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5 **Abstract**

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7 *Index terms—*

8 **1 INTRODUCTION**

9 There is new literature that is being produced that is forging ahead and giving a new sense of direction to the
10 discourse about cannabis from a South African, African and Global South perspective (Waetjen 2019; 2022).
11 This literature is -as the intention of this article also illuminates -beginning to show that cannabis can exist and
12 has existed as a more complex feature of development and political geography than is popularly acknowledged.
13 Offering a critical discussion of cannabis, applicable to more than just its recreational ?? part, is imperative to
14 reimagining the role the plant will play in contemporary development.

15 This means also providing new theoretical and methodological ways of understanding the plant. 2 These
16 must illuminate the often-conspicuous historiography and theories of black revolution and resistance that are
17 nonetheless encompassed in the study of cannabis. Regrettably, the lessons 2

18 **2 In**

19 forthcoming articles these theoretical and methodological aspects will be dealt with fully and respectively. This
20 article only provides an overview of the importance of cannabis studies to emancipatory politics and development
21 more generally. 1 Recreational goods including tobacco, alcohol and cannabis have long been a part of most
22 societies. Western development particularly made use of them to maintain control over labour regimes and
23 people. For example, the 'tot system' in the Cape Province, as well as the opium trade of the British Empire in
24 Asia. See for example Mills (2005) discussion of Great Britain's trade and prohibition of cannabis in the 19 th
25 century.

26 from such activities are often far too easily dismissed in most disciplines in the academic institute (see Morris
27 2015). By arguing for a theoretical, yet practical pedagogy for cannabis studies produces a more tangible
28 output that calls out the concerns of the Global South. A micro-analysis of a plant and its interaction with
29 bigger forces that influence it offers fresh methods with which to positively critique the analysis of agrarian
30 transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. By using cannabis as a conduit through which to understand
31 various aspects of South Africa's contemporary politics and socioeconomics is an innovative method of assessing
32 the ongoing challenges of development. These include the need to increase black ownership, access to just pro-
33 poor employment opportunities for the poor working class and ensuring women occupy real leadership positions
34 (see for instance Buxton

35 **3 II. MORE TO CANNABIS STUDIES THAN SMOKE**

36 There is much more fire to cannabis 3 than smoke! Nevertheless, all the uses of the plant (recreational, medicinal
37 or industrial -and even spiritual and cultural usages) are generally ostracized in South Africa based on colonial
38 and post-colonial stereotypes about its psychedelic abilities. Moreover, South Africa in the main still adheres to
39 'Prohibitionist drug policy' (Scheibe, Shelly & Versfeld in Buxton et.al. 2020). These negative narratives continue
40 to have great 3 Cannabis describes the entire range of uses of the plant; industrial, medicinal, recreational
41 and spiritual (see Chouvy 2019 for the continued confusions about classifying the plant). Moreover, there is
42 significant interrelationship between all these uses of the plant that highlights that cannabis is more than just a
43 psychoactive substance. To provide distinction, the term hemp is used to describe industrial cannabis. Marijuana
44 (more commonly called dagga in South Africa), when used, will be in reference to recreational but also medicinal
45 cannabis.

4 III. SOME BACKGROUND TO UNDERSTANDING CANNABIS

46 resonance over the plant's contemporary and future development. 4 So even though cannabis is a potentially
47 useful agricultural crop, the obstructive link to smoking recreational marijuana to get high warrants, for regulators
48 and the public alike, that the entire uses of the plant's development are kept separated and side-lined, rather
49 than unified and consolidated. Illuminating new ways of thinking through the legacy's prohibition geographies
50 inscribed onto the plant is thus essential to the plant's future.

51 Honing the skills learnt while labouring for cannabis during prohibition so that they become a permanent
52 feature of its contemporary development is one way to rethink the plants future. Ordinary people's struggles
53 have created ways to exist that are progressive because they tend to be labour centered and viewed from a lens
54 that reveals the emancipation and 'rebellion of the poor' (see Alexander 2010; Neocosmos 2016). In this way,
55 legal contemporary cannabis development is not solely about entering 'the market' or gaining liberal democratic
56 capitalist consent. In fact, the international cannabis movement 5 is generally disconcerted that the parameters
57 of the current development program for the plant are still largely being decided upon by those with wealth
58 and power. The cannabis movement is defined as those people and ideas who have supported the plant even
59 during prohibition rather than those who are only advocating for the plant since the start of global legalization.
60 Narratives are framed in history and produced, reproduced, repackaged and changed over time (see London 2009).
61 The notion of 'narratives' is a leitmotif that can also be used to explore broader issues of contemporary South
62 Africa such race and identity or gender and sexuality. Michel Foucault understood narratives as genealogy whose
63 concern, (and in terms of this understanding of Cannabis), is clearly not history, but trying to understand the
64 present by using democratic capital expansion. It further scrutinizes how it is possible that the system (politics)
65 that prohibited cannabis, for various legal, moral and economic reasons, remains in control of the contours of
66 the plants development in the legalization era. Such a critical view of cannabis development rehabilitates 'other'
67 discourses about the plant to initiate their use in a post-legalization era that seems to be side-lining them. Firstly,
68 cannabis has political ideas steeped in slave and colonial history, pan-Africanism, and black consciousness that
69 are often not referenced in its mainstream development. 6 Secondly, the important labour agency black people,
70 the poor working class and women have given to the plants global recognition are being dispossessed in the plant's
71 contemporary development plans. Contemporary South African cannabis development illustrates how ordinary
72 people's history and labour is flouted when policies are written. 7 Much more inspired academic inquiry is thus
73 needed to direct the process of cannabis development since the landmark South African Constitutional Court
74 judgement that legalized cannabis for private use on 18 September 2018. 8 Essentially cannabis is now able to
75 mingle with free-market economies; which is a positive development. However, it also allows capital the enterprise
76 to maintain 'power over' merchandises; even those it formally dismissed. What is more, party politics, the state,
77 as well as broader neoliberal agendas remain reliant on free market economic planning that have benefited a
78 minority, rather than most black people (See particularly reggae music that has long conceptualized cannabis
79 within a black revolutionary historic framework. Schneider 2003). 9 Cannabis development in South Africa
80 therefore has to escape the capital limitation of materialism if it wants to include the lessons of its history into its
81 contemporary drive. Innovative approaches to (cannabis) development enhance more inspired forms of positive
82 change because "We must look for solutions and a way of life elsewhere" (Sinwell 2022: 6), so (South Africa) the
83 world can make it through its current quagmire.

84 4 III. SOME BACKGROUND TO UNDERSTANDING 85 CANNABIS

86 Cannabis has been cultivated for thousands of years, this accentuates the close relationship this plant has had to
87 human societies and agrarian development (Paterson MA Dissertation 2009: 16). 10 Plants are cultivated because
88 the goods they produce add intrinsic value to the society in which they are being farmed. Hemp cannabis for
89 example has been and still is renowned throughout the world for its multiple product capabilities. These include,
90 "agro-industrial fields such as agriculture, textile, bio composite, paper-making, automotive, construction, bio-
91 fuel, functional food, oil, cosmetics, personal care, and [the] pharmaceutical industry" (Bouloc, Allegret and
92 Arnaud eds., 2013 ; Salentijn et.al., 2015). Cannabis also has, besides its recreational usage, significant medicinal
93 properties for critically ill patients, pain relief, multiple sclerosis, nausea and epilepsy for instance (Chapkis &
94 Webb 2008; Crowther, Reynolds, Tansey eds., 2010). However, it is the chemical compounds found in cannabis
95 that have caused much of this plant's controversy.

96 The two primary chemical components found in cannabis are Tetrahydro cannabinol (THC) the principal
97 psychoactive constituent of recreational marijuana (Agricultural Research Council 2014) and CBD (Cannabidiol)
98 that is not psychedelic (i.e., it cannot make a person high). Both THC and CBD have health benefits and
99 work to improve the London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences 15 bodies endocannabinoid
100 system that has an important "? role in regulating many functions and processes, including, sleep, mood, appetite,
101 memory, reproduction, and fertility" (First Crop, Accessed 05 January 2022). Warf (2014: 433) therefore surmises
102 that "While it has been accepted and tolerated more often than not, cannabis has also been repeatedly demonized
103 in different historical contexts; attempts to restrict its usage have invariably reflected political and moral agendas
104 rather than established science."

105 The cycle of victimizing cannabis eventually resulted, in the 20 ??h century, in the total and global prohibition
106 of even those parts of the plant that could not be used for psychedelic purposes. 11 South Africa had a very

107 important part to play in the scheduling of cannabis as a 'dangerous drug' by the League of Nations in 1925
108 (Chattopadhyaya 2019; Duvall 2016; Duvall 2019; Nkosi et.al.,2020; Waetjen 2022). The plant was so heavily
109 'demonized' because it was regarded as a leading cause of the 'breakdown in racial and cultural boundaries' (Nkosi
110 et.al., 2020: 73). Prohibition therefore had a definite racial slant and was portrayed as a means of preventing
111 black men from coming into physical contact with white women during the interwar years in South Africa as
112 well as in the United States of America and Great Britain (see Cross in Manning (ed) 2007). 12 Popular (mostly
113 American) discourse argued that the plant was prohibited because textile, paper and plastic industries supported
114 by bankers and politicians, as well as a growing medical industrial complex more interested in synthetic drugs,
115 wanted to remove its products' commercial threat from the marketplace. To do this, politicians and big business
116 linked the psychedelic and recreational use of marijuana to all cannabis products. According to this narrative,
117 it was this combination of power and wealth that eventually saw to it that the entire plant was scheduled as a
118 12 Linking drug use to minority groups occurred also in the history of cannabis in Nigeria in the early twentieth
119 century (see Klantschnig in Klantschnig, Carrier & Ambler 2014). 'hard drug' almost throughout the world
120 (Herer (1985 [2010]); London 2009).

121 Relating cannabis to 'otherness', drugs and criminal behaviour became a useful leverage tool for politicians
122 throughout the cold war, reaching its apex in the 1980s (London 2009: 83-89). However, since the 1990s increasing
123 societal pressure has forced many policy makers to reevaluate recreational and medicinal marijuana regulations.
124 Today, legal, essentially legal, or decriminalized cannabis policies are now fully fledged in many countries of the
125 world as well as in several American states (Amaducci et.al South Africans also began to challenge the legal basis
126 for cannabis prohibition after establishing a majority government in 1994. These challenges were set in motion
127 by Gareth Prince in the late 1990s and through the 2000s all of which were dismissed by the courts (see Mia
128 2020). However, since the 2010's the legality of cannabis in South Africa has begun to gain ground much more
129 swiftly. The 31 March, 2017 Western High Court judgement declared "the prohibition of the cultivation, use and
130 possession of cannabis within the privacy of the home, unconstitutional" (Myrtle Clarke, Accessed 05 January
131 2022). And finally, on 18 September 2018, the Constitutional Court of South Africa made it a citizen's right to
132 use recreational cannabis in their private space.

133 However, many African countries continue to maintain the prohibition of recreational, medicinal and industrial
134 cannabis regardless of the current international debates surrounding the plant have illuminated (Adebisi & Olaoye
135 2022). African countries inherited colonial prohibitionist policies towards not just marijuana, but also alcohol
136 and khat for example. Khat is prominent in East Africa and when chewed acts as a stimulant for recreational and
137 work contexts (Carrier p. 105-123 in Klantschnig et.al. 2014). The London Journal of Research in Humanities
138 and Social Sciences legacies of colonial agrarian agricultural development therefore still have influence in South
139 Africa, Africa and the black diaspora. Some of the most prominent crops that have directly aided 'colonial
140 accumulation' in Africa and former slave economies have been maize, sugar cane and cotton but also opium,
141 cocoa and cannabis (Mills 2003). The debate about the various relationships that specific products or crops
142 have (had) in the development of societies, economies and politics therefore cannot be ignored. These include
143 for example, Kurlasky's (2003) presentation of the multiple and global linkages of salt. Beinart & Wotshela's
144 (2011) localized social agrarian history of the prickly pear in South Africa's Eastern Cape region. Or, McCann's
145 (2005) important discussion about the encounter and production of maize in Africa from the sixteenth century.
146 13 Likening cannabis to other plants and agrarian products is important because it is always viewed out of the
147 context of nature due to the persistent framing of the plant as a drug substance. These agrarian frameworks
148 that decide which plants can and cannot be used continue to hold substantial power over 'developing' countries
149 agricultures (see Duvall 2016). They also present a challenge to 'emergent economies' to rethink how they
150 participate in the global economy, and, with what products they will base their development plans on. 14

151 5 IV. THE WEAKNESSES IN CONTEMPORARY 152 CANNABIS DEVELOPMENT

153 Development is defined here as how societies create and sustain progressive change, including economically and
154 politically, within and without. 15 15 Development is defined as many things. It has been defined as a simple
155 process of progress of society and the attainment of basic needs such as food, water, shelter, health care and
156 education. It has also been argued to be about fundamental change of social, economic and political institutes
157 and the 14 The terms 'lean' and 'fat' is a noteworthy terminology for describing 'developing' and 'developed'
158 nations (see Olopade 2014). 13 Interestingly, "Maize is so widespread, and so widely considered by Africans as an
159 African crop, that it is difficult to see its adoption, and subsequent infiltration to the heart of many production
160 systems, as enforced" (Beinart & Middleton 2004: 20).

161 Unfortunately the term development is also associated to the negative discourses created by over half a
162 millennium of hegemonic liberal democratic capitalism (Willis 2005)

163 **6 London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences**

164 framework that liberal democratic capitalism has shaped (Kay et.al., 2020). The archeology and genealogy, in a 165 Focauldian sense, of 20 th century prohibition therefore still exists and functions within liberal democratic capital 166 development which is furthermore built on difference rather than unity. Essentially, this type of development has 167 historically been designed to let only a few people ever own, lead or labour freely.

168 As a result of this exclusionary process, it is possible to view cannabis development in South Africa as a 169 microcosm of the unequal reality of the countries contemporary economic geography. Cannabis research then 170 becomes a conduit through which critique of the various sets of relations that continue to have influence over 171 South Africa's history, political geography and development can be made. Once problems such as unemployment 172 and poverty are exposed alternative forms of development may be stimulated into practice (see Clarke & Riboulet- 173 Zemouli 2021). Cannabis is an important member of this deliberation because its usages neatly fit into the vital 174 spaces occupied by agriculture, the medical industrial complex and the functional goods produced by non-food 175 crops, besides the spiritual and traditional healing practices the plant also has meaning for. ??6 Cannabis 176 development, if managed correctly, can arguably become a potentially valuable non-food crop for South Africa 177 that can be used to the countries advantage (Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli 2021).

178 African development must insert itself into the global discussion about cannabis because of the impact this 179 plant already has for social, economic and political systems, that is besides its proven track record of providing an 180 income for black people, the poor working class and women. Cannabis also feeds directly into the highly charged 181 agrarian questions related to food security; the domination of the largely Western medical industrial complex 182 over medicines and 16 Non-food crops are those plants that produce recreational, medicinal or industrial goods 183 and whose main function is not to provide humans with food. Cannabis, is unique because it is able to produce 184 all three of these types of non-food crop goods. the practice of medicine; land; as well as the development of 185 practical, innovative, and productive solutions for African and South African socio-economic change.

187 **7 V. REARRANGING CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL DESIGNS**

188 Making sense of the complex interactions that are incorporated in the study of cannabis in South Africa requires 189 a multifaceted conceptual approach. The study of cannabis is dominated by Western discourse, so any discussion 190 of it in South Africa requires historical and theoretical frameworks able to interpret these to fit the circumstances 191 faced in Africa. 17 Although some authors such as Bewley-Taylor, Jelsma & Kay (2020); Buxton, Chinery-Hesse 192 & Tinasti (Eds.). (2020); or Clarke & Riboulet-Zemouli (2021) do offer more radical alternatives for cannabis 193 they do not express these in the black revolutionary experience.

194 The work of James (1984) as well as Gilroy (1993) for example pay special attention to assembling a history 195 of blacks in the diaspora that is not separate to world history but necessarily a part of it. 18 Likewise, the 196 "international herb" 19 is infused into the wider geopolitics of oppressed people's history from the end of slavery, 197 through the anti-colonial nationalist struggles, to the contemporary struggles of the new millennium. Rodney's 198 (1973) analysis of black historiography can be used to understand prohibition histories as 19 Culture, 'The 199 international herb' International herb, Virgin Records: 1979. 18 Archille Mbembe ideas about the 'Postcolony' 200 can perhaps also be included here for his explanation of Africans place in the world (see Mbembe 1992; 2005

202 **8 London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences**

203 well as the continuation of 'underdevelopment' in contemporary development more generally. Revisiting the 204 notion of underdevelopment, makes it possible to pose the argument that development consciously removed 205 what it did not want from participation in its imperial efforts. Thus, it became taboo for black revolutionary 206 history and action, past and present, to affect how economic development proceeds. The terms and conditions of 207 underdevelopment remain deeply engraved onto the lexicon of peoples understanding of marijuana. Dependency 208 schools of thought therefore proposed that delinking from capitalist 'world systems' was a means of correcting 209 such entrenched underdevelopment. 20 Similarly, cannabis development needs to delink from flawed prohibition 210 standards if it is to propose a way forward for the entire plant's usages.

212 C.L.R. James (1938 [1980]; 1984) work can also be used to understand cannabis because he emphasised 213 a black Marxist perspective that remained principally about the revolutionary worker and the usefulness of 214 revolutionary action to the world. Gordon (2008: 165) states that "James's intellectual contributions consisted 215 of his continuous production of oppositional histories and diagnoses of political phenomena through which he 216 articulated his notion of 'the creative universal,' which, he argued, manifested itself in the resilience of the working 217 classes and the peasantry". This perspective is essential to the critique that a truly equitable and sustainable 218 development future not only for cannabis, but also other commodities, ideas and inventions, must be labour 219 centred and include black revolutionary thought and action into its strategies. Proposing methods of action 220 designed by and for the Global South is what both Rodney (1969 [1996]; 1973) and James (1938 [1980]; 1984)

221 as well as Fanon offered in their "?alternative models of revolution with shared premises [with Marxism] but 20
222 Immanuel Wallerstein coined the notion of a 'world-system' to explain how leading (core) countries interacted in
223 an unequal basis with middle income (semiperiphery) and poorer (periphery) countries. Ultimately, this 'world
224 system' maintained the power of the few (core countries) particularly over the majority (periphery regions of
225 the world). different conclusions" (Gordon 2008: 165). Such theoretical positioning's provide a grounding with
226 which to plant critiques of prohibition geographies conceptualization of cannabis as first and foremost a deviant
227 recreational good.

228 Following from the 'groundings' provided by Rodney (1969 [1996]; 1973) and James (1938 [1980]; 1984), an
229 updated version of Cooper's (2002) notion of gatekeeping problematizes contemporary cannabis medicalization.
230 Using the 'gatekeeper thesis' for understanding cannabis highlights how the otherwise useful contemporary drive
231 towards the medicalization of cannabis operates as just another effort aimed at ensuring the gate to liberal
232 democratic capitalism is kept intact. The medicalization of cannabis therefore still does not do enough to
233 consolidate all the plant's usages or combat failed development ideals. Thus, the acceptance of a medicinal
234 categorization of cannabis is welcomed but still constrains and controls what can and cannot be incorporated
235 into the plant's development (see also London 2009). It likely also means access to ownership of cannabis
236 industries, will still largely be the prerogative of the elite over the marginalized. London (2009) emphasizes that
237 the drive towards the medicalization of cannabis does little to rearrange who controls the development design
238 for the plant. As such, formerly prohibited goods such as cannabis remain regulated by the very same liberal
239 paradigms that made them illegal in the first place. The medicalization of cannabis is only acceptable now
240 because the liberal capital system has been able to decide the extent to which the boundaries of their system can
241 be pushed. Therefore, the relatively recent 'medicalization of society' (Conrad 2008) fashions new boundaries
242 for formerly criminalized practices such as alcoholism or gambling, rather than deal with the root causes of
243 their persistence. Extrapolating from this idea illustrates how political goods, particularly black revolutionary
244 history, or black ownership of key labour markets, are allowed access to legalized capital markets only once new
245 boundaries for their reach are configured. Black revolutionary practices that continue to challenge the basis of
246 liberal capitalism and its but other commodities, activities and even people whose relationship to the state and law
247 is ambiguous." Like 'other' things and groups Cannabis remains 'ambiguous' to the law and the state. The debate
248 about cannabis is therefore still highly polarised between those for or against. However, Fijnaut & De Ruyver
249 (2015) argue that rather than explaining these two extremes a 'third way' must be found that takes account of
250 both polarized views. Such a 'third way' is a more ethical positioning to take than the two extremities, either
251 for or against the plant. Consequently, it would be unethical for cannabis research not to concern themselves
252 with how the benefits of a legal cannabis market will accrue to the marginalized. Bewley-Taylor, Jelsma & Kay
253 (2020) for example speak about this new ethics as an issue of igniting fair trade practices to benefit the most
254 marginalized cannabis producer. As such, questions of ethics have everything to do with the practical effort they
255 seek to achieve. If development increases the economic, as well as social and political well-being of those already
256 with these capabilities then it has done a disservice, ethically speaking. Producing engaged, political and black
257 understandings about cannabis is therefore an ethical necessity and a new positive way of conceiving cannabis;
258 even if these face a daunting uphill travail.

259 9 VII. CONCLUSION

260 It is essential that black people, the poor working class and women have a say in the designs of contemporary
261 development. At the moment these groups still do not have enough power to decide the parameters of
262 developments that directly affect them. This is also true for contemporary cannabis development which is
263 failing to ensure all those who worked with the plant even during prohibition are justly incorporated into its
264 future sites of trade. These people will likely be left out of key decision or implementation practices regarding
265 the plant.

266 Legalizing cannabis has not meant that marginalized people who seek access to the industry will be duly
267 accommodated. As such the process of development itself must be at fault and London Journal of Research in
268 Humanities and Social Sciences 20 it is the academics obligation to critique its system and seek viable alternatives.
269 This article argued that when development includes a) black revolutionary history and b) the labour creation
270 that informal economies have made functional, its pursuit will benefit the most marginalized in society.

271 South Africa is at a crossroads that requires every bit of help it can from all sectors. Continuing to do
272 development in a way that benefits the few rather than the majority will only breed more faults rather than solve
273 the various crises that plague South Africa, Africa and the Global South. Getting the contemporary development
274 of cannabis right can offer to people of colour some certainty (even if it is minuscule) that their history and labour
275 were for a just cause.

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¹ 'Mo fire' than Smoke: Liberating the Politics and Development of Cannabis in South Africa

² © 2023 Great] Britain Journals Press | 16 | Volume 23 Issue ?? Compilation 1.0 'Mo fire' than Smoke:
Liberating the Politics and Development of Cannabis in South Africa



Figure 1: 4



Figure 2: 6



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Figure 4: 11 For

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developmental paradigms remain excluded. Thus, even with the medicalization of cannabis, inaccessibility exists. Povinelli (2011) offers that these non-inclusions are a way that 'late liberalism' continues to manage global economic development through political, economic and social control mechanisms.

And more importantly than that, what Alcock (2018) and Povinelli (2011) as well as the arguments being made here introduce, is how access to employment opportunities also means extending these to include the ideals and designs of work that the most marginalized groups have energized. 21

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in the alienated labour force created by liberal democratic capitalist paradigms. It also makes work, labour and employment an ethical necessity of life rather than an arrangement people only engage in to survive the money driven lifestyle of contemporary society.

VI. ESTABLISHING A NEW ETHICS FOR

CANNABIS
STUD-
IES

The South African Constitutional Courts decision on 18 September, 2018, birthed a new ethical standard for industrial, medicinal and more especially recreational cannabis. Nonetheless, the Constitutional Courts judgement is still fragile in terms of what is and what is not legal for cannabis. 22

Hence,
Povinelli's
(2011:
13)
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of

'quasi-events' that "They neither happen nor not happen" is useful to understanding the uncertainty still surrounding cannabis in South Africa. A similar notion is noted by Carrier & Klantschnig (2018) who use the term 'quasilegality' in their discussion of Cannabis and khat. Carrier & Klantschnig (2018: 3) use this term because of "? its ability to capture a key aspect of not just drugs like khat and cannabis,

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9 VII. CONCLUSION

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