

Draft: Eirik Hammersvik

**Dear discussant,**

This text is rough draft on an article that I am working on. The discussion is not included, the language is poor and there are way to many references. I apologise for this, and promise I will do my best to make up for it in the presentation. What follows is; abstract, introduction, methods and findings.

Good luck!

Eirik

## **Five barriers against internal violence in an atomistic market: Peaceful conflict resolution among large-scale cannabis growers**

The conventional-wisdom project the relationship between violence and drug dealers as intrinsically linked. Two years of ethnographic fieldwork among large marijuana-growers in Norway in a stabile atomistic market, draws a different picture. Violence was among the cannabis growers seen as a last desperate and poor solution. The data consist of interviews and conversations with 52 indoor growers. 32 of them were associated with one of the 23 grow-sites that have been observed. This article identifies five arguments for why marijuana growers refrain from using violence. 1) Violence does not immediately lead to economic compensations if the debtor does not have money or property. 2) Violence draws attention and inhibits “business as usual”, which reduces profit making. 3) High profit, and strategies for avoiding debt, provides a large scope of action for choosing sanctions other than violence. 4) The attitudes toward profit as a possibility rather than a guaranty makes growers calculate wastage and prepare for financial loses. 5) The social relations between actors, and the importance of friendship in ‘cannabis culture’, prevent the use of violence. This study discusses if governments and policy makers can utilize the market dynamics that follows the new trend of domestic cannabis cultivation in Northern Europe to reduce violence.

## Introduction

It has become part of our common-sense wisdom that illicit drug markets and violence are closely intertwined (Zimring and Hawkins, 1997: 138; Jacques and Wright, 2008a, p 222, Jensen, 2000). Paul Goldstein (1985) have suggested three possible links between illicit drugs and violence: (i) Violence can be triggered by the effect it has on the user's psyche (psychopharmacological violence), (ii) violence can occur as a result of the crime drug addicts commit to obtain money and drugs (economic compulsive violence), and (iii) violence can emerged when actors operate in a business with no formal systems for sanctioning or regulating market participants (systemic violence). The systemic-violence model includes all forms of violence that are related to illicit drug markets. Goldstein has defined systemic violence as; “... (the) *traditionally aggressive patterns of interaction within the system of drug distribution and use*” (1985, p. 222). Common examples of systemic violence are crack market in the U.S. market in 1980 and 1990, and drug wars in Mexico and Colombia (Andreas & Wallman, 2009; Reuter 2009; Coombs 2006). The function of systemic violence is to deter competitors, and maintain and obtain loyalty and reliability and thus trust and control.

Systemic violence can be divided into three types of violence that can be committed against operators within or outside the distribution network or distribution network: Disciplinary-successional violence, competitive violence and transactional violence (Reuter 2009, .p. 276-277). According to economic theories are the role of violence linked to market structures and market stability (Brownstein et al 2000, p. 886). Hierarchical structured drug markets are associated with more disciplinary violence than stabile atomistic market, since it allows for the use of violence to gain upward mobility (May and Hough 2004, p. 555, Reuter 1983, Reuter 2009, p. 277). This *successional violence* is symmetric to *disciplinary violence*. Large drug operators can deter subordinates from attempting to use successional violence by using disciplinary violence. This type of violence, also known as vertical violence, seems to be unusual in atomistic markets (Reuter 2009, p. 276). Thus, in atomistic markets the violence has a narrower set of sources than in markets with a strong hierarchically structure. *Competitive violence* and *transactional violence* can however occur

regardless of market type. The prevalence of competitive violence and transactional violence is related to market stability (Moeller and Hessen 2013, .p 218, Brownstein, Crimmins, Spunt 2000, p. 870). In unstable markets, such as emerging markets or markets disrupted by intensive police enforcement, violence can be used to obtain or maintain markets shares and territories from competitors. In addition, in unstable markets are the structures of authority weak, and so are the social control systems that provide routines for settling disputes (Brownstein et al. 2000, p. 876). What market form that aggregate most violent is thus difficult to ascertain (Reuter, 2009, .p 277). Still, stable atomistic markets with a friendly form of competition seem to the most peaceful.

There are few studies of violence in cannabis markets, and even less is know about violence among cannabis growers (Room et al, .2010, p. 79, Andreas and Wallman 2009, p 226). The few existing studies conclude that cannabis markets in general seem to be less violent than other drug markets (Korf, Brochu, Benschop, Harrison, and Einarkson 2008, Room et al 2010, Gamella & Jiménez Rodrigo 2008). Suggested explanations are the drug`s soothing effect, and the normalization of cannabis use in the general population (Coomber, 2006 p. 140). Another explanation could be the typical structure of cannabis markets. The reported violence in cannabis markets is mainly related to transactions between costumers and retail-dealers, and between large-scale operators (Gamella & Jiménez Rodrigo 2008, Spapens 2011, p. 8). There are few reports about disciplinary violence among cannabis traffickers, small-scale street dealers, and cannabis growers (Spapens 2011, p. 11, Gamella & Jiménez Rodrigo 2008, p. 283 Room et al 2010, p. 61). The sources of the reported violence are *disloyal* and *unreliable behaviour*: Disloyalty refers to acts that are interpreted as thefts, frauds, snitching, and “disrespecting” superiors or partners. Unreliability aims at breach of business contracts, appointments and work duties. Violent conflicts can evolve from one or from both of these sources. There are few reports of the use of competitive violence in order to maintain or obtain monopoly or oligopoly conditions (Wilkinson and Casswell 2003, Gamella & Jiménez Rodrigo 2008, p. 284). The picture drawn from the existing studies can indicate that cannabis markets in general are stable witch a peaceful from of competition. The Norwegian cannabis markets are no exception (Larson, 2009). However, even though competitive violence seems to be a rare event in cannabis markets, two important exceptions must

be mentioned. The first one is the conflict between large-scale hash operators in the Dutch drug market in the 1980s and 1990s, which led to several shootouts and murders (Spapens, 2011, s. 11, Fijnaut et al, 1998, s. 75-79, 92).<sup>1</sup> The second exception is the on-going war between bikers and ethnic groups in Copenhagen, Denmark (Moeller, 2009, Moeller and Hesse, 2013, p. 2).

A growing body of researchers claim that Western drug markets are in general quite peaceful, even though they sometimes get violent (Jacobs, 1999 .p 80–1; MacCoun and Reuter, 2001, p. 121, Zimring and Hawkins, 1997, .p 138–55, Jacques and Wright 2008, p. 223, Jacques 2009). This assertion is contrary to the common sense understanding of drug markets as extreme violent (Coomber 2006). Several authors have claimed that the misconception at least partly can be explained with a *selection bias* within the existing research literature (Jacques and Wright 2008, p. 224, Andreas and Wallman, 2009, p. 226, Coomber 2006, p. 130, Gamella and Jiménez Rodrigo 2008, p. 283). Firstly, statistically studies do often sample on the depended variable “violent drug market” (Zimring and Hawkin 1997). A lot of previous studies are for example based on extreme violent drug markets, such as crack markets and heroin markets (Glodstein 1985, Baumer, 1994, Baumer et al., 1998; Inciardi, 1990, Lattimore et al., 1997, Coomber 2006, p. 130, Moeller 2013, p. 207). Secondly, ethnographic studies have to a large extent conducted fieldwork among deprived and marginalized dealers in violent street cultures, rather than middle class dealers whom are known for being less violent and closer connected to the conventional culture (Zimring and Hawkin, 1997, p. XX, Jacques and Wright 2008b). To broaden our understanding of the role violence play in illegal markets, researchers should empirically investigate less extreme drug markets and drug distributors (Andreas and Wallman 2009, Jacques and Wright 2008a).

This article investigate the absent of violence within cannabis networks in an atomistic markets through the description of three severe conflicts that evolved from what the growers interpreted as disloyal and unreliable behaviour. By describing peaceful reactions to conflicts that in the literature are described as triggers of

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<sup>1</sup> Her it should be added that it is disputed whether the violent conflict between the hash baron Klaas Bruinsma and other networks of large-scale hash importers, was due to competition or disciplinary action towards those Bruinsma believed to have given the police information that lead to a seizure of 50 tons hash (Fijnaut et al., 1997, p. 75-79, Zaitch 2005, p. 185).

violence, we might expand our knowledge about the role of violence in illegal markets. This article's original contribution might be that it studies internal violence in atomistic cannabis markets by investigating the absence of violence in situations that are usually described as triggers of violence. Such an approach might contribute to three understudied research areas: The role of peace in illegal drug markets (Jacques and Wright 2008, 223), conflict resolution among cannabis growers (Room et al 2010, p 61), and studies of violence within selling organizations and networks – or in this case the absence from violence (Reuter 2009, p 276).

## **Method**

The presented data are from two studies. The first one was an extensive investigation of cannabis users conducted by two of my colleagues (N = 100) in Norway in 2006–2010 (for details, Sandberg & Pedersen, 2010). Participants were recruited through the researchers' networks, students at the University of Oslo and Bergen, from cannabis interest organizations and through an Internet advertisement. Respondents were distributed across Norway. 20 of them had experiences with cannabis cultivation. Most of them only attempted to cultivate a few times, but many of them knew regular growers. Four of them had for two years run an 80-plant-grow-op. Two of them had experiences with running grow-operations with 200 plants and more. None of the interviewees had personally experienced or heard of violence among cannabis growers.

The data in the second study was a two and half-year fieldwork among large and small growers. The “gatekeeper” who provided access to the field was a research participant from a previous project. The first time we met was in 2004 through a friend of a friend. We have stayed in contact since then, and the stories and knowledge obtained during the period from 2004-2011 has influenced the analysis. The convenient sample of observations consists of 32 growers divided on 23 grow-sites. Four of them can be categorized (for def. see Hammersvik et al 2012) as large-scale grow-ops (cultivating 100 -350 plants). Two were mid-sized (60-100 plants), and 17 of them were small (1-20 plants). In total the four large grow-sites consisted of 11 individuals. Two growers operated each of the mid-sized grow-sites, while single growers ran the small grow-sites. All research participants were cultivating indoors. Some of the growers allowed me to observe the whole production and distribution

cycles several times. The fieldwork also included socializing with participants at gyms, at their friends' places, in bars, cafés and at concerts. All growers were men aged between 23 and 45 years; some highly educated with good jobs whereas others were living on social benefits.

The research participants did not accept to be tape-recorded. The field notes were written down the same day, or the day after they occurred. When analyzing interviews and notes, I coded them for themes pertaining sources of conflicts, conflict development, and sanctioning. After this initial coding, all statements and field notes were analyzed in consistence with the five identified reasons for avoiding violence. Such style of coding is consistent with standards of qualitative research techniques, grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

## **Findings**

### *1) Violence draws attention that inhibits "business as usual"*

One of the observed conflicts evolved from both disloyal and unreliable behaviour. The large indoor grow-sites (200-250 plants) consisted of two gardeners, Calvin (35) and David (35), and two investors, Eric (36) and Bob (42). Next to being investors, Eric distributed the cannabis, while Bob supplied the growers with equipment and horticultural knowledge. They all had legit work. The investors had been dealing and growing cannabis at a large-scale level for 8 and 10 years. Calvin had occasionally "helped" Eric, while David had no previous experiences with large drug operations. David's poor understanding of the importance of complying with agreement first led to unreliable behaviour and later to several acts of disloyalty. Examples of David's unreliable conduct includes inviting girls to the grow-sites, and failing to comply with duties and obligations. The other growers' patience with David ended after a large leak of odour went into neighbourhood, since David had not changed the charcoal filter. That same day decided Calvin to close down the grow-site. The decision cost the growers 1.2 million NOK, but it would later increase when David took 150 000 NOK in addition to the 50-80 000 NOK he had already lent. I was there when the odour got noticed. Calvin's aggressive mood made David leave the house for the day. After that, Einar, Calvin and I went out in their garden to barbeque. Einar lighted up a joint, and he and Calvin started to discuss how they should react.

*Einar: I say we threw him out [of the operation and the house]*

*Calvin: yeah, that would be the faire thing to do, but he does not have a place to go, or money to rent a new place. I think he will get pissed off, and then he will for sure get lose lipped when he gets drunk with his friends. I think it would be best if we give him 10 000 [of the money he had lent], and tell him that he have to pay his share of the rent from now on. Maybe that will make him move out. I don't think he can afford living here, but I don't want to force him...*

*Einar: yeah, but we won't be growing that much, so I it is not that big deal [if he tells his friends].*

*Calvin: I don't want his drunken ass friends to know that we grow.*

*Einar: I bet they already know.*

*Calvin: maybe some of them, but I don't want the guys around Albert [know by the growers as an opportunistic criminal to know]. Those guys are fucked up, and I bet they will tip of someone [weed-robbers].... maybe they will follow us to the next location. It's better to get rid of him in a safe way, and rather putt up a new grow-site.*

Calvin feared that if they pushed David to fare he would get “loose-lipped”, which could lead to unwanted attention from robbers or the police. The same reasoning guided their reaction when David ran away with 150 000 NOK. Unwanted attention implied that Calvin and Einar had to operate their businesses more carefully, and that did not correspond with their business plans. Calvin's plan for covering the loss was to put up a new grow-site. Eric had already a few other grow-sites going. A well ran large grow-operation could in one turn easily yield 150 000 NOK, but they needed to work undisturbed. The plan worked. The 150 000 NOK was covered five months before David paid his first instalment. In the end the strategy to restore the money with a downplay plan demanded was a success. They got back 150 00 NOK with interests, and while waiting they managed to make more money.

The argument that violence is “bad for business” because it draws attention and thus makes it difficult to run “business as usual”, is well recognized in the literature about different kinds of drug dealers and illegal operators (Andreas and Wallman, 2009, p. 228, Venkatesh 2008, p. 95-98, Reuter 1984, p. 130-131, Pearson

and Hobbs 2001, p. 45). The argument is also used to argue that peace and non-violent resolution are usually more economical rational than violence (Friman, 2009, p. 286, Venkatesh 2008, Jacques 2009), and that violence are not an inherit logic of illegal markets (Naylor 2009, p. 241).

## 2) *Violence does not create material values*

Calvin detected that some of his money were missing a few days after they had moved out of the grow-house. Over the next months he attempted daily to get in touch with David, but David had gone underground. When David finally called six weeks later, he explained that he had to borrow the money in order to avoid being declared personal bankrupted. If that had happened, he would he not have been able to pay back Calvin and Eric. Calvin was angry, but he was only interested in getting his 150 000 NOK back. He offered David a down payment plan with 7 present annual interest, and monthly instalment of 8000 NOK. David accepted the plan, but did not pay a single instalment before 12 months later. I asked Calvin in that period if he had thought of selling David's debt, or to get someone to collect it for him. He replied; "*If anyone would buy it, maybe I would, but no one wants it. He doesn't own anything...*". If David had own anything of value that he had not wanted to hand over as repayment, the growers might have been more tempted to use a potential violent solution, such as robbery. Einar explained to me when and why negotiations were more efficient than violence and threats to restore financial losses.

*... if you beat up a guy who has no money, you risk that he runs away - and what will you do then; go after him to beat him up again? Then he just runs off again, or goes undergroned ... And if you take his knees, he can't work and then you won't get your money. [...] We [in the distribution network] are not concerned with scaring each other and stuff – like honor and respect ant that bullshit. If you fuck up, everyone gets to know it, right, and then you're out. But like, if I had told everyone that I went after David, and beat the she shit out of him, I would have scared away my customers. You see, the people I sell to do not bring me my money because they are afraid of violence. We pay since we don't bail, we are not that kind of people, and that is something everyone benefits from. ...[...]*And you don't fuck with that system...

Since David did not own anything of value was the immediate effect of violence small. An alternative strategy that could have promptly restored some of their financial losses was to force David to take on “missions” for smugglers and wholesale distributors. However, David’s lack of experience from running operations in the black market made this a risky strategy. Calvin and Eric had to vouch for David, so if David lost the goods they could be held accountable. Thus, the only immediate effect of violence was revenge and deterrence.

Violence cannot immediately lead to material values if the person with debt does not own anything of value, (Jacques and Wright, 2008, p 238, Jacques 2009, Taylor 2007). However, it can restore moral injustice. In the cannabis distribution network Calvin and Eric belonged to, violence was a symbol of failed business, desperation, and what they often saw as a pathetic street machismo. Calvin once described the violence among street dealers and bikers as “.... *they are like a dog pissing on fence, or like ants who do their work without thinking*”. Whether violence is used to restore moral injustice or not, depends to a large extent on the culture that the market draws on (Sandberg 2012, Coomber, 2006, Jacobs 2000, Johannes 2000).

### *3) Absence of debt creates a large scope of action*

On a different grow-operation, a large conflict evolved from unreliability and unfair sanctioning. Mike (39) and Bill (41) had known each other for 20 years, and had worked together on several large projects: Raging from import and cultivation of marijuana, large wholesale of hash, and mid-sized amphetamine and cocaine operations. They were both hard working guys with legit jobs. At the time of the observation they were mainly involved in grow-operations. Their largest grow-site had 250 and 300 plants. The marijuana was distributed in networks of cannabis users and dealers, as well as to dealers in networks of ethnic dealers and networks of bikers. These networks are associated with diverse types of crime, such as distribution of different types of drugs, illegal goods, money collection, money laundering, loansharking and extortion. Since violence occurs more often within these networks, Bill occasionally carried a gun. The literature about drug dealers describe criminal diversifiers as more acceptance of violence than the traditionally cannabis dealer (see Dorn, Murji and South, 1992, p. 16).

The source of the conflict had originally been Mike's unreliable money management. Mike was supposed to look after some of Bill's money, while Bill was abroad to set up a large operation. However, Mike spent his own money and 350 000 NOK of Bill's money on a large batch of hash. The plan was to put the money back before Bill returned, but Mike got caught by the police, and sentenced to four and half years in prison. Since Bill had not approved the deal he demanded his money back. For that reason Mike worked for four years after he got out from prison at their grow-sites for half his usual profit. Occasionally he also transported large shipment of dope within the country for free. His errands yielded fare more than 350 000 NOK, and Mike thus believed the debt was settle. He was obviously surprised the day Bill told him that he had two months to repay the 350 000 NOK. I met Mike at his regular pub a few days after he had gotten the messages from Bill.

*I: [...] something must have gone wrong?*

*Mike: I don't know, but he is desperate for money. The last time something like this happened [to a friend of him] was because he had lent money from his work [a family business] and did not managed to get the money back in time. He got busted and his whole family got to know it, and they did not take it very nicely....*

*I: What will happen if you cannot get the money?*

*Mike: He says he will sell the debt to the bikers, and that he has already talked with Knut [one of the criminal bikers]. I don't understand what the fuck is going on. Like, why is he coming after me?*

If Bill had sold Mike's debt to loan sharks in the biker community, violence might have occurred. That had happened on previous occasion. I met Mike regularly over the next month. As the deadline got closer the pressure from Bill increased, and so did Mike's worries. Three weeks before the deadline had Mike collected the money he had available, and asked friends for loans, but he was still fare away from having 350 000 NOK. Mike thus called for a meeting at his apartment. I happened to be there when Bill arrived. Mike was sitting on the floor in his "holy robe", and playing on his oriental instruments. His girlfriend opened the door for Bill. Bill entered the living room and greeted us, but Mike kept on playing his instrument as if nothing had

happened. Bill sat down beside me on the couch. He pulled out a gun from his back waistband, and placed it on the coffee table. Mike jumped up from the floor.

*Mike: you can shove that thing up your ass. I am not afraid of you.*

*Bill: Hey dude, take it easy I do not mean it like that.*

*Mike: sure seems like it. You have been threatening me for weeks, and now you bring a gun to my apartment. What the fuck is wrong with you? If you want a fight, lets fight – but put that thing away.*

*Bill: This one [picks up the gun and starts to laughs]? It is not even real [proved to be a replica], and I am not here to fight. I found a solution, so forget about it. Let's just say you own me 60 [60 000], and that you take the time you need.*

The atmosphere was acquired after that. Bill started to explain why he had been desperate for money. As Mike had predicted, Bill had borrowed money from his legit work and had problems with repaying it. His plan had been to spend the money on a large batch of hash, and use the profit to cover some of the expenses for their next grow-site. The hash sale had gone slow, and Bill had started to worry whether he would be able to return the money on time. If he did not manage to repay, the family business would get large problems with their financial statements. Two days before the meeting Bill had gotten a large order on hash. The money from the deal enabled him to repay the money, and the profit covered the expenses for the new grow-site.

The potential of violence disappeared as soon as Bill's stressful economic situation was solved. The lack of accumulated credit was also an important reason for why Eric and Calvin, from the previous case, could use a down payment plan to get their money back. If they had owed money, maybe the solution would have been different. Economic desperation and deprivation are commonly used to explain violence in general (Garr, 1970, Howe & Crilly 2001), which also applies for the violence in the drug economy (Goldstein 1985; Jacques & Wright 2008a; Bourgois 2003, Anderson 1999). Large-scale operators are aware of the risks of having large debt, and do therefor utilize different strategies to avoid debt. Absence of debt and "pressure from above" creates a large scope of action for reacting on misbehaviour and financial losses (Venkatesh 2008; Taylor 2007; Adler 1993). For example, it becomes easier to use non-violent sanctions such as toleration, negotiation and down

payment, stigmatization and exclusion (Hobbs and Pearson 2001, p. 41-41, Jacques and Wright 2008a, p. 241-242, Adler 1991, .p 97, Venkatesh 2008, Zaitch 2005). As we saw, being aware of these strategies do not mean that large-scale operators always follow them. However, many dealers do probably often use strategies to avoid large debt, which prevent the number of situations that could trigger violence.

*4) The attitude towards profit: “To win some, you have to lose some”*

Einar was the large-scale grower at the most observed grow-site. He let me hang around him during the afternoons for several months. We went on bar rounds and concerts, and we visited his connections, costumers and friends. Einar had been dealing cannabis for 12 years, and had been a large-scale dealer for eight of them. He had over the last five years increasingly shifted from dealing hash to selling his own grown cannabis. During his time as a large dealer Einar had several times mediated in large conflicts between dealers, and we often talked about the correlations between violence and business organization models. One afternoon while we were staying at the grow-site, I asked him if he was surprised by the loss of 1.2 million NOK.

*No, I would have been more surprised if we had managed to run it [the grow-op] so smoothly that we had gotten that kind of money (laughs). I knew David was a newbie, and I suspected that he would fuck up, but Calvin wanted to tray him out. So no, I am not surprised. You see, there is no guarantee for making money when you are doing this, right. One try once best, but there are so many things that can go wrong that you calculate losses. The most important things is to avoid debt, and rather hop that things will improve for the next round...*

The last sentences fit the core of the attitude towards profits that many cannabis growers and sellers share with other drug distributors. Profit is not a guarantee, just a possibility. The main thing is to cover debts and avoid losses. Usually the operation work out, and the dealer makes money. Others times the operation goes wrong, and money disappears or gets temporarily hold due to someone’s inability to pay. The rationale is similar to the one we find among legal professionals, such as brokers and commission sellers (Pearson & Hobbs 2004, Gambetta 2009). The same attitude towards profit is described in studies of large and small dealers in different types of

drug markets (Venkatesh 2008, Levitt and Venkatesh 2000, Adler 1991). Venkatesh (2008) uses the metaphor "Golden ticket", while Venkatesh and Levitt (2003) uses "Tournament" to describe the attitudes towards profit.

What we might understand as a cautious expectation of profit or as a realistic attitude towards profitmaking, might be stronger among cannabis growers than among other drug distributors. While dealers change money against drugs, growers get paid for the work involved in producing cannabis. Cannabis cultivation is still expensive, but as long as the grow-site is running, growers have the possibility to produce more. If a dealer loses his drugs, he will usually have to cover its value in money. The careful expectation for money is reinforced by the fact that grower know their crops can fail. Cannabis plants are an uncertain form of capital. They can die, get sick and when dried they can become mouldy, and as other types of drugs, it can also get stolen or be seized by the police. Several of the large growers in the sample had experienced failed crops, due to technical problems and insects. Failing crops meant huge financial losses, but since losses was seen a part of the game, most of the growers avoided to lend too much money. Thus, to make a lot of money was usually something the growers were hoping for in the long run. They all made money off cultivation, but not as much as one should thing. In order to make the big money growers must operate flawlessly, and that is really difficult (Hammersvik et al 2012).

Large-scale dealers can prepare for losses by calculating wastage and prepare for potential losses (Venkatesh, 2008). The cautious expectation for earnings and calculation of losses creates a large space to choose reactions understand. As absent debt creates a large scope of action so do the cautioned attitude towards profit. Sometimes misbehaviour is tolerated if the offender has a good an explanation (Zaitch 2005, Taylor 2007). Other times mediation is needed to restore moral justice and economical losses (Reuter 1983). When misbehaviour are severe or occurs repeatedly, exclusion and stigmatization can be used (Adler 1993, Jacques and Wright 2008). In some occasions threats can be used to signify seriousness, but there is still a long way from threatening to committing violence (Zaitch 2005)

##### *5) Friendships and cannabis culture*

In the presented stories about situations that could have evolved into violence, the actors had economic reasons for avoiding violence. This was not the case for Tommy. Tommy (35) participated in the first study. He had been an initiator and investor of a 250-plant grow-operation, but his former partner snitched on him. Tommy got sentenced to three years in prison, while his former partner went free. Snitching is in the literature about street codes and street justice described as the most disloyal act a dealer can make, and potential trigger for violence and even murder (Rosenfeld, Jacobs and Wright 2003, p. 297). However, Tommy reacted differently.

*I made it clear at once that I was not a violent man; it was more like fuck him. The revenge will be that he will have to live with the harm he made, that's enough for me, I will do just fine, like I will survive, but I hope he continues to have a bad conscience. That was my standpoint. But obviously, there were some who flared up and who were like; "we should have taken his kneecap". But I know those guys would not have been capable of doing it [laughs]. But in a different milieu, if you snitch on a guy who gets three years [in prison], then... I don't know, maybe it would have been a sufficient reason for murder. It was not only me he snitched on, but the police didn't get anything on them, so the consequences for them were small. But still, it is not fun for him to go out on town, and see the people that he snitched on... I think that makes him turn around pretty fast....*

The interview was conducted 7-8 years after Tommy got arrested, but people had still not forgotten about the snitcher. His former partner was still paying the social costs of being labelled. Multiple studies of large-scale and mid-scale dealer have reported that exclusion and stigmatization are more common in some network than violence – even when conflicts gets serious (Hobbs and Pearson 2001, p. 46, Adler, 1991, Jacques and Wright 2008, Taylor 2007, Zaitch 2005). The social control effect presented by stigmatization and labelling might be higher among cannabis growers and dealers whom identify with values such as community and friendship.

According to a great number of studies are friendship, sharing, and ecological values significant for many cannabis growers' motivation to cultivate (Decorte, 2010, 2008, Potter 2010, Potter et al 2011, Weisheit 1991, Nguyen and Bouchard 2010, Hakkarainen, et al, 2011, Dahl, Frank and Villumsen, 2010, Potter 2010). IN the

sample of growers did all to a certain extent identified with the cannabis ideology and cannabis culture. Tommy had known most of the large growers in town, and described them as being different from those he called “dope dealers” and “criminals”.

*....it started sort of as an idealistic thing. Firstly, it was the quality aspect. The weed that came in was fucking horrible. And secondly, we had this idea that we should not be part of the criminal milieu and support the chain that lay behind it, and all the exploitation... ... most of the people I knew who were cultivating came from a different layer of the population (than dealers), since you need a great deal of knowledge. It is very connected to knowledge; it is bloody difficult to get it right. So you need a lot of knowledge, and you have to be a bit clever with your hands, and you must be able to read up on things, you know, and most of it is in English,*

The values Tommy draws on are typical of those described ideological oriented cannabis growers. He used to have a great interest in marihuana horticulture, cannabis quality, and he wanted to avoid supporting the chain of criminals that supply hash, and the exploitation that follows it. Cannabis use and dealing have for a long time been associated with a distinctive subculture and ideology, which values anti-commercialism, anti-violence, sharing, friendship and green ecological values (Goode 1970, Young 1971, Marks 1996, Weisheit 1991, Potter 2010 Weisheit 1991, Matthews, 2003, p. 115-129; Langer 1977, .p. 378, Johnson 1980, p. 116). Sandberg and Pedersen (2010) have conceptualized what others have termed cannabis ideology as *cannabis culture*, which are defined as a collection of common rituals, narratives and symbols that users can draw on to create meaning. This culture is antagonistic to the macho street culture, where violence is a symbolic capital (Sandberg 2012, p. xx, Langer, 1977, p. 382, Pearson and Hobbs 2001, p. 46, Bourgois, 2003). Thus, the values within the cannabis culture do probably prevent the use of violence among growers. If a grower who strongly identify with the cannabis culture commits violence to make money, he will easily lose his social identity, friends and costumers. It is thus plausible to suggest that the valued position of friendship in the cannabis culture can reinforce the violence-preventing barrier that friendship is (Zaitch 2005).

## REREANSER

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