Studying social supply through personal networks

The case of young Flemish cannabis users
ISSDP
May 20–22, 2015
Introduction

- Explore supply through personal network analysis

- Supply as “a multiplex relation between two individuals in a relational context”
Overview

1. Social supply in network terms
2. Method
3. Preliminary results
4. Reflections
1. Social supply

- Social supply (e.g. Parker, 2002; Hough, 2003):
  - Non-stranger
    - ‘Friends’ (Potter, 2010)?
  - Not-for-profit
    - Minimal commercial supply (Coomber & Moyle, 2013)
Social supply:

- Between two individuals
- In a multiplex relation (Krohn, 1986)
- In a wider relational context (e.g. Scott, J., & Carrington, 2011).

All these elements form the process of cannabis going from one person to the other.

This process has multiple variations.
Leading to following research questions:

- How are personal networks in which cannabis use and supply is present, composed and structured?

- What is the nature of the relationship between young cannabis users and their suppliers?
2. Method

- CAPI
  - Survey–type questions
  - Participatory mapping (Hogan, Carrasco, & Wellman, 2007)
    - Leisure time network
    - Cannabis network
  - In–depth open questions
- Sample (N= 50)
  - Age: range: 20–30, mean: 24.48
  - Gender: 39 men, 11 women
  - SES:
    - Education:
      - Range: vocational higher education (lower years) to university master
      - 50% had no further education, 50% did
    - Employment status: 28% full time student, 48% part time or full time employed, 24% unemployed
Cannabis use:
- First use: 8–21, mean: 15
- Current use:
  - LM: 50 % every day, 25 % more than once a week
  - LW: mean: 7

Other substances:
- Alcohol: 35 % less then once a week
- Tobacco: 37 % never used or quitted
- Other substances: 72 % during LM
3. Preliminary results

A. Composition and structure

- Size cannabis network:
  - Range: 5 – 30
  - Average: 16
  - In comparison to leisure time network:
    - Range: 25 to 38
    - Cannabis network:
      - Range: 19% – 93%
      - Average: 54%
Homophily (leisure time network):
- Gender: E–I index = –0.397
- Age: E–I index = 0.587
- Cannabis use: E–I index = –0.130

Density:
- Leisure time network: 53 % (Range: 0.3 – 0.97)
- Cannabis network: 35 % (range: 0 – 0.85)
Examples (cannabis networks of R13, R20, R24)
B. Multiplex relation

- Social relation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type (n = 50)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Max.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>62 %</td>
<td>96 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best friend</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>51 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td>9 %</td>
<td>46 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleague</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>46 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Strength (n=50)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical support</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness</td>
<td>3.27 (LTN)/ 3.36 (CN)</td>
</tr>
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Supply relation:

Type:
- “Sharing is dealing... at least that’s how the police defines it?” (R24)
- “I see him as a friend but in the ten minutes it takes to way, sell, and put it in a bag... he is a dealer” (R13)

Thresholds (preliminary) paying when...
- Quantity
- Frequency
- Level of trust (strength of social relation)

User relation
Embedded in a relational context:

- **Social:**
  - “Making a statement... now I don’t show it anymore” (R13)
  - Embedded in social rituals: “*Cannabis use is only normal inside my own social network*” (R16)

- **Physical:**
  - Pubs, parks ➔ homely environment

- **Collaborative setting (ref)**
  - Risks versus benefits
4. Some reflections

“I want it, a legal alternative is better, but illegal if I have to” (R21)

- How?
  - Grow myself
  - Cannabis social clubs
  - Controlled and distributed by the state

- Do not legalise: “I don’t want the stigma”
Thank you for your attention!

marieke.vlaemynck@ugent.be
Institute for Social Drug Research
University of Ghent