Activation involves loosening up joints and muscles by swinging arms and legs through their full range of motion. Most warm-up routines are designed to get blood flowing to areas not used outside of the water, which can help prevent injury. Children take full advantage of these moments to socialize by catching up on the day's school activities and discussing what will or has happened on their precious days off and while away from their peers. Here is a place where children bond, make closer friendships within their groups, and establish a sense of belonging. It is during the pre-workout activation sessions and the post-workout mandatory stretching that children often exhibit the varying levels of a swimmer's embodied identity. Some have bought into the training regimes required of them, while others pretend and put on a show of complying with the demands of the club and coach they are attached to.

Age group club swimming can be far more than a recreational activity that parents put their children into. It can include a large assortment of activities and practices that range from the developmental club enrolled swimmer to that of competitive international podiums. Inside these fields, identity is contested and shaped and bodies are subjected to training regimes required of them, while others pretend and put on a show of complying with the demands of the club and coach they are attached to.

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drug users, but the policies established by the Canadian government in response to the substance have been largely ineffective.

The Canadian Approach

Canada's Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) outlines the prohibitions surrounding the production, distribution, and possession of cannabis. Though this substance has been deemed illegal, there was no debate in the Canadian Parliament when this label was established in 1923 (Boyd, 2013, p.30). Gordon (2006) argues that criminalizing marijuana was the result of attempts to inhibit the spread of Caribbean culture in Canada (p.64). Others point to international obligations through the 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs as well as immense pressure from the American government (Babor et al., 2010, p.205). Regardless of why cannabis was initially criminalized, evidence reveals that the CDSA provisions on the possession of this substance have not been as efficient as the government might have hoped.

Cannabis and its derivatives are found in Schedule II of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The drug does have a less severe penalty available in comparison to other substances. Under s. 7(2), the production of cannabis is an indictable offence punishable for a term of no more than seven years; other illicit substances have a maximum life sentence. The possession of the drug can be charged as an indictable or summary offence with a fine.

Effect of cannabis use

Cannabis has been deemed illegal, there are many barriers to employment, stigma and strain on social relationships (Room et al., p.66). The use of conditional sentencing wields the net of who may come in contact with police and continues to produce the stigma of being associated with the criminal justice system (Room et al., p.80). The experiences within Canadian courts also demonstrate the inefficiency of the current approach to cannabis. In R. v. Redhead the accused has three previous charges for trafficking marijuana. As pointed out by the British Columbia Court of Appeal, Mr. Redhead's past associations with the criminal justice system did not deter or rehabilitate him in any way. In R. v. Evers, the accused lacked remorse for producing marijuana and she explicitly stated that she intended to continue her grow operation in the future. Nevertheless, the trial judge did not feel the need to impose jail time on Evers. In fact, the fine that was levied on the accused at trial was unlikely to be pursued for collection by the Crown. The approach outlined in the CDSA creates unfair targeting, unnecessary arrests and causes the public to view police powers negatively (Room et al., p.73-74). Rather than arbitrarily prohibiting the possession of marijuana, the government should consider scientific research on the actual effects the substance has on the health of Canadians.

Consequences of Criminalizing the Possession of Cannabis

Policy makers rationalize the tough on crime approach to cannabis as a way of preventing use through deterrence as well as interference with distributors and producers. Room et al. (2010) state that this justification cannot be upheld; an increase in arrests under the CDSA has not led to a decrease in the use of marijuana (p.69). On the contrary, the number of distributors and consumers has increased in recent years (Room et al., 2010, p.60). Rather than preventing the use of this illicit substance, the current prohibitions expose users to illegal markets. Room et al. (2010) note that the cannabis illegal markers do not have the same level of violence as those of other illicit substances (p.61). Nonetheless, exposure to these environments as a way of obtaining cannabis leads to the potential for the introduction to harder drugs such as opium and cocaine (Room et al., p.33). In R. v. Malmo-Levine; R. v. Caine the dissenting Justice Arbour stated that criminalizing the possession of cannabis punishes those who pose little risk to society and violates their right to liberty under s.7 of the Charter. Justice Arbour went on to argue that the harmful effects of marijuana do not justify the prohibition of the possession of this drug. Additionally, the idea of protecting "vulnerable groups" in society is illogical as imprisoning them for cannabis possession does not assist them in any way. Though the majority of the Supreme Court of Canada did not agree with Justice Arbour's views, his argument is consistent with the research evidence surrounding this societal issue.

Policy Alternatives

Criminalizing the possession of cannabis is harmful to Canadians. The government may consider looking to other countries as a way of modifying the current system and diminishing the unnecessary damage to citizens found in possession of cannabis. Though the substance is generally criminalized around the globe, there are examples of nations that have worked to minimize the risks and consequences associated with prohibiting the possession of the drug. One of the best known
examples comes out of the Netherlands. This European nation famously takes a de facto legalization approach to cannabis (Room et al., 2010, p.92). Although the drug is still deemed illegal, personal use of marijuana is tolerated (Room et al., p.92). Cannabis is made available through coffee shops. These dispensaries help prevent consumers from being exposed to illegal markets (Room et al., p.94). It is important to take into account that, even with this de facto legalization in place, the Netherlands has a lower rate of cannabis use than the United States (Babor et al., 2010, p.32). This evidence demonstrates that the legalization of marijuana will not necessarily lead to an increase in use among citizens. However, the approach taken by the Netherlands is not without its downsides. Issues arise out of the supply of and demand for cannabis. Confusion occurs due to the fact that the drug is still illegal; the production of the substance often continues to come from illegitimate, criminal sources (Room et al., p.95).

Another means taken on by Spain and Portugal is the de jure legalization of the possession of cannabis. This scheme allows for personal use quantities to be carried and consumed by citizens (Room et al., p.97). The formal legalization of possession for personal use helps to ensure that an individual's rights and liberties are not violated by the state's prohibition of drugs. Nevertheless, this approach also has disadvantages when considering the illegal production and trafficking of illicit substances.

A third method is the decriminalization of the possession of cannabis. This system was adopted in Western Australia. Rather than criminalizing the substance, fines are imposed as a way of preventing the stigma of the criminal justice system (Room et al., p.66). Studies show that this civic approach does not lead to an increase in use (Room et al., p.112). Additionally, those who were subject to fines, as opposed to the criminal justice system, had suffered fewer negative consequences in relation to employment and personal relationships (Room et al., p.114). The main criticism directed to this process is that people from disadvantaged groups, such as the indigenous population and visible minorities, are often burdened financially by the imposition of fines (Room et al., p.116). Members of the middle and upper classes do not feel the same level of impact if they are found to be in possession of marijuana. If this method were to be taken on, considerations would have to be made as to where the money from the imposed fines would be streamed (Room et al., p.127). Also, thought would have to be put into how to avoid net widening by authorities.

Each of these approaches has advantages and implications that the Canadian government may wish to consider in reformulating the current legislation on the possession of cannabis. However, even with these examples in place, Canada's international obligations need to be kept in mind to determine what kinds of changes, if any, policy makers can actually implement.

**International Obligations**

The international 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs has had a significant impact on Canada's current approach to cannabis possession. The Convention places the substance under Schedule I as an extremely harmful drug (Room et al., 2010, p.11). Babor et al. (2010) state that this classification was largely a result of heavy pressure from the United States to have cannabis added into the agreement (p.205). The World Health Organization (WHO) made attempts to move cannabis to Schedule IV of the convention, a class containing low risk drugs (Room et al., p.11). Research conducted by WHO suggests that marijuana does not have significant impacts on health in comparison to other drugs. Nonetheless, through influence from the United States Office of National Drug Policy, this reclassification was rejected without strong justification (Babor et al., 2010, p.24).

The United States government claims that moving cannabis to Schedule IV would cause tension among countries (Babor et al., p.214). Room et al. (2010) point out that without cannabis in the Convention, the war on drugs would not be viewed as a global level issue (p.9). The United States has played a leading role in keeping cannabis central to the war on drugs; this approach provides the nation with a platform for American policy (Babor et al., p.214).

In addition to the 1961 agreement, the United States government works to certify countries that comply with the international agreement on cannabis. Failure to meet the standards set out leads to a loss of certification which threatens foreign assistance and funding in development (Babor et al., p.215). This immense pressure from the American government plays an imperative role in criminalizing cannabis in Canada. On a broader level, failure to comply with the Convention and the war on drugs would also cause the nation to be viewed as uncooperative globally (Babor et al., p.216). There would likely be major harm to international relations if Canada chose to legalize the possession of cannabis. Although views are changing around marijuana, it is unlikely that Canada, or any other nation, will eventually withdraw from obligations on its own. Room et al. (2010) point out that countries would have to work together to de-schedule cannabis from the Convention or work to create a new treaty altogether (p.129-136). If Canada were to follow the best available evidence on cannabis, the nation would challenge the current international law by legalizing the substance.

**Considerations & Conclusions**

The legalization of cannabis in Canada would assist in preventing the harms associated with the prohibition of the substance. Although crime will always exist, allowing people to freely consume the drug would significantly reduce unnecessary arrests and the stigma associated with illicit substances. The government would, however, need to put serious consideration into how cannabis would be produced and distributed. There would need to be strong regulation and systems in place to prevent illegal activity in the production of the substance (Room et al., 2010, p.103). Room et al. (2010) suggest adopting the model used for the distribution of tobacco (p.159). The government would need to work to limit advertisements, prevent minors from accessing the drug and regulate the potency and quantity of the substance (Room et al., p.171). Most importantly, there would need to be education on the harms associated with cannabis use. Babor et al. (2010) advise that the availability of social and health services are imperative to reducing crime, disease and other dangers linked to drug use (p.242). Treatment has been shown to be more effective than punishment (Babor et al., 2010, p.52). With the legalization of cannabis, evidence-based treatment would be vital to put in place so that the health of Canadians could be protected (Babor et al., p.248). Programs in schools would provide a way of reducing use by youth. Focus on social skills for children and the management skills of teachers have been shown to be effective in deterring drug use (Babor et al., p.110-113). Programs for families surrounding communication have also been linked to reduced rates of marijuana consumption (Babor et al., p.114). Accessibility to such resources could help address the actual problems associated with cannabis use. The legalization of cannabis would be a positive step for Canadian society if the implementation is conducted thoughtfully by the government.

Cannabis is a commonly used drug around the world and its popularity is growing. Canada's current approach prohibits the possession of the substance. Although the government and judiciary claim that the criminalization is for the protection of citizens, this idea is not well justified. In comparison to other illicit and legal substances, cannabis poses a low risk to drug users. There are countries that have taken different approaches to the possession of the drug. De facto and de jure legalization as well as decriminalization are a few of the systems that have been established to accommodate the increasingly liberal views around cannabis. Nonetheless, international obligations and pressure from the United States has prevented Canada from legalizing the drug. If policy makers were to follow the current research on cannabis, the possession of the substance would be a lawful act. Legalizing cannabis could help reduce the harms that come out of prohibition. However, the government would have to consider factors such as regulation and education to ensure that the health and well-being of Canadians is kept in mind. As society becomes more accepting of cannabis and research demonstrates the low risks associated with the drug, Canada will need to seriously consider altering the current approach to cannabis possession.
Carrying the Cross: Being Gay, Catholic, and Filipino

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Introduction

Everyday we are confronted with topics that show the interplay of religion and society, topics that range from the mundane to the transformative. In fact, religion plays a huge part in an individual's holistic being that it can affect the way he or she articulates with and to the society he or she lives in. Furthermore, throughout the course of history, religion is considered a huge part in better understanding a particular society and that society's citizens' way of life (Durkheim, 1915; Orsi, 2003).

However, certain religion is more prevalent over the others and this difference in scope is evident in some parts of the globe. In the Philippines, for instance, the number of Filipino Catholics reached 76.18 million out of the country's estimated population of 96.8 million (Uy, 2013). This is a considerable statistic for it shows how the majority of the population shares collective views and beliefs as a result of being part of the same religion.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that although the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country, it is noticeable that there is more widespread acceptance of homosexuality than might be expected.

Moreover, reports like this make us reflect and wonder about the impacts and effects of certain religions in the lives of individuals in a particular society (i.e. The Philippines) that they dominate; also, it makes us question how the prevalence of this religion impacts the lives of people, more specifically, the way it affects the lives of the members of a historically marginalized group such as the LGBTQ community. Thus, in this essay, I will try to explore the lives of the LGBTQ community in the Philippines, most specifically, Catholic Filipino gay men. And I will argue that although these men embrace their homosexuality, they still do this in and around the norms, values, and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. In doing so, I hope to make the reader better understand both Filipino homosexuality and Catholicism in the Philippines.

As Robert Orsi puts in his argument, in order to better understand a particular religion, it is best to look at the collective memories and shared experiences of adherents rather than just at official doctrine (Orsi, 2003).

To better contextualize this topic, this essay is divided into different sections. In the first section, I present some of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines and its views and stance in regards to the issue of homosexuality. Then, I contextualize this by presenting the Catholic Filipino gay men and their ways of operating both as catholic and homosexual in the contemporary time.

In the same section, I provide some examples and narratives on how the image of the Catholic Filipino gay man is presented in the media. The essay ends with reflections on the effect of the Roman Catholic church in the lives of Catholic Filipino gay men and an analysis of how male homosexuality is articulated within the context of a predominantly Catholic society such as the Philippines.

Catholicism in the Philippines: The Paradox of Faith

"All passions are dishonorable, for the soul is even more prejudiced and degraded by sin than is the body by disease; but the worst of all passions is lust between men…. not only are their passions [of the homosexual] satanic, but their lives are diabolic…. There is nothing, absolutely nothing more mad or damaging than this perversion." -Saint John Chrysostom, 347–407

As a predominantly Catholic Christian nation, albeit with a substantial Muslim minority, the...