

Cannabis under control: cannabis social clubs as a regulated, non-profit model on the local level

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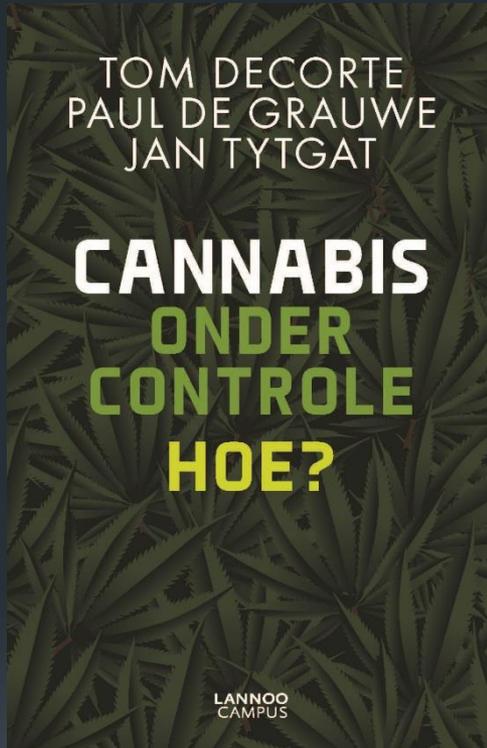
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Introduction - context

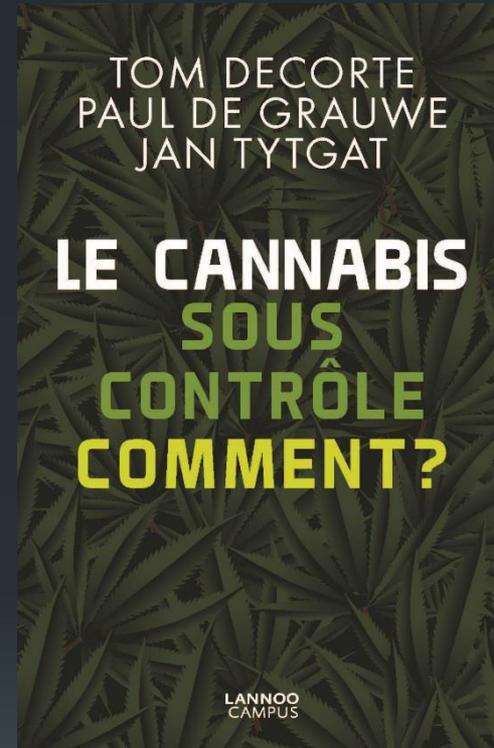
1. **Parliamentary Working Group (1997) – Federal Policy note Drugs (2001) – New drug laws (2003-2004)**
2. **Plea for critical evaluation of cannabis policy (november 2013)**
3. **Political reactions + reactions from umbrella organizations of treatment and prevention centres + reaction other academics**
4. **‘Cannabis under control: how?’ (Decorte, De Grauwe & Tytgat, 2016)**

“Cannabis under control: how?”

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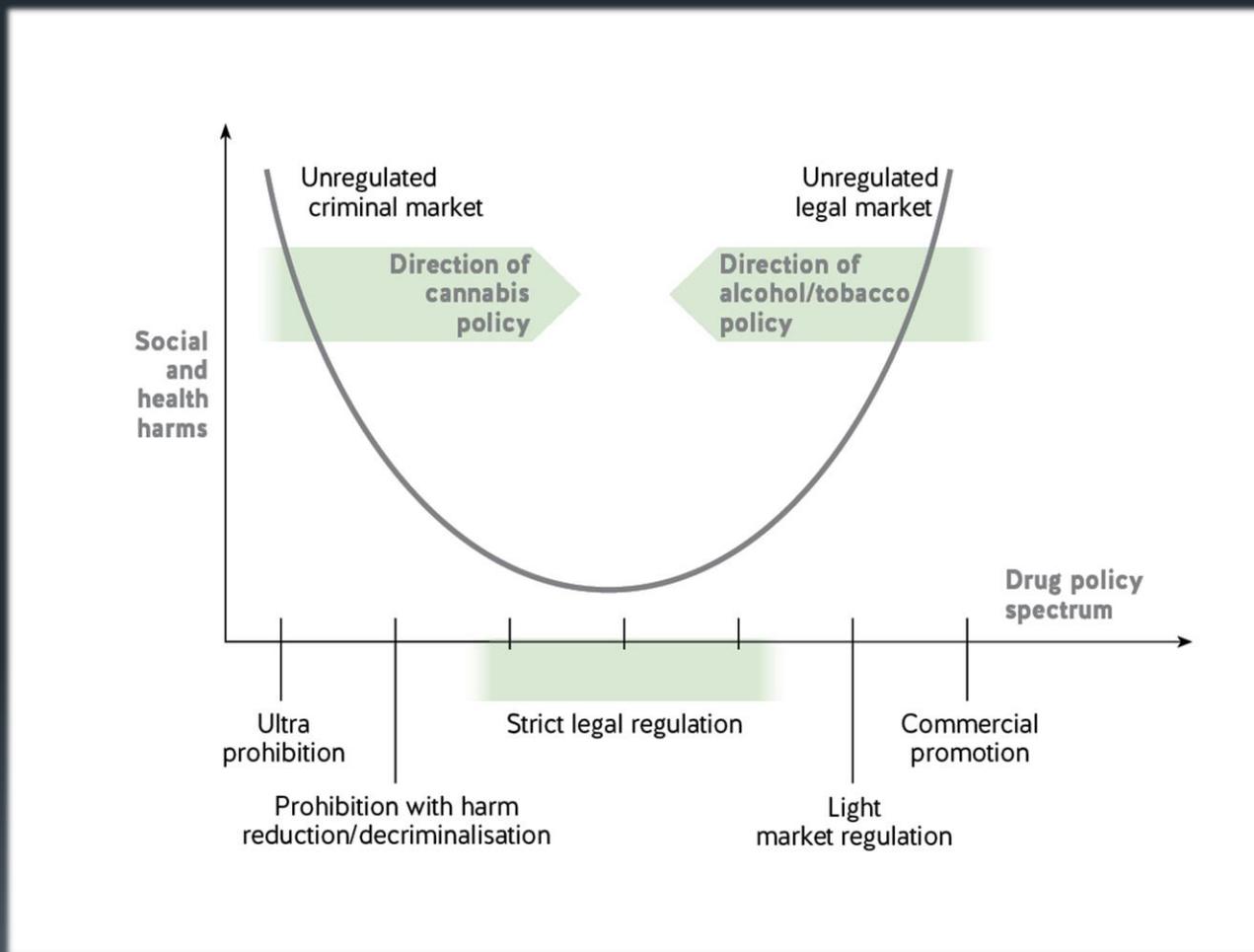
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Basic principles (starting points)

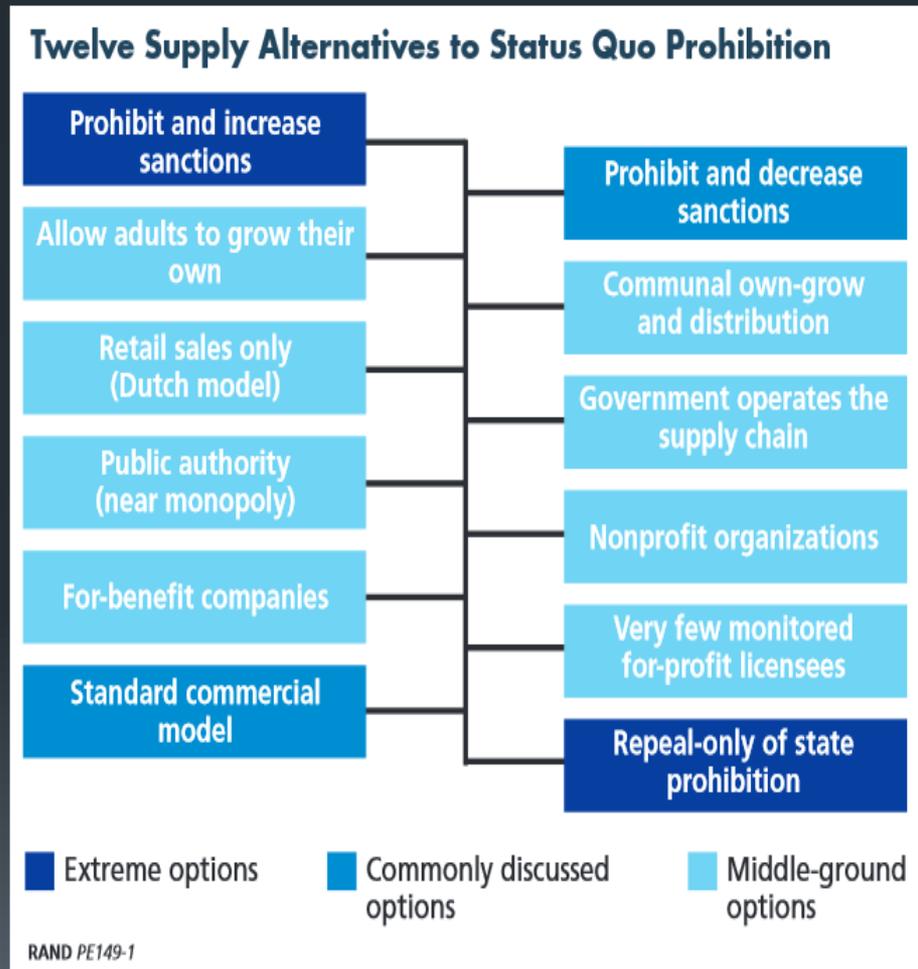


- Objectives: enhance control over production, availability, prices, distribution, use
- Regulation: what it is, and what it is not (legalization, decriminalisation of use, commercialisation, laissez-faire, a silver bullet,...)
- Relation between [social and health costs] and [regulatory models: who controls the market]

Spectrum of policy options



Options for regulating supply



Lessons from the past + laboratory of ongoing experiments

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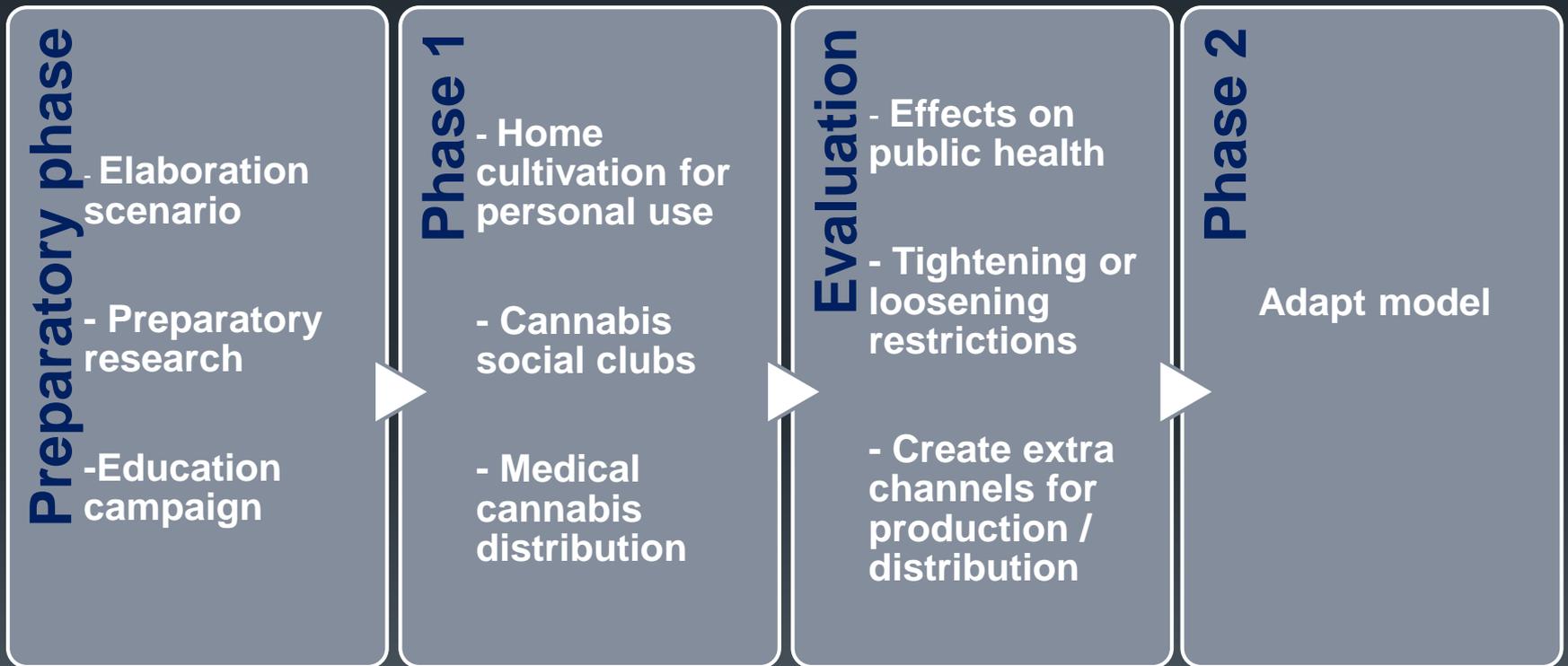
- Regulatory frameworks for alcohol – tobacco – pharmaceutical drugs
- Commercialization
- The Dutch coffeeshopmodel
- Cannabis social club experiments in Spain, Belgium, Uruguay, elsewhere
- Decriminalization models across the globe
- Medicinal marihuana programmes
- Uruguay
- Colorado / Washington / Vermont / Oregon / California ...
- Canada



Regulating cannabis: a difficult balancing act

- Take into account the current international legal context (interpretations of drug conventions vs. Positive human rights approach)
- Urgent implementation of an alternative policy vs. Over-hasty implemented policy
- Not too many restrictions, and not too few restrictions

A detailed, cautious and interventionist scenario, in 2 phases





But what is a cannabis social club?

Cannabis Social Clubs (CSCs)

Different contexts and practices

- ▶ Spain: 400-600 CSCs
- ▶ Belgium: 5-10 CSCs
- ▶ Slovenia: 'Cannabis Social Club Maribor'
- ▶ The Netherlands: 'The Three of Life' (Amsterdam), initiative by the city of Utrecht
- ▶ France: Fédération des CSC (CSCF) – 'Les amis de CSCF' (?)
- ▶ United Kingdom: UKCSC (working closely with NORML UK) (?)
- ▶ Switzerland: 'Die Grüne Blume' (medical CSC, 2006) (?)
- ▶ Italy: 'laPiantiamo' (?)

- ▶ Uruguay: part of the legal system
- ▶ Elsewhere in the world: New Zealand, Latin America,...



Cannabis Social Clubs (CSCs)

A SWOT-analysis

Strengths

- ▶ Not profit-driven
- ▶ Control over quality, potency and growing techniques
- ▶ No redistribution among non members (minor) and no drug tourism (cf. some Barcelona clubs)
- ▶ Only for adults : not available too easy and not leading to more consumption

Weaknesses

- ▶ Huge differences in house rules, structures and organization
- ▶ Unstable and fleeting nature of CSC's
- ▶ Democratic organizations: rights and decision-making capacity of the members
- ▶ Transparency
- ▶ Lack of professionalization
- ▶ Control over quality and potency
- ▶ Mixing up medical marijuana and recreational cannabis
- ▶ Morphing into marketing enterprises

Cannabis Social Clubs (CSCs)

A SWOT-analysis (2)

Opportunities

- ▶ Generating legal economic activities
- ▶ Generating tax revenues
- ▶ Potential of weakening the black market
- ▶ More democratic compared to multinational enterprises (cf. tobacco companies, pharmaceutical companies and multinational breweries)
- ▶ Facilitating detection and prevention of problematic use

Threats

- ▶ Processes of criminalization ('drug trafficking', 'promoting drug use', 'criminal organization')
- ▶ Shadow clubs : fronts for dealers / criminal entrepreneurs
- ▶ Systemic violence from criminal entrepreneurs: threats, theft and intimidation



Back to the detailed scenario

- **Home cultivation:**

- ✓ 6 plants

- **Social clubs:**

- ✓ Registration procedure – max. 250 members – small non-profit organisations
- ✓ No profit – no advertising
- ✓ Membership criteria (age – Belgian residents only)
- ✓ Production procedures (cultivation procedures) and requirements for growers
- ✓ Cannabis products and derivatives
- ✓ Criteria for quality and potency
- ✓ Criteria for packaging
- ✓ Distribution procedure
- ✓ Transparent administration and bookkeeping

- **Medical marijuana**

- ✓ Expanding possibilities
- ✓ Home cultivation for medical purposes
- ✓ Strict separation of recreational and medical cannabis
- ✓ Cannabis products of pharmaceutical quality
- ✓ Prescription only – under medical supervision
- ✓ Distribution via pharmacies only

Thank you!

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