

# SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF DRUG USE WITH REFLECTIONS TO CANNABIS USE IN CROATIA\*

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## ABSTRACT

Socio-cultural context of drug use is reflected as the constitutive part of interpretation of its effects and corresponding meanings, both at macro and micro-societal level of sociological analysis. In the first part of the article some more influential social-theoretical approaches to drug use are considered. Most of them consider drug use in terms of sociology of subculture and deviance. In second part, Croatian socio-cultural context is analysed, with reflections on questioning key terms that are addressed in the first part of the article. The concluding part indicates the ability for critical reflection of part of theories with regard to specificities of Croatian socio-cultural context. Furthermore, it is indicated that is necessary to overcome existing focus on the war, transition and after-war period as still dominant interpretative model in actual Croatian social research on drug use.

## KEY WORDS

socio-cultural context, drug use, cannabis, subcultures

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Drug use is considered here with respect to the assumptions that social and cultural context is the indispensable element of understanding the causes, forms, meanings and consequences of drug use. The detailed social theoretical approaches indicated a need to overcome those explanations that are based solely on the supposed “pharmacological reality” of legal and illegal substances and which are embedded in the dominant notions and social norms of the greater, lesser or none acceptance of any drugs. Social-theoretical analyzes that are considered here have shown this context is a complex phenomenon which tends to change and diversity, and that it can be studied at different levels of social reality.

With regard to macro-sociological analysis, socio-cultural context as an important element is incorporated in an attempt to answer the question about the nature of drug use at the societal level, and it is usually sketched using concepts that suggest basic social processes: immediate or enduring characteristics of a society – like frequently applied Merton’s anomic approach [1, 2], or Young’s definition of productivity ethos as an important mark of the dominant culture in industrial society [3], and suggestions of British society, defined as a post-modern one, made by Parker, Aldridge and Measham in the mid-nineties [4]. On the other hand, the socio-cultural context of drug use is outlined at micro-social level as the immediate context in which the use occurs. Ways, forms and consequences of drug use that are recognizable in actual life experience of users, are often affected by concepts of groups, learning, subcultures, etc. at the micro-level [5-7]. At both levels the socio-cultural context is the constitutive factor (with the personality of the user and pharmacological properties of drugs) in the function of drugs and their effect on the human psyche. Similarly, at both levels, drug users and their identities are being formed in their manifestations, sometimes more, sometimes less, determined by elements of the societal reaction that accompanies drug use and reflects the interests of social groups which play a crucial role in defining the core values in the dominant culture. Societal reaction mainly manifests itself by carrying out the principles of legality: allowing the use of legal drugs in the socially standardized forms and condemning both drug use when it takes place in the improper way and the use of illicit drugs in general.

The levels of socio-cultural context are not always strictly separated, but rather simultaneously integrated into the structure of concepts or models. Mostly, it is a literature that examines the use of drugs in the development of theoretical generalizations within the sociology of deviance and subcultures. Focus on research from these two fields in sociology is not surprising, considering that the use of illegal drugs clearly implies exceeding the norms as a common element in the social and cultural contexts which can be considerably different.

## **FROM SUBCULTURES TO COUNTERCULTURE**

Concepts of subculture and deviance were already implied in the studies by authors from Chicago school of sociology [8, 9]. Referring to the normative conflict as understandable in terms of cultural transmission and the diversity of American society, Sutherland’s concept of “social learning” as a socio-psychological framework for understanding deviance (crime) has proved to be incentive for future surveys of cannabis users [10]. While those surveys almost always confirmed significance of (friendly) group in accepting the aspects that approve drug tasting and longer smoking, the space left for questioning the scope of the initial concept was opened in the absence of interest in the issue of the conflicting nature of society and the problem of social causes of deviance [9] as well as an actor’s implicit “drowning” in the context and being subject to the group “pressure” [11]. However, the context of the (friendly,

peer) group, including exceeding the norms and the various conceptual modifications, will wriggle later as one of inevitable level of studies about drug use.

Theoretical developments that followed the Second World War have insisted emphatically upon the interaction between subculture and deviance. How much and in what ways these concepts, particularly in the study of the use of cannabis and other drugs, were brought in relation to each other, mediated by the very socio-cultural context in which the surveys were conducted. If it's kept in mind that it is mostly on theoretical approaches that generally observed use of drugs in general within societies of high capitalist modernization, especially in the U.S. [5-7, 12, 13], it is evident that the key changes in the socio-cultural context of drug use surrounded with the "spirit of the sixties" and the counterculture of the young people, which will be the very fertile ground to form new concepts, as well as to further develop and modify the terms of subculture and deviance, as the actual terms within the current studies of drugs and their users today. The approaches preceding the counterculture were fewer and their achievements were more often analyzed in performing through recent decades and even today, than at the time of their development. Those are: the delinquent anomic subculture by Cloward and Ohlin [14], Alfred Lindesmith's review of their model [15] that questioned anomic perspective in general, and Becker's sequential model of deviance [5] that will anticipate counterculture and future social-theoretical developments at the plane of drugs. They are important for several reasons.

The extending of Merton anomic matrix [1] enabled the Cloward and Ohlin [14] to specify a delinquent subculture of retreatment, which means collective (group) rejection of cultural goals of society along with the already unavailable legitimate and illegitimate means to achieve them. Cloward and Ohlin have situated such withdrawal at subculture level in the context of disorganization and disintegration of communities in urban centres, referring to drugs as a central preoccupation in terms of self-orientation of actors determined with failure. This approach has proven to be inspirational many times. However, its critical examination primarily allowed disclosure of theoretical reserves towards anomic paradigm as a comprehensive model for explaining drug use. Taking into account the multiplicity of motives for drug use, the variability in the effect of the same drug in various stages of an individual user's career, the diversity of culturally shaped patterns of drug use in different contexts, and, finally, the diversity of patterns of use of the same drug in the same context, but at different periods (such as the use of opiates in American society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), Lindesmith and Gagnon [15] have disputed the scope of understanding of the focus on drugs as individual or collective withdrawal, confirming their insights using complex historical material. Their observations suggest that the scientific explanation coincides with the official one too much, and that an element of illegality as a direct expression of social policy on drugs can significantly shape the modalities of their use and the elements of their appearance. In other words, illegality and social policies should be included in sociological analysis because they can - rather than withdrawal as a socio-structurally determined reaction to anomie - imply the problem of marginalization of users. These remarks are implicitly evident in the remarks addressed to Cloward and Ohlin because of their excessive insistence on socio-structural factors and street crime which has left too much room for the assumptions of predisposed risk markers of lower and marginalized social strata and groups in the field of crime [11, 16]. But regardless of this justified criticism, the concept of delinquent subcultures anticipated the importance of some concepts in the context of various forms of subcultural association [17]. Finally, the concept of withdrawal subculture has inspired researches of the role of structural factors in chronic and uncontrolled use of certain drugs (e.g., crack) in the context of the disintegration of local communities in poor and minority enclaves of American cities during the eighties and nineties [18].

The interaction of subculture and deviance in sociology of 1950s has been considerably nuanced in the works of authors dealing with interaction. Howard Becker [5] has determined subcultures only in principle, through examination of the character of the possible outcome of the plurality of society and social groups, and keeping a distance from notions of society and culture as a homogeneous entity. On the other hand, the socio-demographic characteristics of the actors in the context of the problem of deviance are relativised here by reference to the problem of the power structure and the key role that social status groups (depending on age, gender, ethnicity and class) allows making and enforcing the rules, i. e. labelling only one part of the lawbreakers. Using the analysis of phases in the career of marijuana smokers Becker has developed a model for the study of deviance in which discontinuities in the behaviour reflected the characteristic motivations that are shaped incidentally, not prior to the initial transgression, and thus reaffirm the (deviant) actor as a subject that can overcome inevitable determinism of the group (subculture) visible in the social learning theory.

Counterculture of youth, the forthcoming period of psychedelics and significantly expanding drug use during 1960s allowed further examination of the approaches that focused only to the lower social strata and marginalized world of immigrants and coloured people. Mass drug tasting and occasional drug taking was simultaneously the starting point for the development of new approaches and concepts. The epidemic model was significantly stabilized at the level of official definitions, confirming the indications of far-reaching Becker's "hierarchy of credibility" and social theory has met the need of redefining socio-structural components in the study of drugs. In this sense, cannabis (often with LSD) was observed as a drug to which young people from predominantly middle strata of society were devoted to [6, 19], and the mentioned terms of subculture and deviance have actualized Becker's clues to the "loosening" of socio-demographically determined motives for use. This is already evident in Goode's studies [6]. He implies a subculture as a sub community, and this fact would be even more recognizable in research by Zinberg [7]. Subculture has been implicated as sub community [6], or simply, in the research by Zinberg [7], as a peer group that approves the drug use, makes it controlled and gives it meaning using internal sanctions and rituals (as opposed to official sanctions of rejection and punishment). Although the Young's [3] apostrophizing of the bohemian youth culture (as the subculture of hippies and black people) was a reminder that the different positions in the social structure form the different attitudes towards the productivity ethos as the dominant value of the industrial capitalism, and might have the use of associated drugs as a kind of outcome, the drug use abruptly jumped from a margin into the centre of society. The turning point is, if we ignore the other elements in the discussion about the achievements of the counterculture, at least in the case of cannabis referred to the cultural assimilation of knowledge among users (and to some extent even among non-users): it will be manifested primarily in notion that it is a light drug and its use will become noticeably less ritualized, including the decline of earlier stricter forms of neutralizing external control [7]. One can discern that cultural assimilation of knowledge mentioned emerged on the waves of counterculture, as well as Young's prediction about youth as a social category in which - due to their specific position in the context of questioning contradictory impulses of free time and productivity ethos - drugs retain an important role in subsequent periods, corresponding to cultural accommodation of forbidden and modalities of recreational drug use among young people, as key concepts indicated in the studies of British authors from the mid-nineties [4].

## **FROM COUNTERCULTURE TO NORMALIZATION**

But the social and cultural context of the use of cannabis and other drugs is not a one way street. Grinspoon and Bakalar [20] warned that a society only partially "becomes what it

consumes”. Inspecting the deviant paradigm in the study of cannabis use to the “normalization thesis” will be developed gradually, along with the concept of moral panic [21, 22] repeatedly showing that analyzing the societal reactions we could be convinced that the capacity of society to accept the drug use as a normal human choice is still narrow. The approaches that inspect the deviance as a starting point, without accepting the pathological premises, individual or social, have been developed till 1990s in different conditions: from emphatically prohibitive, like those in the U.S. in 1980s, to the Dutch, which will not only anticipate, but now for nearly three decades, serve as an example of how the assumption of normal cannabis use can be integrated into socially acceptable patterns. Also, cultural accumulation of knowledge among users of different drugs enabled the creation and development of approaches that were yet to establish themselves in 1990s as a desirable and acceptable official policy. Harm reduction is a typical example of a legitimate approach subject to the attempts of science and politics, preoccupied with prohibition and abstinence, to adapt it to their own premises [23].

Multiplication and the increasing complexity of young people’s micro worlds now affected by the different and new concepts in subculture sociology with wider social changes that implied speech about post-modern society, have allowed the wider use of drugs that fit into the form of recreational drugs (where cannabis cannot be forgotten), and an apparent increase of user knowledge in relation to “public knowledge” issued in the terms of “normalization thesis” [4, 24], with obviously marked distance from the subcultural-deviant paradigm. The authors have portrayed the social and cultural context in which substances like cannabis and amphetamine drugs are not a “phenomenon” reserved for a hidden, unknown, delinquent and subcultural world, that their use does not necessarily result in deterioration of the user, although the use of some drugs is associated with obvious risks, but also that the entire, complex world of socializing forms itself no longer depending on whether drugs are used or not. There are indicated movements that reflect reduction of socio-demographic differences in tasting drugs, where – considering the implicit focus of sociological research of the world of drugs as a male world – gender redistribution has the greatest importance and follows the well-known changes in the belonging to a class, a race or an ethnicity. The apparent adaptation, the integration of drug use into the context of everyday obligations indicates the social and cultural context in which drugs are just one of the hazards of growing up and living in highly modernized societies, and often one of the ways in which young people somewhat neutralize the difficulties of everyday life [24].

## **CANNABIS IN CROATIA**

Considering the use of cannabis in the Croatian context, it is necessary to question the usefulness of theoretical approaches in outlining its specifics and associated elements which we could regard universal. They clearly indicate the existence of both kinds of elements.

Cannabis, like most other illegal drugs in the Croatian context, perhaps generally points to the kind of “historical concentration”. As sociological literature on youth subcultures shows that the process of their fragmentation intensifies during the 1980s [17], not lagging behind those in developed industrial societies, so the spread of cannabis use may be observed as a process that directly corresponds to it. Youth subculture is also the birthplace of use of other illegal drugs in Croatia. However, the use of cannabis occurs during the 1970s primarily as smoking hashish, simultaneously being undifferentiated compared to other illegal drugs (except heroin – its significant use started later, when the process of differentiation among drug users advanced). This usage can be interpreted in terms of subculture because it was a small number of young people whose preoccupation with drug experimentation would soon grow into recognizable shapes of focusing on drug-mediated activity and isolation apart from the

whole emerging youth culture, but also because drugs were inevitable area of experimentation and interest within fragments of the subcultures in the process of their formation.

At that time cannabis appeared in the society as something new – without the traditional long-term use, as it was the case with alcohol, deeply rooted in the culture of the wider society in which widespread use among young people often reproduced already existing patterns. The spread of cannabis was not preceded with the long-term presence or the use among certain social groups on whose repression, discrimination and marginalization the societal reaction focused to the criminalization of cannabis use in some developed industrial and other societies was based. In other words, there was no drug use in neglected urban quarters like those typical for the Latin American population in the United States, and no Rastafarians in the hills near major Croatian cities. Cannabis was present only in the form of industrially grown hemp. Unlike hashish smoking, marijuana smoking, planting and spreading started among young people on the turn of 1980s, when it was already sung about and celebrated in rock-music-mediated youth culture in the world for numerous times. Knowledge and perceptions of its effects were more or less mediated by reception of foreign rock culture and preceded the process of expansion. As already mentioned, although marijuana appears simultaneously with heroin, the area of their differentiation among users was already prepared for some time, either in the development of positive and negative symbolic notions, or literally in the form of at least occasional and sporadic separation of consumer scenes [17].

Marijuana quickly established itself among the various youth subcultures, where its use constantly raised in relation to other illegal drugs, and alongside socio-demographic strictly confining boundaries. To some extent this is true for the use of other illegal drugs. They appear and become established in the social system which – despite of stratification elements that are generated from its single-party system embedded in traditional marks of the dominant culture, or the contradiction between the planned and the commercial economy, and finally, the split between the official self-management project and its performance, often observed in literature in terms of half-modernisation [25, 26] – did legitimize itself, at least with the illusion of social security and social equality, passing through phases of prosperity and economic and political crisis until the final collapse and the war. If socio-theoretical approaches to the cannabis and other drugs use issue outlined broader socio-cultural context in advanced industrial societies as a shift from the margins of adolescence and youth, from ethnically and racially bounded world, to the massing in its centre during 1960s, with emphasis on young people from the middle classes, and later on crossing over socio-demographic framework (at least for cannabis), here it all starts right from the fragments of the centre – a wide range of young people who were in the mixture of compulsory education and open way to the university as a medium of social mobility entered the transition period with cannabis as a drug that represents something familiar and even fairly accepted: the grass which was tasted, smoked for some time, or is still consumed occasionally or frequently. Dispersion among subcultures and social strata can leave space for identifying the different modalities of drug use in numerous groups based on socializing, from those from certain neighbourhoods or benches in parks to those from the student rooms or toilets, or from some other, more or less conspicuous place in a club or disco. However, through twenty years, cannabis established itself as a drug the use of which can not be fully grasped by the socio-economic categories - as witnessed in the literature [17], that described changes in the subculture of bullies, recognized in 1970s at the “poor entry” of children from segments of labour families that were not accepting any drugs other than alcohol, and in the second half of 1980s were somewhat integrated into an entirely new world of football fans, not so much determined by classes, with both heroin and marijuana present in its fragments.

If the modalities considering this or that subculture are somewhat different, the prevailing patterns of drug use from the beginnings, more than twenty years ago, may be aggregated in the term recreational use – mostly smoking marijuana for pleasure, without the individual's decay, which is smoking more periodically or more often integrated into individual existence not in the form of escape from the pressures that come from certain life, but rather as something not directly related to these pressures. Smoking marijuana does not manifest as a disorienting response of young people to swinging and evident social crisis in 1980s or the difficulties of transition in 1990s, it is neither escape, and mostly not even symbolic resistance, it is rather continually incorporated into pluralisation of youth styles as clearly recognizable modernizing indication of the social development as something to be decorated with sometimes and to invent different “niches” in the multiplicity of individual and group orientations some other times. In so far smoking is often a sort of companion to “shaving” as a term (symbolically processed several times in subcultures) that shows different forms of expression, from the primarily hedonistic to those creative, sometimes equally indigestible for the dominant culture. Finally, over the period mentioned, which was recorded in Croatian sociological literature [2, 17], smoking cannabis has gradually, but clearly without doubt, lost the belonging clear sense of exceeding the norm that it once had. But it remained prohibited, punishable and subject to rejecting as harmful and dangerous in the notions and the fears of illegal drugs in the dominant culture.

This also indicated the socio-cultural context of cannabis use with respect to the terms in which it is outlined here: as a gradual and differentiated normalization that takes place from the beginning of drug use in conditions of societal reaction focused on abstinence. As such, the socio-cultural context is constant, regardless to the diversity of actors/users and the diversity of socio-economic stages in the development of Croatian society. At the same time, in contradiction of fundamental efforts it is not compact and consistent – the spreading of predominantly recreational marijuana smoking over the last quarter of 20C in Croatia took place in conditions in which the refusal from the side of the dominant culture was often presented as diffuse, allowing us to recall Cohen's [21] warnings that the spreading of normative interest in deviance is neither always politically and economically determined, nor it is always substitutable in its outcomes. As the refusal of societal reaction remains constant, and a kind of “quotient of tolerance” of the dominant culture in an effort to reintegrate is today tested through its talking to itself during the campaign of moral panic, and tomorrow it will be manifested through circumvention of formal and informal sanctions, so the normalization is expressed as differential – leaving opportunities to appreciate the heterogeneity of youth attitudes and behaviour with regard to drug use, i. e. for the recognition of different motives and forms of existence in various forms of drug use within the differentiated segments of young population. In addition, in the meantime, the world of users focused to cannabis has articulated among generations, searching for approaching of their own beliefs, knowledge, rationalizations and action strategies within the current possibilities for actualizing different motives and patterns of cannabis use.

When the ambivalence of a socio-cultural context is outlined following the research insights that have pointed to the complexity of social dynamics and cultural impacts in Croatia over the past ten years in a similar way, but within slightly different issues, there is the intention to draw attention to the richness and “elaboration” of space between assumed extremes to which the context may more or less incline in certain periods. This indicates the dynamics of context in time, which allows us to observe the intertwining fragments of normalization and the societal reaction without succumbing to linear determinism, where the actors would be just passive observers whose focus on the cannabis and other drug use appears only as a reaction to the “social and economic crisis”, war and transition, as it has been interpreted in some

Croatian contemporary drug research [2, 27, 28]. The increase in cannabis use among young people in the early 1990s was recorded in post-industrial societies, and existed in Croatia before it. Therefore, the effects of war and transition to the cannabis use do not appear as a completely unambiguous or consistent (from the variability of accessibility which can drastically vary at different periods of transition, to the types of legal and illegal drugs, increased use of which was mediated by the horrors of war), and do not form the base for users' disoriented focusing to the drug use. Drug use shapes in its diversity, mostly through questioning accents in the societal reaction with respect to its actual effects – the accumulation of knowledge and the multiplicity of users' options takes place in the ambient of more or less certain, but actual “sweat” and it can sometimes produce similar or identical marginalization outcomes, regardless of whether it is the first or the hundredth smoked joint in one's life.

The mediation of societal reaction in drug use manifests itself in a way that approaches the Croatian context in terms of internal heterogeneity with regard to the fact one can talk about the diversity of supply, patterns of use, its visibility, but also of the refusal or sanctions and moral concerns in terms of interest not only from region to region or depending on the degree of urbanization, but also among the major urban centres. Most of the concepts developed in the theoretical approaches – from focusing on subculture and generating of moral panic to cultural accommodations of the forbidden – will prove adequate in varying degrees in different parts of Croatia. Somewhere it would be impossible to buy joint rolling papers as basic equipment for smoking marijuana, or the drug would just be brought around occasionally, and such circumstances would be unimaginable elsewhere. In some cities, at the level of micromedia, there would be developed acquaintance with elementary and impartial facts about cannabis with the help of school teachers, and at other places one would witness activities to mobilize the local population focused on “purifying” the neighbourhood of drug addicts, with the online campaign to testify not only the IT education of the interested parties, but also the total disqualifications of the shyest mention of the need for differentiation of illegal drugs. However, in the third location for “indefinite time” there would be “comics reading club” working as a kind of Croatian version of Amsterdam's coffee-shop. At the same time, in different locations. But the question is in what extent such diversity can be seen as a pronounced specificity of Croatian socio-cultural context, and in what extent as something that essentially refers to its universalizing characteristics with regard to significant internal differentiation that can be seen elsewhere, where perhaps would be enough to state that – in terms of enhanced continuity of tolerant policies towards the cannabis use – the example of Amsterdam is often stereotypically taken as typical of the whole context of the Netherlands.

While the dynamics of the socio-cultural context at the macro level refers to the opportunity to speak about differentiated and gradual normalization in terms of subtractive societal response, with appreciation of the fluctuations and occasional upheavals in its shaping and recreativity as the dominant feature, at the micro-level the context shapes through the group. It remains a necessary and pervasive element in the immediate context of use - allowing us to simultaneously apply and question nearly all of the concepts and models developed in socio-theoretical approaches. This means that we will be able to inspect the usefulness of escapist elements in Cloward's and Ohlin's [12] model of withdrawal subculture, but also embrace their indications of the importance of the reference group. Alternatively, the part of drug users from different parts of Croatia, using their own experience, could convince us of the existence of certain stages in Becker's concept of marijuana smokers' career [5], recognizing the “labelling drama” as close, while some others would also show that the whole world of drug use, from its beginnings at the individual level to continuous smoking, has developed in its diversity in Croatia. Similarly, today, the group as a predominant feature of the immediate



context of drug use stands as the only entity in understanding of meaning and use and rebuttal of stereotypes associated with cannabis in the context of a wider society – it is the stimulus, the impulse to smoke it for pleasure, or for smoking as a catalyst in companionship, and, finally, as something casual. At the same time, the group is an occasional shelter, i. e. almost the only mediator in the forming of drug use that might just wave its hand responding to the warning messages and moralizing of societal reaction, and perhaps seek for some sort of alternative socio-pharmacology and question adverse effects of cannabis use in its own terms. In its own organization today, such a group leaves plenty of room for the actor/user as an individual, as well as for the recognition and acceptance of non-users. It can be defined as a subculture, as a subcommunity or as an affective affiliation – of peers, adolescents, or some other members. Groups as a kind of focal points in organizing of various symbolic structures, along with the intertwining of people, meanings and contents, have resulted in a certain way by extending the concept of subculture in social theory. Research contributions that have enabled overcoming focus exclusively on withdrawal and isolation in relation to the wider society, symbolic accept of values of the dominant culture or class defining of symbolic rejection, today are the heritage of several decades of theoretical sociology of subculture. The need for similar progress is implicitly marked in literature that has a basic interest in the drug use as a subject. Smoking marijuana and hashish is present in different fragments of the youth culture, even when it follows to some extent the formation of various more or less complex micro-worlds. In those in which the affection to smoking will be expressed more, the complex world of interactions, symbols, identities and beliefs that revolve around the use of cannabis would be formed. In so far as the subculture term which expresses the general characteristics of cannabis use in Croatia, with indications of the extent of the elementary and intergenerational establishing, they will be somewhat questioned, but at any attempt of ethnographic or similar insight into the formation and the possible existence of “grain tribe” – also confirmed.

## CONCLUSIONS

Croatian society has changed in relation to the society of 1970s or early 1980s, when cannabis and other illicit drugs appeared in it [25, 29, 30]. Throughout this period, and even today, it shows a pronounced fear of unknown forms psychoactivity, whether mediated by drug use or not. In the case of drugs it's primary principle relating to psychoactivity is based on the principle of legality. Croatian society is not extraordinary in this at all. Different societies and cultures express aversion to substances that are new, unfamiliar, and their use may allow the questioning of the prevailing patterns of reality and, perhaps, the values that the dominant social groups present as an integrative framework of society and culture, most often in their existing forms: from rejection of alcohol in countries where Islam is the dominant religion, to a range of psychoactive substances that European colonists attributed to “lower” and “primitive” forms of human existence and attempted to eradicate them along with cultures and peoples that used those substances or integrated them in social and cultural terms [31, 32]. In a similar way, along with the warnings of non-motivating syndrome as a result of smoking cannabis, one could recall Young's indications [3] which show that the dominant culture of industrial society refuses hedonistic and expressive drug use that symbolically structures the inspecting the productivity ethos by developing alternate realities. Despite everything, the alternative forms of reality have not disappeared: in some areas they were an integral part of resistance to the culture of invaders, and have almost everywhere survived on the margins of society, often being labelled as dangerous in efforts for the purpose of reintegration of the wider society and culture on the lines of detachment toward deviance, crime and obvious discriminative labelling of the whole racial and ethnic groups, usually minority groups. It was perhaps also a key form of controlling the unknown and various forms of psychoactivity, until 1950s. When questioning of the predominant existence

forms in 1960s appeared from within, or in the very centre of a developed industrial society, in the form of youthful massive and radical rejection of the culture of industrial capitalism, it was mediated by the use of various psychoactive substances. It was rather shocking in its appearance, and “dangerous” in its visions of a new world and therefore continually criminalized, parallel with putting new substances beyond the possibilities of legal use, and it was just that much widely recognized as a challenge and a new space in the world, the consumption-oriented industrial capitalism. From that point on, a complex interplay of rejection and absorption has taken place. Drugs continued to be presented purely in terms of rejection, harm, damage, danger, disease, etc., i.e. the topics by which societal reactions have often tried to patch holes in the dominant culture and to restore the society on the lines of long forms of domination, from those based on age and gender, to those fundamental in the system of capitalist production, emphasizing the youth as highly sensitive and weak, but important link in maintaining its own continuity. At the same time, the illegal drugs as once more and sometimes less present, but certainly a lasting element in youth culture, were indirectly integrated into the new, growing and propulsive parts of the capitalist economy, finding their place, more implicitly and in the form of the intriguing association within rock culture industry, and later within the rave culture and the entertainment industry in general. Psychoactivity will be built into the budgets of usability, if it can not be accepted any more. In other words, in the actual conditions the drugs will become a dynamic element of the cultural logic of late capitalism in which “drug economy” continues to be illegal, but its commercial cultural support will be legitimate and profitable [33, 34]. As it appears that the society ultimately may not be so interested in a particular difficult problems which drug use can result in, as commonly spoken, so it can be discerned that even the original culture is not entirely immune to psychoactivity if it can sustain it within its own endurable framework and patterns. So, shifts of perception and experience are no longer reserved for the interpretation of the use of stroboscope and lasers in night clubs, or in the context of rave culture labelled as “drug use”, but they are installed along with all associated technology into the conventional notion of the average football matches or the opening of the Olympic Games, where the magic and psychedelic moments will be the basis of the event organization itself.

During 1990s and 2000s, the social theory draws attention to the ambiguity of “social preoccupation with drugs” and is using certain terms, such as “normalization” and “persistence of drug use” to comprehend the main features of the certain illegal drugs recreational use in the socio-cultural contexts of highly modernized societies. Cannabis will be often pronounced as the paradigmatic example. This allows us to notice that most of the contents in recent studies dealing with cannabis in the past decade concerns the possibilities of formal social control of its use, with emphasis on the structuring of norms which would allow the cannabis use not to be punished no longer. The decriminalization and non-penalisation of drug use, as the actual issues that deserve proper attention also in Croatia, depending on the understanding of the concepts themselves, will be the inevitable question in the social policy towards the use of cannabis in forthcoming years. A socio-cultural context of its use in Croatia, along with all of the pertinent specifics in the social and cultural dynamics, the difficulties mediated by the war and the transition, as well as the manifestation of use and societal responses, will warn of the existence of substantial universalizing marks – especially those that the actors of drug use and the actors of societal responses share with associated actors in numerous countries in the world.

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## SOCIOKULTURNI KONTEKST UPOTREBE DROGA S OSVRTOM NA UPOTREBU KANABISA U HRVATSKOJ

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### SAŽETAK

Sociokulturni kontekst upotrebe droga ovdje se razmatra kao konstitutivni čimbenik u interpretaciji njihova učinka i pripadajućeg značenja na makro i mikro socijetalnoj razini sociološke analize. U prvom dijelu razmotreni su važniji socijalno teorijski pristupi koji upotrebi droga pristupaju u terminima sociologije devijantnosti i subkultura. U drugom dijelu, razmatra se sociokulturni kontekst upotrebe kanabisa u Hrvatskoj i mogućnosti propitivanja osnovnih termina navedenih u teorijskom dijelu rada. U zaključnom dijelu naznačuje se mogućnost kritičke refleksije pojedinih teorija s obzirom na specifičnosti hrvatskog sociokulturnog konteksta, kao i potreba za prevladavanjem fokusa na ratu, tranziciji i poraću prisutnih u pojedinim hrvatskim društvenim istraživanjima upotrebe droga.

### KLJUČNE RIJEČI

sociokulturni kontekst, upotreba droga, kanabis, subkulture