

Positional Paper regarding Cannabis legalization.docx

by Zane Booyens

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**FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES COVER
PAGE FOR GROUP ASSESSMENTS**

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FACILITATOR'S NAME:	Mr A. Du Plessis
DUE DATE:	01 October 2023

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in South Africa**

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purposes in South Africa & conclusion**

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Should the sale of recreational cannabis be for sale in South Africa?

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Cannabis was illegal in South Africa however now it is decriminalized. This was because of the international convention held in 1922 where several countries such as the United States of America, Spain, Great Britain, China, and South Africa decided to ban the use of the substance among other drugs. ^{Citation Needed} Most countries have changed their stance. For example, the Netherlands legalized cannabis in 1975. Portugal decriminalized cannabis in 2001. America on a state level legalized cannabis in 2012. Canada legalized cannabis in 2018. While South Africa decriminalized cannabis in 2016, it has not yet legalized the substance fully. Most recently Thailand has legalized cannabis in 2022. ^{Citation Needed} In this paper, the reasons why cannabis sales should be illegal and why the sale should be legal this paper will disprove any argument against cannabis legalization and provide supporting reason why cannabis should be legal for adults in South Africa. Not only for medicinal purposes as it already is but for recreational purposes which in turn will provide several benefits. In essence, this paper supports the legalization of cannabis in South Africa.

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Cannabis for recreational sale should be illegal in South Africa

Cannabis sales allow drug cartels to generate immense profits. Regarding black-market sales of cannabis, according to Molero and Bloomberg (2023) a seizure of about 7000 pounds of cannabis in the United States in 2023, has had an estimate of \$28 million in value. Additionally, "Marijuana legalization in Colorado and Washington has cost Mexican drug cartels an estimated \$2.7 billion in profits" (ProCon.org, 2023). While this information shows that while black-market cannabis sales are profitable, the legalization would have an immense impact on drug cartel's ability to profit.

Furthermore, marijuana is harmful to the health of individuals that use the substance. Although, "research shows that smoking one marijuana joint is as damaging to the lungs as five tobacco cigarettes" (ProCon.org, 2023). However, smoking marijuana has been found to be harmful to individuals health when compared to the death toll to that of legal drugs such as tobacco and alcohol have, deaths related to marijuana use are insignificant. For example, Bah et al. (2004) states that roughly 20000 persons in South Africa die from tobacco use per year. According to Parry et al. (2018) roughly 62000 individuals in South Africa died from complications related to alcohol in 2015. While a comprehensive study compiled from 1998-2021 in England by Copeland et al. (2021) It was found that 3455 persons had cannabis in their system upon death. Furthermore only 136 of these cases only had cannabis in their systems. While the majority of deaths were related to traumatic injuries. Only 14 cases found that cannabis was used before deaths related to cardiac failure, aspiration and cerebral haemorrhage. However, only in 1 case cannabis overdose was found to be the underlying and immediate cause of death. Thus, cannabis is far less harmful than legal drugs such as tobacco and alcohol. It is important to note that in South Africa there has not been a factual article/research study concerning reported deaths of cannabis alone.

^{Sp.} Lastly cannabis is seen as a gateway drug. An article by Williams (2020) states that the consumption of cannabis by the youth functions as a gateway drug to more extreme substances such as opiates. However, given the fact that "Globally, cannabis is the most commonly used drug" (Peltzer et al., 2020). Should there not be an increase in the use of hard drugs globally if cannabis really is the so-called gateway drug. In fact, research by Williams (2020) has stated that other risk factors associated with the development of substance use disorders include biological factors, mental characteristics and their symptoms, and social factors that affect health, as well as combinations of high-risk genes that actively increase the risk of uncontrollable drug use. Therefore, it is not necessarily cannabis that is the gateway drug but the use of any substance including tobacco and alcohol with the combination of various factors that leads to the use of hard drugs.

Cannabis for recreational use and sale should be legalized in South Africa

Currently cannabis is decriminalized for recreational use in South Africa. However, for economic reasons it should be legalized for recreational sale and use. Consider that according to Hopkins (2017) a stupendous R3.5 billion had been expended on cannabis related prosecutions in 2014-2015. While the street value of the cannabis seized was only R1.5 billion. Given the fact that the money spent on prosecutions could be utilized to benefit other government projects. Such as, development of the railway system, public transportation, job creation efforts, prosecution of more serious crimes such as rape, murder corruption, human trafficking or even basic service delivery. The potential relief on government spending and benefits of job creation in terms of being able to legally sell recreational cannabis and its revenue collection possibilities that government could implement; the legalization of cannabis sales would only benefit the South African economy.

While citizens of South Africa are permitted to grow, consume and giveaway cannabis for private use there is very little regulation in terms of the safety of the cannabis being home grown. For instance, according to ProCon.org (2023) consumers obtaining cannabis via unregulated means have little chance of identifying whether the substance has been properly cultivated, stored or if it has harmful chemicals that may affect the user. With the legalization, strict cannabis control and regulation policies can be put into place to minimize the potential health risks harmful chemicals or moulds might have on the user and alleviate the potential threat it might impose on hospitals that have to deal with poisoning from added chemicals and lung infections from mouldy cannabis.

Recreational cannabis sales would be an advantage to the tourism industry. Hence, Matiza (2023, cited in O'Connell 2023) Sp. gues that the commercialization of hemp-based substances, apparel, and food items will assist in creating significant opportunities for economic growth. Furthermore, Matiza (2023, cited in O'Connell 2023) which mentioned the growing market of cannabis cultivation farm tours as well as cannabis friendly hotels across South Africa. Considering that cannabis enthusiasts would engage in these tours, try these foods, stay at these hotels and if recreational cannabis sale is legalized. The opportunity for cannabis tourism and its revenue from not only the cannabis industry but the tourism, hotel and restaurant industry would be ultimately beneficial to South Africa.

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Conclusion

In conclusion the way forward is to fully legalize the sale of cannabis to adults for recreational and medicinal purposes in South Africa. While medicinal sale is legal and regulated, recreational sale should follow a similar process. Taking into the economic benefits that could boost the gross domestic product of South Africa. The potential benefit to the local economic develop of the country through taxation of profits from the cannabis industry. The health benefits for users in the country in terms of safety standards to be imposed. The relief on the health care system in terms of the safety regulations to be imposed on cannabis and the justice system in terms of no longer having to incur as many unnecessary costs of prosecution for the sale of cannabis. Furthermore, the plan of action should be to completely legalize cannabis. To issue licenses for medical and recreational cultivation and sales. To impose a taxation system on cannabis sales. To establish guidelines which cannabis cultivators/sellers must adhere. To formulate policy which forces cultivators to adhere to standards and have their products tested by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority before sales commence. As well as, to have cultivators be subject to testing of their products at any given time. Fines should be imposed on cultivators that fail to adhere to the standards and in serious offences their licenses revoked in addition to fines. Lastly, to establish educational programmes on the safe use of cannabis for users or those intending to use.

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GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

86/100

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR POSITION PAPER		
	Maximum	Marks allocated
Introduction (introduces the position paper and highlight the significance of the particular position) and Conclusion (provides a concise summary of the position paper.	20	17
Academic contents (Provides a critical analysis of text in relation the arguments for and against, critically analyses the strengths and weaknesses of each argument, insight proposes a particular position on the topic). The argument is original, and the similarity do not exceed 10 percent. Content do not exceed 2 pages.	40	34
Technical care (style of reference; bibliography), Use at least 7 sources (journal articles or books) that appears in both text and bibliography. Use the Harvard method consistently. Text is in 11 pt Arial, 1.5 line spacing and justified.	20	20
Language and presentation	10	7
General impression	10	8

TOTAL	100	86
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Comment 1

Good reference list.