## LEGALISATION OF MARIJUANA

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### Abstract

Marijuana, also known as cannabis, has been a controversial substance for decades due to its psychoactive effects and potential for abuse. However, in recent years, there has been a growing movement to legalize marijuana for medical and recreational purposes. In this essay, I will argue in favor of legalizing marijuana, examining the potential benefits and drawbacks of such a move.

One of the primary arguments in favor of legalizing marijuana is that it has numerous medical benefits. Studies have shown that marijuana can be effective in treating a range of conditions, including chronic pain, epilepsy, anxiety, and nausea. Legalization would make it easier for patients to access marijuana-based medications and treatments, potentially improving their quality of life.

Another argument in favor of legalization is that it would reduce crime and increase tax revenue. Marijuana is currently illegal in many countries, and the black market trade in this drug is a significant source of income for criminal organizations. Legalizing marijuana would reduce the profits of these groups and potentially reduce the associated crime. Additionally, the government could tax the sale of marijuana, creating a new revenue stream that could be used to fund education, healthcare, and other public services.

Opponents of marijuana legalization argue that it would lead to an increase in drug use and addiction. However, studies have shown that legalization does not necessarily lead to increased drug use. In fact, in some cases, drug use has decreased in areas where marijuana has been legalized. Additionally, legalizing marijuana could help reduce addiction rates by allowing for better regulation and control of the drug.

Another potential drawback of marijuana legalization is that it could lead to increased impaired driving and workplace accidents. However, it is worth noting that marijuana is already widely used in many countries, and legalization could actually make it easier to monitor and regulate its use on the roads and in the workplace.

### Review of Literature

***Perspectives of illicit marijuana growers and traders on commercial legalisation of marijuana in South Africa: considerations for policy formulation***; *Emmanuel Manu,*

***Mbuyiselo Douglas;2021***

The relaxation of regulations on marijuana cultivation and usage in some countries has sparked a global movement for decriminalising commercial marijuana cultivation, trading and usage. This is against the backdrop that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), through advocacy and lobbying, often influence policy change in many countries Proponents of commercial marijuana legalisation argue that such a move will not only empower the economies of poor countries but could also moderate the use of other hard illicit drugs such as opiates. For instance, recreational and medicinal marijuana sales allowed the Colorado government to collect more than $135 million in taxation revenue in the year 2015 alone. To ensure that positive outcomes occur alongside the considerable economic boost

that recreational marijuana legalisation may present, the generated tax revenue could be used to fund substance abuse and regulation of marijuana use. Recreational marijuana legalisation could also result in the employment of more workers who can grow and package marijuana for sale, and in a country where the unemployment rate is high among rural dwellers, this could be a good opportunity. It could also present job opportunities to those who can work in educational and health promotion initiatives to promote the safe use of the drug.

### *Marijuana legalisation in the United States : an Australian perspective; Peter HOMEL*

### *Rick Brown; 2021*

Range and scope of present and proposed marijuana legalisation measures in the United States - different jurisdictional models for the use and regulation of various forms of legal marijuana - actual and potential economic, social, health and criminal harms and benefits that have been observed so far - possible impacts on supply chains and the roles of those involved in marijuana distribution - relevance to and implications for Australia - Narcotic Drugs Amendment Act 2016 - legalises the cultivation and prescription of medicinal marijuana for therapeutic purposes.

### Introduction

The legalization of marijuana refers to the process of lifting legal restrictions on the use, possession, cultivation, and sale of marijuana or cannabis. Marijuana is a plant that contains a psychoactive compound known as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) that can produce various effects on the human body, including relaxation, altered perception, and euphoria.

Marijuana has been a controversial topic for many years, with some people advocating for its legalization, while others oppose it. Proponents of legalization argue that marijuana can be used for medical purposes, can generate tax revenue for governments, and can

reduce crime rates associated with the black market. On the other hand, opponents argue that marijuana can have negative health effects, can lead to addiction, and can have a negative impact on public safety.

Over the past few decades, many countries and states have moved towards legalizing marijuana for both medicinal and recreational purposes. As of 2021, several countries, including Canada, Uruguay, and some states in the United States, have fully legalized marijuana. In some other countries, marijuana use is decriminalized, meaning that individuals caught with small amounts of marijuana may face only minor fines rather than criminal charges.

The debate around marijuana legalization is ongoing, and it remains a controversial issue in many parts of the world.

### Research questions

- What are the social and economic impacts of marijuana legalization on a state or country?
- How does the legalization of marijuana affect public health outcomes, including addiction rates and mental health?
- How has marijuana legalization impacted criminal justice outcomes, including arrest rates and incarceration rates?
- What are the potential risks and benefits of legalizing marijuana for medicinal purposes?
- How does the legal status of marijuana impact its use among adolescents and young adults?

### Hypothesis

- Legalization of marijuana will lead to an increase in use among adolescents and young adults due to increased availability and reduced perception of risk.
- Legalization of marijuana will reduce crime rates associated with the black market and drug trafficking, leading to

lower incarceration rates and reduced strain on the criminal justice system.

- Legalization of marijuana for medical purposes will lead to increased access to effective treatments for patients with conditions such as chronic pain, epilepsy, and anxiety, while reducing reliance on opioid medications.

## Objectives of the study

- To reduce the harms associated with the criminalization of marijuana, such as disproportionate arrest and incarceration rates for minority groups.
- To improve access to medical marijuana for patients with qualifying conditions, thereby increasing patient autonomy and reducing the risk of harm from unsafe, unregulated products.
- To promote public safety by reducing the number of people driving under the influence of marijuana through regulation and education campaigns.
- To reduce the demand for black market marijuana by providing legal, regulated options for consumers.

## Significance of the study

- Social and Economic Impacts: Legalization of marijuana can have significant social and economic impacts, such as changes in tax revenue, employment rates, and criminal justice outcomes. Understanding these impacts can inform policy decisions related to marijuana legalization.
- Public Health Outcomes: Marijuana use can have both positive and negative health effects, and legalization can affect patterns of use and exposure to risks. Studying the health implications of legalization can help policymakers develop effective regulations and public health campaigns.
- Attitudes and Beliefs: Attitudes and beliefs towards marijuana use and legalization can vary across different demographic groups and regions. Understanding these attitudes and beliefs can help policymakers tailor public outreach and education campaigns to effectively communicate the risks and benefits of legalization.
- International Comparisons: Many countries and states have legalized marijuana in recent years, and studying these experiences can provide insight into potential outcomes and challenges associated with legalization.

## Scope of the study

- Legal and Regulatory Frameworks: This area of study would focus on the legal and regulatory frameworks for marijuana legalization, including issues such as taxation, licensing, and quality control. Researchers may examine the different approaches taken by different jurisdictions and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different regulatory models.
- Public Health Outcomes: The public health implications of marijuana legalization are an important area of study, including the impacts on patterns of use, addiction rates, mental health outcomes, and healthcare utilization. Researchers may examine the evidence on the effectiveness of different public health interventions, such as education campaigns or harm reduction strategies.
- Social and Economic Impacts: The social and economic impacts of marijuana legalization are also important areas of study, including changes in tax revenue, employment rates, and crime rates. Researchers may examine the direct and indirect costs and benefits associated with legalization and evaluate the potential impacts on other sectors of the economy, such as tourism or agriculture.
- Attitudes and Beliefs: Understanding attitudes and beliefs towards marijuana legalization is important for developing effective policies and communication

strategies. Researchers may conduct surveys or focus groups to explore public attitudes and beliefs towards legalization and examine the factors that shape these attitudes.

- International Comparisons: The experiences of other countries and states that have legalized marijuana can provide valuable insights for policymakers and researchers. Researchers may examine the similarities and differences in approaches to legalization across different jurisdictions and evaluate the outcomes and challenges associated with different models.

**Research Methodologies**

**Research design**

- Cross-sectional surveys: Cross-sectional surveys can be used to gather data on patterns of marijuana use, attitudes towards legalization, and related outcomes such as mental health, substance use disorders, and criminal justice involvement. These surveys can be conducted on representative samples of the population or targeted subgroups.
- Longitudinal studies: Longitudinal studies can be used to track changes in patterns of marijuana use, attitudes towards legalization, and outcomes over time, both before and after legalization. These studies can provide more robust evidence on the causal effects of legalization on different outcomes.
- Natural experiments: Natural experiments can occur when legalization is implemented in different jurisdictions at different times, or when different jurisdictions implement different regulatory models. These natural experiments can be used to compare the outcomes associated with different approaches to legalization and evaluate

the effectiveness of different regulatory models.

- Qualitative studies: Qualitative studies can be used to gather in-depth information on the experiences of different stakeholders, such as marijuana users, healthcare providers, law enforcement officials, and policymakers. These studies can provide valuable insights into the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of different groups related to marijuana legalization.
- Cost-benefit analysis: Cost-benefit analysis can be used to evaluate the overall costs and benefits of legalization, including impacts on public health, public safety, the criminal justice system, and the economy. This approach involves comparing the costs and benefits of legalization, both in terms of monetary values and non-monetary outcomes.

**Sources of data**

- Surveys: Surveys can be used to gather data on patterns of marijuana use, attitudes towards legalization, and related outcomes such as mental health, substance use disorders, and criminal justice involvement. Surveys can be conducted on representative samples of the population or targeted subgroups.
- Administrative data: Administrative data sources, such as hospital discharge records, emergency department visits, and criminal justice records, can be used to track changes in patterns of marijuana use and related outcomes before and after legalization. These data sources can provide valuable information on the impacts of legalization on healthcare utilization and criminal justice involvement.

**Critical analysis on the legalizing the Marijuana**

Legalization of marijuana refers to the process of removing legal prohibitions on the cultivation,

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possession, sale, and consumption of marijuana. The decision to legalize marijuana is a highly debated topic, with advocates and opponents arguing about its potential benefits and harms.

Advocates of legalization argue that it can generate significant revenue for governments through taxes and reduce criminal activities related to drug trafficking. Legalization can also provide medical benefits, as marijuana is believed to help alleviate symptoms of various health conditions, such as chronic pain, epilepsy, and anxiety.

On the other hand, opponents argue that legalization can lead to an increase in drug abuse, especially among youth, and may have negative impacts on public health and safety. They also contend that legalization could lead to addiction and increased crime rates.

Despite the controversy, many countries and states have already legalized marijuana for medical or recreational use, or both. In the United States, for example, 36 states have legalized medical marijuana, while 15 states have legalized recreational use. Similarly, Canada, Uruguay, and several European countries have legalized marijuana to varying degrees.

However, the legalization of marijuana still remains a complex issue, and policymakers need to carefully consider the potential benefits and drawbacks before deciding on whether to legalize or not.

The legality of marijuana cultivation and use varies by country and state/province, and it can be a complex and evolving issue. Here are some general points to consider:

- Some countries have legalized the use and cultivation of marijuana for medical or recreational purposes, while others have not. For example, as of 2021, Canada and Uruguay have legalized recreational marijuana, while many U.S. states have legalized medical and/or recreational marijuana, but it is still illegal at the federal level in the United States.

- Even in places where marijuana has been legalized, there may be restrictions on how much an individual can possess, where it can be grown, and where it can be consumed. For example, in some U.S. states, it is legal to grow a certain number of plants for personal use, but it must be done in a secure and private location.

- Cultivation of marijuana can also be subject to various regulations, such as zoning laws, licensing requirements, and safety standards. For example, in some places, growers may need to obtain a permit or license to cultivate marijuana, and they may be subject to inspections and safety requirements to prevent fires or other hazards.

- Even if marijuana cultivation and use is legal in a particular location, it may still be illegal under federal law. This can create challenges for businesses and individuals who operate in the marijuana industry, as they may face obstacles in accessing banking services, filing taxes, and other issues.

**Critical Analysing the legalization of marijuana**

The legalization of marijuana has been a topic of debate in many countries around the world. Supporters argue that it can have various medical benefits and can be a source of revenue for governments, while opponents argue that it can have negative effects on health and society. Here are some points to consider when critically analyzing countries that have legalized marijuana:

- Public health concerns: Critics of marijuana legalization argue that it can have negative effects on health, such as increased risk of addiction, impaired cognitive function, and lung damage. Countries that have legalized marijuana

need to consider measures to mitigate these concerns, such as setting age limits for purchase, regulating the potency and purity of products, and investing in public education campaigns.

- Economic benefits: Supporters of marijuana legalization argue that it can be a source of revenue for governments through taxation and regulation. Countries that have legalized marijuana need to carefully consider the economic benefits and costs, including potential impacts on the black market and other industries, and ensure that regulations are in place to prevent abuse and protect public safety.

- Social justice considerations: Some advocates of marijuana legalization argue that it can help to address social justice issues by reducing the number of people who are incarcerated for drug offenses and promoting equity in the industry. Countries that have legalized marijuana need to ensure that regulations are designed to promote fairness and equity, such as by prioritizing licenses for people from communities that have been disproportionately affected by drug laws.

- International relations: Countries that have legalized marijuana may face challenges in terms of international relations and trade, as marijuana remains illegal in many other countries. This can create issues around drug trafficking and cross-border enforcement, and countries need to consider the potential impacts on their relationships with other countries.

As of my knowledge cutoff date of September 2021, several countries have legalized marijuana in some form. However, the specific laws and regulations governing the use of marijuana vary widely from country to country. Here are some examples:

- Canada legalized recreational marijuana in 2018.
- Uruguay was the first country to fully legalize marijuana in 2013.
- Several US states have legalized recreational and/or medical marijuana, including Colorado, California, and Massachusetts.
- Mexico's Supreme Court ruled in 2018 that the country's ban on recreational marijuana was unconstitutional, and lawmakers are currently working on legislation to legalize it.

In some countries, such as the Netherlands and Portugal, marijuana is not fully legal, but its use is decriminalized or tolerated to varying degrees. It's important to note that laws and regulations regarding marijuana are constantly evolving, so the situation may have changed since my knowledge cutoff date.

### Legalisation of marijuana in India

As of my knowledge cutoff date of September 2021, marijuana is illegal for recreational use in India under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985. However, the use of marijuana for medicinal and scientific purposes is allowed with a license from the government.

There have been some calls for the legalization of marijuana in India, with proponents arguing that it could have economic benefits and reduce the harm caused by the black market for illegal drugs. However, there is also opposition to legalization on social, cultural, and religious grounds.

It's worth noting that there is some historical evidence to suggest that marijuana was used for spiritual and medicinal purposes in ancient India. The plant has also played a role in certain religious and cultural practices in India, such as the worship of Lord Shiva. Nonetheless, the current legal status of marijuana in India is that it is illegal for recreational use.

### Critically analysing the laws related to the legalisation of marijuana

The laws relating to the legalizing of marijuana have been subject to intense debate and scrutiny. While some countries have already legalized marijuana for medical and/or recreational use, others continue to criminalize it. In this critical analysis, I will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the laws relating to the legalizing of marijuana.

**Strengths:**

Increased Access to Medical Marijuana: One of the strengths of legalizing marijuana is that it increases access to medical marijuana for patients suffering from various ailments. Patients no longer have to resort to the black market to access medical marijuana, and instead can obtain it from legal dispensaries that meet safety and quality standards.

Reduced Crime: Legalizing marijuana can also help reduce crime. Criminalization of marijuana has led to a thriving black market, which often funds organized crime. By legalizing marijuana, the government can regulate and control the production, distribution, and sale of the drug, reducing the power of criminal organizations.

Economic Benefits: Legalizing marijuana also provides economic benefits, as it can create new jobs, generate tax revenue, and reduce government spending on law enforcement and criminal justice.

**Weaknesses:**

Public Health Concerns: One of the primary weaknesses of legalizing marijuana is that it raises public health concerns. While marijuana has been shown to have some medical benefits, it is also known to have harmful effects on the brain, particularly in young people. Legalizing marijuana may lead to increased usage, which can exacerbate these harmful effects.

Impaired Driving: Legalizing marijuana also raises concerns about impaired driving. Marijuana use can impair driving skills, and there is currently no reliable way to test for marijuana impairment in drivers. This can pose a risk to public safety.

Enforcement: Legalizing marijuana can also pose challenges in terms of enforcement. Law enforcement agencies will need to develop new procedures and policies to regulate the production, distribution, and sale of marijuana. They will also need to determine how to enforce laws against driving under the influence of marijuana.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the potential benefits of legalizing marijuana outweigh the potential drawbacks. Legalization would make it easier for patients to access medical marijuana, reduce crime, and generate tax revenue. While there are potential risks associated with legalization, these can be mitigated through careful regulation and monitoring. Overall, legalizing marijuana is a move that could improve the lives of millions of people while also providing economic benefits to society as a whole.

In conclusion, the laws relating to the legalizing of marijuana have both strengths and weaknesses. While legalizing marijuana can increase access to medical marijuana, reduce crime, and provide economic benefits, it can also raise public health concerns, impair driving, and pose challenges for law enforcement. It is important to carefully weigh these factors when considering whether or not to legalize marijuana.

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