach could deal with this assumption.

The interpretive approach is supported by a number of drugs policy researchers. Nicholas Dorn, for example, acknowledges that the notion of drugs involves conventions, evaluation and different interpretations, based on a specific range of notions about them. In his long-standing experience of drugs policy research, he states that people's perceptions of drugs shape their opinions regarding them (Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1992: xiv).

Although Soft Systems Methodology has been used in the analysis of certain public policies,⁵⁶ very few attempts have been made to apply SSM to the analysis of the drugs policy, with a few exceptions on the part of independent consultants who are applying some concepts of the methodology in terms of action research.⁵⁷ Exploring the potential of using Soft Systems Methodology in an analysis of drugs policy therefore provides an original contribution of this thesis.

This research, referring to the process of policy making as a dynamic phenomenon during a particular period, does not focus on a single institution, nor has it aimed to propose a course of actions or solutions for public officers. Instead, this research addresses a wider realm, in which different appreciations from diverse sources (experts, public officers, and stake-holders) are seen to influence the process of policy making.

Therefore, some parts of this methodology will be used to explore the essential information related to cannabis policy in the United Kingdom. As will be explained later, the initial stages of Soft Systems Methodology aim to include as many views of the situation as possible in order to compile a rich picture and identify relevant systems. In this way, the different opinions about cannabis and cannabis re-classification are included, thus the risks of neglecting or favouring any opinions are minimised. The selection of those interviews and opinions collected in approaching the information on cannabis and its re-classification requires a balanced perspective from which hierarchies or ranks are not determinant of the quality of the information presented. In order to ensure that equal weight, the process of interviewing people was based both on the opportunity to

⁵⁶ Apart from Checkland's personal experience as a consultant for national institutions, there have been a number of applications of this methodology in the area of health. See for example Jacobs, B., (2004) "Using Soft Systems Methodology for Performance Improvement and Organisational Change in the English National Health Service." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* (12) (4): 138-149.

⁵⁷ The researcher had the opportunity to talk to independent consultant Mike Haynes, who uses Soft Systems Methodology in action research related to drugs policy in the United Kingdom. In particular he has been working on the case of the Drug Prevention Initiative at the regional and local levels. In this conversation he acknowledged that their use of Soft Systems Methodology allowed a learning process in which some models of activity can be established as a way of reflecting the experiences of the daily life for public officers. Interview with Mike Haynes, Hull, 30 January 2005.

talk to different available actors, and also, by the selection of these interviews based on the contrasting opinions on this topic.

In addition, the interviews were selected by including those voices that were not reported in the mainstream sources (e.g. news, official reports, etc.). For example, users, campaigners and activists who did not have too much relevance in the news were approached for this research. On the other hand, actors such as parents, drug treatment agencies and some users were identified at the local level in the community of Hull. The reason behind that was to provide a colloquial view about this topic. In addition, the opinions of certain experts who are relevant at the national level were also included. In fact, Chapter Five will illustrate how the diversity of interviews and material regarding this research influenced the decision to adopt the Soft Systems Methodology as a starting point from where to address the complexity of the research topic.

In general terms, Soft Systems Methodology acknowledges that:

[S]ocial reality is the ever changing outcome of the social process in which human beings continually negotiate and re-negotiate with others their perceptions and interpretations of the world outside themselves. (see Checkland, P., 1981: 285)

Similarly, it is possible to consider the drugs policy as a process of negotiation involving different perceptions and interpretations of the drugs problem. An interesting fact about using Soft Systems Methodology in policy analysis lies in the connection of SSM with the ideas of Sir Geoffrey Vickers, especially in the adoption of the principle of 'appreciation' when analysing public policy.

The influence of Vickers has been extensively acknowledged in the development of Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland, P., 1993; 1999; Checkland, P. and Casar, A., 1986)⁵⁸. In the specific field of policy

⁵⁸ In Checkland's opinion, Soft Systems Methodology can be seen as a systemic learning process which articulates the working of 'appreciative systems' in Vickers' sense. See Checkland, P., (1999) *Soft Systems Methodology: A 30-Year Retrospective*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

analysis, Vickers argued that decisions and judgments in policy making are taken:

[W]ithin and depend on a net of communication, which is meaningful only through a vast, partly organized accumulation of largely shared assumptions and expectations, a structure constantly being developed and changed by the activities it mediates. (Vickers, G., 1995: 30)

As stated before, opinions regarding drugs are part of an extensive net of reports, meanings, evaluations, and experiences in relation to the regulation of drug practices. In the case of the drugs policy analysis, Vickers would suggest focusing not only on the executive decisions, but on the *appreciation* of the context leading up to this or that particular executive decision. The concept is defined by him as follows:

An appreciation involves making judgments of fact about the 'state of the system', both internally and in its external relations. I will call these reality judgments ... It also involves making judgments about the significance of these facts to the appreciation or to the body for whom the appreciation is made. These I will call value judgments. Reality judgments and value judgments are inseparable constituents of appreciation. (Vickers, G., 1995: 54)

The notion of appreciation is crucial in the development of Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology. As will be explained in the following sub-section, the methodology assumes a number of perceptions or 'world-views' regarding a particular situation. These appreciations are at the core of the concept of *Weltanschauung* used by Checkland as part of the issues to be identified in the implementation of the Soft Systems Methodology. The following sub-section will highlight parts of the methodology used in starting this research.

4.3.1. Methodology outlined

Initially, Checkland proposed a methodology of seven stages aiming at diagnosing a situation and taking actions to improve it.⁵⁹ However, in this research the aim is to obtain a fair and comprehensive diagnostic of the situation; therefore, just three of the seven stages will be effectively used here. These parts of the methodology are applied in organising the amount of information regarding the drugs policy, as well as - more particularly - in identifying the main discourses about cannabis and cannabis re-classification.

As mentioned above, the particular application of some stages of SSM follows the general principles proposed by Checkland; nevertheless, this application does not imply strict, uncritical adherence to a 'set' methodology: in contrast, the application of SSM in this research is governed by its potential for organising an extensive corpus of information in which are found different - and sometimes contrasting - views on a situation. In the current investigation, the use of SSM is innovative, and its utilisation is determined by the capacity of SSM to approach and organise extensive information.

In relation to traditional modes of applying SSM, this research differs from Mode 1 and Mode 2 as proposed by Checkland. The former is related to the use of systems ideas and the application of the Seven Stage Model in the analysis of some part of the real world (intervention); the latter is related to reflections upon the everyday flux of events and ideas using the methodology as a basis for the reflection (interaction). SSM is thus used as a way of making sense of the information or learning about this everyday experience.⁶⁰

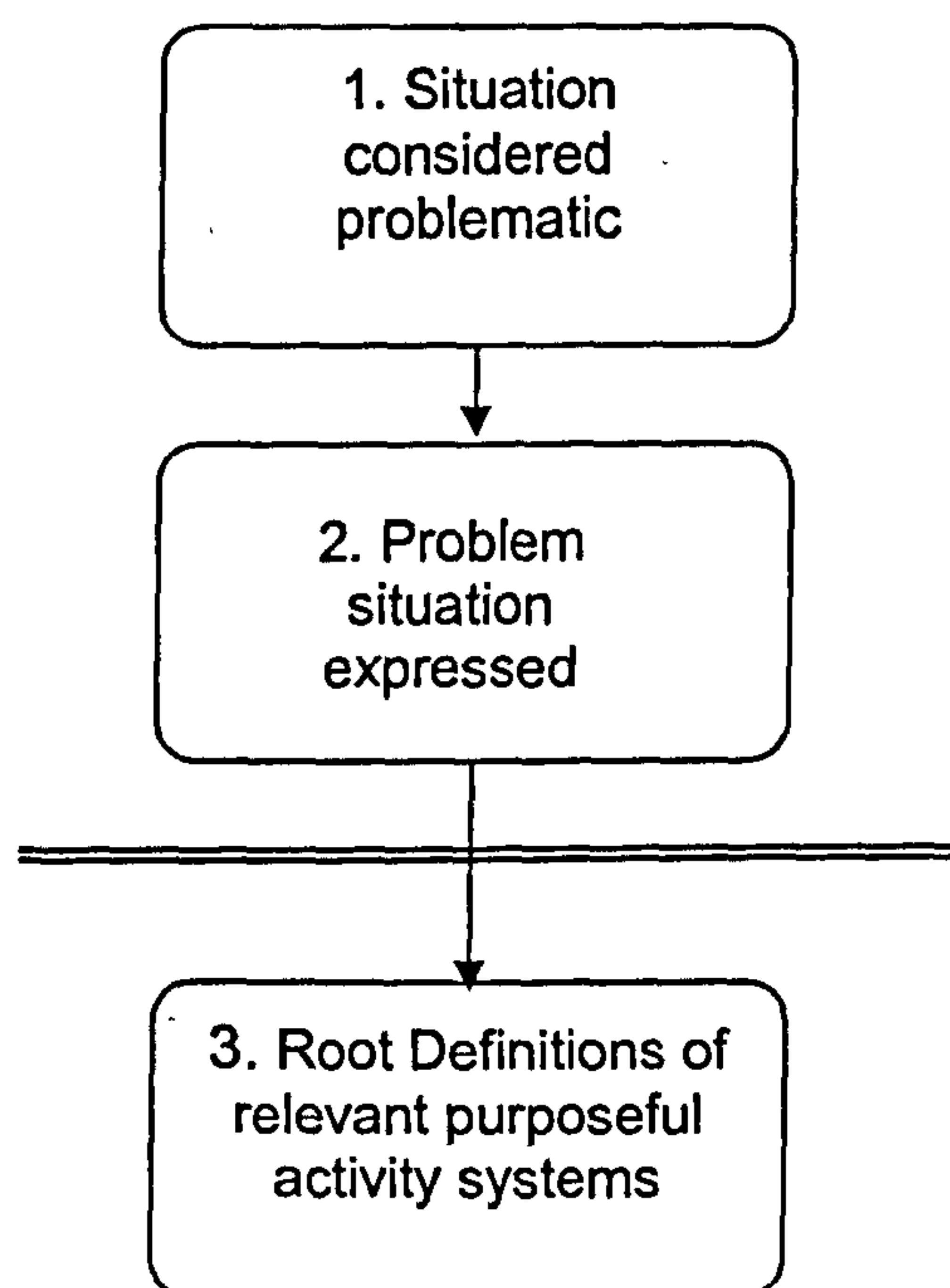
⁵⁹ As Checkland has stated in the 30-year retrospective of SSM, the methodology has evolved. The initial model of the Seven Stages proposed in 1981 (*Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*) is complemented in 1988 with the 'Two Streams of Enquiry'. In 1990 that which Checkland and Scholes presented as SSM is a refined methodology which emphasises its flexible use in action research and problem solving (*Soft Systems Methodology in Action*).

⁶⁰ For a summary of the differences of these two modes of application, see Jackson, M.C., (2000) *Systems Approaches to Management*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. pp.252-258.

In this research, the use of SSM is limited to organising information involving a wide range of appreciations regarding cannabis and its re-classification in the United Kingdom.

The application of SSM proposed here represents an innovative utilisation, given that it is engaged in organising diverse pieces of information. It is expected that, through using SSM, certain information related to the process of cannabis re-classification may be organised in the form of 'archaeology', in which different world-views about cannabis and its re-classification can be identified. By using merely three stages of the methodology, yet retaining its general principles regarding the inclusion and identification of diverse world-views, it is possible to achieve an initial means of organising information. The following figure illustrates the stages to be applied in this research.

Figure 2: Three stages of Soft Systems Methodology



(Adapted from Checkland 1999: 163)

The diagram can be explained as follows:

The first and second stages are an 'expression' phase during which an attempt is made to build up the richest possible picture of the situation. Checkland emphasises that in this phase the focus is not on the 'problem', but on the *situation* in which there is perceived to be a problem (Checkland, P., 1999: 163). The situation itself, because it is a part of human affairs, is the product of a particular history, a history of which there will always be more than one account (Checkland, P. and Scholes, J., 1990: 28).

When addressing a situation, the researcher may find that the problem situation is not structured, and that there might be a considerable quantity of diverse types of information about it. This might appear confusing, yet for Checkland the richness of the methodology relies on the readiness to collect as many perceptions of the problem as possible from a wide range of actors. In this process the problem situation is expressed in different ways. It might include verbal assessments, official documents, pictures, drawings, schemes, maps, and other visual material. The wider the range of material collected, the richer is the final picture. Finally, the function of Stages 1 and 2 is 'to display the situation so that a range of possible and, hopefully, relevant choices can be revealed' (Checkland, P., 1999: 166).

For the purposes of this research, the notion of including many diverse world-views guides the exercise of applying Stages 1 and 2 of SSM. However, this approach may differ from traditional applications of the methodology. For example, the rich picture here is interpreted not as a 'drawing'; yet it is presented as a comprehensive description of the diverse discourses and opinions about cannabis, including official statements, historical archives, popular culture, and interviews with stake-holders and experts. From this, the identification of 'relevant systems' and their development into root definitions will form the basis for a particular organisation of discourses on cannabis, taking into account contrasting opinions on the matter.

The question: What are the names of notional systems that, from the analysis phase, seem relevant to the problem? Is fundamental to this stage of the research. This question requires a high level of precision and care, since it will determine the prominent aspects to be taken into account in further analysis of the research. In methodological terms, it corresponds to Stage 3: Root Definitions of Relevant Systems. Checkland calls our attention, in this phase, towards the necessity of being very concise in a precise description which captures a particular view of the relevant system. In other words, each root definition must express clearly a particular *Weltanschauung* or an identifiable world-view from the myriad of relevant systems.

The root definitions act as conceptual aids in the form of 'ideal types' serving the purpose of organising the information and addressing relevant aspects of the situation. The relevant systems became known as 'root definitions' since they express the core or essence of the world-view about the situation to be modelled:

A root definition expresses the core purpose of a purposeful activity system. That core purpose is always expressed as a transformation process in which some entity, the 'input' is changed, or transformed, into some new form of that same entity, the 'output'. (Checkland, P. and Scholes, J., 1990: 33)

In addition, Checkland suggests a guide about how to build well-defined Root Definitions: by including and naming the following elements in the actual root definition:

- Customers, the people towards whom the action of the relevant system is directed;
- Actors, the people who make it possible that it happens;
- Transformation, the purpose of the system in transforming an initial situation S (i) to a final situation S (f);
- World-view (*Weltanschauung*), the appreciation of the problem that justifies and supports the particular approach to the problem;

- Owners, those who can eventually stop the transformation, and
- Environment, the conditions and context in which the system operates, and which are taken for granted.

Although this guide (known as CATWOE, after the initial letter of each element) may appear somewhat mechanical, its value lies in the inclusion of determinant elements in the definition. In fact, as demonstrated by Checkland's own experience of applying this methodology, it represents a helpful tool for research and analysis. The methodology emphasises that both the transformation and the world-view must be clearly defined since they will influence further stages in the methodology. Nevertheless, for this research, the root definitions will not constitute sophisticated inputs to further stages of the methodology; their value lies within their respective potentialities to identify the different elements - CATWOE - present in each of the prominent world-views on cannabis.

Summarising, for the purpose of this research, Stages 1 to 3 will be used as a general framework in approaching the topic of cannabis in the diversity and extension of the information available. This is related to the necessity expressed by the methodology of obtaining a rich picture of the situation and from there to identifying relevant systems towards the building of the root definitions. Given the characteristics of the topic of cannabis, these stages correspond to the general purpose of the research since they are useful in the initial exploration of the problem situation.

This part is very important, taking into account the complexity of drug policy issues. In fact, as stated by some drugs researchers, the models are not only desirable, but they are necessary in entering into the analysis of actual cases, such as the decision concerning cannabis re-classification:

Few social researchers are naive enough to believe that they can enter the field without preconceptions and that reality declares itself so frankly and directly that no interpretation is necessary. (Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1992: xiv).

In this sense it is expected that the use of these stages of the Soft Systems Methodology can improve the quality of the organisation of perceptions in relation to cannabis re-classification. In this particular research, these opinions are referred to through the term 'discourse', which includes different forms of language use, including official documents, scientific reports, opinions, and other cultural expressions.

In practical terms, the root definitions are defined as models to be confronted with the reality. By building the root definitions it will be possible for the researcher to organise information based on the 'world-view' or *Weltanschauung* that different actors, institutions and disciplines may hold regarding the problem of cannabis. As a result, it is expected that the root definitions are enriched and the quality of the research is enhanced. It will at the same time be possible to follow the steps of Soft Systems Methodology by starting with a 'rich picture' of the situation regarding cannabis, including different approaches, discourses, opinions, and appreciations of the use of cannabis in general and thus to address the particular case of cannabis re-classification. **The framework provided by the root definitions will determine the quality of the 'archaeological' material to be analysed according to a post-Structural approach as in the work of Foucault.**

Because this research aims to explore some of the main discussions about drug policy making, Stages 4, 5 and 6 will not be developed⁶¹. As mentioned before, it is acknowledged that the selective use of SSM will provide the 'archaeological' material in the form of discourses on cannabis. However, the sole use of this methodology will prove insufficient to respond fully to the research questions regarding both the emergence of the discourses on cannabis, and the prevalence of certain discourses over others. It is not in fact anticipated that SSM will prove adequate in

⁶¹ These Stages concern the construction of Conceptual Models as well as the identification of feasible and desirable changes. Although important, these stages are not relevant to this investigation. They can be furthered in the context of policy-making discussions about possible changes and future actions within the topic of drugs policy.

dealing with these issues, since criticisms of its limitations have already been made by respected academics and researchers.

The next section summarises some of the relevant criticisms of Soft Systems Methodology, presented here to complete the description of this methodology and its limitations.

4.4. Criticisms of Soft Systems Methodology

It is important to clarify that this research acknowledges the advantages of using Soft Systems Methodology as an initial device through which to explore the complexity of cannabis-related issues in the United Kingdom. However, it is also crucial to anticipate some of the possible limitations of the methodology when addressing questions regarding the policy-making process in the case of cannabis.

Earlier criticisms of SSM addressed its claimed political neutrality, in relation to Checkland's claim of not serving any particular group or class. This criticism, first presented by Thomas and Lockett (1979), explained how power relations structure the way problems are considered.⁶² In other words, how problems are structured obeys dynamics of power that are not totally neutral. In addition to this criticism, Mingers (1984) pointed out the limitations of SSM when including structural features of social systems such as conflict and power. Jackson (1985) later argued that soft methods cannot be used neutrally where economic and social structures give rise to coercive constraints.

Although these criticisms are directed at the use of the methodology in its Seven Stages, it is important to consider the implications for the particular use of Stages 1 to 3 of SSM in this research. As mentioned before, it is expected that SSM will contribute to organising in a coherent and

systematic manner the variety of discourses about cannabis re-classification. The potentialities of SSM in including a wide range of world-views on the situation lead to the belief that this expectation may indeed be achieved.

Nevertheless, the methodology cannot answer the research questions, because it fails to refer to the way in which those discourses are produced, in terms of the disciplines or arguments supporting one or another world-view; nor does SSM inform us how certain world-views prevail over others. The selective use of SSM provides the organisation of diverse pieces of information about cannabis and thus produces 'archaeological' material, crucial for the process of answering the research questions.

Once the material organised by SSM has been prepared, the next phase of the research is to enquire into the process of policy making on cannabis. This phase involves questions regarding the dynamics of power, ones that cannot be addressed only through SSM. As will be presented in Chapter Five, SSM lacks the full capacity to approach the dynamics of power and knowledge involved in the emergence and production of discourses on cannabis. In response, the work of Michel Foucault offers a suitable framework through which to answer the research questions. Foucault's approach will be explained in Chapter Seven. The next section synthesises the main conclusions derived from the ideas considered throughout this chapter.

⁶² Cited in Flood, R. and Jackson, M.C., (Eds.) (1991) *Critical Systems Thinking: Directed Readings*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, p.5.

4.5. Conclusions

This chapter has formed the foundation as regards epistemological considerations in studying the drugs policy issues. It has been suggested that a non-positivist approach in this area can offer interesting insights in relation to the research questions. In particular, it has been proposed to initiate the exploration of this topic from an interpretive paradigm in social research, as described by Burrell and Morgan (1979).

Given the ill-defined nature of cannabis issues - and the multiplicity of views regarding this topic - a suitable methodology must include all different perspectives. A non-positivist approach may offer an interesting path to explore, in response to some of these considerations. In particular, it is suggested that the interpretive paradigm can be a suitable way of pursuing this investigation and answering the questions posed by the research in the thesis.

It has been proposed that some stages of Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology be used in order to initiate this research and in aiming to approach the amount of information related to cannabis and its re-classification. In the present chapter, some of the main aspects of Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland, P., 1999) to be applied in this research have been described. The innovative utilisation of SSM for the purpose of this research has been justified, based on the suggestion that the selective use of some stages of SSM may contribute to the compilation of extensive material on cannabis and the debate on its re-classification in the form of 'archaeology'.

In relation to the potentialities of applying Soft Systems Methodology to the analysis of the drugs policy, this research constitutes an original application of certain selected stages of Soft Systems Methodology as a tool through which to explore the bulk of available information related to

the cannabis policy in the United Kingdom. It has been emphasised that Vickers' notion of *appreciation* in the analysis of public policy can be an interesting feature to explore in the selective use of the methodology.

The main reasons for using SSM as a tool for organising information regarding cannabis and its re-classification can be summarised as follows:

Firstly, the research acknowledges in general the advantages of using Soft Systems Methodology as an initial device in exploring the complexity of cannabis-related issues in the United Kingdom. It is assumed that the selective use of SSM contributes to organising in a coherent and systematic manner the amount and variety of discourses on cannabis re-classification. In general, it has been said that SSM has the potential to include a wide range of world-views about the situation, thus this assumption is expected to be proved valid.

Secondly, it has been specified how the selected stages of the methodology will be used in this thesis. It was explained how Stages 1, 2 and 3 of SSM can contribute to organising extensive information by providing a 'rich picture' about cannabis, and providing a framework within which to identify 'relevant systems' and build 'root definitions'. The next chapter will illustrate the use of these stages of the methodology. It is expected that the root definitions will assist in organising information based on the respective world-views or *Weltanschauungen* held by different actors, institutions, and disciplines on the topic of cannabis. As a result, it is expected that the main discourses regarding cannabis will be identified; they will then be presented in Chapter Five.

Thirdly, it has been stated that SSM, as with all methodologies, should be applied while taking into account their limitations and potentialities. The current thesis is therefore an attempt to acknowledge this consideration by using the aspects of SSM that are useful for a defined stage of the investigation: to initiate the research process by approaching and organising the amount of information related to cannabis and the debate

on its re-classification. It is expected that these three stages of SSM will produce an initial means of organising the information in an 'archaeological' fashion.

Fourthly, it was explained that the use of SSM does not correspond to any of the traditional modes of utilising this methodology, namely, Mode 1 or Mode 2. The reason is because this research uses some stages of SSM as a tool for organising information, it engages neither in intervention (Mode 1) nor in interaction (Mode 2). In fact, this research proposes an innovative way of using SSM in supporting the interpretive analytics approach in Foucault's work.

Finally, it is expected that the material organised using some stages of SSM can support the wider approach of this research, based on Foucault's interpretive analytics. By using Foucault's ideas, the issues of power present in the process of policy making can be addressed. The following chapters will illustrate the selective use of SSM in organising the different discourses about cannabis and, particularly, in identifying relevant world-views on cannabis re-classification: the case study forming the focus of this research.

CHAPTER 5 DISCOURSES ON CANNABIS

Chapters Two and Three showed that the realm of drugs policy making is wide and extensive. It was pointed out that different perceptions regarding 'drugs', including cannabis, have influenced the process of policy making in this matter. In addition, the controversy about this topic and the polarisation of opinions represent important challenges to be considered in this thesis. Consequently, in Chapter Four, it was proposed that a suitable Methodology to address the complexity of cannabis policy might be through using some stages of Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology (SSM). The selective use of this Methodology may provide a way of exploring the different aspects, actors, and world-views involved in the topic of cannabis.

The current chapter is a practical application of Stages 1 – 3 of SSM in the description of the problem situation by means of obtaining a rich picture, and a way of organising relevant systems in the consideration of cannabis. The result of this will be a framework of Root Definitions supporting the analysis of the decision on the re-classification of cannabis. By following the Methodology, the first section starts with a rich picture of the situation regarding cannabis. It includes different definitions of cannabis, as a plant or as a drug, and the diverse ways that it has been considered throughout history. This rich picture aims to consider as many views of the situation as possible; therefore, a wide range of material will be presented⁶³. This information is complemented with a number of interviews with different actors in or 'experts' on the topic of cannabis. The inclusion of these interviews will reveal the dynamics of power as determining the process of policy making, and the prevalence of some views on cannabis reflected in the political decisions.

The second section seeks to identify relevant systems in the consideration of cannabis. Based on the rich picture, it is possible to find a number of

⁶³ For example, diagrammatic material, photographs, illustrations, literary quotations, and popular art references will be included.

world-views on cannabis. For instance, cannabis can be regarded as a remedy or a medicine for many maladies, or as part of spiritual rituals. For others, cannabis is perceived as a poison, harmful both to the human body and also to the soul. Following these tendencies, it is proposed a matrix be created for classifying different world-views (*Weltanschauungen*) on cannabis. The matrix combines two binary elements: the first is the perception of cannabis as a remedy or as a poison; the second is how its properties (as remedy or poison) act in two different realms of a person: his/her body, and soul. Drawing together these two binaries, a matrix of four quadrants supports the organisation of the material about cannabis. This means of classifying is merely one possibility among many, yet for the purposes of this research may provide a suitable contribution to the Methodology.

In the third section, the relevant systems regarding different world-views on cannabis are developed and explained. The purpose of this section is to build Root Definitions of these relevant systems. Addressing the main criteria for building Root Definitions, two main aspects are identified: the world-view (*Weltanschauung*) supporting the system, and the 'transformation' that each system may undergo. Consequently, eight different Root Definitions or *discourses* on cannabis are identified: ritualistic, recreational, medicinal, economic, prohibitionist, criminalisation, treatment, and public policy.

The fourth section addresses certain issues related to power emerging from the investigation process, and particularly from the selection of interviews and data collection. These aspects need to be tackled through using either the SSM approach, or through considering a post-structuralist approach based on the work of Michel Foucault. This section thus considers these two approaches to power in order to find a means of furthering the process of investigation, and to satisfy the research questions about the debate on cannabis re-classification.

Finally, the fifth section summarises the chapter.

5.1. Rich Picture: What is Cannabis?



Cannabis Leaf (64)



calligraphy, ma(hemp)

Chinese Ideogram for 'hemp' (65)

“Do you have a marijuana cigarette?”
asked Vivida as we lounged on the deck chair the next day in the boiling sun.
“Marijuana? What’s that?”-
“You know” said Vivida, “Marijuana...: Kunubu, Kunnapu, Cannabis, Kannabis, Konnab, Kinab, Kon-nab, Kannab, Kanub, Kinnab, Quinnab, Konneb, Quennb, Quinnaq, Quinnab, Kenneb, Alcanque, Kinnabis, Kinnub, Kannab, Danop, Kanq, Ranob, Canapa, Kanep, Canep, Konopi, Konople, Konopli, Konoplia, Canapa, Cannappa, Canamo, Cañamo, Canamzao, Kanas, Kas, Henneb, Hen-nab, Hennip, Hennup, Hampa, Hamp, Kamp, Kemp, Hemp, Hanf, Cannabis Indica, Cannabis sativa, Kandir, Bhanga, Bangué, Banga, Bhang, Bhanga, Bang, Beng, Benghin, Benj, Bendj, Ganja, Ganjica, Gangika, Ganga, Ginji, Ginjeh, Guinnjeh, Gidnsche, Gunjag, Guaza, Haschisha, Hasheesh, Hashish, Haschisch, Hachache, Hachaichi, Handschi, Azallu, Subjee, Shesh, Assis, Axis, Assyuni, Asarath, Nasha, Anascha, Asa, Dakka, Dakha, Dacha, Dakka, Dakkan, Dagga, Djamba Diamba, Jamba, Riamba, Damba, Kanedir, Cansjava, Chanvre, Chenevis, Chutsao, Chu-Tsao, Cu-Tso, Hursuni, Shanareq, Sjarank Sheera, Ma, Ma-yo, Ta-ma, Si-ma, Tsema, Maguen, El Mogen, Malach, Mosjusck, Masconha Marijuana, Mariguana, Jarajuana, Matakwane, Mnoana, Mutokwana, Ospishnu, Penek, Pienka, Penha, Rongoyne, Sejav, Ahetsmangha, Fasukh, Vijaya, Teriaki Tekrowia, Takrousi, Taktut Takruri, Takrouri, Tekrouri, Assis, Berch, Bernavi, Bernavy Bers, Bosa, Churas, Chiras, Churus, Churrus, Chira, Marijuana Pura, Gard, Rup, Taghalim, Ganja Gabza, Momea, Shahjehani, Mashak, Bhara, Dust, Chastry, Chatzraki, Chastry, Chinty, Dawamese, Kawamesck, Kawamesc, Diamoschum, Diamusch, Diamesch Diamesk, Dyamouch, Esrar, Extract Hemp, The Emerald Cup of Haider, Garawisch, Maju, Majum, Tadhal, Majoon, Madjoon, Majoom, Madjun, Madjoun, Massgi-oun, Majoan, Mapuchari, Mapouch-ari, Mapouchair, Maslac, Nasha, Ma’agoun, Manzoul, Manjoun, Haloua, Masmoch, Malak, Maraguango, Juanita, Doña Juanita, Maria Johanna, Rosa Maria, Nabutal, Qunnab, Siddhi, Subji, Patti, Ganje-kuper, Gur, Siddhi, Sabzi, Phulganja, Savia, Sukhu, Sidhi, Sabza, Thandai, Siddhi, Sabzi, Subzee, Daraketebang, Darakhte-Kinnab, Drake-Bang, Nabatul-Qunnab, Muggles, Mooter, Reefers, Greefa, Griffio, Mary Warner, Mary Weaver, Mary Jane, Indian Hay, Loco Weed, Love Weed, Joy Smoke, Gigglesmoke, Bambalacha, Mohasky, Mu, Joochah, The Weed, grass, Tea, Ea-tay, Eed-Way, Eed Waggles...

Excerpt from “1001 Thoughts about Drugs”, Tuli Kupferberg, 1962; “Call me Adam” in *High Times*: “1001 Thoughts about drugs” No. 472, *High Times*, 1983, 97 (Sept): 82. Cited in (Bey, H. and Zug, A. 2004: 451-2)

Cannabis sativa is a most gentle looking, spontaneously growing plant with several practical applications already known in the ancient world. It contains, however, treacherously addictive substances that have turned the plant into an international problem. As for other illicit drugs, cannabis is a global problem not simply because it is traded everywhere, but because it cannot be countered by any single nation. The reality of this evil business is such that consumers in one region provide for the supply elsewhere; similarly supply can generate its own demands across borders.

Antonio Maria Costa, Director General, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. At the International Symposium on Cannabis, Stockholm (2003)

⁶⁴ Image source: http://www.broxtowe.gov.uk/cannabis_leaf.jpg
⁶⁵ Image source: http://www.drugscope.org.uk/images/a_z/hemp-ma.gif

As suggested by the previous quotations, there are many opinions on cannabis. This section provides a rich picture of the different ways of defining cannabis. It starts with a description of cannabis, including information on its botanic and chemical composition. The characteristics of cannabis as a 'plant' and as a 'drug' will thus be addressed.

A brief historical background is also provided, in order to trace the different perceptions of the plant throughout history. The historical review focuses on the perception of Western societies of the plant, moving from the notion in which cannabis can be a remedy for multiple maladies to its current perception as a dangerous 'drug' that must be prohibited.

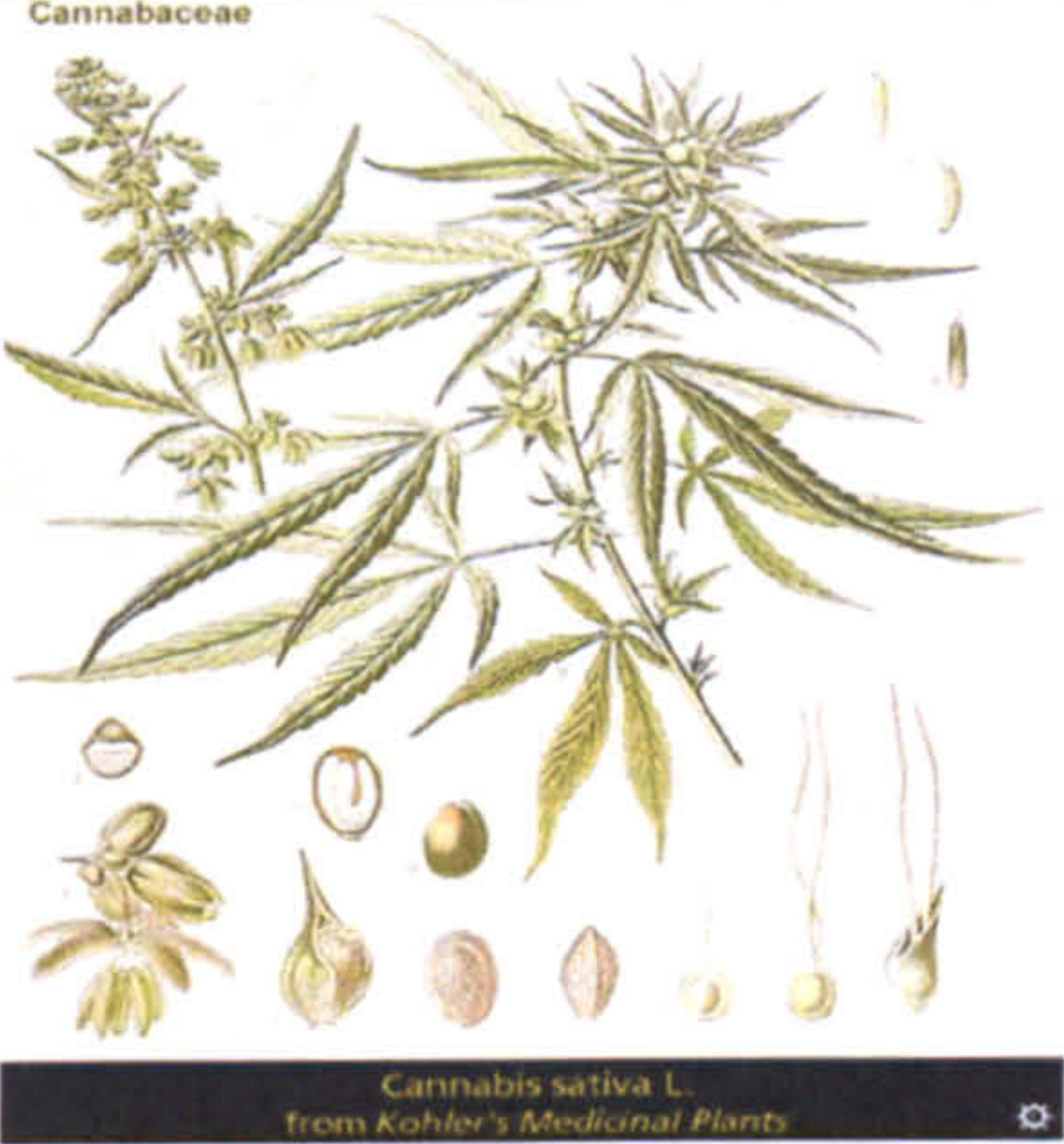


5.1.1. Cannabis: The Plant

The botanic classification of cannabis has been the matter of numerous discussions (Raman, A., 1998).⁶⁶ Although the genus *Cannabis* belongs to the family of *Cannabaceae*, some botanists have classified it in the order *Urticaceae*. In 1785, Lamark assigned the Latin binomial *Cannabis indica* to cannabis grown in India (also known as Indian Hemp), classifying it as a unique species on the basis of its different growth habit, morphological characteristics and stronger narcotic properties than the European (hemp) plant (Brown, D.T., 1998). Nevertheless, the tendency in recent literature is to refer to all types of cannabis as *Cannabis sativa* with an indication of the fibrous or narcotic characteristics of the plant. According to leading botanic authorities such as Schultes (1970) and Emboden (1972b) there are three species of cannabis: *C. sativa*, *C. indica*, and *C. ruderalis*.⁶⁷ The following figure illustrates the differences between these three varieties:

⁶⁶ For a discussion about the difficulties in science and semantics of cannabis, refer to Small, E., (1979) 'The Species Problem in Cannabis: Science and Semantics', Toronto: Corpus Information Services Limited.

⁶⁷ For further information about the taxonomy and botany of the plant, see Raman, A. (1998) 'The Cannabis Plant: Botany, Cultivation and Processing for Use' in Brown, D.T. (ed.) *Cannabis: the Genus Cannabis*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Figure 3: Varieties of the plant *Cannabis*

<p><i>Cannabis sativa</i> Fibre hemp ⁶⁸</p> <p>Fibre hemp plants grow to be very tall (to 4 meters); have a thick fibrous stem, few branches and open foliage. The quantity of psychoactive substances is typically low, sometimes approaching zero. This is the sort of plant widely used for ropes and fibre in the naval industry.</p>	 <p>Cannabaceae</p> <p>Cannabis sativa L. from Kohler's Medicinal Plants</p>
<p><i>Cannabis indica</i> Indian Hemp ⁶⁹</p> <p>Indian hemp is small, growing to 1.2m and very bushy, the stem is low in fibre and branches heavily, and the foliage is dense. The content of psychoactive substances is very high. As its name indicates, this variety comes from India, where its intoxicating effects were part of ritual and also it was used as an inebriant for certain groups of the population.</p>	 <p>FIG. 53.—<i>Cannabis indica</i>—Branch.</p>
<p><i>Cannabis ruderalis</i> Ruderal hemp ⁷⁰</p> <p>Ruderal hemp plants are very small (60 cm) with a thin, slightly fibrous stem almost devoid of branches. The foliage is open, and the leaves are relatively large. Allegedly, this variety comes originally from Russia and other regions of Central Europe. The amount of psychoactive substances is lower than in <i>C. sativa</i> and <i>C. indica</i>.</p>	

Cannabis is an annual herb that grows outdoors during the warm season and then dies down, with new generations springing up from seed the

⁶⁸ Image source: http://www.erowid.org/plants/show_image.php?i=cannabis/cannabis_sativa1.jpg

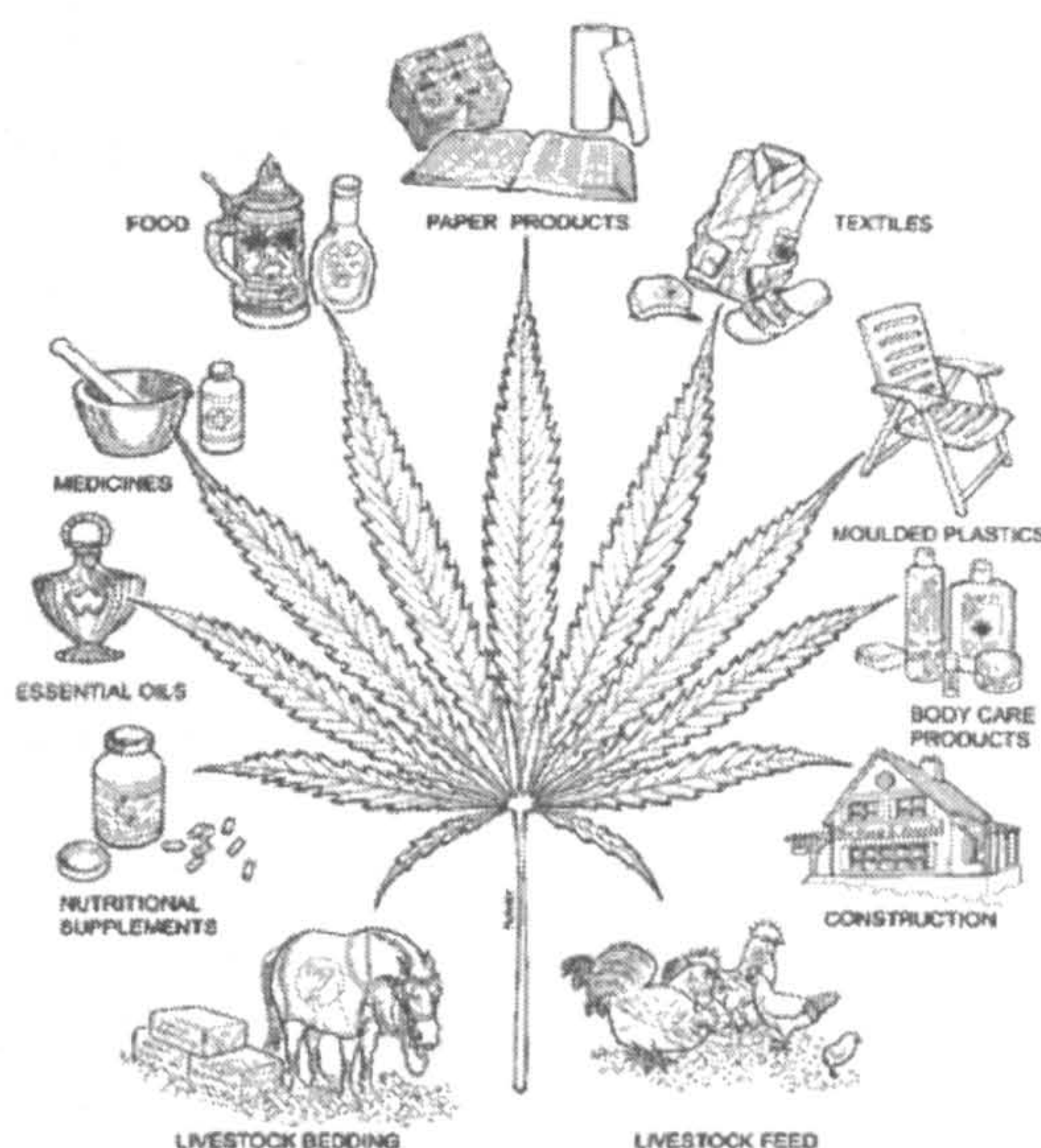
⁶⁹ Image source: <http://www.canmedbotanics.nl/images/indica.jpg>

⁷⁰ Image source: <http://www.cannabislandia.com/images/items/item398.jpg>

following year.⁷¹ Nevertheless, new techniques are currently allowing cultivation of cannabis indoors by means of hydroponics and the appropriate equipment.

Throughout history, cannabis has been used for different purposes. Some archaeological evidence shows that 'hemp' was used as a source for textiles, rope, and seeds for food, dating to between 500 BC and 300 AD in Germany and England (Schultes, R.E., 1970)⁷². Nowadays, similar uses survive and cannabis is used as a source of oil, food and fibre for some industries⁷³. Also, there have been experiments with it as a source of fuel and as an alternative to plastic.⁷⁴

Figure 4. Industrial Uses of Cannabis⁷⁵



Although the plant can be cultivated in almost every part of the world, cannabis originally came from Asia. There, the pharmacological effects of cannabis had been discovered in ancient times and the plant was used for medicinal and ceremonial purposes (Rätsch, C., 1998). Early writings on the effects of the herb include the medicinal treatise of the legendary

⁷¹ Flowering is usually initiated at a critical day length, which varies depending on the strain of the plant. As cannabis is usually dioecious, male and female flowers are produced on separate plants and pollination is reported to occur mainly through the agency of wind. The maturation time for cannabis varies from two to ten months. Typically in the Northern hemisphere, cannabis seeds would be sown in May and the plants harvested in September. Raman, A., (1998) 'The Cannabis Plant: Botany, Cultivation and Processing for Use' in *Cannabis: The Genus Cannabis*, Brown, D.T. (ed.) Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

⁷² It is also argued that the King James Bible was printed on a cannabis-based paper. Indeed, the use of hemp as a source of rope for cording and rigging was crucial to the naval industry in England and France. Brownlee, N., (2003) *The Complete Illustrated Guide to Cannabis*, London: Sanctuary Publishing.

⁷³ For a comprehensive description of the many uses of cannabis throughout history see Green, J., (2005) *Cannabis: The Story of the Weed that Rocked the World*, Brighton: Pavilion Publication.

⁷⁴ Perhaps one of the most surprising uses of hemp, albeit a short-lived one, was in the car body manufactured by Henry Ford from hemp-based plastic in 1941. The plastic was much lighter than steel; moreover, the car was fuelled by clean-burning hemp-based ethanol fuel. See Herer, J., (1992) *The Emperor Wears No Clothes: Hemp and the Marijuana Conspiracy*, Van Nuys, CA: Queen of Clubs Publishing.

⁷⁵ Image source: www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/ncnu02/v5-284.html

Chinese Emperor Shen Nuan⁷⁶, the ancient Ayurveda of India (pre-1400 BC) and the Zend-Avesta of Northern Iran (ca. 600 BC). Despite the amount of evidence regarding diverse uses of cannabis in history, our current perception regards it mainly as a drug. Indeed, its pharmacological properties have attracted the attention of scientists and medical experts, especially doctors; furthermore, such characteristics have been evaluated as harmful or undesirable by social perceptions. For the purpose of this rich picture it is important to refer to these characteristics through describing rather than through evaluating them.

5.1.2. Cannabis: The Drug

The controversy about the taxonomy of cannabis as a plant is also an issue when referring to its pharmacological properties. Under various conditions and dosages cannabis can show stimulant, sedative, analgesic, or psychedelic effects. As a 'drug', cannabis is used in various forms: herbal cannabis or marijuana, and cannabis resin or hashish. The herbal form consists of the dried leaves and the female flower heads. The resin, commonly known as 'hashish', appears in the form of blocks of compressed resin, taken from the leaves and flower heads. The following pictures illustrate the main forms of cannabis on the market. The left-hand picture shows it in its herbal form, normally called 'weed'; the right-hand picture shows a cigarette made of crumbled resin (hashish) sometimes mixed with tobacco.



Individually Packaged Cannabis Buds⁷⁷



Cigarette of cannabis, or Joint, made with resin form (hashish)⁷⁸

⁷⁶ The book '*Shennong Benzao*' or '*Shennong's Essential Herbs*' is mythically attributed to 2700b.c. yet was actually written during the Han dynasty in the second or first centuries BC. Clarification provided by a Chinese academic.

⁷⁷ Image Source: http://www.erowid.org/plants/show_image.php?i=cannabis/cannabis3.jpg.

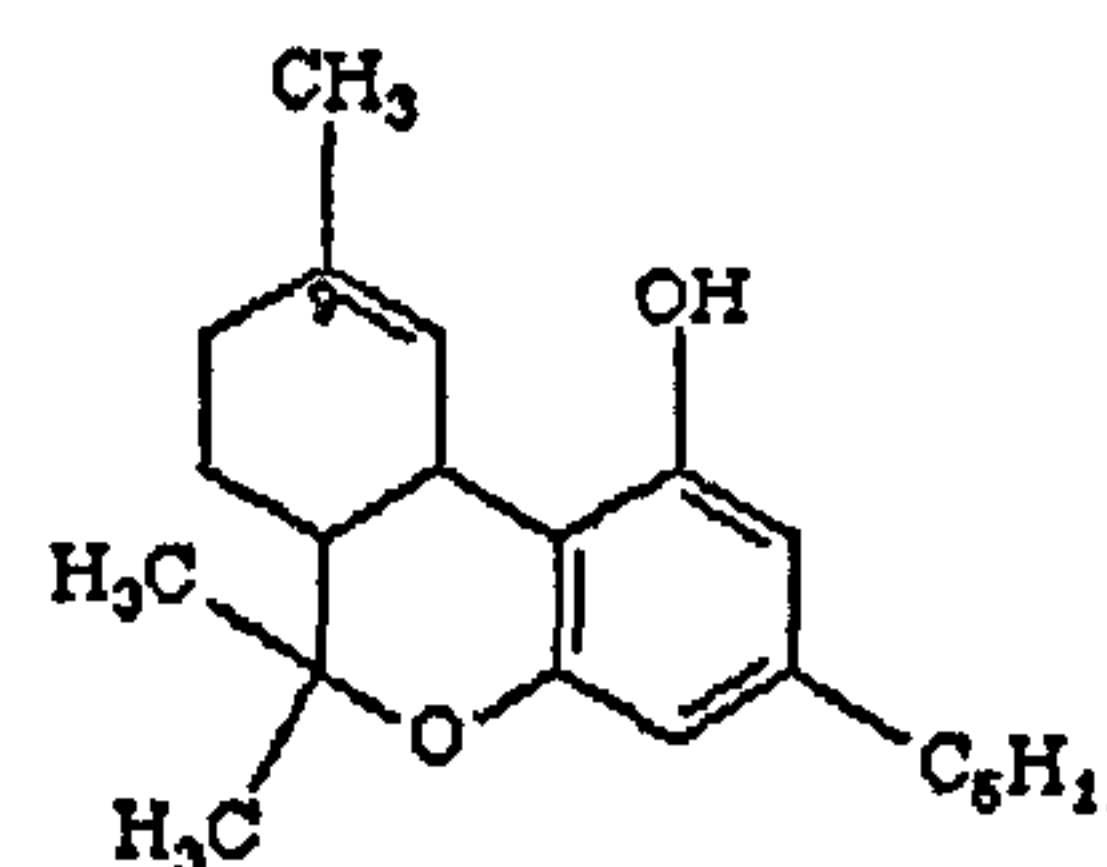
⁷⁸ Image Source: http://www.erowid.org/plants/show_image.php?i=cannabis/cannabis_joint2.jpg

In addition to these two forms, there are also synthetic medicines containing cannabinoid – the active component of cannabis - such as nabilone, dronabinol, and levonantradol.⁷⁹ Recently, the firm GW has developed a cannabis-based medicine called Sativex® - the first time that a scientifically controlled plantation of cannabis has been allowed for pharmaceutical purposes. Indeed, the economic benefits of this medicine are highly profitable.

Many attempts have been made in order to understand the complex chemistry of the plant. Scientific studies have revealed that cannabis contains different chemical compounds, of which 66 are unique to the plant, called 'cannabinoids' (Earlywine, M., 2005).

Amongst the cannabinoids, probably the best known is THC or delta-9 tetra-hydrocannabinol. Because Delta 9-THC is more abundant in the plant, it has been assumed to be the main source of the drug's effects.⁸⁰ However, it seems that the action of those compounds is much more complex than is the isolated action of Delta 9-THC.

9 Delta Tetrahydrocannabinol-
Δ9 THC⁸¹



The metabolism of THC, i.e., the time that it takes to be eliminated from the body, varies among different people.⁸² There are two common ways of ingesting cannabis: smoking it, and eating it. Smoking is said to provide the most efficient form of administration as THC is delivered rapidly to the areas of the brain where it exerts its activity; in contrast, oral ingestion is

⁷⁹ See Earlywine, M., (2005) *Understanding Marijuana: A new look at the scientific evidence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁸⁰ There are also variations in the different strains of the plant, and the conditions in which it has been cultivated. For information about the chemistry of cannabis see Mechoulam, R. and Hanus, L., (2004) 'The cannabinoid system: from the point of view of a chemist' in Castle, D. and Murray, R., *Marijuana and Madness: Psychiatry and Neurobiology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁸¹ Image source: <http://www.ecn.org/hemp/icone/thc2D.gif>

⁸² For a comprehensive explanation of the pharmacological effects of cannabis, see Earlywine, M., (2005) *Understanding Marijuana: A new look at the scientific evidence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 6.

slower in terms of onset of action (Castle, D. and Solowij, N., 2004). By smoking cannabis the active ingredients are rapidly absorbed, inducing effects. Because the active ingredients in cannabis are lipid soluble, they are metabolised by the liver and can be kept in the fatty tissues of the body⁸³ (Leccese, A., 1996).

The effects on the body and behaviour are varied, as many accounts by different kinds of actors have testified. Those effects are also described in terms of positive or negative consequences. Cannabis, as a drug, is associated with the notion of addiction. In this sense, cannabis use can become addictive and therefore constitute an illness. Furthermore, it is argued that cannabis can be related to mental illnesses, particularly psychosis and schizophrenia. Cannabis use can, it is said, lead to the use of harder drugs (such as heroin): the 'stepping stone' theory (van Ours, J.C., 2003).

Other arguments have associated the use of cannabis to criminality and anti-social behaviour. For example, many of the news items about cannabis are related to murder, violence and juvenile delinquency (Coomber, R. *et al.*, 2000; Woolner, C. and Thom, B., 2003). As will be analysed later in this chapter, these are influential arguments supporting the prohibition of cannabis. However, the link between cannabis and criminality is still a matter of debate (Bean, P., 1974; Inciardi, J., 1981; Simpson, M., 2003).

Cannabis as a drug can, in contrast, be evaluated in terms of its positive effects on human health. For instance, cannabis has historically been used as a remedy for the painful effects of illnesses such as multiple sclerosis or arthritis; or as an appetite enhancer in patients suffering from cancer or HIV/AIDS (Grinspoon, L., 1971; 1999; 2001; Grinspoon, L. and Bakalar, J., 1993; Grotenhermen, F., 2002; Russo, E., 2003). Another

⁸³ This should not be confused with the psychotropic effects that can take less time to be experienced; it varies, too, from one person to another. For a chemical explanation of cannabis effects on the brain, see Iversen, L., (2004), 'How cannabis works in the brain' in Castle, D. and Murray, R. (eds.) *Marijuana and Madness: Psychiatry and Neurobiology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

positive perception of cannabis refers to its effects as a relaxant, or as a recreational substance. Interestingly, this view is expressed by the users themselves, although the effects can be diverse for many of them.

In general, people use cannabis with certain expectations as to its effects. For example, the Independent Drug Monitoring Unit (Atha, M.J. and Blanchard, S., 1997) analysed the answers of 1,333 respondents in a survey in the United Kingdom in relation to different effects sensed from using cannabis:



Sixty per cent experienced positive effects from using cannabis, including relaxation and relief from stress (26%), personal development (9%) and a positive effect on the mood (5%) and sociability (2%). However, adverse effects were also reported, such as impairment of memory (6%), paranoia (6%), apathy/laziness (5%) and anxiety/panic (5%).

As can be noted there are different and diverse accounts of the effects of cannabis, with those perceptions often in direct opposition. Whereas some regard cannabis as a plant with multiple positive uses, others refer to it as a dangerous drug linked to violence and crime. Many of these divergences in the appreciation of cannabis and its effects can be found throughout history. A brief overview of the history of cannabis will be presented in the next sub-section.

5.1.3. Historical Background

There are as many names for cannabis as there are references to its use in the history of humankind (Abel, E., 1980; Green, J., 2005; Merlin, M., 1972). Apart from the medicinal uses of cannabis mentioned before, it has been argued that cannabis was firstly used in rituals of shamans in ancient

cultures around the world⁸⁴ (Escohotado, A., 1998; Rātsch, C., 1998; Walton, S., 2001). The shaman or priest possessed the ability to communicate between the (living) community and their spirits. In some cultures, the use of cannabis was associated with funerary rituals, in which the plant helped the soul in its transition to other dimensions (Emboden, W., 1972b; Emboden, W.J., 1972; Furst, P., 1972a; Wasson, G., 1970; Wasson, G. *et al.*, 1986).

Throughout the centuries, cannabis has been present in folk medicine throughout Europe, including Russia, Germany and England. In the south of Europe and thanks to the influence of the Islamic culture, cannabis was widely used as a medicine (Lozano, I. 2001); during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, cannabis was highly appreciated by herbalists and as a popular medicine, a versatile remedy (Crawford, V., 2002; Le Strange, R., 1977).



Persian prince smoking⁸⁵

Some varieties of cannabis were used in Europe as a source of fibre and ropes. In fact, it is argued that fibre made of cannabis contributed to the development of the naval industry and the colonial expansion of some European countries during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Brown, D.T., 1998; Davenport-Hines, R., 2004).⁸⁶ When the first European travellers visited Asia, they found different uses of cannabis, apart from the use for fibre (Green, J., 2005).

⁸⁴ The oldest archaeological evidence for the cultural use of hemp also points to its shamanic usage. Hemp seeds, identified as those of *Cannabis sativa*, were recovered in the Neolithic ceramic layers of Eisenberg in Thüringen, Germany. The layers were dated to around 5500 BCE. See Rātsch, C., (1998) *Marijuana Medicine: A world tour of the healing and visionary powers of cannabis*, Rochester, Vermont: Healing Arts Press.

⁸⁵ Image source:

http://www.erowid.org/plants/show_image.php?i=cannabis/marijuana_smoker_persian_prince.jpg

⁸⁶ From the seventeenth century onwards, the British Royal Navy - at the time the most powerful in the world - relied heavily on hemp for ropes, rigging, and caulking. France and England encouraged its cultivation in the new colonies of North America. See Brownlee, N., (2003) *The Complete Illustrated Guide to Cannabis*, London: Sanctuary Publishing.

In fact, the variety cultivated in Asia was mainly used as part of rituals, medicine and as an inebriant (Walton, S., 2001). By mixing the flowers of the plant, a beverage called 'bhang' has been a popular intoxicant in India, used for special occasions as well as by common people (Mills, J., 2003).⁸⁷

The British in India learned about the extended trade in and consumption of this variety of the plant, and they attempted to tax it. When the local population showed reluctance to pay duty for this activity, the trade of cannabis started to be seen as a criminal activity in the eyes of British officers (Mills, J., 2003). This negative perception was complemented by the view of travellers and officers about the inebriant use of cannabis. Based on moral ideas regarding the proscription of inebriation, some temperance campaigners in India realised that cannabis was similar to alcohol. In consequence, their opinions derided this practice, considered as a moral weakness of barbaric people.⁸⁸

However, this lasted until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when cannabis began to be mentioned as a possible remedy for a number of maladies in some European countries. The reason for that can be found in the booming trade between European travellers and the East of Asia, where cannabis was widely used. (Grinspoon, L. and Bakalar, J., 1993).



Tincture of cannabis used as a medicine ⁸⁹

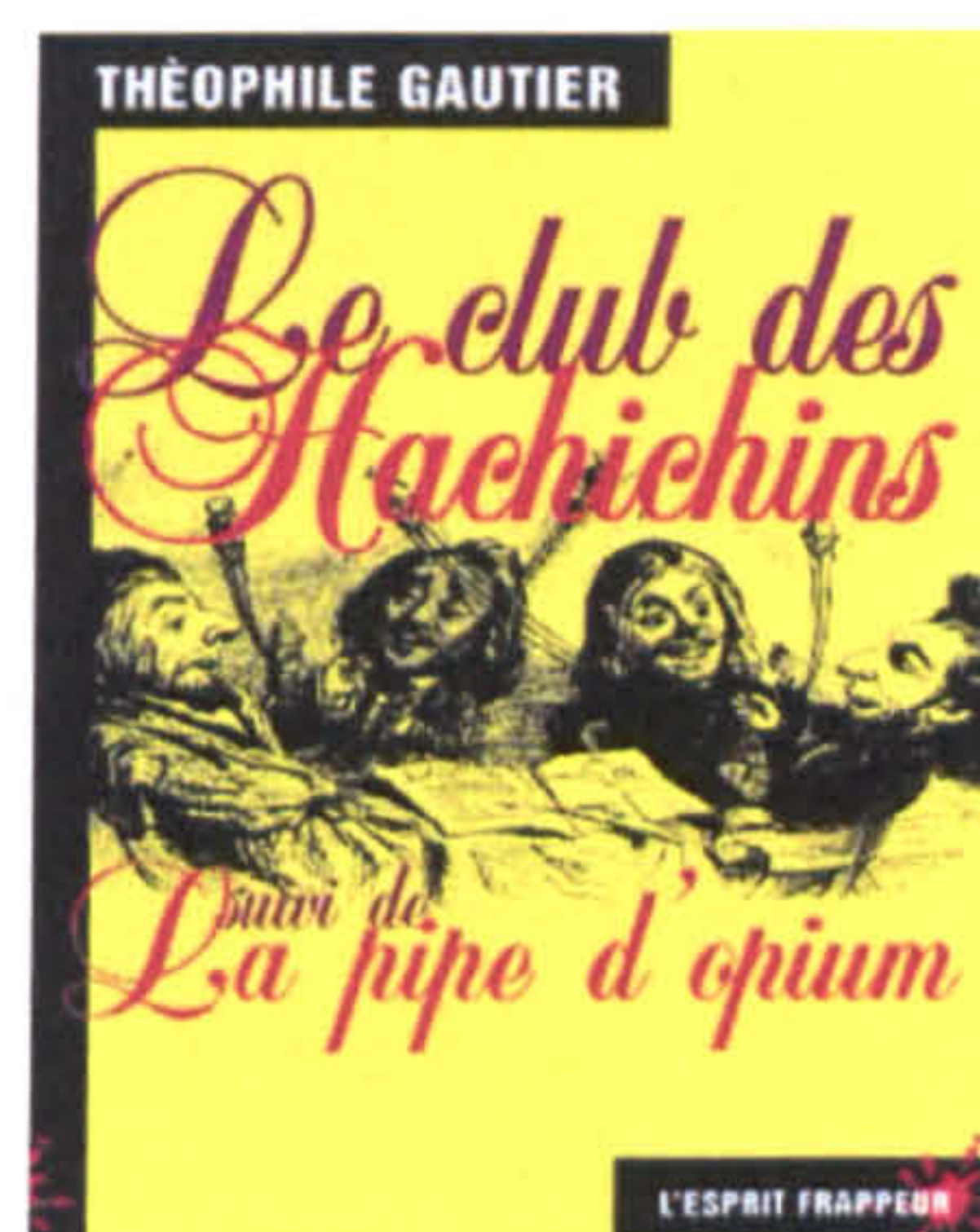
⁸⁷ In fact, the intoxicating properties of cannabis were related to the particular variety of *Cannabis indica* cultivated in Asia, where its intoxicating effects were common among the populations. There is also evidence for the recreational use of cannabis in the Greek and Roman cultures. A recreational consumption of cannabis seeds is attested first in the comic poet Ehippus in the fourth century BC and again in Galen in the second century ACE. See Butrica, J.L., (2002) "The medical use of cannabis among the Greeks and Romans" in *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* (2) (1): 51-70.

⁸⁸ In his analysis of the perception of cannabis use as part of the colonial rule of British in India, Mills argues that many of the practices of the local people were referred as 'barbaric' or 'savage'. This perception is associated with the colonialist view of the local cultures as inferior races. See Mills, J., (2000) *Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism*, New York: St. Martin's Press.

⁸⁹ Image source: <http://www.cannabinoid.com/boards/politics/media/35/35917.gif>

Thanks to this flourishing commerce cannabis, as well as other substances such as opium, became available in different parts of Europe. At this time, the buying and selling of these substances was regulated by traders who also imported other types of novelties from the colonies (Berridge, V. and Edwards, G., 1981).

By the nineteenth century, apart from traders, groups of artists and scientists became interested in the intoxicating effects of cannabis (Jay, M., 2002). In Paris and London, some groups of artists and writers became habitual users of hashish, and various books were published about their souls' journeys with the substance⁹⁰ (Boon, M., 2002).



Cover of The Hashish Club(91)

Their descriptions of using hashish varied. Some praised the effects of cannabis, whereas other writers acknowledged the dark side of those effects, citing less pleasurable experiences.⁹²

In nineteenth-century Britain, the perception of cannabis oscillated between two positions: although the medicinal properties of cannabis had been celebrated by some British in India (O'Shaughnessy, W., 1842), its use as an intoxicant became a preoccupation for temperance campaigners concerned about the spread of its use among people in the

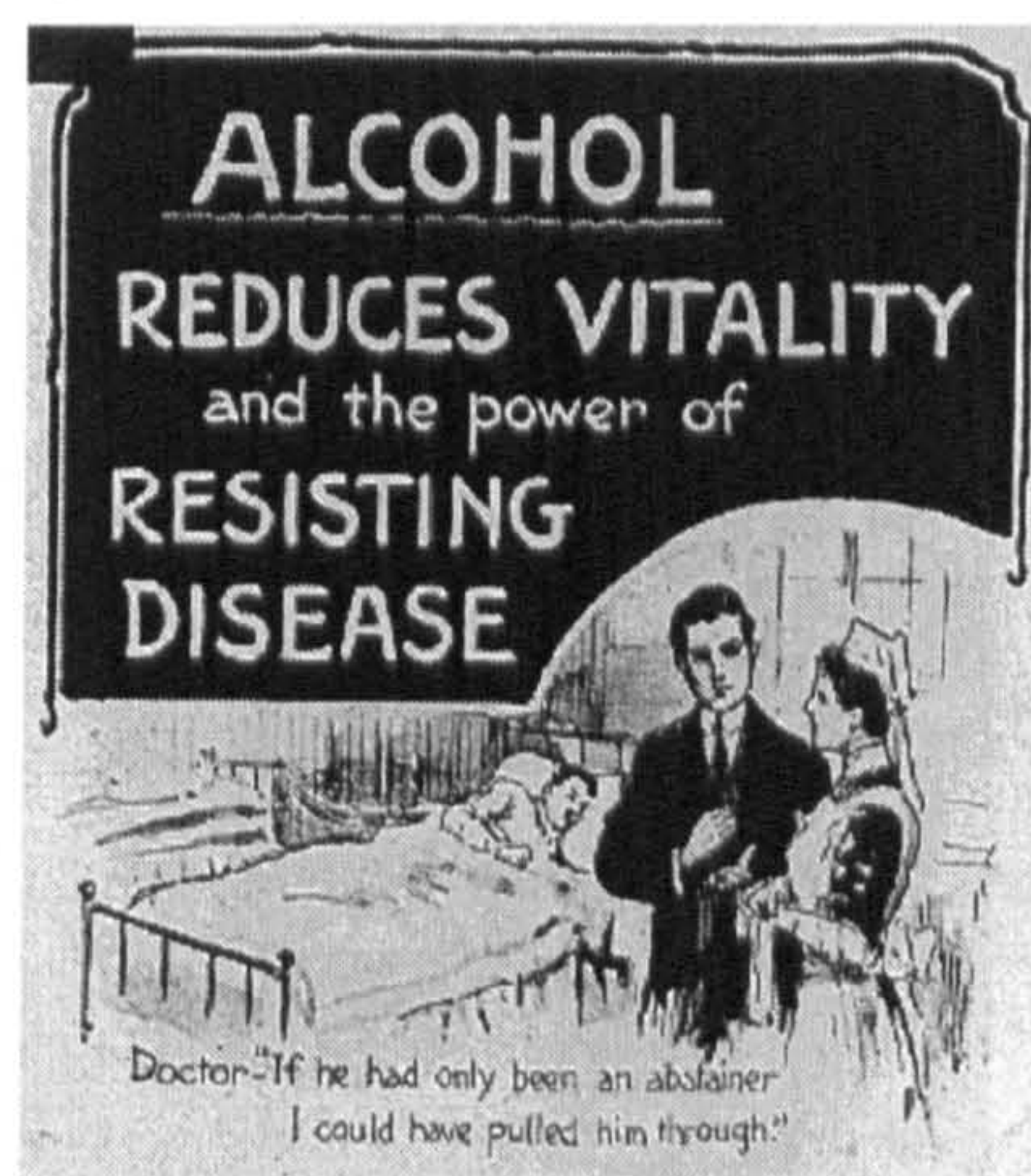
⁹⁰ The French physician Jacques Joseph Moreau remains the most widely cited connection between cannabis and the artistic community. While experimenting with hashish (cannabis resin) Moreau invited artists such as Théophile Gautier and Gerard de Nerval to take part in his experiments. Later, Gautier himself and other members of France's artistic community formed what became known as 'The Hashish Club' around 1845-46. See Earlywine, M., (2005) *Understanding Marijuana: A new look at the scientific evidence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁹¹ Image source: <http://www.agora-international.com/uploadp/EF006/EF006Hachichins.jpg>

⁹² Sadie Plant describes two interesting examples of the dark side of cannabis intoxication. In France, Charles Baudelaire objected to hashish on ethical and religious grounds, although it is also argued that it was his own inability to write while under the effect of drugs that underscored his disapproval. Baudelaire insisted that whereas 'wine heightens the power of the will', hashish annihilates it. Wine increases bodily vigour, hashish is a suicide weapon'. (p.42). In America, writer Fritz Hugh Ludlow had praised the effects of cannabis in a book entitled *The Hashish Eater* (1857). Ludlow became an enthusiastic student of hashish effects, but when it came to consigning hashish to his past, Ludlow was unable to do so. Plant, S., (1999) *Writing on Drugs*, London: Faber and Faber Publications.

colonies⁹³. This position was echoed on the other side of the Atlantic, where an increasing prohibition of drugs use began to influence the domestic and international politics of the United States of America (Musto, D., 1973).

It has been argued that the role of Temperance campaigners in the proscription of alcohol and other forms of intoxication influenced the political aspects of drug policy. In the United States and in England, Temperance Movements gained a prominent role in the moral disapproval of drugs and alcohol use (Bischke, P.M., 2003; Gusfield, J.R., 1963).



Temperance Propaganda ⁹⁴

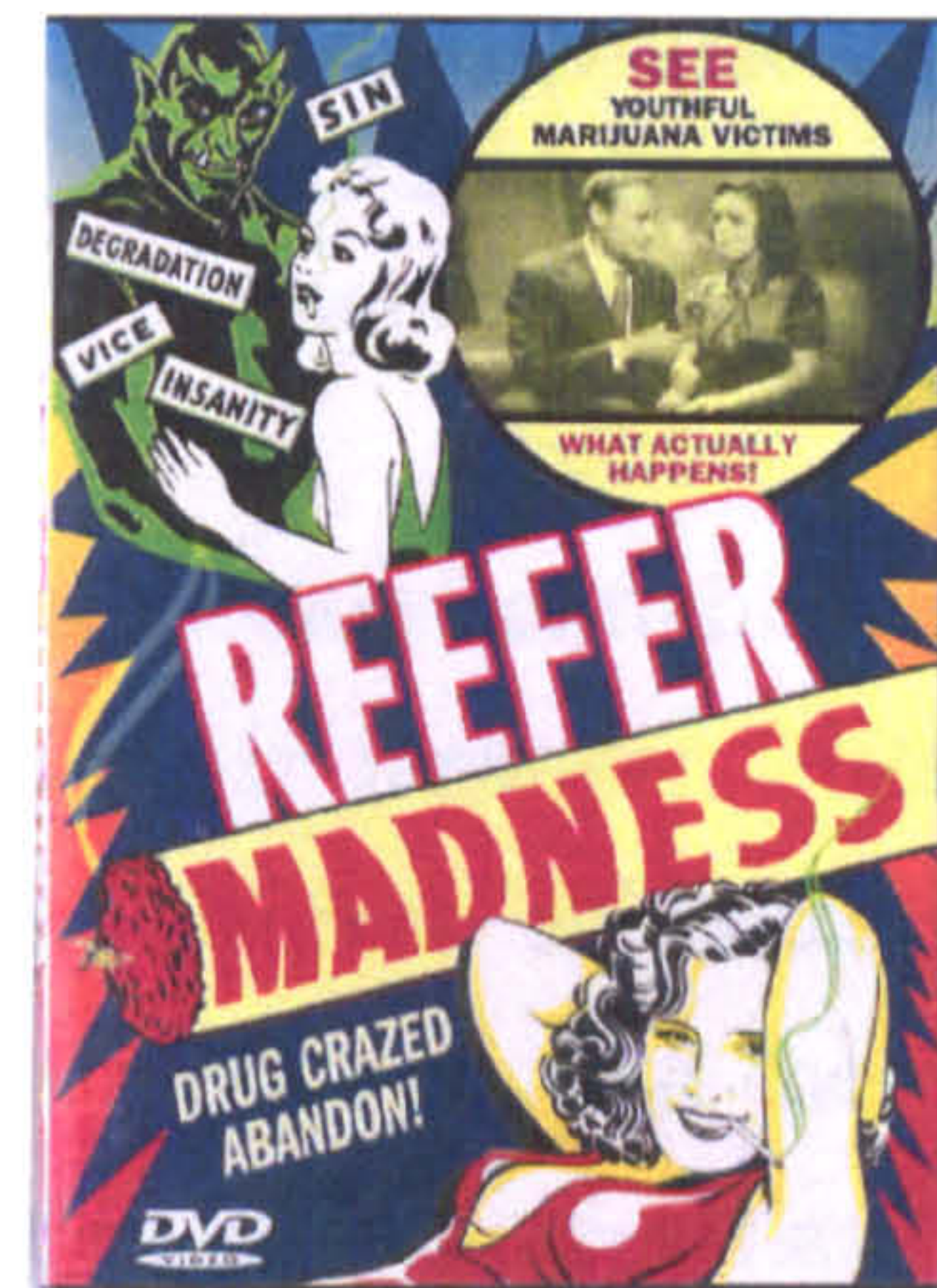
In addition to the moral proscription of certain substances, the medical view on drugs use played an important role in defining the issue of drugs. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the role of medical experts in the definition of drugs use as a matter of addiction, on the one hand, and as medical treatment, on the other, has influenced the approach to drugs during the twentieth century. In consequence, the notion of cannabis as an 'addictive' substance was easily transferred from other drugs such as opium and alcohol (Berridge, V., 1985; Levine, H.G., 1978; Seeley, J.R., 1962).

The moral proscription of inebriation from alcohol, adding to the medical problematisation of drugs use, resulted in the situation that many other substances such as cannabis were included in the category of dangerous drugs or poisons. However, cannabis was included in the list of illegal drugs to be regulated by the International Conventions only in 1926.

⁹³ The attitude against intoxication was developed along the lines of the proscription of inebriation and drunkenness. In Victorian England, Temperance Movements began to gain prominence in the social sphere, focusing their attentions on the moral degradation of those who gave themselves over to alcohol and other inebriants. See Walton, S., (2001) *Out of It: A cultural history of intoxication*, London: Penguin Books Ltd.

This action paved the way for further regulations about this substance in different countries (Kendell, R., 2003). In particular, during the 1930s the United States of America started increasingly anti-cannabis propaganda, while prominent federal officers publicised its harmful effects.

It was, for instance, said that cannabis was the source of all evil because it induced violence, weakened moral values and poisoned the human soul (Duster, T., 1970; Heath, D., 1996; Sloman, L.R., 1979).⁹⁵ In general, all of the anti-cannabis propaganda emphasised the overwhelming powers of cannabis to affect vulnerable victims.



Reefer Madness Poster⁹⁶

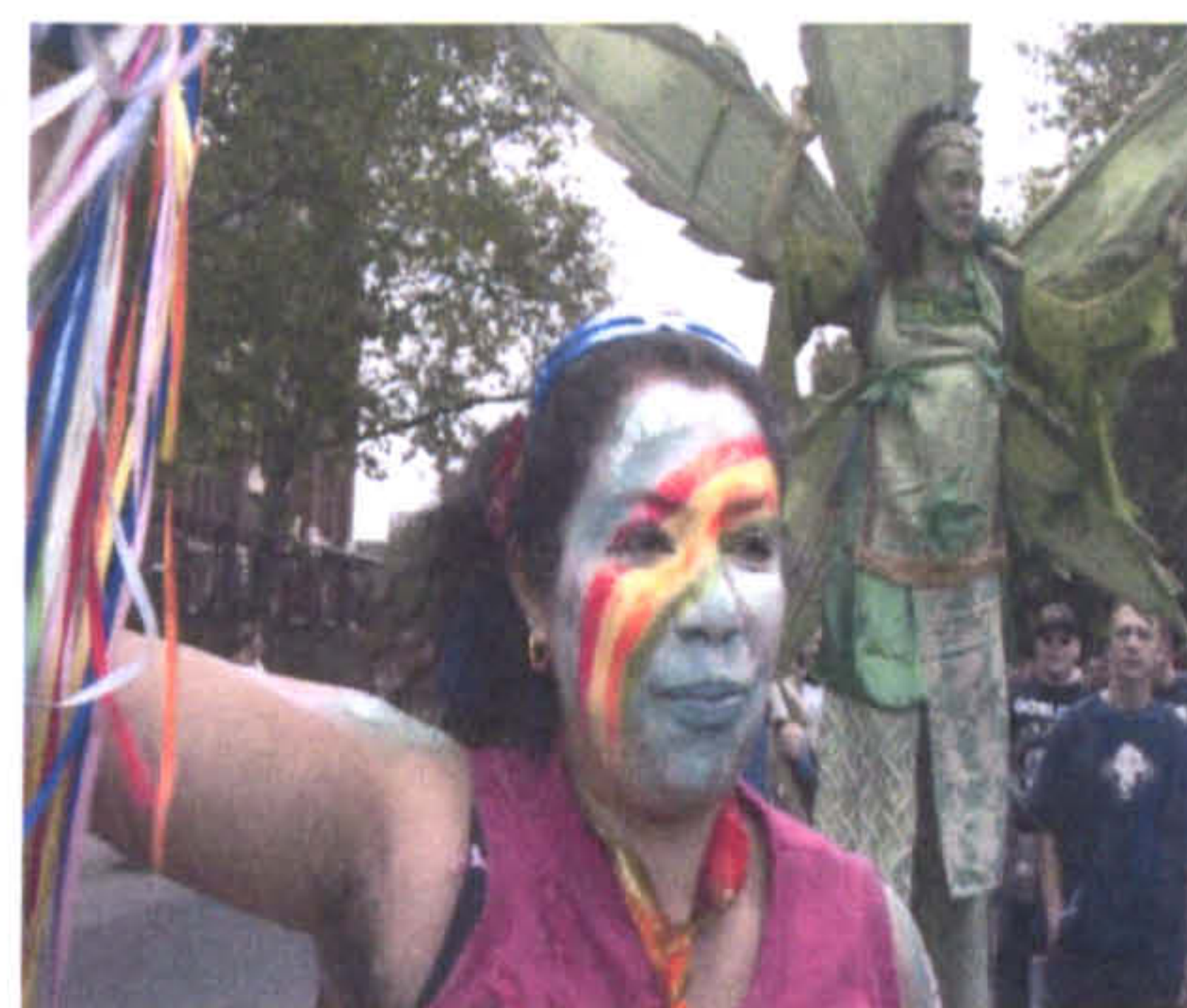
The medical models of drugs control in Britain deterred the stigmatisation of substances in the American style. Indeed, cannabis was not particularly a problem, since its use was limited to certain minorities of immigrants from the West Indies, and musicians (Kendell, R., 2003). For instance, some groups of Rastafarians from Jamaica used cannabis as part of their religious beliefs. Therefore, cannabis was associated with 'alien' cultures and Bohemian groups, all of them marginal to the mainstream society (Yates, R., 2002).

⁹⁴ Image source: <http://www.uclan.ac.uk/library/usersupport/lrs/collections/livesey/images/alcredvit.gif>

⁹⁵ During the 1930s and 1940s the proscription of cannabis was reinforced by effective propaganda promoted by Federal Agencies in the American Government. The director of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, Harry Anslinger, was particularly influential in the direction of the anti-marijuana movement in the United States. See Anslinger, H. and Ryley Cooper, C., (1937) 'Marijuana: Assassin of Youth', *American Magazine*

⁹⁶ Image source: <http://www.rapbay.com/catalog/images/reefer%20madness.jpg>

However, alongside changes in the social scenario, cannabis became the drug of option for the 1960s (Bewley, T., 2005). Some groups of young people and artists started to use cannabis as a symbol for spiritual change (Leary, T., 1970). It was used for relaxation, for socialisation, for recreation, and also as a spiritual relief.



Demonstration for the legalisation of cannabis, London, 2004

Indeed, musicians, film directors, and artists have made cannabis part of contemporary culture.⁹⁷ This perception of cannabis is, however, limited to certain social groups. The mainstream opinion is that cannabis is a harmful drug which brings a number of social problems, and therefore must remain prohibited (Jay, M., 2002). The negative evaluation has been reinforced by the international regulations on cannabis. As explained in Chapter 3, different conventions on drugs have shaped a legislative framework for national policies. By endorsing these conventions, countries around the world have agreed to enforce a prohibitionist approach to a list of drugs (Bruun, K. *et al.*, 1975). Trade in these substances is especially tightly regulated.

The economic dimension of drug trafficking has become a major preoccupation for many countries (Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1992). In the case of cannabis, it was mentioned that the plant can be cultivated in virtually every part of the world. Although it originally comes from Asia, nowadays the main producer countries are in North Africa; cannabis is increasingly being cultivated indoors in the Netherlands and other parts of Europe (INCB 2002; 2003).

⁹⁷ Many examples from popular music, art, literature, and the cinema can be included in this analysis. For example, it is possible to find more than 500 films in which cannabis is represented. See Day, K., (1999) *Marijuana in the Movies: The complete guide to the Hollywood High*, San Francisco: Media Green Press. For general further information about cannabis and popular culture, see Shapiro, H., (1999) *Waiting for the Man : The story of drugs and popular music*, London: Helter Skelter; Shapiro, H., (2003) *Shooting Stars: Drugs, Hollywood and the Movies*, London: Serpent's Tail; Matthews, P., (1999) *Cannabis Culture: A Journey through Disputed Territory*, London: Bloomsbury.

In the United Kingdom, it is argued that home-grown cannabis represents almost 50 per cent of the market (Hough, M. *et al.*, 2003). It is conventionally accepted that these countries will enforce action against drug trafficking, while a certain room for manoeuvre is permitted in the case of the respective domestic legislations regarding possession (Dorn, N. and Jamieson, A., 2000). As a result, some countries, such as Portugal, the Netherlands or Canada, have tried to adjust their regulations according to their own contexts without jeopardising the main commitments in international conventions and agreements.

However, in most of the countries signatory to such agreements, the main approach is the prohibition of drugs; the variable element is the intensity of the enforcement. In other words, drugs are considered illegal in all of the ratifying countries, yet some can choose to be more or less severe in the application of the law (Van het Loo, M. *et al.*, 2003). For example, Sweden exhibits a zero tolerance approach to drugs, and it is considered a major social problem to be addressed by the criminal justice system and the treatment agencies (Boekhout Van Solinge, T., 1997). In contrast, the Netherlands have modified their approach to drugs by dividing them into two groups: soft and hard drugs (De Kort, M., 1994; Uitermark, J., 2004; Van de Wijngaart, G.F., 1990).⁹⁸ Cannabis belongs to the group of soft drugs and although illegal, its penalties are mainly administrative sanctions that may or may not be applied, based on the perception of the individual police officer.⁹⁹

In the European context, these two positions have polarised the debate about a potential integration of drugs policies at the European Union level (Boekhout Van Solinge, T., 2002). Some countries such as Spain and

⁹⁸ For a general approach to drugs policy including cannabis and heroin, drinking and smoking in the Dutch political culture, see Korf, D.J., (1995) *Dutch Treat: Formal control and illicit drug use in the Netherlands*, Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers Amsterdam. For the European context, see Boekhout van Solinge, T., (1999) "Dutch Drug Policy in a European Context", *Journal of Drug Issues* (29) (3): 511-599.

⁹⁹ A number of works can be referred to in studying Dutch drugs policy. For an historical account of the conditions and contexts in which decisions in drug policy were produced see Boekhout van Solinge, T., (1999) "Dutch Drug Policy in a European Context", *Journal of Drug Issues* (29) (3): 511-599; Abraham, M., Kaal, H. and Cohen, P., (2001) *Licit and Illicit Drug Use in the Netherlands 2001*, Amsterdam: CEDRO-Mets and Schilt; Fromberg, E., (1993) *Dutch Drug Policy: Past, present and future*. Presented at the 17th Conference on Drug Policy Reform, Washington: 17-20 November, 1993 (mimeo).

Portugal have endorsed a less punitive approach to drugs, while France has opted for criminalisation of drug use.

In this context, the United Kingdom seems to be 'sitting on the fence' between these options. One reason is related to British history of drugs regulation as regards the medical approach towards drug use, combined with an increasing criminalisation of the practice. Similarly to many other countries in Europe, the United Kingdom has witnessed the increasing demand of certain social groups for a revision of cannabis policy. However, as will be presented in this thesis, the mainstream opinion regards cannabis as a dangerous threat to society; therefore, prohibition remains the official response to such demands.

In fact, as the rich picture shows, the controversy over '*What is cannabis?*' is a very difficult one, since it involves many definitions. The debate about cannabis represents the way in which different perceptions emerge in the political discussion, as is presented in this section. The current legislation supports the idea of cannabis as a dangerous drug that needs to be controlled, yet the debate about its re-classification has been confronted with widely divergent arguments. In simple terms, the debate is between those who argue about its harmful consequences, and those who for whatever reasons defend their right to use cannabis. These two positions represent the extremes in the 'perception' of cannabis. On the one hand, it is possible to see how some regard it positively (i.e., as a remedy), and others emphasise its negative aspects (i.e., as a poison). There are, of course, many shades and interpretations between these extremes. The use of Soft Systems Methodology for the purpose of this thesis will show how these positions can be unfolded and developed in detail. The following section describes one possible means of distinguishing different world-views of the controversial situation.

5.1.4. Speaking about cannabis: Interviews and stakeholders

During the process of collecting material for this dissertation, the researcher came across a number of opinions, actors, experts, and messages from the British news.¹⁰⁰ Many of these opinions on cannabis are related to the divergence in the considerations of cannabis either as a remedy or as a poison. Nonetheless, the media items seem to favour certain actors above others, thus some opinions on cannabis are prevalent over others. The task of the researcher has, in consequence, been to balance the types of opinions to be included in this investigation. As a general criterion, the purpose has been to give equal weight to each of these opinions, regardless of whether the opinion comes from a public officer, a police officer, a public servant, a user, parents, or campaigners at the more local level. As mentioned before, in order to ensure the fulfilment of this purpose the researcher included a number of actors normally ignored by the mainstream media. In addition, a number of interviews with experts who played a significant role in the decision making on cannabis were obtained. The aim was to include all of these opinions, neither editing nor pre-selecting in order to convey a particular message. The opinions are thus neither supporting nor opposing any particular view about cannabis; rather, the diversity of views on this matter represents the richness of this research and its originality. The testimonies and transcriptions have not been subjected to analysis; nor has it been the intention to decipher their possible hidden meanings. Instead, the opinions are transcribed without editorial amendment; the purpose of this subsection is thus to highlight the diversity of opinions on cannabis taken both from face-to-face interviews and from a regular reading of the daily news.

Interestingly, it is possible to relate opinions on cannabis to the historical description already presented. In this way, certain views on cannabis may be determined, pointing out ritual uses of cannabis, and its economic and political aspects. As stated by Carl Wagner, candidate for the Legalise Cannabis Alliance political party in Hull:

Cannabis is a divine herb; it is also very versatile. It is material for fuel and it can replace oil and petrol, so it is a menace to the oil industry. Also, it is a source of fibre and plastic; that is also big business. Cannabis is a material for fabric, it is a medicine, it helps you to relax, it makes you a happier person, it does not carry the risks of alcohol... It is a plant made by God, there is no logical reason to make it illegal.¹⁰¹

Although emphasis has been laid on the ritual uses of cannabis from a historical approach or related to certain ethnic groups, the ritual meaning of using cannabis can be found in contemporary communities. For example, in the United Kingdom, the Universal Church of the Holy and Sacred Herb, founded in 1998, regards cannabis as central to the beliefs of its adherents.¹⁰² One of its leaders, Jack Girling, refers to the use of cannabis thus:

The use of cannabis is not a criminal activity, it is a spiritual activity, and on that basis the law has nothing to do with it.¹⁰³

Apart from these uses of cannabis to relieve the soul, the researcher had the opportunity to talk to people who use cannabis for medicinal reasons. The case of Chris Baldwyn, cannabis campaigner and owner of a failed coffee shop is relevant. Mr. Baldwyn suffers from semi-paralysed legs; he lives with his mother, aged 84, who also has a medical condition. Both use cannabis for medical reasons:

I have a lower back injury, and I started smoking cannabis many years ago for fun, but I discovered along the way, I discovered that my leg spasm, that can be bad, in other words my legs can twitch, can go away when I am smoking cannabis. ... After a time we decided to open a coffee shop. There was a lot of people who came in with different medical conditions; people with Multiple Sclerosis, another guy came with his legs and arms completely twitching, and I put a vaporiser, a bong, in his mouth, and in a matter of one or two

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix 3: Summary of Interviews and Conversations for this research.

¹⁰¹ Informal conversations with Carl Wagner, Trinity Market in Hull. November 2004. Research Notes by B. Acevedo.

¹⁰² Although this Church is not recognised officially, they operate under the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The group is based in Norwich, United Kingdom.

¹⁰³ Interview on 20 October 2005. Transcribed by B. Acevedo.

minutes his arms that were twitching were relaxed... Cannabis made an enormous difference.¹⁰⁴

The recreational use of cannabis is represented in the media, popular culture, music, films, etc. This use seems to be common to certain groups of young people who smoke cannabis as part of their activities of socialisation and going out. Far from being pushed by peer pressure to do so, they seem to enjoy discernment over the type of effect they want to achieve by smoking a certain type of cannabis. When asked about which effects they seek when using cannabis, one of the interviewees said:

I prefer to get mellow, but being serious, you don't get too much good weed, so, then skunk is the alternative... skunk really tastes nicer and smells nice as well, and it is more easy accessible.¹⁰⁵

The view of cannabis as a recreational substance for a certain group of people has been widely accepted by more mainstream actors. The independent inquiry into cannabis commissioned by the Police Foundation (Runciman, 1999) acknowledges the use of cannabis for recreational and medicinal reasons. Furthermore, some police officers acknowledge that the use of cannabis can, regarding certain people, be labelled as a non-problematic use, taking into account that its use is limited to weekends or to dancing activities. As expressed by a senior police officer, this acknowledgement may have been one of the reasons for the revision of the status of cannabis by means of its re-classification:

At the end of the day, it seems that there are people who are capable of working in a job having some cannabis, maybe during the weekends. And after that they go back to their jobs.¹⁰⁶

For some, using cannabis as a recreational activity may eventually itself become a source of revenue. Within the same group of young people, it was possible to interview a 'social dealer', a person who usually brings

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Chris Baldwyn. Cannabis campaigner, Worthing, 18-19 November 2004. Interview and transcription by B. Acevedo.

¹⁰⁵ Group Interview. Participants 21-25 years old. Hull, 12 May 2004. Interview and Research Notes by B. Acevedo. Skunk is a type of cannabis cultivated by hydroponics and with higher concentration of THC.

cannabis to the other members of the group. In his own words, this activity is part of his social activities, and it also provides a certain form of income. As expressed by the interviewee:

It is fun. Normally, people ring on Friday night, and I get there and stay partying. People are nice with you because they know you have the stuff. Sometimes I do not make much money on it. In fact, the money thing depends on whether you smoke or not. That's the issue: 'don't get high from your own supply'. [laughs]¹⁰⁷

In addition to this view on 'dealing' with cannabis, there are other views in which the motives are referred as a compassionate, almost charitable activity. As expressed by Jeffrey Ditchfield:

[It is] a bigger priority and a bigger need to provide cannabis for medicinal users rather than recreational use. We don't sell cannabis, we give it away. We asked growers to grow for us, we also grow it ourselves, and we say to them, 'if you get arrested we can back you in court'...¹⁰⁸

In contrast to these views of a recreational, ritual or medicinal use of cannabis, the majority of opinions from mainstream sources express their concern about reforms on the current legislation given the links between cannabis and violence, mental health and social problems. These views are widely illustrated by news items and confirmed by some of the interviews for this research. For example, news items during the period of this research emphasised the relationship between the use of cannabis and violent behaviour. In the case of the murderer of teenager Jodi Jones, it was said that her boyfriend "accused of murdering school girl Jodie Jones smoked the equivalent of 600 cannabis joints a week."¹⁰⁹

Some other news during that period emphasised this link. However, at the street level the preoccupation of the authorities and police officers is not

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Brian Paddick, 6 June 2004. Scotland Yard, London. Interview and transcription by B. Acevedo

¹⁰⁷ John (not his real name), a 'social dealer', Hull, 12 May 2004. Transcription by B. Acevedo.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Jeffrey Ditchfield. Rhyl (Wales), 22 February 2005. Interview and transcription by B. Acevedo.

¹⁰⁹ *Daily Mail*, 21 January 2004, 'Jodi's mother talks'.

necessarily with cannabis and violence, but how cannabis can be a 'gateway' drug to the use of harder substances. As expressed by some:

As a policeman working from the 1970s, I can say I know about the misery of drugs. Here in the office, in that drawer, I have plenty of death cases caused by heroin that could have been treated if - since the very beginning of the problem; it means, to have been tackled as teenagers. The problem with cannabis is that it makes people to try harder and more dangerous substances.¹¹⁰

At a more domestic level, there has been an increasing preoccupation by parents and families regarding the effects of cannabis in relation to youngsters' mental health. The British media have increasingly reported about a possible 'cannabis psychosis'; parents have expressed their concern about a cannabis ten or twenty times stronger than that they used to know in the 1960s and '70s. However, at the time of this research, the group of parents interviewed were not necessarily worried about 'cannabis psychosis'; their concern was about the fact of the illegality of cannabis use and the risks to youngsters of smoking cannabis and being arrested. In informal conversations with parents the following opinion was registered:

We are quite concerned about my son smoking cannabis. We know what he is doing with his friends in the garage, but we prefer him to smoke at home rather than in the park where he can be caught by the police. We know it is not good, and we hope this is just a phase and when he enters college he will stop smoking.¹¹¹

Some other parents expressed their concern about the necessity of talking honestly to youngsters, and also to provide some other alternative forms of entertainment which do not involve drug use. For instance, a group of parents against drugs based in Hull – DADs: Dads Against Drugs - proposed football games as an excuse to talk about drugs and to dissuade youngsters from using them. Youngsters know about drugs and they have their own opinions about them, which seems central to the issue:

¹¹⁰ Interview with Geoff Ogden, Drug Action Team Coordinator East Riding Yorkshire. April, 2003. Notes by B. Acevedo.

¹¹¹ Informal conversation with parents in Hull. December 2004. Notes by B. Acevedo.

My son is studying history at the university. One day, we engaged in a discussion about drugs and alcohol. He and his friends were arguing that alcohol can be more harmful than drugs such as 'marijuana'. I said 'you may be right, but drugs in general are very harmful', and I can tell that because I worked as a nurse and I have seen many people coming to the hospital because of a drugs overdose.¹¹²

Furthermore, some parents are increasingly concerned about the emergence of a new type of mental condition associated with cannabis, as has been expressed in the newspapers, and also in public events associated with cannabis. For example, at the Cannabis Festival in Brixton (London, June 2004) a 'mother' went up on stage to present her opinion on cannabis. She denounced the dangers of cannabis, arguing that she used to have a tolerant opinion of cannabis until the day her son developed schizophrenia, and she realised that it could have been triggered by 'skunk', twenty times stronger than common weed; now, she asks for attention to be paid by other young people, for them to become aware of this possible risk.¹¹³

In this respect, newspapers and mainstream sources seem to agree on a judgement of cannabis: that it is dangerous. In this perception, any attempt to reform the legislation on this subject is seen as being 'softly softly' on drugs, or as being influenced by a menacing 'pot-lobby'. As expressed by journalist Melanie Philips when referring to the decision on re-classifying cannabis:

As David Blunkett contemplates the chaos and fury triggered by his decision to downgrade the law on cannabis, he could do worse than consider the case of Dominique Lansdowne. Eleven years ago, when she was 18, the former care assistant from Swansea started

¹¹² Interview with Rob Broomfield – DADs: Dads against Drugs - 24 April 2004. Hull. Notes and transcription by B. Acevedo.

¹¹³ From the research notes of B. Acevedo: Cannabis Festival, Brixton, 4 June 2004: "In another tent there were different people talking about cannabis. Different speakers were expressing their opinions. A young lad was very enthusiastic in his 'preaching' style. After that, Mary, a 'mother', spoke about the links between cannabis and schizophrenia in her son; and she was really brave in front of a crowd who was at the time smoking grass. I thought about her participation in a Festival where everybody was smoking grass openly. I felt sad for her son; however, it was a bit odd, the fact that she was not expressing so much emotion in her speech. Later on, I saw her rushing through the park as if on a mission, and I thought, maybe she is a professional mother: playing the role of parents on the festival scene." B. Acevedo, Observation, London.

smoking cannabis once a week. It very nearly destroyed her. ... The Home Secretary's move has delighted the drug legalisers – but astonished and horrified those, like Dominique, who know the truth about its effects.¹¹⁴

Although there are undeniable effects of cannabis use on the behaviour and health of those who use it, the opinions of some stakeholders must be balanced with those of the users - where these are different individuals. As presented before, they may differ in the type of effect or experience derived from using cannabis. Without trying to prove the veracity of one or other statement, this research aims to include the variety and the sometimes contradictory diversity of opinions on this matter.

Being such a controversial issue, it is also important to find out about the reasons, as expressed by the British government, inspiring the proposal to re-classify cannabis. As part of this background, a pragmatic experiment regarding the penalisation of the use of cannabis was being tried in the Lambeth District in London. Commonly known as the 'Lambeth Experiment', it could have influenced the view of the government on the topic of cannabis. Due to the importance of this experiment, and the influence that it could have had on the decision of re-classification it deserves a bit more attention for the analysis:

The Lambeth Experiment, in the Brixton area of London, consisted of a pilot experiment in which the issue of cannabis was to be addressed by police in an alternative way to usual police procedure. The core of this measure proposed that the police would issue a warning, instead of initiating prosecution procedures against cannabis offences:

The six-month pilot scheme began in the borough of Lambeth on the 2nd of July 2001, allowing officers to issue warnings for small amounts of cannabis for personal uses. Under this pilot, the officer

¹¹⁴ Phillips, Melanie, *Daily Mail*, 26 January 2004: 'Cannabis Catastrophe', pp. 10-12.

confiscates cannabis and issues a warning, enabling the officer to return to street patrol more quickly than if a person was arrested.¹¹⁵

The evaluation of the experience was carried out by two institutions: an independent evaluation by The Police Foundation (2002), and through the internal report of the Metropolitan Police. Both reports highlighted the outcome of saving police time by applying this scheme. In the opinion of the leader of this initiative, Police Commander Brian Paddick, support for the scheme was conditioned by its effectiveness in dealing with more serious crime:

We surveyed the community by MORI and the Police Foundation. Eighty-three per cent of people said that they conditionally or unconditionally supported the experiment. Those who conditionally agreed did so on the condition that the police concentrated on more serious crime and that levels of serious crime came down as a result. Both of these things happened.¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, there was some confusion regarding what exactly the measure implied. For example, nearly thirty-seven per cent of people asked in this survey believed - inaccurately - that the police would 'let people off for possession of cannabis'; six per cent of the interviewees thought that cannabis had been legalised. However, it was acknowledged that this practice could have contributed to improving the relationship between the community (with a high percentage of a young Black population) and the police during the experiment.

In fact, what Commander Paddick intended to do was to attend to the local necessities expressed by the community. In an interview with the researcher, he emphasised that the experiment was implemented within a particular set of conditions at that time in the Lambeth borough. He and his team noticed specifically that, firstly, local courts were dealing with cases of cannabis possession and use by issuing minor sentences; secondly,

¹¹⁵ Results of the Lambeth cannabis pilot evaluation, 21 March 2002. Quotation from Deputy Assistant Commissioner Michael Fuller. http://www.met.police.uk/pns/DisplayPN.dgl?on_id=2002_0010. Accessed 4 June 2004.

¹¹⁶ Former Police Commander Brian Paddick, Scotland Yard, London, 6 June 2004. Interview and Transcription by B. Acevedo.

that the problems within the community were actually related to more serious crime than to the use of cannabis; finally, there was a shortage of police resources. At the end of the experiment, it was demonstrated that by simply issuing a warning on cannabis offences, six hours of police officers' time per case could be saved.

However, in spite of the apparent support for the measure from the residents, local and national newspapers reported on an increase in drugs dealing in the area. The Conservative Party attacked the scheme by defining it as a 'disaster'.¹¹⁷ Other journalists added to the controversy the 'detail' of Commander Paddick's homosexuality, suggesting that this could have influenced his 'softly softly' approach to cannabis regulation.¹¹⁸

To summarise, it is possible to see two contradictory streams as forming the context for the discussion on cannabis. On the one hand, the context of change and the social opinion expressed in some of the media were favourable to reviewing the law on cannabis; on the other, there were an increasing criminalisation of social problems and the negative reaction of some sectors of public opinion regarding initiatives for reviewing cannabis legislation. These streams correspond to the trends regarding both a negative and a positive evaluation of cannabis issues.

The influence of these events at the time of the announcement by the Home Secretary supported the re-classification based on two reasons: firstly, as a way of updating the legislation and secondly, aiming to save resources that could be re-directed to fight other, harder drugs such as

¹¹⁷ See Appendix 2: Background: No.4 "Tories Condemn Brixton Cannabis Scheme" (*The Guardian* 9 July 2002) and No. 5: Tories Attack Cannabis Pilot (*BBC on Line*, 8 July 2002).

¹¹⁸ The controversy exploded when an ex-boyfriend of Paddick told the tabloids that he used to smoke cannabis in front of Paddick in the apartment they shared. Melanie Philips from the *Daily Mail* wrote that "Paddick is an icon for our morally inverted, decadent times... The fact that such a man could be a senior police officer shows how sick this society has become. At its root lies a collapse of belief in morality and in the law by the political and intellectual class... our drug and violent crime problems are out of control because we tolerate them while our maverick police officers, decadent intelligentsia and pusillanimous politicians remain part of the very problem over which they shed crocodile tears". *Daily Mail*, 18 March 2003. In reaction to these accusations, Paddick was removed from his post. Nevertheless, the social support for Paddick demanded a revision of this decision by the Police, with the result that Paddick was not only reinstated to the force: he was also promoted. As a marginal comment, it must be said that throughout this research many references to 'drugs' and 'homosexuality' have been found in different news items. It seems that despite the legality of homosexuality and the apparent liberality of British society, these concepts remained linked as deviant practices. A further investigation to examine these connections is highly desirable.

cocaine and heroin. As expressed by a public servant from the Home Office interviewed for this research:

The re-classification of cannabis is related to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, and the three types of drugs. When the Home Secretary announced the idea he consulted three areas: the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs, a Select Committee at the House of Commons, and the experiment in the South of London. Based on the Lambeth experiment it was seen that police instead of arresting for cannabis could use their time in fighting other drugs or more difficult crime... It is possible, then, that the re-classification of cannabis can help to save resources and to be more strategic in the drugs policy.¹¹⁹

As will be analysed in Chapter Six, other statements from the government seem to support this view on saving resources and on responding to demands regarding the efficiency and efficacy of the drugs policy. However, the government has emphasised that this does not mean a 'softly softly' approach to drugs, yet is a way of tackling a controversial practice that may avoid the criminalisation of otherwise law-abiding citizens.

All of these opinions, normally aired behind closed doors, became visible during the public discussion about cannabis and its re-classification. Many endorse a negative perception of cannabis, based on its effects on physical and mental health; yet the general view of cannabis is linked to crime and violence. In contrast, emerging appreciations of cannabis refer to its recreational uses and medicinal properties. The inclusion of these alternative views on cannabis in this dissertation represents one significant contribution made by this research. As stated before, it is neither the intention of this research to prove the veracity of these statements, nor to judge whether they make any type of sense, but to provide a rich picture of the situation in terms of the diversity and divergence of opinions regarding this topic. In this research it was possible to gather different views not only from the mainstream sources, but also from people who hold opinions on this topic.

The research is, particularly, allowing equal validity to these different opinions on cannabis, regardless of the relative places in a 'hierarchy' or the respective 'power' of the people who express them. In the view of the researcher, the opinion of a cannabis user is as relevant as is the opinion of a police officer, although these two views may conflict. Some other issues about power started to emerge throughout the process of investigation, as will be explained later in this chapter¹²⁰. The challenge for this research is thus to find a way in which these views are given equal weight, since all of them contribute to an enhanced understanding of the problem. Indeed, it is necessary to find a way of organising the diversity of these statements, as an archaeologist sorts his/her artefacts and thus findings. The next section suggests a way to organise the information about cannabis by identifying trends or common perceptions about the topic. Acknowledging the stages in the Soft Systems Methodology, this phase corresponds to the naming and identification of relevant systems.

5.2. Relevant systems

5.2.1. Identifying systems relevant to cannabis

In the previous section a rich picture of the situation of cannabis was presented. In basic terms, it was proposed that the perceptions of cannabis tend to be located between the positive and the negative extremes. By exploring this tension, it is possible to develop the second stage of the Methodology, related to naming some systems which appear relevant to the problem situation (see Checkland, P., 1999: 164). SSM proposes that a useful way of identifying relevant systems will emphasise the world-view about the situation perceived as problematic. In this way, it is possible to identify a number of typical discourses about cannabis. They constitute those which in the Methodology are called the 'relevant systems' present in the rich picture of the situation. As suggested before, it is possible to identify some tensions in the definition of cannabis.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Jeremy Sare, Home Office, 29 September 2004. Interview and notes, B. Acevedo.

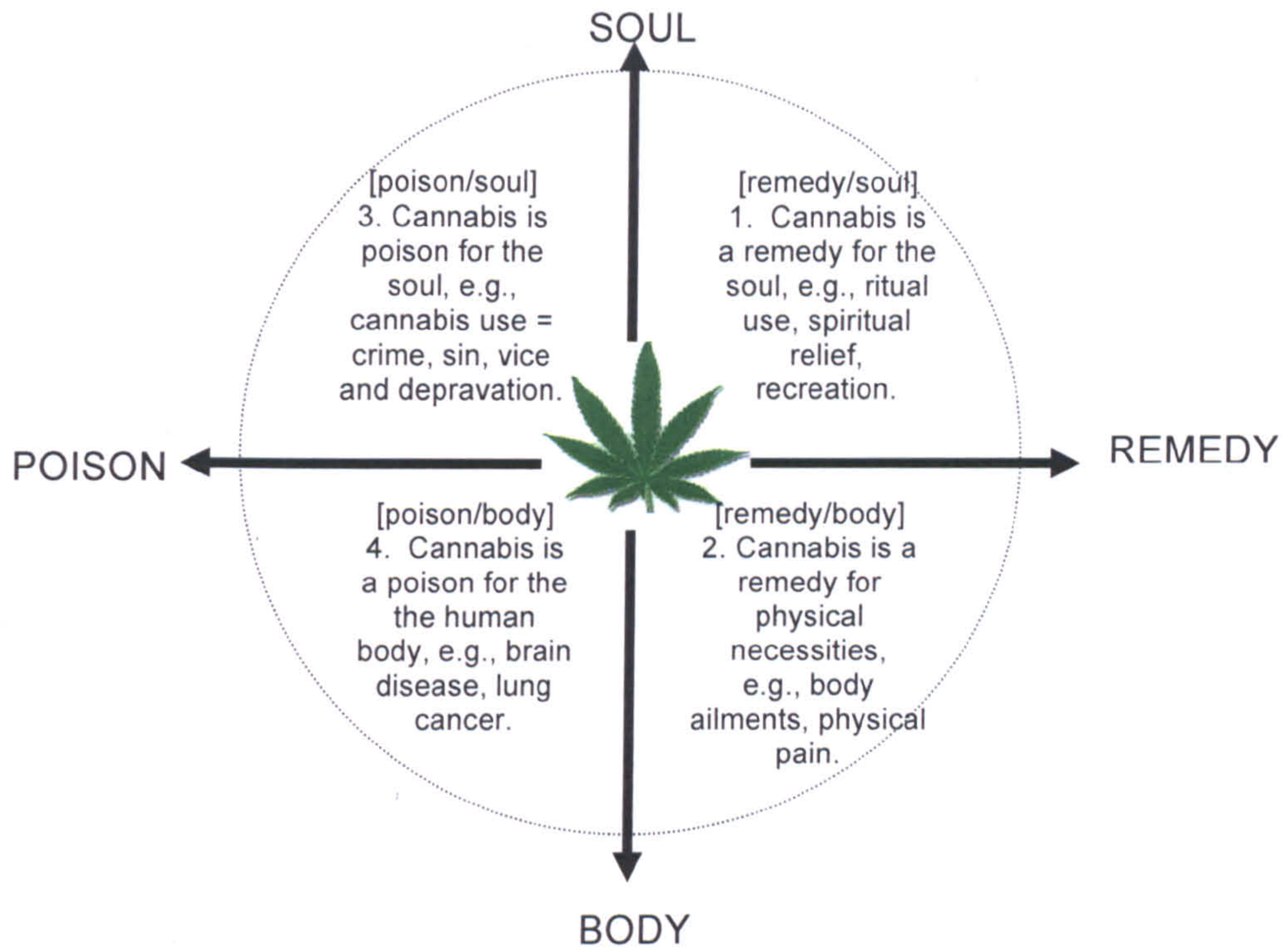
¹²⁰ See Section 5.4. Power issues emerging from the research process.

On the one hand, it was demonstrated that, historically, cannabis has been regarded as a beneficial plant. It has been used as a herbal remedy for a number of ailments. In addition, cannabis has been included as an important element in ancient rituals. In more contemporary times, cannabis is used for recreational purposes, for spiritual relief, or as a mood enhancer. These opinions refer to positive uses of cannabis intended for different realms of human life. To summarise: cannabis can be claimed as being appreciated as a **remedy** for bodily illnesses, and that it can also be used as remedy for the human soul. On the other hand, it was also stated that the complex pharmacology of cannabis can have negative consequences for human health. Evidence has shown that cannabis smoking can be a cause of lung and heart diseases. Indeed, the consequences of cannabis use affect primarily the human brain, manifested in drug addiction and other mental illnesses.

Apart from the effects on the body, it has been argued that cannabis can pervert moral values or that it can provoke violence and crime. As demonstrated above, the anti-cannabis propaganda has pointed out that cannabis use is related to 'vice', 'immorality', 'depravation', or 'sin'. In other words, that cannabis is a **poison** for the body and the soul. It has been shown that two different binary tensions exist. Firstly, the effects of cannabis can be described as either 'remedy' or as 'poison'.¹²¹ The second binary is related to the realms of a person, divided between 'body' and 'soul'. Bringing together these binaries it is possible to draw a matrix for different combinations of these categories. The result can be illustrated as follows:

¹²¹ In fact, the definition of cannabis as either a remedy or a poison can be traced back in the origin of the word *pharmakon* in the designation of drugs. As stated by Derrida [Derrida, J., (1981). *Dissemination*. London: The Atholone Press, Ltd.] the double meaning of the term '*pharmakon*' which in Greek can mean both 'remedy' and 'poison' can be considered as a possible cause for the modern denomination of drugs.

Figure 5: Representation of Discourses on Cannabis



By unfolding the four quadrants of the matrix, it is possible to identify a number of relevant systems, or typical discourses about cannabis in general.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the purpose of this exercise is not to moderate the reality of cannabis; nor is it to impose concepts through which it is supposed that reality must behave. Instead, the identification of relevant systems will help us to create models, as ideal types, aimed at organising the different world-views on cannabis. Indeed, it is expected that the identification of relevant systems can provide a basis for the construction of different Root Definitions assisting in the clarification of the topic. As a consequence, the next step is to develop the possible manifestation of the different combination of remedy and poison, acting in the realm of the body and soul. The following section will explore the different possibilities.

5.2.2. Naming relevant systems

Based on the figure presented above, it is possible to identify four quadrants, in which the combination of the two properties of cannabis - as a poison or as a remedy - can be analysed in their actions regarding the two realms of human life: body and soul. By developing each quadrant relevant systems may be determined, in the form of typical discourses regarding the topic of cannabis. The relevant systems may thus be named. In the first quadrant, the relation remedy for the soul is highlighted. Here, the thesis is referring to the spiritual uses of cannabis, both at the ritual level in some religions or certain communities, and as part of the identity of the group. In addition, the use of cannabis is mentioned as a recreational substance used as a mood enhancer, stress reliever or just as a practice of spending 'time out'. These world-views can be summarised as follows:

1. The use of cannabis as part of the rituals in religious communities;
2. The use of cannabis as related to recreational activities.

The second quadrant refers to the positive effects of cannabis in the human body. In particular, the rich picture highlighted the fact that, historically, cannabis has been used as a remedy for a number of physical ailments. Indeed, the medicinal use of cannabis has become an important argument in favour of the use of this substance, although this is still illegal in many countries. In addition to the physical effects of using the substance, it might be possible to add another, less direct use of cannabis for the human body. For instance, people who cultivate or distribute cannabis may argue economic reasons for their activity, in terms of alleviating a material necessity. In this sense, cannabis can be considered a remedy for a financial situation that affects a person in his/her human body.¹²²

¹²² However, a typical example here of the economic aspects of involvement with cannabis is illustrated in the case of the cultivation by pharmaceutical companies of cannabis. Although they can argue medical purposes for

To synthesise, these two world-views about cannabis as a remedy can be expressed as follows:

3. The medicinal use of cannabis, which represents more accurately the meaning of cannabis as a remedy for the body;
4. The economic discourse about cannabis, as a remedy for the financial situation in which a person or organisation engages in cannabis-related activities (production or distribution) seeking financial alleviation.

The third quadrant [poison/soul] emphasises the arguments regarding cannabis that serve to justify its prohibition. As mentioned in the rich picture, the main reason for prohibiting cannabis is related to the social perception of cannabis use as a form of deviance. In this world-view it is argued that cannabis use represents a vice or a sinful practice. From a more pragmatic point of view, cannabis use is considered a criminal offence that must be punished by legal sanctions. These two world-views can be synthesised as follows:

5. Cannabis is a deviant practice that can be removed by its prohibition;
6. Cannabis possession and/or use are considered a crime leading to legal sanctions.

The fourth quadrant refers to the negative actions of cannabis in relation to the human body: poison for the body. As mentioned before, cannabis as a drug has been associated with the disease model of addiction, and other physical and mental problems. A typical example of this view is summarised as follows:

their activity, at the end of the day, they are not using cannabis, but benefiting from others' use of cannabis. The same can be applied to some dealers, cultivators or donors of the substance.

7. Cannabis use is considered as a medical matter requiring treatment.

In addition, it is important to mention the political discourse on cannabis. Although this view cannot be located in one single quadrant of the related figure, for the effects of this research it is being located in the quadrant in which cannabis is considered as a poison for the body.¹²³

In general, world-wide cannabis use is here defined as a social problem that requires state intervention. In short, the discourse can be expressed as follows:

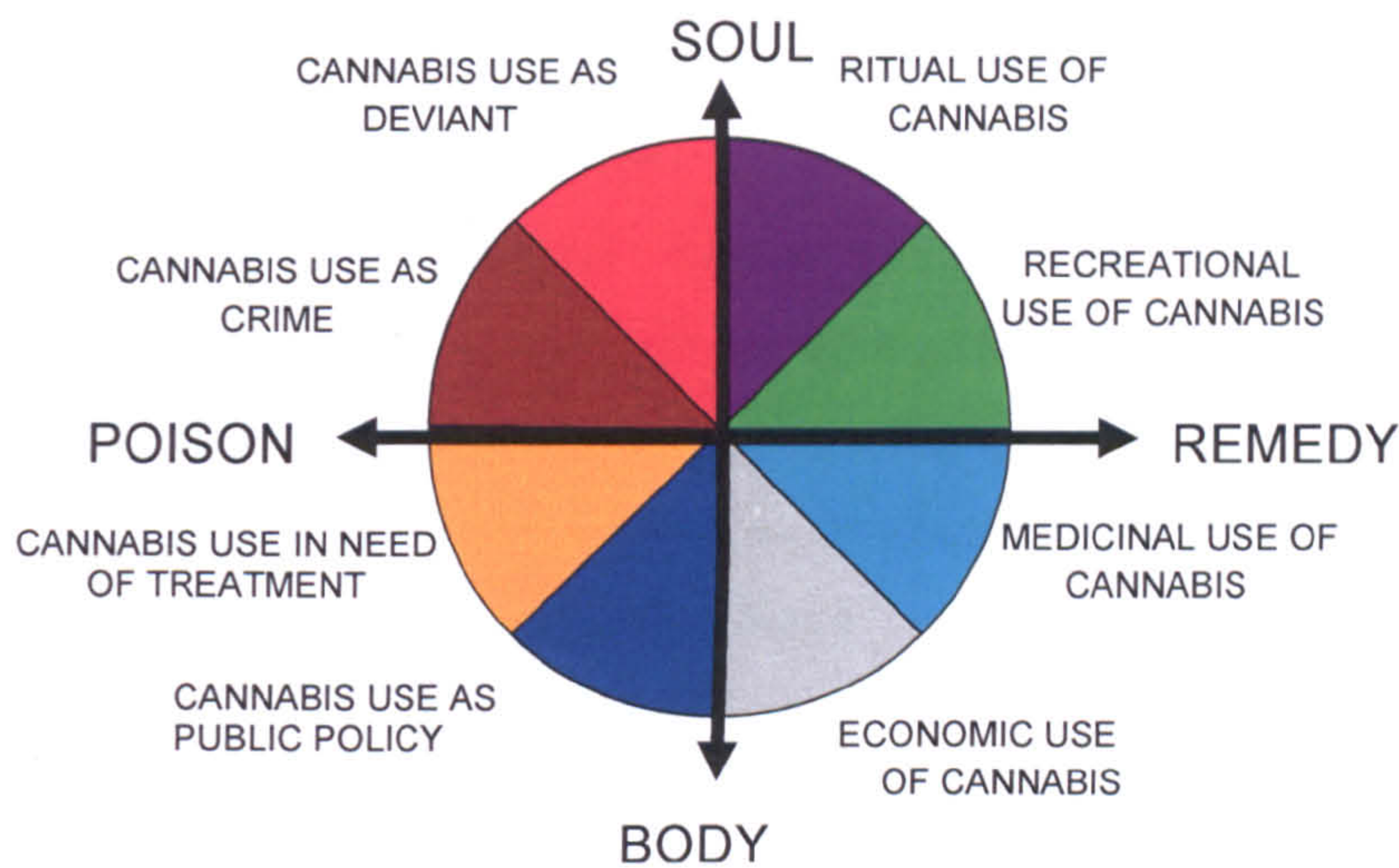
8. Cannabis is considered a social problem requiring a specific public policy.

In summary, the four quadrants in pairs of typical *discourses* about cannabis, derived from the rich picture, can be unfolded. In this research, 'relevant systems' are related to the term 'discourse'. This is because different arguments regarding cannabis expressed in many forms have been explored.

In the following diagram, it is possible to see how Figure 6, can be unfolded into eight discourses corresponding to the relevant systems:

¹²³ Although policy making could be interpreted as a 'neutral' discourse, it must be borne in mind that the current policy seems to side with the negative aspects of cannabis use. Given that cannabis use is defined as a social problem, cannabis policy is developed as a matter of public health yet also as a criminal offence. For the effects of this classification, the researcher prefers to locate this discourse as part of the combination poison/body, since emphasis is placed on the negative aspects of cannabis use.

Figure 6: Eight Discourses on Cannabis



The following table complements the previous Figure:

Table: Eight Discourses about Cannabis

Quadrant		Discourse	World-view
[remedy/soul]	R	Ritualistic	Cannabis can be used as a way of reinforcing identities in particular communities.
	L	Recreational	Cannabis can be used as part of recreational activities, spiritual relief or mood enhancer.
[remedy/body]	M	Medicinal	Cannabis can be used as a remedy to alleviate physical pain.
	E	Economical	Cannabis can be used as an economic activity to generate revenues.
[poison/soul]	P	Prohibition	Cannabis is a menace for social order that must be removed.
	C	Criminalisation	Cannabis use is a crime that must be punished and controlled.
[poison/body]	T	Treatment	Cannabis is a poison for the human body, particularly acting in the brain. It requires adequate medicinal treatment.
[poison/body and soul]	PP	Public Policy	Cannabis is a social problem that must be managed by public policy. It includes the different institutions in the government responsible for the public policy

In summary, it is important to clarify that this classification is one method among many others of identifying relevant systems in the analysis of the situation. In this particular case, the identification of relevant systems in the form of discourses expressed by different actors about cannabis has been chosen as the method. Equal weight has in this process of identification been given to each of the discourses, because the aim of this stage of the Methodology is to include as many views about the situation as possible, regardless of whether they are scientifically verifiable, morally approved, authorised, or politically correct.

The relevant systems form the basis for the next stage in the Methodology: the construction of the Root Definitions. The following section deals with this stage; it will refine the ideas presented about cannabis and the different approaches to the topic.

5.3. Root Definitions

The third stage of the Methodology consists of building 'Root Definitions' based on the relevant systems identified above. As stated, the utility of the 'Root Definitions' consists of highlighting a particular world-view or *Weltanschauung* in relation to the situation to be analysed. This exercise has been already initiated in the previous section, and will be complemented by other elements in the definition. In general, the Root Definitions aim to stress what the 'system is'.

The following sub-sections develop the Root Definitions by including three characteristic aspects: firstly, an overview of the literature related to each discourse aimed at clarifying concepts or terms used in this classification; secondly, some examples will be presented to illustrate the manner in which this discourse is expressed in reality; and thirdly, there is an attempt to build a Root Definition, including the elements of CATWOE (Customers,

Actors, Transformation, World-view, Owners, Environment) as recommended by Checkland's Methodology (Checkland, P., 1999).

5.3.1. Ritual use of cannabis

*What is ganja? We know it's a plant
Created by God to fulfil men's want
The powers that be, say man should not use
They use it in secret, yet show its abuse.*

*In The Rastafarians,
by Leonard Barrett (1988)*

The first discourse expressed about cannabis in this presentation is related to its 'ritualistic' use. As mentioned before, cannabis use has been linked to rituals in some ancient cultures. In particular, rituals using cannabis are related to the use of other psychoactive plants in the practices of shamanism¹²⁴ (McKenna, T., 1992; Rátsch, C., 1998; Wasson, G. *et al.*, 1986). In some cases, the shaman is both a priest and a healer. Therefore, the line between the medicinal and the spiritual uses of cannabis in this sort of practice is indistinct. The shaman may use substances in order to perform rituals or healing. However, as explained by Rátsch (1998), the use of drugs does not *per se* make of a person a shaman, yet the substance is part of a complex practice associated with religious beliefs, tradition, and authority within certain communities:

In order to travel to the invisible world, the shaman must enter into a trance and leave the normal world behind. To induce the necessary trance, most shamans use various psychoactive drugs.

¹²⁴ Shamanism is not a religion, but a technique of consciousness associated with special individuals. It functions especially in polytheistic religions that venerate nature, such as animism, Taoism, Shintoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. A shaman can be defined as a 'specialist of the soul'. Shamans can be male or female, and they normally play the role of priests, oracles, diviners, magicians, witches, midwives, herbalists, scientists, actors in mystery plays, rhapsodists, and keepers of oral traditions. Anthropologist Mircea Eliade has shown that shamanism is a stage in the development of almost all human societies; it is an archaic form of religiosity. Eliade, M., (1964) *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. For an illustrated reference of the connections between shamanism and creativity see Hughes, J., (1999) *Altered States: Creativity Under the Influence*, New York: Watson and Guptill Publications; Rátsch, C., (1998) *Marijuana Medicine: A world tour of the healing and visionary powers of cannabis*, Rochester, Vermont: Healing Arts Press.

... The drug, however, does not make a person into a shaman. Instead, the shaman uses the drug as a catalyst that allows him to express and exploit his own abilities (p.14)

The term 'ritual' has been a matter of wide investigation for anthropologists and sociologists. In classical sociological studies, the meaning of rituals is related to religious behaviour (Durkheim, E., 1971).¹²⁵ However, rituals may be contained in other daily practices validated through cultural values (Radcliffe-Brown, A.R., 1952). In this sense, rituals can be defined in relation to their instrumental and symbolic value.¹²⁶ It is, in fact, not always easy to define the purpose of a ritual activity,¹²⁷ although it can be assumed that one potential aim of these rituals is to reinforce the identity of a group or community who regard cannabis as part of their values¹²⁸. In the case of cannabis used as part of rituals, it is possible to describe two examples of the ritualistic use of cannabis: the religious and the symbolic uses of cannabis.

In the first case, within the Rastafarian community, the use of 'ganja' (cannabis) is seen as 'an aid to spirituality' (Murji, K., 1999: 59). In this context, cannabis use can be understood as part of their religious practices.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Durkheim distinguished two forms of religious behaviour: beliefs and rites: "The rites can be defined and distinguished from other human practices, moral practices, for example, only by the special nature of their object". Durkheim, E., (1971) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. In addition, Malinowski stated: '[R]ituals belong to the sacred domain and are *ipso facto* an action grounded in faith rather than in reason'. Malinowski, B., (1948) *Magic, Science and Religion, and other essays*, Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press of Glencoe.

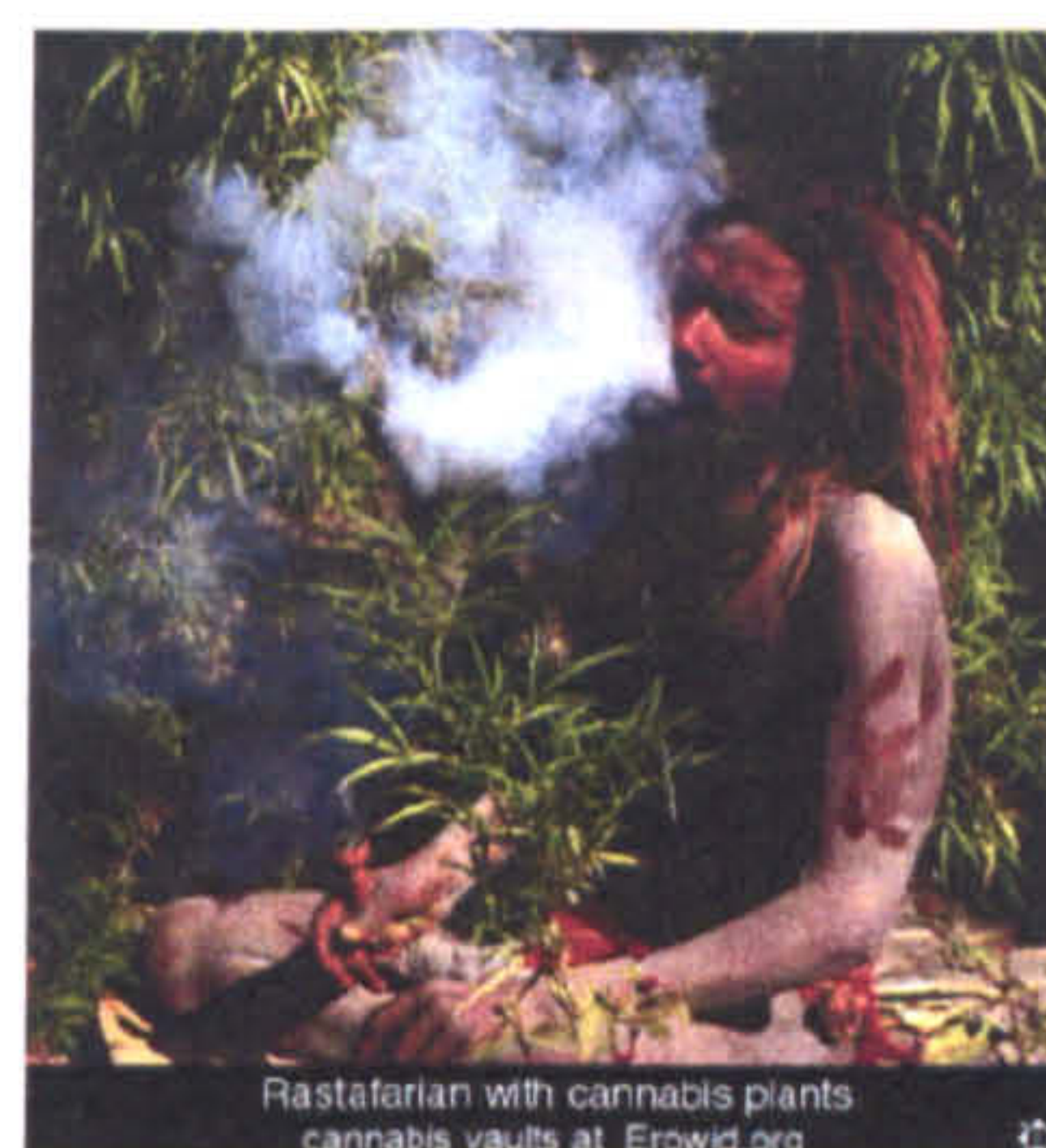
¹²⁶ According to Radcliffe-Brown, A.R., (1952) *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, London: Cohen and West, Ltd., ritual acts stand in direct contrast to technical acts: 'In technical activity an adequate statement of the purpose of any particular act or series of acts constitutes by itself a sufficient explanation. But ritual acts differ from technical acts in having in all instances some expressive or symbolic element in them'.

¹²⁷ When using the Soft Systems Methodology, Checkland refers to relevant systems as *purposeful activity systems* or Root Definitions. Nevertheless, in this particular case, the ritual does not necessarily have a technical intent, but serves a symbolic function. As mentioned before, it is possible to define an arbitrary process in which the identity of the group is reinforced by the performance of rituals. In this sense there exists no contradiction with the Methodology.

¹²⁸ More recent aspects of ritualistic use of cannabis can be found in the discussion about the civil rights of certain communities to use 'substances' as part of their religion. See Macrae, E., (1998) "Santo Daime and Santa Maria - The licit ritual use of 'ayahuasca' and the illicit use of cannabis in a Brazilian Amazonian religion" in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (9) (5): 325-338.

¹²⁹ A similar example can be found in the religious and cultural rituals in Hindu societies, from the time of the colonies, whereby 'preparations of hemp were also used by the wider society within their religious and cultural rituals'. Mills, J., (2003) *Cannabis Britannica: Empire Trade and Prohibition 1800-1928*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Nowadays, the nomadic communities of Sadhus in India use cannabis as part of their cultural practices. Because cannabis has been associated with Lord Shiva, the preparation of 'bhang' plays the role of wine in the Roman Catholic Eucharist. Shiva is also known as the Bhangeri Baba: The Lord of Hemp (Strol, 1988: 198). According to shamanic tradition, Shiva discovered hemp and sowed it in the Himalaya so that it would always be there for humans. Shiva also gave people different recipes for its use. See Ratsch, C., (1998).

Barrett (1988) has referred to the sacramental value of cannabis use, and its role in the identity of the Rastafarian community. He argues that prior to the emergence of the Rastafarians, 'ganja' (cannabis) was used as a medicine; as the Rastafarians emerged, 'ganja' took on a new role as religious sacrament.



¹³⁰Rastafarian with cannabis plants

Thus, cannabis use produced psycho-spiritual effects and it has socio-religious functions. Over time 'ganja' has become a dominant symbol in this community, popularised in the United Kingdom with the growing affluence of migrant communities from the West Indies (Yates, R., 2002). In India, some cultural groups such as the Sadhus use cannabis for religious purposes. As noted by the researcher Molly Charles¹³¹ the emphasis of their practice is not necessarily on the substance *per se*, yet cannabis use is part of a wider context of tradition as regulated by the elders of the community (Charles, M. *et al.*, 2005).

The ritual use of drugs is not necessarily limited to its religious significance; it refers to the symbolic value of drug use. This is the second aspect of the ritual use of cannabis. The argument is supported by the work of some researchers regarding the symbolic aspects of drug use amongst certain groups of a population (Grund, J.P., 1993; Suissa, A.J., 2001; Zinberg, N., 1984). Grund (1993) in particular has described the use of heroin in the form of a ritual, whereby the symbolic value of drug use is expressed in the sequence of behaviour involved in the process of using drugs. Here, the ritual is inscribed in the value attached to the movements, processes and activities involved in drug use.¹³²

¹³⁰ Image source: http://www.erowid.org/plants/show_image.php?i=cannabis/marijuana_smoker_rasta.jpg

¹³¹ Presentation at Wilton Park Conference., March, 2005. Complemented with personal conversation with the researcher.

¹³² The expressions of ritual observed around the administration of heroin and cocaine have important instrumental functions in the day-to-day management of drug use – both in solitary and in social ritual situations – and are significant in defining the social relationships between the drug users in their social networks. See Grund, J.P., (1993) *Drug Use as a Social Ritual: Functionality, Symbolism and Determinants of Self-regulation*, Rotterdam: IVO (Instituut voor Verslavingsonderzoek).

A further example of a symbolic use of a drug is related to the identity of the group in relation to the use of a substance. For instance, during the 1960s, smoking cannabis became the symbol for a rebel generation:

A youth culture which attacked traditional values became closely connected to marihuana smoking and the use of other psychedelics. Customary use of certain drugs came to symbolise the difference between that group and the rest of society (Musto, D., 1973: 245)

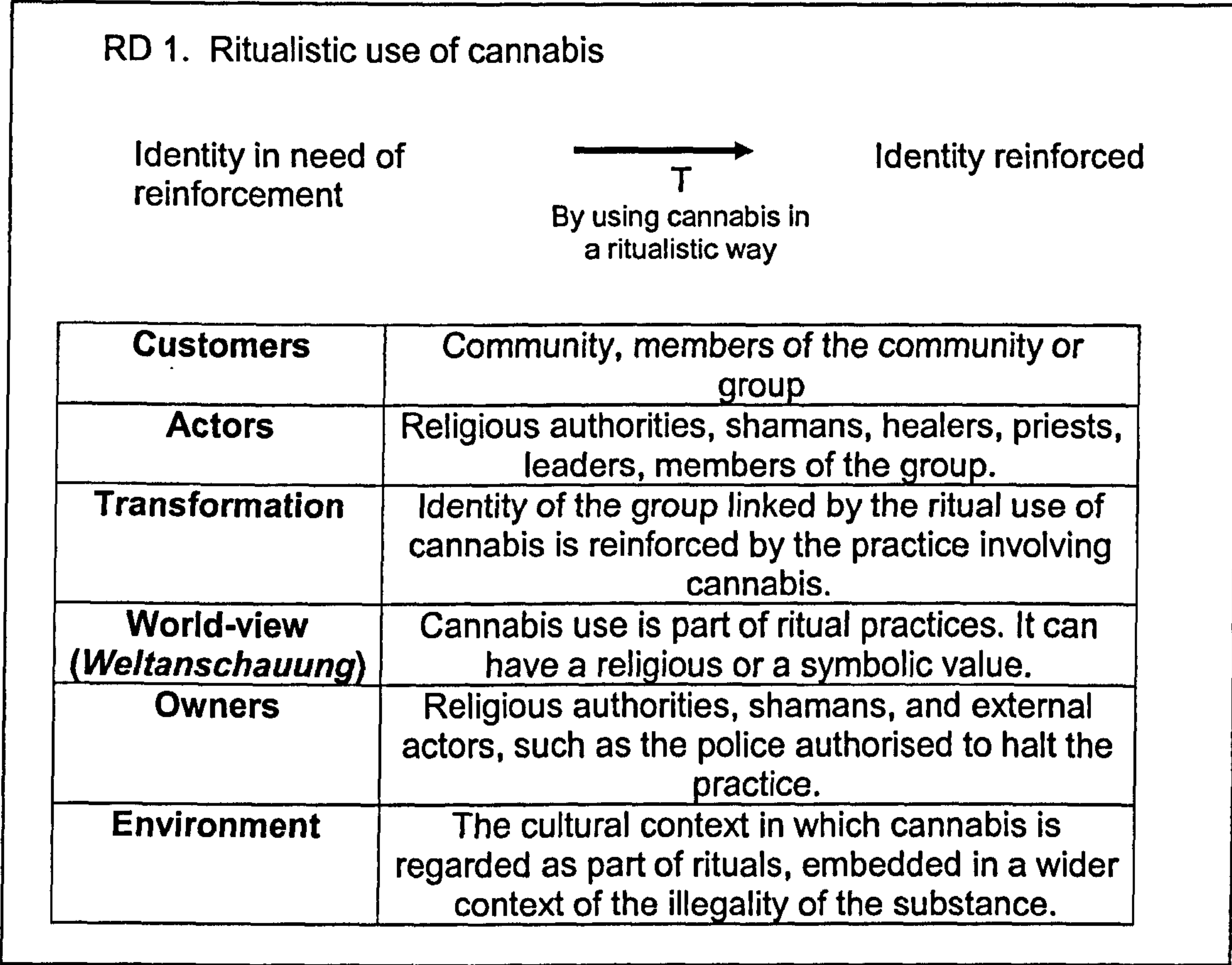
In summarising, it may be argued that the ritual use of cannabis can take two forms: a religious expression, or a symbolic expression, within different groups. In the former, religious authorities as well as members of the community take part in the ritual actions. In the latter, there might be peer support in a certain group that provides the significance of the use of cannabis. In both cases the implicit purpose in using cannabis can be interpreted as that of reinforcing the identity of the people involved. The main world-view in this approach is that there is a ritualistic use of cannabis. It is, however, important to consider that in the current regulation of drugs, the religious use of cannabis is challenged by its illegality. In this sense, a further element must be included, related to the possible obstacles raised by the context of prohibition in the exercise of this practice.

Therefore, it can be asserted that the use of cannabis as ritual can be found in religious, traditional, and contemporary groups. The commonality of these different groups is the use of cannabis as part of rituals. There, the value of cannabis use can be symbolic or religious, and it forms part of the identity of the group. In addition, the group is also located in a wider context within which their views might not be shared.

The following Root Definition will help in condensing these different aspects:

A community or a group of people, supported by religious beliefs or particular values, use cannabis as part of rituals, in order to reinforce their identity as a group, in a context in which cannabis use is considered an illegal activity.

It is possible diagrammatically to identify a transformation, as well as the other elements of CATWOE, as follows:



It is important to clarify that this Root Definition serves as a model for certain approaches to cannabis use. However, as already mentioned, the borders between the religious use and the practice of the recreational use of cannabis are not completely discrete. The subsequent section will focus on the recreational uses of cannabis in Western societies.

5.3.2. Recreational use of cannabis

'Recreational Drug: A drug regarded as a source of pleasure and enjoyment for one's leisured moments.
Oxford Dictionary of New Words (1998)

*Yeah I'm floating on thin air.
Going to Amsterdam in the New Year - top gear there
'cause I take pride in my hobby
Home made bongz using my engineering degree
Dear Leaders, please legalise weed for these reasons*

The Irony of it All, Song by The Streets (2002)

As mentioned in the Introduction, the proportion of individuals who have used cannabis in their lifetimes suggests that cannabis is the most popular illegal drug across the world. In the past year (2004) around 145 million people in the world have used cannabis (UNDCP 2005). In the United Kingdom alone, the percentage of people who have used cannabis at least once in their lifetime is nearly half of the adult population [approximately 44 per cent].¹³³ In explaining why people use cannabis, it can be argued that when individuals take the decision to choose to do so, this involves a deliberate purpose. This type of explanation emphasises the agency of individuals in using cannabis for pleasure. As stated by Goode (1970):

Marijuana users are fully aware of what they are doing; they enter into the activity, from start to finish, with open eyes. They have *chosen* to smoke marijuana. There is an active element in their choosing. They imagine themselves, prior to the act of becoming 'turned on', actually smoking. They have weighed alternatives. They have considered social costs. They operate on the basis of a value system; using it is a realistic and a rational choice in that marijuana use will often be and obtain for them what they anticipate. (Goode, E., 1970: 7)

¹³³ Based on British Crime Survey 2002/2003

Various studies have over recent years revealed how recreational drug use fits into young people's notion of 'time out' and leisure (Amos, A. *et al.*, 2004; Parker, H. *et al.*, 1998; Williams, L. and Parker, H., 2001). The study by Parker *et al.*, (1998) particularly emphasises the fact that certain illegal drugs use is perceived as an extension of a relatively normalised social activity. Young people as well as adults are making 'purposeful' decisions when taking drugs in order to obtain pleasure, relaxation, or enjoyment. As the cited study states:

The key message from this analysis is how dynamic and ever changing are the drug decision-making journeys adolescents make over many years, as through experience and maturity, they assess and re-assess their attitudes to leisure and pleasure and the psychoactive options available. (Parker, H. *et al.*, 1998: 3)

It has been argued that during the 1960s, a shift in the consideration of cannabis use was produced (Bewley, T., 2005).¹³⁴ Cannabis use, previously associated with minorities, began to gain a place in mainstream society. Popular culture, rock music and the image of cannabis smoking as a youth trend could have contributed to this shift in its perception.¹³⁵

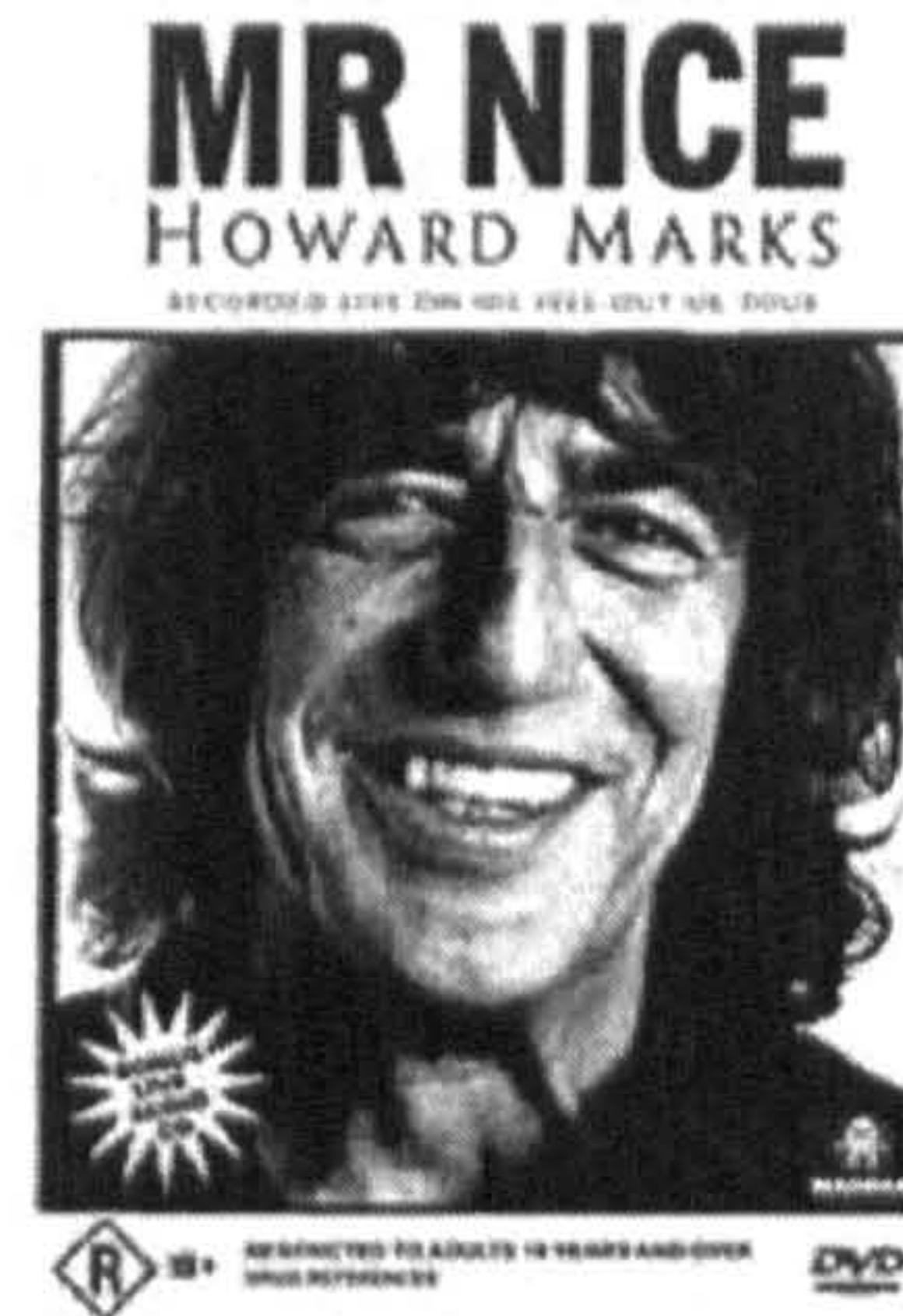
The way in which the wide availability of different varieties of cannabis has contributed to enhancing this practice can be traced. For example, a user is able to distinguish among varieties of cannabis, and to select his/her choice in relation to the desired effect. Individuals do indeed make a series of decisions when considering the price, availability, risk, routes of provision, and the effects of the substance:

¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the social response to this sort of purpose has taken other interpretation. As argued by Plant (1987) 'a rampant hedonist can be both fascinating and sinister' p. 5. Plant, M., (1987) *Drugs in Perspective*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

¹³⁵ As mentioned, cannabis has become part of Western culture, and its use has been popularised by films, music, literature, and art. In cinema, see for example Shapiro, H., (1999) *Waiting for the Man: The Story of Drugs and Popular Music*, London: Helter Skelter; Shapiro, H., (2002) "From Chaplin to Charlie: Cocaine, Hollywood and the Movies", *Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy* (9) (2): 133-141; Shapiro, H., (2003) *Shooting Stars: Drugs, Hollywood and the Movies*, London: Serpent's Tail. Other views on the history of cannabis use are presented by Rubin, S., (1999) *Off-beat Marijuana: the life and times of the world's grooviest plants*, Santa Monica, CA: Santa Monica Press, LLC. The spread of cannabis use around the world has been documented by Preston, B., (2002) *Pot Planet: Adventures in Global Marijuana Culture*, London: Atlantic Books.

When you are younger, say 14-15 [years-old], you get weed or hashish, because it is cheaper. But, when you grow up, you'd rather have 'skunk'... people prefer skunk, although it is more expensive, but it tastes and smells much nicer.¹³⁶

The popularity of cannabis as a recreational drug has been also portrayed in the media and popular culture. Usually, it is associated with 'having a good time'¹³⁷. In fact, many cultural expressions benefit from this attitude, and cannabis use is frequently thus incorporated into TV programmes, films, books, etc.



¹³⁸ Howard Marks, *alias* Mr. Nice, an icon in British cannabis culture

At the level of drug policy, there are few countries in which the possession of small quantities of cannabis is not a criminal offence (Dorn, N. and Jamieson, A., 2000). There are however attempts, although as yet no formal de-criminalisation or legalisation of cannabis, to normalise and regulate its use (Reuter, P. and MacCoun, R., 2001). One of the most prominent examples is the 'coffee shop experience' in the Dutch model of drugs policy (Boekhout van Solinge, T., 1999). By differentiating between 'hard' and 'soft' drugs markets, the recreational use of cannabis has been confined to certain 'coffee shops'.¹³⁹ However, the attitude in the Netherlands cannot be explained without referring to the local cultural and social conditions, under which a normalisation of cannabis use can indeed be made possible (Uitermark, J., 2004).

¹³⁶ Interview to a 22 years old 'social supplier' in Hull. Interview and transcription by B. Acevedo., 12 May 2004.

¹³⁷ In a study of about 54 movies, cannabis was described as having good or neutral qualities. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/4294476.stm>. It is interesting to note that apart from the mainstream media, a good number of publications are dedicated to cannabis use, for example, *High Times* (US); *CCNewz* and *Red Eye* (the UK) and *Cañamo* (Spain). Indeed, the number of websites on cannabis runs into the thousands.

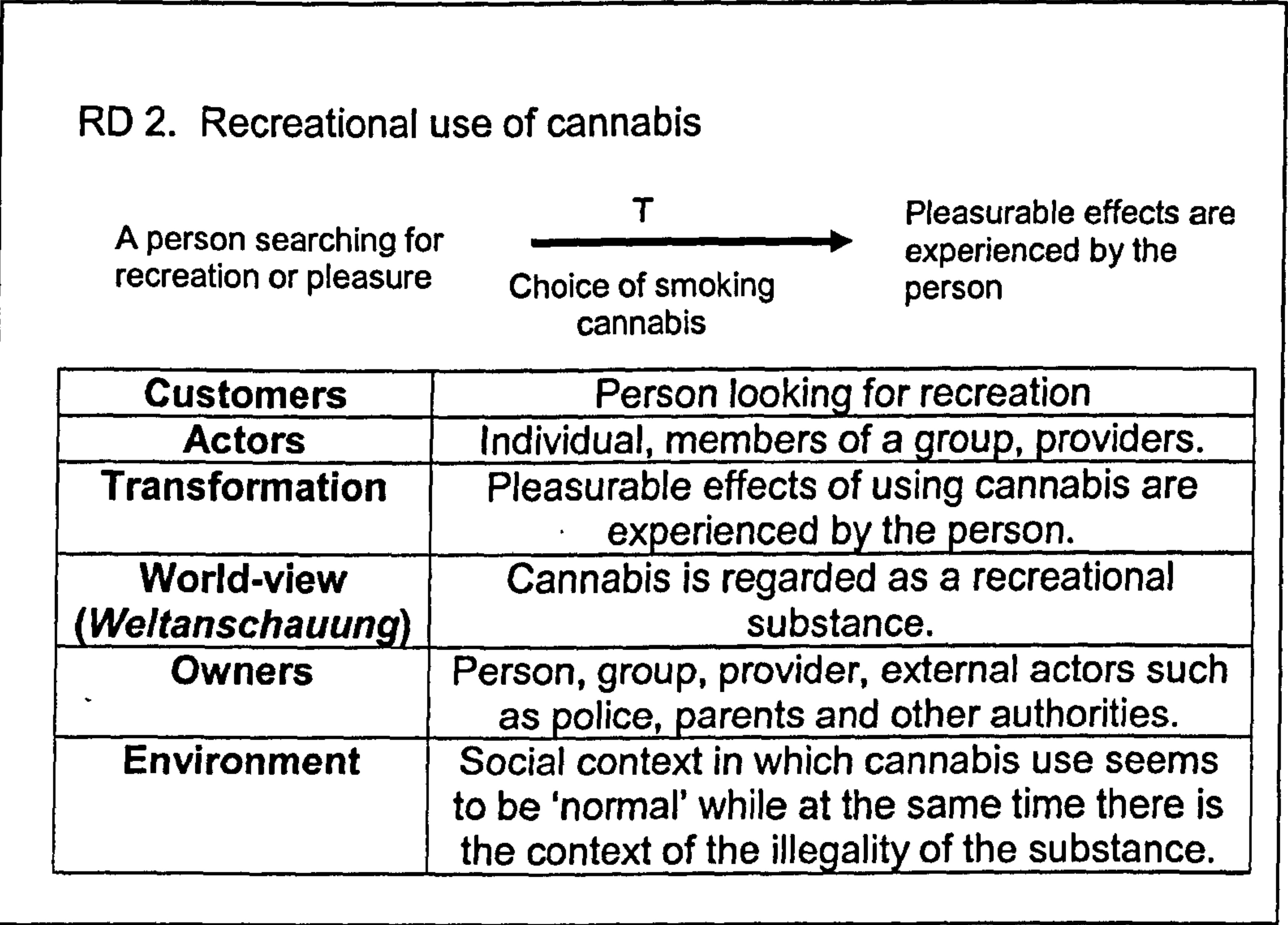
¹³⁸ Image source: www.moviestars.co.nz/images/products/1469467.jpg. Howard Marks was in prison for cannabis trafficking in the 1990s. Nowadays, as a 'reformed' criminal Marks presents a comedy act in which cannabis and a satire of drugs policy are the central topic. His books and videos are quite popular in Britain. As an expert on drugs policy issues - and specifically on cannabis - his opinions about the re-classification of cannabis will be presented in the next chapter.

¹³⁹ Normally, coffee shops are not allowed to sell alcohol, and they forbid entry to under-18-year-olds. Further information about coffee shops can be found in van Schaik, N., (2002) *The Dutch Experience: The Inside Story: 30 Years of Hash & Grass Coffee Shops*, Amsterdam: A Real Deal Publishing Books.

In summarising, the argument of recreational use of cannabis emphasises the agency of a person in seeking pleasure by using cannabis. However, as stated in the work of Becker (1953), this pleasure can be learned by an individual in the context of a group (Becker, H.S., 1953). In many cases, the use of cannabis involves not only the person, but also it refers to a group and includes a possible provider. In all circumstances, the availability of the substance is limited by the illegality of cannabis.

The use of cannabis for recreational purposes can be expressed in the following Root Definition:

A person in search of pleasure chooses to smoke cannabis in order to obtain a desirable effect on his/her mood; based on the idea that cannabis is a recreational substance supported by culture or transmitted by a peer group, in a context in which cannabis possession is illegal.



Similarly to the previous Root Definition, the role of external actors such as the police or other authorities is considered here. Any user of cannabis will

generally face the problem of availability and also the problem of illegality. This is a common factor that must be considered in further analysis, despite also being present in the medicinal use of cannabis. The next section analyses the latter argument: medicinal use.

5.3.2. The medicinal use of cannabis

It helps me sleep, it helps my waterworks, it regulates my bowels, it is a wonder drug. It is just amazing, I just find it just amazing. I'd give up everything else for that. (R12)¹⁴⁰

While the previous discourse emphasises the purpose of 'feeling good', the medicinal use of cannabis states its purpose as 'feeling better'. Cannabis has, as already stated, a long history in the treatment of different kinds of pain and discomfort. Research into the medicinal properties of cannabis has been as extensive as that related to its harmful effects (Baker, D. *et al.*, 2003; Cutler, D., 2001; Grinspoon, L., 1971; 1999; Grotenhermen, F., 2002; Perrot, S., 2004; Raschke, P. and Kalke, J., 1999; Rättsch, C., 1998; Russo, E., 2003). As with the recreational use, the medicinal use of cannabis implies the active agency of the person who decides to take cannabis in order to obtain relief normally related to that from a physical condition. Cannabis can be used as an analgesic, anti-emetic, and an anti-epileptic, and to treat diverse medical conditions such as neuralgia, arthritis, dysmenorrhoea, convulsions, asthma, and rheumatism (Grinspoon, L., 2001: 377).

The medicinal use of cannabis has been approved in some countries such as Canada, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands. The feasibility of using cannabis instead of other pharmaceutical drugs appears to be related to the current shift in public attitudes away from

'conventional' medicine (Coomber, R. *et al.* 2003). In any event, the types of people who apparently use cannabis for medicinal purposes are quite different from those who use it recreationally or ritually.

In the United Kingdom, the majority of those interviewed in this research for this thesis and related to the medicinal use of cannabis are not necessarily the 'usual suspects'; in fact, they are usually middle-aged or elderly people who have discovered cannabis in the context of their respective ailments.

For example, the case of 66-year-old Patricia Tabram has gained some attention in the media. She has argued that her use of cannabis is strictly medicinal; however, she has been prosecuted under the charges of conspiracy to supply.¹⁴¹



"I was in constant pain. Now, through ingesting cannabis in my food five times a day, five times a week: I feel great."

The medicinal use of cannabis has become a topic of research and also for consideration by the authorities in the United Kingdom. The House of Lords' Select Committee on Science and Technology (1998) published a report on the therapeutic uses of cannabis.



In this report, they recommended that the medicinal use of cannabis should be legalised. The Select Committee considered it undesirable to prosecute genuine therapeutic users of cannabis who possess or grow cannabis for their own use.

¹⁴⁰ Cited as one of the case studies in Coomber, R., Oliver, M. and Morris, C., (2003) "Using Cannabis therapeutically in the United Kingdom: A qualitative Analysis", *Journal of Drug Issues* (33) (2): 325-57.

¹⁴¹ At the moment of this interview Mrs. Tabram was waiting for her case to come up in court in order to respond to charges relating to a number of plants found by the police in her house. She has become an activist for the medicinal use of cannabis. She refers to 'cannabis' as a herb, comparing it with other medicinal herbs in her garden. Interview by B. Acevedo, 1 October 2004. London Hemp Fair.

The case of the medicinal use of cannabis has attracted the attention of both the media and the authorities, because of the implications in terms of human rights, and the possibility that cannabis indeed possesses the potential to alleviate physical pain. However, in the case of the British government, elusiveness in this matter is preferred, with the risks of an uncontrolled market of cannabis - if medicinal use is permitted - being the main consideration.¹⁴²

In some countries such as the Netherlands and Germany, the state has itself become a provider of medicinal cannabis (Raschke, P. and Kalke, J., 1999). However, the quality and the price of this form of cannabis are not competitive with other types of cannabis found in coffee shops. In other countries, such as the United Kingdom, pharmaceutical forms of cannabis are being considered for a possible licence. However, as will be presented in next section, their purpose is not necessarily to alleviate physical pain, but to obtain economic benefits from potentially selling a medicine on the market.

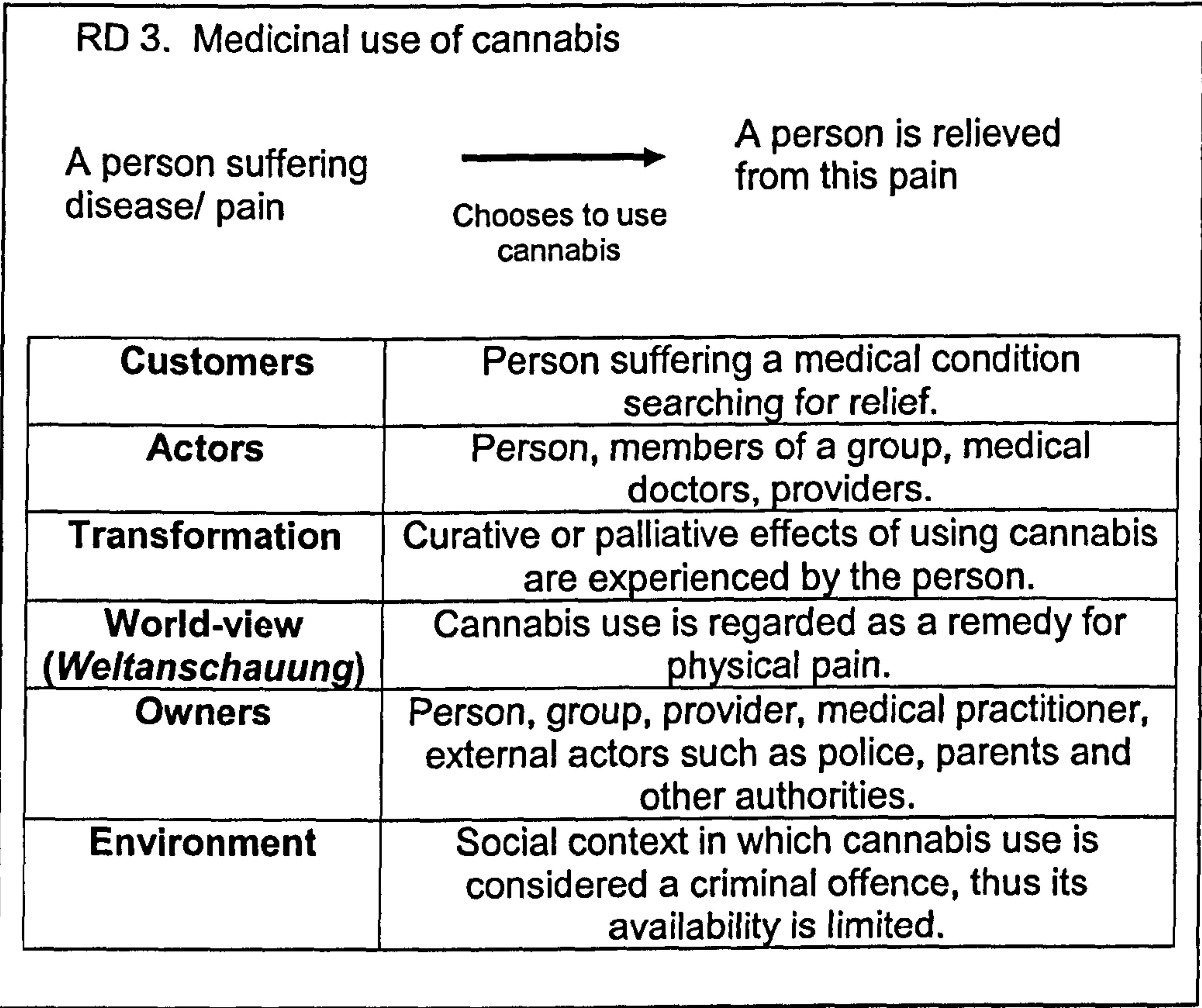
In summary: it may be stated that cannabis used medicinally is also restricted by the context of the illegality of the substance. In addition, the role of the person as an active agent who decides to use cannabis for a particular purpose is highlighted here. In this case the information provided by medical experts and peers can influence this decision. Indeed, the major issue concerns the availability of the substance, which can be provided by the state, unauthorised dealers, coffee-shops, cannabis donors, or by the users themselves who can cultivate it. In general, this is a very delicate topic that in the context of the political discussion has gained some prominence.

¹⁴² See Secretary of State for Health (2001) *Government response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology's Report on Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis*. Cm 5332 London: Department of Health. These aspects will be mentioned later in Chapters 6 and 8. This opinion is confirmed by an interview with a Home Office civil servant, in regards the risks of allowing the medicinal use of cannabis. Since the re-classification decision the government is taking a cautious approach to the issue, by stating that 'raw cannabis should not be available for medical purposes'. Interview with JS -Home Office, 29 September 2004.

In terms of a Root Definition, these aspects may be combined as follows:

A person in a physical condition of pain considers the curative properties of cannabis by using it in a medicinal way, in order to alleviate this pain or ailment, in a context in which cannabis is illegal, but there is some evidence about its potential medicinal uses.

The transformation and other elements in the definition can be illustrated as follows:



The medical argument regarding the use of cannabis has prompted the debate about not only the use itself, but the alternatives where obtaining the substance is concerned. In many of the interviews carried out during this research, a number of medicinal users are growing their own plants. This activity is not only a means of self-provision: it is also a profitable activity.

As will be examined in the next section, the demand for cannabis as a medicine, for rituals or for recreational purposes, has prompted the development of a booming activity in the local production of cannabis (home-growing), and the investment of pharmaceutical companies in its cultivation.

5.3.4. Economic uses of cannabis

Euro cannabis presents a rather interesting case of 'import substitution'. Only a few decades ago, the growing of psychotropic cannabis was largely confined to regions outside the Western world. Cannabis products had to be imported. Nowadays euro cannabis is taking over this illegal market in a rather spectacular way

(Jansen, A.C.M., 2002)

Apart from the previous discourses on cannabis, whereby a person or a group justify their use based on different reasons, the topic of the economic uses of cannabis can include both users and non-users. This section focuses on the purposeful activity of obtaining revenue by being involved in activities related to cannabis distribution or production. In addition, it will include the case of the pharmaceutical development of cannabis-based medicines, as a profitable project in the name of medicine. Traditionally, the consumption of cannabis has been regarded as a problem in First World countries, while the production has been located in developing countries.¹⁴³ This situation has nevertheless changed in the past decade, when new techniques for growing cannabis have allowed what can be called a 'substitution of importations' through the development of the local production of cannabis in some European countries.

¹⁴³ In general terms most of the herbal cannabis consumed in Europe comes from North Africa. Morocco in particular has been one of the world's leading cannabis producers and the source of 60-70 per cent of cannabis resin seized in Europe. INCB (2003) *Report from the International Narcotic Control Board for 2003*. E/INCB/2003/1 Vienna: United Nations. For further information about production patterns around the world, see UNDCP (2005) *World Drug Report 2005*, Vol. 1. Geneva: United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime.

In the United Kingdom, the production of cannabis has become a booming activity. A report published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Hough, M. *et al.*, 2003), estimates that the local production of cannabis in Britain is directed at satisfying half of the total market.¹⁴⁴ According to this study, an increasing number of small-scale cultivators have appeared in the illegal market in cannabis, competing with the illegal smuggling of cannabis from traditional producer countries.¹⁴⁵ An initial explanation about the reasons for individuals to become involved in cannabis cultivation appears to be linked to the economic rationality, in which financial benefits or revenue are expected from this activity.

While the issues regarding illicit drug trade and organised crime have been widely documented,¹⁴⁶ at the local level the variety is much more diverse. In particular, it is possible to argue that some of those home-growers become involved in cannabis-related activities in order to satisfy a local demand, rather than to participate in the complex chain of organised crime.¹⁴⁷ Given the cited report by Hough *et al.* (2003), it seems that a significant proportion of home-growers began to grow cannabis mainly to ensure the quality of the product, to save money or as a means of avoiding contact with drug sellers. Home-growers of this sample can thus be classified into five general groups (Hough, M. *et al.*, 2003: ix):

¹⁴⁴ Jansen argues that the illegal status of cannabis has favoured a growing technology for developing a strong plant in rather unusual conditions of artificial light and hydroponics techniques: the equation is simple: 'where a demand emerges, the supply will follow'. Home growing of cannabis has also benefited from the existence of a 'cluster' of enterprises offering services and equipment for intensive horticulture. Although here focus is on the case of the Netherlands, some of those conditions are similar to the case of the United Kingdom, and other European countries. See Jansen, A.C.M., (2002) *The Economics of Cannabis Cultivation in Europe*, CEDRO-Amsterdam. www.cedro-uva.org/lib/jansen.economics.html. Accessed 1 July 2003.

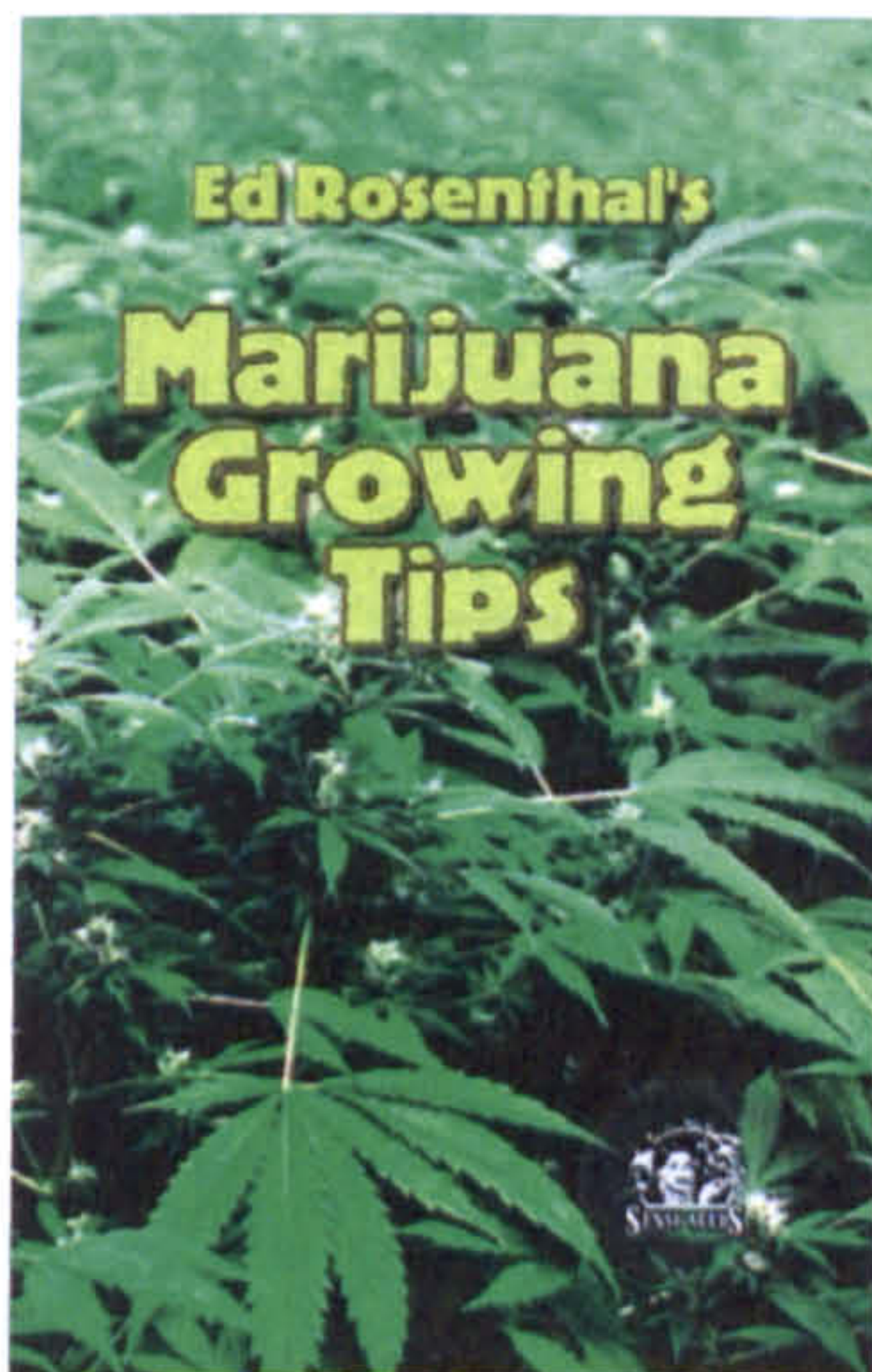
¹⁴⁵ In 2000 the number of 1960 offences related to cannabis production were recorded. However, the penalties applied were not as severe as they could have been in the case of dealing, supplying or trafficking. Although supplying of cannabis may lead to 14 years in prison, there is an unclear distinction between cultivation, production and supplying, the first being considered as a variety of possession offences. Hough, M., Warburton, H., Bradley, F., May, T., Man, L.-H., Witton, J. and Turnbull, P., (2003) *A Growing Market: The domestic cultivation of cannabis*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

¹⁴⁶ See, for example, Dorn, N. (2004) "UK Policing of Drug Traffickers and Users: Policy implementation in the contexts of national law, European traditions, international drug conventions and security after 2001", *Journal of Drug Issues* (34) (3): 533-550; Dorn, N., Murji, K. and South, N., (1992) *Traffickers: Drug markets and law enforcement*, London: Routledge; Johnson, G., Goldstein, P., Preble, E., Schemedler, J., Lipton, D. S., Spunt, G. and Miller, T., (1985) *Taking Care of Business: The Economics of Crime by Heroin Abusers*, Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath; Reuter, P. and Kleinman, M.A., (1986) 'Risks and Prices', in Tonry, M. and Morris, N., *Crime and Justice: Annual Review of Research* (Vol.7) Chicago: University of Chicago Press; UNDCP (2005) *World Drug Report 2005*, Vol. 1. Geneva: United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime. In relation to the production in Andean countries see Thoumi, F.E., (2003) *Illegal Drugs, Economy, and Society in the Andes*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press. Other reports on this area can be found in www.tni.org/crime.

¹⁴⁷ In summary, there can be several meanings of the economic purpose of becoming involved in cannabis. In terms of the Root Definition, solely economic reasons for cultivating cannabis must be accompanied by further analysis. However, for the purposes of this chapter, it will be assumed that there is an economic purpose in this activity.

- a. The sole-use grower – cultivating cannabis as a money-saving hobby, for their personal use and use with friends;
- b. The medicinal grower – motivated mainly by the perceived therapeutic values of cannabis for those with medical conditions;
- c. The social grower – growing it to ensure a supply of good quality and affordable cannabis for themselves and friends;
- d. The social/commercial grower – those who grow it for themselves and friends, at least in part to supply an income, and
- e. The commercial grower – growing it to make money, and selling to any potential customer.

This classification shows the complexity of the issues surrounding cannabis cultivation. However, for the effects of this particular discourse, the implicit or explicit economic interest represents the purpose in becoming involved with cannabis. As the following example illustrates, the reasons for cultivating cannabis seems to point out financial incentives in this activity:



Guide for the cultivation of marijuana¹⁴⁸

“Initially, I began growing in partnership with a friend who had grown before. The reasons were mainly because at that time, herbal cannabis was very difficult to obtain, and I was beginning to learn about how bad ‘soap bar’ was for you. The other consideration was obviously financial. Not only could my friend and I keep ourselves in herbal cannabis, but we could also give ourselves a nice financial lift, as we were both unemployed at the time. Our first crop brought in around 1.5 kilos of flower heads, which worked out at roughly 3000 pounds each.” Jason, an ex-commercial grower. Case Study 2. (In Hough, *et al.* 2002:11)

¹⁴⁸ Image source: <http://www.1-seedbank.com/books/large-images/Marijuana-Growing-Tips.jpg>

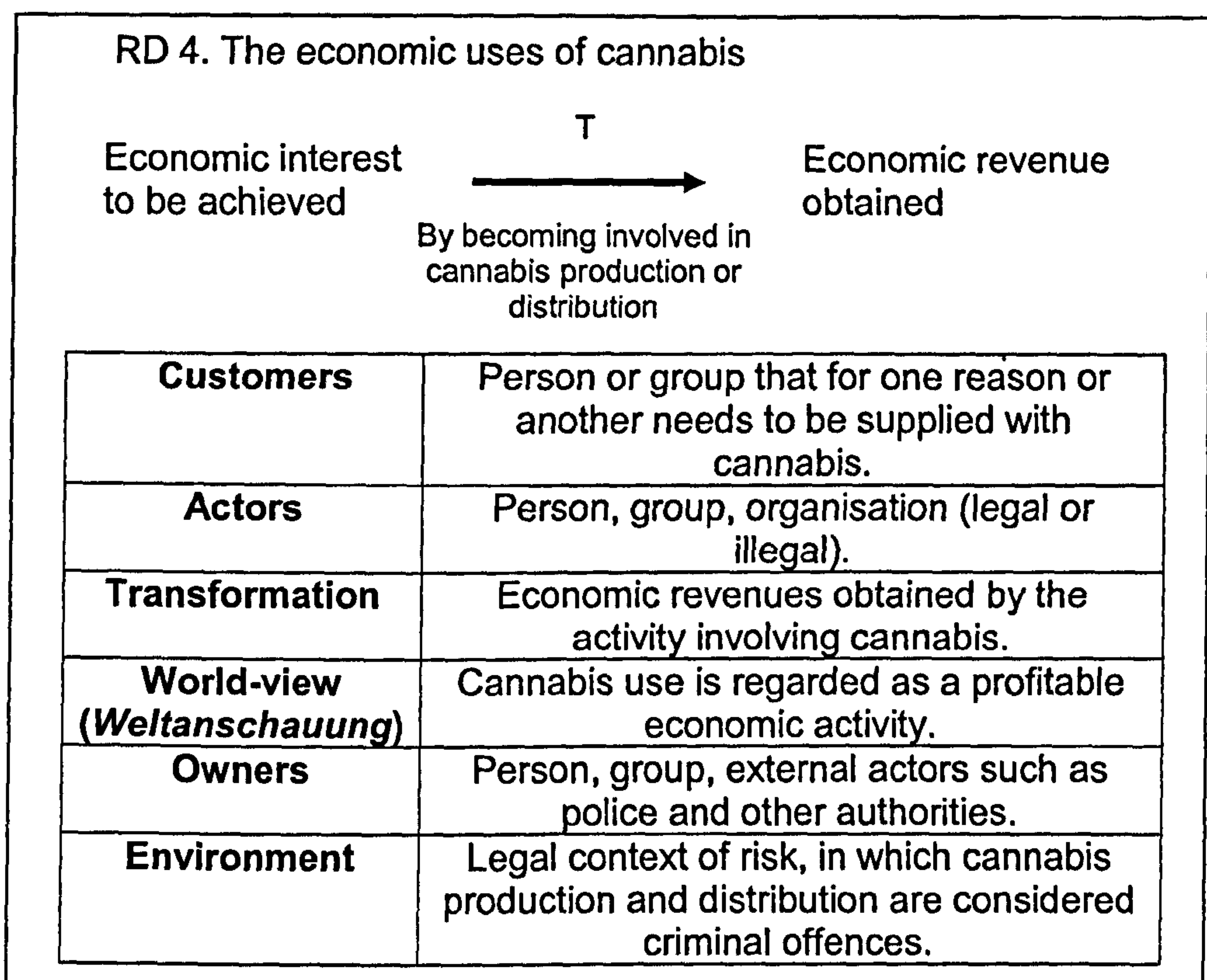
Apart from home-growing for personal supply, cannabis can be produced commercially to supply the demand for pharmaceutical medicines based on this plant. For example, in the United Kingdom GW Pharmaceuticals, the company developing pain-killers based on cannabis, has been growing enough cannabis to provide a supply for their medicines. The company's reasons are not merely to alleviate the pain of thousands of potential users, but also to generate financial profits in the stocking market.¹⁴⁹ At the moment GW Pharmaceuticals are waiting for the licence to distribute their product Sativex® - an under-the-tongue spray for treating the symptoms of multiple sclerosis and severe neuropathic pain.

To summarise: it may be seen how cannabis use can attract other, related activities in terms of production or distribution. Although some of the producers may be growing cannabis for their own use, it is possible to find other sorts of groups involved in cannabis production because of its economic benefits. Indeed, the role of gangs and criminal groups in the trade in cannabis has traditionally been considered as the source of many social problems. However, what counts for the purposes of this research is to realise that any person, group, or organisation (legal or illegal) may consider cannabis as a means of obtaining economic revenue. As a Root Definition, the following may be provided:

A person or an organisation appreciates the economic opportunities of cannabis by getting involved in cannabis production or distribution, in order to obtain economic revenue from this activity; in a context in which cannabis is demanded although its production and supplying are illegal activities.

The Root Definition may be complemented diagrammatically as follows:

¹⁴⁹ In 2005 GW Pharmaceuticals signed a deal with bio-chemical giant Bayer for the rights to distribute the product. This deal, worth an initial £12.5 million, and possible further £20 million to GW for the distribution of Sativex in the UK, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and much of Europe. See Corporate Watch, September 23, 2005. <http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=2025>. Retrieved August, 2006.



Significant to this research is the realisation that although this Root Definition does not necessarily involve the use of cannabis *per se*, it is nevertheless related to the use of cannabis in society. In consequence, whether the recreational, ritual or medicinal use of cannabis is concerned, the issue of its availability is influenced by these economic actors. These uses are not necessarily considered to be valid reasons for *not* prohibiting cannabis. In fact, the negative connotations of cannabis use are deeply rooted in the minds of policy makers and social groups. The following sections will describe the main arguments for the prohibition of substances, based on moral, social, medical, and political arguments. Once again, the purpose of this description is neither to judge nor to evaluate their validity, but to serve as models with which to compare the reality.

5.3.5. Prohibition: Cannabis use as a deviant practice

*Marijuana inflames the
erotic impulses and leads
to revolting sex crimes.
Daily Mirror (1924)*¹⁵⁰

Apart from the uses of cannabis in different contexts - ritual, recreational, medical or economic - there are other perceptions of cannabis use as problematic. In the present context of prohibition, cannabis is regarded as an illegal drug representing a menace to society. The term 'menace' can be elusive, although it may be seen as an underlying argument supporting drugs prohibition; in turn, as a means of removing this menace from society.

In this section, the main arguments regarding drug prohibition, and particularly cannabis prohibition, will be presented. 'Prohibition' may generally be defined as a system of values and regulations whose main purpose is to justify proscribing a number of substances legally, scientifically, socially, and morally. In the case of cannabis as an illegal drug, it is possible to argue that the purpose of prohibition is to remove this menace from society by different means. As expressed by Heath (1996):

There is a simple direct logic that, if something is troublesome, you are better off without it. Presumably this has been at the root of the various bans on different drugs we have noted around the world. A striking regularity, however, is that all such prohibitions have been circumvented at the time, and almost all were rescinded by administrators who eventually judged the costs to outweigh the benefits. (Heath, D., 1996: 290)

Some authors have analysed the origin of prohibition as a social construction emerging within a particular historical context. They argue that the different interests of powerful groups emerged at a particular moment to support the prohibition paradigm (Cohen, P., 1990; Jay, M.,

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.cannabis.net/marigirl.html>

2002; Levine, H.G., 1978; 2003).¹⁵¹ As previously suggested, the British approach to drugs represents a middle point between the prohibitionist and the pragmatic approaches to drugs. The role of the medical profession in defining drug use, and consequently cannabis use within a disease model, has supported a less punitive approach. However, the process of the criminalisation of drugs issues seems to have prevailed in the consideration of drugs (Berridge, V., 2005; Stimson, G.V. and Lart, R., 2005).¹⁵²

Due to the international agreements on drugs, cannabis was included in the list of illegal substances. Paradoxically, the arguments for prohibiting cannabis were provided not by the American government, but by the Egyptian delegate in the Second Conference on Opium, 1926. His description of the effects of cannabis represents an excellent example of the evaluation of cannabis in this discourse:



A furious delirium and strong physical agitation, it predisposes to acts of violence and produces a characteristic strident laugh.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ The conjunction of interests between Temperance Movement groups and medical profession met around the drug issue. As described by Escohotado (1998) this coincidence in interests prompted a sort of alliance to establish the prohibitionist paradigm: "The conditions of that agreement were quite simple: doctors and pharmaceuticals could keep on prescribing some alcoholic beverages as part of their professional treatments in the case of a Temperance Law, and they would obtain a system of exclusive distribution of cocaine, opium, and other controlled drugs. As a reward, they supported the main ideas of the Prohibition Party, in which the drug use was considered as sudden and dangerous epidemic, that can be cured with the according enforcing methods". Escohotado, A., (1998) *Historia General de las Drogas*, Bogota: Alianza Editorial. Translation by B. Acevedo.

¹⁵² See Chapter Two: Drugs Policy in the United Kingdom.

¹⁵³ Image source:

http://www.hoboes.com/pub/Prohibition/Drug%20Information/Marijuana/History/reefer_madness.jpg

¹⁵⁴ Record of the Second Opium Conference, Vol. 1, November 1924, pp. 39-40. Cited in Mills, 2003: 167.

He argued that hashish was a scourge for Egyptian people, adding a characterisation of the disgraceful effects of cannabis on people.¹⁵⁵ In this description it is possible to appreciate the predominant definition of cannabis use, linked to a loss of control, madness, and thus the potential to cause harm. In fact, as will be presented later in this research, similar reasons for prohibiting cannabis are reproduced by the media and social actors. In Britain, cannabis has been defined in similar terms, emphasising its disturbing effects.

In the early 1950s, a book called *Indian Hemp: A Social Menace* (Johnson, D., 1952) described cannabis effects: 'to discredit you personally... to remove you for some time from your affairs and perhaps permanently from the place where you are living'.¹⁵⁶ The same perception has remained in the public speeches of politicians; for example, it is noted that British Prime Minister Tony Blair has referred to illegal drugs in terms such as 'scourge', 'menace' or 'threat' (Stimson, G.V., 2000: 262).

It is possible to find various ways of stigmatising cannabis use, as explained by the theory of deviance provided by Becker (1963). He argues that social groups create deviance by 'making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance' (Becker, H.S., 1963: 8-9). Such rules are the product of negotiation about morality among different social groups and individual actors (Lidz, C.W. and Walker, A., 1980). A number of studies about deviance have been produced by criminologists and sociologists (Pfohl, S., 1994; Rock, P. and McIntosh, M., 1974; Rubington, E. and Weinberg, M.S., 1973; Schur, E.M., 1971; Sumner, C., 1994). The theory of labelling deviance has focused in particular on explaining the processes involved in the production of crime and the 'rule breaker', as well as on the 'audience of agents of control'. Because all societies have rules to enforce, once an

¹⁵⁵ In his analysis, Mills includes the geopolitical aspects of the Egyptian government in relation to the British and the possibility of gaining the sympathy of Americans by tacitly acknowledging and accepting the principle of the American approach to drugs. See Mills, J., (2003) *Cannabis Britannica: Empire Trade and Prohibition 1800-1928*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵⁶ Cited in Melechi, A., (Ed.) (1997) *Psychodelia Britannica: Hallucinogenic Drugs in Britain*, London: Tamaround p.25

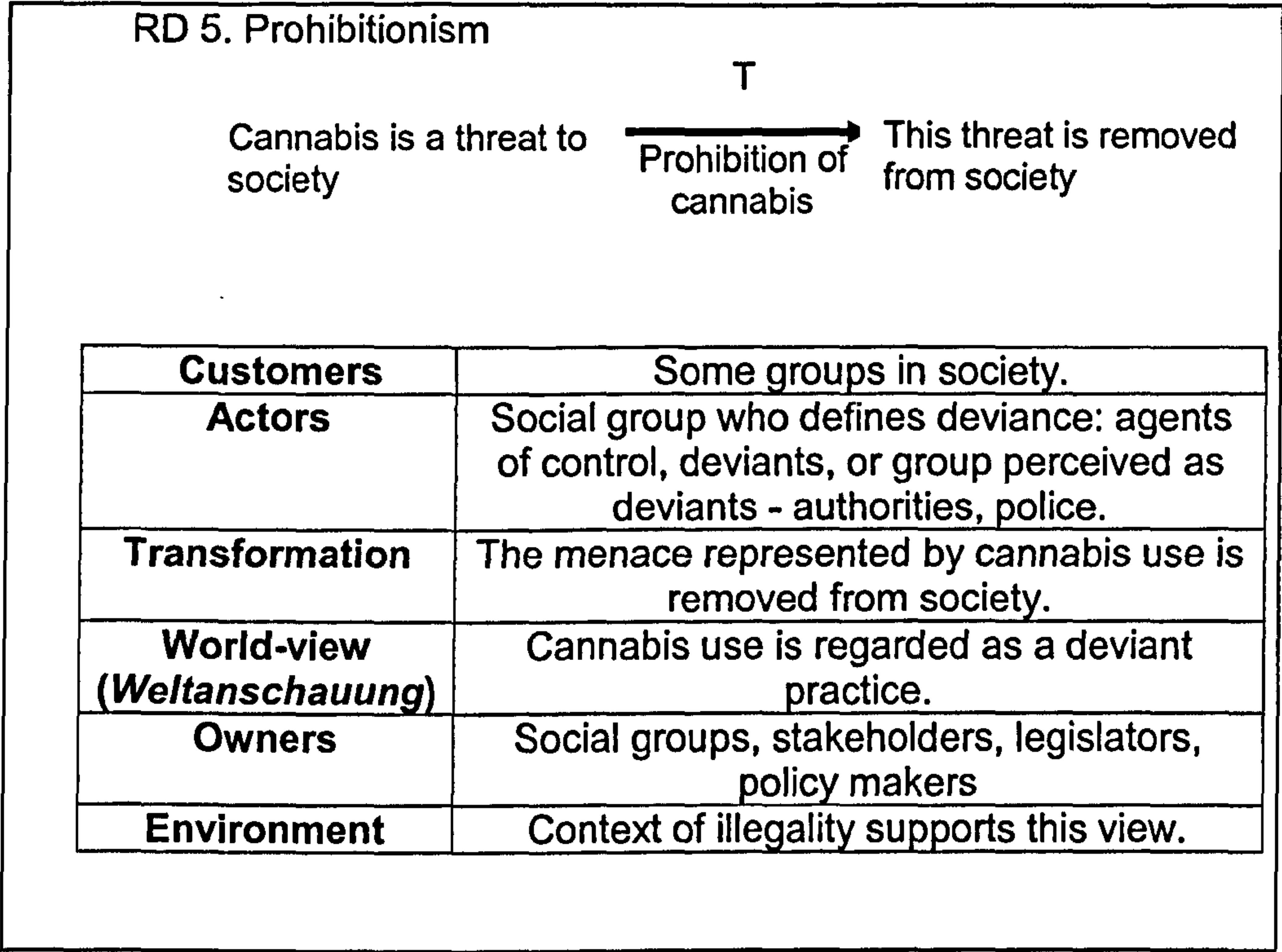
individual or group breaks a rule, this rule-breaker is seen as a different person, an outsider. When a certain group or person is labelled as 'deviant', s/he tends to become the way s/he is described as being (Tannenbaum, F., 1938: 19).

In the United Kingdom, Cohen and Young have analysed the role of the media in the creation of deviance (1984). They demonstrate how the media have the potential to create 'moral panics' in which certain juvenile 'sub-cultures' thereby become labelled as enemies of public morality. This argument is relevant when associating cannabis use and cannabis users with constituting a threat to moral values. Summarising, it is possible to say that in this discourse there are two main actors: firstly, what Becker called 'social entrepreneurs', or agents of control who define the person or groups representing a menace to social values. The process of labelling includes the identification of the deviant practice or behaviour, as well as the characterisation of the deviant person or group.

For the purpose of the Root Definition, it may then be claimed that a certain social group defines cannabis use as a menace to social or moral values. Therefore, the purpose of the 'social entrepreneurs' is to remove this menace by prohibiting cannabis use, not only through legislation, but also through the social proscription of these practices. In this Root Definition the focus is concentrated on the underlying arguments that justify prohibition: in other words, on the way that cannabis use is defined as deviant behaviour threatening social order, in order to justify its prohibition. The following Root Definition may be provided:

A social group evaluates cannabis use as a menace to social and moral values, by defining cannabis use as a deviant practice, in order to remove the menace that it represents; this is in the context of prohibition of cannabis, while increasing political debate about changes in the legislation of cannabis.

This Root Definition can be represented diagrammatically as follows:



As mentioned above, there are many ways of removing the menace of cannabis use. A typical example is found in the anti-cannabis propaganda initiated since the 1920s and 1930s in the United States regarding ‘reefer madness’. Although many of their claims regarding cannabis use are associated with sin, depravation and immorality can be considered subjective constructions, their influence is still relevant in the perception of cannabis. Given these social constructions against cannabis, some other forms of removing its menace can be developed, for example, the increasing criminalisation of cannabis-related offences. The following section analyses this particular process of criminalisation.

5.3.6. Criminalisation: Cannabis as a crime

*Origins of the word Hashish:
Having been promised paradise in return for dying in action,
the killers, it is said, were made to yearn for
paradise by being given a life of pleasure
that included the use of hashish.¹⁵⁷*

The link between crime and drugs has been firmly established since the beginning of prohibition. This is not only because using a drug without regulation is against the law, thus a crime, but also because it is believed that cannabis use leads to violence and other sorts of crimes. The alleged link between drugs and violence has led to a criminal approach to their use. Goldstein (1985) points out some of the arguments in which is based this connection: (1) the pharmacological effects of the drug on the user can induce violent behaviour, (2) the high cost of drug use often impels users to commit criminal actions in order to support continued drug use, and (3) violence is a common feature of the drug distribution system.¹⁵⁸ An important group of scholars and academics has carried out research into the origin of criminalisation of drug use (Bean, P., 2002; Boyd, S., 2004; Dorn, N., 2004: ; Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1991; Hough, M., 1996; Inciardi, J., 1981; Murji, K., 1998).

The majority of these studies point out an increasing process of the criminalisation of drug use, based on the illegality of drugs-related practices which has superseded the medical approach. In Britain this process is widely documented, and it is reflected in the way that the Home Office and the Criminal Justice System have exerted their domain over drug issues; in the United Kingdom, the criminalisation of drugs use is related to political concerns about crime, violence, drug trafficking, and terrorism (Green, P., 1998; Newburn, T. and Sparks, R., 2004; Stimson, G.V., 2000). Following the arguments about construction of deviance, drug

¹⁵⁷ The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition, 2000.

¹⁵⁸ Cited in Collins, J., (1994) 'Summary Thoughts About Drugs and Violence' in Coomber, R., (ed.) *Drugs and Violence: Causes, Correlates and Consequences*, Dartford, Kent: Greenwich University Press, p. 271

users and drug traffickers have become 'suitable enemies' for the social order (Green, P., 1998).

However, it has also been argued that the criminalisation of drug use subsumes a process of the marginalisation of particular groups of society stereotypically associated with drug use or trade (South, N. and Coomber, R., 2004).



'The war on drugs is black and white' ¹⁵⁹

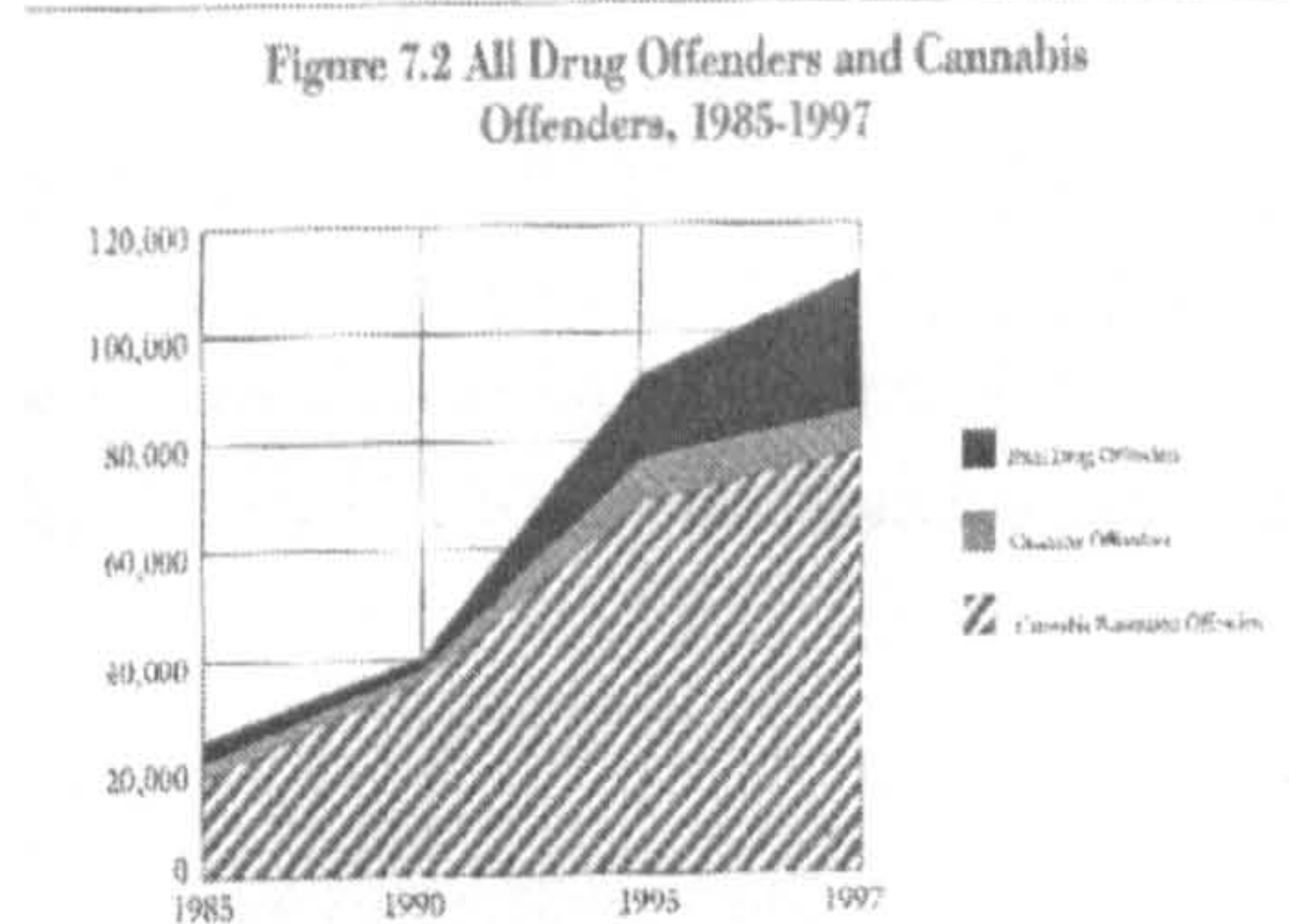
The identification of drug use with alien groups in society such as migrants and minorities have been a constant in the social construction of drug problems (Murji, K., 1999; Musto, D., 1973; Yates, R., 2002). As argued by Guy:

People from Black African, Black Caribbean, or Asian backgrounds are less likely to use or trade in drugs than those of White European origin. Yet non-Whites are more likely to be stopped in the street and searched under our drug laws. They also are more likely to be arrested, more likely to be charged, less likely to be given bail, and more likely to be convicted. They are also more likely to receive a prison sentence. That sentence is likely to be longer, and parole is less likely to be granted. (Guy, P. *et al.*, 2002: 144)

The government's response to issues related to controlling drugs-related crime has focused mainly on the criminalisation and imprisonment of cannabis users and dealers. In particular, the British government has emphasised their trust in the efficacy of a prison sentence as a means of deterring drug use (MacGregor, S. and Smith, L., 1998). However, this strategy has been highly debated because it seems that most cannabis users are otherwise law-abiding citizens who use cannabis for reasons established before, such as ritualistic, recreational, or medicinal purposes.

¹⁵⁹ Image source: http://ocnorml.org/images/War_On_Drugs_is_BW_KIRK_Anderson_2000.jpg

During the last ten years the increasing criminalisation of cannabis use is represented by the high percentage of prison sentences for this offence: “In every year since the law was created over 75% and sometimes up to 90% of all drug offenders have been arrested for cannabis possession” (Guy, P. *et al.*, 2002: 138).



Data from Runciman, R., 2000

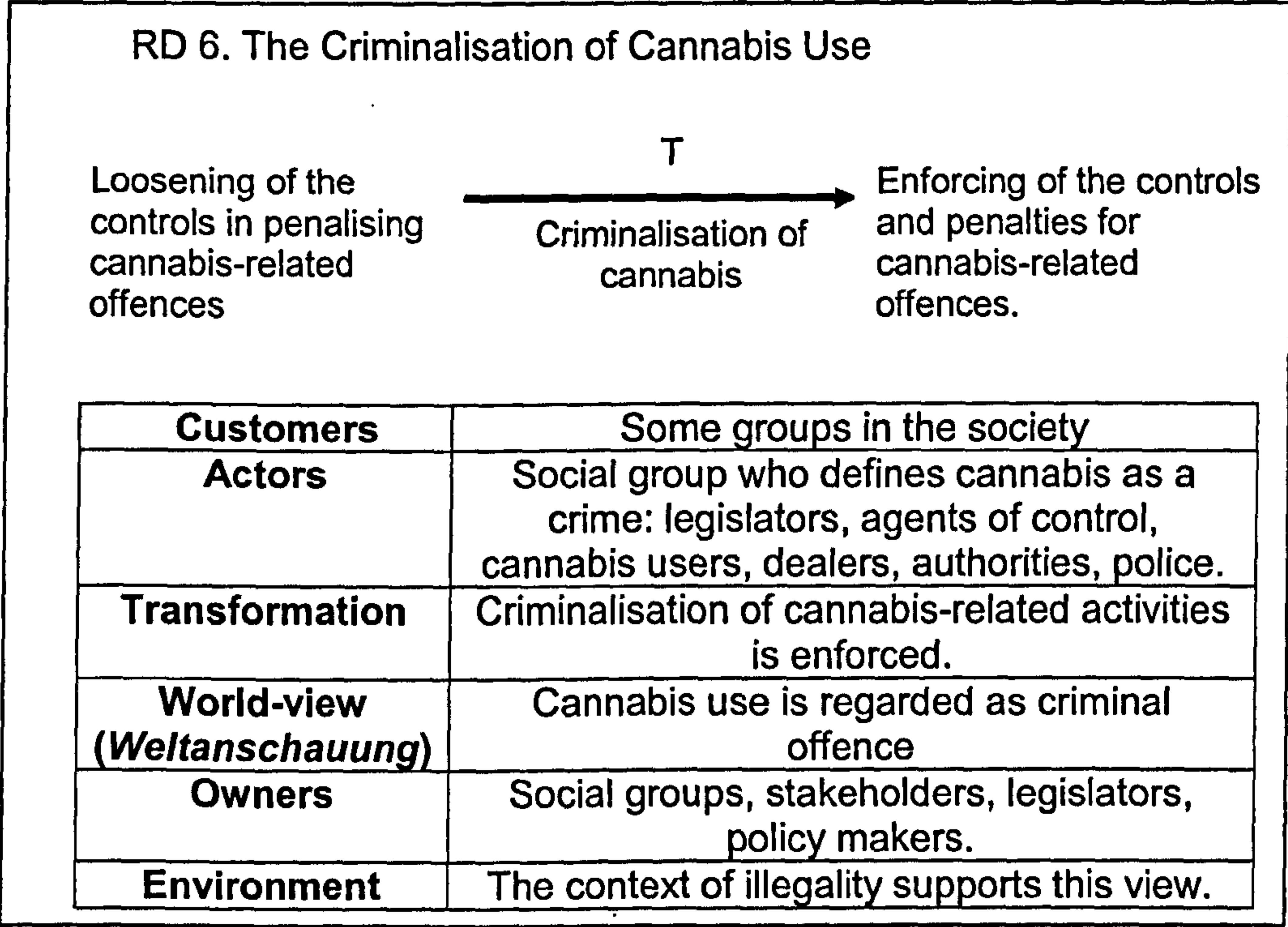
Nevertheless, this strategy has not diminished the proportion of people using cannabis; rather, it has increased the number of people in prison. Indeed, some researchers and experts have argued that drug criminalisation is more a source of problems than a solution for them (Simpson, M., 2003; The Police Foundation, 2004; Young, J. 1992). The discourse on cannabis as a crime has, to summarise, predominated in many countries, including in the United Kingdom. The statistics on arrests and imprisonment for cannabis offences speak for themselves.

This process of criminalisation follows the discourse of prohibition, focusing on criminalisation as a possible means of removing the menace of cannabis use. Therefore, it might be possible to argue that criminalisation is promoted by some social groups that have furthered the perception of cannabis use and supply as social menaces by defining them as criminal activities, thus to be punished. The main institution responsible for addressing these crimes is therefore prison. Furthermore, it may be claimed that the increase in cannabis penalisation can be due to the perception of the loss of the authorities' control over practices related to cannabis use, and the government's emphasis on being 'tough on drugs and crime'. In this sense, the increasing consumption of cannabis provokes the necessity for strengthening controls over cannabis-related activities.

In terms of a Root Definition, the following may be provided:

A social group defines cannabis-related activities as criminal offences by means of penalising them; in order to strengthen penalties and reinforce controls over cannabis related activities, in a context in which cannabis is illegal, but there is evidence of increasing use and production.

This Root Definition can be represented diagrammatically as follows:



As has been stated, the emphasis of this approach to cannabis is to criminalise activities related to its use or supply. Indeed, the institution responsible for penalising cannabis offences is prison. There are, however, other institutions of discipline and control to have addressed the problem of cannabis use. As will be presented in next section, when cannabis use is defined as a health problem, medical institutions are responsible for its treatment and eventual cure. Here, instead of police guards, there are nurses and doctors; in the role of judges, there are

doctors and psychiatrists; instead of being locked up in prison, cannabis users are confined to hospitals, treatment centres and asylums.

5.3.7. Treatment: Cannabis as a disease

These findings add to the growing body of evidence from different sources, all of which suggest that heavy use of cannabis may lead to increased risk of psychotic symptoms and disease in susceptible individuals.

Prof. David Fergusson, in *BBC on Line*¹⁶⁰

While the previous discourse defines cannabis use as a crime, in this Root Definition cannabis use is defined in terms of a disease. The Root Definition will in this context be furthered by including the aspects of addiction, physical harm, and mental health. From an historical point of view, the definition of drug addiction in relation to a disease has allowed the development of treatment services in British drugs policy. It is expected that the problem of cannabis use can be treated through appropriate procedures, in order to cure the illness of addiction. The official definition by the World Health Organisation states that:

Drug addiction is a state of periodic or chronic intoxication detrimental to the individual and to society, produced by the repeated consumption of a drug (natural or synthetic). Its characteristics include: 1) an overpowering desire or need (compulsion) to continue taking the drug and to obtain it by any means, 2) a tendency to increase the dosage, and 3) a psychic and sometimes physical dependence on the effect of the drug. (Cited by Szasz, T. 1994 [orig. 1972])

However, addiction is not a simple issue, and researchers have argued that addiction can also be a socially constructed concept, used in justifying

the role of the medical community in treating it as an illness (Davies, J.B., 1997; Levine, H.G., 1978). The controversy over cannabis is related to the 'addictive' characteristic of the substance, which seems to remain more as a psychological dependence than a physical one. Another argument in relation to the physical harm of cannabis in the human body is related to the 'gateway theory'. Here, it is argued that cannabis, as well as alcohol and tobacco, paves the way for further use of harder drugs (Fergusson, D.M., and Horwood, L.J., 2000; Golub, A. and Johnson, B.D., 2002). In general, the treatment approach towards cannabis use goes beyond the addictive effects, while it includes other physical and mental harm. As has been mentioned, cannabis use is linked to heart disease, lung cancer, and some mental conditions (Castle, D. and Murray, R., 2004; Earlywine, M., 2005; Rey, J.M. and Tennant, C.C., 2002).

Recent emphasis on the connections between cannabis use and illnesses such as depression, schizophrenia, and even suicide has prompted a number of studies and claims about the hazards of cannabis smoking (Hall, W. and Degenhardt, L., 2000; Harrigan, P., 1999; Macleod, J. *et al.*, 2004). In particular, it has been identified a particular case of psychosis associated with the use of cannabis amongst young people, commonly known as cannabis psychosis (Arendt, M., 2002; Miller, P. and Plant, M., 2002; Veen, N.D. *et al.*, 2000; Verdoux, H. *et al.*, 2002). The evidence tends to reveal a particular hazard in young people with a predisposition towards schizophrenia; also, it depicts the hazards for teenagers of smoking cannabis.

Although further research would be required to establish the real causes of and ways of treating this particular type of mental condition, cannabis in relation to mental health has been identified as a particular form of psychosis. 'Cannabis psychosis' has become a new threat to public health in Britain.

¹⁶⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4305783.stm>. Accessed on 10 March 2005.

Nevertheless, apart from some researchers, the term is mainly used by parents, opinion makers, and other authorities, to point out the dangers of cannabis in certain groups of the population.

For example, one British father believes smoking cannabis helped precipitate schizophrenia in his son six years ago: "He collapsed in a disco, and when he came round he heard voices saying 'it's OK Steve - you can get up' but there was no one there talking." He has heard them ever since.

The doctors are saying it [cannabis] was definitely a trigger."¹⁶¹



Terry Hammond, from Southampton, told the BBC that his son Stephen, 27, started hearing voices after a "binge" on cannabis joints.

From this example, it can be seen how cannabis use can be defined as a mental condition. Majority support for this approach has come from doctors who, as has been demonstrated, have favoured a disease model in explaining drugs practices. In terms of the Methodology, it is possible to say that when cannabis use is defined as a disease, the main purpose for doctors is to treat or to cure this condition.

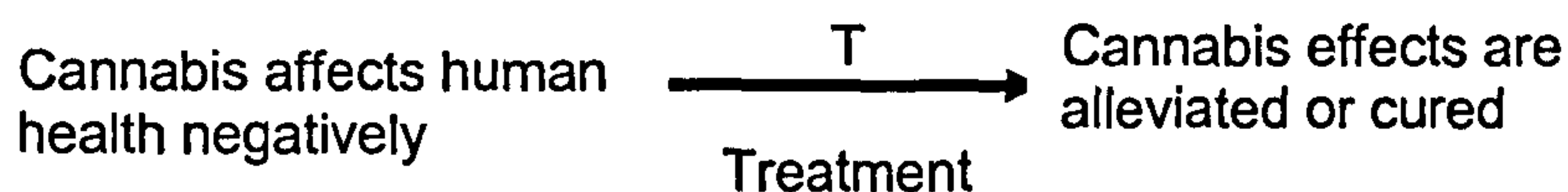
The Root Definition can synthesise this approach as follows:

A professional group appreciates the possible effects of cannabis on human health, in need of medical attention by providing appropriate treatment, in order to cure or to alleviate its consequences; in a context in which cannabis is illegal.

It can be illustrated thus:

¹⁶¹ Source <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4277408.stm>. Accessed 10 June 2005

RD 7. Treatment of the effects of cannabis



Customers	Some groups in society, users, parents, communities
Actors	Doctors, health professionals, authorities, users.
Transformation	The effects of cannabis on human health are treated or cured.
World-view (Weltanschauung)	Cannabis use is regarded as a disease.
Owners	Medical practitioners, scientists, governmental authorities.
Environment	Context of illegality supports this view.

As mentioned above, the medical approach to cannabis use represents another way of controlling or removing the menace it represents. However, it might be argued that this is a more humanitarian way of treating cannabis-related problems; moreover, that this is a 'scientific' approach to the problem. Without denying the possible negative effects that cannabis use can have, this sort of definition also reinforces a negative perception of cannabis (in contrast to what users may claim). The main agents belong to the medical profession; instead of prison, there are hospitals to treat its after-effects. In the context of a welfare state, hospitals and prisons are part of the activities of the government. It is thus possible to argue that any of these strategies will have budgetary consequences for the public administration. The next section will analyse the role of the government in the definition of cannabis use as a social problem, to be treated by any institution applying public funds. Recent changes toward a 'management' state have opened up the opportunity of reviewing the debate on the real

efficiency of the current strategies for controlling or eliminating cannabis use.

5.3.8. Public Policy: Cannabis as a social problem

Home Secretary David Blunkett has called for an "adult debate" on the reform of the cannabis law, paving the way for a possible re-think in government policy. In BBC on Line, 8 July 2001.¹⁶²

The last two discourses in which cannabis use is defined as a crime or as a disease find convergence in the field of public policy. Because justice and health are part of the responsibilities of modern states, the discourse of public policy emerges as part of the approaches to cannabis. As was described in Chapter Two, the realm of the drugs policy in the United Kingdom can be characterised by a configuration of two main approaches: the medical, and the criminalist. In both cases, cannabis use is considered a problem to be regulated through the respective institutions: hospital or prison. Nevertheless, the social dimension of drug problems in relation to further aspects of public interest and the re-configuration of the British state has promoted a view in which drug problems are social problems requiring a particular public policy.

In fact, public policy in relation to drugs comprises a number of institutions in the bureaucratic organisation, acting at different levels: national, regional, and local. In the process of the re-organisation of the State and the definition of its responsibilities, it can be argued that management principles regarding the administration of public policies have become a dominant paradigm in this sector (Flynn, N., 1997). Drugs policy issues have not escaped the management reform promoted since those of the Conservative government during the 1980s and 1990s,

furthered by New Labour after 1997 (Marlow, A., 1999: 1). An important aspect of the approach towards drugs from the New Labour government has been to acknowledge the complexity of drug problems where these are seen as being related to wider social problems. The New Labour Party placed this connection within drugs policy by addressing social policies by means of a 'multi-agency' approach, 'joint working' and 'partnership' (Pearson, 1999: 20-1). On the other hand, by introducing management principles into the public sector, institutions have had to justify their existence (McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J., 1994). It is argued that support must be given to the policies that really work, yet the revision of current anti-drugs strategies remains a sensitive topic (Murji, K., 1998).¹⁶³

In the particular case of cannabis, as will be analysed in the following chapter, the management discourse in public policy prompted the discussion advocating a less criminalist approach. The reasons apparently to have influenced the discussion include firstly, the evaluation of the cost of policing drugs, which in 1999 had been estimated in £516 million, of which approximately £350 million (68 per cent) was related to cannabis offences (May, T. *et al.*, 2002). Secondly, public opinion appeared to be more tolerant regarding cannabis (ICM Poll for *BBC on Line*, 2001 and the ICM Poll for *The Guardian*, 2001). In the context of limited resources, the line of thought was that by re-classifying cannabis, it would be possible to redirect those resources to major forms of crime. It is interesting to note a change in the consideration of cannabis as a problem regarding the last three discourses. While in the prohibitionist approach cannabis is plainly defined as a menace that must be removed, the second and third discourses consider it a crime or disease to be punished or treated; in the current discourse the perception changes slightly. Although cannabis is still a problem which preferably should be removed, here the authorities'

¹⁶² Source; http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1429178.stm

¹⁶³ Indeed, it is argued that New Labour's fixation with cracking down on disorder has prompted a process of the re-moralisation of crime control strategies; McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J., (2000) 'The Criminal Justice System: New Labour's New Partnerships' in Clarke, J., Gewirtz, S. and McLaughlin, E., (eds.) *New Managerialism, New Welfare?* London: Sage/Open University. In this sense, the increasing criminalisation of drugs-related activities seems to adapt to their approach on social control, inspired by the American approach to drugs. Newburn, T. and Sparks, R., (eds.) (2004) *Criminal Justice and Political Cultures: National and International Dimensions of Crime Control*, Cullompton: Willan Publishers.

aim is to gain administration over it. This idea of the administration of crime is analysed by Garland (1996), who points out the limits of the state in its purpose of reducing crime. In the context of limited funds, cannabis re-classification represents a way of re-focusing efforts in the wider realm of drugs policy. As stated by (Roberts, M. *et al.*, 2005):

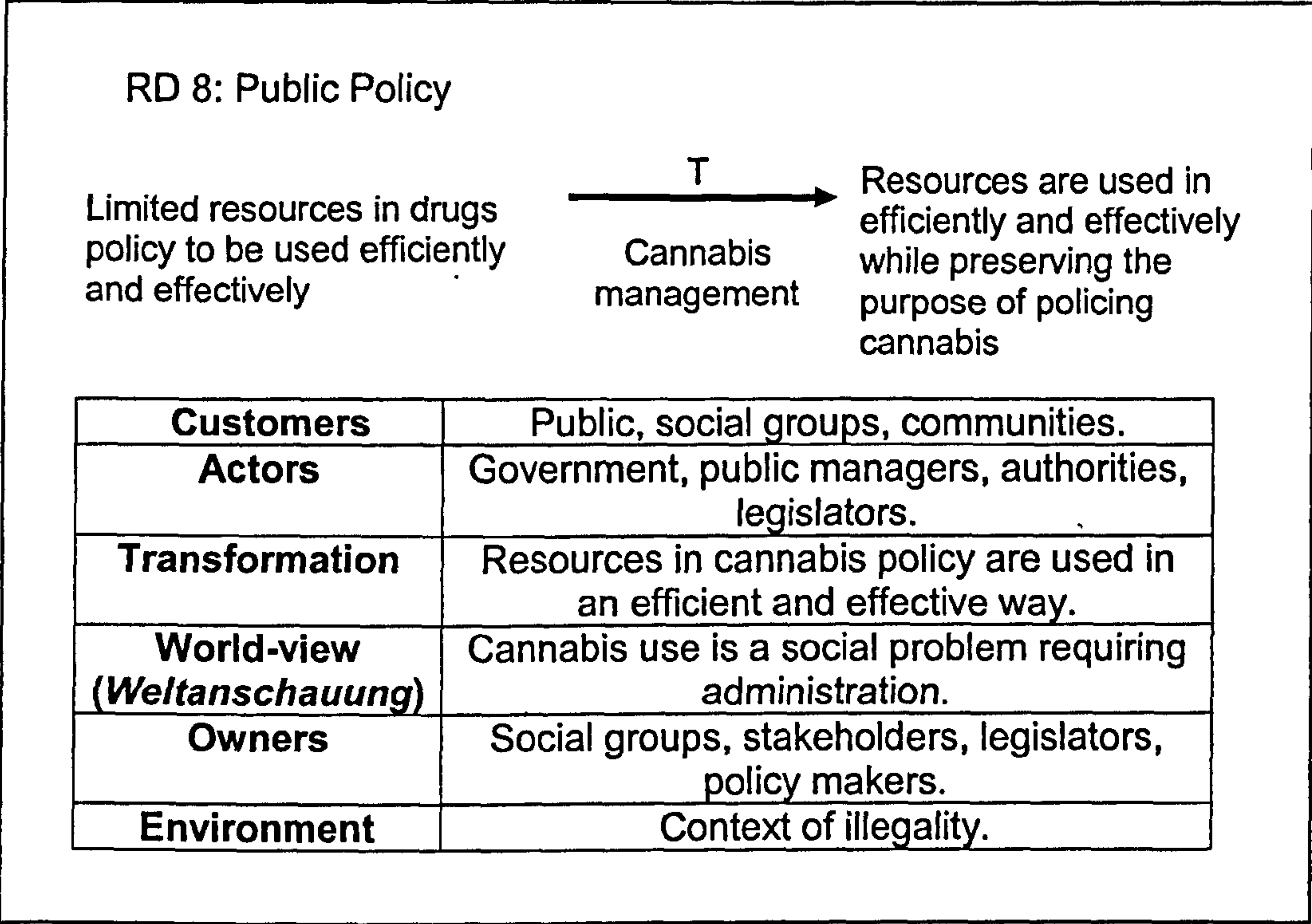
[T]he re-classification of cannabis in the UK was partly justified as a means of enabling better resourced and better targeted law enforcement to focus on the illicit trade in the most harmful drugs, particularly heroin and crack/cocaine, and on targeting the drug suppliers instead of an otherwise law-abiding group of experimental drug users. (p.7)

In this sense, the purpose of using police officers time more efficiently by reviewing the legislation on cannabis appears to be a suitable explanation for the decision. As will be analysed in the next chapter, this particular argument seems to have been very influential in the debate on re-classification. It has two sides: first, the management approach to drugs policy issues, including criteria of efficiency and efficacy; and secondly, the acknowledgment of an 'experimental', or recreational, use of cannabis.

For the purpose of this Root Definition, the management character of the argument is the main focus:

A government defines cannabis as a social problem in need of public policy in order to deal with the consequences of its use and, at the same time, being efficient in the use of limited resources in a context where cannabis-related activities are illegal.

Hence, this root definition can be illustrated as:



As will be presented in the next chapter, the political discussion on cannabis has allowed the emergence of different discourses about cannabis. In the discussion, the management approach to cannabis is one more discourse among many. In fact, each group holding any of the discourses identified by the Root Definition has a way of dealing with the environment while pursuing its own aims in terms of a desired transformation regarding cannabis use. Whereas some insist on retaining the *status quo* of prohibition through providing further reasons in the definition of cannabis use as deviant behaviour or by criminalising it, others may focus on the consequences as regards human health. Certain groups may, in contrast, attempt to change the context of illegality, which may constitute an obstacle for their own activities. The opinions of all of them are equally important in reaching an understanding of the process of policy making. However, the challenge here is to find a suitable way to acknowledge that in the political debate may lay other dynamics, favouring one group of opinion over others.

5.3.9. Summary

In this sub-section different root definitions have been developed. As a result, the amount of discussions on cannabis can be classified in these different 'discourses', showing *what is said* about this topic. These discourses express diverse and sometimes opposed views on cannabis which will be present in the debate about its re-classification. These root definitions were developed by using different sources, including interviews with relevant actors. From this revision it has been possible to reveal some divergences in the perception of cannabis against the political debate about its legislation. The next section aims to explain a concern for the power issues emerging from the research process and the particular considerations of both Checkland and Foucault about this topic.

5.4. Power issues emerging from the research process

Throughout the development of this chapter a number of questions regarding the prevalence of a specific type of discourse in mainstream sources have been identified. For instance, when analysing the content of media items published over the two years of this research, changes in the proportion and presence of discourses have been noted. The mainstream media in the UK tend to reflect a certain negative approach to cannabis; some of the discourses about cannabis supporting a relatively positive use of the substance were thus somewhat more difficult to find, which may be interpreted as a form of discrimination against such a view.

In comparison, in analysing the process of policy making on the issue of cannabis, it appeared to follow a rational sequence of events, and to be informed by expert advice, public consultation, and previous experiences. This would seem to be the logical framework for the use of certain methodologies for analysing processes. Nevertheless, the collection of other defining facts in the decision-making process, especially where

these were contrasted with a number of interviews with stakeholders, proved otherwise.

These two aspects will be analysed in detail in Chapter Six. However, what is important for this stage of the dissertation is that both the predominance of certain discourses highlighting the negative effects of cannabis use, and also the inconsistencies in the process of policy making informed by the interviews, alerted the researcher to the existence of power issues that needed to be understood in the context of the investigation. In particular, this section highlights certain interviews with stakeholders and experts, revealing aspects both of the discrimination inherent in some of the discourses on cannabis, and of the inconsistencies in the logic of the process of policy making. In consequence, the following two sub-sections address firstly, how during the course of the interviews some aspects related to power issues were identified, illustrated by four examples, which will be analysed in detail later; and secondly, the ways in which the works of Checkland and Foucault consider power issues.

5.4.1. Interviews, data collection, and emerging issues

The emergence of power issues in the development of this research can be illustrated through presenting four examples in which the presence of power issues was evidenced. These aspects will be explored in depth in the next chapter; however, it is important to highlight them now as their exploration will define the path of this investigation.

First of all, it was noted the predominance of certain discourses in the mainstream media over other opinions on cannabis. As will be analysed in detail later in this dissertation, most of the news items collected during the years between 2002 and 2004 emphasised the perception of cannabis as negative. The number of news items reporting either cases of violence triggered by cannabis or problems of mental health associated with

cannabis use represents the majority. The fact that there are other drugs, such as alcohol or prescription drugs, causing similar damage yet not necessarily being highlighted to the extent that cannabis problems are in the mainstream media is paradoxical.

In addition, during the course of the investigation it became clear that certain relevant actors were rarely quoted in the news items, for instance, cannabis users and campaigners. They are indeed key actors in the understanding of the situation surrounding cannabis, although are seldom considered in the political debate as being valid decision makers. It may be the case that they have insufficient power, money, or prestige to be quoted, an issue to be considered in an analysis of the process of policy making. It was thus important for the researcher to gain access to those groups that had largely remained invisible in mainstream sources. The process of contacting such experts was relatively difficult, partly because of the illegal character of cannabis use. The interviews with users had to remain confidential, and the identity of the interviewees has required anonymity.

The necessity of including the variety of the opinions on cannabis and of dealing with them in a balanced way became a challenge for the researcher. Throughout the investigation the aim has been to consider different and sometimes divergent views on cannabis in an equal manner. It has also been important to contrast the opinions expressed in the mainstream sources with the views of those people who participated in or who held an informed opinion on the process of policy making.

For instance, it is frequently said that campaigners supporting the use of cannabis have played an important role in the discussion about re-classification.¹⁶⁴ However, in reality it seems that their role has been consultative rather than influential in the final decision on cannabis. Although their opinion was consulted, the impact of their views was

¹⁶⁴ See Section 5.1.4. Speaking about cannabis: Interviews and stakeholders; quoting Phillips, Melanie, *Daily Mail*, 26 January 2004: 'Cannabis Catastrophe', pp. 10-12

disregarded, as was demonstrated during the process of conducting interviews. Alun Buffrey – delegate for the Legalise Cannabis Alliance – refers to their participation in the debate about re-classification as follows:

I went in representation from the Legalise Cannabis Alliance. I went down to the Home Affairs Committee about the evaluation of the policy on drugs. I said that I was very concerned with the issue of supplying and cultivation, and that the re-classification was not enough. And I argued that legalisation would protect people from crime. We were called but really they did not pay a lot of attention.¹⁶⁵

In a democratic political system such as the British one, in which the opinions of different people should be taken into account, the absence of key actors such as users and campaigners represents a warning that certain issues of power are influencing the political debate. Nonetheless, the decision taken as regards re-classification seems more to be reactive to public opinion as reflected by the mainstream media than a decision that has weighed all of the factors equally.

The result of these adjustments to the public opinion expressed by mainstream media and other stakeholders was the re-formulation of cannabis re-classification in terms of sending the 'right message' to the young people in Britain and to the international community. This entailed a change to the core of the proposal of making cannabis use a non-arrestable offence by including aggravating circumstances, and emphasising that possession of all Class C drugs was to constitute an arrestable offence. As suggested by Howard Marks – former cannabis dealer and expert on cannabis issues – interviewed by the researcher:

You hear that all the time, that they [politicians] do not want to 'send the wrong message' ... they should listen to the messages that we send to them [swearing] ... it is part of the political jargon.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Alun Buffrey, Norwich, 19 October 2004. Conducted and transcribed by B. Acevedo.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Howard Marks. York, 16 June 2004. Interview and transcription by B. Acevedo.

This assertion, although ironic, holds validity, when an analysis is made of the British democratic system in which politicians represent voters and citizens. However, it seems to be the case that the opinions of cannabis users are disregarded when the authorities are taking decisions on drugs policy; this rendering invisible of an informed and involved sector of society confirms the existence of power issues affecting the transparency of the public debate on this matter. Other inconsistencies in the logic of policy making - guided though it was claimed to be by rational principles - evidenced another significant example of the identification of power issues in this research.

A third aspect in which the presence of power issues was identified in the course of this research is revealed by the alleged sequence of decisions taken in the process of cannabis re-classification. For instance, the experiment in Lambeth became closely associated with the notion of re-classification. The possibility of showing 'measurable' results in terms of saving resources where efficiency is concerned could have encouraged the government to take steps towards re-classification. In October 2001, the then new Home Secretary David Blunkett announced that he was considering revision of cannabis legislation.

The two events - the Lambeth Experiment, and Blunkett's disclosure three months after its implementation - seemed in the social perception to be connected, yet the researcher has determined that this is not necessarily the case. Former Commander Paddick confirmed in an interview [6 June 2004] that when the Home Secretary announced the re-classification, the experiment had been in operation for only two or three months, and none of the results were available for the decision to have been based on them:

I had no discussions at all with the Home Office Secretary, before, during or after the experiment.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Former Police Commander Brian Paddick, Scotland Yard, London, 6 June 2004. Interview and transcription by B. Acevedo.

It is nevertheless accepted that, in terms of policy making, there is certain logic to the decision-making process. However, it seems, rather, a convergence of factors that produces an idea of sequential logic. In this sense, it may thus be claimed that the decision on re-classification came on the initiative of the then Home Secretary David Blunkett, as he interpreted the social and political context.

The position of power of the Home Secretary could have influenced his proposal as regards re-classifying cannabis. In fact, the announcement of re-classifying cannabis represented a break with the traditional reluctance of previous Home Secretaries about the topic of drugs. As expressed by Mike Trace – former deputy Anti-Drugs Tsar and expert in drugs policy – the personal opinion of the Home Secretary is a crucial factor to consider in the analysis of cannabis policy making:

I would guess that three things happened: the ministerial changes, David Blunkett in the Home Office in charge of the drug officers, and apparently he was more comfortable than Jack Straw on cannabis issues, at the personal level. He would have had some kind of personal appreciation of the issue; he would have not taken a sudden decision. Secondly, the evidence about the amount of money spent on arresting minor offenders, basically more and more people in the media and academia were producing reports about this, these are not very sensible things. Thirdly, it might be the case that political advisers thought that liberalising cannabis policy would have not necessarily been seen by the public as giving up the drug problem. Although politicians are very aware of not wanting to look soft on drugs, they could have thought that the social reaction would be favourable to reviewing cannabis.¹⁶⁸

The interview with this actor carries importance because it reflects from inside the government the ways in which political issues are discussed. Indeed, it shows how certain processes of consultation are promoted according to the personal appreciations of policy makers. The point here is to highlight that these appreciations become policy initiatives when the policy maker holds any form of power, such as being a minister or head of department. On the other hand, as the same quotation expresses, there

¹⁶⁸ Mike Trace, London, 7 October 2004: Interview and transcription by B. Acevedo.

are a number of groups inside the government who played an important role in the discussions on policy issues and the production of final decisions on matters such as cannabis re-classification.¹⁶⁹

The fourth aspect showing evidence of the exercise of power is related to the inconsistencies in the process of policy making. As will be explained in detail later in this dissertation, a missing link between the original proposal on cannabis re-classification and the final decision about the penalisation of cannabis offences in the official downgrading of cannabis can be identified: this is the power of arrest.¹⁷⁰ When the re-classification of cannabis was announced in 2002, the main impact of this measure was to decrease the penalties for possession of this substance. Under Class B drugs, cannabis possession was punished with five years' imprisonment, and its supply with fourteen years. By moving cannabis to Class C, penalties for possession would decrease to two years' imprisonment and for supplying, seven years. It had been the practice that offences penalised with up to two years' imprisonment were treated by the police with cautions or community service, thus, when moving cannabis to Class C, the main effect was to make cannabis possession a non-arrestable offence. However, as the decision was progressing, the severity of penalties was emphasised by the government by their specifying aggravating circumstances, and by increasing the penalties for the supplying of all Class C drugs to fourteen years' imprisonment. As a consequence of the debate, cannabis possession is still an arrestable offence, which can under certain circumstances be aggravated. In other words, the core of the proposal as had originally been announced - that of not penalising otherwise law-abiding citizens - was clearly disregarded.

The confusion created by this measure within public and police officers is illustrated by the following statement from an interview with a police officer

¹⁶⁹ For example, when the re-classification of cannabis was announced officially by the Home Office, Michael Howard, Leader of the Conservative Party, attacked the measure, considering it 'absurd', and promising to 'reverse' it when the Conservatives returned to office. The conversation between the Home Secretary and the Leader of the Opposition revolved around the question 'Have you ever smoked?', to which no answer was given by the latter. See Appendix 2: Re-classification, 15-30 January 2004, News No. 43 to 47. 'Have you ever smoked?' Various newspapers.

¹⁷⁰ This aspect will be analysed in detail in Chapter Eight: See Section 8.3.1. The power of arrest.

in the streets of London, on the very same day on which the decision regarding cannabis re-classification came into operation, 29 January 2004:

Before [the re-classification] we used to decide whether or not to arrest the person on possession of cannabis. Now [with the re-classification] it is so confusing that in order to avoid mistakes, we are arresting all of them.¹⁷¹

The problem here lies not only in the confusion about the effects on the re-classification, but in terms of power issues: this case illustrates the presence of interests and groups who opposed and influenced the decision to keep cannabis possession as an arrestable offence, against the practice of non-arrestability for offences penalised with two years' imprisonment. This aspect was discussed with some of the experts interviewed in this research, who suggested the intervention by some individuals with power who thus influenced the decision of the Home Secretary to retain the power of arrest. As was expressed by Brian Paddick:

Up until eight days before the Home Secretary was due to announce the re-classification in the House of Commons, he and his officers were going around trying to convince everybody that the re-classification was the thing to do, with the effect that [cannabis offences] will be penalised with two years for possession, which meant the police could no longer arrest for it. [...] But what happened was that some senior police officers went to talk to the Home Secretary and persuaded him that the police needed to retain their power of arrest. And eight days before he was going to announce the decision, the Home Secretary changed his mind and said that he would re-introduce primary legislation to introduce the power of arrest for cannabis after it has been reclassified.

This is clear evidence of the presence of power issues in the policy making process, therefore, they must be considered in the analysis. The re-classification concerns not merely the rationality of conserving resources or protecting law-abiding citizens, nor is it intended to update the legislation by acknowledging the existence of certain non-problematic uses of cannabis. In fact, as will be demonstrated later in this dissertation,

the debate and decision-making process regarding the re-classification of cannabis became the arena for particular power games, in which different actors holding particular interests influenced the decision that should instead have been guided by rational principles, expert advice and objective evidence about the real costs and benefits of the penalisation of cannabis-related offences.

To summarise: these four aspects have provided evidence of the presence of power issues to be considered in this research. The opportunity to gain access to certain experts, insiders, users, and campaigners was in fact a positive aspect of this research process. Without the interviews, many of the inconsistencies or even the existence of other voices disregarded in the mainstream sources would have remained invisible and thus unheard. The current investigation contributes to a comprehensive documentation of the process of policy making; it serves to point towards future analyses in the area of drugs policy in the United Kingdom. It is therefore necessary, taking into account these aspects, to include the issue of power as a central feature of the examination of cannabis re-classification. The next sub-section presents two approaches to the understanding of power in the works of Checkland and Foucault that are subjected to analysis.

5.4.2. Power issues in the works of Checkland and Foucault

As evidenced in this chapter, the information about cannabis is extensive and diverse; in addition, it has been found some emerging aspects related to power that need to be considered in this dissertation. Due to the controversy surrounding cannabis policy, it is necessary to treat the different opinions and world views in an equal manner. Taking into account these defining characteristics and considering the research questions of the current thesis, it was suggested that the selective use of

¹⁷¹ Interview with police officer in the street, Kings Cross, London, 29 January 2004. Research notes by B. Acevedo.

Soft Systems Methodology might respond to the challenge posed by the research topic.

It has been also demonstrated that the selective use of Soft Systems Methodology represents a versatile tool for organising diverse and sometimes divergent items of information in the cannabis debate. Because this research must deal with the complexity of the topic and the diverse opinions involved in its appreciation, Soft Systems Methodology emerges as being a suitable device through which many views of the topic may be included non-judgementally. In particular, the use of the rich picture allowed the researcher to acquire a comprehensive view of the situation.

While revealing different views about cannabis, the fact that the political debate tends to involve power dynamics, in which certain opinions are assumed to be more valid than others, seems inevitable and predictable. The political debate on cannabis policy suggests that issues of power can determine which argument prevails over others. In fact, as has been proved during the research processes, some of the opinions favouring a positive view of cannabis use – recreational or medicinal - are not necessarily present in the mainstream sources. Media, newspapers and governmental reports tend to highlight the negative aspects of cannabis use; such use is thus defined as constituting a problem in need of regulation, treatment or management. In this case, it is important to analyse how SSM deals with this situation and what may prove to be its weaknesses in an analysis of power.

As presented in the previous Chapter, SSM relies on the transparency of different arguments and discussion from diverse actors interested in a situation. Given this, the methodology accepts that any human situation will have a political dimension (Checkland, P., 1986), and indeed suggests a way of analysing aspects of political systems. In what Checkland and Scholes (1990) named “Analysis Three”, politics is taken to be a process through which differing interests reach mutual accommodation.

Accommodating those interests is the business of politics, and the concept will apply to a company or work group or a sports club as well as to a city or a nation state. Finally, the accommodations which are generated, modified or dissolved by politics will ultimately rest on dispositions of power (Checkland, P. and Scholes, J., 1990: 50).

In Analysis Three, Checkland and Scholes recommend a way of understanding power by formulating the following question: "What are the 'commodities' [meaning: the embodiments] through which power is expressed in the situation?" They suggest that different examples of 'commodities' of power may include: formal (role-based) authority, intellectual authority, personal charisma, external reputation, commanding, access (or lack of access) to important information, and membership or non membership of various committees or less formal groups. (Checkland, P. and Scholes, J., 1990: 51).

Although Checkland acknowledges that power issues are present in any political system, the methodology is limited in responding to how these power processes take place, or how they are linked to the production of different discourses. In the case of cannabis re-classification, the four cases presented before evidence the complexity of the decisions on drugs policy making. First of all, the requirement of transparency in Checkland's SSM is not necessarily fulfilled, since there are some actors who are not evident in the public debate, yet, they can determine and influence final decisions on this matter. Secondly, the predominance of some discourses above others cannot be explained by analysing mainstream sources, thus, it is important to include many opinions that are sometimes disregarded from the public debate and the political discussions. The way in which certain opinions are excluded is connected to the aspects of power described before. Thirdly, the inconsistencies between the original purpose and the final decision in the classification of cannabis and its corresponding legal effects evidenced that there are changing dynamics of power in the process of policy making. Thus, it is not a rational or logical

process, yet, it involves interests, influences and motivations of different actors holding different levels of power.

In consequence, it is possible to say that Checkland's approach to power is not sufficient to understand some of the emerging questions of this research. It relies on the transparency of discourses and opinions about the problem situation, in this case cannabis; and it assumes that there is certain logic in the process of policy making. Indeed, this approach does not account for the relationship between discourses or knowledge produced about cannabis, or how discourses represent power. In addition, this view fails to consider the historical conditions in which the political discussions take place, but suggests concentrating on some examples as 'commodities of power', without finding a way to identify processes linked to the production/origin of these commodities. It is thus important to appreciate when to cease applying a methodology that provides no further answers and, therefore, the advantages of including complementary frameworks that might enrich the purpose of the investigation.

A possible response to those limitations is provided by Michel Foucault's approach to power. He addresses the notions of power and knowledge and the construction of the self that may prove applicable in answering the research questions. As will be explain in detail in Chapter Seven, Foucault was interested in the processes of the normalisation of certain practices by Western societies. For instance, he focused on the quest into how certain practices become problematic in the 'gaze' of society, and how subjects are defined. The way in which the current research is interested in understanding how cannabis become a problem, and how this problem is defined in the public debate and the policy-making process, can possibly be understood using his ideas. The particular event of cannabis re-classification represents a privileged opportunity to reveal how different views on cannabis emerge in the political discussion, as do the dynamics of power that determine the prevalence of certain opinions over others.

In Foucault's approach, what is said about a certain situation expresses not only knowledge, but also power. For example, in his book *Madness and Civilisation*, he shows how *what is said* about 'madness' in a particular historical period is the expression of both knowledge and power, in the sense that it determines who (the subject) is considered to be 'mad' and who (discipline or institution) must address this problem. This view on the duality of power and knowledge is expressed by Foucault as follows:

We should admit ... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, M., 1991a: 27)

In this consideration, the collection of different statements, opinions, or world-views about cannabis reveals knowledge, which is at the same time dependent on the power dynamics in a given historical period. In other words, that which is said about cannabis is not just the spontaneous expression of different views: their emergence and prevalence are determined by the power dynamics of different actors in the political debate. In this way, the prevalence of a negative or positive approach to cannabis cannot be explained solely in terms of if it were the most popular or perhaps a truer statement. The researcher must respond by considering all of these opinions as part of the duality of power and knowledge, and therefore an inclusion of as many divergent views as there are on a topic provides the insight necessary to this investigation.

When considering the diversity of opinions, this diversity cannot be understood solely as a 'commodity of power', as suggested by Checkland. In fact, the discourses obtained by using the Root Definitions convey not only a definition of or a world-view on cannabis; they are also the result of a complex process in which different disciplines, interests, and institutions exert their power by expressing knowledge. In summary: the issue of power cannot be understood merely through analysing the 'commodities' of power; it is an ongoing dynamic process linked to the production of

knowledge. This approach represents a promising path towards enriching the discussion on cannabis re-classification as a process of the normalisation of drug use.

5.5. Synthesis and conclusions

The chapter began with paramount information about cannabis. It was suggested that by using some stages of Soft Systems Methodology, the extensive information regarding to this matter could be addressed. As a consequence, drawing on history, different perceptions and applications of the plant - as a medicine, a part of rituals, a source of fibre, or as an inebriant for some cultural groups - have been presented. It has further been revealed that the current approach to cannabis as a harmful drug can be traced back through the history of political regulations and social perceptions regarding this substance. All of these different approaches to cannabis constitute a rich picture of the central topic of this research.

By applying the steps of the Methodology, a number of relevant systems have been identified. Classifying them within the matrix produced by the combination of two binaries has been selected from among many ways of identifying these systems. The first binary addresses the perception of the effects of cannabis as a 'remedy' or as a 'poison'. The second binary refers to these effects in relation to two aspects of human life: the 'body' and the 'soul'. When drawing together these binaries, a matrix of four quadrants in which the combination of the four categories produces an initial taxonomy for the different perceptions of cannabis has been obtained. Later, these different combinations were developed by including typical examples of how the action of cannabis can affect the body or the mind.

In the identification of the relevant systems the term 'discourse' was chosen in order to emphasise the different aspects that are highlighted in one or other world-view on cannabis. The naming of relevant systems and

thus the further steps of this Methodology rely on the identification of different world-views that support one or another approach to cannabis. In consequence, eight discourses were formulated as root definitions:

1. Ritualistic use of cannabis
2. Recreational use of cannabis
3. Medicinal use of cannabis
4. Economic use of cannabis
5. Cannabis use as deviant practice: Prohibition
6. Cannabis use as a crime: Criminalisation
7. Cannabis use as an illness: Treatment
8. Cannabis use as a social problem: Public Policy

By acknowledging different interpretations of the same situation, the interpretive paradigm that guides this research has been identified: Soft Systems Methodology emphasises the subjective understanding of social action, separating itself from a functionalist approach (see Checkland, P., 1999: 277). Such a perspective seems much more convenient than others in investigating the effects of this research into the use of drugs, taking into account the diverse and sometimes opposing views on the same situation.

In this chapter, it has been demonstrated that one of the main contributions of Checkland's Soft Systems Thinking to the understanding of the process of cannabis re-classification is to provide a means of organising the different discourses expressed in the debate on this political decision. Through applying the Root Definitions, the presentation of a wide range of opinions on regarding cannabis re-classification, organised coherently, has been made feasible. The root definitions can also be understood as 'discourses' or 'statements' in relation to the topic of discussion - in this case, cannabis re-classification. In other words, they can be seen as discursive statements expressed during a particular period by different actors.

As will be presented in Chapter Seven, the figure of 'discourse' is central to Foucault's approach. Throughout his work Foucault analyses different discursive formations regarding certain 'problems' of human beings. For example, he was interested in the different discourses on madness and how these change over a given period of time. Nevertheless, his interest was not to test the validity or otherwise of those discourses, nor did he try to demonstrate or contradict their coherence or whether they make sense; instead, he approached the discourses as a means of enquiring into how those discourses eventually create 'problems' and the 'subjects' who experience those 'problems'.

In summary: the use of SSM in this research and the identification of Root Definitions have served as analytical tools in organising different arguments in the situation at issue. The identification of the world-view, normally concealed or otherwise not explicit in some of the processes, is the key aspect here. Nevertheless, some emerging issues regarding power that require a particular approach have been evidenced in the process of the investigation.

This chapter has included a wide range of opinions from stakeholders, experts, and actors with insight knowledge about the process of policy making in the topic of cannabis. The opportunity to gain access to these people represents an achievement of this research process. Thanks to the interviews, many of the inconsistencies of the policy making process were evidenced. Indeed, the interviews show the existence of other voices disregarded in the mainstream sources that without this investigation would have remained invisible and unheard.

Four examples in which the presence of power issues was evidenced have been included. They refer basically to the invisibilisation of certain group of actors, the predominance of certain opinions over others, the fractures in the logic in the policy making process, and the lack of transparency in the process of decision making about cannabis policy. In consequence, it has been demonstrated that it is necessary to include the

issue of power as a central feature of the examination of cannabis re-classification.

In this sense, two approaches to this issue were considered in this chapter. Firstly, how Checkland's view of how power, in the analysis of any political system, can be understood by the identification of certain 'commodities of power' was presented. In the case of the cannabis debate, this approach to power fails to address the complexity of the different opinions expressed in the public debate. Because the issue of drugs policy and cannabis policy involves many actors and different institutions, it is not possible to identify precisely what constitutes these commodities of power. Furthermore, this approach fails to identify the origin and production of different discourses on cannabis, or the fact that some opinions seem to take prevalence within a certain historical period. Given that these questions form a crucial part of this research, it is thus necessary to include a wider approach to the emerging issues of power, reflected in the data collection and the different opinions expressed by interviewees and stakeholders.

It was proposed, in response to this factor, to attempt an understanding of power by using Foucault's approach, in which power is linked to knowledge and is related also to the subject. As explained before, this approach suits both the possibility of answering the research questions, regarding the production of certain discourses on cannabis, and the dynamics by which some of these discourses prevail in the political decisions. In addition, this approach allows the equal consideration of the different opinions expressed in the interviews regardless of the perceived 'authority', 'hierarchy' or 'prestige' of people interviewed.

As proposed in this investigation, the case of cannabis re-classification represents a privileged opportunity to see how different discourses are crystallised in the discussion, determining their role in the process of policy making. Due to the coincidence of studying this topic in real time it was also possible to interview a great variety of people who could inform the

process of policy making, as well as noting the perceptions of different groups regarding this decision. In addition, through the process of investigation it was evidenced that emerging issues showing the exercise of power may have influenced the definition, discussion and decision making regarding cannabis. The next chapter presents in detail the aspects of, discussions on and background to cannabis policy in the United Kingdom, and the actual process of cannabis re-classification.

CHAPTER 6 CANNABIS POLICY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The previous chapter provided a general view of the situation regarding cannabis and initiated the application of some stages of the Soft Systems Methodology. It started with a rich picture including diverse world views on cannabis; these formed the basis for identifying relevant systems. In particular, it was proposed that one way, among many others, was to organise these world views regarding the juxtaposition of two binaries: the consideration of cannabis as a remedy or as a poison; and its acting in the realms of the body and the soul. By revealing the various combinations, eight relevant systems were identified, and they provided the basis for the construction of eight root definitions.

The aim of this chapter is to test those root definitions by organising the quantity of information regarding the debate on cannabis re-classification. The framework produced earlier in formulating an understanding of the debate of cannabis re-classification will be applied, and the proposed methodology thus be completed. The debate on cannabis re-classification represents an appropriate context within which to appreciate how different discourses emerge in public discussion, and how they are incorporated into the policy-making process. It also represents an excellent opportunity to test the root definitions with direct reference to the actual debate on cannabis legislation in the United Kingdom.

The chapter begins with an historical review of prominent moments in the cannabis debate since the 1960s. Because many of the political decisions are rooted in previous appreciations of problems, the current section emphasises selected mainstream perceptions developed during this period that may be taken into account in the analysis of cannabis re-classification.

The second section focuses on the debate on cannabis re-classification, initiated by Reports at the end of the 1990s, and re-introduced by the

British Government in 2001. The events related to the re-classification of cannabis are summarised in Appendix 1: *Chronology of Events related to Cannabis Re-classification*. The core of this section is the use of the Root Definitions seeking to organise the material collected during the period of the investigation. It will be demonstrated that by applying the framework provided by this stage of the Soft Systems Methodology, it is indeed possible to organise the diverse forms of information about cannabis re-classification. The exercise can be compared to the task of an archaeologist in organising a range of facts and artefacts from a specific site.

In the current research, the sources to be used in the task of compilation are the following:

Firstly, some prominent government documents in relation to cannabis and cannabis re-classification will be analysed in the next sub-section. The purpose is, through using root definitions as a general framework, to identify the main ideas discussed at government level.

Secondly, a collection of news from a random sample of British newspapers will be analysed. The reason behind this selection is because media messages and news may be said to represent at least one aspect of the discussion on cannabis re-classification. As a consequence, the root definitions will help in reaching an understanding of the ways in which the discussion changed in response to two historical moments in the public debate: the period of 2002-2003 when the possibility of re-classifying cannabis was considered; and the period in which the decision about re-classification was made official in January, 2004.

Finally, a number of interviews with different stakeholders will complement the information obtained in previous sources. The purpose of including them is to complement the views of the media

and official documents with the voices of certain actors not necessarily represented by the mass media or by government institutions.

Once this information has been classified and organised through applying the root definitions, the third section of this chapter concerns the specific description of the process of cannabis re-classification. The section analyses the transition from the original implications of re-classifying cannabis, at the one extreme, to the final decision taken by the New Labour government, at the other. The purpose of this section is to highlight the possible 'gaps' in the process of policy making regarding cannabis. In this section, the root definitions will be used as an aid to commenting on a range of facts and events regarding the process of re-classifying cannabis. Further questions emerging from the analysis of this topic will be presented.

The fourth section synthesises the main results in the selective use of the Soft Systems Methodology. In particular, this chapter uses the Root Definitions as a guide to classify and organise different discourses in the process of debating cannabis reclassification.

Finally, the fifth section presents certain conclusions concerning the whole chapter, and will introduce theories from the work of Michel Foucault in answering the questions emerging through this research. It will be suggested that this means will contribute to gaining a fuller understanding of the information revealed by this chapter.

6.1. Historical Background

The purpose of this section is to draw attention to specific historical moments in the political discussion on cannabis. As presented in Chapter Two, it may be argued that cannabis became a social problem in Britain

from the 1960s. The analysis therefore starts in this period, when 'times were changing' in the drug scene.

It has been stated that in the 1960s, an increasing number of young people started to experiment with cannabis and other drugs. The government of that time, puzzled by the phenomenon of the spreading consumption of drugs and pressed by the demand from certain sections of society to discover the details, appointed two committees to study the issue of drugs use in British society. These committees are commonly known as the First and the Second Brain Committees (1962-1965).¹⁷²

The Second Brain Committee (1965) proposed that a special group of experts be consulted for advice regarding drugs matters. In order to discover more about the increasing phenomenon of drug consumption and its legal implications, the government in April 1967 appointed the Advisory Committee on Drugs Dependence (ACDD) to address the topics of cannabis and D-lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD).

The ACDD Report (1969), chaired by Baroness Wooton and commonly known as the *Wooton Report*, was published in the midst of a controversy regarding changing views about the harmfulness of cannabis.¹⁷³ The convergence of contradictory opinions about cannabis and the interpretations made by legislators of them can be compared to contemporary approaches to cannabis policy, as will be illustrated in the following examples.

6.1.1. The Wooton Report and the 'pot lobby'

In approaching the history of the Wooton Report, many interconnected aspects regarding the political decision on cannabis legislation can be

¹⁷² See Chapter Two: Drugs policy in the United Kingdom.

¹⁷³ At first, government committees were concerned with only the opiates, in particular with heroin addiction. The two reports of the Interdepartmental Committee under Lord Brain in 1961 and 1965 hardly mentioned cannabis. See Schofield, M., (1971) *The Strange Case of Pot*, London: Penguin. Schofield participated in the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence, and his views on the process are summarised in this book.

identified. For instance, it is commonly accepted that social pressure could have influenced the Advisory Committee's Report. In fact, the importance of the Report has been tempered by the surrounding events in relation to the whole environment of social change (Abrams, S., 1997).

The ACDD examined the main aspects related to cannabis, including scientific evidence about its effects on human health. In particular, the members focused on discovering the effects of cannabis in terms of addiction. They concluded in the final report that the 'long term consumption of cannabis in moderate doses has no harmful effects' (ACDD 1969: Para. 29);¹⁷⁴ they also discussed the recreational or experimental use of cannabis among people from different social backgrounds, ethnic origins, and age groups. The committee concluded that 'there is no evidence that this activity is causing violent crime or aggressive antisocial behaviour, or is producing in otherwise normal people conditions of dependence or psychosis, requiring medical treatment' (ACDD 1969: Para. 67).

In the interests of this dissertation, it is important to mention that this Advisory Committee recommended for the first time the consideration of cannabis as a separate issue in the context of illicit drug use. In particular, it was suggested that the penalties for the unlawful possession, sale or supply of cannabis should be reduced, and that the possession of a small amount of this substance should not be regarded as a serious crime to be punished by imprisonment.

Their Report was submitted to the Home Secretary in October 1968, and published on his authority in January 1969. The Report seemed to endorse a liberal attitude towards cannabis, but it was not well received by the then Home Secretary, James Callaghan. In the parliamentary discussion on the Cannabis Advisory Committee's report he stated that:

¹⁷⁴ See also Section 1: Para. 19-32, ACDD (1969) *Cannabis: Report by the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence*. London: HMSO

To reduce the penalties for the possession, sale or supply of cannabis would be bound to lead people to think that the Government take a less than serious view of the effects of drug taking.¹⁷⁵

He declared that reducing cannabis penalties would add to the number of social 'evils' in Britain; he argued that: "it would be sheer masochism to add to our evils by legislating to make it easier for people to introduce yet another one".¹⁷⁶ In addition, he denounced the fact that the Report was 'over-influenced' by what he called 'a pot lobby'.¹⁷⁷

The so-called 'pot lobby' may in fact be seen as a series of events and circumstances that were not necessarily connected. Because of their resonance in the media and manifestation in the reaction of the Home Secretary, they have become part of the British memory in relation to cannabis in the 1960s. Two events in particular attracted the attention of the media and social perceptions during this period. The first is related to the imprisonment of members of the rock band 'The Rolling Stones', accused of the possession of cannabis and other controlled drugs in May 1967. The highly publicised event was contested by the famous editorial in the Times written by Rees-Mogg: "Who breaks a Butterfly on a Wheel?". In this article he pointed out that through this arrest, not only were the individual members of that band prosecuted, but so was a whole generation whose attitude to drugs was part of their challenge to social order.¹⁷⁸

Later that year in the same newspaper, an advertisement on 24 July stated that the "Law on cannabis is immoral in principle, and unworkable in practice". The advertisement signed by the 'great and the good' was

¹⁷⁵ In Hansard (1969) "Cannabis (Advisory Committee's Report)", *Hansard Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons* (col. 662), 23 January 1969.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* col. 663.

¹⁷⁷ James Callaghan, House of Commons Debates, 27 January 1969, Vol. 776, col. 959. Cited in Davenport-Hines, R., (2001). 'The History of British Law', in *High Time for Reform: Drugs policy for the 21st Century*, edited by Chen, S. and Skidelsky, E., London: The Social Market Foundation, p.13.

¹⁷⁸ On June 1st, the Times published Rees-Mogg's editorial, in which he argued that: "if we are going to make any case a symbol of conflict between the sound traditional values of Britain and the new hedonism, then we must be sure that the sound traditional values include those of tolerance and equity." Quoted in Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolling_Stones. Accessed on 19 October, 2005.

directed towards encouraging a debate about cannabis.¹⁷⁹ In combination, these two events seem to have given rise to the notion of an articulated 'pot lobby' influencing the Wooton Report.¹⁸⁰

However, the Committee had been gathering scientific evidence, interviewing experts and examining the facts for almost one year before these events. At the end of 1968 the Advisory Committee presented their conclusions. In general, it was affirmed that 'although the wider use of cannabis should not be encouraged, the dangers of its use have been overstated and the existing criminal sanctions intended to curb its use are unjustifiably severe'.¹⁸¹

The government itself had commissioned this report, yet the Committee's main recommendations were dismissed when their results were presented. It seems that the reaction of the media was influential in criticising the Wooton Report.¹⁸²

It may be summarised by stating that some of the contemporary discourses resemble the current discussions on cannabis. Those early discourses can also be compared to the Root Definitions established in the last chapter. For instance, the Home Secretary James Callaghan defined cannabis use as a 'social evil', which coincides with the Root

¹⁷⁹ In general, it was thought that the advertisement was connected to the editorial on the Rolling Stones. However, this advertisement was part of an initiative originated in Oxford, separately from the controversy about the Rolling Stones. The organisers of this project believed that an advertisement in one of the most prominent newspapers might encourage a debate on cannabis, at the time quite controversial. The cost of the advertisement was £1800, and part of this money was provided by Paul McCartney of The Beatles. Interview with Steve Abrams, 27 January 2004. London, transcribed by B. Acevedo. Additional information about the events surrounding the Wooton Report can be found in Abrams, S., (1997) *The Wooton Report: The Decriminalisation of Cannabis in Britain*, <http://www.drugtext.org/articles>. Accessed 30 November 2003.

¹⁸⁰ In fact, although some of the 12 members of the Advisory Committee signed the advertisement, a favourable approach to cannabis by the rest of the members of this committee, chaired by Baroness Wooton, was not expected. For a comprehensive account of the cannabis 'propaganda' and the Wooton Report, refer to Potter, M.E., (2000) *Propaganda: The Cannabis Supporters and the Wooton Report 1967-1969*, University of Kent, Master of Arts Thesis

¹⁸¹ Cannabis: Report by the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence. Home Office. Whitehall. Summary presented to the Home Secretary on Wednesday, 8 January 1969, p.1. Document for restricted distribution. Accessed in Drugscope Library.

¹⁸² In an interview for the journal *IT*, Lady Wooton referred to the public reaction to the Report: 'Hysteria from the stupider papers and quite sensible articles from the Observer, The Sunday Times, the Times remarkably so, to some extent the Daily Mail (rather surprisingly). The Telegraph was also fairly reasonable. The public is used to alcohol and that is why they tend to ignore its dangers. As far as we know, cannabis used in moderation does no more and possibly less harm than alcohol. New proposals are often considered outrageous at the start but a few years later they have become quite commonplace. A rational attitude towards cannabis will eventually be established.' p.8. Coon, C., (1969) *Lady Wooton Talks to Caroline Coon about Pot*, *IT* 49, January 31-February, 1969

Definition regarding *prohibition*. Another example can be found when the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence acknowledged that there is a *recreational use of cannabis*.

Other similarities can be established; however, for the purpose of this dissertation, it is enough to highlight the coincidences in terms of the discourses portrayed by different actors. In addition, the historical review points out the process of policy making in which the government may appoint a committee of experts, yet the decisions made by the government seem to be influenced by aspects other than by informed reports.¹⁸³

As a consequence of the urgent demand for legislation on drugs, the Misuse of Drugs Act was introduced in 1971. The Act prescribed a classification of illegal drugs based on their level of danger. Cannabis was included as a Class B drug, despite the evidence about the relative effects of cannabis and the inconvenience of criminalising this practice. In addition, and through the recommendation of the Home Office, the Misuse of Drugs Act distinguished between supply, on the one hand, and possession, on the other.¹⁸⁴

The Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971 and the drugs policy developed in this decade endorsed a generally *criminalist* approach to drugs use. Drugs use was, and still is, considered a social evil that must be regulated, prohibited and penalised. These features have remained as the basic template for British drugs policy and legislation.

¹⁸³ In their analysis of the British system of drug control, Stimson and Lart state that "the fact that it was an 'Advisory' committee also indicates the loose British approach to policy making. The Advisory Committee could advise, but Ministers did not have to listen". Stimson, G.V. and Lart, R., (2005), 'The Relationship between the State and Local practices in the development of national policy on drugs between 1920-1990', in *Heroin Addiction in Britain. Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*. Edited by Strang, J. and Gossop, M., Abingdon: Routledge, p. 182.

¹⁸⁴ In fact, despite the initial reaction of the Home Secretary, it was proposed that cannabis offences be decreased by half, but a leak of this initiative in the media provoked a counter-reaction by maintaining the severity of penalties for cannabis. The Sunday Mirror entitled this decision as 'Jim changes his mind'. In response, Mr. Callaghan decided to retain the penalties on cannabis and not to reduce them. Cited in Abrams, S., (1997) *The Wooton Report: The Decriminalisation of Cannabis in Britain*, <http://www.drugtext.org/articles>. Accessed 30 November 2003.

After the 1971 Act several attempts were made to review the legislation on cannabis. As will be presented in the next sub-section, various commissions and experts have been appointed to review the law on cannabis in the subsequent decades: from the 1970s to the 1990s. However, it seems that there have been few if any major deviations from the initial template provided by the discussion during the 1960s.

6.1.2. Cannabis discussion: the first thirty years

As part of the reforms established by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the then Advisory Committee was replaced by an Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, the ACMD. The ACMD designated a working party to continue the research into cannabis legislation. The Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) was still in force during the research, while the Advisory Council carried out a revision of the drugs legislation. Its conclusions were not intended to be published; they were meant to represent political advice and guidance for the government. In the particular case of cannabis, the Advisory Council stated that its use should not be legalised in the United Kingdom, and that a deterrent to this practice was still needed (ACMD 1982). However, the group added that existing research had failed to demonstrate positively and significantly harmful effects in human health attributable solely to the use of cannabis (ACMD 1982a: para. 20.2).

Despite the endorsement of these recommendations in favour of maintaining the *status quo*, the Council introduced a new topic into the political discussion about cannabis:

Many traditional therapeutic uses of cannabis have been confirmed by scientific research, but in most instances to date with no greater efficacy than existing modern drugs (ACMD 1982a: Para. 17 (p.5).

The Advisory Council dismissed the possibility of using cannabis in its herbal and resin forms as a remedy, over other 'pharmaceutical' substances; yet at least they opened up the possibility of discussing the therapeutic uses of cannabis at the political level.

The ACMD Report (1982) broadly supported the *prohibitionist* approach to cannabis; however, it recommended removing the status of possession of cannabis as an 'arrestable offence' by means of re-classifying cannabis. However, in the context of new elections, the recommendations were disregarded, thus considerations about re-classifying cannabis remained dormant for almost twenty years¹⁸⁵.

During the same period, a study group from the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence¹⁸⁶ considered different options for the control of cannabis, including the licensing system, decriminalisation, re-classification and legalisation (Logan, F., 1979). Despite the extensive research informing and underpinning their proposals, it seems that the political context was not prepared to consider such options. Some years later, an additional effort to change the status of cannabis was attempted. The Misuse of Drugs Regulations Act (1985) introduced a new division within the controlled drugs to take account of the needs of medical practice; it was therefore proposed to move cannabis from Schedule I to Schedule II¹⁸⁷. Once again, this proposal was disregarded in the political discussion, and cannabis was retained under Schedule I.

¹⁸⁵ The report was interpreted as 'one step forward, two steps back' in relation to the ambiguity of their recommendations. "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" in *Druglink* (12) (Summer, 1979): pp.1-4. Indeed, the Prime Minister, James Callaghan, who had ten years previously rejected the recommendations of the Wooton Report, was not going to give in to his advisers.

¹⁸⁶ Now Drugscope. See www.drugscope.org

¹⁸⁷ In addition to the Classification of Drugs based on their respective levels of danger, there is a second classification, in which illegal drugs can be used for medicinal purposes, i.e., obtained by prescription or under special licence. In this way, drugs under Schedule I (e.g., LSD) are the most tightly restricted drugs, which may be supplied or possessed for research or other special purposes only by individuals or bodies licensed by the Home Office. Of other illegal drugs available for medicinal use, most are prescription only. Schedule II includes such drugs as diamorphine (heroin), morphine, pethidine, and cocaine. These are subject to the full controlled drug requirements relating to prescriptions, safe custody, the need to keep records, etc. Schedule III includes barbiturates and some tranquillisers requiring neither safe custody nor the need to keep registers. Schedule IV, includes benzodiazepines and anabolic steroids. See House of Commons-Research Paper 00/74 Sleator, A. and Allen, G., (2000) *Cannabis*, 89308 London: House of Commons Library.

For the duration of the Conservative years of Margaret Thatcher and her government's alliance with the principles of the American government in the 1980s, the topic of drugs became a crucial aspect in this relationship. As a consequence, Britain also declared a War on Drugs, and the possibility of altering cannabis legislation was barely mentioned in the political agenda. Indeed, drugs constituted the centre of the War on Drugs and drug trafficking became an important issue in the political discussion (Green, P., 1998).

Another important aspect in the consideration of this historical period was mentioned in Chapter Two, where the effects of HIV/AIDS on British drugs policy were addressed. The epidemic was not directly related to cannabis use; however, it can be argued that the experience of tackling this crisis contributed to re-initiating discussion on alternative ways of tackling the drugs problem in Western societies (McDemrott, P., 2005; Robertson, J.R., 2005; Stimson, G.V., 1990; Turner, D., 2005).

A renewed debate regarding cannabis use and its relative level of harmfulness compared to other drugs linked to HIV/AIDS was supported by the scientific community. In the United Kingdom, research published in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* (1995) suggested the option of the legalisation of cannabis. This idea was supported by pressure from certain newspapers about the 'normal' use of cannabis in modern society. The arguments can be described in terms of the root definitions as the *recreational* and *medicinal* uses of cannabis.

The discussions and the political climate of change and 'management' principles of the Conservative government could have prompted a revision in the drugs policy in the 1990s. An articulated drugs policy which became the British drug strategy was proposed: *Tackling Drugs Together* (HM Government, 1995). In general terms, this strategy suggested the coordination of efforts in four key areas: young people, communities, treatment, and availability. It was also recommended that an efficient use of resources should concentrate on Class A drugs and that enforcement

activities must target trafficking offences rather than mere possession. This approach to the drugs policy was maintained in the following New Labour government from 1997 onwards.¹⁸⁸ With the victory of New Labour in the polls after almost two decades of Conservative administration, it was expected that drugs policy would be discussed in a more liberal way. Social demonstrations started to demand attention for the drugs policy, particularly where it concerned cannabis. Similar events seem to have influenced the position of the newly-elected government regarding revision of the drugs policy.

For instance, a Select Committee on the Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis was formed to report to the House of Lords (1998). The Committee produced an extensive report on the medicinal uses of cannabis, while proposing once again to re-schedule cannabis under Schedule II rather than under its current Schedule I classification. In this way, doctors would be permitted to prescribe a suitable form of cannabis as a medicine, although unlicensed.

However, the response from the New Labour government was elusive and the recommendations were not implemented. Apparently puzzled by this attitude, the Select Committee wrote:

We regret that the mind of the Government appears to be closed on this issue, and hope that the results of new research now under way may cause them to revisit our recommendations at an early date.¹⁸⁹

After a second report by the same Committee, the government responded cautiously to its proposals. The government broadly emphasised that it did not want to send the 'wrong signal' to the community regarding cannabis,

¹⁸⁸ The new strategy, renamed *Tackling Drugs Together to Build a Better Britain*, adopted the main principles of the previous strategy, while recommending some organisational changes. See HM Government (1998) *Tackling Drugs Together to Build a Better Britain: The Government's Ten-Year Strategy for Tackling Drug Misuse*. London: HMSO.

¹⁸⁹ 2nd Report Session 1998-99, HL Paper 39, p. 5. House of Lords (2001) *Second Report: Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis*. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200001/ldselect/ldsctech/50/5002.htm#n1> London: HL Select Committee on Science and Technology.

and that it was waiting for advanced scientific research in this area (Department of Health, 2001).

Even the initial attitude of the Labour government concerning drugs policy seems to have disappointed some sectors of society concerned about cannabis legislation. As a response, a group of activists created a political party to participate in the elections in 1997, with the single issue of cannabis legalisation: The Legalise Cannabis Alliance.¹⁹⁰ The party combined a number of demands regarding cannabis, such as the right to use cannabis for pleasure and the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes.

Despite the apparent lack of interest of the government regarding changes in the drugs strategy, established institutions began to study the proposal to review cannabis legislation. Apart from the Select Committee on Science and Technology on the Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis, two important documents were produced at the time: an Independent Inquiry commissioned by the Police Foundation, chaired by Viscountess Runciman (1999); and the House of Commons Select Committee (2002) concerning the evaluation of the government strategy on drugs.

Those documents will be analysed in the next section as they constitute landmarks in the discussions on re-classification of cannabis.

6.2. The Re-classification of Cannabis in the United Kingdom

A number of events have paved the way for the decision on re-classification. Some of the main episodes that could have contributed to the political discussion about this topic will be described; they may be

¹⁹⁰ In interview with Alun Buffrey, coordinator of the Legalise Cannabis Alliance (LCA), the party as a group was formed in 1992, when a number of detentions were made in Norwich for cannabis possession. The idea of a party came later because at the political party level the campaign could get more changes. Although they have participated in the last three elections, they remained a very small party; whereas at the level of campaign they represent an important voice. There are some other cannabis parties around the world: in New Zealand, Australia, Israel, and the United States. Interview with Alun Buffrey. Norwich, 19 October 2004.

interpreted as contextual elements possibly providing the meanings and orientation of the discussion about the re-classification of cannabis.

First of all, it is important to describe the context in which the discussion on cannabis was introduced. It has been mentioned that the Conservative government had produced an articulated strategy on drugs in 1995. It was also revealed that the New Labour government endorsed many of the principles stated in that strategy.

In fact, as stated by Mike Trace, former Deputy Anti-Drugs Tsar and expert in British drugs policy, the grounds for the decision on cannabis were settled through the drugs strategy: *Tackling Drugs Together* (1995) adopted by the new government in 1997. The strategy emphasised the necessity to focus on the drugs that cause major harm to society (e.g., Class A drugs) and, further, to achieve the efficient use of public resources. Regarding the origin of the discussion on cannabis re-classification, Trace recalled that:

It began to be an option again around the 1990s, and with the change of government in 1997, and the issue was getting quite hotly debated again around that time, not because the government was particularly interested in it, but because more and more lobby groups, more non-government organisations and the media had started to say: 'right, we have so many percentage of people using cannabis, why should we be trying to arrest them all'.¹⁹¹

In addition, a convergence of factors seems to have encouraged the Home Secretary to call for 'an adult and intelligent debate' on cannabis. Firstly, Blunkett could have appreciated that there was apparent public support in favour of reviewing drugs legislation in Britain. Besides, as mentioned before, the announcement about a revision of cannabis classification may be interpreted as his way of regaining control over the issue of drugs after the short existence of the Tsar's Office. Secondly,

¹⁹¹ Mike Trace, former Deputy Anti-Drugs Tsar, expert on British drugs policy, London, 7 October 2004. Interview and Transcription: B. Acevedo.

governmental concern about the efficiency of their drugs policy could have played a role in the revision of cannabis.

The discussion on cannabis had, as mentioned before, been furthered by certain government institutions, prior to the announcement of the Home Secretary about its possible re-classification. In this section will be included an analysis of selected prominent official documents regarding the topic of cannabis; the social view expressed by the media regarding cannabis; and the opinion of some stakeholders not necessarily subsumed under the previous sources.

6.2.2. Influential documents in drugs policy making

6.2.2.1. The Police Foundation Independent Inquiry into the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971: Drugs and the Law. The Runciman Report, 1997-1999

In 1997 the Police Foundation appointed an Independent Inquiry into the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. It was initially aimed at reviewing the effectiveness of the current policy after almost thirty years of drugs legislation while taking into account social changes in British society during this period. The report was commissioned by the Police Foundation, an organisation formed to carry out independent research on policing, and chaired by Viscountess Runciman, who has been a member of the Advisory Council of the Misuse of Drugs for twenty years.

The Report, commonly known as the 'Runciman Report', began by acknowledging that the eradication of drugs use is not achievable and is therefore, for public policy, neither a realistic nor a sensible goal. Instead, the Report believed that the main aim of the law 'must be to control and limit the demand for and the supply of illicit drugs in order to minimise the

serious individual and social harms caused by their use' (Runciman, R., 1999: para. 2).

In particular, the Runciman Report concentrated on cannabis legislation, arguing that cannabis should be re-classified as a Class C drug, given the proportion of 'casual' users of this substance. In addition, it acknowledged that there is 'much unease and scepticism about the law and its operation in relation to cannabis' (para. 29). This is not to say that the Report considered cannabis a harmless drug; on the contrary: it emphasised the physical and psychological risks of using cannabis. However, its conclusion was that the 'present law on cannabis produces more harm than it prevents':

It is very expensive of the time and resources of the criminal justice system and especially of the police. It inevitably bears more heavily on young people in the streets of inner cities, who are also more likely to be from minority ethnic communities, and as such is inimical to police community relations. It criminalises large numbers of otherwise law abiding, mainly young, people to the detriment of their futures. It has become a proxy for the control of public order; and it inhibits accurate education about the relative risks of different drugs including the risks of cannabis itself. Within these costs against the harms of cannabis, we are convinced that a better balance is needed and would be achieved if our recommendations were implemented. (Para. 30)

This recommendation was the result of extensive research into international legislation, the respective experiences of other Western countries, the opinion of medical experts, and interviews with stakeholders, regarding not only cannabis but including the whole drugs policy in the United Kingdom. The document represents a milestone in the drugs policy analysis, and is an important reference for any other aspect of British drugs policy.

The Runciman Report included a specific chapter on cannabis, whereby the realm of the legislation and the international commitments, with the levels of prevalence, availability and price of cannabis, were analysed. It also presented an analysis of the scientific evidence regarding the effects

of cannabis on human health. In addition, it studied the process of prosecuting cannabis offences, and emphasised the necessity for returning to a health perspective on, rather than a criminal approach to, cannabis. Finally, it amalgamated the recommendations of the Select Committee on the therapeutic uses of cannabis. Its recommendations on cannabis can be summarised in the following points:

- Cannabis should be transferred from Class B to Class C of Schedule II of the MDA, and cannabinal and its derivatives should be transferred from Class A to Class C.
- The possession of cannabis should not be an imprisonable offence.
- Prosecution of offences of cannabis possession should be the exception and only then should an offence, resulting in a conviction, incur a criminal record.
- The cultivation of small numbers of cannabis plants for personal use should be a separate offence from production and should be treated in the same way as possession of cannabis, being neither arrestable nor imprisonable.
- Permitting suffering people to smoke cannabis on the premises which they occupy or manage should no longer be an offence.

In terms of the Root Definitions, it is possible to identify some discourses present in this document. First of all, the document acknowledges that cannabis can be used for *medicinal* and *recreational* reasons. Therefore, these two discourses are widely represented and documented. In fact, the issue of the *medicinal* uses of cannabis engages a large proportion of the study, as well as do the considerations regarding people who use cannabis as part of *recreational* practices, for 'time out', and other reasons. It includes furthermore the *economic* aspects of cannabis cultivation as an issue to be regulated without being penalised.

Nevertheless, the Runciman Report admits that cannabis is fundamentally a substance harmful to human health. In this sense, it endorses a view of

cannabis use as a disease in need of *treatment*, instead of a criminalist approach towards the practice. Interestingly, the final argument for the re-classification provided in this document is related to the realm of *public policy*. In particular, the Report recommends the re-classification as a way of achieving more *efficient public policy* and, thus, as an answer to the increasing perception regarding the use of resources and the impact of this factor. In contrast, it challenges the effects of prohibition by pointing out its failure in terms of public order, the criminalisation of otherwise law-abiding citizens, and the fact that prohibition has failed to eliminate cannabis use from British society. At the level of the practical effects of the Report on cannabis policy, it acknowledged that the main change effected by re-classifying cannabis would be to deprive the police of their power of arrest for a possession offence. This particular aspect is the core modification implied by the re-classification. As will be analysed below, this precise aspect will change throughout the process of policy making.

Similarly to the Wooton Report, the advice of the Runciman Report had to face discussion at government level. In the discussion of the latter in the House of Commons, Dame Runciman and other members of the Independent Inquiry had to face questions regarding the validity of their recommendations. For example, the Home Affairs committee questioned the selection process of witnesses and members of the Inquiry, suggesting that a slight majority of the people who gave written or oral evidence can be described as 'legalisers/harm reductionists'¹⁹². In other words, and paraphrasing James Callaghan's words thirty years earlier, a 'pot lobby' could have weighed more heavily in the consultation process.

¹⁹² As analysed in Chapter Two, harm reduction represents a broad range of strategies in which the main goal is to minimise the harmful effects of taking drugs. The harm reduction approach to the HIV/AIDS epidemic during the 1980s contributed to the significant decrease in the devastating effects of this epidemic by providing alternative ways of treating drugs-related problems. Nevertheless, the harm reduction approach has come under increasing criticism by international agencies, prohibitionists and other sectors, who arguing that it 'concealed legalisers'. See for example, the preface of INCB report in 2002; the reports by the American officers in relation to avoiding the inclusion of the term 'harm reduction' in institutional documents; and their rejection to fund 'harm reduction' programmes, despite the undeniable effect on deterring major damage in drug users. This aspect will be analysed in depth in further Chapters. In response to this question, Dame Runciman defended the selection of the evidence, and she added that she was 'rather surprised that there is an equation between legalisers and harm reductionists: there is a very great difference between being a legaliser and a harm reductionist'. See Home Affairs Committee (2000) *Minutes of Evidence, Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971: Drugs and the Law*. 561-i London: House of Commons

In addition, the interpretation of the term 're-classification' was questioned as to whether it was a form of legalisation or of decriminalisation. The questions put to Dame Runciman about the difference between legalisation and decriminalisation pointed out the risk that British young people would be given 'a wrong message' about cannabis harmfulness, and that they would be tempted to try something 'harder'.¹⁹³ As happened thirty years previously, the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry were virtually ignored by the government, who persisted in a *prohibitionist* approach to cannabis. Dame Runciman commented on this attitude by saying:

I wish I could say I was surprised. I was not wholly surprised. Of course I was disappointed. What was more surprising, if I may say so, and particularly pleasing was the extraordinary fair wind we got from the press right across the political spectrum in terms of their call for a mature and rational public debate. (Home Affairs Committee 2000: Para. 16)

Despite the controversy, the considerations of the Independent Inquiry were included in further discussions at the governmental and institutional levels. What is interesting here is to note the shift in the government in the consideration of cannabis re-classification.

Whereas in 2000 the Runciman Report was thoroughly questioned by members of the government, in 2001 the new Home Secretary announced that he would indeed be considering the option of re-classification.

In proposing the review of cannabis, the Home Secretary consulted the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (October, 2001). Their advice is described in the next sub-section.

¹⁹³ In response, Professor Nutt (member of the Independent Inquiry) Head of Mental Health at the University of Bristol stated: 'I think that the evidence that using cannabis makes you more interested in or more likely to use other drugs is very weak.' See *Ibid.*, paras. 31-50.

6.2.2.2 The Classification of Cannabis under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971: Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, 2002

As explained before, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs was established as a committee of experts after the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. It aims to keep under review the drugs situation in the United Kingdom and to advise government ministers on the measures to be taken in terms of drugs policy. The Advisory Council is composed of a number of experts in several disciplines, including psychologists, psychiatrists, policemen, charitable organisations, and other experts.

In relation to the proposal of cannabis re-classification, the Advisory Council drew together relevant evidence and research about the status of cannabis and its harmfulness. Its recommendations took into account the epidemiology of cannabis; the risks to human health and the discussion of the main arguments for its prohibition, such as the 'gateway' theory (i.e., cannabis can lead on to the use of other, probably harder, drugs) and the risks to society. As a result of these considerations the Council stated that:

The Council recommends the re-classification of all cannabis preparations to Class C. The Council believes that the current classification of cannabis is disproportionate in relation both to its inherent toxicity, and to that of other substances (such as amphetamines) that are currently within Class B. (ACMD 2002: i)

Nevertheless, the Council clarified that cannabis is 'unquestionably harmful'; the public must therefore be informed about the dangers associated with it. The report is written in a style accessible to the public at large. An entire section is dedicated to analysing the risks of cannabis to human health. In particular, the Council describes how, in some cases, 'acute cannabis intoxication can produce a psychotic state that may

continue for some time and require treatment with anti-psychotic drugs' (ACMD 2002: p. 7, para. 4.3.7.).¹⁹⁴

In relation to the previous documents – The Runciman Report and the Select Committee on the Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis – the Advisory Committee 'forgot' to include the issue of the medicinal uses of cannabis. One of the reasons for this can be related to the previous response of the government to the issues of the therapeutic uses of cannabis in the Select Committee of Science and Technology.¹⁹⁵

The Advisory Council's argument supports the re-classification of cannabis in considering that its toxicity was not equal to other Class B drugs. Indeed, the Advisory Council supports a view of cannabis issues as a matter of public health and treatment, rather than as a criminal matter. In terms of the Root Definitions, it is clear that the Advisory Council largely endorses a '*treatment*' discourse on cannabis. The extensive evidence of the risks of cannabis to human health supports this argument.

Without compromising other types of world views of cannabis, the document of the Advisory Council seems to be more closely in accordance with the changing attitude of the government in relation to cannabis policy; in other words, it seems that its recommendations were what the government was able to hear without risk of such a controversy as that evoked by the previous reports regarding the medicinal uses of cannabis.

Considering the context of the debate during 2002, the recommendations of the Advisory Council were complemented by other government instances, such as the House of Commons, in their evaluation of the drugs

¹⁹⁴ Particularly Section 4 of the ACMD Report refers to the long-term health risks of cannabis, including the possible connection with schizophrenia and psychosis. Nevertheless, they did not refer to a condition of 'cannabis psychosis'. Changes in the nomenclature on this topic will be analysed in future chapters of this thesis.

¹⁹⁵ Another possible reason is that the majority of members of the Advisory Council are part of the medical profession, and they had emphasised the possible risks in relation to mental health of using cannabis. Perhaps the inclusion of the medicinal use of cannabis could have been interpreted as a contradiction between the evidence provided about its harmfulness and potential benefits. A further analysis of these possibilities will be explored in Chapter 8: A Genealogy of Cannabis Re-classification.

policy. The next sub-section analyses the government's perceptions of the cannabis problem.

6.2.2.3. Select Committee House of Commons: The Government's Drugs Policy: Is it working? May - July, 2002

In July 2001 the Home Affairs Committee of the House of Commons announced its intention to hold an investigation called: The Government's Drugs Policy: Is it working? The Home Office provided written evidence to the Committee in 2001 and 2002, gathering opinions from 45 witnesses over a total of eleven evidence sessions, in addition to more than 200 people and organisations providing written submissions. The report was published firstly on 22 May 2002, with an abridged version in July 2002. The report starts by acknowledging the difficulties in discussing drugs issues:

There are few subjects more emotive than illegal drugs. It is widely recognised that existing efforts to deal with them have failed, but as to solutions there is an absolute difference of opinions among experts of every relevant profession – doctors, police and social workers. Opinions – all advanced with equal passion – range from those who argue that prohibition has failed and should, therefore, be abandoned to those who argue that all drugs are harmful and that existing bans and proscriptions should be maintained or indeed tightened. In between there are many shades of grey. (Home Affairs Committee 2002: para. 1)

With this introduction, the resulting document is an extensive compilation of opinions and points of view about the government's drugs strategy from 1998. Interestingly enough, it acknowledges the many 'world views' involved in debating drugs policy issues. In terms of the root definitions, the evaluation mentioned different world views about cannabis, aiming to point out the diversity of opinions and the complexity of the topic. Amongst these world views it included the '*recreational*' use of drugs; the '*treatment*' of drugs-related problems; and in a minor extent the possibility of '*medicinal*' uses of cannabis. The report further included an analysis of

both legal and illegal drugs; it also brought in considerations regarding other countries' drugs policies.

Along the same lines as those suggested in the drugs policy strategy (HM Government 1998), it was accepted that 'drugs policy should primarily be addressed to dealing with the 250,000 problematic users rather than towards the large numbers whose drug use poses no serious threat either to their own well being or to that of others' (Home Affairs Committee 2002: para. 38). In this context, a specific perception of cannabis in relation to the proposal from the Home Secretary was included. In discussing the suggestion, the various alternatives mentioned before were widely discussed: re-classification, cautioning, legalisation, and decriminalisation.

As the document continues, the *prohibitionist* approach appears generally to dominate the evaluation. It was argued that illegality carries a deterrent effect, and that any attempt to review this statement would be conducive to an increasing use. As a consequence, alternatives such as legalisation or decriminalisation were plainly rejected:

We accept that to decriminalise the possession of drugs for personal use would send the wrong message to the majority of young people who do not take drugs and that it would inevitably lead to an increase in drug abuse. We, therefore, reject decriminalisation. (Home Affairs Committee 2002: para. 74)

Nevertheless, the Home Affairs Committee was 'attracted though by the prospect of avoiding giving criminal records to otherwise law-abiding young people, and that this problem is better dealt with by re-classification'. The opinion of different stakeholders and experts, including the Runciman Report, was thus incorporated, as were the evidence presented by Paddick about the Lambeth Experiment and the opinion of the Advisory Council, cited above. The Committee concluded:

We accept that cannabis can be harmful and that its use should be discouraged. We accept that in some cases the taking of cannabis can be a gateway to the taking of more damaging drugs. However,

whether or not cannabis is a gateway drug, we do not believe there is anything to be gained by exaggerating its harmfulness. On the contrary, exaggeration undermines the credibility of messages that we wish to send regarding more harmful drugs. We support, therefore, the Home Secretary's proposal to reclassify cannabis from Class B to Class C. (Home Affairs Committee, 2002: paras. 120-121)

In terms of the root definitions of cannabis, the Home Affairs Committee evaluation of cannabis re-classification is supported by the following world views: firstly, the acknowledgement of the level of harmfulness of cannabis. In consequence, the Committee stated that its use should remain *prohibited*. Secondly, it recognised that cannabis use can be a matter of *treatment*, although it is possible for it to continue to be *criminalised*. Finally, it supports the argument in terms of *public policy*. In this sense the re-classification would contribute to a higher value in drugs policy services as well as an honest message to the consumers about the policy. These discourses will be replicated through different instances in the policy-making process.

It is important to note that until this moment, the implications of re-classification remained similar to those of any other Class C drugs. As stated in the report:

[I]t simply means that in the future the maximum penalties for the supply and possession of cannabis would be reduced from 14 years' imprisonment to five years (for supply), and from five years to two years (for possession). In addition, possession of cannabis would cease to be an 'arrestable offence', which means that the offence would no longer attract the investigative powers which attach to arrestable offences, e.g., the power to enter and search premises without a warrant, and will leave the police free to concentrate on more harmful drugs. (para.122)

Such an approach was challenged by the response of the Government to the Home Affairs Select Committee (Home Office, 2002). Once again, they remained cautious about the recommendations that can show a 'soft' approach to drugs. After this evaluation and the consideration of different aspects relevant to the decision of re-classification, the Home Secretary

announced that cannabis would be downgraded to Class C, but that special amendments were included in this decision. In fact, as will be presented next, the decision on re-classifying cannabis as operating after January 2004 seems to have neglected the core purpose of the proposal. The next sub-section will summarise some of the main contradictions between the original proposal of re-classification and the final decision announced by the government.

6.2.2.4. One step forward, one step back: the history of an announcement

The previous sections demonstrate how the process of cannabis re-classification has taken many steps. The idea emerged firstly in discussions from the 1960s, yet was eventually studied at the end of 1990 through the publication of the Runciman Report. After the second victory of New Labour in the polls, and maybe influenced by social demand, the Home Secretary announced in October 2001 that he would consider the re-classification while consulting the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD). Then, the ACMD stated their opinion in March 2002, and the House of Commons discussed the issue in May 2002. Finally, on 10 July 2002 the Home Secretary announced that cannabis would be re-classified as a Class C drug. The decision was to be implemented on 29 January 2004.¹⁹⁶

Nevertheless, from the time of the options proposed by the Runciman Report, discussed by the ACMD and the Select Committee in the House of Commons, to the final decision, the decision changed significantly. Certain 'gaps' between these two moments can be summarised as follows:

The power of arrest for cannabis offences was not eliminated, as had initially been proposed. In July 2003 the Government announced their

¹⁹⁶ For a summary of the events related to Cannabis Re-classification, please refer to Appendix 1: Chronology of Events Related to the Re-classification of Cannabis.

intention to introduce legislation to ensure that the police retain the power of arrest for the possession of cannabis. In terms of the root definitions, the government clearly endorsed the *prohibitionist* and *criminalisation* approaches to cannabis.

Secondly, penalties for supplying cannabis as a Class C drug were not decreased from 14 to five years, as proposed initially. The Government justified their refusal to take this action through arguing that they '[took] the supply and dealing of cannabis very seriously'. In consequence, they brought forward legislation to increase the maximum penalty for supplying and trafficking in all other Class C drugs from five to 14 years' imprisonment.

Thirdly, the Government proposed to create a new offence in which the supply of drugs to young people (aged under 16) would attract higher maximum sentences than those currently available to the courts for cases concerning supply (Home Office 2002: 13-14).

Finally, the Government did not even consider the issue of *medicinal* uses of cannabis; similarly to the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, it seems that medicinal user's claim about their right to self-prescription of herbal cannabis remained invisible in the political discussion, in spite of the scientific evidence gathered by previous committees and the evidence of increasing use of cannabis for medicinal purposes in the United Kingdom.

Summarising, it seems that the discussion on the re-classification of cannabis created more amendments than clarifications. It did not definitively improve the condition of cannabis users; on the contrary, the discourses related to uses of cannabis for *recreational*, *ritualistic*, and *medicinal* reasons were bluntly ignored. Instead, cannabis possession is still an arrestable offence; cannabis supply remains punishable with 14 years' imprisonment, as are other Class C drugs; and aggravating factors were introduced to strengthen police action in the street. In other words,

the Government emphasised the *prohibitionist* and *criminalist* discourses on cannabis, neglecting all other considerations.

In brief, the decision made of cannabis a Class of its own, and the official announcement did not necessarily answer the different questions regarding the variety of world views on cannabis. It is unsurprising that the final decision has emerged in a 'fog of confusion', as commented by several actors. Furthermore, it remains unclear why or how the decision changed from the original proposal to the final announcement.

It seems that some other discussions produce the shift in the effects of re-classification. The inquiry about those reasons cannot be found in any official documents. What is clear is that on 10 July 2002, the official notice by the Home Secretary on cannabis policy - including all these particularities - was made public in the House of Commons. In his speech to the Commons the Home Secretary listed the reasons for seeking the re-classification of cannabis.¹⁹⁷ He started by reinforcing a prohibitionist discourse on drugs by referring to drugs in general and Class A drugs specifically as the 'scourge of modern times.' Following this line of argument he presented the main aspect of the re-classification:

Today I want to inform the House of the overall direction of the review of the drugs strategy, and the Committee's report. There will be an increased focus on class A drugs. The message is clear: drugs are dangerous. We will educate, persuade and, where necessary, direct young people away from their use. We will not legalise or decriminalise any drugs, nor do we envisage a time when that would be appropriate.

However, the message to young people and families must be open, honest and believable. That is why I asked the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to review the classification of cannabis. It has recommended that the current classification is disproportionate in relation to the harmfulness and nature of other controlled drugs. It is clear, and so am I, that cannabis is a potentially harmful drug, and should remain illegal. However, it is not comparable with crack, heroin or ecstasy.

¹⁹⁷ These are selected extracts from his speech. The complete text is available on the House of Commons Website, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/> Accessed 10 July 2002.

Let me be clear: cannabis possession remains a criminal offence. I am determined that the police be able to control the streets and uphold order. That is why I will instate the ability to arrest for possession where public order is threatened, or where children are at risk.

The importance of this speech is not just the announcement of the re-classification, but the context in which it is introduced. The main ideas, discussed above, are related to the necessity to redirect resources to Class A drugs, while 'being honest and transparent' with young people. However, as he stated, cannabis possession is still an arrestable offence, and special circumstances will constitute aggravating factors in this offence. A brief analysis of the speech reveals the use of certain adjectives and nouns used on the topic of drugs and cannabis: *dangerous drug, harmful drug, illegal, criminal offence, control, order, threat, and risk*.

In terms of the Root Definitions two main world views supporting the measure on re-classification can be identified: firstly, the reinforcement of the *prohibitionist* discourse in which cannabis is a social menace that should be removed. Secondly, there is an attempt to suggest a rational *public policy*, in which the re-classification would offer an 'honest' product to 'the customer' of drugs policy services. Nevertheless, although there is a continuous reiteration of those arguments in relation to cannabis re-classification, interpretations by social and political groups has created their own respective reactions. Although the Home Secretary tried hard to sound 'tough on drugs', the social interpretation of his decision was appreciated as being 'softly softly' about cannabis. At the time that the re-classification was announced officially, a number of reactions occurred.

The next sub-section mentions a few.

6.2.2.5. After the announcement

On the very morning of the announcement, the former Anti-Drugs Tsar Keith Hellawell, who was at the time working as a consultant in the Home Office, announced that he had resigned his post in protest at the decision taken by the Home Secretary. In an interview in the programme *Today* on BBC Radio 4 reproduced in the newspapers, Hellawell summarised his reasons for opposing the re-classification:

I'm against it because of the message it gives. It's actually a technical adjustment which in the reality of the law doesn't make a great deal of difference. But it's been bandied about by people as a softening of the law. It is a softening of the law and it's giving the wrong message... It's a personal initiative of David Blunkett. I don't know where he got his advice from; he certainly didn't get it from me.¹⁹⁸

Another reaction came from the Shadow Home Secretary Oliver Letwin in the House of Commons debate; on the day Blunkett announced his intention, Letwin referred both to the confusing aspects of the re-classification and the opinion of Hellawell expressed in the radio earlier that day:

The saddest thing about this policy is that it owes its origins not to the advice of the Government's chief adviser on drugs, nor to a well considered examination of the results of the Brixton experiment, and certainly not to the views of people whose children's lives are being destroyed by drugs, but to a political stratagem. The Home Secretary adopted this policy — *[Interruption]* — oh yes, and he told people so — because he believed that he could wrong-foot all his opponents, buying off the libertarians with increasing liberalisation, and the anti-drugs lobby with a show of toughness.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ See Appendix 2: Background (3): *The Guardian*, 10 July 2002, Top drugs adviser quits over cannabis plans. Paradoxically, it is the Drug Strategy of 1995 which seems to have formed the grounds for the decision on cannabis; Keith Hellawell was actively involved in this strategy, and on many other occasions he emphasised the necessity of focusing resources on Class A drugs.

¹⁹⁹ See <http://www.publications.parliament.uk> 10 July 2002; Oliver Letwin: cannabis.

Ironically, these are the same arguments used by the Home Secretary in his speech on cannabis re-classification. It seems that the simple consideration of a change in the legislation was interpreted as a soft approach to that terrible menace represented by cannabis. On the other hand, this view can be interpreted as a political strategy to discredit New Labour's government. This and other power expressions are present in the whole debate about cannabis policy.

On the other hand, the police force, responsible for the implementation of those changes, also published their Guidance for addressing cannabis offences, produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO, 2003). The Guidance emphasised the consequences of the re-classification, in particular the possible confusion that as a Class C drug, it would not be an arrestable offence [under Section 24 PACE 1984]. Because the law was amended in Parliament such that it would continue to be defined as an arrestable offence, the police officers would have to determine whether or not to apply the arrest procedure. In paragraph (2.2.) the guidance states:

There will be circumstances where it is appropriate to arrest for possession of cannabis. This is very much left to the discretion of officers who will be expected to take into account the prevailing circumstances in deciding whether to arrest or not. An officer may consider arrest in the following situations: Beyond simple possession of cannabis; youth offenders; locally identified policing problem; protect young people. (ACPO, 2003)

The police force is the main and ultimate authority responsible for implementing the decision on cannabis re-classification. As cited in the study by May *et al.* (2002), the police have maintained a significant level of discretion in dealing with cannabis offences. Indeed, senior police officers could have influenced the final decision on reclassification as suggested before.²⁰⁰ There are nevertheless major variations in the attitudes of individual police officers regarding cannabis; although it is a hierarchical

²⁰⁰ See Chapter 5: Discourses on Cannabis; Section 5.4.1. Interviews, data collection, and emerging issues.

organisation, the work done by each at street level demonstrates appreciable divergences.

In terms of the root definitions, the world views expressed in the different documents may be summarised through taking into account the main arguments represented there. Although the current exploration is in its infancy and must be furthered by appropriate techniques of discourse analysis and statistical tools, it represents the pulse of the discussion in those government documents.

Document	Root Definitions or Prevalent Discourses								
	YEAR	P	C	T	PP	R	L	M	E
Independent Inquiry (Runciman Report)	1999								
Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs	2002								
Select Committee House of Commons	2002								
Official Announcement David Blunkett	2002								

The *prohibitionist* and the *public policy* discourses represent the main theories. From this combination could have emerged the final decision; however, the linearity of decision in public policy making is challenged by the existence of divergences between the original purpose of the re-classification, on the one hand, and the final decision, on the other. The issue here is to find the missing link between the original proposal made by the Runciman Report (and previously proposed by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs in 2002), supported by the Select Committee in the House of Commons (2002), and how this is related to the final decision taken by the Home Secretary (2003).

In addition to the government documents, the opinions of experts, stakeholders and other actors were expressed in the mass media. This research considers that the role of the media in revealing the different opinions of and perceptions on the decision regarding cannabis re-classification is directly relevant to such an investigation. The next sub-

section will focus on the analysis of a random sample of pieces of information and of the use of root definitions to analyse this.

6.2.3. Media Analysis

As part of this investigation, a number of news items with a bearing on the period of discussion of cannabis policy 2002-2004 have been gathered. In this section the root definitions are used as the frame within which to organise the information derived from a random sample of news stories from British sources.

In general, it has been argued that in Britain media coverage of drugs issues can be characterised by 'exaggeration, distortion, inaccuracy, sensationalism' (Coomber, R. *et al.*, 2000). News reported in the media can, however, in the approach of this research, be considered as *one* form of expression among many other references. In other words, this research considers media items as another actor, in which a number of opinion makers (journalists, editorialists, etc.), emphasise or neglect a certain type of discourse on the subject matter.

For the purpose of the current exploration, the root definitions are used as a way of classifying the type of news and the world views involved. As does an archaeologist approaching an excavation, media messages constitute a rich, extensive material to explore. It is expected that the root definitions provide both a framework for the taxonomy of the news items and the basis for comments on the content. In this analysis, the media messages have been divided into two periods related to the discussion on cannabis re-classification.

The first period concerns the discussion prior to the decision of re-classifying cannabis, from 2002 to 2003. As presented before, this was the

period in which the re-classification of cannabis was being debated in different social, institutional and political fora. The second period refers to the particular moment in which cannabis re-classification is officially implemented in January 2004. In general, the number of news items in each period can be illustrated as follows:

PERIOD	Number of News Items
2002-2003: Background to cannabis re-classification	40
15-30 January 2004: Cannabis re-classification is made official	70
TOTAL NEWS ITEMS	110

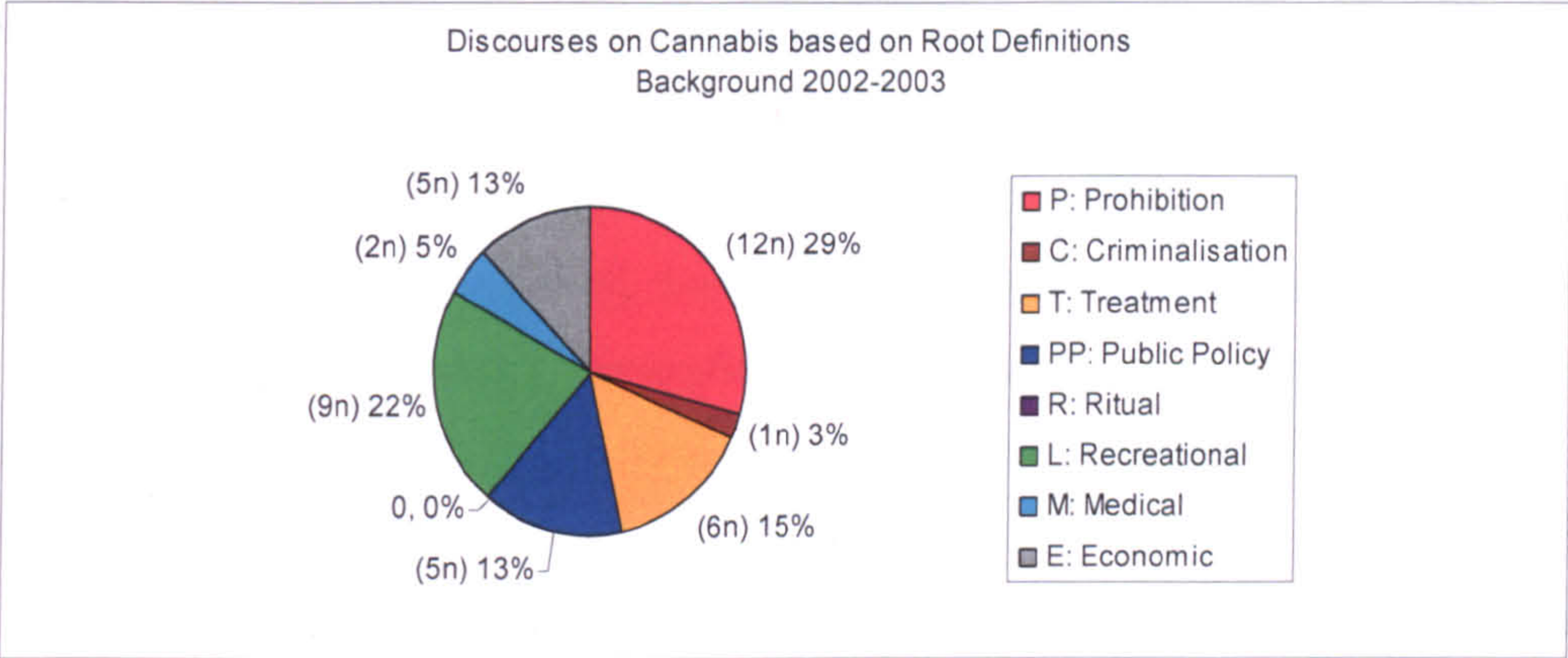
The news comes from a random sample of British newspapers, based on a periodic revision of cannabis-related news, both on the Internet and in printed copies. Obtaining a perfectly balanced sample is not the main aim of the thesis; presenting the case of news from different sources to test the utility of the root definitions, however, is. In Appendix 2 the reader will find a random sample of news, appeared in British newspapers regarding cannabis and cannabis reclassification. The sample has been collected during the period of this dissertation, and aims to present a picture of the public debate on this topic. Due to the diversity of sources and types of news, the next sub-sections illustrate the use of the root definitions in organising the information obtained from the news.

6.2.3.1. Background: Discussion of cannabis re-classification 2002-2003

The first period from 2002 to 2003 can be considered a background to the discussion about cannabis. The analysis of the news produced in this time provides a general idea of how the debate started and the main opinions portrayed. From the samples of news, appreciation of some of the discourses identified by the root definitions is possible. The following figure

summarises the types of discourses and their relative prominence during that period:

Figure 7 : Discourses on cannabis (2002-2003)



Source: Research Files. Analysis by B. Acevedo, 2005.

As the figure shows, there is a relative balance between the arguments *pro* and *contra* the notion of cannabis re-classification. The figure however shows a slight majority on the negative appreciation of cannabis re-classification. This is also reflected in the second poll by *The Guardian*, in which 53 per cent of Britons did not support the re-classification initiative.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Appendix 2: Background (12) *The Guardian*, 30 July 2003. Survey: 53 per cent of adult voters say they do not support the re-classification, only 38 per cent say they support the move. A clear majority of the younger generation, those under 35, back the new 'softly softly' approach to cannabis. Some 54 per cent of those aged 18-24 approve of the change, as do 55 per cent of 25-34 year olds.

Interestingly, the possibility of re-classifying cannabis seemed to open the space for different discourses apart from the prohibitionist or criminalist. In the figure a significant proportion of news appears to correspond to the *recreational* discourse. Although initially the liberal opinions on cannabis can be encapsulated into the *recreational* discourse, the concomitant root definition falls short of including the variety of arguments supporting the review of cannabis legislation. Oddly enough, those supportive views come from certain politicians, journalists, activists, and researchers. Very few users are quoted or consulted. The positive views are likely to be encountered in the on-line surveys, such as those carried out by the BBC.

The re-classification of cannabis actually became an excuse for a political debate among politicians and public officials expressing their views on the matter. For example, whereas Mo Mowlam (Labour) was pushing the boundaries by suggesting that *all* drugs should be legalised, members of the Conservative Party were condemning the Lambeth Experiment. The political battle will become more evident in the second phase of the analysis. In contrast, there is certain acknowledgement of the medicinal uses of cannabis, based on scientific reports. Paradoxically, the view of medicinal cannabis is reported mainly in relation to the launch of Sativex®, a cannabis-based medicine, and its economic potential.

Another emerging discourse is related to the root definition of *treatment*. In the news, the treatment discourse is developed in two senses: firstly, by pointing out the addictive properties of cannabis and secondly, by revealing the links between cannabis and schizophrenia in relation to the argument of a potential 'cannabis psychosis'. However, the way by which the news is reported varies from one source to another: from large-point front-page headlines reporting that 'cannabis kills 30,000 a year' to more moderate reports quoting scientific evidence on the link between cannabis and mental health.

Finally, there is a significant proportion of news related to the *public policy* discourse. It emphasises the aim of saving resources (police time and

wages, for instance) through the re-classification of cannabis, and reinforces the purpose of 'being honest' as stated by the Home Secretary in his official announcement. The Under-Secretary of the Home Office Caroline Flint stated that:

Honesty in this area is important. It's about having credibility with young people and addressing the issue of the drugs that really do harm.²⁰²

The relevance and frequency of news about cannabis tends to vary in this period. In general, there is a balanced configuration of opinions prior to the official decision.²⁰³ However, as mentioned before, they are part of the social representations of cannabis made by newspapers and opinion makers, rather than a balanced reflection of the different views of society. When the decision regarding re-classification came into operation on 29 January 2004, the attention of newspapers focused on diverse opinions about the potential impact of the measure. Interestingly, the proportion of opinions represented in the samples of news reveals how certain perceptions seem to be more widely publicised than others, as will be illustrated in the next sub-section.

6.2.4.2. 15-30 January 2004: Official re-classification of cannabis

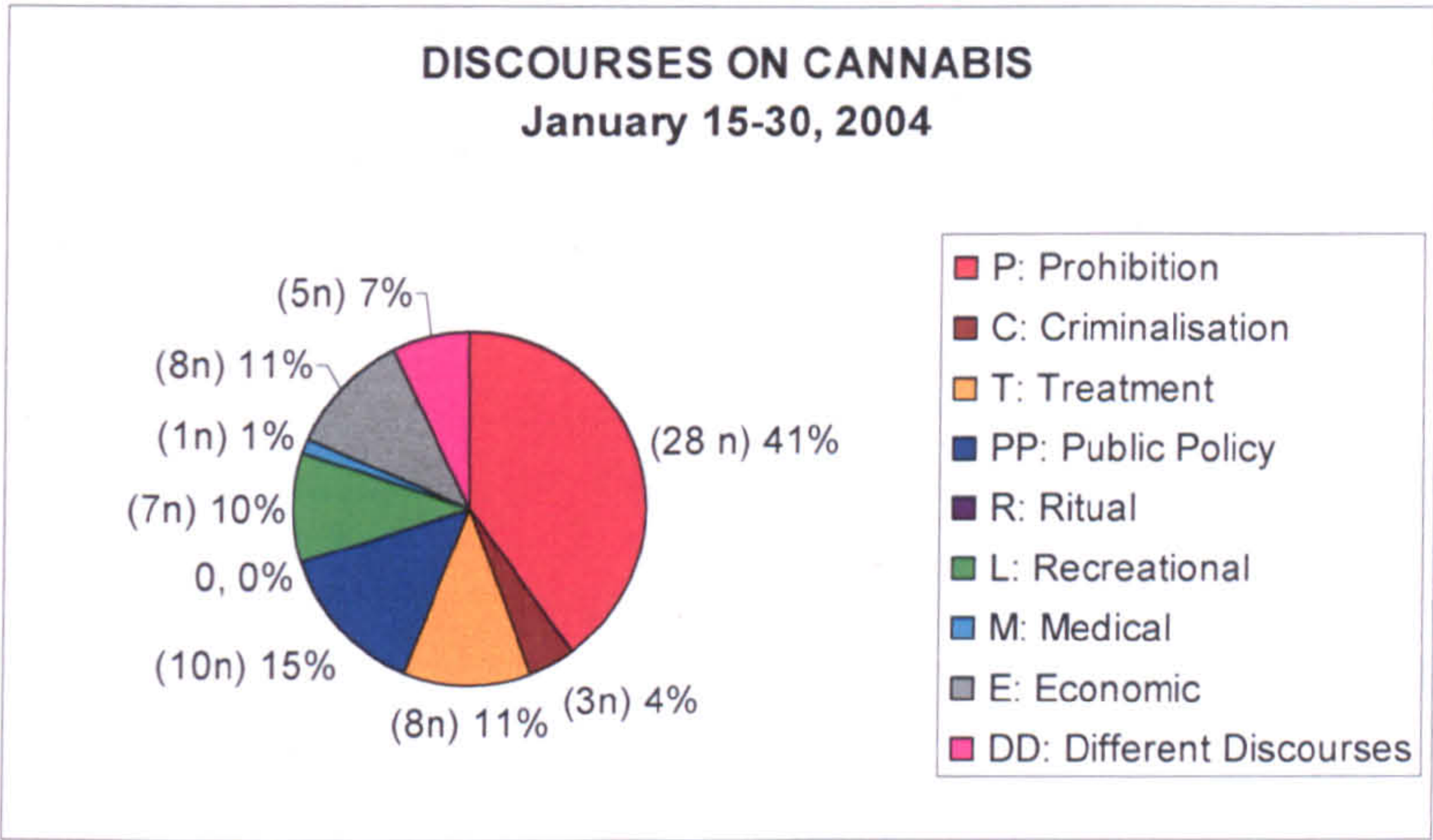
The second period in this media analysis is defined by the two last weeks in January 2004, when cannabis re-classification was made official (15-30 January, 2004). During this period, the number of items of cannabis-related news increased and thus focused public attention on the event. In the random sample, a total of 70 items of news was collected from different sources. They represent a reaction to the decision about to be implemented. As illustrated in the following figure, this time the

²⁰² Appendix. 2 Background (28) *Financial Times*, 30 July 2003 p.5. "Honesty may prove to be best policy in fighting drugs".

²⁰³ This is also expressed in the political debate on the House of Commons evaluation of the drugs policy, above.

configuration of negative or positive reactions to the measure and to cannabis changed again in the proportion of discourses represented by the root definitions.²⁰⁴

Figure 8: Discourses on Cannabis (January 15-30, 2004)



Source: Research Files. Analysis by B. Acevedo, 2005.

A brief look at the figure shows how the ‘*prohibitionist*’ discourse seems to have subsumed the rest of discourses. There is particular reference to the negative aspects of the measure in relation to the harmful effects of cannabis and the problems ensuing from drugs use. On the other hand, the proportion of ‘*recreational*’ discourses represented in the news diminished considerably. Positive aspects of cannabis use, such as the initially publicised medicinal potential of cannabis, suddenly disappeared from the sample of news. At the same time, the news related to Sativex ® and other *economic* uses of cannabis seems to have increased during this period.

An increasing number of news items reported the effects of cannabis on mental health and other physical conditions. In fact, most of the news items refer to the possible link between cannabis and schizophrenia, and the introduction of a condition named as ‘cannabis psychosis’. Several

²⁰⁴ In this sample, some news contains different opinions on cannabis that cannot be labelled by a single root definition. For the purpose of this research, they are labelled as ‘different discourses’ or ‘DD’, although some could effectively be classified under the eight root definitions.

testimonies have revealed dramatic cases of this condition. For example, some news items were concerned about the dangers of cannabis to families, with parents interviewed about this 'cannabis psychosis'. They mentioned their knowledge of cannabis based on their own experiences in the 1960s. However, it seems that a stronger variety of cannabis (i.e., skunk) may constitute a real threat to young people. The following example illustrates the general view of this emerging problem:

What Giles had been smoking that weekend — when he also went without sleep and consumed large amounts of alcohol — was not the substance Sophie's generation indulgently called "wacky baccy" but skunk. This special strain of cannabis, now widely available, has a level of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient, at least ten times stronger than in natural versions of the plant.²⁰⁵

The argument has been backed by medical experts and researchers with regard to the effects of cannabis on mental health. Nevertheless, those statements do not necessarily condemn the re-classification; they advocate more resources to conduct further research into these areas:

We are very worried about the negative health effects of smoking cannabis and want the government to fund more research on this issue. (Dr. Peter Maguire, British Medical Association)²⁰⁶

At the level of *public policy*, the discourse changed from 'justifications for cannabis re-classification' to a more general discourse on 'clarifications and rectifications'. After the decision on re-classification the government tried to insist on the illegality of cannabis. For instance, they emphasised that the power of arrest was maintained; in addition, they launched a million-pound campaign regarding the harmfulness of cannabis. The following advertisement on a British radio station represents an example of the government strategy to address any possible confusions about cannabis:

²⁰⁵ See Appendix 2: Re-classification 15-30 January 2004 (27). *The Times on Line*: 18 January 2004, Parenting: different class, same problem.

[*Woman's voice*] Marijuana, ashes, African, bazooka, blonde, blue sage, bud, broccoli, brown, buddha, bullyon, cheeba, Colombian, Don Juan, hash, J, jive stick, jolly green, kiff, killer, Panama gold, parsley, roach, straw, wheat, Texas T, locoweed. Call it what you like; just don't call it legal.

[*Man's voice*] Cannabis is still illegal, still harmful, and you can still get a criminal record that may affect your future career or holiday plans.²⁰⁷

This example shows how the government insists on the *prohibitionist* and *criminalist* discourse.

Concerns about the confusion produced by the measure were thus expressed by police officers. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) had issued guidelines in regard the re-classification, yet there were still many uncertainties; such a situation provoked a counter-productive reaction from some police officers. They opposed the re-classification, and announced a tougher attitude regarding cannabis offenders. In short, it seems that instead of 'formalising' a practice implemented by police officers, the re-classification had the opposite effect.

In addition, a number of news items in the sample reported the opening and closing down of 'cannabis coffee-shops' around the United Kingdom. In much of the news reported, there is a negative perception of the places, illustrating the social perception of cannabis users:

To prevent passers-by enjoying the spectacle of a handful of ageing hippies and unemployed youths getting stoned, grids have been placed across the café windows.²⁰⁸

Paradoxically, a 'grid' of interpretations produced by newspapers and opinion makers seems to direct the attention of the public to certain

²⁰⁶ See Appendix 2: Re-classification 15-30 January 2004 (30). *The Guardian*, 21 January 2004. Doctors warn of dangers of cannabis downgrading.

²⁰⁷ Transcribed as heard on BBC Radio 4, 5 February 2004.

²⁰⁸ See Appendix 2: Background (5) *The Times*, 30 January 2004.

aspects of the measure while neglecting others. The main purpose of this research is not, however, to evaluate the validity or otherwise of these representations. As mentioned before, the sample of news items is another source through which to test whether the root definitions are suitable tools for classifying information on this matter.

In summarising: it may be seen how the root definitions may adopt different expressions in the real debate on re-classification. Some examples can be provided to test the utility of the root definitions in characterising and classifying certain media items. The following table summarises a selection of the quotations that can be represented by the Root definitions:

Table: Root Definitions and Examples

ROOT DEFINTION	EXPRESSION IN MEDIA ITEMS
PROHIBITION	As a young and academically gifted teenager, our daughter, in the company of her inner-city peer group, was seduced and transformed by the hideous flirtation with various drugs. At the centre of it all, cannabis destroyed her compliant nature and her intellect, and she became a travesty of her former self. The demands of voices she heard in her head led her into alcoholism, unprotected promiscuity, acute poverty, and socially destructive paranoia. <i>The Times on Line</i> , 19 January 2004
CRIMINAL	Having been on the receiving end of an abusive partner, I have every reason to believe that his excessive use of cannabis was the cause of his violent mood swings and severe changes in personality. Julia, <i>UK on BBC</i> , 29 January 2004
TREATMENT (PSYCHOSIS)	We studied people who recently developed [schizophrenia], then followed them up after four years... The people who were taking cannabis when we first met them and continued taking cannabis were doing three times worse than people who had never taken cannabis. In particular they still had some of the positive symptoms of schizophrenia. Robin Murray, in <i>The Guardian</i> , 20 January 2004
PUBLIC POLICY	Re-classification should make our job slightly easier because it will free up some resources, the amount of arrests at street level will drop and that will probably mean less police time, less paperwork. PC Richard Price, Drugs Coordinator for Norfolk Police, in <i>Evening News</i> , 26 January 2004

ROOT DEFINTION	EXPRESSION IN MEDIA ITEMS
RITUAL	People that have never taken drugs don't understand that a big part of it is the ritual -- going to score, scoring, getting the drugs home, going through the motions and getting the end result. Take away that ritual from a drug addict and you take away a huge part of their lives. James, 35, from Catton, has been using drugs for the past 22 years. In <i>Evening Standard</i> , 26 January 2004
RECREATION	The drug cannabis is safe in moderation. However, like all 'drugs' excessive misuse can have negative effects. Most users will experience these effects in some form but like everything in life it's up to the individual to know their limits. I have used it for ten years and still have a lust for life and a decent memory although like drinking there can be a 'hangover'! Jaime, on <i>BBC on Line</i> , 29 January 2004
MEDICINAL	It's a step in the right direction for people with MS. I say it's time the stigma was lifted from cannabis. I had been banging my head against a brick wall. The doctors and neurologists were not friendly. MS gave me sleep problems and anxiety; they prescribed antidepressants. But cannabis helped me to sleep and to concentrate. Patrick Donnelly, 35, in <i>The Independent</i> , 18 January 2004
ECONOMICAL	Being called a 'dealer' makes me sound like some kind of underworld king that wears huge sovereign rings and has minders on the door. It's not like that at all. I buy my stuff from a bloke I used to go to school from who gets his from someone he met when he was abroad. Bradley, 37, who lives in Earlham, has sold cannabis to his friends for the past ten years. He has a full-time job, a partner and two children. The sale of cannabis supplements his income by around Pounds Sterling 150 a week. In <i>Evening Standard</i> , 26 January 2004

It is important to clarify that the above quotations, illustrating the relevance of the different Root Definitions, do not represent the mainstream opinion portrayed in the news. In the sample of news, it is possible to see that the main opinions reflect a negative appreciation of cannabis, reinforcing the *prohibitionist*, the *criminalist* and the *treatment* discourses about it. Supporting this mainstream view, a few politicians seized the opportunity to promote their own agendas.

Finally; it is interesting to note the significant role of the media as 'opinion makers' in expressing their views (positive or negative) on the re-classification measure. Some newspapers evaluate the measure as a step forward in the purpose of normalising cannabis use, e.g., *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Times*.

The government is trying to be pragmatic about cannabis use. Millions use it in moderation for pleasure, and to stigmatise law-abiding citizens with a criminal record is silly; cannabis use is here to stay. And yet the government and most parents fear, with good reason, that further liberalisation would lead to an explosion of use. Hence the retention of the threat of arrest. If this is too confusing for the public and the police, then the way forward has to be towards full decriminalisation. To work, this must go hand in hand with a vigorous education campaign on the dangers of drug abuse. *The Guardian*, Editorial, 18 January 2004

Nevertheless, some newspapers evaluated the decision as 'an exercise of political cynicism', due to the contradictions between the original proposal and the special circumstances added to the final decision.²⁰⁹ In contrast, a few tabloids held to their opposition, by claiming that the government had conceded to a conspiracy of the liberal elite²¹⁰ and that the decision was a 'green light to smoke pot'²¹¹.

To summarise, it can be said that the diverse reactions towards the re-classification highlighted many of the interests of different actors regarding drugs policy making. Politicians saw the re-classification as an opportunity to capture the attention of the voters by supporting the proposal or by attacking it. Medical doctors benefited from the debate by claiming a greater share of resources for carrying out research into the possible effects of cannabis on human health. Activists from all sides could express their opinion in this controversial debate. The police emphasised the public's confusion over the retention of their power of arrest, with some officers warning the public about their severity in interpretation of the law as regards cannabis offences.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Some other editorials pointed out the confusion about the status of cannabis, and that at the end the measure meant little in comparison with the expected changes (*The Independent*, 18 January 2004). Others accused the government of trying to win votes through their liberal approach (*Evening Standard*, 15 January 2004).

²¹⁰ *Daily Mail*, 27 January 2004: Cannabis, conspiracy and how the liberal elite made a dope of Blunkett, by Melanie Philips; *Daily Mail*, 26 January 2004, Cannabis catastrophe, by Melanie Philips; *Daily Mail*, 5 December 2004, The real reason Labour has gone soft on cannabis, by Melanie Philips.

²¹¹ *Daily Mail*, 12 September 2003, Green Light to Smoke Pot.

²¹² See Appendix 2: Re-classification 15-30 January 2004 (35) *The Independent*, Police Chief to get tough on cannabis and ignore new law. 19 January 2004. Other news confirmed that cannabis is still illegal, and that any attempt to break the law will be prosecuted. This attitude is demonstrated by the immediate closing down of coffee shops in Scotland and England, which had seemed to have interpreted the measure as virtual legalisation.

Paradoxically, any evaluation of the re-classification was indeed premature, since it would need time for any results to become evident. The general reaction portrayed in media gives predominance to certain actors over others. For example, it was mentioned that cannabis users are not easily quoted in the news, except for the on-line polls limited to the Internet. The following section will include these apparently excluded voices which, however, constitute an integral source of information on the topic.

6.2.4. Other Stakeholders

In addition to the opinions expressed in the media, the current research approached a number of stakeholders and actors who can contribute to the debate. The aim of this sub-section is to highlight the divergence in perceptions and interests involved in the political decision; also, it will point out that in some of the social constructions regarding cannabis users there are many assumptions and commonly held beliefs that may diverge from the interests expressed by the users themselves. By analysing the opinions of different people, the way in which their perceptions of cannabis re-classification vary can be observed. Indeed, it is interesting to note that mainstream assumptions about the type of actors interested in cannabis are challenged by the variety and diversity of their reality. Several examples will be offered illustrating the divergences between the social constructions, on the one hand, and the diversity of actors involved in cannabis issues, on the other.

The first example refers to some of the alleged effects of the measure in increasing cannabis use. It might seem that the government is afraid of 'promoting' cannabis use, just because of its downgrading in the legislation. This view, however, is contested by users themselves who separate their use from any political regulation, as can be seen in the following interview:

It is ridiculous to think that because [politicians] decide whatever they decide I am going to smoke more or less. I really don't care what they do, they are politicians, and they do whatever is convenient for them.²¹³

Adding to this comment, another interviewee said:

I really do not know anybody who has started to smoke cannabis because of the re-classification.²¹⁴

The lack of interest on what politicians said should not be assumed as a general trend. It, however, shows the distance between what policy makers may think and what users may do. Nevertheless, it is not very clear what are the real consequences of possession and supplying of cannabis. As expressed by Alun Buffrey, from the Legalise Cannabis Alliance:

[The re-classification of cannabis] is a kind of half measure; it is not what we want, because it is saying to people that if you are caught with a small amount we can arrest you, but only if you are under seventeenth years-old special circumstances are applied. But what happens is that if you are in London maybe [the police] will not arrest you, but if you are in Devon maybe [they] will arrest you...

There is no allowance for supplying, there is not allowance for medicinal use, or how much is a personal amount.

On the other hand, as Alun Buffrey suggests it may be the case that the 'confusion' of the British public can produce the effect of discouraging political activism and social concern in relation to cannabis issues. In his words:

As a political party, there are people that are thinking now I can smoke it at home and think: well, and they do not bother to come to us, and they smoke in the park. They do not think that they'd have any problem, but when they got busted then they call.²¹⁵

²¹³ Group Interview. Participants 21-25 years old. Hull, 12 May 2004. Interview and Research Notes by B. Acevedo.

²¹⁴ Interview with Jeffrey Ditchfield, Rhyl, 20 February 2005. Interview and transcription by B. Acevedo.

²¹⁵ Interview with Alun Buffrey, Norwich, 19 October 2004. Interview and Transcription by B. Acevedo.

Although the single-issue party Legalise Cannabis Alliance was called to give evidence to the Select Committee on Home Affairs, it seems that their claimings received no attention. Further more, if considering the previous assertion, the re-classification actually may dissolve the political interest and discussion about cannabis. Indeed, this can be a mechanism of invisibility of the claims of activists and campaigners.

Other actors, too, remained invisible in the discussion. The theory of an articulated 'liberal lobby' as presented by the amount of people advocating cannabis is also questionable. For example, even at the heart of the Legalise Cannabis Alliance many directions and opinions on the whole issue of cannabis can be found. In fact, although the Legalise Cannabis Alliance is representative of the political activism, there are still many individuals who support the legalisation of cannabis in their own ways: some prefer to support festivals and other public demonstrations; others try to participate in the political discussion, and yet others are more active in exchanging information on the Internet.

A second aspect to consider in the effects of downgrading cannabis, is the impacts in the market. Mainstream opinion regards dealers as money-seekers, who get involved in dealing cannabis due to its economic revenues, sometimes to support their own drugs consumption. Nevertheless, dealing in cannabis obeys a number of reasons, not necessarily economic. Drawing from the interviews and from the revision of different sources, three examples of different purposes in dealing with cannabis can be presented here: On one hand, as expressed by John, the social dealer, cannabis supply is a means of socialising; particularly, when dealers distribute to a small group of friends, thus participating of the activities of recreation and entertainment linked to cannabis use.²¹⁶ On the other hand, there may be reasons - other than for the money - both to get into the business and to get out of it. In his book *Mr. Nice* Howard Marks states:

It gave us a means of living and salved our rebellious consciences by fucking up the establishment. We were true outlaws. We just wanted a good time, and we worked hard and took risks to get it by supplying a badly needed service. (Marks, H., 1998: 69)

Finally, another non-economic example in cannabis supply is provided by Jeffrey Ditchfield, from the Bud-Buddies organisation.²¹⁷ His aim is to provide high quality cannabis to medicinal users. He does not call himself a 'dealer'; he prefers the term 'a donor' attending to approximately 250 'patients'. Although Ditchfield has been prosecuted for intending to open a 'coffee shop' and still faces charges for supplying cannabis, his attitude represents an interesting aspect of cannabis policy in relation to its medicinal use. He argues that his interest in medicinal cannabis is founded on compassionate reasons:

I obey every single law in this country, but I think that to donate cannabis to sick people should not be illegal; I think that it is a good thing to do, and although it is illegal, I don't think I am a bad person. Some senior police officers in Rhyl have advised me that if I keep quiet they would leave me alone. But I am not ashamed of donating cannabis to people who need it, why am I going to keep quiet?²¹⁸

In relation to the re-classification, it seems a possibility that the appeal of becoming 'donors' to medicinal users has waned, and the growing of cannabis is seen rather as a profitable activity. In general, this case evidences the variety of reasons for people to become involved in cannabis 'supply' or 'donation', other than solely economic reasons.

A third aspect found in mainstream discourses refers to the relationship between political decisions, and the practice of their implementation at street level. In other words, once the legislation is formulated, this leads to its direct application. In the case of the re-classification, far from clarifying or specifying what to do in cases of cannabis possession, the room for interpretation has become quite broad. As stated in an interview by a Probation Officer:

²¹⁶ See Section 5.1.4. Speaking about cannabis: A contemporary view.

²¹⁷ Interview with Jeffrey Ditchfield. Rhyl (Wales), 22 February 2005. Interview and Transcription by B. Acevedo.

²¹⁸ Interview with Jeffrey Ditchfield. Rhyl (Wales), 22 February 2005. Interview and Transcription B. Acevedo.

I am working in a job which is directly impacted by the law. Actually the re-classification does not change my job too much, but for the fact that now we do not have to write many reports on cannabis. The problem with re-classification is not about whether or not to catch people with cannabis, but what to do with them. The problem now is that police must decide what to do, because politicians transferred the responsibility to the police officers. This should not be a grey area for people who are caught with cannabis or not, but the grey area is in whether or not to apply the legislation.²¹⁹

In this quotation, it is possible to see how the problem of deciding what to do with cannabis users is transferred to the police officer in the street. In contrast, politicians seem to be concerned about sending or not a 'wrong message' to society, and its possible effects of these messages in the public and their votes. It expresses a clear top-to-bottom approach, which contradicts the so-publicised bottom-to-top discourse of political reformists. Whether politicians fear to risk their credibility, it might be more sensible to hear what their voters think.

Nevertheless, not merely the 'right' or 'wrong' message from the government gives cannabis its appeal; its attraction seems to be linked to a wider sub-culture that views cannabis positively, and it makes young people interested in trying it (or not). Cannabis consumption is determined by fashion, popular culture, and social perception. As one social worker in a voluntary agency for drug prevention states:

From the point of view of prevention, [cannabis] is a very interesting case. It is perceived as a gateway drug, for parents, doctors, etc.; although cannabis is very popular amongst young people, is in young urban culture; hip-hop reggae groups; music, movies. It can be quite attractive to young people, because of the connotations it has: having a laugh, chill out, having the 'munchies'. It carries a cultural bag. It is one of the most difficult drugs to deal with.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Interview with Probation Police Officer. Norwich, 20 October 2004. Interview and Transcription by B. Acevedo. (In this case, the officer responded under the condition of anonymity.)

²²⁰ Interview with David Sheperdon. New Horizons, Drug Prevention Programme, Hull, 20 March 2005. Interview and Transcription by B. Acevedo.

Finally comes the group whose opinion was apparently ignored in the final decision and who have a different opinion of the measure. Medicinal users initially supportive of the re-classification as originally proposed seem to have been negatively affected by the final decision. This group is noteworthy because many discovered the use of cannabis through suffering from a medical condition causing discomfort. In fact, some medicinal users had never tried cannabis in their life until discovering it eased their pain, improved their appetites, and/or helped them to relax - as formal medicine had failed to do. Their involvement with cannabis, although a voluntary option, has affected their lives in many ways. Some have started to grow their own cannabis; others have become active campaigners in changing the legislation. Their actions are also quite diverse, as are their perceptions of re-classification.

The re-classification of cannabis has affected this particular group to their detriment. They argue that because of cannabis re-classification, dealers who used to donate a proportion of their 'stuff' to medicinal users are less keen on donating cannabis because the dealers believe they can now have a major and thus profitable share of the market. In some interviews with medical users, the fact of a decrease in the amount of donation can be explained by the fact that suppliers and dealers may be saving their stock for more profitable markets. Nevertheless, there is not a final proof of this argument.

On the other hand, the police have repeatedly prosecuted the medicinal users who grow their own cannabis in an attempt to show that the latter are still hard on cannabis and they are applying the law.²²¹ Although the medicinal uses of cannabis were ignored in the legislation, the situation of these stakeholders illustrates one of the more delicate elements of policy making: the right to self-medication. Whereas the medical argument in relation to cannabis psychosis has been revealed in the media and other public debates, it seems that there are few interests supporting the issue

²²¹ Research notes. Observation and conversation at the London Hemp Fair, 4-6 October 2004. Interviews and informal conversations by B. Acevedo.

of the medicinal use of cannabis. The question as to how some discourses tend to prevail over others is one of the questions emerging from this research. This and other questions stimulated in the course of the investigation will be presented later in the current chapter.

When approaching the fieldwork for the thesis, the variety and complexity of the issues of cannabis use increases considerably, apart from the descriptions made by media of different actors about cannabis. Nevertheless, similarities can be found regarding the wider discourses represented by the root definitions. Among them, the medicinal discourse is widely represented here, as well as a certain type of ritual use of cannabis. In addition, the recreational discourse is represented by some of the interviewees.

It can be seen from the previous examples how the opinions represented in the official documents, in government statements, in the mass media and by the different stakeholders, can represent the general debate about cannabis re-classification. The next section will discuss certain prominent aspects in the political discussion about cannabis and its re-classification. In this discussion the root definitions will be used as an aid to commenting on the different findings and results of this research.

6.3. Synthesis

Based on an analysis of government documents, several changes can be perceived between the initial proposal of re-classifying cannabis and the final decision taken by the Home Office. It is assumed that the process of policy making is a rational process that includes the opinion of experts and government commissions, yet decisions are ultimately determined by a convergence of factors and other interests, as well as the respective personal perceptions of politicians and policy makers.

By using the methodology it has been possible to identify main tendencies in the public debate. This is one of the outcomes of this research. Indeed, a policy analysis can be furthered by following the different events analysed in this chapter.

For example, when analysing the Runciman Report the opinion pressing for an updating of the view on the legislation concerning cannabis was introduced. This report included different world views on cannabis, such as the medicinal and recreational uses of cannabis. The main target of the Runciman Report was to eliminate the power of arrest. In addition to this report, the Advisory Council on Drug Misuse supported the notion of re-classifying cannabis, and the implications regarding its possession remaining an arrestable offence. In this context, the re-classification of cannabis was suggested as a means of creating a sensible public policy in relation to cannabis use by avoiding the criminalisation, with its expensive cost factor, of otherwise law-abiding citizens.

On the other hand, when the Home Secretary David Blunkett announced his intention to re-classify cannabis, his personal perception of the issue and the political climate could have enhanced its significance. From a political point of view, it is possible to argue that the announcement can be interpreted as Blunkett's ploy to regain control over drugs policy issues after the disintegration of the Tsar's Office. However, in the course of the consultations, the Home Office tried to respond to criticisms thus to adapt the decision to the pressure of social actors and the mass media. The final decision rejected the most significant proposed result of the initial recommendations: to eliminate the power of arrest for cannabis possession.

In fact, it can be argued that this 'power' of arrest is a prerogative of police officers, yet their influence on the decision cannot be deduced solely through analysing official documents or media messages. As presented before, it was necessary to carry out several interviews with actors and experts to understand the influence of certain police officers who had the

power to modify decisions that were otherwise widely studied and considered by appointed committees, scientific advisors and governmental officers. Although the decision to keep the possession cannabis as a criminal matter is unsurprising, taking into account the general argumentation in the prohibitionist discourse, yet the way in which political decisions are taken can be a matter of debate. Instead of following a logical process in which different views are taken into account and influenced by the advise of special committees, the case of cannabis re-classification evidences the existence of power issues to be taken into account for the analysis.

Hence, in the final decision, the issue of cannabis remains a criminal one, in spite of many of the reports' pointing out the necessity to re-consider cannabis a public health issue in need of treatment - rather than a criminal one (e.g., the Home Affairs Select Committee; the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs). The re-classification as originally proposed would have addressed the increasing criminalisation of cannabis users by keeping cannabis illegal yet removing the power of arrest. Instead, the final decision stressed the criminalisation of cannabis offences, by retaining the power of arrest and increasing the penalties for possession of all Class C drugs.

When analysing the official documents and governmental statements a combination of two approaches can be seen. On one hand, a managerial approach justifying the reclassification in terms of efficient use of resources; on the other, a reiterative proscription of cannabis use by emphasising its illegality, and the maintenance of the power of arrest for cannabis offences. This emphasis confirms the supremacy of a 'prohibitionist' and a 'criminalistic' view on cannabis related activities, held by powerful groups influencing political decisions.

Although initially there was an implicit acknowledgement of the 'recreational' use of cannabis by 'otherwise law-abiding citizens', this does not necessarily constitute a validation of a 'normal' use of cannabis.

Instead, it seems that the managerial view is interpreted as a change in the terms, whereby users are defined by the government as 'customers', yet they are not considered in the diversity of their world views on cannabis use.

The various opinions are more likely to be expressed in other scenarios. The mass media have indeed included some of those opinions; however, the additions are selective and are usually interpreted by the opinion makers. It is likely that the mass media played a crucial rôle in the determination of the final decision on policy making. For instance, a considerable proportion of the discussion related to the eventual problems of cannabis re-classification were exposed in newspapers; in terms of the root definition, the negative appreciation of cannabis in the prohibitionist approach was increasingly prominent in the reported news.

Another interesting aspect is to see how the argument of cannabis psychosis was gaining prominence throughout the periods analysed here. What started as concerns about links between cannabis use and mental health suddenly became a recognised condition named 'cannabis psychosis'. Prior to the debate about re-classification there were a number of studies about the links between cannabis and mental conditions, and during this period it emerged that cannabis might produce a particular form of psychosis. In media reports and scientific studies, young people who smoke more potent varieties of cannabis (e.g., 'skunk') tend to experience paranoid or psychotic events. Parents and doctors are represented in the media as the main voices exposing the tragedy of those young people so affected. Considering these aspects, it is possible to see how the participation of different actors also changed during the period under analysis. As a result of the changes, the discourse of treatment began to focus on the condition of cannabis psychosis, and it became an argument posed against re-classification. It is unclear whether medical experts opposed the measure; the way their opinion can be contained in the *treatment* discourse may implicitly support a *prohibitionist* approach.

In general, it is possible to argue that 'cannabis psychosis' defines not only a medical condition, but also defines the subjects more vulnerable to its effects. The emerging question is how this topic can be affecting the definition of the cannabis issue and the characterisation of the subjects who may experience concomitant problems. At the same time, this type of argument against re-classification became visible in the debate; the managerial aim in the discourse of public policy regarding the re-classification was losing prominence. The earlier support for the Lambeth Experiment was replaced by an antagonist view of its results, and the government was accused of conceding to a liberal lobby.

It might be thought that the public policy discourse could have brought changes at the practical level of drugs policy. However, the fundamental perception of drugs in general remains attached to the prohibitionist world-view. For instance, the mass media reported a number of news items regarding the increasing consumption of cannabis. Much of that news reported crimes allegedly committed while under the influence of cannabis. The reports were tainted with spectacular titles of murder, vice and violence sparked by cannabis use.

However, it must be reminded that these arguments about crime, psychosis, or violence were excluded from the original discussions on re-classification. As stated originally by the government, the purpose was to save resources in the public policy sector, while preserving the illegal status of cannabis as a deterrent to an eventual rise in cannabis use. Nonetheless, the arguments against re-classification tend to avoid those initial objectives to focus more specifically on the prohibitionist and criminalist aspects of cannabis, as well as on its treatment features. Further more, powerful groups with particular interests on retaining certain prerogatives when dealing with cannabis offences have played an important role, yet, their presence in the discussion is not necessarily evident.

In terms of using the methodology, it is possible to see how the discourses represented by the Root Definitions have been useful in the identification of the main tendencies in the public debate. By applying selected stages of the Soft Systems Methodology it has been possible to encapsulate most of the discussions and discourses about cannabis re-classification. Many were held behind closed doors, and others were selectively represented by the mass media. The latter's messages are diverse and numerous. The use of the methodology in organising those discourses by using the root definitions facilitated their taxonomy. However, some other issues related to the presence of power issues cannot be understood after solely organising the main discourses in the debate. The next section analyses the particular benefits and limitations of using selected stages of Soft Systems Methodology.

6.4. Conclusions

The complexity of drugs policy issues required an appropriate tool through which to include the different elements present in the policy-making process. The emphasis on the interdisciplinary character of drugs research, and the presence of diverse world views on the issue, make Soft Systems Methodology a suitable tool to initiate the research process. The analysis of this particular case has indeed been proved to be a complex task, as too was the process of addressing cannabis re-classification. During the course of the investigation, the researcher determined that the relevant information is diverse and specialised. For instance, the historical background presented in this chapter in relation to cannabis legislation could not be found in one single document. Instead, the researcher had to consult many archives and interview various actors in order to obtain a balanced view of related events. Common knowledge has created a number of assumptions that still represent the social perception of issues regarding cannabis policy. For example, the idea of a 'pot lobby'

influencing the Wooton Report is similar to the accusation of a 'liberal lobby' pushing for a 'softly, softly' approach to cannabis re-classification.

Certainly, the compilation of this historical review is of considerable value because of the many comparisons that can be made with the current discussion on cannabis. In this sense, it was demonstrated that the predominant discourse in drugs policy since the 1960s is related to the *prohibitionist* and the *criminalistic* root definitions. As quoted at the beginning of this chapter, it seems that British drugs policy is sensitive to the media pressure and in general is more reactive than proactive, as shown in the case of cannabis re-classification. At the same time, the media tends to reflect the opinion of certain sectors in society, some of which are not in favour of cannabis re-classification or illicit drugs use in general (Fisher, 2006).

Similar aspects are confirmed when addressing the contemporary case of the re-classification of cannabis. Despite the publicity in the mass media and in political speeches, there are many gaps in the information regarding the policy-making process. Among these the breach between the initial consideration of cannabis and the final decision regarding whether arrest was justifiable for cannabis possession offences was highlighted in this chapter. This 'missing link' constitutes one of the significant gaps that remain unsolved when the topic is approached through mainstream sources.

In general, the use of selected stages of Soft Systems Methodology has proved to be a suitable means of addressing the complexity of the case study. The realm of this topic is, as has been shown, rich and diverse. In consequence, the use of the stages concerning the rich picture, relevant systems and root definitions have proved to be useful in including most of the views on the topic. Given the volume of information and controversy around cannabis, the selection of the Methodology was a crucial matter for this research. The selective use of SSM in this research has proved its validity in addressing such complexity. In particular, the root definitions

have been used as a way of determining different discourses on cannabis. Because the root definitions are constructed as ideal types, they represent one model among others through which to approach reality. In addition, the root definitions rely on the identification of particular world views, vital when considering a controversial topic such as cannabis. By applying the root definitions it has been possible to compile systematically records of a number of events otherwise disorganised and disconnected. As an archaeologist who collates artefacts and information, the root definitions have allowed the logical compilation of all of these disparate elements.

In the debate on the analysis of cannabis, the root definitions have helped in demonstrating how the dominant discourses belong to the prohibitionist and the criminalistic definitions of cannabis. The emergence of the discourse related to treatment, as in the case of cannabis psychosis, was similarly revealed. Finally, by using the root definitions it was possible to detect that certain discourses were excluded from the debate. For example, the medicinal use of cannabis seems to have disappeared completely from the official documents and the mass media, whereas the recreational discourse decreased in importance in the same sources. Nevertheless, the mere collection of facts fails to provide information on the processes of political decisions in which power can play an important role.

As a result of this chapter and based on the application of the methodology it is possible to see how the inclusion of different discourses has enriched the analysis. Notwithstanding, as highlighted in Chapter Five and confirmed in this chapter, emerging issues regarding power need to be considered in the analysis of the process of policy making. In response to this consideration, it has been proposed that the work of Michel Foucault may provide interesting insights for an understanding of power in processes of policy making regarding the regulation of certain human behaviours. The next chapter addresses the work of Foucault, providing an overview of the conceptual and methodological framework to be used in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 7 A POST-STRUCTURALIST APPROACH

In the previous chapter different discourses related to the debate on the re-classification of cannabis were presented. These discourses were organised through using the Root Definitions in the Soft Systems Methodology. It was demonstrated that the Root Definitions help to classify and distinguish among different perceptions of cannabis: in other words, that the Root Definitions present different world views or *Weltanschauungen* on cannabis and cannabis re-classification.

In addition, it was revealed that questions related to how those discourses are produced and what their role is in the policy-making process cannot be answered solely by using Soft Systems Methodology. It is proposed that the work of Michel Foucault can possibly provide a framework to respond to the research questions.

Foucault was interested in analysing certain processes of the normalisation of human behaviour and practices through the analysis of discursive formations and historical conditions. The ways in which certain problems 'emerge' at particular moments of history, and the ways in which such problems are defined and regulated, can be understood with his findings. In the current chapter, it is expected that a revision of Foucault's work will provide clues towards enhancing the understanding of the process of policy making as regards cannabis, considering the specific instance of its re-classification.

The main purpose of this chapter is to synthesise the results from applying selected stages from the Soft Systems Methodology, and to introduce the theoretical framework of Foucault's work. In particular, this chapter will deal with the concepts of 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' in an analysis of the historical events defining issues and topic areas. It will be demonstrated that Soft Systems Methodology can support the

'archaeological' stage in Foucault's 'methodology', which must be complemented with a 'genealogical' analysis of the problem situation - in this case, the re-classification of cannabis.

The chapter is divided into the following sections:

In the first section, a synthesis of the potentialities and weaknesses of Soft Systems Methodology in dealing with the understanding of cannabis re-classification will be presented. It is proposed that a Post-Structuralist approach based on the work of Michel Foucault can contribute to answer the research questions guiding this dissertation.

In the second section, the work of Michel Foucault will be introduced. This section presents specifically a brief review of those aspects of Foucault's work contributing to the understanding of drugs policy issues and in particular the re-classification of cannabis. Four aspects will be considered in this review: it begins by presenting Foucault's approach to history as a means of diagnosing the present, continues with the notions of 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' as 'methodological' devices, and concludes by including the notion of '*dispositif*'. By focusing on these notions, it is possible to explain the concepts of power, knowledge, and the definition of the subject involved in Foucault's analysis of historical events.

The third section presents possible connections between contemporary drugs research and Foucault's ideas. As will be argued in this section, many of the contemporary concerns in drugs research are related to the ideas explored by Foucault. Although the reference to Foucault is not necessarily explicit in many of the works presented here, it can be seen how questions posed by researchers highlight many of Foucault's interests. The aim of the current section is to provide clues in Foucault's work to be used in the context of analysing drugs policy, particularly in understanding the case of cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom.

In the fourth section, a summary of the main consequences for the orientation of this research, based as it is on Foucault's ideas, will be provided. It will be demonstrated how Soft Systems thinking can provide a basis for an 'archaeology' of discourses in Foucault's 'method'. In addition, clues towards developing the 'genealogy' of cannabis re-classification will be provided. The core of this section is to provide a 'map' for a Post-Structuralist analysis in Chapter 8 of the discourses and practices regarding cannabis re-classification.

The fifth and final section offers conclusions on the analysis of Foucault's work and the implications for the present research.

7.1. Contributions of Soft Systems Methodology: A reminder

In the previous chapter, one of the main contributions of Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology to the understanding of the process of cannabis re-classification, i.e., to provide a means of organising the different discourses expressed in the debate about this political decision, has been demonstrated. Through applying the Root Definitions it has been possible to present a wide range of opinions, organised coherently, regarding cannabis re-classification. The root definitions can also be understood as 'discourses' or 'statements' in relation to the topic of discussion, in this case cannabis re-classification. In other words, they can be seen as discursive statements expressed during a particular period by different actors.

The following sections show how the figure of 'discourse' is central to Foucault's approach. Throughout his work Foucault analyses different discursive formations regarding the 'problems' of human beings'. For example, he was interested in the different discourses on madness and how these change over a given period of time. Nevertheless, his interest was not to test the validity or otherwise of those discourses, nor did he try

to demonstrate or contradict their coherence or whether they make sense. Instead, he approached the discourses as a means of enquiring into how those discourses eventually create 'problems' and the 'subjects' who experience those problems.

Foucault provided no unique formula for identifying discourses; he approached history by means of what he called 'the archaeology'. This notion will be examined in the next section. As will be examined there, the notion is crucial to Foucault's 'method'. By comparing what has been done in terms of the root definitions and the notion of 'archaeology', it will be possible to demonstrate that the discourses collated through using Soft Systems Methodology may be considered basic material in terms of the 'archaeology' proposed by Foucault.²²² In other words, it is claimed that the outcomes of using Soft Systems Methodology and the identification of a number of root definitions are a valid means of representing the 'discursive formations' to be analysed according to Foucault's approach.

As previously presented, the identification of discourses on cannabis re-classification has allowed appreciation of the variety of world views and the multiplicity of actors involved in the debate. During the period of analysis those discourses have changed and, more importantly, some discourses have assumed prevalence over others. Nevertheless, it is necessary to understand some of the contribution of Michel Foucault's work to enhance the analysis of the policy making process in which certain power issues have been evidenced. The next section explains Foucault's main concepts to be used in this research.

7.2. Introducing Foucault's work

The work of Michel Foucault has been regarded as among the most influential in contemporary social science. In particular, Foucault was

interested in understanding the origin and definition of problematic situations in Western culture, by focusing on the process of the normalisation of particular aspects of human experience.

His objective “has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.” (Foucault, M., 1983: 283). Foucault addressed history as a way towards understanding those processes of normalisation, by focusing on the transformation of discourses, identities, and power relationships. Due to the extent of Foucault’s work, this section will focus on the different discourses embedded in the discussions on re-classification. In particular, the examination of the process of how the ‘problem of cannabis’ is defined during a particular period of time (2002-2004) will be analysed. In Foucault’s terms, this examination is related to a wider process of normalisation of ‘cannabis use’ and the definition of the ‘cannabis user’.

Various references to Foucault’s work will be included, for example, the work of Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983), Rabinow (1984), and Kendall and Wickham (1999) are considered significant sources towards understanding Foucault’s ideas. In addition, a selection of Foucault’s books, interviews and essays will be mentioned in this chapter. Four aspects in Foucault’s work will be considered:

- Approaching history: A history of the present
- Archaeology
- Genealogy
- The notion of ‘*dispositif*’

²²² This demonstration is presented in Section 7.4.1. Root Definitions and the Archaeology

7.2.1. A History of the Present

It is widely acknowledged that Foucault approached history as the source for his material. However, he was not seeking to find out how the present has emerged from the past; rather, his point is to use history as a way of *diagnosing* the present (Kendall, G. and Wickham, G., 1999: 4). Foucault approached history as the source for his material, yet was uninterested in the sequence of facts *per se*; nor had he tried to demonstrate the veracity of those facts. Instead, he addresses history in order to understand the processes of normalisation in Western societies.

In his early works, Foucault analysed historical facts in order to disentangle systems of institutions and discursive practices (Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., 1983: xiv). For example, in *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault analysed the origin of madness by revealing a number of discourses from different disciplines that define and categorise insanity. He approaches those discourses in the context of an institution, the Hospital, where they are developed. Foucault called attention to examination of the historical context as the realm within which to understand how certain 'problems' emerge. As mentioned before he was interested not only in the sequential facts; he also considered the environment in which political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions determine 'who' talks about problems, and 'how' those problems are defined.

In the context of Foucault's approach, 'problems' are always related to human beings: in other words, the definition of problems is related to the

person or group who 'suffer', 'experience' or 'is' the problem. Foucault's inquiries into the ways in which our culture produces 'subjects' is related to this process of objectification. The problematic aspect lies in the way 'subjects' and their practices or behaviours are defined as being so. Rabinow (1984) synthesised Foucault's approach to this matter by describing three modes in which the subject becomes an 'object'. In Rabinow's synthesis these three modes of objectification of the subject are:

- Dividing practices
- Scientific discourse
- Subjectification.

In this section, two of those modes of objectification will be described. The third method of 'subjectification' will be developed in section 7.2.4.

The *first mode* of the objectification of the subject is what Foucault refers to as 'dividing practices'. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault analyses the process by which certain people were 'divided' from the rest of the population. During the classic era, a new confinement of the poor, the insane, and vagabonds took place in the 'great catch-all' *Hôpital Général* in 1656. He reminded us that these individuals were initially confined not for their mental condition, but they were mainly beggars, poor people, vagabonds and sometimes enemies of the regime, who filled the position of the lepers in the Middle Ages (Foucault, M., 2001: 5). Foucault argued that once they were confined (dividing practices), it was possible to create a 'discourse' about their condition. He proposed that it was not the discovery of 'madness' as a condition to be treated, but the process of confinement itself which rendered possible the emergence of the new category in human behaviour. Confinement is accompanied by a type of sensitivity and it 'suddenly isolated' a group of people.

[To] inhabit the reaches long since abandoned by the lepers, they chose a group that to our eyes is strangely mixed and confused.

But what is for us merely an undifferentiated sensibility must have been for those living in the classical age a clearly articulate perception. It is this mode of perception which we must investigate in order to discover the form of sensibility to madness in an epoch we are accustomed to define by the privileges of reason. (Foucault, M., 2001: 42)

He went further in suggesting that the practice of confinement materialised in the *Hôpital Général* was not a medical establishment but a way of exercising power:

In its functioning, or in its purpose, the *Hôpital Général* had nothing to do with any medical concept. It was an instance of order, of the monarchical and bourgeois order being organised in France during this period. It was directly linked with the royal power which places it under the authority of the civil government alone. (Foucault, M., 2001: 37)

In this way Foucault stated how certain aspects that today are considered as an expression of a positive development of science, or in this reference, of the development of medical knowledge, are linked to practices of power. Without trying to criticise such exercise of power, Foucault attempted to provide a warning about the ways in which historical facts must be considered in a wider context. He suggested understanding the origin of madness not just as a 'positive' development, but by inquiring into the conditions in which a new sensitivity to insanity is created. In other words, Foucault concentrated on revealing the mechanisms that distinguish, separate, or confine certain populations (dividing practices) in order to understand the emergence of madness.

Moreover, it can be claimed that his interest in history did not necessarily focus on the sequence of facts itself, but whatever lies between those facts. Foucault approached history in order to understand the present. It must be noted that he was not concerned with a period-based problem (i.e., the classic era), but as a 'problem-based' approach (i.e., the emergence of madness). His purpose was neither to validate one form or another of defining madness, nor to prove that those definitions are biased

or reliable; he aimed to analyse how these discourses or statements emerge in the context of a particular period.

In Foucault's history of madness, the dividing practices made possible that a scientific discourse was developed to define a condition observed within the confines of the *Hôpital Général*. Rabinow describes this as the *second mode* of turning human beings into objectified subjects, by 'scientific classification'. It is related to the dividing practices in the sense that by isolating certain groups in the population, it was possible to 'talk scientifically' about them. However, this 'scientific classification' is independent of the dividing practices. In his book *The Birth of the Clinic* (1975), the second mode of objectification is made comprehensible. Here, Foucault analysed how the medical discipline developed its own way of considering the human body. He traced back the form in which diseases are considered, not only as categories, classes or species, but how they are mapped and defined in the human body. In this quest, he attempted to unveil the moment in which 'ways of saying become ways of seeing' (2003: 77). Once again, he focused on a particular institution, in this case the clinic, as the space in which many of those discourses articulate medical knowledge.

As stated before, he was uninterested in proving that one type of medical knowledge is more valid than others. Instead he focused on the way in which a certain type of discourse emerged within the realms of the clinic:

I should like to make it plain once and for all that this book has not been written in favour of one kind of medicine as against another kind of medicine, or against medicine and in favour of an absence of medicine. It is a structural study that sets out to disentangle the conditions of its history from the density of discourse, as do others of my works. (Foucault, M., 2003a: xxii)

In this book, he refined the 'archaeological technique' through which it is possible to show how medical statements, practice, and experience are expressed in a discursive structure. Foucault

[M]oves away from his study of social practices which attempt to make sense of and control the deep subjective universal experience of madness, to examine those practices which enable human beings to treat themselves as objects in the purest sense. (Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., 1983: 15)

After *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault advanced his study of the discursive practices in relation to the human sciences. In his book *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault furthered 'an archaeology' of human sciences. However, this time his focus was not on institutions. Foucault overcame the limits of institutions by concentrating on 'discursive formations' in relation to human sciences and the production of knowledge. This must not be confused with a compromise with 'Structuralism' or 'hermeneutics'. As Rabinow clarifies:

[In *Archaeology of Knowledge*] discourse is bracketed off from the social practices and institutions in which it is embedded... [However] he never intended to isolate discourse from the social practices that surround it. Rather, he was experimenting to see how much autonomy could legitimately be claimed for discursive formations. His aim, then as now, was to avoid analysis of discourse (or ideology) as reflections, no matter how sophisticatedly mediated, of something supposedly 'deeper' and more 'real'. (Rabinow, P., 1984: 10)

Foucault used history as the main field for his enquiries. As presented here his use of history was directed towards answering the question about the processes of normalisation by which human beings are made subjects. Whether taking a particular period, an event or a problematic, the idea for Foucault was to transcend the question to reach the origin or causes of a particular phenomenon by focusing, rather, on the contingencies that render possible the emergence of the problematic itself. His focus on the 'discourses' must be interpreted as the way in which 'problematics' are visible. He chose not to question the validity of those discourses, or the authority of who express them; he sought to find out 'How does discourse function?'.

In summary, Foucault's approach to history and his focus on the discourses emerged during particular historical periods can be understood as comprising the 'archaeological' technique. Archaeology is the basis for his approach to history, and he proposed to 'begin like a pure empiricist, simply selecting as his raw data an ensemble of what were taken to be serious speech acts during a given period' (Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., 1983: 59).

The following section clarifies the potentialities and modes of the 'archaeological' technique in Foucault's work.

7.2.2. Archaeology

Foucault approached history as the source for 'archaeological' material. Archaeology refers to the work of collecting facts in the form of statements, representations or expressions of a particular situation (or problem) during a period of time. The idea is to collect those statements while making no judgement as to their truthfulness or whether they make sense. Instead, Foucault proposed to treat what is said in the human sciences as a 'discourse-object' (Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., 1983: xiv).

Archaeology is not necessarily history, in the sense that:

The archaeologist is not interested in the empirical succession of events, nor is he interested in transcendental historical rules, which would state the conditions of the possibility of all change. Rather the archaeologist is interested in the way one discursive formation comes to be substituted for another, that is, in how 'to reveal the relations that characterise the temporality of the discourse'. (Foucault, M., 1972: 167)

Based on these ideas, it may be said that the 'archaeology' represents a way of collecting information, in which there is neither an interpretation of the facts nor a linear organisation of those facts. In the archaeology, the

aim is to collect facts, not necessarily consecutively, nor even in a chronological fashion, but indicating the nature of discourses exposed in a determined period of time regarding a particular situation. As a result, the information collected in the form of statements or discourses forms part of a configuration of the problem.

For example, in the publication '*I Pierre Rivière...*', Foucault and his colleagues assembled a 'dossier' about the event of a parricide in 1835 (Foucault, M., 1978). It was the case of Pierre Rivière, a farmer, who slaughtered his mother, his sister and his brother; and which case seems to have puzzled experts and the general public of his time. The dossier is a collection of witnesses' evidence, reports from the judicial official, medical opinion, and the text of Pierre Rivière's confession. Foucault defined a 'dossier' as "a case, an affair; an event that provided the intersection of discourses that differed in origin, form, organisation and function" (Foucault, M., 1978: x). The dossier on Pierre Rivière is a compilation of different discourses of the facts as they occurred on 3 June 1863. In other words, it is a collection of opinions – discourses – of 'experts': doctors, psychiatrists, the judge, newspapers, and witnesses from the community.

All of them speak, or appear to be speaking, of one and the same thing; at any rate, the burden of all these discourses is the occurrence on June 3. But in their totality and their variety they form neither a composite work nor an exemplary text; but rather a strange contest, a confrontation, a power relation, a battle among discourses and through discourses. (Foucault, M., 1978: x)

In his presentation of this case, Foucault collected different statements and opinions. The dossier includes as a central component the account written by Pierre Rivière about the circumstances of and the reasons for his actions. Despite the possible temptations to analyse or to interpret the confession, Foucault clearly refused to fall into the trap of framing it within any discipline:

As to Rivière's discourse we decided not to interpret it and not to subject it to any psychiatric or psychoanalytic commentary. (Foucault, M., 1978: xiii)

This decision must be understood in relation to the very nature of Foucault's 'archaeology'. History is treated not as a source of the 'truth' nor as a description of logical or sequential facts, but in a way that the statements themselves can come to the surface and thus become the representation of the problem. The book on Pierre Rivière, among his other works, presents what can be seen as a key rule in Foucault's work, with regard to avoiding the trap of interpretation:

The analysis of statements, then, is a historical analysis, but one that avoids all interpretation: it does not question things said as to what they are hiding, what they were 'really' saying, in spite of themselves, the unspoken element that they contain... but, on the contrary, it questions them as to their mode of existence ... what it means for them to have appeared when and where they did – they and no others. (Foucault, M., 1972: 109)

In the instance of Pierre Rivière, Foucault was not interested in knowing whether Pierre Rivière was or was not guilty (the question for the truth), or in determining whether the different opinions about the case made sense (the question of validity). The discussion between criminologists and psychiatrists about the mental condition of Pierre Rivière reflects "the battle among discourses and through discourses of their correspondent disciplines". While compiling those different discourses (archaeology) he paved the way for the complementary dimension of genealogy, and its question about power.

Foucault acknowledged that the 'archaeology' in itself is insufficient to answer questions about how those discourses emerge, and how one or a group of them can take prevalence over others. During the development of his work, this technique will be not only refined but also challenged. In addition to the archaeology, Foucault formulates additional questions: How are those discourses produced? What role do they play in society? His responses are based on the genealogy. The emergence of the

questions will complement his approach to the question of normalisation. In other words, he starts developing his 'genealogical' approach to history, as will be presented in the following section.

7.2.3. Genealogy

The publication of his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979) marked a step forward in Foucault's approach to history. Whereas previous works – *Madness and Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* - focused on the development of the 'archaeological' technique, this book includes new questions about the relation between power and knowledge, and the definition of subjects.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault compared two events in relation to the way crime is being addressed: the public execution, and the prison regime. Foucault analysed the way in which these two practices are connected within the general act of punishing. He focused on the birth of the prison as the institution that historically crystallises different definitions of crime (as a problem) and the delinquent (as a subject). By comparing the two aspects, Foucault aimed to understand how the concepts of justice and punishment were transformed during a certain historical period. He analysed how "a corpus of knowledge, techniques, and 'scientific' discourses is formed and becomes entangled with the practice of the power to punish" (Foucault, M., 1991a: 23).

In his approach to discourses, it has been argued that Foucault went further 'to claim that discursive practices of institutions actually take primacy over knowledge by making knowledge possible – which is to say that they mark out the boundaries of knowledge for the subject' (Cohan, S. and Shires, L., 1998: 141). Foucault thus introduced his concept of 'power' as the other side of 'knowledge', both acting as a single entity.

We should admit... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

These power/knowledge relations are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to a power system, but on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power/knowledge and their historical transformations. (Foucault, M., 1991a: 27-28)

This quote serves to summarise some of the key aspects of Foucault's thought. However, he clarified that he was not necessarily interested in analysing the phenomena of power exclusively. By analysing the development of disciplinary techniques, Foucault opened a new approach to the understanding of power. For him, power is not an abstract entity, nor is it the privilege of one class over others. Instead, he stated that:

[P]ower is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the 'privilege', acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions – an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated. (Foucault, M., 1991a: 26)

Foucault analysed the transition from the public execution to the regime of incarceration. For him, this shift was part of a wider process of disciplining; in other words, a process of normalisation. It was not just a 'better way of punishing', more human, less cruel; rather, it was a calculated form of controlling human beings. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault analysed the ways in which the disciplinary technology, whatever its institutional form – prison, schools or workshops - is linked to what he calls a political economy of punishment.

Thus [Foucault's] history of the birth of modern prisons and the extension of the 'carceral' system to other institutions suggests that the spread of this system throughout the social fabric is

accompanied by a corresponding moulding of people into 'normal' as opposed to 'abnormal', 'delinquent', or 'deviant' individuals. He calls this process 'normalization' and means by it the imposition of a model of well ordered human activity on all aspects of social life. (Couzens Hoy, D., 1986: 12)

Further more, he located the development of these disciplinary techniques in relation to the human body in the context of capitalism. From the prison, to the military institution, through the school and the workshop, there is a constant preoccupation with disciplining the human body. For Foucault the aim of the prison system and other disciplinary techniques is to create 'docile bodies' useful to an emerging capitalist system (Rabinow, P., 1984: 18).

It must be noted that Foucault was not interested in the growth of the capitalist system *per se*. In his consideration of an 'economy of punishment' in the context of capitalism, prison is one way among many others of disciplining. Discipline holds the key for the transformations in the ways that knowledge, health, justice, and education are produced. Foucault said:

'Discipline' may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of applications, targets... And it may be taken over either by 'specialized institutions' (penitentiary) or by institutions that use it as an essential instrument for a particular end (schools, hospitals). (Foucault, M., 1991a: 215)

In the opinion of many analysts of Foucault's work, *Discipline and Punish* marked the transition in Foucault's interests from the structure of discourses toward questions related to power and knowledge in the definition of subjects. As stated by Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983), after May 1968, Foucault's interests began to shift away from discourse, and he was more interested in the issue of power.

Foucault's approach to power appeared explicitly in an essay published in 1971, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy and History'. In it Foucault proposed

'genealogy' as a way of analysing power. He borrowed from Nietzsche the notion of 'genealogy' as a starting point for "developing a method that would allow him to thematise the relationship between truth, theory and values and the social institutions and practices in which they emerge" (Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., 1983: xxv). By proposing 'genealogy' Foucault adds new questions to his consideration of the discursive structures that make disciplines possible:

What are the modes of existence of this discourse?
Where does it come from; how it is circulated; who controls it?
What placements are determined for possible subjects?
Who can fulfil these diverse functions of the subject?
(Foucault, M. 1977: 138)

In summary, Foucault proposed genealogy as a way of analysing power relationships. While in doing so, he did not reject archaeology, he suggests complementing it by questioning the emergence of those discourses. In fact, he proposes that archaeology can provide the material for the genealogy. In Foucault's words:

Genealogy is grey, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times. (Foucault, M., 1977: 139)

Genealogy aims to reveal the hidden origin of discourses, the material context in which they emerge, and the ways in which they may favour particular interests. As Kendall and Wickham (1999) phrased it:

[Genealogy is like] a methodological device with the same effect as a precocious child at a dinner party: genealogy makes the older guests at the table of intellectual analysis feel decidedly uncomfortable by pointing out things about their origins and functions that they would rather remain hidden. (p. 29)

Nevertheless, Foucault warns us about the temptation of attempting to 'interpret' those collected facts, in the sense of seeking a 'deeper' truth.

On the contrary: genealogy avoids the search for depth. Instead, "it seeks the surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and subtle contours":

Whereas the interpreter is obliged to go to the depth of things, like an excavator, the moment of interpretation [genealogy] is like an overview from higher and higher up, which allows the depth to be laid out in front of him in a more and more profound visibility; depth is re-situated as an absolutely superficial secret. (Foucault, M., 1967: 187)

Foucault's genealogy focuses on the duality power/knowledge as the driving force in the conformation of discourses, normalisation of practices and definition of subjects. However, genealogy and archaeology complement each other. In his approach, Foucault selects history to do the 'archaeology' as a technique for identifying discourses and complementarily developed the 'genealogical' dimension focused on the role of power relations (Valero-Silva, N., 2004: 3)

As has been presented, Foucault pointed out the importance of genealogy in his works *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality*. There, Foucault stressed the importance of genealogy, introducing the dimensions of power and knowledge, and pointing out the 'body' as being the place where those relationships take place. For example, in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault's comparison between the public execution and the carceral regime regards the body as the target where the disciplinary actions and/or the punishment are carried out. He pointed out the disappearance of the body from the public execution towards a more sophisticated way of punishment, in the carceral regime. For him, it is not a matter of a more humane form of punishment, nor is it a less cruel way of addressing crime. Instead, Foucault related this change with what he called 'political technologies of power'. Thus, in this book Foucault sought to:

[Try] to study the metamorphosis of punitive methods on the basis of a political technology of the body in which might be read a common history of power relations and object relations. (Foucault, M. 1991a: 24)

The aspect of the body is crucial in the understanding of the genealogy. As stated by Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983), one of Foucault's major achievements has been his ability to isolate and conceptualise the way in which the body has become an essential component of the operation of power relations in modern society. From this starting point, Foucault would develop the idea of political technology of the body – as the crossing of power relations, knowledge and the body - in relation to the State. In Section 7.3.3. (below) Foucault's notion of governmentality in relation to what he called 'bio-power' will be presented. Now, though, it is important to emphasise that the genealogy points out the body as a target and a place towards which disciplinary techniques are directed.

In this summary, the main aspects from Foucault's work to be used in this research are clarified. As will be addressed in the following section, the information collected by the Root Definitions can be considered as 'archaeological material'. It is thus possible to include a genealogical analysis of those discourses in order to respond to the questions emerging from this research. Nevertheless, because there is in this investigation no single institution or particular discipline that encapsulates the discussion on cannabis, it is necessary to include an additional aspect in Foucault's work.

After the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, and more specifically in his last works, Foucault attempted to go beyond the space of identifiable institutions and towards less visible aspects of human experience in the processes of normalisation. These heterogeneous sets of practices and discourses able to offer an account of the processes of normalisation are called by Foucault as "the *dispositif*". The next section introduces the notion of the '*dispositif*' in order to complete the notions to be used in this research.

7.2.4. The notion of '*dispositif*'

In the previous sub-sections the techniques of archaeology and genealogy have been presented. The archaeology of discursive formations analysed there are related mainly to institutions such as the 'prison' or the 'hospital'. However, Foucault made no attempt to construct a history of institutions *per se*. His interest was in the processes of normalisation, eventually crystallised within the space of certain institutions. For example, he was interested in studying insanity (as a human experience) by focusing in the hospital (an institution) where different discourses about mental illnesses were possible. In other words, he was concerned with the ways in which institutions come to crystallise many of the emerging discourses regarding a human experience or practice. The range of human experiences may transcend the space of a single institution or of a particular discipline, and here is when Foucault provided the notion of '*dispositif*'.

This *dispositif* is, of course, a grid of analysis constructed by the historian. But it is also the practices themselves, acting as an apparatus, a tool, constituting subjects and organizing them. Foucault is seeking to isolate and establish precisely the kind of intelligibility that practices have. (Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., 1983: 121)

Foucault proposed that a way of understanding those processes of normalisation cannot be limited to the space of institutions, or just by the analysis of discourse (text). He acknowledged that there are practices (institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophic propositions, morality, and philanthropy) in addition to discourse which may be used in carrying out a genealogical analysis of some particular situation. (Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., 1983: 120)

For instance, when analysing practices around sexuality, Foucault did not focus on a single institution. He approached no one discipline, regulation or scientific statement. In studying sexuality he proposed to define the '*dispositif* of sexuality' as follows:

What I am trying to pick up with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said and the unsaid. (Foucault, M., 1980b: 194)

Foucault thus approached history in order to understand what is said about sexuality. This is not limited to one institution, one discipline, one text; it also includes the way in which the person describes him/herself in relation to sex. In other words, in the *dispositif* Foucault included the 'subject' in relation to the "way a human being turns him or herself into a subject." (Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., 1983: 208). It must be pointed out that in previous works, Foucault had addressed the dividing practices as techniques of domination in which a group of people, e.g., vagabonds or those defined as marginal, were put into a 'category', or a 'cell', a delimited space. In this dividing practice the 'subject' is passive; others have put him/her in this category without his/her participation. Foucault was also interested in the type of processes in which the 'subject' is active in his/her self-formation. In his later works, Foucault analysed those techniques by which the person talks about him/herself; in other words, when he/she initiates an active self-formation:

This self-formation has a long and complicated genealogy; it takes place through a variety of "operations on [people's] own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct". These operations characteristically entail a process of self-understanding but one which is mediated by an external authority figure, be he confessor or psychoanalyst. (Rabinow, P., 1984: 11)

In his *History of Sexuality* (1980a), Foucault analysed the way in which sex and discourses about sex proliferated during the nineteenth century. In this period, sex became a key to 'self-understanding'. The process of 'subjectification' constitutes a third mode of objectification, alongside dividing practices and scientific discourses.²²³

²²³ The first two modes are described by Rabinow (1984) as dividing practices and scientific discourses. See section 7.2.1. It concerns the 'way a human being turns him –or herself into a subject'. In his latest work *History of Sexuality*, Foucault approached this topic by focusing on 'sex' and 'sexuality'. This time, apart from the scientific discourses about 'sex', Foucault introduced the role of the subject in his/her self understanding through sexuality.

In summary: by using the notion of the *dispositif*, Foucault analysed institutions and bodies of knowledge that play a role in processes of normalisation. Furthermore, he identified dividing practices, scientific discourses and ways of self-understanding as the realms for enquiring about the processes by which human beings are made subjects. Indeed, by focusing in a case of human experience and by determining a historical period, Foucault proved that it is possible to establish a realm for the question about normalisation. In consequence, it may be assumed that the researcher must try:

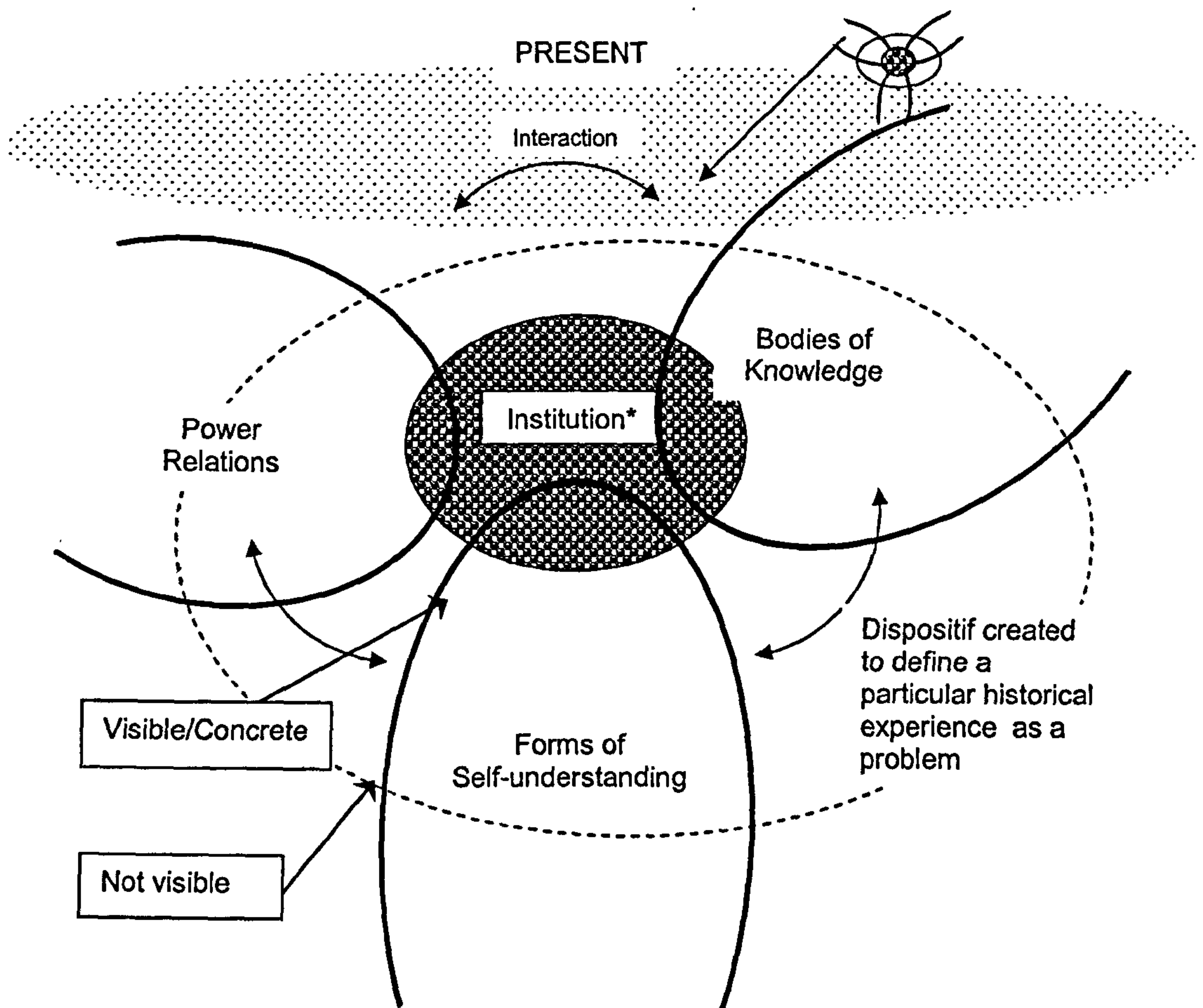
...[T]o decipher this *dispositif* as it exists in a particular historical moment: that is, how the practices that organise and govern human actions in relation to a particular human experience (e.g. madness) are structured. For example, Foucault's study of madness is not intended merely to identify a set of institutional practices and a scientific discourse, but rather to explore how this human experience is organised in a particular historical moment, and how the characterisation of this human experience changes over time. (Valero-Silva, N., 1998: 99)

In this sense, any attempt to use Foucault's approach must consider not only the discursive formations about a human experience, limited by a discipline or institution, but it must go towards the definition of the problem itself. The *dispositif* must include not only what is said by experts, doctors, or other bodies of knowledge, but also what other actors can reveal about the definition of a problem. For example, the discourses identified in the case of cannabis re-classification belong to different disciplines and are provided by different actors. The collection of those discourses have not just approached '*what is said*' in the public media, but also '*what is not said*', in terms of actors who remain invisible or are marginalised from the public debate.

Valero-Silva (Valero-Silva, N., 1998) provides a graphic method of understanding the '*dispositif*'. In the figure, it is possible to see that the *dispositif* considers interaction of different elements within three dimensions: power relationships, bodies of knowledge, and forms of self-

understanding. The figure contemplates 'institution' as the space in which these aspects take place, but Valero-Silva clarifies that the institution 'constitutes part of the answer given to a particular problematisation'.

Figure 9: THE *DISPOSITIF*



* Constitutes part of the answer given to a particular problematisation. Multiple problematisations are simultaneously created and modified at any particular historical moment.

(Valero-Silva, N. 1999: 39)

In summarising, the last sub-sections have covered some of the main concepts and methodological devices to be used in this research. Foucault's work is extensive and cannot be compressed here. However, some considerations must be added to this brief description of Foucault's ideas. The next subsection concerns some of the criticisms made to Foucault *oeuvre*.

7.2.5. Criticisms of Foucault

As part of the revision of Foucault's work, it is important to mention some of the main criticisms made of it. As has been agreed by many researchers, Foucault's approach is not unproblematic (Sawicki, 1994; Brewis, 1996; Simons, 1995). His changing views over central topics; the relative brevity of his productive time, cut short by his sudden death in 1984; his challenge to the epistemological pillars of Western philosophy and, to a certain extent, his own private life and political attitude have provoked a number of criticisms from scholars and followers. As Sawicki points out, Foucault left a good many of the issues around 'identity and politics' undeveloped, thus 'much remains implicit and vague' (Sawicki, 1994: 296). Similarly, Knights and Vurdubakis (1994: 170-171) comment on the 'non-static character of [Foucault's] work, with its many unresolved questions, gaps, ambivalences and contradictions'. Many of these unresolved questions constitute part of the difficulties inherent in understanding his work.²²⁴

Foucault's work cannot easily be classified within a single particular discipline. His extensive *oeuvre* addressed different fields and areas, such as history, psychology, philosophy, and sociology. Indeed, the name 'History of Systems of Thought' was given by Foucault to his Chair at the College de France in 1970. Contradictions, changes and re-evaluations throughout his work can, however, be interpreted as a natural progression within his own way of thinking. As argued by Simons: 'For Foucault writing is a technique for transforming himself. What interested him was not the academic status of work, but the changes his knowledge wrought in himself and in others' (Simons, 1995: 7). Certainly his way of thinking and thus acting politically, sexually or aesthetically may be understood in relation to his own development as a person. Although 'an answer', 'a formula', or 'a solution' could justifiably be expected, Foucault refuses to

give answers, to be a model, or even to be considered as an 'author' (Foucault, 1977a). Instead, he proposed to consider his work as a 'tool-kit' (Foucault, 1980c: 145).

In contrast, Foucault's legacy has been described as nihilistic, anarchic, or fruitless, as criticised by important thinkers such as Horkheimer and Habermas (Valero-Silva, 1998: 42). This is because Foucault refused to provide answers, while denying the existence of a Utopian situation, or a better future society towards which to strive. Questions such as 'why fight' or 'fight what for' remain unresolved by Foucault (Comay 1986; Habermas 1987).

Brewis (1996: 336) summarises the main criticisms levelled at Foucault's approach as follows:

- (i) It has been suggested (by, for example, Fraser, 1989; Hartsock, 1990; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993) that Foucault's analysis does not touch on the structures of power existing in society - and that his calls to micro-level struggles will therefore leave these structures untouched;
- (ii) Other critics (for example, Comay 1986; Taylor 1986; Walzer 1986; Habermas 1987; Fraser 1989; Purvis and Hunt 1993) claim that while Foucault is scathingly critical of modernity, he fails to offer a picture of a better society, of something for which to strive. Consequently, Foucault is accused by these commentators of being politically quietist;
- (iii) Foucault's vision of the questioning of self, of beginning to choose one's relationship with self, is seen to be highly individualistic, not to say narcissistic. Critics (for example, Wolin 1986; McNay 1992; Grimshaw 1993; Soper 1993) suggest that this kind of project implies a withdrawal into self such that others become almost entirely irrelevant.

²²⁴ Referred in Brewis, J. (1996) *Sex, Work and Sex at Work: A Foucauldian Analysis*, unpublished PhD thesis, UMIST, UK

To answer these criticisms is not, however, the purpose of this section; it is sufficient to present them, as a complementary view into the revision of his work. Nevertheless, for the researcher, the purpose of applying Foucault's ideas in understanding cannabis policy in the United Kingdom is inspired not by the possibility of finding a solution, nor to provide a more direct approach to the policy making process. Indeed, this pessimistic view on certain situations suits the researcher's own approach. The aim of academics and scholars is not necessarily to provide answers, but reiteratively to question the present and to identify fissures and gaps in 'taken for granted' notions or ideas. The topic of drugs is one of those issues in which the quest for a 'truth', a 'solution' or an 'improvement' has led to questionable interventions, programmes or legislations. Nevertheless, as Brewis (1996: 381-382) has argued, for Foucault to refuse to offer a Utopian vision of what the society could be does not entail his suggesting that there is no point in our questioning and experimenting with the ways in which we relate to self. Foucault makes this abundantly clear when he offers this somewhat acerbic response to accusations of quietism:

To say that one can never be 'outside' power does not mean that one is trapped and condemned to defeat no matter what. (Foucault, 1980c: 141-142)

On the other hand, what is important for this investigation is to utilise those 'tools' provided in Foucault's 'kit' that can enhance the understanding of the case study. The next section summarises the main ideas to be addressed and developed in this research.

7.2.6. Considerations for this research

Throughout this section some aspects from Foucault's work have been identified in order to further this research. The main goal in using Foucault's ideas is to answer the emerging questions in relation to the

process of policy making on cannabis, with specific reference to the case of its re-classification.

It is possible to summarise these aspects as follows:

It is understood that Foucault approached history in order to question the present. History is not only the sequence of facts, but the material from which processes of the normalisation of human practices are made possible. His method of 'interpretive analytics' is based on the combination of two techniques: firstly, the archaeology of discursive formations that shape and define a particular problem in history, and secondly, Foucault proposed the genealogy, which questions the origin of these discourses in terms of dynamics of power and knowledge. In addition, Foucault added the role of the subject, in terms of self-understanding in relation to the problem situation: in other words, that people can also define and recognise themselves in those discourses.

Foucault was interested in the process of the problematisation of particular aspects of human experience, through the interaction of different elements within three dimensions: discourses, identities, and individual/group relationships. Among the multiple responses designed to address these problematisations can be found the production and modification of discourses, identities, and power relationships. In addition, they also include the production and modification of certain institutions (Acevedo, B. and Valero-Silva, N., 2005).

However, the spaces in which these methodological devices can be applied transcend the limits of institutions. Foucault introduced the notion of '*dispositif*' in order to broaden the scope of his analysis to areas of human experience and practice. By deciphering the *dispositif*, it will be possible to see how bodies of knowledge, power dynamics, and the subject interact in 'normalising' human experiences and practices.

In relation to this research, the process of normalisation is related to the 're-classification of cannabis'. The process involves many disciplines, diverse institutions, and multiple opinions. The 're-classification' must be understood as one 'answer' among many in the process of the regulation of cannabis. Following Foucault's ideas, the '*dispositif*' is the amalgamation of those different discourses, practices, laws, regulations, and popular expression emerging during the debate and discussion on cannabis re-classification. The analysis is thus not about one institution only; it is regarding the 'event' of re-classification. From this summary, it is possible to clarify how Foucault's ideas can be applied in this research. The purpose is to enquire into different discursive formations about the normalisation of cannabis by means of its re-classification. In particular, the current phase of the investigation aims to answer the questions emerging from applying Foucault's theories.

In the field of contemporary drugs research, Foucault's work has been regarded as a potential framework within which to understand the origins of prohibition, and his ideas have been used to challenge pivotal notions such as addiction. The next section summarises briefly some of the attempts made by researchers with regard to including Foucault's ideas in the understanding of drugs issues.

7.3. Foucault and contemporary drugs research

This section focuses on the potential contributions of Foucault's work in relation to contemporary questions on drugs research. It will be demonstrated that Foucault's ideas can enhance the practice and research on drugs policy issues, particularly in the understanding of the processes of the normalisation of drugs use and specifically in the case of cannabis.

From the description provided in Chapter Two regarding the development of drugs policy and from Chapter Three in dealing with what has been accomplished in drugs policy research, it can be seen how a large proportion of Foucault's ideas are relevant in understanding the process of the normalisation of drugs use. In those chapters it was documented how drugs use was defined during the end of nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth. From there, how drugs use was firstly defined as a disease to be treated by the medical profession has been shown. With the international conventions and the illegality of a certain group of substances, drugs use has been defined as a criminal offence punishable with a prison sentence. Finally, drugs use has been identified as a possible cause of insanity.

From this brief reference, it is likely to appreciate how Foucault's analysis of the medical discourse in the definition of disease, the definition of madness in the classic era, and the origin of the prison as a disciplinary technique touches those forms of 'problematization' of drugs use. As a consequence of the definitions (mentioned above) of drugs use, problems related to it have been normally addressed by the Hospital, the Prison, or the Asylum.

However, the definition of problems associated with drugs use is still a matter for debate. As presented in Chapter Three, recent developments in drugs research have questioned the very origin of the 'disease model of addiction' (Cohen, P., 1990; Davies, J.B., 1997; Levine, H.G., 1978; Reinerman, C., 2005). Others have focused on the process through which drugs use has become a criminal matter (Bean, P., 2002; Dorn, N., 2004; Inciardi, J., 1981; Simpson, M., 2003). Finally, work has been done in understanding how those definitions about drugs use determine the role and characteristics of the 'drugs user' (Acker, C.J., 2001; Becker, H.S., 1953; 1963).

In this section, selected questions posed by contemporary drugs researchers in relation to the development of drugs policy are briefly

summarised. In particular, the interest of this research is related to the discussions about the concept of 'drug addiction' and the definition of the 'drug addict'. It will be demonstrated that Foucault's theories can contribute to enhancing the understanding of drugs policy research; therefore, his work represents a valuable insight into the questions both for contemporary drugs research and especially for the present research into cannabis re-classification.

7.3.1. Normalising inebriation: the discovery of addiction

One of the pioneer authors to have used Foucault's ideas is Harry Levine (1978) in his work *The Discovery of Addiction*. By using Foucault's approach to the process of the normalisation of human experience and practices, he argues that our current frames of understanding both of alcoholism and of drug addiction are related by the process of judging inebriation. He points out that the preoccupation with inebriation and drunkenness emerged in American popular and medical thought at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. In this context a new definition of addiction (as alcohol habituation) was associated to the medical concept of disease.

Further:

Around that time a new paradigm was created; or in Foucault's terms, the 'gaze' of the observer shifted then to a new configuration – a new *Gestalt*. This new paradigm or model defined addiction as a central problem in drugs use and diagnosed it as a disease, or disease like. (Levine, H.G., 1978: 493)

Levine argues that the idea of drugs as inherently addictive was initially determined for alcohol and then extended to other substances. Following Foucault's approach, Levine analyses different discourses about alcoholism as a physical disease. He demonstrates that the interest in inebriation shifted from defining it as a[n] [im]moral practice, at one end of

the spectrum, towards a disease model, supported by the medical profession. Following this line of argument other researchers have formulated questions about the historical conditions and the interests behind the notion of addiction. Among others, the works of the following researchers are considered here. Firstly, American drugs researcher Craig Reinerman (2005) synthesised many of those questions on the elusiveness of the concept of addiction. He centres his analysis on three questions: the historical and cultural conditions under which addiction-as-disease was constructed; the specific actors and institutions who promulgated it, and the discursive procedures through which it is reproduced and internalised by those said to be afflicted.²²⁵ He argues that:

The ubiquity of the disease concept of addiction obscures the fact that it did not emerge from the accretion of scientific discoveries. Addiction-as-disease has been continuously redefined, mostly in the direction of conceptual elasticity, such that it now yields an embarrassment of riches: a growing range of allegedly addictive phenomena which do not involve drugs. (Reinerman, C., 2005: 307)

Along a similar line of argument, Dutch researcher Peter Cohen has proposed analysing the 'problem of drugs' as 'social constructions'. In his dissertation, Cohen defines drugs as social constructions thus:

...[R]ealities created by a myriad of relationships between persons who used concepts to understand a reality that would adapt them for their survival within these relationships. And since the inequality of power is one of the structural characteristics of interpersonal (or for that matter, inter-organisational) relationships, much of the so-called scientific analysis of drugs use is instrumental to the survival of the most powerful. Power, of course, is not only connected to wealth or decision making, but also to the construction of morality and ideology. (Cohen, P., 1990: 1)

In the context of the United Kingdom, a number of researchers have analysed the relationships between morality and the medical concept of addiction as a disease. For example, Berridge (1989a) identifies how

²²⁵ This idea is further developed by Davies, J. B. (1997). *The Myth of Addiction*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

inebriation became a medical concern in nineteenth-century England, and how doctors defined it as a disease.²²⁶ In addition, Stimson and Oppenheimer (1982) mention the convergences between medical and moral ideas in relation to the nature of addiction in the cases of opium and heroin. They argue that medical interest in addiction was supported by a moral approach to inebriation, given the influence of Temperance Movements during the nineteenth century in England:

What emerged from the debate about the growing problem of 'morphinomania' was a construction of habitual drugs use as a disease. This new view was influenced by both the developing medical ideas about organic disease and by the Temperance movement. 'Morphinism' was linked to addiction to alcohol and to mental illness through the concept of 'inebriety'. (1982: 22)

Other authors have approached the history of opiate addiction using Foucault's ideas. For example, Harding (1998) analyses the historical conditions under which opiate addiction was constituted as a social construction. He argues that in addition to those of the medical profession, the problem of opium was supported by the ideas of an anti-opium movement in the nineteenth-century Britain. He analyses different discourses of these anti-opium groups and other expressions by doctors, writers and health professionals.

Similarly, the work of Lart (1998) introduces the dimension of power/knowledge in the analysis of the role of the medical profession in the definition of the drugs problem. She argues that the history of drugs policies and regulations in the United Kingdom cannot be seen as a simple dichotomy between treatment and control. Instead, by using a Foucauldian approach to power, these aspects [treatment and control] are inseparable.

To summarise: the way in which Foucault's ideas can enlighten contemporary questions in drugs research has been observed. For example, the questions about the origin of the concept of addiction and the proscription of drugs-related practices can be related to Foucault's

²²⁶ Cited in Chapter 2: Drugs policy in the United Kingdom.

concerns about processes of the normalisation of human practices and experiences. Following Foucault's ideas, these questions must include the 'subject' who experiences drugs use, and drugs-related problems. The following sub-section will present how Foucault's quest for the subject can add valuable insights to this research.

7.3.2. Defining the drugs user

As was demonstrated in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis, it is possible to see how different 'constructions' of the drugs user have been developed in Western societies²²⁷. For example, opium use in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries formed part of wider practices of medication. Eventually, both the excessive use and the habituation to opium use were seen as a sort of indulgence, but soon it was labelled as a 'bad habit' in relation to the Victorian values of the nineteenth century.

With the increasing interest of the medical profession in this matter, drugs use and drug addiction became related, and the drugs user was defined as a 'sick' person in need of treatment. In other words, what was defined as 'badness' became 'sickness', thanks to the intervention of the medical profession (Conrad, P. and Schneider, J., 1980). Foucault addressed the development of medical knowledge regarding the notion of 'disease'. As presented in *The Birth of the Clinic*, he analysed how the various forms of medical knowledge pertained to the positive notions of 'health' and 'normality':

Generally speaking, it might be said that up to the end of the eighteenth century, medicine related much more to health than to normality... Nineteenth-century medicine, on the other hand, was regulated more in accordance with normality than with health. (Foucault, M., 2003a: 40)

Foucault furthered his theories on 'normality' and 'abnormality' in his lectures in the College of France, 1974-1975. He argued that these ideas were mainly developed during the nineteenth century. When extrapolating his analysis to the emergence of the concept of addiction, it is possible to observe how drugs use as a problematic practice is fully developed during the same period: the nineteenth century. Drugs use became an 'abnormal' practice, and in this way, the drugs user turned into a drug addict.²²⁸ As presented above, the definition of addiction and the drug addict have oscillated between his/her 'badness' or his/her 'sickness'. Following Foucault's line of argument, it is possible to acknowledge that his approach to the concepts of 'normality' and 'abnormality' can enhance the understanding of our current perception of drug addiction and drug addicts. As stated in his lectures at the College of France (1974-1975):

The large, ill-defined, and confused family of 'abnormal individuals,' the fear of which haunts the end of the nineteenth century, does not merely mark a phase of uncertainty or somewhat unfortunate episode in the history of psychopathology. It was formed in correlation with a set of institutions of control and a series of mechanism of surveillance and distribution, and when it is almost entirely taken over by the category of 'degeneration', it gives rise to laughable theoretical constructions that nonetheless have harshly real effects. (Foucault, M., 2003b)

In the process of the normalisation of drug use, the drug user too has experienced many classifications: he/she has been considered a 'sick' person, in terms of his/her addiction; in other contexts he/she has been considered a criminal. In general, both definitions can be related to the label of 'abnormality'. The process of labelling 'drug users' as deviants is analysed in the ground-breaking book by Howard Becker (1963). Becker analysed the process by which 'deviance' becomes an elastic term that can include many different behaviours considered as problematic, threatening, or undesirable for certain social groups. Becker (1953) also

²²⁷ In particular, please refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3. 'Becoming a marihuana user'

²²⁸ This argumentation is proposed here as a way of encouraging connections between Foucault's work and the analysis of the emergence of drugs addiction and the construction of the drugs user. Further analysis can be done in future works by the researcher.

analysed the way in which the subject is created in the practice of using cannabis. He argues that 'becoming a marijuana user' involves a learning process determined within and by certain sub-cultures. In learning to be a 'marijuana user', Becker describes three steps in this process: (1) Learn to smoke marijuana properly in order to ingest a psychoactive dose of the drugs; (2) learn to perceive the effects of the high once the user has ingested a psychoactive dose, and (3) learn to define these effects as enjoyable.

Becker's argument has been updated by contemporary researchers²²⁹, who retained the initial notion of the learning process, and added further aspects of what Becker calls the 'drugs career'. However, the point here is to realise how the identity of the cannabis user is determined not only by the 'substance', but also by social, cultural, and institutional settings. Moreover, these elements play a role in the 'self-understanding' of the cannabis user.

Indeed, the way in which the cannabis user is defined includes not only the micro-level of cannabis use (i.e., the process of becoming a marijuana user); there is also the way in which the cannabis user is defined by institutions, policy, and agencies. The next section will present ideas from Foucault's approach to 'governmentality' and possible connections in understanding the process of drugs policy making, in the case of cannabis re-classification.

²²⁹ See Hallstone, M. (2002). "Updating Howard Becker's theory of using marijuana for pleasure." *Contemporary Drugs Problems* (29) (Winter): 821-844. Also, Hirsch, M., Conforti, R. and Graney, C. (1990). "The Use of Marijuana for Pleasure: A Replication of Howard S. Beckers's Study of Marijuana Use." *Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality* (5) (4): 497-510.

7.3.3. Drugs policy and 'governmentality'

As stated in this chapter, Foucault was interested in analysing the modes by which our culture has produced 'subjects'. He explained how dividing practices, supported by scientific discourses, can be analysed in the context of institutions. Those institutions may form part of the State, such as the Prison or the Hospital. In Foucault's analysis the State is also a means of exercising power. His theories are now to be examined.

From the analysis of the evolution of the 'state', Foucault proposed investigating the evolution of the notion of 'government'. He argued that whereas the Renaissance defined the State in relation to the territory and the ways in which a prince could best guard his power, a new shift appeared in its consideration. Around the seventeenth century, many treatises about the State pointed out that its role must include the government of individuals, goods and wealth:

[T]he art of government... is concerned with answering the question of how to introduce economy – that is to say, the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family... how to introduce this meticulous attention of the father towards his family, into the management of the state. (Foucault, M., 1991b: 92)

Foucault furthered his analysis of the state by pointing out the increasing concern of the government regarding the population and their administration. For example, Foucault noted the origin of statistics as 'the science of the State' and its importance in the administration of public affairs. In this way, the population became the ultimate aim of government (*Ibid.*, 99). Progressing from this, society happened to be a political target, to be regulated, organised or administered.

It must be noted that Foucault's scope was neither the State *per se* nor its institutions; instead, he questioned some of the political purposes of those institutions. Apart from the 'disciplinary techniques' as modes of regulating human bodies, Foucault introduced the notion of 'bio-power', as a means of understanding how the State can regulate the 'human body'. Rabinow explains:

As the fostering of life and the growth and care of population becomes a central concern of the state, articulated in the art of government, a new regime of power takes hold. Foucault calls this regime 'bio-power'.... Bio-power coalesces around two distinct poles at the beginning of the classical age. One pole is the human species... The other pole of bio-power is the human body: the body approached not directly in its biological dimension, but as an object to be manipulated and controlled. (Rabinow, P., 1984: 17)

A possible example of how to apply these concepts in contemporary drugs policy research is found in the work of American anthropologist Philip Bourgeois (2000; 2002). He analyses the role of American government in the provision of treatment for heroin users as a constituent of bio-power:

The phenomenon of the methadone clinic is an unhappy compromise between competing discourses: A criminalizing morality *versus* a medicalizing model of addiction-as-a-brain-disease. Treatment in this context becomes a hostile exercise in disciplining the unruly misuses of pleasure and in controlling economically unproductive bodies. (Bourgeois, P., 2000: 165)

In summary, it can be seen how drugs policy can be understood as a political strategy of disciplining, correcting or punishing a practice perceived as undesirable. Drugs use became a problem through complex mechanisms of power and knowledge, in which different institutions and multiple disciplines played a role. In the ambiguity of the consideration of drugs use (e.g., disease and crime), the State seems to find its way of justifying the regulation of practices that concern the individual human body. Many more examples can be included regarding possible connections between contemporary drugs research and some of the

questions posed by Foucault.²³⁰ However, the aim here was to present briefly some of these ideas in order to emphasise the relevance of Foucault's work in the understanding of drugs policy issues.

As a final remark it must be emphasised that many of contemporary drugs researchers fail to mention the contributions made by Foucault; they have failed to try to apply his methods. In this sense, the current research represents a way of using Foucault's ideas pro-actively. The next section provides some clues in this purpose.

7.4. A Post-Structuralist approach to cannabis re-classification

7.4.1. Root Definitions and archaeology

Foucault, as has been shown, provided no fixed formula for identifying discourses. Although he approached history in order to reveal how particular discursive structures replace others, he made no attempt to verify the validity or the truth of those discourses. In fact, Foucault suggested taking discourses or 'statements' at their face value without trying to interpret them. He further recommends that the archaeologist does not take 'serious speech acts' seriously; in other words, that the archaeologist should not try to interpret them in the sense of seeking a hidden meaning.

²³⁰ Some contemporary researchers have addressed the recreational use of drugs by using Foucault's ideas, in particular, related to the notion of 'self'. These ideas are developed in *History of Sexuality*, work that we are not referring to specifically in this dissertation. Nevertheless, the importance of this mention is to point out the many resonances that Foucault can have in the understanding of drugs practices in contemporary Western societies. See Duff, C. (2004). "Drugs use as a 'practice of the self': is there any place for an 'ethics of moderation' in contemporary drugs policy?" *International Journal of Drugs Policy* (15) (5-6): 385-393.

In the case of cannabis re-classification, the Root Definitions have served as a methodological device through which to organise a number of discourses about this topic. The Root Definitions, grouped in different categories, do not attempt to prove the veracity of each of the arguments or discourses presented. Soft Systems Methodology is based on the assumption that there are many approaches to any problem-situation, based on different world views of the situation itself. As a consequence, it can be claimed that the methodology does not try to prove whether the world views are true or false; it attempts to elicit them by providing a 'rich picture' and identifying relevant systems. Indeed, the researcher can take as many 'relevant systems' and 'Root Definitions' as she pleases, as long as they can be represented in terms of the methodology.²³¹ In this exercise, the researcher is not concerned with the 'truth' of these statements, nor with the 'authority' of the speaker. Instead, the inclusion of a wide range of opinions from diverse sources has been accomplished. Moreover, the researcher has considered those discourses expressed in the mainstream media, as well as embracing a variety of opinions from actors that for one reason or another have not been published in the newspapers.

Foucault recommended taking discourses at their surface level - in other words, to consider them in their totality: the discourses express a view of a problem situation that in a wider approach may constitute the way in which a practice or experience is defined. In a similar fashion, during the collection of discourses on cannabis, many different world views of cannabis and its re-classification have been found. In this particular approach, the classifying of the discourses has followed the logic provided by the Root Definitions in terms of the world view of cannabis. A means of organising those world views created by the intersection of the duality in the definition of cannabis both as a poison and as a remedy, acting in two

²³¹ Some critiques of Soft Systems Methodology were presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation. In this section the purpose is to highlight the coincidences between some parts of the methodology and the archaeological technique in Foucault's approach.

realms of the human person, both the soul and the body, has been proposed.

This decision is entirely the responsibility of the researcher as one of many possible different ways of grouping discourses about drugs.²³²

The purpose of providing such a classification is not to prove or refute the consideration of cannabis as a poison or as a remedy, acting in the realm of the body or the soul; the purpose is, rather, to show how different discourses can be represented in this intersection of polarities. As has been stated, this is one way among many in which to represent different discourses on cannabis and its re-classification. The wide variety of discourses may illustrate the dynamics of power and knowledge that will eventually define the problem itself, those people affected by the problem, and the means of normalising or regulating it.

Given the claims about Foucault's 'archaeology' and considering the results of applying Soft Systems Methodology, it is possible to demonstrate that the discourses identified by the Root Definitions represent a body of archaeological material, for the following reasons:

1. They are a collection of statements that can illustrate discursive formations in the definition of the problem situation in relation to cannabis use and its regulation.
2. They are collected in an arbitrary form, without compromising one particular view of the problem yet aiming to include as many world views as possible.

²³² In a similar exploration of 'archaeology of drugs discourses', Giulianotti (1997), proposes a way of organizing discourses in Scottish and British media. He suggests four categories which are created by the intersection of two binaries –the societal/sub cultural couplet and the public/private couplet. Those categories are: descriptive, prescriptive, adscriptive and post-scriptive. The adoption of this classification depends entirely on the researcher. Giulianotti, R. (1997). "Drugs and the media in the era of post modernity: an archaeological analysis." *Media, Culture and Society* (19) (3): 413-439.

3. They are gathered during a particular period of time. However, they are not presented as a sequence; they represent the 'crystallisation' of many of the discourses and practices that would otherwise remain invisible in the public arena.
4. They show how different institutions, bodies of knowledge, and people define the 'problem of cannabis'. The discourses express different interests, rationalities and world views that eventually can define the final outcome in terms of the normalisation of the practice of using cannabis.

Finally, these discourses do not *per se* provide much information on the wider quest of this research. In Foucault's terms they represent merely the 'archaeology' of discursive formations on cannabis re-classification. Following Foucault's process, the 'archaeology' must be complemented by the genealogy.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the weaknesses of Soft Systems Methodology are related most closely to the necessity of including aspects related to power in political decisions. The research questions about the emergence of discourses on cannabis, or the prevalence of some discourses against others, can be tackled through applying the genealogical analysis, as has been described. The next sub-section describes how the genealogical analysis can be applied to the understanding of these questions regarding cannabis re-classification.

7.4.2. Key aspects in a genealogy of cannabis re-classification

As was the case with the 'archaeology', Foucault provided no single formula for the 'genealogy'. Nevertheless, from previous sections it is possible to identify in Foucault's approach clues to understanding the

process of the normalisation of human practices. The process of normalisation can include the implementation of disciplinary techniques, the creation of institutions or the formulation of policies. For the specific purposes of this research, the scope is provided by the debate on cannabis re-classification, organised and classified following the Root Definitions.

Foucault, as is known, was interested in determining how certain practices evolve over a particular period of time, in relation to the ways in which those practices are defined, regulated and normalised. For example, in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault presented two moments in the practice of punishment: the public execution, and the regime of imprisonment. Foucault analysed the changes between these two moments in terms of the punitive strategies as well as through considering punishment as a complex social function.

In a similar fashion, it is possible to take two moments in the process of re-classification: the proposal to re-classify it in 2002, then the final decision made in 2004. Between these events it is possible to appreciate the ways in which discourses change, and the actors behind those discourses. The comparison may provide some clues towards understanding why one type of discourse takes prevalence over others, and which actors have prevalence in the public debate on cannabis re-classification. A second clue can be found in Foucault's approach to discourses. Once again, he is less concerned with the veracity of those discourses or in whether they make sense than in questioning the effects of those discourses in normalising a practice, defining a subject, or creating new problems. The challenge for the current research is to 'excavate' the discourses in order to discover how a 'reality of cannabis problems' is created, i.e., how those discourses play a role in the definition of cannabis issues and cannabis users. In short, it is expected that within a genealogy of cannabis re-classification, identifying a number of topics to have taken prevalence in the public debate may be achieved. It will be possible, for example, to determine how the cannabis problem is defined (as a crime, as a disease,

or as a mental illness); and the way in which the cannabis user is distinguished (as a criminal, as an addict, or as a psychotic).

A third clue is found in the way genealogy differs from archaeology. While the latter seeks closer detail, Foucault recommended for the genealogy distancing oneself ever higher in order to gain a complete picture of the situation. However, instead of focusing on the larger picture, the genealogist “seeks the surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and subtle contours”.

For the research, the recommendations can be implemented in three ways:

- First, cannabis re-classification must be considered as one aspect within a wider context of drugs policy making. Therefore, the discussions about cannabis are inseparable from the background of drugs policy as formalised in 1995 and ratified in 1998 by the British government.
- Second, the aspects of governmentality and bio-power suggested by Foucault must be included in the analysis. In relation to this point, it is important to consider similar ‘technologies’ of which the target is the human body.
- Finally, when considering the history of re-classification, special attention must be given to the ‘discontinuities’ and to the aspects remaining concealed from the mainstream discussion.

A fourth clue to consider is related to the ‘efficiency’ of cannabis re-classification. Following Foucault's thinking, this question is unrelated to the purposes expressed by the government in reducing drugs use problems or saving resources. Instead, the interest of this thesis is to discover what cannabis re-classification entails in terms of normalising human practices.

Finally, it must be noted that the clues mentioned to consider in the genealogy are related to possible ways of answering the questions emerging from this research. Foucault provided, as has been shown, a means of transcending the space of a single institution, or a discipline by including the analytical device of the '*dispositif*'. The aspects mentioned here as part of a possible genealogy of cannabis re-classification are elements to consider in this '*dispositif*'.

7.4.3. The '*dispositif*' of cannabis re-classification

Section 7.2.4. was devoted to an examination of the notion of '*dispositif*' in Foucault's work. A schematic method was also included towards improving the understanding of this notion, proposed by Valero-Silva (1999). A practical application of this *dispositif* is described below.

The *dispositif* encapsulates different discourses, practices, and institutions related to the 'problem-situation' to be researched. It is not limited to the realm of institutions; nor is marked by a single discipline; rather, the focus is on a problem-situation during a specific period. This is the visible part of the situation whereby many - yet not all - discourses are made public in the form of statements, interviews or reports. The period currently under study is marked by the discussion on cannabis re-classification: 2002-2004.

Firstly, the *dispositif* assists in reaching an understanding of how the practices that organise human actions (e.g., discourses or regulations) are structured in relation to the actual experience (in this case, cannabis use). In terms of '*bodies of knowledge*', the structure can be found in many sources, such as government documents; scientific discourses; information in newspapers, or the statements provided by different actors.

In addition, other aspects, such as popular culture, also producing knowledge must be considered.

Secondly, in those discourses, statements or regulations there is a definition of the cannabis problem and the subject who experiences it. The cannabis user can be defined in different ways; also, the subject adopts some of these definitions as *'forms of self-understanding'*.

Finally, the interaction of those elements is influenced by the exercise of power in terms of *'power relations'*. Foucault pointed out that power is not a static force, but is expressed in relations. For example, in the case of the prison, the emphasis is on the 'institution', yet not in the discourses of criminologists and other specialists. However, the actors and their interests determine the type of discourse that will prevail.

7.5. Synthesis and conclusions

This chapter began by reiterating the limitations and potentialities of Soft Systems Methodology in relation to the understanding of cannabis re-classification. It was highlighted that the use of the methodology, particularly in the identification of Root Definitions provides a valuable means of organising discourses on cannabis re-classification. It was subsequently revealed that the decision regarding cannabis re-classification involves issues related to power where political decisions are concerned and, as a consequence, it will be necessary to include this notion in order to further the analysis and respond to the emerging questions.

After recalling the main weaknesses of the Soft Systems Methodology in the analysis of cannabis re-classification, suggestions were offered as to how to overcome these limitations. In particular, crucial aspects of Foucault's work were presented. The use of some concepts in Foucault's

work related to power and knowledge was proposed, as was the process of creating 'subjects' in Western societies, in order to respond to the questions that cannot be solved solely by the application of the Soft Systems Methodology.

The second section presented some of the main concepts in Foucault's work. It was emphasised that he aimed to write 'a history of the present', although he uses history in a specific way. In a similar fashion, this research enquires into the events in relation to a recent history of cannabis, in order to understand further processes on the normalisation of cannabis use by means of drugs policy and cannabis policy making.

Foucault proposed a particular approach to history in which the aim is not to interpret sequential facts, nor to enquire about the veracity of those events. Instead, he approaches history through what Dreyfus and Rabinow called 'interpretive analytics'. In this method, two important aspects were described: the archaeology, and the genealogy. It has been stated that 'archaeology' can be understood as a method through which to approach history, in the sense of collecting discursive formations accounting for a particular situation. In addition, it was explained that those discursive formations must be analysed taking into account their 'genealogy', in the sense of revealing the dynamics of power and knowledge in the definition of problems. The techniques can be implemented not only in the realm of an institution; they can also be applied in a 'heterogeneous ensemble of discourses and institutions', as a '*dispositif*' for any analysis.

In the third part of the chapter, it was proposed that some of the questions in Foucault's work can be found in contemporary drugs research. The work of Foucault has undoubtedly influenced the social sciences, and drugs research can benefit from a further exploration of Foucault's ideas. The nature of the questions posed explicitly or implicitly by contemporary drugs researchers can be related to further questions about the process of the normalisation of drugs use. In particular, it is possible to understand

drugs policy in the context of governmentality and through applying the notion of bio-power. By describing Foucault's main ideas in relation to his interest in the processes of normalisation, it was demonstrated that a further approach to Foucault's work can provide valuable insight into contemporary drugs research, and specifically into the understanding of cannabis policy in the United Kingdom.

Finally, a practical means of applying Foucault's 'methods' was presented in the fourth part of this chapter. It was demonstrated that the Root Definitions provide an 'archaeology' of discourses on cannabis re-classification. Additional clues in furthering a 'genealogical' analysis were provided. In practical terms, the notion of *dispositif* provides a practical way of answering the questions emerging from this research in relation to the understanding of cannabis re-classification.

As a conclusion, it is proposed that at this point of the research, the results obtained from using Soft Systems Methodology must be recapitulated such that the analysis may continue through incorporating theories drawn from Foucault's approach. In addition, it has been demonstrated that a further analysis based on the work of Michel Foucault can contribute to enhancing our understanding of drugs policy making, with the case of cannabis re-classification its main focus. The subsequent chapter will put into practice all of the elements of the genealogy as described above.

CHAPTER 8 A GENEALOGY OF CANNABIS RE-CLASSIFICATION

The previous chapter demonstrated how the use of some parts of Soft Systems Methodology can support the archaeological dimension in Foucault's approach. In particular, it was confirmed that the information gathered by using the Root Definitions represents valuable material to be complemented with a genealogy of the discourses and practices related to cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom.

The general purpose of this chapter is to present a genealogical analysis of cannabis re-classification. It aims to illustrate in practice the combination of the outcomes of applying some parts of Soft Systems Methodology in terms of the archaeology, and the genealogical analysis of this material in the Post-Structuralist approach proposed by Foucault. In order to develop its purpose, the chapter is divided into the following sections: addressing key aspects for a genealogical analysis, presented in the last chapter, the first section highlights two moments in relation to the process of cannabis re-classification:

The first moment refers to the official announcement by the Home Secretary of the government's intention to review cannabis classification. The second moment refers to the official decision on re-classifying cannabis, in January 2004. As suggested, there are a number of gaps between, on the one hand, the original intention of re-classifying cannabis and, on the other, the actual effects of its downgrading. This section will provide a reminder of selected gaps.

The second section concerns the analysis of the changes between the first and the second moments of the re-classification. This section will analyse the material collected by the root definitions, by stressing *what is said* and *who said* any given argument in the debate.

From the identification of actors and discourses in the two moments under analysis, the third section focuses on what Foucault calls the discontinuities, the divergences, and contours. Here, the researcher focuses on three aspects: firstly, to emphasise the 'discontinuity' from the original proposal of reclassifying cannabis in relation to take out the power of arrest from police and the final decision; secondly, to point out 'the visibility and invisibility' of some discourses and actors represented in the two moments of this analysis and thirdly, to reveal some of the contours related to a wider discussion about drug policy and other social problems in the United Kingdom during the period of analysis.

These aspects having been identified, the fourth section in this chapter is concerned with deciphering the *dispositif* of cannabis re-classification. As presented in Chapter Seven, the *dispositif* is used as a methodological device towards reaching an understanding of the three dimensions in Foucault's interpretive analytics: the production of discourses by bodies of knowledge; the power relationships involved in the process of policy making, and the implications of the understanding of the subject. This section will attempt specifically to answer the questions emerging from this research by focusing on how the definition of the cannabis issue has changed, following the effects of the discussion of its re-classification.

The fifth and final section synthesises the ideas stimulated by the genealogical analysis. In particular, it will present the potentialities of this analysis in the understanding of drugs policy issues. The considerations are also related to their feasibility in furthering analytical research into the normalisation of drugs use as a social practice in contemporary British society.

8.1. The problem: from public policy to criminality

Addressing certain of the suggestions from the reading of Foucault's work, two moments in the process of regulating cannabis use in the United Kingdom can be identified. The first moment was in October 2001, when the Home Secretary declared that he would be seeking the recommendations of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) regarding the classification of cannabis; the second moment refers to January 2004, when the decision on cannabis re-classification included a number of modifications of the initial proposal. A close examination of these two moments can reveal a shift in the governmental discourse and the definition of the cannabis problem.

As stated before, the re-classification of cannabis was initially supported by a number of government reports and experiences connected with alternative means of tackling cannabis offences²³³. At the height of the New Labour Party's political success, it was considered that the initiative of re-classifying cannabis represented some of the principles of management, efficiency and honesty proclaimed by the government. At this particular moment, the decision to re-classify cannabis had a two-fold purpose: firstly, to save resources that could be directed to fighting the proliferation of the use of Class A drugs, perceived as more dangerous to society; secondly, the re-classification aimed to normalise the recreational and medicinal uses of cannabis. It was perceived that by re-classifying cannabis as a Class C drug, the time spent by police officers in processing any offences involving cannabis could be used more efficiently. It was, furthermore, acknowledged that the use of cannabis by otherwise law-abiding citizens should not be penalised severely. In order to accomplish these two aims the power of arrest for cannabis offences should be neutralised, i.e., the original purpose of re-classification was to render cannabis possession a non-arrestable offence. Therefore, the time and resources spent on procedures for arresting cannabis offenders could be

saved. This took place in 2001, when the possibility of re-classifying cannabis was initially considered.

After this announcement, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs offered their advice in March 2002; two months later, in May 2002, the Home Affairs Select Committee was evaluating the overall drug policy, including the issue of cannabis. Until then, the proposal had followed the lines of the initial consideration of the power of arrest. The Home Secretary finally announced in July 2002 that cannabis would be re-classified. However, the effects of the re-classification differed from those in the initial proposal. For instance, the core of the proposal regarding the power of arrest for cannabis offences was not affected in the slightest. Although penalties for possession were reduced from five to two years' imprisonment, the government insisted that cannabis possession was still an arrestable offence, and that the police were thus entitled to make an arrest for this offence. Moreover, the government emphasised that penalties for supplying cannabis, as well as other Class C drugs, would increase from seven to fourteen years. Cannabis re-classification including these provisos was made official on 29 January 2004.

The issue here is to determine *how* the problem initially defined as a matter or *public policy* became in fact a matter of *criminality*. Some aspects of the discussion will be reiterated in order for the main points to be addressed in this chapter to be amalgamated.

The first consideration refers to the public discussion about cannabis re-classification in the period of 2002 to 2004. During these two years of public debate, a variety of arguments addressed the convenience of this decision. Many of the discussions have focused on the harmfulness of cannabis, and the necessity to retain penalisation for its use. Others argued that medicinal and recreational uses of cannabis should be permitted. The initial purpose of saving resources, as mentioned in the

²³³ See Chapter 6: Influential documents on drugs policy in the United Kingdom.

media and government speeches, did not constitute the focal point of public discussion.

The second consideration includes the emergence of new issues associated with cannabis. As has been mentioned, the public perception of cannabis re-classification concentrated on denouncing a number of problems related to cannabis use. In particular, two topics were highlighted in the discussion: on the one hand, certain information regarding violence and other anti-social behaviour in relation to the use of cannabis were widely reported. On the other hand, there was also an emerging issue of mental health problems thought to be caused or aggravated by cannabis use. The condition, still a matter of research and controversy, has been named 'cannabis psychosis'; it has become a common term for referring to specific problems allegedly caused by cannabis use.

The third aspect suggests that the change of emphasis in these two moments refers not only to a sudden shift in the discourses, but includes the transformation within the very nature of the cannabis problem. In the period of analysis it is possible to see how a problem initially defined as a matter of 'public policy' related to efficiency in the use of resources and the necessity of updating the cannabis strategy later became a problem of 'social behaviour' and 'public health'. The discourses predominant in the public discussion and the result expressed through the final decision served to highlight a 'criminal' and a 'prohibitionist' perception of the practices associated with cannabis.

It may thus be argued that the public debate on cannabis re-classification could have influenced the final decision and its change of emphasis. However, it is unclear how such a change was possible, which actors could have influenced this change, and what were the arguments supporting this or another world view of the cannabis problem. A further look at the actors represented - and also those not represented - in the media and political debate can eventually reveal how the discussion on

the nature of the cannabis problem changes during the period of analysis. The next section focuses on the 'visibility' and 'invisibility' of certain actors and discourses throughout the public discussion on cannabis re-classification.

8.2. Visibility: actors and discourses

From the organisation of the material in Chapter Six, the transformation in the nature of the discourses about cannabis re-classification may be observed. In the current section the aim is to complement the analysis with a supplementary examination of the type of actors represented in those discourses.

It must be noted that the term 'actors' is used in relation to the notion of 'experts' in Foucault's approach. Because Foucault is interested only in what he called 'serious speech acts', the focus here is to determine *what experts say* when they are speaking as experts. For the purposes of this research, an 'actor' is any person, group, discipline, or institution representing an area of 'expertise' on cannabis. They may be doctors, psychologists, criminologists, researchers, campaigners, users, parents, police officers, politicians, government officials, scientists, etc.

This section will recall *what has been said* in relation to the actors *who said* it, in each of the two periods under analysis.

8.2.1 Background: Discussion of cannabis policy 2002-2003

As described in Chapter Six, the discussion during this period in relation to cannabis revealed the variety and extent of its use amongst some groups within the British population. Different actors were represented in public

debates, the mass media, and government discussions during this period. The representation of this variety was a remarkable characteristic of the period, reflecting as it did the extent of the process of consultation in relation to the depiction of the cannabis issue.

However, in the sample of news gathered for this research, it was possible to note that some actors were more widely quoted than others.²³⁴ For example, public officers and particularly the Home Secretary appeared both in the news and in government discussions. They were frequently quoted or referred to in relation to the effects of cannabis re-classification. Their participation could be related to the discourses of public policy, criminalisation, and prohibition.

A second group that must be considered a significant actor was the group of journalists and editorialist who wrote the news. These actors may be called opinion makers, since their participation was not limited to 'reporting' facts: their influence could shape public opinion regarding the discussion on sensitive issues such as drug use (Cohen, S. and Young, J., 1984; Coomber, R. *et al.*, 2000). However, it is unclear what type of discourse they represented. Some adopted a clearly prohibitionist approach, whereas others tried to maintain a balanced approach to the diversity of opinions regarding cannabis.

A third group referred to in government documents and the newspapers consisted of campaigners on and researchers into the topic of drugs. Curiously, they tended to represent the voice of the users, who were thus included in the discussions, however indirectly. The majority of the references in the news and governmental documents were not from the users themselves; instead, the actors generally quoted were campaigners, sociologists, and other practitioners from voluntary organisations. In some of the media, particularly on-line fora, the users tended to occupy a significant proportion of these spaces, yet in the government documents and mass media their opinions seem often to have been edited and

interpreted. These opinions can generally be classified within the discourses of recreational and medicinal discourse, with a small proportion related to the economic aspects of cannabis.

Finally, two important groups were also included in the discussion, although to a relatively minor degree. For example, doctors and police officers who would be determinant in the next period were referenced in almost equal proportion to other actors. Medical specialists leaned towards justifying a treatment discourse on cannabis issues, whereas police officers in this period tended to support a public policy approach to cannabis.

The composition of the actors would, however, change, as will be analysed in the next sub-section.

8.2.2. The re-classification of Cannabis: 15-30 January 2004

During this period, the majority of the news was related to the official re-classification of cannabis. As presented in Chapter Six, the distribution of the discourses on re-classification changed from what they had been previously. There was an increasing amount of information regarding the prohibitionist discourse. In general, both the government documents and the mass media tended to present firstly, the arguments used by the government in favour of downgrading cannabis and secondly, the reactions of different stakeholders. Similarly to within the previous period, some main actors were represented in the media and government discussions: public officials, politicians, opinion makers, campaigners, doctors, police officers, stakeholders, researchers, etc. In particular, the period was characterised by the polarisation of the opinions regarding cannabis re-classification.

²³⁴ See Appendix 2: News on Cannabis Reclassification- Background (2002-2004) and January 15-30 2004.

These reactions can be separated into two groups. The first one includes those who opposed the measure, including politicians, certain individual police officers, parents, families, opinion makers, and some charities. The second group comprised those who welcomed the measure as a further step in the revision of drugs legislation, including campaigners, medicinal users, users, politicians, and some groups within the police force. A minor proportion of opinion makers also falls under the latter group since, as will be presented later, these opinion makers tended to represent the mainstream opposition to the re-classification.

The government's speeches attempted to clarify the confusion produced by the divergences between the initial proposals and the final decision. As mentioned in Chapter Six, public officials and politicians flooded the mass media with a quantity of reports regarding re-classification. Many of these emphasised the prohibitionist and the criminalist discourses on cannabis.

In contrast, there was an emerging concern about the possible connection between cannabis and mental health, denounced by parents and confirmed by some doctors. As presented in Chapter Six, these new actors gained predominance in the public discussion, and their influence seems to have attracted attention to the emerging problem of 'cannabis psychosis'. In particular, doctors gained a significant role in the definition of this new condition.

Finally, police officers who had remained relatively reticent in the previous period later became reported on and quoted in different scenarios. As presented before, the news reported revealed that a relative minority of police officers and senior police officers supported the measure of re-classification. Indeed, some groups of officers warned that they would be applying the whole extent of the law, and that they would maintain their stance of being tough on drugs offences.

Nevertheless, the identification of these actors does not in itself provide information about how the shift in the discourse could have been produced, or why these actors pursue one or other world-view regarding the debate. The following sub-section aims to explain some of the possible reasons for supporting the representation of certain types of actors and their world-views in the public debate on cannabis re-classification.

8.2.3. Synthesis

It can be argued that the participation of different actors in the public discussion is not arbitrary.²³⁵ In fact, each of the actors identified in this section represents a particular discourse or world-view of cannabis re-classification. The thesis will examine which actors become predominant and the reasons that may support their perceptions of the topic.

It has been shown that opinion makers (journalists, editorialists, reporters, etc.) have a great deal of influence on the social perception of cannabis issues. Considering the proportion of discourses reported in the news, it is clear that most of these opinion makers may have adopted a *prohibitionist* approach, which eventually reflects the mainstream perception of cannabis use. It is not just a case of newspapers influencing public opinion; there is a general perception of drug use that needs to be represented. As argued by tabloid journalist Lorraine Fisher:

Newspapers like to think they lead public opinion. But in reality, they also have to reflect the views of their readers for fear that people who pay their wages will defect to another paper... with newspapers losing sales, journalists simply can't afford to take a chance – there is not a lot of sympathy for drug addicts out there. (Fisher, L., 2006: 14)

Indeed, the representations of drug users as deviants are best-selling stories in which they play the role of villains. However, it is possible to

identify dissenting representations of the cannabis users in the news. These voices are limited to editorials or inner-page articles, yet the general depiction of the cannabis user as a villain, a possible assassin, or a madman is reinforced in the different articles.

The second group under consideration in this analysis are doctors. In the news bulletins, and particularly in the second period considered here, their opinions are frequently quoted and referred to. As representatives of 'scientific knowledge' in the realm of the human body and mind, they have contributed to the definition of the problem of drugs use as a matter of treatment. It has been demonstrated how the increasing criminalisation of drugs-related activities have diminished the influence of doctors over the approach to drugs use, because this approach has formed the basis of the British system of drugs control. As a consequence of the development of drugs policy during the past 50 years in Britain, the medical profession has seen how drugs problems have become a matter of criminality, security, and even a cultural topic. In other words, medical experts have lost terrain in the definition of drugs-related issues. Interestingly, the re-classification of cannabis has provided the opportunity for them to recover this lost terrain.

A possible explanation for such resurgence is related to the way in which cannabis problems were defined by different sectors. It was mentioned in Chapter 5 that there are diverse sources of information regarding the substance, including not only scientific studies, but also a massive proliferation of literature and references. As a consequence, the 'problem of cannabis' was not necessarily clearly delimited, and popular awareness could have replaced scientific knowledge of this area.

With the debate on cannabis re-classification, the arguments regarding its prohibition needed to be updated. Although the old 'reefer madness' idea has been revisited, the fact is that young people in contemporary Britain

²³⁵ In the case of news, actors are selected in relation to particular purposes. See Cohen, S. and Young, J., (eds.) (1984) *The Manufacture of News: Social problems, deviance and the mass media*, London: Constable

had access to a wide range of sources of information regarding cannabis, including internet, peers, cultural references, TV, music, and fashion. A renovated and 'valid' approach to the cannabis problem was required in order to justify the necessity of prohibiting it.

The scientific reports highlighting the relationship between cannabis use and mental health problems thus became a suitable mode of addressing both the justification of major controls for cannabis, and also a way of determining an appropriate definition of cannabis problems. By defining cannabis as a matter of mental health, the *prohibitionist* approach gained support; the medical profession was also able to recover control over this topic. Given the analysis presented in Chapters Five and Six, it is possible to present theories as to how this process has taken place.

The possible links between cannabis use and adverse effects on mental health have been extensively studied, yet there has been no conclusive evidence.²³⁶ In the report by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD 2002), the link between cannabis use and mental health is widely documented.²³⁷ The report suggests the possibility of 'panic attacks, paranoia and confused feelings' and that in 'few cases such an episode may be the start of a long-lasting psychotic illness, usually schizophrenia'.²³⁸

Nevertheless, the report nowhere mentions 'cannabis psychosis' as a specific condition of mental health. The issue of cannabis psychosis is still a matter of controversy for medical science. In contrast, this term is quite popular among parents, who refer to this 'condition' when talking about

²³⁶ Researchers from New Zealand have analysed the hypothesis of a possible cannabis psychosis as a particular condition. They have concluded that there is limited clinical evidence for this hypothesis. If 'cannabis psychoses' exist, they seem to be rare, because they require very high doses of tetrahydrocannabinol, the prolonged use of highly potent forms of cannabis, or a pre-existing (but as yet unspecified) vulnerability, or all of these factors. However, there is more reliable clinical and epidemiological evidence that cannabis use can exacerbate the symptoms of schizophrenia. See Hall, W. and Degenhardt, L., (2000) "Cannabis use and psychosis: a review of clinical and epidemiological evidence", *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* (34) (1): 26.

²³⁷ The inclusion of these considerations can be also explained by the composition of the Advisory Council, most of whose members belong to the medical profession, including psychologists, psychiatrists, and pharmacologists.

²³⁸ See ACMD (2002) *The Classification of Cannabis under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*, London: Home Office. Section 4.3. Acute health risks of cannabis, and Section 4.4. Long health risks of cannabis.

their children's bad experiences with cannabis. As presented in the previous chapter, the description of the symptoms can be analysed in terms of a template in which certain discursive elements are present.²³⁹

From the news samples, it has been shown that some parents have reacted to the re-classification by reporting their concerns about the effects of their children's use of cannabis. The structure of their arguments includes the following elements: parents have a preconception of the effects of cannabis based on their own experiences in the 1960s; children, normally youths between 19-21, experience a psychotic episode (e.g., hearing voices or paranoid effects); these effects are triggered by a powerful type of cannabis (e.g., skunk); the user develops a psychotic condition, then named 'cannabis psychosis'. This term has become a common branding within the arguments of parents against cannabis re-classification.

Another example came from the observation of a Cannabis Festival in Brixton (London, June 2004): The festival attracted a great amount of people from different ages and ethnic origins, as well as genders. Also, different groups such as campaigners, business people, political parties (e.g. Green Party and Legalise Cannabis Alliance Party) had their speeches about their views on British cannabis policy. After the speech of a Green Party's member, a 'mother' went up on stage to present a different approach to this topic. She denounced the dangers of cannabis, based on her own experience, associated to the fact of she having a beneficent opinion of cannabis until the day her son developed schizophrenia, and she realised that it could have been triggered by 'skunk', twenty times stronger than common weed.

²³⁹ A more detailed discourse analysis can be made of this and other sorts of statements. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the current research, the intention is to reveal the possible structures of language that make the emergence of a particular problem such as cannabis psychosis possible. This might be an interesting aspect to explore in future work.

Concerned about youngsters and their parents, her mission now is to denounce the dangers of cannabis in public scenarios such as the Cannabis Festival.²⁴⁰

In this example, it can be noted that the description of the symptoms and their sequence is presented mainly by parents. Although some users have referred to their own problems with cannabis by arguing for a possible 'cannabis psychosis', yet the term is commonly used by *others*, i.e., different to the users. However, in the case of users describing their own symptoms and problematic experiences, it is possible to see how the notion of 'cannabis psychosis' may 'help' the 'self-understanding' of certain problems experienced by an individual and assumed to be related to smoking cannabis. However, in this and other examples from the news, it is unclear whether there was a prior identification of the condition of 'cannabis psychosis' in understanding a particular situation, or whether specific symptoms experienced by young people in relation to cannabis became 'named' as 'cannabis psychosis'. The hypothesis of the current thesis is that the term gained social acceptance, and was supported by medical research regarding the links between heavy cannabis use and the development of certain mental health conditions.

To summarise: it can be seen that doctors have benefited from the debate on cannabis. In particular, they have been relatively influential in characterising the issue of the effects of cannabis as a medical problem to be treated by therapeutic institutions. Considering that the problem of cannabis has been defined traditionally from a criminal approach, the shift toward a medical condition can be interpreted as a change in the configuration of interests between the criminal and the medical approaches. Nevertheless, as presented in this review of the actors, the

²⁴⁰ From the research notes of B. Acevedo: Cannabis Festival, Brixton, 4 June 2004: "In another tent there were different people talking about cannabis. Different speakers were expressing their opinions. A young lad was very enthusiastic in his 'preaching' style. After that, Mary, a 'mother', spoke about the links between cannabis and schizophrenia in her son; and she was really brave in front of a crowd who was at the time smoking grass. I thought about her participation in a Festival where everybody was smoking grass openly. I felt sad for her son; however, it was a bit odd, the fact that she was not expressing so much emotion in her speech. Later on, I saw her rushing through the park as if on a mission, and I thought, maybe she is a professional mother: playing the role of parents on the festival scene." B.Acevedo, *Observation*, London.

police and government maintain to play an important role in the cannabis problem, as will be analysed in the following.

The third group to increase its participation in the public debate is the police force. When the re-classification was proposed, the police played an interesting role, mainly because some were already implementing a form of re-classification in their street actions. Furthermore, the experiment of giving cautions instead of arresting people in the district of Lambeth in London was led by a senior police officer. At the time of deciding over reducing the power of arrest, however, it was this group who opposed the possibility. As has been suggested, the power of arrest is the missing link between the initial discussion about cannabis re-classification, and the final decision. In this sense, it is hardly surprising that the police force gained predominance both in the public debate and in the news. Senior police officers seem to have abandoned their role as executors of policies towards a more stakeholder-like approach in influencing policy making. As mentioned before, the participation of the police force in the process of policy making on cannabis is a sensitive aspect of the decision on re-classifying cannabis. It is interesting to note that their appearance in the news is no mere chance, but clear evidence of their influence on the configuration of cannabis policy in Britain.

Finally, government officials, ministers, and politicians are frequently quoted or referred to in the discussion: supporting, reviewing, justifying or opposing their decision on cannabis re-classification, they seem to address the different demands from social actors. Paradoxically, their perception of the cannabis problem is swayed by public opinion. The reactive behaviour seems to test the pulse of the discussion by adding or acceding to the decision in order to gratify one or another argument. In other words, the government seems to react to public opinion by providing answers, measures or statements directed at satisfying the issue of the day. At the same time, it disregards certain other opinions, which gradually became inaudible in the debate. Some of these inaudible actors are recapitulated below.

Throughout the political debate expressed in the media, public fora and government discussions, some actors have gradually faded; for example, medical users and recreational users are not quoted as frequently as in the previous period. The disappearance of recreational and medical users from the debate will be analysed in the next section when addressing, as Foucault identifies them, the discontinuities, divergences and contours.

The following section will deal with those details providing answers towards the genealogy of cannabis re-classification.

8.3. Discontinuities, divergences and contours

8.3.1. The power of arrest

From the analysis provided in Chapter Six, it can be argued that the power of arrest is the most sensitive issue in the decision to re-classifying cannabis to Class C. In fact, the power of arrest is the key aspect in both aims: of saving resources, and of normalising cannabis use. However, as previously observed, there was a diversion from the original proposal of re-classifying cannabis before the final decision approved by the government. Following Foucault's recommendations, it is possible to argue that this 'little detail' (i.e. the power of arrest for cannabis offences), represents a discontinuity from the original purpose to the final decision. In his view this would be an interesting feature to analyse in the genealogy.

The power of arrest is, as a commentator stated, a "cherished power by the police".²⁴¹ Searching members of the public for cannabis possession can give rise to further investigations, thus the police usually have a high regard for this authority. Some officers explained: while prosecuting for

²⁴¹ Interview with M. Trace, London, October, 2004.

cannabis possession the police officer may collect information on other crimes, possibly more severe than cannabis possession. In short, arresting individuals for cannabis offences serves as a doorway to further investigations. It could thus be claimed that the power of arrest for cannabis possession is a tool for criminal investigations, because it is, in a wider sense, a technique for control and surveillance.

Although the latter development might appear an 'improper' use of this power, it can be argued that it has a 'proper' goal. Then, when the removal or limiting of the power of arrest is a matter for discussion, it is unsurprising that police officers have reacted against that possibility. As expressed in mass media, some police officers disagreed with the re-classification. Although, the fact that initiatives such as the Lambeth Experiment have been led by a police officers, it does not mean an uniformity of opinions. Even more, as presented before, the presence of influential senior police officers talking directly to the Home Secretary – and in this way disregarding other public and political realms of debate – determined the final decision of retaining the power of arrest in the official re-classification.

However, this retention of the power of arrest was not clear for the public, and a number of complaints by police officers, reported in the media and some interviews, pointed out the misunderstanding created by cannabis re-classification. Police officers have seen that a large percentage of the population understood that the power of arrest had been rescinded; people were therefore smoking cannabis more openly. This was interpreted as part of the confusion created by the decision on cannabis, given that this differed from the initial proposal. On the other hand, such behaviour can be also understood as a form of resistance by certain marginal groups, through which cannabis smoking can represent a means of 'defying' authority.

In some cases, the reaction of police officers has been to take a tougher approach regarding cannabis offences. Since they maintained the power

of arrest, they continued to apply it. Warburton *et al.* (2005) argued that the police had, prior to the re-classification, dealt informally with offences of cannabis possession. Instead of formalising this procedure, cannabis re-classification had the effect of reinforcing the strict application of the law. As the cited authors stated:

One possible consequence of the new arrangements has been largely overlooked: formal on-the-spot warnings and confiscation could substitute not simply for arrest but also for informal disposal. In other words, we may see a variant of 'net-widening', in that offenders who previously would have been dealt with completely informally may now be handled in a more formal – and visible – way. (114)

To summarise: what re-classification accomplished at the street level was to make the application of the law a more visible event. Indeed, while the power of arrest is a key technique in dealing with cannabis offences, it may also provide the key to further powers of intervention by the police into private affairs. Here, the interest is not discussed whether this is an 'improper power for a proper means', but to understand it in a wider context of other issues related to security and control. Surveillance and control are limited neither to cannabis offences nor to other offences related to drugs: they are all justified under the stated aim of protecting citizens from crime. It has been reported that crime rates decreased during the last ten years, the social perception supports a tougher approach to crime, more severe sentences for offenders and major powers to the police to exert their authority (The Police Foundation, 2004).

With other salient issues such as terrorism, social disorder or crime, those mechanisms are not only maintained, but reinforced. The next section will analyse other situations that in the context of cannabis legislation converge in the reinforcing of government control, disciplinary techniques and other mechanisms called by Foucault 'bio-power'.

8.3.2. Socio-political context

On 29 January 2004, this researcher had the opportunity to interview a senior police officer in central London. The interview was related, of course, to the decision of re-classifying cannabis - on the very first day of its operation. In the course of the interview, it was noted that this officer was not particularly concerned about cannabis re-classification; in fact, he stated that re-classification was the formalisation of an informal practice used by some police officers. Instead, the conversation shifted toward other anti-drugs strategies, from where he went on to describe the Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) due to come into effect in 2004.²⁴²

By means of these ASBOs, it was possible for officers to 'ban' people from certain areas and also to enter properties with the permission of the local authority. The interviewee referred particularly to the possibility of closing down 'crack houses' and also to banning prostitutes (prostitutes who thus fund their heroin habits) from a specific part of the city. As an example, he highlighted the progress in 'cleaning up' the area around Kings Cross, where this interview was held. At that moment, the shift in the conversation was interpreted as a diversion from the main topic of the interview. A careful reading of these statements can reveal what Foucault calls the 'divergences and contours'.

The issue of anti-social behaviour is one of the preoccupations in British society. Measures to tackle this type of conduct have been included in social programmes, debates and political statements. Although 'anti-social disorder' is difficult to define precisely, the government utilises 'images of deviance' in order to typify it. For example, in the cited report, anti-social behaviour is identified with 'yobs', 'crack-dealers', 'drug dealers' and 'criminals'. Given that it is such a broad concept, it seems that government actions are unable to eliminate such behaviour; instead, the aim is to

²⁴² See Secretary of State (2003) *Respect and Responsibility - Taking a Stand Against Anti-Social Behaviour*. Cm 5778 London: Home Office.

displace the problem by banning people from certain areas of the city. The strategy can be interpreted as a way of 'separating' elements of the population by means of relocating certain types of people considered undesirable. This could happen with the application of ASBOs.

Similarly to other security measures, the division of groups of society can be explained within a wider system of punitive policies aiming at a reduction in crime rather than its elimination. The process includes not only the identification of a visible enemy, but also its characterisation, which allows the implementation of these security measures. As stated by Garland:

Punitive policies are premised upon characterisations of offenders as 'yobs', 'predators', 'career criminals', 'sex beasts', as 'evil', 'wicked', or member of an 'underclass' – each of these being 'suitable enemies' (Christie, 1986) for a ruling culture stressing family values, individual enterprise, and the limits of welfarism... The only practical and rational response to such types is to have them 'taken out of circulation' for the protection of the public. (Garland, D., 1996: 461)

In addition to anti-social behaviour, other dangers haunt British society. Since the tragic events in America of 11 September 2001, terrorism has become a priority in the security of Western countries. A permanent state of emergency has thus allowed the extension of the powers of detention, and changes in the means of bringing to justice those suspected of terrorist activities.²⁴³

The perceived menace has become the reason to enforce security in Britain. For example, the police have sued for wider powers in dealing with suspected terrorists. This includes measures such as longer periods of detention, the carrying of firearms, and the exercise of the stop and search strategy. Indeed, terrorism has been linked to drug trafficking, thus it is

²⁴³ For an analysis of these events in the extension of government powers, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben offers an interesting explanation, using the idea of 'state of exception'. He argues that the state of exception, which was meant to be a provisional measure, has become in the course of the twentieth century a working paradigm of government. By analysing the effects of the events of 11 September 2001, Agamben develops the notion of bio-power in the work of Foucault. See Agamben, G. (2005) *State of Exception*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

not surprising that both activities have become foci of domestic and international security.²⁴⁴

The notion of a link between drugs and terrorism has gained certain popularity since the 1990s (Green, P., 1998; Dale P. and Marshall, J., 1991). Prominent figures in the United Kingdom have argued that drugs use may indirectly be supporting terrorism.²⁴⁵ In fact, this association can be traced back to the 1980s, when the drug trafficker and the terrorist were connected in the British discourse on crime:

One of the linguistic legacies of the 1980s was the transformation of the 'drug trafficker' into an ideological cue, a shorthand reference encompassing the menace, evil, greed, depravity and corruption (moral, financial and political) required to ease the passage of repressive new anti-drug legislation and policies. (Green, P., 1998: 40)

As suggested by Green and other researchers, actors involved in illicit drugs such as dealers, traffickers or users tend to be categorised as 'suitable enemies'. They represent the 'alien menace' poisoning Western society; thus, they are normally identified as 'foreigners', 'deviants' or 'criminals', and they become targets of enforcement strategies (Dorn, N. *et al.*, 1992). If this social perception is seen as having validity, the justification for stronger anti-drugs legislation requires relatively little discussion, since the actors involved are by definition the source of evil.

A practical example of how drug users are viewed within British legislation is found in the case of the Drug Test and Treatment Orders (DTTO). This procedure was implemented in 1998 as part of the Criminal Offences Act of the same year.²⁴⁶ The aim of the measure is to implement the 'marriage' between medical treatment and criminal justice in the British approach to drugs. The government believes that this would improve the detection of

²⁴⁴ For example, it is said that the production of opium and heroin in Afghanistan supports terrorist activities, as in other producer countries such as Colombia, whereby left- and right-wing illegal armies rely on the extraordinary profits derived from the illegal production of cocaine. Although there is a connection between illicit drugs and some other illegal activities, the link may not be as direct as it appears in those statements.

²⁴⁵ See, for example, *The Guardian*, 3 February 2005: *Cocaine, anyone?* <http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,1404499,00.html>

²⁴⁶ See Bean, P., (2002) *Drugs and Crime*, Cullompton: Willan Publishing. Chapter 4.

drugs misuse problems in offenders, who would then be directed into treatment. However, it also can be interpreted as a major intervention of the government in the offender's body, *via* blood, urine and other testing. It can further be argued that compulsory treatment is used as punishment. In this context, treatment services are part of the disciplining technique used by the state to exert its authority over 'unproductive bodies'.²⁴⁷ Thus, it is unsurprising that both the 'illness' and the 'cure' can be identified and applied in the 'body' of the drug user. Legislation is reaching far beyond the simple possession of drugs, yet the possession is traced back to *inside* the human body, where it may be detected by medical testing procedures. This is clear example of bio-power,²⁴⁸ whereby the state not only exerts its power over the body of an individual, but also requires that his/her physical body suffers intervention.

As explained by Foucault, bio-power concerns two poles: control of the body, and control of the species. In his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault emphasised that in the nineteenth century, sex became the construction through which power linked the vitality of the body together with that of the species. From there, it was possible that discourses about health and social welfare were fostered by the state. In Foucault's words, it means:

[A]n intensification of the body, a problematisation of health and its operational terms: it was a question of techniques for maximizing life. The primary concern was... the body, vigour, longevity, progeniture, and descent of the classes that ruled. (Foucault, M., 1980a: 123)

Foucault explained the emergence of the state's concern about health, well-being, security, and protection as part of the extension of the bio-power. As a consequence, the development of different institutions, from the department of health to the police force, from social welfare to the prison, is related to the purpose of the control and administration of human

²⁴⁷ A similar idea is proposed by Bourgois in relation to the bio-politics of methadone in the United States. See Bourgois, P. (2000). "Disciplining addictions: the bio-politics of methadone and heroin in the United States." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* (24) (2): 165-195.

²⁴⁸ See Chapter 7, Section 7.3.3. As a reminder, bio-power is defined by Foucault as 'the increased ordering in all realms under the guise of improving the welfare of the individual'.

bodies in a given society. Since drugs use has been defined as a 'disease' or as a 'crime', the state is entitled to intervene in the practice of drugs use. However, in order to justify such intervention, it is necessary that drugs use be defined as a problem. For example, in the case of cannabis re-classification, its effects on mental health and its associations with criminal behaviour have been emphasised. In this sense, it is possible to explain why other discourses regarding cannabis use as a positive practice, are in certain way disregarded. Perhaps this is the reason why the recreational and the medicinal user who were present at the beginning of the social debate have *suddenly* disappeared. It is not just the stopping of the mass media's reporting on them while devoting more column-inches to those who experience problems with the substance; there are other mechanisms playing a role in this 'disappearing'. The next section considers those actors who are not only excluded from the social debate, but also made inaudible by what Foucault called 'other technologies of punishment'.

8.3.3. An economy of punishment

As analysed in the previous section, between 2002 and 2004 some actors and discourses have gained prominence in the debate while others have disappeared. For instance, campaigners and medicinal users seem to have lost importance in the discussion on re-classification. Whereas in 2002-2003 the topic of the medicinal uses of cannabis was an important aspect, the news about them concentrated in 2004 on the pharmaceutical cannabis-based products, yet medicinal users are rarely quoted or interviewed. A possible explanation for the disappearance of these groups can be found in what Foucault called an 'economy of punishment'.²⁴⁹ In his approach, the ways in which disciplinary techniques shape people's behaviours are related to the 'moulding of people into 'normal' as opposed to 'abnormal', 'delinquent' or 'deviant' individuals' (Couzens Hoy, D., 1986:

²⁴⁹ See Chapter 7, Section 7.2. 3 Genealogy

12). In this way, the characterisation as 'abnormal' of certain practices related to cannabis is supported by emphasis on their 'negative' aspects, e.g., violence, cannabis psychosis, and anti-social behaviour.

In addition, the possibilities of the alternative uses of cannabis, in the recreational and medicinal approaches, must at least be ignored or disregarded - if not described as 'abnormal' or 'deviant'. The current subsection focuses on the disappearance of certain actors from the public debate, and how these disappearances contribute to the efficiency of the regulation of cannabis practices.

One of the possible explanations about why certain drug users disappear from the public debate is related to the depiction of drug users as villains, in the practice of reporting drugs news items. When it was initially acknowledged that recreational and medicinal users could be otherwise law-abiding citizens, the contradiction emerged, because they might be seen as 'good/normal' people, and not as evil villains. For example, in many cases medicinal users were described as 'martyrs' or 'heroes' by some newspapers, although this would be contradictory to the mainstream perception of drug use. Similarly, the recreational user represented in the news and official documents suddenly vanished. In this case, an explanation can be ventured regarding the diversity and the sometimes divergent interests within this 'group'. One possible reason is the diversity of the group of cannabis users. As previously presented, there are many types of cannabis users - not only those who use it for medicinal, ritual, or recreational reasons. There are also 'poly-users', who use cannabis as well as other substances; there are occasional users, and there are well-established users who may not view their practice as a purposeful activity. Furthermore, the group comprised of cannabis campaigners usually has diverse interests represented within it.

Ironically, protestors against the decision to down-grade cannabis have claimed that the re-classification was a triumph of 'a liberal élite',

influenced by a 'legalising lobby'.²⁵⁰ In fact, this description contributes to enhancing the view of this 'legalising lobby' as a powerful influence and, therefore, greater resources and harsher penalties should be applied to deterring this lobby's advance. Other explanations point out that during the course of the debate on cannabis re-classification, this 'legalising lobby' has not only been ignored; moreover, they have been systematically silenced.

Throughout this investigation the researcher has had the opportunity of interviewing a number of campaigners in favour of the legalisation of cannabis. Many are well-known pro-cannabis activists in their communities, while others participate in the Legalise Cannabis Alliance political party. As described by some government statements and also by themselves, they are usually 'law-abiding' citizens - except over the issue of cannabis. Paradoxically, they describe negative experiences when questioned about the consequences of re-classification for their aims. Instead of enjoying a significant degree of freedom now that cannabis possession is less severely penalised, they have been arrested and prosecuted several times during the last two years.²⁵¹ It might seem obvious that they are indeed breaking the law, and that police officers are only doing their job in arresting them. However, it could be asked why those prominent people fail to benefit from the 'blind eye' otherwise enjoyed by any offender in the street; and, moreover, why they are subject to complicated judicial processes, penalised by expensive fines, yet finally freed.

After the political controversy around cannabis re-classification, it is possible that the government was unwilling to put itself at greater risk in this area. Indeed, the mass media insisted on highlighting a 'softly softly'

²⁵⁰ See, for example, *Daily Mirror* 23 January 2005: 'Don't let the drugs lobby tear down our school gates'.

²⁵¹ Some examples from campaigners in the United Kingdom can illustrate this point: in Hull (East Yorkshire) the owner of a stall selling 'paraphernalia' and also a candidate for the LCA political party, Carl Wagner, was brought before the Crown Court in 2003-2004. Patricia Tabram alias 'Granny Pot' was arrested in June 2004, accused of throwing 'pot parties' with other elderly people in her community in Northumberland. A year before, coffee-shop owner Chris Baldwyn in Worthing, was imprisoned despite his evident physical problems. In 2005, Multiple Sclerosis campaigners Mark and Leslie Gibson in Cumbria were prosecuted for 'supplying' cannabis in the form of chocolates to other sufferers; and self-styled 'cannabis donor' Jeff Ditchfield of Wales has been charged and prosecuted for distributing cannabis for medicinal purposes during the last three years.

government, while the police force and the criminal justice system made an effort to stress the criminality of cannabis offences. In order to demonstrate their commitment against drugs, there remained nothing better than to prosecute those *visible* examples in the communities who seem to find justifications for their relation to cannabis (e.g., the medicinal use or donation of cannabis). As was demonstrated above, many of the activists in the campaign for the legalisation of cannabis have been arrested, prosecuted, and - in many cases - punished.

However, the administration of justice seems to attempt to evaluate the impact of the penalties. Although the law is clear and the users are breaking the law, the question is how to apply an effective punishment. As mentioned before, a number of those offenders are active campaigners in favour of the medicinal use of cannabis. Due to the nature of their claims and the severity of the penalties, these cases usually catch the attention of the media. It seems that the aim of many judges, as a consequence of such attention, has been to avoid the 'victimisation' of the cannabis offender, since it seems to attract more sympathy than condemnation from the public.

The criminal process against Patricia Tabram (*alias* 'Granny Pot') illustrates this precaution. On being accused of the possession and possible distribution of cannabis, a prosecution was brought. Mrs. Tabram was freed on bail and on condition that she would not repeat the offence. However, not only does she need cannabis for her health, but also, since she has become an active campaigner on this issue, she again attracted the attention of the police and the media. Precisely this attention is managed carefully by the criminal justice system. As was expressed by Judge Hodson, the judge presiding over the prosecution:

People in this part of the world cannot fail to have noticed that you have been caught up in a media circus...It might be that you have

been trying to tempt the courts into making a martyr of you. I am not going to do this.²⁵²

Other campaigners have mentioned the fact that police know where they are and know what they are doing; thus, the police can always bring a prosecution when officers need to show results. The recommendation in general is to 'keep quiet', which means not to publicise their cannabis use or cannabis activism. It seems that neither of the purposes of the legislation is to reduce the use of cannabis among the populace or to reduce drugs-related crime associated with cannabis. Instead, the purpose is to deter individuals from the use of cannabis by making an example of, through punishing, those visible actors campaigning for changes in the legislation on cannabis.

In summarising: whereas the re-classification has made more visible the attitudes towards and social responses to the practice of cannabis use, the legislation has changed very little the penalties for what is still considered a criminal offence. The role of the re-classification has been to contribute to the ordering (governance) of some of the practices and discourses associated with cannabis use and other types of illegal drugs use that had before been dispersed or hidden for their illegal character. The issue here is to identify how those practices are regulated by the re-classification. The following section aims to respond the question by applying the notion of '*dispositif*' and its effects on the definition both of the problem and of the subject, as proposed in the work of Foucault.

²⁵² Staff Reporter (2005) 'Guilty cannabis granny is free to carry on baking', *The Times*, 9 April 2005.

8.4. The *dispositif* of cannabis

In Chapter Seven, Foucault's interest in institutions was shown to constitute part of his concern for revealing the dynamics through which the problematisation of certain practices emerges, and how these processes define the subject. It was proposed to apply the notion of '*dispositif*', as used in Foucault's work, in order to respond to the questions emerging from the current research. The '*dispositif*' can, it has been shown, be understood as a 'methodological device' in which three dimensions are explored: the discursive formations revealed in different bodies of knowledge, the power relationships expressed in the discussion about the event, and the processes of self-understanding or definition of the subject in the discussion.

This section aims to reveal the '*dispositif*' of the cannabis problem. As presented in Chapter Seven, the *dispositif* will assist in answering some of the questions arising from this research. The following sub-sections will address these questions by focusing on the effects of re-classification in both the definition of the problem, as a convergence of power and knowledge, and the creation of a cannabis user in relation to this problem.

8.4.1. The problematisation of cannabis: power and knowledge

Throughout this dissertation a number of world-views on cannabis expressed in relation to its re-classification have been seen. Certain methodological devices have been applied in identifying them as discourses on cannabis and cannabis re-classification. The discourses crystallise a particular approach to cannabis problems within a given historical period. Hence, some discussions that are usually invisible have

come to the surface. It is, though, somewhat unclear how these discourses are produced, and how one takes precedence over others. In order to answer these questions it is important to recall the way in which drug issues have been defined by different disciplines and actors.

In Chapter Two, the way in which drug use became a problem to be managed by both doctors and the government at the end of nineteenth century was described. The former group justified their intervention on the effects on human health of the use of certain drugs. The latter focused on the criminal effects of illicit drugs use and supply. From time to time, there are fluctuations in the respective influences of the two groups within the wider context of political discussions. As presented in this thesis, the groups are crucial to the definition of the cannabis problem. Whereas the government describes the problem as a criminal issue to be penalised, the medical profession defines it as an issue concerning public health and, specifically, a problem of mental health.

Complementarily, the institutions usually addressing drugs use problems are the Prison and the Hospital. It is thus possible to argue that in both disciplines and institutions there is a greater number of similarities than of divergences, as both serve disciplinary purposes. Both institutions target the human body as part of their solutions: the prison promises to discipline the human body in the context of confinement; medical intervention proposes treatment for the body as both a punishment and a cure.

The relevance of the 'body' in Foucault's studies is related to his concept of governmentality, and therefore forms a central part of the genealogical analysis. Foucault explored the relationships between body and power in the sense that an increasing interest from the government and the state is focused on the body. In Foucault's approach, the body is related to the dynamics of power; hence, the body has become an essential component for the operation of power relations in modern society. This line of argument can be furthered in the case of drugs use. Here, the interest in the administration of a 'docile body' or a 'productive body' is confronted by

the dynamics of knowledge about that body. The human body is the site of disciplines disputing the primacy of defining drugs use and its problems. It is thus unsurprising that both the doctors and criminologists dispute the knowledge about the drugs user's body. However, at the same time, both disciplines serve the purposes of 'bio-politics' in the sense of 'bio-power'. This is because both disciplines aim to normalise individuals through increasingly rationalised means by turning them into meaningful subjects and docile bodies.

As mentioned in the previous section, bio-power is the increased ordering in all realms under the guise of improving the welfare of the individual. In the case of cannabis legislation, the main argument is to protect the individual, to increase his/her health (or diminishing the risk of negative health conditions) and to prevent problems for the individual in relation to his/her social group. In this context, cannabis re-classification is an appropriate way of responding to these concerns. Nevertheless, cannabis re-classification is not evaluated solely on the benefits for the population of cannabis users; nor is it evaluated for the diminishment of the problems related to its use. Instead, the re-classification must be evaluated according to its service to other political technologies of the body. The re-classification has rendered visible the practices and discourses regarding cannabis use that had previously escaped regulation. Three aspects can serve to illustrate this point.

Firstly, the debate on re-classification has made visible a 'battle' of knowledge among different groups, such as doctors, police officers, parents, campaigners, opinion makers, researchers, criminologists, and public managers. In Foucault's words, the debate amongst these different experts in relation to cannabis re-classification represents a 'ritual of power' in which these different opinions challenge each other. As suggested before, the opportunity to regain control over cannabis and other drugs problems was seized by the medical profession when the debate introduced the issue regarding the effects of cannabis on human health. Whereas the criminal justice system was concerned in applying

management criteria to the administration of justice, the problem of cannabis use began to slide out of their domain and therefore grasp. As a consequence, the issue of cannabis use as a crime became a problem of the efficient use of resources. The issue of resources failed, however, to address the difficulty in defining those elements problematic in cannabis use, and how subjects experience these problems. In response, the medical profession offered a suitable explanation in contribution to defining the problem of cannabis use and characterising the subject experiencing these problems.

Secondly, apart from distributing responsibilities amongst different institutions, or authorising a particular discipline as the most appropriate in addressing cannabis problems, the re-classification has rendered visible the different practices regarding to cannabis. To recapitulate: apparently, cannabis use was being tolerated, and re-classification was aimed at normalising this practice. As a consequence of the cannabis re-classification, the virtual freedom in discourses and practices in relation to cannabis use was made visible, and therefore, this liberty was formalised and regulated. It is therefore possible to see how the re-classification, as a judicial and legal change, represents what Foucault called the 'micro-physics of power'.

Finally, the definition of the problem of cannabis also makes visible the type of subject who experiences the problems. Indeed, the process of characterising the cannabis user concerns not only the external attribution of the person, but is also incorporated by the subject as a means of self-understanding. There, the cycle is complete: power relationships determine *what is said* and understood about the problem of cannabis; this knowledge is circulated and validated throughout different institutions and scenarios (e.g., the media, government documents, etc.), and finally, these aspects contribute to a self-understanding of the subject who eventually experiences the problems defined and distributed by the previous domains in the *dispositif*. The effects of cannabis re-classification in the definition of the subject will be analysed in the next sub-section.

8.4.2. Creating the cannabis user: the subject

Another aspect to be considered in the analysis of the re-classification concerns the definition of the subject who uses cannabis. As explained by Foucault, the process of normalisation of human practices also conveys the definition of a certain type of subject. This process has two-fold aspects: firstly, how the subject is defined by different disciplines and secondly, how the subject defines him/herself. Both aspects are intertwined with the dynamics of power and knowledge as presented above.

It was shown that cannabis re-classification, as originally proposed, was directed at normalising the use of cannabis in recreational and medical settings. There, the person was defined as an 'otherwise law-abiding citizen' who happens to consume cannabis, for recreational reasons. Similarly, the medicinal user was acknowledged as a person who uses cannabis as a form of self-prescription. Indeed, newspapers, official documents and interviews gave a wide range of examples of these types of cannabis use.²⁵³ At first sight those definitions correspond to the type of person to be addressed by the original proposal to re-classify cannabis. It was considered that the cannabis user was a 'sensible' user, in control of his/her practice (Duff, C., 2004; Parker, H. *et al.*, 2002). On the other hand, medicinal users were characterised differently: usually, they are not young people, but adults who seek in cannabis a relief from the discomforts accompanying particular ailments, such as multiple sclerosis, muscular pain, loss of appetite, or depression. In this case, the user also has control over the decision to use cannabis as a remedy, through self-prescription.

Although the issue of the medicinal use of cannabis had been discussed by several instances in the government, such as the House of Lords (1998; 2001), it was left unresolved by the re-classification. In fact, the government opted for a cautious position on this aspect, as can be seen in the following speech:

Anyone who has a close relative suffering from a debilitating illness naturally wishes them to have relief from their suffering as soon as possible. But it would be irresponsible for a government to abandon the accepted procedure for securing the safety of medicines. We are not going to set a precedent. The prescribing of raw cannabis would be to condone its smoking; it would be open to abuse and there is no guarantee that sufferers from severe illnesses, such as multiple sclerosis, would get access to the quality of product which would bring them relief. For these reasons the government does not accept the motion advocated.²⁵⁴

In general, official documents, research and knowledge about cannabis use continue to use the term 'drug misuse'. In the United Kingdom the Advisory Council on the *Misuse* of Drugs is consulted for drugs policy matters. Furthermore, practices concerning drugs are normally equated with drug abuse. In other countries, such as the United States of America or Sweden, there is an institutional denial of the recreational use of drugs: they prefer to call this practice 'non-problematic drug abuse'. All of these linguistic terms represent the way in which drug use is defined at the institutional, scientific, and political levels.

By regarding practices related to drugs as 'drug misuse' or 'drug abuse' implies the negative connotation of these practices. It is, furthermore, possible to blame the subject for the 'abuse' or 'misuse' of the substances. However, due to the pharmacological properties of the drugs, there is certain room for 'blaming' the substance such that the problem of drug misuse or drug abuse becomes a problem of addiction.

²⁵³ See section 5.2. Root Definitions, in Chapter Five, Discourses about cannabis. Also, see Chapter 6, Cannabis re-classification.

²⁵⁴ Flint, C., (2004) *Adjournment debate on legalisation of medical cannabis*. Hansard Debates for 14 October 2004 (pt 34) London: House of Commons.

As analysed by Davies (1997) and Reinerman (2005), the concept of addiction can be understood as a 'useful social construction'. The authors explain how in the context of addiction, drugs use is normally regarded as an 'external force' that takes over the individual. The 'external force' taking over people by means of its addictive properties is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it justifies the special powers of the 'addiction doctor' required to fight the evil (Cohen, P., 2000). Indeed, increasing resources are directed towards institutions and enforcement agencies apparently powerless in fighting drugs problems. On the other hand, it also represents an excuse for drugs users in taking / not taking responsibility for their actions (Davies, J.B., 1997).

In contrast, discourses about the recreational and medicinal uses of cannabis transfer the responsibility to the user. He or she is the one who can manage their respective levels of consumption. Similarly to other practices such as eating, smoking or drinking, it is possible that the person can decide what to consume and thus incorporate into his/her body. Furthermore, it must be recalled that in the context of the public management in drugs policy, the drugs user became 'a customer who can make responsible choices with regard to his or her health' (Zibbell, J.E., 2004: 59). If this is the case, the doctor or the specialist is no longer required, since the person maintains a level of control over his/her own decisions and actions.

It may be claimed, thus, that one of the main consequences of the re-classification of cannabis has been to define the problem of cannabis, and thus, the characterisation of the cannabis user. The debate on cannabis has indirectly allowed the problem to be re-sited in the realm of mental health, and in this way, it has nominated the medical practitioner as the individual responsible for its treatment. However, this definition is not merely a better, more accurate, or more humane way of treating cannabis issues; specifying a condition as a 'disease' carries an important social message, not just a medical one (Davies, J.B., 1997: 12). In addition, the definition entails that people who use cannabis and experience problems

can place the responsibility for their cure on others: usually a doctor, a psychologist, or even a religious leader. Because of his /her medical condition, the responsibility for drug use is thus removed from the individual; in other words, his/her agency is made inaudible. As a consequence, an external entity or authority must take care of the body, in which case the intervention of the state, *via* health programmes, treatment or imprisonment, is easily justified.

In the analysis of media articles and official documents prior to the re-classification there are few examples in which the user defines him/herself as having a condition of mental health, being mad, or a psychotic. When the definition of 'cannabis psychosis' was created, some sufferers began to describe their problems in relation to this condition. Before, the cannabis user had described his/her use as part of a hedonistic practice, or a relaxation activity.²⁵⁵ Now, the cannabis user is not only described by others (i.e., parents, doctors, psychologists, treatment agencies, and campaigners), but also, they start to incorporate these descriptions as part of their lives. In other words, the definition of the problem precedes its affliction.

To summarise: the re-classification of cannabis, as part of the political technologies of the body, has created a new type of subject. He or she appears to suffer from a condition that must be treated, and sometimes punished. The subject is no longer a recreational user or a medicinal user, but a psychotic or a criminal. In the drugs policy, and in the context of cannabis re-classification, there are no drug users. Instead, the subject is defined as a drug misuser, a drug abuser or a drug addict. He/she requires treatment, punishment or education: it means disciplinary techniques.

²⁵⁵ It has been shown in Chapter 5: Discourses about cannabis, how Becker analysed the practice of smoking cannabis as a learning experience whereby the pleasurable effects of cannabis are discerned and explained using cultural cues within a particular group. See Becker, H.S., (1953) "Becoming a Marihuana User", *The American Journal of Sociology* (59) 395-403.

8.4.3. The efficiency of cannabis re-classification

A third aspect to be analysed in this research refers to the effects of cannabis re-classification in the wider context of drugs policy making and the social constructions about cannabis problems in British society. Here, the reference to 'efficiency' is not related to the original purpose in the Government of 'saving resources'. It is not either, a better understanding of the recreational and medicinal reasons for using cannabis in certain cases, therefore, a possible 'normalisation' of those uses. If these constituted the real purposes of the re-classification, then the power of arrest would have been definitively withdrawn, and the re-classification taken further by challenging the issue of the wholesale prohibition of drugs. On the contrary, the message of the Government was clear: the possession or use of cannabis is still an offence carrying the possibility of arrest, and prohibition is the best way to deal with drugs-related problems in society.

From the previous sections in this chapter, the efficiency of re-classification, not just in terms of the aims proposed by the government, but in the process of regulating human practices can be analysed. In this way, cannabis re-classification is part of a wider *dispositif* of the regularisation and control of the practice of drug use. As mentioned before, cannabis re-classification can be understood in the context of political technologies of power. Hence, its efficiency relies on the following aspects:

Firstly, re-classification works as an efficient means of making *invisible/inaudible* certain types of cannabis use (i.e., medicinal and recreational), while revealing the problems associated with its use. Other actions become simultaneously more visible. For example, police action regarding cannabis offences has become more formal or more visible, as have the problems associated with cannabis use in relation to mental health.

However, both *visible* aspects of the re-classification refer to the consequences for the body and the mind of using cannabis. Since the possession and use of cannabis are still arrestable offences, then he/she may be fined or be sent to prison. If the person is not caught, the risk of developing psychosis is nevertheless present: in other words, his or her mind is under the condition of 'psychosis'. In this way, body and soul (or mind) are regulated by cannabis re-classification: there is no escape.

Secondly, the re-classification of cannabis must be understood in the context of power relationships among different types of knowledge, institutions and agents. In general terms, it is possible to see how the medical profession and the criminal justice system tend to dominate the discussion. Users and campaigners have, nevertheless, appeared as prominent actors, especially in the first part of the debate.

As a result of the re-classification, the apparent 'normalisation' of cannabis use has been neutralised. Recreational users and medicinal users are defined as drug misusers, and the negative effects of cannabis on human health are emphasised. After the re-classification, the two traditional disciplines, criminologists and the medical profession, seem to have retained their predominance in treating or punishing cannabis issues, yet both are part of the extensive powers of the state in the exercise of bio-power.

8.5. Final Remarks

This chapter has provided a genealogical analysis of the re-classification of cannabis. By following some of the theories derived from Foucault's work, the genealogy has revealed how the problem of cannabis has been redefined, as well as the effects of this redefinition on the subject of this decision. Through the analysis of two moments in the re-classification debate, from 2004 and 2005, the way in which discourses and actors have been transformed has been demonstrated. This transformation can be

understood in the wider context of power/knowledge relationships. From this exercise it can be argued that a Post-Structuralist approach to the understanding of drugs policy issues offers new avenues for exploration.

Certain notions can be further developed from this exercise:

Drugs policy is understood as a way of regulating practices related to drugs through the problematisation of these practices. Drugs policy is thus an exercise of bio-power in which the purpose seems to be to discipline that which is regarded as an undesirable practice. The criminalisation and 'medicalisation' of drug use are, in this context, part of the same aim: control. As previously explained, penalties for drug use are punished both by treatment and by imprisonment. Both aspects are linked in the legislation and in the implementation of the law. As a consequence, there is no significant division between treatment, on the one hand, and control, on the other, in the British system: both are part of the same political technology of power aimed at intervening in the body.

Further exploration of aspects related to drugs policy can be executed through adopting and applying Foucault's ideas. As was explained, this is a relatively unexplored territory offering insights of considerable value to the discussion into contemporary drugs research. In particular, Foucault's interest in the body in relation to the practices regarding drugs use, as well as forms of regulating these practices, can be developed in the understanding of drugs policy issues.

Another important aspect added by a Post-Structuralist approach to the understanding of drugs policy in the United Kingdom is the consideration of the changing dynamics of power relationships, and the production of knowledge. As has been demonstrated in this chapter, the different definitions of drug problems, in this case, cannabis problems, has revealed the multiplicity of interests in this process. Medical experts, government officials, police officers, and other stakeholders pursue their own respective agendas; therefore, the policy-making process must be

understood as a configuration of forces and influences that are eventually crystallised into one specific decision.

Further investigation can be developed from the material gathered in this research. In particular, it would be desirable to apply some of the techniques related to discourse analysis, focusing on concrete examples in the constructions of drug discourses. Nevertheless, the material collected and classified constitutes a rich vein of source material for future exploration.

Finally, the genealogy has allowed the researcher to go beyond the case of re-classification to understanding other dynamics in relation to bio-power, the exercise of power, and the 'battles of knowledge' in the process of the normalisation of drugs use. By approaching this research from a Post-Structuralist view, it has been possible to complement the material gathered from the selective use of the initial methodology, by providing answers regarding how discourses are produced and how some of them become dominant in the public discussion. A number of conclusions drawn from the complete investigation will be summarised in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9 SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The process of writing this PhD thesis began when the debate on cannabis in the United Kingdom was at its height. Only a few months before the academic period started in September 2002, the British government had announced that they were considering the downgrading of cannabis from Class B to Class C in the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971. The experience of the researcher in the study of drugs policies in Latin America and Europe, in addition to the support from her supervisor in this regard, encouraged further study of the issue.

As demonstrated in the thesis, the challenges and difficulties encountered proved greater than could have been anticipated. The controversy surrounding the topic, the divergent opinions on it, and the extensive (sometimes elusive) information available represent the reality of the investigation. The researcher should thus address such a diversity of opinions and contradictory information through ensuring a means of considering these factors even-handedly. Therefore, the process of collecting material, gaining access to certain sources, and interviewing a number of experts conformed to the necessity of including as many opinions and views on cannabis as possible. Using both Foucault's interpretive analytics and Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology in support, it has been possible to advance a clearer understanding of the process of drugs policy making in the specific case of cannabis. The result, as confirmed by the thesis, has proved wholly worthwhile; in these eight chapters, the research questions initially inspiring the work have been addressed. In addition, the investigation may contribute to the debate on drugs policy not only where the United Kingdom is concerned, but also for other Western societies.

The current chapter synthesises some of the outcomes and conclusions from the investigation on cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom.

In order to present these ideas, the chapter has been organised into the following sections.

In the first part, the main methodological conclusions of this research will be presented. With the benefit of hindsight, this section highlights the way in which the tools and concepts provided by the work of both Foucault and Checkland were used in gaining an understanding of the process of policy making regarding cannabis in the United Kingdom. Because the methodological aspects are related to the fourth research question, thus this section represents an answer related to the contributions of Soft Systems Methodology within the wider approach of Foucault's interpretive analytics used in this investigation.

In the second section the answers to the remaining three research questions will be compiled. A reminder of the content of the chapters in which the answers are developed is provided. Finally, this section summarises the main contributions of this thesis to an understanding of drugs policy issues.

The third part of the chapter offers some personal remarks on the whole undertaking and the challenges faced by the researcher. The aim of such remarks is to indicate areas of future research into this field of study as they arose during the writing of the current thesis.

9.1. Contribution to this dissertation of the use of the work of Foucault and of Checkland.

The topic of drugs policy is one of the most controversial areas in Western societies, as has been widely illustrated in this dissertation. From the early twentieth century - and based on a number of international agreements - a list has been compiled of drugs defined by different governments as illicit. Hence, various countries such as the United Kingdom have implemented

regulations and procedures for controlling the trade in and the use of those substances. As explained in Chapter Two, the regulations covering illicit drugs use in Britain have evolved alongside three elements: the perception of problems related to drugs use, the international context, and the priorities of British social policy. The regulation of cannabis has, as one part of this evolution, responded to public concern and scientific debate about its level of harmfulness. As has been presented in this dissertation, the process of policy making on cannabis has evolved throughout different periods of time; it has been influenced by scientific, cultural, and social perceptions of cannabis.

The first three questions inspiring this investigation relate to the way in which certain appreciations of the topic are expressed in the public debate, and their impact on the process of policy making. As specified by the research questions, this dissertation aimed to find out how certain discourses on cannabis take place, why some discourses take precedence over others, and what the impacts are of the process of cannabis re-classification on the definition of the problems related to cannabis and the subject experiencing these problems. In the fourth question, a number of methodological aspects have been tested as in responding to the research questions. Particularly, the utilisation of some tools from the work of both Michel Foucault and Peter Checkland has provided the methodological core of this dissertation. This section synthesises the answer to the fourth question: that of the development and practical application of a methodology through using the work of Checkland as a supportive device to the approach developed by Foucault in the analysis of drugs policy-making processes, such as cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom.

The notion of combining the works of these two authors has been proposed by some authors in the area of systems thinking. Among them, the current dissertation owes a debt to Jackson (2000) and to Valero-Silva (1998) in their consideration of Foucault's work as a promising path towards complementing the use of certain systems thinking

methodologies. Particularly, the work of Valero-Silva has been significant in understanding the extent to which the use of some aspects of certain systems thinking methodologies can support the 'archaeological' stage of Foucault's approach (Acevedo, B. and Valero-Silva, N., 2005). As a practical application of these proposals, the thesis represents an original contribution by enhancing the potential uses of some systems thinking methodologies in the understanding of the dynamics involved in power issues such as drugs policy making.

The purpose of this section is thus to discuss certain methodological aspects in the use and complementarity of the work of Checkland and Foucault. In order to develop the purpose, the section is divided in three parts: in the first, the ontological and methodological foundations in the understanding of the nature of drugs and particularly cannabis are recapitulated. From there, the second part addresses the main methodological framework used in this research; it is based on the application of certain ideas from the work of Michel Foucault. It clarifies how some selected stages of Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology were used as a supportive device in the interpretive analytics method proposed by Foucault, particularly in the 'archaeological' phase. The third part synthesises the overall application of Foucault's interpretive analytics in the understanding of the *dispositif* of cannabis re-classification as an example of the normalisation of drugs use in the United Kingdom.

9.1.1. Epistemological Foundations

As explained in Chapter Four, many ways of understanding the reality of drugs and the way in which they can be understood exist. These questions are related to the ontology and the epistemology. Ontology refers to the question of 'What is reality?' In the case of drugs, whether they are a 'given' substance out there independently of our perception, or whether their reality is mediated by our perception, may be questioned. Chapter Four states that there may be two ways of understanding drugs: in the first

option, drugs are considered as independent entities to be studied by natural science. Thus, disciplines such as chemistry or pharmacology can produce knowledge about their composition, effects, and characteristics. However, this one perspective cannot provide the information about why certain substances are labelled as 'illegal drugs', while other substances (such as alcohol) produce effects similar to those that are classified as illegal drugs. In response, it was proposed that the epistemology of drugs might benefit from a non-positivist approach. Furthermore, it was proposed to understand drugs, and illicit drugs particularly, as the product of social constructions susceptible to change over time. This view is based on the work of a number of drugs researchers, among whom are Peter Cohen (1990), Harry Levine (1978), and Craig Reinerman (2005); they argue for a consideration of drugs as social constructions.

When starting this research, it was specified that an interpretive paradigm represented an appropriate path towards achieving an understanding of the complexity of drugs, taking into account the evolving perceptions and knowledge of them in different periods of history. It was claimed, thus, that the interpretive paradigm represented a suitable platform on which to address some of the questions in contemporary drugs research including how drugs are socially constructed and expressed in different discursive formations or by certain institutions.

In an analysis of the epistemological foundations of Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology it was specified that it belongs more closely to an interpretive than a functionalist paradigm (Jackson, 2000: 248). Chapter Four presented the way in which Checkland's methodology emerged as an original means of dealing with ill-defined situations, including different appreciations of a situation. Checkland's approach represented a milestone in the development of systems thinking ideas, through his acknowledging the dynamic and sometimes problematic features of problems involving human action. In his Soft Systems Methodology, Checkland stressed the importance of considering different world-views – *Weltanschauungen* - in the analysis of a situation. These world-views, as

presented in this thesis, take the form of 'discourses', including different statements in which opinions on and knowledge of the situation are expressed.

The thesis also considered the work of Michel Foucault as another promising path towards exploring the understanding of cannabis re-classification as a case of drugs policy making. Chapter Seven presented a comprehensive review of Foucault's approach. It was said that one of Foucault's major concerns in the development of his work was the understanding of certain processes of the normalisation of human behaviour and practices through the analysis of discursive formations and historical conditions. The ways in which certain problems 'emerge' at particular moments of history, and the ways in which such problems are defined and regulated, can be understood by means of his findings. Throughout his work Foucault developed his method of inquiry into these processes. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983) have called his method 'interpretive analytics'. This method involves the 'archaeological' and 'genealogical' phases, aiming to understand how certain discourses about a particular situation (or problem) emerge, along with the dynamics of power and knowledge supporting these constructions.

In relation to the epistemological paradigm proposed in this research, it is possible to argue that using some aspects in Foucault's work represents a way to further the understanding of drugs as social constructions. As was presented before, some authors in the drugs research field have used Foucault's ideas to reach an understanding of how issues around the practice of inebriation have been defined as 'problems' in given historical periods. Among them, Harry Levine (1978) defined the pathway of the use of Foucault's ideas in understanding what Levine referred to as 'the discovery of addiction' in relation to the definition of problems associated with alcohol. The present dissertation draws on Levine's work and the understanding of drugs as social constructions; it represents a progression in the development of this line of thought by including questions such as: how social constructions about drugs emerge, how they are disseminated,

and how they are expressed in certain discourses related to a given historical period. As is confirmed by this dissertation, the analysis of the case of cannabis re-classification has helped in the understanding of changes in the social construction of the problem of cannabis in the United Kingdom within a particular historical period: that from 2002 to 2004.

When initiating the research journey it was specified that an interpretive paradigm may accommodate both Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology and the questions related to the nature of drugs. Throughout the process of investigation certain evidence of the existence of power issues to be considered in the analysis were highlighted. As mentioned before, the predominance of certain discourses highlighting the negative effects of cannabis use, and also the inconsistencies in the process of policy making informed by the interviews, alerted the researcher to the existence of power issues that needed to be understood in the context of the investigation.

This dissertation has included a wide range of opinions from stakeholders, experts, and actors with insightful knowledge about the process of policy making in the topic of cannabis. The opportunity to gain access to these people represents an achievement of this investigation. Thanks to the interviews, many of the inconsistencies of the policy making process were evidenced. Indeed, the interviews show the existence of other voices disregarded in the mainstream sources that without this investigation would have remained invisible and unheard.

Four examples in which the presence of power issues was evidenced have been included and explained. They refer to the invisibility of certain group of actors, the predominance of certain opinions over others, the fractures in the logic in the policy making process, and the lack of transparency in the process of decision making about cannabis policy. In consequence, it has been demonstrated that it is necessary to include the issue of power as a central feature of the examination of cannabis re-classification.

This consideration evolved toward integrating the work of Foucault and its possible contributions in responding to the research questions. An outcome of this research is that it has been possible to propose using Foucault's interpretive analytics as the general framework against which to reach the understanding of processes concerning drugs policy making. The case of cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom has served as a test for this use of Foucault's interpretive analytics. Complementary to the framework, the use of some stages in Soft Systems Methodology have been subordinated to Foucault's approach; in particular, it was specified that Checkland's SSM serves as a methodological device in the 'archaeological' stage in Foucault's interpretive analytics. A brief reminder of the notions of 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' in Foucault's work and their application in this research are presented in the next sub-sections.

9.1.2. An 'archaeology' of cannabis re-classification using some stages of Soft Systems Methodology

Chapter Seven of this dissertation explained how Foucault approached history as the source for his material. He used history as a way of *diagnosing* the present and understanding certain processes by which certain forms of behaviour or situations are defined as 'problems' for Western societies. In his interpretive analytics method, history is the source of 'archaeological' material. In the archaeology, the aim is to collect facts, not necessarily consecutively, nor even in a chronological fashion, but indicating the nature of discourses emerging in a determined period of time regarding a particular situation. As a result, the information collected in the form of statements or discourses forms part of a configuration of these problems.

Foucault, as has been shown, provided no fixed formula for carrying out the archaeology. Throughout his earlier works, he developed the purpose of collecting facts in the form of statements, representations or

expressions of a particular situation (or problem) during a period of time. For instance, in his book *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault analysed the origin of madness by revealing a number of discourses from different disciplines that define and categorise insanity. He approached those discourses in the context of an institution, the Hospital, where they are developed. Foucault went beyond the realm of institutions in his later works, to analyse aspects such as the origin of scientific knowledge. Nevertheless, his focus remained on the discursive formations that expressed this knowledge.

Although Foucault approached history in order to reveal how particular discursive structures replace others, he made no attempt to verify the validity or the truth of those discourses. In fact, he recommended accepting discourses or 'statements' at their face value without trying to interpret them. As shown in Chapter Five, a collection of statements, opinions and views about cannabis re-classification were collected from different sources without attaching to them any value or hierarchy: simply considering them in an equal manner.

This recommendation has been especially useful when approaching a topic in which the diversity and amount of information may prove quite challenging for the researcher. Responding to this challenge, it was decided that some stages in Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology could provide a way of organising the different statements and opinions expressed about cannabis and its re-classification during a specific historical period (in this case, the years 2002 to 2004). Soft Systems Methodology acknowledges that there are many approaches to any problem-situation, based on the different world-views of the situation itself. SSM does not try to prove whether the world-views expressed are true or false. In fact, the utilisation of certain stages of SSM followed, as demonstrated in Chapter Five, Foucault's recommendation in taking discourses at their surface level. A number of world-views about cannabis were identified when the diversity of discourses about cannabis expressed in the rich picture was approached. A means of organising those world-

views created by the intersection of the duality in the definition of cannabis both as a poison and as a remedy, acting in two realms of the human person, both the soul and the body, was proposed. Thus, the purpose of providing such a classification has been neither to prove nor to refute the consideration of cannabis as a poison or as a remedy, acting in the realm of the body or the soul; the purpose has been, rather, to show how different discourses can be represented in this intersection of polarities. As has been stated, this is one way among many in which to represent different discourses on cannabis and its re-classification by providing a 'rich picture' and by identifying relevant systems. The identification of different 'discourses' by building Root Definitions has provided a tool with which to monitor changes in the proportion of these discourses in several scenarios.

Given the claims about Foucault's 'archaeology' and considering the results of applying Soft Systems Methodology, it was possible to demonstrate that the discourses identified by the Root Definitions represent a body of archaeological material. Four reasons were provided for this assertion: firstly, the Root Definitions are a collection of statements in the form of discursive formations regarding cannabis use and its regulation, similar to the way Foucault collected statements about 'madness' or 'illness'; secondly, they were collected and considered in an equal way, aiming to include as many world-views as possible on cannabis; thirdly, they were gathered in a particular period of time, attending to the historical perspective suggested by Foucault; and fourthly, they show how different institutions, bodies of knowledge, and people define the 'problem of cannabis'. The discourses collected by using some stages of SSM express different interests, rationalities, and world-views in what is said about cannabis. The discourses will eventually define the final outcome of the policy-making process in terms of the normalisation of the practice of using cannabis. Indeed, the wide variety of discourses may illustrate the dynamics of power and knowledge that eventually define the problem, those people affected by the problem, and the means of normalising or regulating such a problem.

Finally, it was argued that these discourses do not *per se* provide much information on the wider quest of this investigation. In Foucault's terms, they represent merely the 'archaeology' of discursive formations on cannabis re-classification that must be complemented by the 'genealogy'. The next sub-section synthesises the definition of what constitutes 'genealogy' and its application in this thesis.

9.1.3. A 'Genealogy' of cannabis re-classification: divergences and contours

In the review of Foucault's work it was explained that the 'archaeology' of discursive formations about a situation must be complemented by the 'genealogy'. Using the archaeology it was possible to find the different discourses that define a particular situation or problem. The aim is not to interpret them, or to determine whether these discourses are true - or even if they make sense - but to identify the ways in which a problem is being described or defined by different disciplines or groups. However, the sole identification of the discourses in the case of cannabis re-classification did not provide information about the origin of those discourses, nor did it respond to the question of why some discourses take precedence over others. In order to answer to this type of question, it was proposed to apply that which Foucault called the 'genealogy'.

Foucault developed the genealogy as a way of responding to the questions about how discourses change in a period of time, and the mechanisms that confer greater privilege on some discourses than on others. His book *Discipline and Punish* represents a practical example of the developing of the genealogy. By focusing on two moments in the practice of punishment, i.e., the public execution, and the regime of imprisonment, Foucault analysed the changes between these two moments in terms of the punitive strategies as well as through considering punishment as a complex social function. The current research similarly considered two moments in the process of cannabis re-classification:

firstly, when the proposal to re-classify it emerged in 2002, then when the decision to re-classify cannabis was made official in 2004. By focusing on these two events, gaining an appreciation of the ways in which discourses change and identifying the prevalent world-views on cannabis in these two moments has been made possible.

Chapter Eight analysed how discourses in the media changed in these two periods, as did the content of government documents. In this analysis the 'disappearance' of some discourses and subjects that in the first moment of analysis were highly relevant, i.e., the medicinal and the recreational uses, and the users of cannabis, was noted.

In the genealogy, Foucault focused on the discursive structures and their change throughout historical periods. In the current research, the selective use of SSM aimed to 'excavate' these discourses in order to discover how they play a role in the definition of a cannabis problem within a particular period. Further, in the genealogy of cannabis re-classification developed in Chapter Eight, it was possible to determine how the cannabis problem is expressed by the different discourses; for instance, when analysing news items it was found that the proportion of news reporting violent crimes committed under the influence of cannabis had increased during the period under analysis. In these media statements the cannabis user is distinguished as a *criminal* or as a *social menace*. Similarly, the increasing number of reports mentioning 'cannabis psychosis' contributed to the characterisation of the cannabis user as a potentially psychotic individual in need of treatment.

In addition, Foucault advised the genealogist to examine the surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and subtle contours. Drawing on previous chapters, the way in which the event of the re-classification of cannabis considered the surfaces of events in the wider context of drugs policy making and, in general, the issues related to social policy in the period of study was rendered feasible. It was shown, for example, that certain concerns about cannabis use appeared in the same period when

major legislation about anti-social behaviour and terrorism allowed the implementation of stricter controls over citizens in the United Kingdom. The implicit links between drug use as a social menace, on the one hand, expressed by anti-social behaviour or terrorism, on the other, have been specified in Chapter Eight.

Furthermore, through the genealogy it was possible to identify a major omission in the formulation and implementation of the proposal of re-classifying cannabis: the power of arrest. As explained above, the neutralisation of the power of arrest was the core of the original proposal and the way in which the purpose of saving resources could have been achieved. However, the final decision of the government not only emphasised that the use of cannabis is still an arrestable offence; also, aggravating circumstances were specified in relation to the power of arrest. The disappearance of the debate about the power of arrest represents a major hiatus in the process of discussing cannabis re-classification. This disappearance not only strengthens the power of certain groups, such as police officers, but also shows their influence on the processes of policy making in the British context.

Another interesting finding of this research was to understand the efficiency of cannabis re-classification not necessarily in relation to the purposes expressed by the government in reducing drugs use problems or saving resources; instead, the interest of this thesis was to discover what cannabis re-classification entails in terms of normalising human practices. In order to respond to this question, the notion of '*dispositif*' proposed by Foucault represents a way towards understanding how efficient the re-classification, in terms of the normalisation of the practice of drugs use in British society, has actually been. This notion links the 'archaeology' and the 'genealogy' by deciphering the configuration of power relations, body of knowledge and self-understanding in the discussion about cannabis re-classification. The next sub-section presents a reminder of this important concept regarding the methodological approach of the current thesis.

9.1.4. The *dispositif* deciphered

In the development of his work, Foucault proposed that a way of understanding certain processes of normalisation cannot be limited to the space of institutions, or merely by the analysis of discourses. He proposed, hence, the notion of a *dispositif* to surpass the limits of institutions or regulations by including architectural arrangements, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, etc. As explained by Valero-Silva (1998) the notion of *dispositif* considers the interaction of different elements within three dimensions: power relationships, bodies of knowledge, and forms of self-understanding. Such interaction can be analysed in the context of an institution, thus Valero-Silva clarifies the perception that the institution itself constitutes part of the answer given to a particular problematisation.

Due to the inter-disciplinary character of drugs issues, there are many institutions, professions, and social, economic, medicinal, and legal 'arrangements' involved in the normalisation of drugs-related activities. In this sense, the regulation of cannabis use, as proposed by the process of its re-classification, involves not only changes in the law, but also the re-distribution of responsibilities among agencies, disciplines, experts, and other stakeholders. Consequently, the notion of a *dispositif* can assist in reaching an understanding of how the practices that organise human actions are structured in relation to the production of certain discourses over a period of time in relation to three elements: knowledge, power, and the subject. As presented in this research, the next step is to find out how these three elements of the *dispositif* are expressed in the case of cannabis re-classification.

In terms of '*bodies of knowledge*', the structure can be found in many sources, such as government documents, scientific discourses, information in newspapers, or the statements provided by different actors

in relation to cannabis. In addition, other aspects, such as popular culture, that also produce knowledge have been considered.

Apart from the bodies of knowledge there are certain '*power relations*' that determine what type of discourses are more relevant than others. Foucault pointed out that power is not a static force, but that it is expressed in relations. For instance, the discussion about cannabis allowed interaction between the medical profession in their definition of 'cannabis psychosis' as a mental condition to be treated, and the criminal justice system as the realm in which penalties for cannabis offences are administered. These two realms are also related to actors in the mainstream media, the government, and politicians. They are not necessarily a unified group, yet they are related to each other when defining one or other view about the problem of cannabis. As stated by Foucault, power and knowledge are two sides of the same coin; they determine the precedence of certain discourses.

On the other hand, the different discourses about cannabis and its problems imply a definition of the cannabis problem and the subject who may experience it. Throughout the debate on re-classification, it has been possible to see how the cannabis user can be defined in different ways, not only by others; these definitions are '*forms of self-understanding*'. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that parallel to the exposure of the discourse about the possible existence of a 'cannabis psychosis', many subjects have adopted this hypothesis in order to explain or justify their behaviour, or the both positive and negative possibly detrimental effects that cannabis has had on their mental and physical health.

In contrast, the definitions of the cannabis problems are expressed by the execution of two types of powers over the subject: firstly, the power of arrest, confining the body to the prison system; and secondly, the power of treating those cases arising of damage possibly caused by the use of cannabis to mental health. While sometimes treatment requires the voluntary submission of the patient, it also occurs under the current

mechanism of 'Sectioning' in the UK, which makes it possible to provide this treatment compulsorily. As explained before, Foucault was interested in those mechanisms imposing on the human body by his notion of 'governmentality', emphasising those powers held by the State and its agents over individuals and particularly over their bodies. More intensive research into this topic will be of value to drugs policy researchers.

Finally, it has been argued that many of the aspects related to contemporary issues in drugs policy research are linked to questions formulated by Foucault regarding processes of normalisation. The next section aims to synthesise some of these aspects, as well as the interpretation drawn by this dissertation of contemporary questions in drugs research through using Foucault's interpretive analytics and assisted by the selective use of SSM.

9.1.5. Synthesis

In this review of the work of Michel Foucault and his interpretive analytics method, the way in which Foucault's interpretive analytics have become the main guide for the development of the current research about drugs policy making can be appreciated, having been tested within the understanding of cannabis re-classification in the United Kingdom. The way in which the current research considers drugs as social constructions implies the adoption of both a non-positivist approach and, specifically, an interpretive paradigm as the epistemological foundation of this investigation. It is acknowledged that the notion of drugs is not a single one; rather, the consideration of drugs tends to vary according to different perceptions in certain historical periods. In general, the definition of 'drugs' oscillates between the concepts of remedy or poison, thus the case of cannabis is a good example of a topic where such polarities provide different expressions of and opinions on it.

It was also explained how Foucault's quest into the processes of the normalisation of human practices in Western societies suits the general inspiration of this research, in relation to the study of cannabis re-classification as one of the many ways in which the practice of drugs use is regulated in British society. The research questions in this dissertation are closely related to Foucault's interests in madness, sexuality, illness, and punishment regarding his focus on the discourses defining 'problems' throughout certain historical periods. The examination of Foucault's interpretive analytics and the practical application of the 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' have been presented.

Foucault provided no single way of accomplishing the archaeology, yet he provided some principles for collecting different discourses; these are the expression in certain periods of time of how a problem is defined, or what is said about a particular situation. Foucault recommends the inclusion of a great variety of discourses while also recommending that the veracity of those discourses not be judged, nor if they make sense. He acknowledges that there are power relations determining who says what; he thus advises the inclusion of many opinions as possible - the 'archaeological' material. To this end, the current research opted to apply some stages of Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology as a device through which to perform the 'archaeology'.

The potentialities and advantages of SSM in drawing from a 'rich picture' a number of relevant systems about a situation have been expressed in the form of Root Definitions or 'discourses' about cannabis. It was demonstrated that SSM represents a suitable way of collecting different discourses about cannabis and its re-classification, adhering to Foucault's advice of considering discourses in their diversity and pointing out the world-view underpinning each of the discourses. The original contribution of this dissertation lies in its developing a practical application of the suggestion of considering the work of Foucault in the development of systems thinking methodologies (Flood, R. and Jackson, M., 1991; Jackson, M., 2000; Valero-Silva, N., 1998). The current research takes

these recommendations further by considering Foucault's approach as the general framework in which the selective use of Soft Systems Methodology serves as a supportive device.

The selective use of SSM has provided valuable material organised in a comprehensive way, by pointing out diverse world-views held by different actors with something to say about cannabis and its re-classification. It was demonstrated that this use of SSM has provided a certain 'archaeology' of discourses, as proposed by Foucault. Nevertheless, the mere collation of the discourses is not enough to understand how discourses on cannabis emerge in the discussion, or why some discourses are more prevalent than others in that a group of them define the problem of cannabis and therefore the subject who may experience these problems. It was also acknowledged that although SSM could have provided a suitable path towards understanding certain processes of policy making, it was nevertheless insufficient to deal with power issues emerging from the research process. The power issues are influential in the discussion about re-classification, examples were provided about how they may influence the decision on cannabis re-classification²⁵⁶; it is therefore necessary to adopt a suitable framework within which to tackle the complexity of drugs policy-making processes. Similarly, Foucault acknowledged that the 'archaeology' must be complemented with the 'genealogy' to understand the dynamics of power, knowledge, and the definition of the subject as related to the definition of 'problems' in Western societies.

Finally, it was said that many institutions, disciplines and actors play a role in the policy-making process on cannabis. Therefore, the main outcome of this dissertation has been to decipher the *dispositif* of cannabis re-classification, including both the 'archaeology' and the 'genealogy' and then to answer the research questions of this investigation, as will be demonstrated in the subsequent section.

²⁵⁶ See Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1. Interviews, data collection, and emerging issues.

9.2. Research questions answered

9.2.1. How are discourses on cannabis produced?

While exploring both the historical and the contemporary accounts of cannabis, it has been possible to show the variety of views on this matter. From earlier accounts from travellers to the East, through the scientific debate between the remedial or dangerous properties of cannabis, towards the contemporary controversy about its effects on mental health and criminality, this diversity of opinions has been widely evidenced.

Chapters Two and Five of the thesis have illustrated the different accounts of cannabis from an historical point of view, and also in the analysis of the particular case of cannabis re-classification. The variety of opinions and the amount of information required a suitable methodology acknowledging the contradictory and changing definitions of this topic. In consequence, Chapter Four proposed the use of certain stages of Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology. Further, in Chapter Five, a practical application of this proposal of the selective use of SSM proved to be an appropriate means of organising different discourses and views on cannabis. Given the combination of two binary oppositions, those of the perception of cannabis as a remedy or as a poison, and acting in the realm of the body or the soul, a number of views in the form of root definitions were identified. Eight types of discourses organised in the form of Root Definitions were categorised:

- Ritualistic use of cannabis
- Recreational use of cannabis
- Medicinal use of cannabis
- Economic use of cannabis

- Cannabis use as deviant practice: Prohibition
- Cannabis use as crime: Criminalisation
- Cannabis use as illness: Treatment
- Cannabis use as social problem: Public Policy.

These discourses aimed to include as many world-views as there are about cannabis, and also assisted in classifying and organising the different opinions expressed during the debate on cannabis re-classification. They correspond to the 'archaeology' of cannabis re-classification, according to the methodology proposed by Michel Foucault as constituting the general framework of this thesis. In Chapter Seven, it is possible to see how in Foucault's view discourses on cannabis are not only spontaneous expressions of different opinions: they emerge within a certain historical period, and represent particular world-views and interests.

Nevertheless, the identification alone of the discourses does not answer the question as to how they emerge, or why some of them take precedence over others; these queries were responded to through using the genealogical analysis proposed by Foucault. By analysing changes in the type of discourses over a period of two years, this dissertation shows that the appearance of knowledge about cannabis is related to the dynamics of power, in which certain disciplines, groups or institutions manifest their views on a situation. Following Foucault's advice, it has not been the quest of this research to verify the validity of these discourses; instead, it has been possible to see how discourses about cannabis appear in a certain historical moment, expressing the 'knowledge' of a certain discipline or group that is made public by different means; the disciplines or groups represent an interest either in maintaining the *status quo* of cannabis prohibition, or in challenging it.

As discussed in this thesis, the debate on cannabis re-classification allowed the crystallisation of different opinions and interests related to drugs policy. In fact, the debate on re-classification initiated by the Home

Secretary can be understood as his way of regaining control over drugs policy issues after the re-organisation of responsibilities for drugs policy issues in the British government. As presented in Chapters Two and Six, it has become traditional that the Home Office be responsible for the administration of the drugs policy in the United Kingdom. The responsibilities were temporarily transferred to the short-lived Anti-Drugs Tsar's Office; however, after the second victory of the Labour Party in being returned to government, the area of drugs returned to the Home Office, and the Home Secretary then announced his proposal to re-classify cannabis. Nevertheless, as explained in Chapter Six, the issue of drugs involved many institutions, disciplines, and agencies: all of them expressing their interests in and opinions on the matter.

The proposal to re-classify cannabis revealed the existence of different opinions on cannabis. The opinions, which tend to remain invisible, emerged and crystallised through the political discussion about changes in the legislation. During the period from 2002 to 2004 the opinions of different groups were expressed in diverse fora. In this research, a number of government documents and reports was analysed, and a sample of news items on cannabis was also collected. Interviews with stakeholders further complemented the analysis.

In conclusion, the debate on cannabis re-classification has served the purpose of regulating certain practices associated with cannabis. It was shown how certain discourses on cannabis did suggest a non-problematic use of this substance, since it was used for recreational and medicinal purposes. Indeed, the mass media and cultural products have been portraying cannabis use as a leisure activity, sometimes enjoyable, and most frequently associated with the cultural values of the 1960s. The debate on cannabis and its re-classification has indeed created the conditions for the 'normalisation' of this practice, previously apparently lacking control. This thesis has demonstrated that the delimitation and re-definition of the problem of cannabis has confirmed the authority of certain

disciplines or groups. Consequently, when cannabis is defined as a problem of health, the medical profession gains authority; when defined as a criminal matter, the correspondent authorities are institutions from within the criminal justice system, such as the police, the courts, and the prisons.

In synthesis: it can be seen how the definition of the problem of cannabis and the production of knowledge about it is not just an objective or scientific exercise, nor is the spontaneous appearance of different opinions. Discourses on cannabis emerge in a particular historical period by representing the world-views of different groups and therefore their interests. In fact, the emergence of these opinions in the public debate determines the redistribution of resources, authority and, in general, the exercise of power. The interrelation between power and knowledge determines which discourses are more prevalent than others; thus, an answer is found to the second research question of this research, as follows.

9.2.2. How do particular discourses become more relevant than others in the final decision on cannabis re-classification?

One of the main challenges faced by the researcher in this investigation has been to deal with the diversity of opinions about cannabis. Given that it is such a controversial topic, many of the opinions expressed through the interviews, the news items, and the government statements are charged with particular appreciations of and world-views on this matter. Chapter Five discussed the emergence of power issues from the analysis of different sources, leading to the proposal of a way to address them. It was accepted that as many opinions as possible be included by interviewing a number of experts on cannabis: users, public servants, police men, public servants, researcher on drugs, dealers or ex-dealers, parents, campaigners, etc.

An interesting aspect to emerge was that the analysis of the mainstream sources, particularly the sample of news items collected in this investigation, provided evidence of the fact that some opinions about cannabis took precedence over others. This result was obtained by comparing the proportion of the eight discourses or Root Definitions collected in two moments of the debate: firstly, during 2002-2004 and secondly, in the two weeks preceding the official implementation of cannabis re-classification in January 2004. As a result, the way in which discourses related to 'treatment', 'prohibition' and 'criminality' gradually replaced the variety found in the first sample of news articles, which included alternative discourses such as the 'recreational' use of cannabis, was revealed.

Similarly, the analysis of government documents shows how policy makers and politicians were accommodating the proposal of cannabis re-classification to the demands of the mainstream opinion. In this way, the public management discourse arguing for a more effective drugs policy and an improved distribution of available resources was gradually replaced by a more 'prohibitionist' approach in cannabis policy. The decision to re-classify cannabis yet retain penalties for possession, given that cannabis was in Class B, alongside the emphasis on the arrestable nature of offences related to the possession of cannabis reflect in practice the adoption of a 'prohibitionist' and 'criminalist' approach to cannabis, coinciding with the mainstream appreciation of the issue.

The analysis of government documents and expert reports as presented in Chapter Six explained how independent reports on cannabis were produced by groups of experts, involving the medical profession, psychologists, pharmacologists, and sociologists. The Independent Inquiry on Cannabis (Runciman, R., 1999) and the Select Committee on Science and Technology in the House of Lords (1998; 2001) used relevant information to make current the body of knowledge about cannabis and its different uses by taking advice from the scientific community and different stakeholders. The re-classification of cannabis as originally proposed

accepted the view of these Committees by stating that the major change should be the neutralisation of the power of arrest and the consideration of the medicinal uses of cannabis.

The interpretation and development of this proposal made by policy makers and politicians failed, however, to reflect the advice initially produced. In fact, the final decision on cannabis re-classification aimed to placate mainstream public opinion as presented by the mass media. Instead of following the advice of the Committees, who had consulted a wide range of experts, the government tried to accommodate different interests by responding to many groups. The penalties for possession of Class C drugs was an attempt by the government to seem 'tough' on drugs; simultaneously, it also tried to appear a 'liberal' government who proposed a debate on this controversial matter.

In the analysis of the news items in the two moments of the debate, the ways in which the common opinion of cannabis remain attached to the discourses of 'prohibition' and 'criminality' come to light. The news items reporting violent crimes allegedly soaring when the use of cannabis is involved, and the revelations of the tragedy of families whose children are experiencing 'cannabis psychosis' have indeed reinforced and re-created images of deviance associated with cannabis use. As demonstrated by sociologists Cohen and Young (1972), the creation of images of deviance owes to the mass media the propagation of moral panic associated with certain practices of drugs use. However, this does not mean that the 'media' produce knowledge, or even that they aim consciously to present one particular discourse over others: British newspapers tend to publish articles that their readers would like to read, and at the same time, journalists also express their own views on particular issues, thus becoming opinion makers.

The process by which some discourses are prevalent over others can be understood through an analysis of the processes of the production of knowledge regarding the topic of cannabis. Following Foucault's

approach, the production of knowledge not only refers to scientific knowledge; it includes the totality of statements regarding the matter. As presented in Chapter Eight, the genealogy of cannabis re-classification explains how certain knowledge is expressed during the public debate and is accepted by policy makers and legislators. There, it was proved how the type of knowledge expressed in different fora represents the interests of certain groups. It can be concluded that the re-classification of cannabis represents a prominent event in drugs policy making, while it is also part of the wider realm of regulating drug practices in society. The re-classification of cannabis represents a means towards an understanding reaching far beyond that of normalising cannabis use in British society: the re-classification reorganises and reinforces the respective powers of specific disciplines and institutions.

The interaction between power and knowledge has a definitive effect on the definition of the problem of cannabis, on its characterisation, on the ways of solving it, and on the institutions responsible for the solution. These aspects correspond to the third research question, summarised as follows.

9.2.3. What are the implications of cannabis re-classification for the definition of the 'problem' of cannabis and the characterisation of subjects who might experience this problem?

It has been argued that the debate about cannabis re-classification has allowed the implementation of a change in the legislation as a mechanism to 'normalise' and 'regulate' the practices associated with cannabis. The debate on cannabis encompasses a complex process in which the problem of cannabis is characterised, defined, and updated for a contemporary forum. The results from this research suggest that the re-classification has helped to regain control over those issues related to cannabis use that had allowed the consideration of non-problematic uses

of this substance. It was explained how the increasing acceptance of a 'recreational' practice expressed by cultural products and supported by certain expert research seems to have challenged the tight control of the legislation and the deviant character associated with drugs use. Consequently, the debate about its re-classification helped to place cannabis back under the moral and social scrutiny of British society.

Although the debate on cannabis was triggered by the proposal of the Home Secretary and that also formed part of his strategy to regain control over the issue of drugs, the matter of fact is that the proposal came in a moment in which a renewed discussion about cannabis use was somehow required. The debate served the purposes of diverse groups: either to recommend the strengthening of the prohibition and the severity of controls over cannabis use, or to open the way towards allowing certain drugs use by challenging the deviant character of drugs use in British society. Consequently, the proposal for cannabis re-classification cannot be explained merely as the advance of some liberal groups in the public debate, nor does it mean that the British government had turned 'soft' regarding drugs. Instead, the debate on cannabis re-classification must be understood as the *dispositif* for the normalisation of cannabis use, in which the problem of cannabis is redefined and characterised, and therefore, the concomitant responsibilities among agencies, experts or institutions in addressing this problem are re-distributed.

It was, furthermore, explained that Foucault's notion of *dispositif* goes beyond the limits of an institution by including different expressions, regulations, architectonic arrangements, statements, cultural products, opinions, and other ways in which a particular view on a situation is expressed by a society in a certain historical moment. The *dispositif* can be illustrated as the interaction of three dimensions: power relations, bodies of knowledge, and self-understanding (Valero-Silva, N., 1998). It was demonstrated above that the appearance of certain discourses on cannabis must be understood not only as expressions of 'knowledge', but also that their relevance is connected to the dynamics of 'power'. The

analysis of the different discourses appearing in the public debate demonstrated how a problem defined as a matter of public management regarded the re-classification as a way of saving resources. However, this view was replaced by the definition of a problem of mental health and/or criminality. These two definitions of the problem of cannabis seemed to encourage the increasing application of disciplinary techniques either by the medical profession or by the criminal justice system and their institutions: the Asylum or the Prison.

It can be summarised that the interaction between power and knowledge has produced certain definitions of the problem of cannabis, and has therefore appointed disciplines and institutions responsible for its treatment. In addition to these two dimensions, Foucault includes the subject who is affected by this interaction of power and knowledge. In the case of cannabis re-classification it was demonstrated that the changing definition of the cannabis problem reveals how the 'subject who uses cannabis' is perceived. For example, when the cannabis user is described in government speeches as an 'otherwise law-abiding citizen' who happens to use this substance for recreational or medicinal reasons, there is a definition of the 'subject'.

Paradoxically, that which at the beginning of the discussion could have been interpreted as a more tolerant approach to cannabis use has evolved into a much more complex problem, defined as it has been by the traditional disciplines of medicine and criminology. As the discussion on cannabis progressed, the government body charged with re-classification opted in favour of re-defining cannabis use in terms of mental health and potential crime; therefore, it has enforced certain ways of punishing and disciplining the practice of drugs use and, in turn, the drugs users.

The re-classification of cannabis has defined in specific terms the problem of cannabis use by locating the meaning of cannabis use in the context of its detrimental effects on both mind and body. As a consequence, the cannabis user who was initially regarded as a medicinal or recreational

user is now labelled a cannabis mis-user, a cannabis psychotic, or a cannabis addict. Those labels rely on the problematisation of cannabis use in relation to anti-social behaviour, addiction, and mental health. The means of punishing and controlling the practice has a two-fold strategy: on the one hand, cannabis use is still an arrestable offence, and the police retain the power of arrest over an individual caught in possession of the substance. In fact, as observed in the previous chapter, cannabis possession has become a more visible offence, hence must be treated in a more visible way. On the other hand, those who are not caught by the authorities seem to face an 'internal' punishment: because of the effects of cannabis on the brain and its alleged link with schizophrenia, the punishment seems to be located in their consciousness in the realm of the mind (the scientific locus of the soul).

The re-classification seems thus to have adjusted the juxtaposition of power and knowledge at the heart of drugs policy issues. The adjustment is made in a moment where it seemed that cannabis practices had escaped state control, given the expansion of its use among the population. The effects in terms of the legal implications of cannabis activities have not changed significantly upon re-classification, since the penalties for supplying have remained the same and cannabis possession is still an arrestable offence, thus more subtle issues must be considered. The re-classification of cannabis is inseparable from other public policies and in particular from other drugs policies in the United Kingdom. The appearance and disappearance of certain actors in the public discussion is, furthermore, no random event: it signifies the micro-physics of power. Finally, those divergences and contours direct us towards understanding the re-classification of cannabis as a political technique for gaining authority over the individual's body.

9.2.4. Further comments: Implications of the re-classification of cannabis for drugs policy in the United Kingdom

As a certain result of the genealogical analysis of the re-classification of cannabis presented in Chapter Eight, two significant aspects have been demonstrated: that the retention of the power of arrest by the police force, on the one hand, and the emergence of a new problem regarding cannabis and mental health, on the other, are crucial issues in the problematisation of cannabis.

The importance of this consideration is not limited to the consequences for the medical realm or for the criminal justice system. The formulation of the issue appears to ignore the economic and political implications of drugs use. It is not a matter of individual choice; nor is it a matter of availability. Drugs consumption can be seen as a resilient practice, guided by fashion, music, trends, and other expenditure on pleasure. Indeed, there are many other reasons for and expectations of the use of legal and illegal substances.

These aspects are not limited to the United Kingdom; they involve many countries and cultures. With the increased interconnections between national and international dimensions, the constructions can easily be transferred, shared or interpreted across borders, especially in the Western countries. Further research into these interconnections is desirable.

Finally, it is important to understand the re-classification of cannabis represents the way in which the *dispositif* regarding the regularisation of cannabis discourses and practices operates. As Chapter Seven held, three aspects can explain this assertion:

Firstly, the debate on re-classification has made visible a 'battle of knowledge' among various groups, such as the medical profession, police officers, parents, campaigners, opinion makers, researchers,

criminologists, and public officials. In Foucault's words, the debate amongst these different experts in relation to the re-classification of cannabis represents a ritual of power in which all opinions challenge each other. The medical profession seized upon the opportunity of regaining control over cannabis and other drugs-related issues when the debate introduced the factor of the effects of cannabis on human health. Whereas the criminal justice system was concerned with applying the management criteria in the administration of justice when the problem of cannabis use began to slide out of their domain into that of the medical profession. Possibly as a means of regaining authority, the problem of cannabis use as a crime became a problem of the efficient use of police resources. Nevertheless, the issue of resources failed to address the difficulty in defining the problematic aspects of cannabis use and how subjects experience these problems. The medical profession offered in response an appropriate explanation that contributed to defining the problem of cannabis use and characterising the subject experiencing these problems.

Secondly, apart from distributing responsibilities among different institutions and from awarding authority to a particular discipline as the most appropriate in addressing cannabis problems, the re-classification has rendered visible the different practices concerning cannabis. It should be borne in mind that cannabis use was apparently being tolerated, and that re-classification was aimed at normalising the practice. As a consequence of the re-classification, the virtual freedom in discourses and practices regarding cannabis use is made *visible*; therefore, this earlier liberty has been formalised and regulated. It has thus been illustrated how the re-classification, as a juridical and legal change, represents what Foucault called 'the micro-physics of power'.

Finally, the definition of the problem of cannabis also renders visible the type of subject who experiences problems related to its use. Indeed, the process of characterising the cannabis user concerns not only externally attributed characteristics of the person, but is also incorporated by the subject as a form of self-understanding. There, the cycle is complete:

power relationships determine *what is said* and understood about the problem of cannabis; this knowledge is circulated and validated throughout different institutions and scenarios (e.g., the media and government documents) and, finally, these aspects contribute to a self-understanding by the subject who eventually experiences the problems defined and distributed by the previous domains in the *dispositif*.

9.3. Personal remarks

It has been almost eight years since I began work on drugs policy issues. During this period I have been able to understand the dynamics of the production of drugs and, more recently, the practices of the consumption of drugs. My research has led me through the Latin American context to the European environment. The adventure has been worth the effort.

When embarking on a Doctoral Programme, it is not easy to identify the paths to take, nor whether they are the right ones. In this case, the decisions were not easy, yet they were fortunate. Choosing a systems approach might be interpreted as complying with an instrumental view of drugs policy issues; however, it is not possible to blame a tool in terms of what the user does with it. In this case, Soft Systems Thinking was used as a versatile tool, which aimed to include a number of contrasting views on cannabis. The advantage of approaching the topic from a non-judgemental perspective has allowed me to reveal the richness and complexity of the discussion on drugs policy issues.

Approaching the work of Michel Foucault has, furthermore, been an adventure in itself. The potentialities of his theories in relation to contemporary drugs policy discussions represent a rich vein to explore in future works. The issues of power, knowledge, and the subject have permitted me to extend my research horizons into the analysis of this and other public policies. Indeed, this approach has allowed me to disengage

from preconceptions on the matter, given my experience during these years of study. This does not, of course, entail complete objectivity over the results of this approach.

In fact, there has been throughout this thesis a genuine desire to enhance the understanding of drugs policy-making processes, to appreciate different perspectives, and to include a wide range of actors. Every interview, every news item and every conversation has allowed me to move closer to the British culture. From local people to national figures, including artists, experts, doctors, politicians, public officials, campaigners, users, parents, and practitioners, this has been a journey to the heart of one of the most controversial topics in terms of individual liberties. It is a fascinating topic in public policy and the increasing exercise of bio-power by Western governments.

Through adopting a post-structuralist approach, I could weigh the discourses in a balanced manner. The intention was not to prove the veracity of one discourse over others or even to decide whether they made any sense. Instead, the purpose was to widen the 'discourses' in order to determine the emergence of the problem, the institutions and interests compromised in this area, and to see how the definition of certain problems inherent in the realm of cannabis influence the self-understanding of subjects. These aspects have been fully achieved in this thesis.

Nevertheless, developments based on these findings can be expanded in the future; for example, a detailed analysis of the discourses collected in this thesis, as well as the comparison of the respective situations in different countries, remain to become articles for publications.

Drugs policy issues are dynamic and complex. What today is considered a matter of security may tomorrow be regarded as a market aspect of consumers' choice. History has taught us about the relativity of drugs use, the vacillation between their positive, their medicinal or their negative

consequences. Human beings wish to explore their minds and emotions, and drugs have been a suitable vehicle. Drugs, both legal and illegal, will continue to be a profitable area of activity for producers and distributors, sometimes fuelling conflicts and supporting markets of violence. It is no less than a satisfyingly challenging topic for a life of research and a rich vein ripe for exploration by those with the courage, to do so.

REFERENCES

- ACPO (2003) *Cannabis Enforcement Guidance*, London: Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- ACDD (1969) *Cannabis: Report by the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence*, London: HMSO
- ACMD (1982) *Report on a Review of the Classification of Controlled Drugs and of Penalties*, London: Home Office
- ACMD (1982a) *Report of the Expert Group on the Effects of Cannabis Use*, London: Home Office Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs
- ACMD (2002) *The Classification of Cannabis under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*, London: Home Office
- Abel, E., (1980) *Marijuana: The First Twelve Thousand Years*, London: Plenum Press
- Abraham, M., Kaal, H. and Cohen, P., (2001) *Licit and Illicit Drug Use in The Netherlands 2001*, Amsterdam: CEDRO- Mets and Schilt
- Abrams, S., (1997) 'The Wooton Report: The Decriminalisation of Cannabis in Britain' on <http://www.drugtext.org/articles>, accessed 30 November 2003
- ACDD (1968) *Cannabis: Report by the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence*, London: HMSO
- Acevedo, B & Common, R (2006): Governance and the management of networks in the Public sector: Drugs Policy in the United Kingdom and the case of Cannabis reclassification. *Public Management Review*. September 2006. Vol. 8 Number 3. pp. 395-414
- Acevedo, B. and Valero-Silva, N., (2005) 'A Post-Structuralist Analysis of the Discourses and Practices Regarding the "Re-classification of Cannabis in the UK"', 49th Conference for the International Society for the Systems Sciences, Cancun, Mexico, July 7-10. 2004
- Acker, C.J., (2001) *Creating the American Junkie: Addiction Research in the Classic Era of Narcotic Control*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press
- Ackoff, R., (1979) 'The Future of Operational Research is Past' in Flood, R. and Jackson, M.C., (eds.) *Critical Systems Thinking: Directed Readings*, Chichester, England: John Wiley and Sons
- Agamben, G., (2005) *State of Exception*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Agar, M., (1973) *Ripping and Running: A Formal Ethnography of Urban Heroin Addicts*, New York: Seminar Press
- Agar, M., (2002) 'How the drug field turned my beard grey' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (13) (4) 249-258
- Alcock, P., (1996) *Social Policy in Britain*, London: MacMillan

- Amos, A., Wiltshire, S., Bostock, Y., Haw, S. and McNeill, A., (2004). Research Report: 'You can't go without a fag?..?..?you need it for your hash' - a qualitative exploration of smoking, cannabis and young people' in *Addiction* (99) (1): 77-81
- Anslinger, H. and Ryley Cooper, C., (1937) 'Marijuana: Assassin of Youth' in *American Magazine*
- Arendt, M., (2002) 'Heavy cannabis users seeking treatment: prevalence of psychiatric disorders' in *European Psychiatry* (17) (Supplement 1): 121
- Atha, M.J. and Blanchard, S., (1997) *Regular Users, Self-Reported Consumption Patterns and Attitudes towards Drugs Amongst 1333 Regular Cannabis Users*, London: Independent Drug Monitoring Unit
- Baker, D., Pryce, G., Giovannoni, G. and Thompson, A.J., (2003) 'The therapeutic potential of cannabis' in *The Lancet Neurology* (2) (5): 291-298
- Barber, B., (1967) *Drugs and Society*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation
- Barrett, L., (1988) *The Rastafarians*, New York: Beacon Press
- Bean, P., (1974) *The Social Control of Drugs*, London: Martin Robertson
- Bean, P., (2002) *Drugs and Crime*, Cullompton: Willan Publishing
- Becker, H.S., (1953) 'Becoming a Marihuana User' in *The American Journal of Sociology* (59) 395-403
- Becker, H.S., (1963) *Outsiders: Studies in Sociology and Deviance*, New York: Free Press
- Becker, H.S., (1977) 'Knowledge, Power, and Drug Effects' in Rock, P.E. (ed.) *Drugs and Politics*, New Brunswick: Transaction Books pp.167-190
- Berger, P. and Luckman, T., (1967) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press
- Berridge, V., (1989a) 'Historical Issues' in MacGregor, S., (ed.) *Drugs and British Society: Responses to a Social Problem in the Eighties*, London and New York: Routledge
- Berridge, V., (1999) 'European drug policies: The need for historical policy perspectives' in Derks, J., Van Kalmthout, A. and Albrecht, H.J., (eds.) *Current and Future Drug Policy Studies in Europe: Problems, Prospects and Research Methods*, Freiburg: Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Penal Law
- Berridge, V., (2003) 'Queen Victoria's cannabis use: Or, how history does and does not get used in drug policy making' in *Addiction Research & Theory* (11) (4): 213
- Berridge, V., (2005) 'The 'British System' and its history: Myth and Reality' In Strang, J. and Gossop, M., (eds.) *Heroin Addiction and the British System Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*, Abingdon: Routledge
- Berridge, V., (ed.) (1990) *Drug Research and Policy in Britain*, Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company Limited
- Berridge, V. and Edwards, G., (1981) *Opium and the People: Opiate Use in Nineteenth-Century England*, London: Allen Lane
- Berridge, V., (1999) 'European Drug Policies: The need for historical policy perspectives' in Derks, J., Van Kalmthout, A. and Albrecht, H.J., eds., *Current and Future Drug Policy*

- Studies in Europe: Problems, Prospects and Research Methods*, Freiburg: Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Penal Law pp 69-87
- Bewley, T., (2005) 'The Drugs Problem of the 1960s: A New Type of Problem' in Strang, J. and Gossop, M., (eds.) *Heroin Addiction and the British System Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*, Abingdon: Routledge
- Bey, H. and Zug, A., (eds.) (2004) *Orgies of the Hemp Eaters: Cuisine, Slang, Literature and Ritual of Cannabis Culture*, New York: Autonomedia
- Bickel, W.K. and De Grandpre, R., (eds.) (1996) *Drug Policy and Human Nature: Psychological Perspectives on the Prevention, Management and Treatment of Illicit Drug Abuse*, New York: Plenum Press
- Bischke, P.M., (2003) 'Pleasure drugs and classical virtues: Temperance and abstinence in U.S. religious thought' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (14) (3): 273-278
- Blum, R.H., (1969) *Drugs*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Boekhout van Solinge, T., (1997) *The Swedish Drug Control System*, Amsterdam: Cedro-University of Amsterdam
- Boekhout van Solinge, T., (1999) 'Dutch Drug Policy in a European Context' in *Journal of Drug Issues* (29) (3): 511-599
- Boekhout van Solinge, T., (2002) *Drugs and Decision Making in the European Union*, Amsterdam: Mets & Schilt Publishers, Amsterdam
- Boekhout van Solinge, T., (2005) *Dealing with Drugs in Europe, An Investigation of European Drug Control Experiences: France, the Netherlands and Sweden*, Annandsale-Australia: The Federation Press
- Boon, M., (2002) *The Road of Excess: A History of Writers on Drugs*, Harvard: Harvard University Press
- Bourgois, P., (2000) 'Disciplining addictions: the bio-politics of methadone and heroin in the United States' in *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* (24) (2): 165-195
- Bourgois, P., (2002) 'Anthropology and epidemiology on drugs: the challenges of cross-methodological and theoretical dialogue' in *International Journal of Drugs Policy* (13) (4): 259-269
- Boyd, S., (2004) *From Witches to Crack Moms: Women, Drug Law and Policy*, Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press
- Brewis, J. (1996) *Sex, Work and Sex at work: A Foucauldian Analysis*, unpublished PhD thesis, UMIST, UK
- Brewis, J., Sanderson, C. and Wray-Bliss, E., (2005) *Interrogating Excess: The case of organizational drug policies*, 23rd Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden, July 2005
- Brown, D.T., (1998) 'Non-Medical Uses of Cannabis Sativa' in Brown, D.T. (ed.) *Cannabis: the Genus Cannabis*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers
- Brown, D.T., (ed.) (1998) *Cannabis: The Genus Cannabis*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers

- Brownlee, N., (2003) *The Complete Illustrated Guide to Cannabis*, London: Sanctuary Publishing
- Bruun, K., Pan, L. and Rexed, I., (1975) *The Gentlemen's Club: International Control of Drugs and Alcohol*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Burrell, G. and Morgan, G., (1979) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*, London: Heinemann
- Butrica, J.L., (2002) 'The medicinal use of cannabis among the Greeks and Romans' in *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* (2) (1): 51-70
- Castle, D. and Murray, R., (eds.) (2004) *Marijuana and Madness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Castle, D. and Solowij, N., (2004) 'Acute and subacute psychomimetic effects of cannabis in humans' in Castle, D. and Murray, R., (eds.) *Marijuana and Madness: Psychiatry and Neurobiology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 41-53
- Charles, M., Bewley-Taylor, D. and Neidpath, A., (2005) *Drug Policy in India: Compounding Harm?* Briefing Paper Ten Oxford: The Beckley Foundation - Drug Policy Programme
- Checkland, P., (1981) *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Checkland, P., (1994) 'Systems theory and management thinking' in *American Behavioural Scientist* (38) (1): 75-91
- Checkland, P., (1999) *Soft Systems Methodology: A 30-year Retrospective*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd
- Checkland, P. and Casar, A., (1986) 'Vickers' concept of an appreciative system: A systemic account' in *Journal of Applied Systems Analysis* (13) 3-17
- Checkland, P. and Scholes, J., (1990) *Soft Systems Methodology in Action*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons
- Chen, S. and Skidelsky, E., (eds.) (2001) *High Time for Reform: Drug Policy for the 21st Century*, London: The Social Market Foundation
- Chivite-Mathews, N., Richardson, A., O' Shea, J., Becker, J., Owen, N., Roe, S. and Condon, J., (2005) *Drug Misuse Declared: Findings from the 2003/2004 British Crime Survey - England and Wales*, London: Home Office - Statistical Bulletin
- Churchman, C.W., (1970) 'Operations Research as a Profession' in Flood, R. and Jackson, M.C., (eds.) *Critical Systems Thinking: Directed Readings*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons
- Churchman, C.W., (1971) *The Design of Inquiring Systems*, New York: Basic Books
- Churchman, C.W., (1979) *The Systems Approach and Its Enemies*, New York: Dell
- Churchman, C.W., Ackoff, R. and Arnoff, E.L., (1957) *Introduction to Operations Research*, New York: Wiley
- Clark, N., (1976) *Deliver Us from Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition*, New York: W.W. Norton

- Clarke, J., (2001) 'Social Problems: Sociological Perspectives' in May, M., Page, R. and Brunsdon, E., (eds.) *Understanding Social Problems: Issues in Social Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell pp. 3-15
- Clarke, J., Cochrane, A. and McLaughlin, E., (eds.) (1994) *Managing Social Policy*, London: Sage
- Cohan, S. and Shires, L., (1998) *Telling Stories: A theoretical analysis of narrative fiction*, London: Routledge
- Cohen, P., (1990) *Drugs as a Social Construct*. Dissertation, Universiteit van Amsterdam, <http://www.cedro-uva.org/lib/cohen.drugs.toc.html>, Retrieved December 2005
- Cohen, P., (2000) 'Is the addiction doctor the voodoo priest of Western man?' in *Addiction Research and Theory* (8) (6): 589-598
- Cohen, S. (1972). *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, St. Albans: Paladin.
- Cohen, S. and Young, J., (eds.) (1981) *The Manufacture of News: Social problems, deviance and the mass media*, London: Constable
- Collins, J., (1994) 'Summary Thoughts About Drugs and Violence' in Coomber, R. (ed.) *Drugs and Violence: Causes, Correlates and Consequences*, Dartford, Kent: Greenwich University Press
- Common, R., (2001) *Public Management and Policy Transfer in Southeast Asia*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited
- Conrad, P. and Schneider, J., (1980) *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness*, St. Louis: The C.V. Mosby Company
- Cooke, M., (1997 [orig. 1860]) *The Seven Sisters of Sleep*, Rochester: Park Street Press
- Coomber, R., (ed.) (1994) *Drugs and Drug Use in Society: A Critical Reader*, Dartford, Kent: Greenwich University Press
- Coomber, R., Morris, C. and Dunn, L., (2000) 'How the media do drugs: quality control and the reporting of drug issues in the UK print media' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (11) (3): 217-225
- Coomber, R., Oliver, M. and Morris, C., (2003) 'Using Cannabis therapeutically in the United Kingdom: A qualitative Analysis' in *Journal of Drug Issues* (33) (2): 325-57
- Coon, C., (1969) *Lady Wootton talks to Caroline Coon about Pot*, IT 49 January 31-February, 1969
- Comay, R. (1986) 'Excavating the repressive hypothesis: aporias of liberation in Foucault', *Telos*, 67 pp 111-120
- Costa, A.M., (2003) *Speech at the International Symposium on Cannabis*, Stockholm, Sweden: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- Courtwright, D., (2001) *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Couzens Hoy, D., (ed.) (1986) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- Craib, I., (1992) *Modern Social Theory: From Parsons to Habermas*, Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf

- Crawford, V., (2002) 'A Homelie Herb: Cannabis in Early England' in *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* (2) (1): 71-79
- Cutler, D., (2001) 'Cannabis issues' in *Trends in Pharmacological Sciences* (22) (9): 449
- Davenport-Hines, R., (2001) 'The History of British Law' in Chen, S. and Skidelsky, E., (eds.) *High Time for Reform: Drug Policy for the 21st century*, London: The Social Market Foundation
- Davenport-Hines, R., (2004) *The Pursuit of Oblivion: A history of narcotics 1500-2000*, London: Orion Publishing Group
- Davies, J.B., (1997) *Drugspeak: the Analysis of Drug Discourse*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers
- Davies, J.B., (1997) *The Myth of Addiction*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers
- Day, K., (1999) *Marijuana in the Movies: The complete guide to the Hollywood High*, San Francisco: Media Green Press
- De Quincey, T., (1997 [Orig. 1821]) *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Berkshire: Penguin Popular Classics
- Department of Health (2001) *Government Response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology's Report on Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis*, Cm 5332 London: Department of Health
- Derks, J., Van Kalmthout, A. and Albrecht, H.J., (eds.) (1999) *Current and Future Drug Policy Studies in Europe: Problems, Prospects and Research Methods*, Freiburg: Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Penal Law
- Derrida, J., (1981) *Dissemination*, London: The Athlone Press, Ltd.
- Dewey, J. (1927) *The Public and its Problems*, New York: Holt
- Dorn, N., (1978) 'Book Review: The Gentlemen's Club' in *British Journal of Addiction* (73) 325-332
- Dorn, N., (2004) 'UK Policing of Drug Traffickers and Users: Policy implementation in the contexts of national law, European traditions, international drug conventions and security after 2001' in *Journal of Drug Issues* (34) (3): 533-550
- Dorn, N. and Jamieson, A., (2000) *Room for Manoeuvre: Overview of comparative legal research into national drug laws of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Sweden and their relation to three international drugs conventions*, London: Drugscope
- Dorn, N. and South, N., (eds.) (1987) *A Land Fit for Heroin?: Drug Policies, Prevention and Practice*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Education
- Dorn, N., Jepsen, J. and Savona, E.E., (1996) *European Drug Policies and Enforcement*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd
- Dorn, N., Murji, K. and South, N., (1992) *Traffickers: drug markets and law enforcement*. London: Routledge
- Dorn, N., Murji, K., and South, N., 'Drugs, Crime and Law Enforcement: Some issues of Europe' in Heidensohn, F. and Farrell, M., (eds.) *Crime in Europe*, London: Routledge

- Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., (1983) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Druglink (1979) 'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back' in *Druglink* (12) (Summer, 1979): 1-4
- Duff, C., (2004) 'Drug use as a 'practice of the self': is there any place for an 'ethics of moderation' in contemporary drug policy?' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (15) (5-6): 385-393
- Duke, K., (2003) *Drugs, Prisons and Policy Making*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Durkheim, E., (1971) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd
- Duster, T., (1970) *The Legislation of Morality: Law, Drugs and Moral Judgment*, New York: The Free Press
- Dye, T.R. (1976) *What Governments Do, Why they do it, What Difference it Makes*, Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press
- Earlywine, M., (2005) *Understanding Marijuana: A new look at the scientific evidence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Eckersley, E.K. and Williams, D., (1999) 'Training your staff (and the boss) to deal with drugs' in *Industrial and Commercial Training* (31) (6): 219-226
- Editorial (1995) 'Deglamorising cannabis' in *The Lancet* (346) (8985): 1241
- Edwards, G., (1989) 'What Drives British Drug Policies?' in *British Journal of Addiction* (84) (2): 219-226
- Edwards, G., Strang, J. and Jaffe, J., (eds.) (1993) *Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco: Making the Science and Policy Connections*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Eliade, M., (1964) *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Eliade, M., (1994) *El Chamanismo y las Tecnicas Arcaicas del Extasis*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica
- Emboden, W.J. (1972) 'Ritual Use of *Cannabis Sativa*: A Historical Ethnographic Survey' in Furst, P., (ed.) *Flesh of Gods: The Ritual Use of Hallucinogens*, New York: Praeger Publishers
- Emboden, W.J., (1972b) *Narcotic Plants*, London: Studio Vista
- Escohotado, A., (1998) *Historia General de las Drogas*, Bogota: Alianza Editorial
- Fergusson, D.M. and Horwood, L.J., (2000) 'Does cannabis use encourage other forms of illicit drug use?' in *Addiction* (95) (4): 505-520
- Fisher, L., (2006) 'Hack Attack: Why drug users are fair game' in *Druglink* 2 14-15 March-April, 2006
- Flint, C., (2004) *Adjournment Debate on the Legalisation of Medical Cannabis*, Hansard Debates for 14 October 2004 (pt 34) London: House of Commons

- Flood, R. and Gregory, W., (1989) 'Systems: past, present and future' in Flood, R., Jackson, M.C. and Keys, P., (eds.) *Systems Prospects*, New York: Plenum pp.55-60
- Flood, R. and Jackson, M.C., (1991) *Creative Problem Solving: Total Systems Intervention*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons
- Flood, R. and Jackson, M.C., (eds.) (1991) *Critical Systems Thinking: Directed Readings*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons
- Flynn, N., (1997) *Public Sector Management*, Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf
- Fort, J., (1969) *The Pleasure Seekers: The Drug Crisis, Youth and Society*, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company
- Foucault, M., (1967) 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx' in Foucault, M., (ed.) *Nietzsche*, Paris: Cahiers de Royaumont
- Foucault, M., (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, New York: Vintage/Random House
- Foucault, M., (1973) *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, New York: Vintage/Random House; edn. (2001) London: Routledge Classics
- Foucault, M., (1975) *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, New York: Vintage/Random House; edited also in 2003, London: Routledge Classics
- Foucault, M., (1977) 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' in Bouchard, D.F., (ed.) *Michel Foucault: Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, New York: Cornell University
- Foucault, M., (1977a) 'What is an author' in Bouchard, D.F., (ed.) *Michel Foucault: Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, New York: Cornell University
- Foucault, M., (ed.) (1978) *I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister and my brother...*, Norwich: Peregrine Books
- Foucault, M., (1979) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Vintage/Random House; edited also in 1991, London: Penguin Books
- Foucault, M., (1980a) *History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction*, New York: Vintage/Random House
- Foucault, M., (1980b) 'The confession of the flesh' in Gordon, C., (ed.) *Power/Knowledge*, Brighton: The Harvester Press
- Foucault, M. (1980c) *Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Gordon, C. (ed.) Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press
- Foucault, M., (1983) 'Afterword: The Subject and Power' in Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P., (eds.) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press pp.208-226
- Foucault, M., (1991b) 'On Governmentality' in Burchell, G., Gordon, C. and Miller, P., (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf
- Foucault, M., (2003b) *Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France 1974-1975*, London: Verso

- Fraser, N. (1989) *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Fromberg, E., (1993) *Dutch Drug Policy: Past, Present and Future*, Presented at the 17th Conference on Drug Policy Reform Washington: 17-20 November, 1993 (mimeo)
- Furst, P., (ed.) (1972a) *Flesh of the Gods: The Ritual Use of Hallucinogens*, New York: Praeger Publishers
- Garland, D., (1996) 'The Limits of the Sovereign State: Strategies of Crime Control in Contemporary Society' in *British Journal of Criminology* (36) (Autumn): 445-471
- Giggs, J., (1991) 'Epidemiology of contemporary drug use' in Whynes, D. and Bean, P., (eds.) *Policing and Prescribing: The British System of Drug Control*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Academic and Professional Ltd.
- Giulianotti, R., (1997) 'Drugs and the media in the era of Postmodernity: an archaeological analysis' in *Media, Culture and Society* (19) (3): 413-439
- Goldstein, P.J., (1985) 'The drugs-violence nexus: A tripartite conceptual framework' in *Journal of Drug Issues* (15) 493-506
- Golub, A. and Johnson, B.D., (2002) 'The misuse of the "Gateway Theory" in US policy on drug abuse control: A secondary analysis of the muddled deduction' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (13) (1): 5-19
- Goode, E., (1970) *The Marijuana Smokers*, New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers
- Goodman, J., Lovejoy, P. and Sheratt, A., (1995) *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology*, London: Routledge
- Gould, A., (1998) 'Nationalism, immigrants and attitudes towards drugs' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (9) (2): 133-139
- Gould, A., (2001) 'Drugs and Drug Misuse' in May, M., Page, R. and Brunsdon, E., (eds.) *Understanding Social Problems: Issues in Social Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Green, J., (2005) *Cannabis: The Story of the Weed that Rocked the World*, Brighton: Pavilion Publication
- Green, P., (1998) *Drugs, Trafficking and Criminal Policy: The Scapegoat Strategy*, Winchester: Waterside Press
- Grimshaw, J. (1993) 'Practices of freedom' in Ramazanoglu, C. (ed.) *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of Some Tensions Between Foucault and Feminism*, London: Routledge, pp 51-72
- Grinspoon, L. (1971) *Marihuana Reconsidered*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Grinspoon, L., (1999) 'Medical marijuana in a time of prohibition' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (10) (2): 145-156
- Grinspoon, L., (2001) 'On the pharmaceuticalization of marijuana' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (12) (5-6): 377-383
- Grinspoon, L. and Bakalar, J., (1993) *Marihuana: The Forbidden Medicine*, New Haven/London: Yale University Press

- Grotenhermen, F., (2002) The medicinal use of cannabis in Germany' in *Journal of Drug Issues* (32) (2): 607
- Grund, J.P., (1993) *Drug Use as a Social Ritual: Functionality, symbolism and determinants of self regulation*, Rotterdam: IVO - Instituut voor Verslavingsonderzoek
- Gusfield, J.R., (1963) *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement*, Chicago: University Press
- Guy, P., Zelvin, E., Barber, J. and Coleman, B., (2002) 'Legalization of Drugs: Perspectives from the United States, United Kingdom and Australia' in *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions* (2) (International Aspects): 137-144
- Habermas, J. (1987) *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Haining, P., (ed.) (1975) *The Hashish Club: An anthology of drug literature*, London: Peter Owen
- Hall, W. and Degenhardt, L., (2000) 'Cannabis use and psychosis: a review of clinical and epidemiological evidence' in *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* (34) (1): 26
- Harding, G., (1998) 'Pathologising the soul: The construction of a 19th century analysis of opiate addiction' in Coomber, R., (ed.) *The Control of Drugs and Drug Users: Reason or Reaction?* Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers
- Harrigan, P., (1999) 'Are cannabis and psychosis linked?' in *The Lancet* (353) (9154): 730
- Hartsock, N. (1990) 'Foucault on power: a theory for women?' in Nicholson, L.J. (ed.) *Feminism/ Postmodernism*, New York: Routledge, pp 154-172
- Hayes, G. and Shapiro, H., (1998) *Drug Notes: Cannabis*, London: Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence
- Heath, D., (1996) 'The War on Drugs as a Metaphor in American Culture' in Bickel, W.K. and De Grandpre, R., (eds.) *Drug Policy and Human Nature*, New York: Plenum Press
- Heidenheimer, A., Hecl, H. and Adams, C.t. (1975) *Comparative Public Policy: the Politics of Social Choice in America, Europe and Japan*, New York: St Martin's Press; 2nd edn, 1983; 3rd edn, 1990
- Herer, J., (1992) *The Emperor Wears No Clothes: Hemp and the Marijuana Conspiracy*, Van Nuys, CA.: Queen of Clubs Publishing
- Hinchliff, S., (2001) 'The meaning of ecstasy use and clubbing to women in the late 1990s' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (12) (5-6): 455-468.
- HM Government (1995) *Tackling Drugs Together: A Strategy for England 1995-8*. London: HMSO
- HM Government (1998) *Tackling Drugs Together to Build a Better Britain: The Government's Ten-Year Strategy for Tackling Drug Misuse*, London: HMSO
- HMSO (1961) *Report*, London: Interdepartmental Committee on Drug Addiction
- HMSO (1965) *Second Report*, London: Interdepartmental Committee on Drug Addiction
- Home Affairs Committee (2000) *Minutes of Evidence, Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971: Drugs and the Law*, 561-I London: House of Commons

- Home Affairs Committee (2002) *Third Report: The Government's drugs policy: Is it working?*
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmhaff/318/31803.htm>
 London: House of Commons
- Home Department (2002) 'The Government's Drug Policy: Is it working?'
 Hough, M., (1996) *Drug Misusers and the Criminal Justice System: A Review of the Literature*, Drug Prevention Initiative, 18. London: Home Office.
<http://www.drugs.gov.uk/ReportsandPublications/DPIResearch/1033751402/1033751431.pdf>, accessed 1 July 2005
- Hough, M. (1996) *Drug Misusers and the Criminal Justice System: A Review of the Literature*, Drug Prevention Initiative, 18. London: Home Office
<http://www.drugs.gov.uk/ReportsandPublications/DPIResearch/1033751402/1033751431.pdf>, accessed 1 July 2005
- Hough, M., Warburton, H., Bradley, F., May, T., Man, L.-H., Witton, J. and Turnbull, P., (2003) *A Growing Market: The domestic cultivation of cannabis*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- House of Lords (1998) *Cannabis: The Scientific and Medical Evidence*, London: HL Select Committee on Science and Technology
- House of Lords (2001) *Second Report: Therapeutic uses of cannabis*,
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200001/ldselect/ldsctech/50/5002.htm#n1>
 London: HL Select Committee on Science and Technology, accessed October, 2005.
- Hughes, J., (1999) *Altered States: Creativity Under the Influence*, New York: Watson and Guptill Publications
- INCB (2002) *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2002*, E/INCB/2002/1
 Vienna: United Nations
- INCB (2003) *Report from the International Narcotics Control Board for 2003*, E/INCB/2003/1
 Vienna: United Nations
- Inciardi, J., (ed.) (1981) *The Drugs-Crime Connection*, Beverley Hills: Sage
- Inciardi, J., and Harrisson, L., (eds.) (2000) *Harm Reduction: National and International Perspectives*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.
- Iversen, L., (2004) 'How cannabis works in the brain' in Castle, D. and Murray, R., (eds.) *Marijuana and Madness: Psychiatry and Neurobiology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 19-40
- Jackson, M.C., (1985) 'Social Systems Theory and Practice: The Need for a Critical Approach' in Flood, R. and Jackson, M.C., *Critical Systems Thinking: Directed Readings*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Jackson, M.C. (2000) *Systems Approaches to Management*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers
- Jackson, M.C. and Keys, P., (1984) 'Towards a system of system methodologies' in *Journal of Operational Research Society* (35) 473-486
- Jacobs, B., (2004) 'Using Soft Systems Methodology for Performance Improvement and Organisational Change in the English National Health Service' in *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* (12) (4): 138-149

- Jansen, A.C.M., (2002) *The Economics of Cannabis Cultivation in Europe*, CEDRO- Amsterdam, www.cedro-uva.org/lib/jansen.economics.html accessed 1 July 2003
- Jay, M., (2002) *Emperors of Dreams: Drugs in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Dedalus, Ltd.
- Jay, M., (2002) *Legalisation: The First Hundred Years. What happened when drugs were legal and why they were prohibited*, Conference Series about 'Legalization', Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), London
- Johnson, D., (1952) *Indian Hemp: A Social Menace*, London: Christopher Johnson
- Johnson, G., Goldstein, P., Preble, E., Schemeidler, J., Lipton, D.S., Spunt, G. and Miller, T., (1985) *Taking Care of Business: The Economics of Crime by Heroin Abusers*, Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath
- Judson, H.F., (1974) *Heroin Addiction in Britain*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
- Kendall, G. and Wickham, G., (1999) *Using Foucault's Methods*, London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Klingemann, H. and Hunt, G., (eds.) (1998) *Drug Treatment Systems in an International Perspective: Drugs, Demons, and Delinquents*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
- Knights, D. and Vurdubakis, T. (1994) 'Foucault, power, resistance and all that' in Jermier, J.M., Knights, D. and Nord, W.R. (eds.) *Resistance and Power in Organizations*, London: Routledge, pp 167-198
- Kohn, M., (1992) *Dope Girls: The Birth of the British Drug Underground*, London: Lawrence and Wishart
- Korf, D.J., (1995) *Dutch Treat: Formal control and illicit drug use in the Netherlands*, Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers Amsterdam
- Lart, R., (1998) 'Medical Power/Knowledge: The Treatment and Control of Drugs and Drug Users' in Coomber, R., (ed.) *The Control of Drug and Drug Users: Reason or Reaction?* Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers
- Le Strange, R., (1977) *A History of Herbal Plants*, New York: Arco Publishing House Inc.
- Leary, T., (1970) *Politics of Ecstasy*, London: Paladin
- Leccese, A., (1996) 'The pharmacological understanding of psychoactive drugs: Basic science in the Context of Differential Prohibition' in Bickel, W.K. and DeGrandpre, R., (eds.) *Drug Policy and Human Nature: Psychological perspectives on the prevention, management and treatment of Illicit drug abuse*, New York: Plenum Press
- Lee, M., (1996) 'London: "Community damage limitation" through Policing?' in Dorn, N., Jepsen, J. and Savona, E., eds. *European Drug Policies and Enforcement*, London: Macmillan Press, Ltd pp.33-54
- Levine, H.G., (1978) 'The Discovery of Addiction: Changing conceptions of habitual drunkenness in America' in *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* (15) 493-506
- Levine, H.G., (2003) 'Global drug prohibition: its uses and crises' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (14) (2): 145-153
- Lidz, C.W. and Walker, A., (1980) *Heroin, Deviance and Morality*, Beverley Hills: Sage Publications

- Logan, F., (1979) *Cannabis: Options for Control*, Quaternaine House Ltd Sunbury: Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence
- Lozano, I., (2001) 'The Therapeutic Use of *Cannabis sativa* (L.) in Arabic Medicine' In *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* (1) (1): 63-70
- Ludlow, F.H., (1857) *The Hashish Eater: Being Passages from the Life of a Pythagorean*, New York: Harper
- MacGregor, S., (2001) 'The Problematic Community' in May, M., Page, R. and Brunsdon, E., eds., *Understanding Social Problems: Issues in Social Policy*. Oxford: Blackwell
- MacGregor, S., (ed.) (1989) *Drugs and British Society: Responses to a social problem in the Eighties*, London and New York: Routledge
- MacGregor, S., and Smith, L., (1998) 'The English Drug Treatment System: Experimentation or Pragmatism?' in Klingemann, H. and Hunt, G., eds., *Drug Treatment System in a International Perspective: Demons, Deviance and Delinquents*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications pp. 69-80
- Macleod, J., Oakes, R., Copello, A., Crome, I., Egger, M., Hickman, M., Oppenkowski, T., Stokes-Lampard, H. and Smith, G.D., (2004) 'Psychological and social sequelae of cannabis and other illicit drug use by young people: a systematic review of longitudinal, general population studies' in *The Lancet* (363) (9421): 1579-1588
- Macrae, E., (1998) 'Santo Daimé and Santa Maria - The licit ritual use of ayahuasca and the illicit use of cannabis in a Brazilian Amazonian religion' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (9) (5): 325-338
- Malinowski, B., (1948) *Magic, Science and Religion, and Other Essays*, Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press of Glencoe
- Marks, H., (1998) *Mr. Nice: An Autobiography*, London: Vintage
- Marlow, A., (1999) 'Joined-up Thinking: Youth and Drugs Policy at the Millennium' in Marlow, A. and Pearson, G., eds., *Young People, Drugs and Community Safety*. Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing Ltd pp. 1-9
- Marx, K., (1928) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, London: Imprint L. Allen & Unwin
- Matthews, P., (1999) *Cannabis Culture: A Journey through Disputed Territory*, London: Bloomsbury
- Matthews, R. and Young, J., (eds.) (2003) *The New Politics of Crime and Punishment*, Cullompton: Willan Publishers
- May, M., Page, R. and Brunsdon, E., (eds.) (2001) *Understanding Social Problems: Issues in Social Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell
- May, T., Warburton, H., Turnbull, P. J. and Hough, M., (2002) *Times They are A-Changing: Policing of Cannabis*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- McAllister, W.B., (2000) *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: An International History*, London: Routledge
- McCoy, A., (1972) *Politics of Heroin in South Asia*, New York: Harper & Row
- McKeena, T., (1992) *Food of the Gods: The Search for the Original Tree of Knowledge*, London: Random House Ltd.

- McAllister, W.B., (2000) *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: An International History*, London: Routledge
- McDermott, P., (2005) 'The Great Mersey Experiment: The Birth of Harm Reduction' in Gossop, M., (ed.) *Heroin Addiction and the British System Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*, Abingdon: Routledge
- McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J., (1994) 'Managing the Criminal Justice System' in McLaughlin, E., (ed.) *Managing Social Policy*, London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J., (2000) 'The Criminal Justice System: New Labour's New Partnerships' in Clarke, J., Gewirtz, S. and McLaughlin, E., (eds.) *New Managerialism, New Welfare?* London: Sage/Open University
- McNay, L. (1992) *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Mechoulam, R. and Hanus, L., (2004) 'The cannabinoid system: from the point of view of a chemist' in Castle, D. and Murray, R., (eds.) *Marijuana and Madness: Psychiatry and Neurobiology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp.1-18
- Melechi, A., (ed.) (1997) *Psychodelia Britannica: Hallucinogenic Drugs in Britain*, London: Turnaround
- Merlin, M., (1972) *Man and Marijuana: Some Aspects of their Ancient Relationship*, Rutherford, NJ: Associated University Press
- Midgley, G., (2000) *Systemic Intervention: Philosophy, Methodology and Practice*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers
- Miller, P. and Plant, M., (2002) 'Heavy cannabis use among UK teenagers: an exploration' in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* (65) (3): 235-242
- Mills, J., (2000) *Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism*, New York: St. Martin's Press
- Mills, J., (2003) *Cannabis Britannica: Empire Trade and Prohibition 1800-1928*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Mingers, J.C., (1984) 'Subjectivism and soft systems methodology - A criticism' in *Journal of Applied Systems Analysis* (11) 85-103
- Murji, K., (1998) *Policing Drugs*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company
- Murji, K., (1999) 'Culture, "Race" and "Drugs" in *Drugs: Cultures, Controls and Everyday Life*, Edited by South, N. London: Sage
- Musto, D., (1973) *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control*, New Haven/London: Yale University Press
- Newburn, T. and Sparks, R., (eds.) (2004) *Criminal Justice and Political Cultures: National and International Dimensions of Crime Control*, Cullompton: Willan Publishers
- Oliga, J.C., (1988) 'Methodological foundations of systems methodologies' in *Systems Practice* (1) 87-112
- O'Shaughnessy, W., (1842) *The Bengal Dispensatory and Companion to the Pharmacopoeia*, London: Allen

- Page, R., (2001) 'The exploration of social problems in the field of social policy' in May, M., Page, R. and Brunsdon, E., eds., *Understanding Social Problems: Issues in Social Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Pape, H. and Rossow, I., (2004) "'Ordinary" people with "normal" lives?' in *Journal of Drug Issues* (34) (2) 389-418
- Parker, H., Williams, L. and Aldridge, J., (2002) 'The normalization of "sensible" recreational drug use: Further evidence from the North West England longitudinal Study' in *Sociology* (36) (4) 941-964
- Parker, H., Aldridge, J. and Measham, H., (1998) *Illegal Leisure: The Normalization of Adolescent Recreational Drug Use*, London: Routledge
- Parsons, T., (1960) *Structure and Process in Modern Society*, New York: Free Press
- Pearson, G., (2001) 'Drugs and Poverty' in Chen, S. and Skidelsky, E., (eds.) *High Time for Reform: Drug Policy for the 21st Century*, London: The Social Market Foundation
- Perrot, S., (2004) 'Cannabis: The Analgesic and Anti-inflammatory Medication of the Future?' in *Joint Bone Spine* (71) (1): 7-8
- Pfohl, S., (1994) *Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Plant, M., (1987) *Drugs in Perspective*, London: Hodder and Stoughton
- Plant, S., (1999) *Writing on Drugs*, London: Faber and Faber Publications
- Police Foundation (2002) *Lambeth Cannabis Policing Experiment*, <http://www.mori.com/polls/2002/polfound.shtml>, accessed 04 June 2004 London: The Police Foundation - MORI
- Preston, B., (2002) *Pot Planet: Adventures in Global Marijuana Culture*, London: Atlantic Books
- Purvis, T. and Hunt, A. (1993) 'Discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology ...', *British Journal of Sociology*, 44 (3) pp 473-499
- Rabinow, P., (1984) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Michel Foucault's Thought*, London: Penguin Books
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R., (1952) *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, London: Cohen and West, Ltd.
- Raman, A., (1998) 'The Cannabis Plant: Botany, Cultivation and Processing for Use' in Brown, D.T., (ed.) *Cannabis: The Genus Cannabis*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers pp. 29-54
- Ramazanoglu, C. (1989) *Feminism and the Contradictions of Oppression*, London: Routledge
- Ramazanoglu, C. and Holland, J. (1993) 'Women's sexuality and men's appropriation of desire' in Ramazanoglu, C. (ed.) *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of Some Tensions Between Foucault and Feminism*, London: Routledge, pp 239-264
- Ramsay, M., Baker, P., Goulden, C., Sharp, C. and Sondhi, A., (2001) *Drug Misuse Declared in 2000: Results from the British Crime Survey*, London: Home Office, United Kingdom

- Raschke, P. and Kalke, J., (1999) 'Cannabis in pharmacies: a proposal from Germany on how to separate the drug markets' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (10) (4): 309-311
- Rätsch, C., (1998) *Marijuana Medicine: A world tour of the healing and visionary powers of cannabis*, Rochester, Vermont: Healing Arts Press
- Reinarman, C., (2005) 'Addiction as accomplishment: the discursive construction of disease' in *Addiction Research and Theory* (13) (4): 307-320
- Reinarman, C. and Levine, H.G., (1995) 'The Crack Attack: America's Latest Drug Scare: 1986-1992' in Best, J., ed., *Images of Issues: Typifying Contemporary Social Problems*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter
- Remenyi, D.E.A., (1998) *Doing Research in Business and Management: An Introduction to Process and Method*, London: SAGE
- Reuter, P. and Kleinman, M.A., (1986) 'Risks and Prices' in Tonry, M. and Morris, N., (eds.) *Crime and Justice: Annual Review of Research* (Vol.7), Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Reuter, P. and MacCoun, R., (2001) 'Evaluating alternative cannabis regimes' in *British Journal of Psychiatry* (178) 123-128
- Reuter, P. and MacCoun, R., (2001) *Drug War Heresies*, Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press
- Rey, J.M. and Tennant, C.C., (2002) 'Cannabis and mental health' in *British Medical Journal* (325) (7374): 1183
- Rhodes, R.A.W., (1997) *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*, Buckingham: Open University Press
- Roberts, M., Bewley-Taylor, D. and Trace, M., (2005) *Facing the Future: The Challenge for National and International Drug Policy*, Report Six, Oxford: The Beckley Foundation - Drug Policy Programme
- Robertson, J.R., (2005) 'The arrival of HIV' in Strang, J. and Gossop, M., (eds.) *Heroin Addiction and the British System Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*, Abingdon: Routledge
- Rock, P. and McIntosh, M., (1974) *Deviance and Social Control*, London: Tavistock
- Rubin, S., (1999). *Off beat Marijuana: The Life and Times of the World's Grooviest Plants*, Santa Monica, CA: Santa Monica Press, LLC.
- Rubington, E. and Weinberg, M.S., (1973) *Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective*, New York: Macmillan Company
- Rumbarger, J., (1989) *Profits, Power and Prohibition: Alcohol Reform and the Industrializing of America, 1800-1930*, Albany: State University of New York Press
- Runciman, R., (1999) *Drugs and the Law: Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*, London: The Police Foundation
- Russo, E., (2003) 'Cannabis and Pain Management' in *Cannabis Health* (6), <http://www.cannabishealth.com/issue06/index.html>
- Sawicki, J. (1994) 'Foucault, feminism and questions of identity' in Gutting, G. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 286-313

- Schofield, M., (1971) *The Strange Case of Pot*, London: Penguin
- Schultes, P. and Hoffman, A., (1979) *Plants of the Gods: Origins of Hallucinogenic Use*, New York, McGraw-Hill
- Schultes, R.E., (1970) 'Random thoughts and queries on the botany of cannabis' in Joyce, C.R.B. and Curry, S.H., (eds.) *The Botany and Chemistry of Cannabis*, London: J.A. Churchill pp. 11-58
- Schur, E.M., (1971) *Labelling Deviant Behaviour: Its Sociological Implications*, New York: Harper and Row
- Schutz, A., (1972) *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, London: Heinemann
- Secretary of State (2003) *Respect and Responsibility - Taking a Stand Against Anti-Social Behaviour*, Cm 5778 London: Home Office
- Secretary of State for Health (2001) *Government Response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology's Report on Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis*, Cm 5332 London: Department of Health
- Seeley, J.R., (1962) 'Alcoholism is a disease: Implications for social policy' in Pittman, D.J. and Snyder, C.R., (eds.) *Society, Culture, and Drinking Patterns*, New York: Wiley
- Shapiro, H., (1999) *Waiting for the Man: The Story of Drugs and Popular Music*, London: Helter Skelter
- Shapiro, H., (2002) 'From Chaplin to Charlie: cocaine, Hollywood and the movies' in *Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy* (9) (2): 133-141
- Shapiro, H., (2003) *Shooting Stars: Drugs, Hollywood and the Movies*, London: Serpent's Tail
- Simons, J., (1995) *Foucault and the Political*, London: Routledge
- Simpson, M., (2003) 'The relationship between drug use and crime: a puzzle inside an enigma' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (14) (4): 307-319
- Sleator, A. and Allen, G., (2000) *Cannabis*, 89308 London: House of Commons Library
- Sloman, L.R. (1979) *Reefer Madness: A History of Marijuana*, New York: St. Martin's Griffin
- Small, E., (1979) *The Species Problem in Cannabis: Science and Semantics*, Toronto: Corpus Information Services Limited
- Soper, K. (1993) 'Productive contradictions' in Ramazanoglu, C. (ed.) *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of Some Tensions Between Foucault and Feminism*, London: Routledge, pp 29-50
- South, N. and Coomber, R., (eds.) (2004) *Drug Use and Cultural Contexts 'beyond the West': Tradition, Change and post-Colonialism*, London: Free Association Books
- Staff Reporter (2005) *Guilty cannabis granny is free to carry on baking*, *The Times*, 9 April 2005
- Sterk, C.E., (2003) 'Drug research: ethnographies or qualitative works' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (14) (1): 127-130

- Stimson, G.V., (1990) 'AIDS and HIV: the challenge for British drug services' in *British Journal of Addiction* (85) (3): 329-339
- Stimson, G.V., (2000) "'Blair declares war": the unhealthy state of British drug policy' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (11) (4): 259-264
- Stimson, G.V. and Lart, R., (2005) 'The relationship between the state and local practices in the development of national policy on drugs between 1920-1990' in Strang, J. and Gossop, M., (eds.) *Heroin Addiction in Britain. Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*, Abingdon: Routledge
- Stimson, G.V. and Oppenheimer, E., (1982) *Heroin Addiction: Treatment and Control in Britain*, Cambridge: University Press
- Stimson, G.V., (1987) 'British Drug Policies in the 1980s: A preliminary analysis and suggestions for research' in *British Journal of Addiction* (82) (5): 477-488
- Suissa, A.J., (2001) 'Cannabis, social control and exclusion: the importance of social ties' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (12) (5-6): 385-396
- Sumner, C., (1994) *The Sociology of Deviance: An Obituary*, New York: Continuum Publishing
- Szasz, T., (1994 [orig. 1972]) 'The Ethics of Addiction' in Coomber, R., (ed.) *Drugs and Drug Use in Society: A Critical Reader*, Dartford (UK): Greenwich University Press
- Taket, A.R. and White, L.A., (1993) 'After OR: An agenda for post-modernism and post-structuralism in OR' in *Journal of Operational Research Society* (44) (867): 867-881
- Tannenbaum, F., (1938) *Crime and the Community*, New York and London: Columbia University Press
- Taylor, C. (1986) 'Foucault on freedom and truth' in Hoy, D.C. (ed.) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp 69-102
- The Government's Reply to the Third Report from the Home Affairs Committee*. HC 318-I, Cm 5537 London: HMSO
- The Police Foundation (2004) *Crime, Courts and Confidence: Report of an independent inquiry into alternatives to prison*, London: Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation
- Thomas, A. and Lockett, M., (1979) 'Marxism and Systems Research: Values in practical action' in Ericson, R.K. (ed.) *Improving the Human Condition*, Louisville: SGSR pp.284-296
- Thoumi, F.E., (2003) *Illegal Drugs, Economy, and Society in the Andes*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press
- Trace, M., Klein, A. and Roberts, M., (2004) *Re-classification of Cannabis in the United Kingdom* (1), London: The Beckley Foundation - A Drugscope Briefing Paper
- Tracy, S. and Acker, C.J., (eds.) (2004) *Altering American Consciousness: The History of Alcohol and Drug Use in the United States 1800-2000*, Boston: University of Massachusetts Press
- Turner, D., (2005) 'The Development of the voluntary sector: No further need for pioneers' in Strang, J. and Gossop, M., (eds.) *Heroin Addiction and the British System Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*, Abingdon: Routledge pp. 187-195

- Turner, D., (1991) 'Pragmatic Incoherence: The changing face of British Drug Policy' In Krauss, M.B. and Laeazar, E.P., (eds.) *Searching for Alternatives: Drug Control Policy in the United States*, Stanford: Hoover Institute Press
- UNDCP (2005) *World Drug Report 2005, Vol. 1*, Geneva: United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime
- Uitermark, J., (2004) 'The origins and future of the Dutch approach toward drugs' in *Journal of Drug Issues* (34) (3): 511-533
- Ulrich, W., (1983) *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*, Bern: Haupt
- Valero-Silva, N., (1998) *A Critical History of the Origins of Critical Systems Thinking*, University of Hull PhD Thesis Hull
- Valero-Silva, N., (2004) *The Historical Analysis of Institutions and the "Critical Ontology of Ourselves"*, 48th Annual Conference for the International Society for the Systems Sciences (ISSS), Asilomar, California; ISSS July, 2004
- van het Loo, M., Hoorens, S., van 'T Hot, C. and Kahan, J., (2003) *Cannabis Policy, Implementation and Outcomes*, MR-1805-VWS Leiden: RAND Europe
- van Ours, J.C., (2003) 'Is cannabis a stepping-stone for cocaine?' in *Journal of Health Economics* (22) (4): 539-554
- van Schaik, N., (2002) *The Dutch Experience: The inside story: 30 years of hash & grass coffeeshops*, Amsterdam: A Real Deal Publishing Books
- Veen, N.D., Selten, J.P., Hoek, H.W., Feller, W.G. and Kahn, R.S., (2000) 'Cannabis misuse in first episode psychosis in the Netherlands: A comparison of ethnic groups' in *Schizophrenia Research* (41) (1): 74-75
- Verdoux, H., Gindre, C., Sorbara, F., Tournier, M. and Swendsen, J., (2002) 'Cannabis use and the expression of psychosis vulnerability in daily life' in *European Psychiatry* (17) (Supplement 1): 180
- Vickers, G., (1995) *The Art of Judgement: A study of policy making*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage
- von Bertalanffy, L., (1968) *General System Theory*, Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Wälti, S., Kübler, D. and Papadopoulos, Y., (2004) 'How democratic is "governance"? Lessons from Swiss drug policy' in *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions* (17) (1): 83-113
- Walton, S., (2001) *Out of It: A cultural history of intoxication*, London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Walzer, M. (1986) 'The politics of Michel Foucault' In Hoy, D.C. (ed.) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp 51-68
- Warburton, H., May, T. and Hough, M., (2005) 'Looking the other way: The impact of reclassifying cannabis on Police warnings, arrests and informal action in England and Wales' in *British Journal of Criminology* (45) (2): 113-128
- Wasson, G., (1970) *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
- Wasson, G., Kramrisch, S., Puck, C. and Ott, J., (1986) *Persephone's Quest: Entheogens and the Origins of Religion*, New Haven: Yale University Press

- Weber, M., (1968) *Economy and Society*, New York: Bedminster
- Whynes, D., (1991) 'Drug problems, drug policies' in Whynes, D. and Bean, P., (eds.) *Policing and Prescribing: The British System of Drug Control*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Academic and Professional Ltd
- Wildavsky, A. (1979) *Speaking the Truth to Power: the Art and Craft of Policy Analysis*, Boston: Little Brown
- Williams, L. and Parker, H., (2001) 'Alcohol, cannabis, ecstasy and cocaine: drugs of reasoned choice amongst young adult recreational drug users in England' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (12) (5-6): 397-413
- Wolin, R. (1986) 'Foucault's aesthetic decisionism', *Telos*, 67 pp 71-86
- Woolner, C. and Thom, B., (2003) 'Drugs: the great cannabis debate' in Young, J. and Matthews, R., (eds.) *The New Politics of Crime and Punishment*, Cullompton: Willan Publishing
- Yates, R. (2002) 'A Brief History of British Drug Policy, 1950-2001' in *Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy* (9) (2): 113-124
- Young, J., (1977) 'The Police as Amplifiers of Deviancy' in Rock, P.E., (ed.) *Drugs and Politics*, New Jersey: Transaction Inc.
- Young, J., (1992) 'The rising demand for law and order and our maginot lines of defence against crime' in Abercrombie, N. and Warde, A., (eds.) *Social Change in Contemporary Britain*, Cambridge: Polity
- Young, J., (1971) *Drugtakers: The social meaning of drug use*, London: Paladin
- Zibbell, J.E., (2004) 'Can the lunatics actually take over the asylum?: Reconfiguring subjectivity and neo-liberal governance in contemporary British drug treatment policy' in *International Journal of Drug Policy* (15) (1): 56-65
- Zimmer, L. and Morgan, J., (1997) *Marijuana Myths, Marijuana Facts: A revision of scientific evidence*, New York: Lindesmith Center
- Zinberg, N., (1984) *Drug, Set, and Setting: The Basis for Controlled Intoxicant Use*, New Haven: Yale University Press

APPENDIX 1

CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS RELATED TO CANNABIS RE-CLASSIFICATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Date	Event
November, 1998	Medicinal use of cannabis is debated in the Parliament.
December, 1999	Report from the Police Foundation reviewed the drug policy in the United Kingdom, and made especial recommendations in the case of cannabis legislation.
March, 2001	House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology's Report on Therapeutic uses of Cannabis
December, 2001	Government responded to the House of Lords Select Committee on Therapeutic uses of cannabis
July 2001	The Lambeth Experiment started for a period of 6 months
October 2001	The new home secretary David Blunkett announced that he was considering the idea of re-classifying cannabis.
November, 2001	The Home Secretary asked for advice to the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) about re-classification
March, 2002	The ACMD presented their report on cannabis reclassification.
May, 2002	The House of Commons Select committee discussed an Evaluation of British Drug Policy, supporting re-classification.
July 10, 2002	The Home Secretary announced that cannabis will be re-classified as a Class C drug, BUT, that it will be an arrestable offence under aggravating circumstances.
July 30, 2002	<i>The Guardian</i> Poll revealed that 53% of Britons oppose the idea of re-classifying cannabis
September 2003	The Association of Chief Police Officers ACPO issued some guidelines in regards to cannabis offences.
October 2003	The House of Commons approved the re-classification of cannabis.
November 2003	The House of Lords approved the re-classification of cannabis
January 29, 2004	Cannabis re-classification is officially implemented

Source: UKCIA, complemented with research.

APPENDIX 2

DATA BASE OF NEWS ISSUES FROM 2002-2004 RELATED TO CANNABIS AND ITS RE-CLASSIFICATION

APPENDIX 2: MEDIA ANALYSIS AND ROOT DEFINITIONS				
BACKGROUND RECLASSIFICATION: 2002-2003				
Nr.	DATE	RD	SOURCE: NEWSPAPER	HEADLINES
1	09/10/00	P	The Guardian	Widdecombe forced to backtrack on cannabis
2	22/07/01	T	The Observer	The drug debate: What's next?
3	13/03/01	PP	The Guardian	Drugs and alcohol: the issue explained
4	09/07/02	P	The Guardian	Tories condemn Brixton cannabis scheme
5	08/07/02	P	BBC News on line	Tories attack Cannabis Pilot
6	09/07/02	L	Transform	Government makes a hash of cannabis reform
7	09/07/02	L	Legalise Cannabis Alliance	Blunkett makes a fudge of cannabis issue
8	10/07/02	P	The Guardian	Police fear muddle over cannabis law
9	10/07/02	P	The Guardian	Top drugs adviser quits over cannabis plans
10	11/07/02	L	Eye Magazine	Brixton blueprint spurs liberalization hopes
11	30/07/02	PP	The Nation (US)	Brits and Drugs
12	31/07/02	P	The Guardian	Cannabis relaxation opposed by majority
13	22/09/02	P	The Sunday Herald	Drugs: How can we alter minds
14	07/10/02	E	The Independent	Medicinal cannabis may be available within two years
15	19/10/02	L	The Guardian	Legalise all drugs worldwide, says Mowlam
16	25/11/02	T	The Independent	Cannabis smoking by teenagers surges by 50%
17	23/11/02	T	British Medical Journal	Cannabis use and mental health in young people
18	11/11/02	T	The Independent	Cannabis 'may produce public health disaster'
19	02/02/03	E	The Observer	Cannabis Economy brings in UKP 11 Bn
20	23/02/03	L	The Observer	Why we should legalise hard drugs
21	04/02/03	PP	The Times	Zero tolerance may mask drug usage
22	17/03/03	E	The Guardian	Home grown outstrips imports from Morocco
23	18/03/03	E	The Guardian	Protect private cannabis cultivators

24	27/02/03	P	The Independent UK	This fantasy world of drug prohibition
25	01/05/03	L	The Independent	Everybody must get stoned
26	27/02/03	C	The Guardian	UK now Europe's jail capital
27	27/02/04	P	The Mirror	We'll crack the crack
28	30/07/03	PP	The Financial Times	Honesty may prove to be best policy in fighting drugs
29	31/10/03	L	Drug War Chronicle	Decriminalization comes to Britain
30	22/07/03	M	The Guardian	'No objective proof': finds MS cannabis study
31	14/08/02	T	The Guardian G2	My High Life
32	27/05/03	E	The Guardian	Ketama God puts Morocco top of Europe's cannabis league
33	15/03/03	L	The Guardian	Police Chief Sues over Kiss and Tell
34	28/11/03	L	The Guardian	Brian Paddick: Profile
35	20/08/03	M	BBC News on line	NHS patients to be given cannabis
36	12/01/04	P	Daily Mail	Cannabis Questions and Answer
37	26/02/03	T	Daily Mail	Cannabis: the scientific evidence against it.
38	02/05/03	P	Daily Mail	Cannabis kills 30000 a year
39	15/06/01	P	The Guardian	Demonising Druggies wins votes
40	06/09/02	PP	New Scientist	Marijuana still befuddles law-makers

APPENDIX 2: MEDIA ANALYSIS AND ROOT DEFINITIONS				
RECLASSIFICATION: JANUARY 15-30, 2004				
Nr.	DATE	RD	SOURCE: NEWSPAPER	HEADLINES
1	19/01/04	L	Times on Line	It might drive people mad, but let's not lose our heads over skunk
2	29/01/04	L	Scotsman	Scotland's First 'Hash Café' Opens
3	30/01/04	P	Daily Telegraph	The Purple Haze opens in a fog of confusion
4	28/01/04	L	The Courier	Campaginners vow cannabis café will open
5	30/01/04	P	The Times	Bring your own to first cannabis café
6	30/01/04	C	The Guardian	Three Arrests at Cannabis Café
7	30/01/04	P	The Herald	Three Arrested as cannabis café opens in Capital
8	17/01/04	DD	The Guardian	Cracking the Problem: Will legalisation win the war on drugs? Ann Widdecombe and Danny Kushlick try to smoke out a solution.
9	19/01/04	L	BBC News on line	Head to Head
10	19/01/04	T	Times on Line	Debate Times: The grim reefer: Is cannabis responsible for certain mental health problems?
11	18/01/04	T	The Observer	Haze of Confusion hangs over dangers to health Steve 25, Jamie 23, and Amit, 30 all liked, or like a smoke
12	18/01/04	P	The Independent	The Met out of step on new cannabis law-London police chief admits to 'massive amount of muddle' over reclassification
13	22/01/04	DD	BBC News on line	Cannabis laws: who knows what?
14	29/01/04	DD	BBC News on line	Cannabis campaign
15	26/01/04	DD	Evening News	What the new cannabis law really means
16	29/01/04	P	News and Star	A joint could still land you in court
17	39/01/04	P	The Independent	Confused public 'believe cannabis is being legalised'
18	19/01/04	DD	The Guardian	Editorials on Cannabis Reclassification: 'An exercise in political cynism'
19	02/02/04	L	The Guardian	Cannabis: The main risk

20	29/01/04	L	Western Gazette	New Cannabis Law comes into force
21	30/01/04	E	The Independent	No place for business in Whitehall's drug mind games
22	18/01/04	L	The Guardian	End the confusion over cannabis
23	30/01/04	P	The Times	What's a girl like you doing with a joint like this
24	25/01/04	C	The Observer	Looking for a place to light up legally in London
25	18/01/04	C	The Observer	So just how potent are our street drugs
26	18/01/04	T	The Observer	Why I ditched my liberal views on dope
27	18/01/04	T	The Times on Line	Parenting: Different class, same problem
28	20/01/04	T	The Guardian	'Some patients don't realise cannabis is actually a drug' Robin Murray
29	21/01/04	T	Times on Line	Doctors condemn plan to downgrade cannabis
30	21/01/04	T	The Guardian	Doctors warn of dangers of cannabis downgrading
31	18/01/04	PP	The Observer	Drugs plan for schools abandoned
32	28/01/04	E	The Guardian	The case for small home growers
33	29/01/04	PP	BBC News on line	More young men smoking cannabis
34	29/01/04	PP	Drugscope	Cannabis classification - Informative
35	19/01/04	P	The Independent	Police Chiefs to get tough on cannabis and ignore new law
36	16/01/04	P	The Independent	Police Chief acknowledges 'muddle' over drug law
37	16/01/04	P	Times on Line	New drug law confuses the public
38	30/01/04	PP	The Times	Police View on Cannabis Law From the Deputy Commissioner of Met Police
39	29/01/04	P	The Herald	Police Predict rise in cannabis dealing
40	29/01/04	P	The Guardian	Leak caused labour to get cold feet
41	22/01/04	PP	The Guardian	Ads warn cannabis 'still illegal'
42	22/01/04	P	The Guardian	Howard: cannabis law change is absurd
43	22/01/04	P	Times on Line	Blunkett to Howard: Have you ever smoked dope?
44	22/01/04	P	The Independent	We will reverse 'absurd' reform of cannabis law, says Howard
45	22/01/04	P	The Independent	"On Cannabis, there are arguments on both sides. But there is no case for this massive muddle" Howard

46	22/01/04	PP	Times on Line	Blunkett agonised over relaxation of cannabis law
47	23/01/04	PP	The Guardian	Blunkett attempt to embarrass Howard over smoking backfires
48	20/01/04	P	Times on Line	Death by cannabis verdict is a first
49	16/01/04	P	The Guardian	Hedge fracas death 'fuelled by cannabis'
50	29/01/04	P	Liverpool Daily Post	Cannabis worst drug of them all
51	16/01/04	M	Times on Line	Depressed farmer ate cannabis ice-cream
52	21/01/04	E	Times on Line	GW hoards cannabis ahead of drug launch
53	22/01/04	E	Times on Line	Need to Know: Sector up 0,4%
54	22/01/04	E	The Guardian	Little light confusion over cannabis drug date
55	29/01/04	E	BBC News on line	The great cannabis cash in
56	27/01/04	P	The Guardian	Many cannabis users 'happy to smoke and drive'
57	27/01/04	PP	The Guardian	Penalties for all illegal drugs under review
58	30/01/04	P	Evening Standard	Pastor takes police to court on cannabis law
59	22/01/04	P	The Independent	Mr. Howard's answer to a confused law on cannabis is a trip back in time
60	22/01/04	E	The Independent	GW flies high on hopes for cannabis treatment
61	22/01/04	E	The Guardian	Little confusion over cannabis drug date
62	23/01/04	PP	The Times	Cannabis and Mental Illness Letter from Prof. Sir. Michael Rawlins
63	22/01/04	T	BBC News	Is cannabis a risk to health
64	26/01/04	P	Daily Mail	Cannabis catastrophe Melanie Philips
65	27/01/04	P	Daily Mail	Cannabis, conspiracy and how the liberal elite made a dope of Blunkett Melanie Philips
66	08/12/04	P	Daily Mail	The real reason Labour has gone soft on cannabis
67	22/01/04	P	The Independent	We will reverse absurd reform of cannabis law, says Howard. By Andrew Grice Political Editor
68	29/01/04	P	The Glaswegian	Girls at Risk-Massive rise in drinking smoking and drug taking By Craig McQueen
69	18/01/04	P	Daily Mail on Sunday	What will Britain be like when there's a whole generation hearing voices in their heads?
70	27/01/04	PP	Drugscope news	Drugscope support review of drug classification

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS FOR THIS RESEARCH

DATE	TECHNIQUE	PERSON/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
08/04/2003	Interview (1)	Geoff Ogden Drug Action Team Coordinator for East Yorkshire Beverley	Geoff Ogden is a senior police officer, who at the time of this interview was working as the DAT coordinator for East Yorkshire. He had participated in the formulation of the Drug Policy Strategy in 1995, working closely with Keith Hellawell (Former Anti-Drugs Tsar). In addition, his work as a DAT coordinator provided important information about the managerial principles in the new drugs strategy of the British government. Notes from the Interview
January 2003	Participant Observation	Join the network ENCOD – European Coalition for a better drugs policy.	This network allowed me to participate in a number of debates, as well as establish contact with the most representative people in the drugs policy debate.
16/10/2003 27/01/2004	Interviews (2)	Steve Abrams Cannabis Campaigner London	Steve Abrams is a cannabis campaigner from the 1960s. He and some other activists were behind the famous advertisement in the newspaper The Times about the "Law on cannabis is immoral in principle and unworkable in practice". The two interviews were conducted at his place in London, a former 'hippie' neighbourhood. Recorded Interviews
26/11/2003	Observation	Cannabis Cup, Amsterdam	The Cannabis Cup is an annual event in which different coffee-shops and other actors come together in a Fair, to choose the 'variety' of the year. This is also the opportunity to exchange information between growers, users, paraphernalia sellers, campaigners, researchers and other figures in the field. This time the guest speaker was Jack Herer, author of the <i>Emperor Wears No Clothes</i> , as a main exponent of the conspiracy theories about cannabis. Notes from the Event

DATE	TECHNIQUE	PERSON/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
From November/ 2003 to 2005	Interviews (3) informal conversations, observations	Carl Wagner Candidate for the Legalise Cannabis Alliance in Hull Hull	Carl Wagner is a cannabis campaigner and candidate to Hull council for the Legalise Cannabis Alliance. He has a shop in the Trinity Market called the 'Divine Herb', selling cannabis paraphernalia. Because of his role as a campaigner he is known as the 'cannabis priest'. In December 2004 he was discovered with four cannabis plants in his house, and he went through a trial. Some observations of the trial were done (April 23, 2005). Notes from the field.
29/01/2004	Interview (4) and Observation	PC Dylan Belt Kings Cross Inspector and ASBO's coordinator London	PC Dylan Belt is a senior police officer and he is the Metropolitan Police's ASBO officer. His views on Kings Cross area and his approach to cannabis reclassification were tremendously opportune, since the interview was the very first day of the application of cannabis reclassification. As demonstrated in the thesis, this interview provided me with some clues about the 'contours' and 'divergences' in the topic of cannabis and drugs policy in general. This interview was one of the luckiest moments of this research, because of the timing and the interesting insights provided by PC Belt. Recorded Interview
29/01/2004	Informal conversation (5)	Police officer in the street at Kings Cross, London	As part of the interview with PC Dylan Belt, the researcher had the opportunity to talk to some other policemen patrolling the street. In fact, she visited one of the 'crack houses' and observed the monitoring system in the streets of Kings Cross Area. Notes from the Field.
26/03/2004	Conversation	John Callow New Horizons	The University of Hull provided this workshop on drugs prevention. John Callow was the person to give this talk, and he became a good contact for a future interview in relation to treatment agencies. Some notes of the workshop.

DATE	TECHNIQUE	PERSON/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
April 13 2004 -Now	Informal conversations (6)	Andria Entimofiou- Mordaunt Expert in Harm Reduction and drugs issues in general London	Andria Enthimofiou-Mordaunt is one of the most respected activists in the field of harm reduction. Just to document her life and experience could have been a book in itself. She is the editor of the User Voice, and director of the John Mordaunt Trust. She carries out activities on harm reduction and prevention, as well as research on this field. Thanks to her I was granted access to important experts. Notes
12/05/2004	Group Interview (7)	Young people users and not users. Protected identity Hull	A group of young people accepted to be interviewed about their use and views about cannabis. People were between 20 and 25 years old, and some of them are regular users as well as students in college and university. Their use is mainly recreational as they expressed in the interview. This interview was also very important to know how young people perceive the discussion on cannabis, and how their use of this substance is part of their life-style or just as a juvenile phase. The identities of this people remain anonymous, although the accepted to be recorded. Interview recorded.
		'John' -social dealer- Protected identity Hull	One of the young people interviewed was John (not his real name) a social dealer, and an 'expert' in cannabis issues. This interview was particularly helpful because it was the opportunity to talk about the delicate issue of 'dealing' (a criminal offence) by protecting the identity of this person and providing interesting insights for this research.
19/05/2004	Interview (8)	'Kevin' Ex-methadone user Hull	Although heroin was not the focus of my research, the issues regarding drugs policy and treatment were still interesting for the context of drugs policy. This was an informal conversation with Kevin, an ex-methadone user, who became addicted because of his relationship with a girl who was provided methadone by a local GP. Issues about treatment provided by religious charities and their problems were revealed here. Notes from the Conversation.

DATE	TECHNIQUE	PERSON/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
21/05/2004	Interview (9)	Claire Cairnes Drug Action Team Coordinator Hull	Mrs. Cairnes replaced Mr. Ogden as the DAT coordinator for Hull and the East Yorkshire. The interview was focused on the new approach of drugs policy –from a balanced approach toward more enforcement activities- and the aim of promoting a multi-agency approach to drugs in the region. The topic of cannabis was not addressed in depth. Recorded interview and notes.
25/05/2004	Interview (10)	Rob and Wendy Broomfield Dads against Drugs Hull	'Dads against drugs' is a relatively new organisation (3 years at the time of the interview) dedicated to prevent drug use through the use of sports, particularly football. The idea is to use football to open options to youngsters in the area. Rob used to work as a nurse and he had seen many people affected by drugs intoxication. He and his wife Wendy run this prevention organisation which has been quite welcome in the Hull community. They use comics and other young friendly activities to achieve their goals. Recorded interviews and notes.
27/05/2004	Conversation	'Tony Organics' London	Tony Organics is a shop operating in the area of Kings Cross promoting the use of cannabis as a medicine. Although the researcher had lot of expectations to talk to Tony, however, he was a bit reluctant to give me an interview. Instead he gave me a lot of material and a video about the medicinal uses of cannabis. Notes from the Conversation.
05/06/2004	Observation	Cannabis Festival in Brixton London	This was an excellent opportunity to observe many actors involved in cannabis issues. There was celebrities, activists, medicinal users, campaigners, politicians, users, mothers, parents, sellers, dealers, communicators, magazines, paraphernalia traders, etc. The event started at 1:00 and finished after 7:00. Notes from Fieldwork.

DATE	TECHNIQUE	PERSON/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
06/06/2004	Interview (11)	Deputy Assistant Commissioner Brian Paddick	DAC Brian Paddick is one of the most influential policemen in the issues of drugs policy in the UK and particularly on cannabis. He was leading part of the Lambeth Experience in London. This interview was crucial in this research, because it reveals many of the details and intimacies of the process of policy making. Many more insights were provided by DAC Paddick and I am truly grateful that he has accepted to talk to me about this issue, considering how controversial his opinions are portrayed by mass media in the UK. Recorded Interview.
16/06/2004	Interview (12)	Howard Marks, - 'Mr. Nice' - Ex-cannabis smuggler and expert. York	Howard Marks used to be one of the 'most dangerous' men in Britain wanted for cannabis smuggling. After serving 10 years in an US prison, he is a 'reformed' ex-dealer and a celebrity in the British cannabis scene. Apart of the interview, I had the opportunity to attend one of his shows and later have an informal conversation with him.
19/06/2004	Interview (13)	Lyndon Pugh Director CCNewz Cannabis Magazine Hull	The name of CCNewz, stand for Cannabis Community, Culture, Café, Consciousness, etc. news. It started in 1998 as a way of providing information about cannabis culture, cultivation, and related articles. This interview was quite useful to understand many of the points of views of campaigners and the diverse ways they pursue their objectives. Interview recorded.
23/06/2004	Observation	Exploring Consciousness Conference Bath	It was an unusual meeting of drug experts, researchers, shamans, healers, anthropologists, users, witches, wizards, and other people interested in this topic. Highlights such as the presence of Alexander Shulgin, the psychotherapist who start using MDMA - Ecstasy - for therapeutical uses. Some material collected

DATE	TECHNIQUE	PERSON/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
22/09/2004	Observation	Harm Reduction Conference	It was an excellent opportunity to meet a lot of researchers and experts in the topic of drugs. Researchers like Tiggey May and activists such as Danny Kushlick – Transform- were keen in talking about cannabis, although there was not so much time for an interview. Nevertheless some further contact was developed but it was impossible to make coincide dates for other interviews. Some notes from the conference
01/10/2004	Participant Observation Informal conversations	London Hemp Fair London	This was the first fair related to cannabis to be made in London. It was the opportunity to know the community of activists and other actors in the cannabis scene in the United Kingdom. I had the opportunity to talk to activist Patricia Tabram – also known as Granny Pot- and Hemp Clothes designer Jenny McPherson (Enamore) as well as other people from the UK and Europe.
06/10/2004	Interview (14)	Jeremy Sare Home Office representative for Drugs Policy London	The interview with Mr. Sare was very interesting to learn and to clarify many of the issues related to cannabis policy. He provided me with a lot of documents related to cannabis reclassification, and particularly we talked about the medicinal use of cannabis that was at the time being discussed at the ministerial level. Recorded Interview and additional material.
07/10/2004	Interview (15)	Mike Trace Former Deputy Anti-Drugs Tsar for the UK London	Mr. Trace career in drugs policy is quite interesting due to his experience both at the street level of treatment and prevention toward senior levels of policy making. Currently he is head of research of the Berkley Foundation for Drugs Policy. The interview with Mr. Trace was very important to understand many of the contradictions in the policy on cannabis, as well, as some of the insights of the process. His opinions and description of what he knew about this topic were of extreme importance for this investigation. I am quite grateful with Mr. Trace for the crucial inputs for this research. Recorded and Transcribed interview.

DATE	TECHNIQUE	PERSON/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
08/10/2004	Conversation	Dr. Axel Klein Researcher at Drugscope, London	An informal conversation about different issues such as the London Hemp Fair, the state of cannabis activism and general aspects of public policy. Some notes taken.
19- 21/10/2004	Interviews	Legalise Cannabis Alliance in Norfolk	A number of conversations with members of this political party. Some of them are cited in this report. It was quite important to know the opinion of the leader of the party as well as other activists involved with cannabis legislation.
19/10/2004	Interview (16)	Alun Buffrey – Leader of the LCA	Mr. Buffrey's opinions about cannabis re-classification are quite relevant since his party represents a clear position on cannabis. He has been an activist for many years, went to jail for cannabis possession/supply, and now he coordinates the activities of the party. I am very grateful to Mr. Buffrey for his time and the opportunity to learn more about the cannabis campaign in the UK. Interview recorded and Notes.
20/10/2004	Interview (17)	Jack Guirling, Leader of the Universal Church of the Holy and Sacred Herb, Norwich	Mr. Guirling's views about the divine nature of cannabis and his own experience in the ritual use of cannabis contributed to understand this worldview that seemed more an ancient aspect than a contemporary practice. Mr. Guirling and his wife are also active members of the LCA. Interview recorded and Notes taken.
20/10/2004	Interview (18)	Steve Barker Legal Advisor LCA Norwich	Mr. Barker has longstanding experience in defending cases related to cannabis. He provides me with an overview of the procedures and instances when somebody is arrested for cannabis. His opinion is that medicinal users are being disregarded by the judicial system, although strong reasons for human rights support their practice. Notes taken.
21/10/2004	Interview (19)	Probation Officer, Identity anonymous. Norwich	His views from the street level of implementation regarding cannabis reclassification were quite insightful to understand the complexity of this decision. He preferred to remain anonymous and not to be recorded. Notes taken.

DATE	TECHNIQUE	PERSON/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
	Interview (20)	Derek Williams Internet Activist UKCIA Norwich	Interesting interview with Mr. Williams and his views on cannabis and his opposition to 'mix' with tobacco. Insightful information from his website. Notes taken.
18/11/2004	Interview (21)	Chris Baldwyn Medicinal User and Campaigner Worthing	Mr. Baldwyn has serious back injuries and he uses cannabis for medicinal reasons. As an activist he tried to open a coffee shop in Worthing but was sent to jail for six months. He is also a candidate for the LCA in Worthing. He lives with his mother (82 years old) who also uses cannabis for medicinal reason. His condition is undeniable relieved by his use of cannabis. He and his mother do not fit into the 'pot-head' stereotype. I am truly grateful to Mr. Baldwyn for his time and his valuable opinions on this topic. Interview recorded and some notes.
22/12/2004	Interview (22)	Inspector Klaran Wood Metropolitan Police Drugs Directorate	This was a very interesting interview in which Inspector Wood explained me many of the technical issues regarding to cannabis and drugs policy in general. It must be mentioned that the Metropolitan Police has been extremely kind with the researcher in conceding interviews and talking openly about this topic. This interview was obtained by writing directly to Sir Ian Blair, as the Police Commissioner who re-directed me to Inspector Klaran. Notes.
30/01/2005	Interview (23)	Mike Haynes Soft Systems Thinking Consultant	Mike Haynes has been working in drugs policy since 1992, and throughout this time he has seen the many changes British policy. He describes current drugs policy as a combination of an approach to treatment and crime; however more emphasis on crime has been made. His work has been directed to use SSM as an action research way to discuss issues related to the Drug Prevention Initiative and to provide a methodology for the discussion of different worldviews in this area of prevention. The interview did not focus on cannabis but on the organisational issues in drugs policy. Recorded interview and Notes.

DATE	TECHNIQUE	PERSON/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
18/02/2005	Interview (24)	David Sheperdons New Horizons – Prevention Agency in Hull	David is a young practitioner in the prevention of drug use in the Hull community. It was an interesting interview revealing the worldview of treatment agencies. In particular, we talked about cannabis as one of the most difficult drug to address due to its popularity. Recorded interview and notes.
22/02/2005	Interview (25)	Jeffrey Ditchfield Cannabis donor The Beggar's Belief Rhyl, Wales	Mr. Ditchfield is an important campaigner on the medicinal use of cannabis. In his shop in Rhyl he sells paraphernalia and some growing equipment, however, he argues he donates cannabis for medicinal patients, rather than selling for recreational users. He has been judged by supplying but he was released because of the medicinal aspects involved in his defence. Recorded Interview and Notes
25/03/2005	Observation	Wilton Park Conference on Drugs Policy Wilton Park, Surrey	This is one of the most important conferences in drugs at worldwide level. Experts from all over the planet get together to discuss issues in this area. Very interesting opportunity with high level officials, stakeholders, charities, policy makers, international agencies and some campaigners. One of the presentations was about the ritual use of cannabis in some communities in India. Notes from the Conference.