

**European Masters in InterCultural Communication
(EMICC)**

Semiotics of Cultures

The Social Addiction of Smoking

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Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary

1. Introduction.....	1
2. A Brief history of smoking.....	3
3. Structure and composition of smokers as a social actor.....	5
3.1. Social Face and Networks.....	5
3.2. Social Environment.....	9
3.3. Social Practices.....	10
3.4. Social Spatiality.....	12
3.5. Social Temporality.....	13
4. Language culture of smoking.....	15
4.1. The Verbal Language of Smoking.....	15
4.2. The Unspoken Language of Smoking.....	17
4.3. The Sign System of Smoking.....	20
4.4. Diglossia in smoking.....	23
5. The Intercultural dimension of smoking.....	25
5.1. Typical stereotypes and general cross-cultural comparisons.....	25
5.2. Smokers vs. Non-smokers.....	26
5.3. Smoking and global legislation.....	28
6. Smoking in Italy.....	30
7. Smoking in Finland.....	33
8. Smoking in the U.S.....	35
9. Conclusive remarks.....	39
Bibliography.....	42

SUMMARY

The present paper explores the notion of smoking as defining a social actor. Of course, nicotine present in cigarettes causes a physical addiction. Nonetheless, here the analysis will be focused on the “social” addiction of smoking to the extent that it creates a unique group of people defined by the elements that compose this activity in a social context. A social actor is a group that shares a common set of activities, environment and resources so as to satisfy its needs and goals and preserve its identity. The elements of smoking, i.e. the process itself, the people who smoke and how they look, communicate and act and the historical background and overall culture of smoking indeed identify it as a social actor.

In fact, the strong bond and common elements of smoking across cultures makes it an internationally recognizable community. The language culture of smoking is such that even two smokers speaking two different languages are able to communicate with one another. The signs and symbols that belong to smoking are also universal in many respects and create henceforth a worldwide understanding and recognition of this group.

Smokers form a community that is, on the one hand, universal, but on the other hand, relative to the culture or context in which smoking occurs. Certain stereotypes exist about various countries and the smoking habits practiced by its citizens and cross-cultural comparisons can be drawn. Moreover, there exists a cross-cultural context of smoking evident through the creation of two groups not defined by national borders: smokers and non-smokers. The latter is a huge element in the formation of a new identity and perception of the smoking group, supported by the proven health risks and dangers associated with smoking.

This paper will exhibit and analyse the elements that compose the *Lebenswelt*, or life world, of smokers as a social actor and analyse the cultural characteristics prevalent by looking at the notion of smoking in the past, present and future. The content of this paper was collected by two non-smokers and one smoker from various books, articles and websites as well as through observations and general knowledge the authors had acquired through years in smoking environments. The authors of this paper

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1. Introduction

Smoking is an international phenomenon. It has spread worldwide, cigarette companies are multinational and smokers represent all possible social sectors. However, despite the international characteristics of the smoking population, smokers form a distinct group as opposed to non-smokers. In fact, the social group of smokers can even be defined according to visible characteristics, such as, at an elementary level, a cigarette burning in their hand. Thus, smokers represent a clearly defined group of people. They share a common cognitive reference frame and possess a specific competence of functioning with regard to this frame. In other words, smokers know how to function in the social reality determined by the activity of smoking, common to all of them. As such, they can be defined as a social actor. This paper explores smokers as a trans-cultural social actor, aiming at defining the specific social and linguistic characteristics resulting in the clear-cut distinction between smokers and non-smokers.

Before smokers can be analysed in detail as a social actor, however, it is first necessary to understand how they are viewed in terms of the definition of culture. Hoopes and Pusch (1999) define culture as "... the sum total of ways of living – including values, beliefs, aesthetic standards, linguistic expression, patterns of thinking, behavioural norms, styles of communication which a group of people has develop to assure its survival in a particular physical and human environment...". Even if smoking is certainly subordinate to such perspectives to culture as national culture or a religious culture, the definition of culture can indeed be applied to smokers as a social group. First of all, smoking represents certain desired characteristics to those who initiate smoking. These characteristics relate to values, beliefs, aesthetic standards and patterns of thinking, particularly to adolescents, subject to initiating smoking, as will be indicated in chapter 3.1. Furthermore, the activity of smoking comprises a great deal of ritualised behaviours, some showing personal characteristics, e.g. blowing circles of the smoke, while some are directly related to the activity of smoking itself and thus common to all smokers, e.g. smoking outdoors if the law so requires. Thus, smokers share behavioural norms, which will be developed in chapter 3.3. The linguistic specificity of smokers, on the other hand, is mainly linked with symbolism and nonverbal communication. The "no smoking" sign is one of the most widely known symbols in the world, whereas eye contact when blowing smoke might convey an emphatic message. It is also worth noticing that a

whole vocabulary specialised on smoking exists in many languages. These aspects will be discussed in part 4. Finally, smoking can be associated with a certain environment both physically and socially. For instance, the present law regulations make it easier than ever to recognise the smoking areas. On the other hand, certain objects belong to smokers' social environment. These issues will be analysed in detail in chapters 3.2 and 3.4. In fact, the only paradoxical observation with regard to the presented definition of culture is that, by smoking, smokers do not in effect assure their survival but in fact threaten it. Nonetheless, when considering the purely social determinants of culture, smokers can indeed be claimed to represent a culture, a trans-national smoking culture.

Smoking being a culture, it thus has a great deal of social implications. First of all, the distinction between smokers and non-smokers can be surprisingly significant, particularly for adolescents. This distinction is based on the mental imagery of smokers. Smoking and smokers provoke strong images and connotations and have done so throughout history, the imagery evolving constantly. The historical perspective will be presented in part 3, but otherwise, the analysis in this paper is concentrated on the present smoking culture. Additionally, a cross-cultural comparison will be presented in part 6 in order to explore what types of differences exist between national cultures and how these differences relate to the so-called global smoking culture. This will be followed by a more detailed analysis of the cases of Finland, Italy and the United States. In fact, it will be argued that smoking culture has a great deal of affinities all over the world, creating a sense of bonding even among two smokers of different national backgrounds when having a cigarette. All in all, even if smoking has serious effects on health, the activity is approached from a purely social aspect, emphasising the social relation between smokers that might become addiction in itself.

2. A Brief History of Smoking

The tobacco known to the ancient pre-Columbian people as "the food of gods" has become understood as one of the most dangerous killers for the health of the man.¹

Smoking has played a significant role in the past and continues to do so. Tobacco has its roots in the Americas where it started growing in about 6000 BC and was first smoked around 1000 BC. It seems that tobacco was originally smoked for ceremonial rituals; for instance, blowing smoke clouds was often believed to attract the rain. At the beginning of religious ceremonies, the Aztec clergymen used to blow the smoke towards the Sun and the four cardinal points through pipes or directly from the rolled up tobacco. During these rituals, the clergymen would often end up inhaling the smoke; in doing so, they discovered the hypnotic effects and feelings created that facilitated the communication with the divinity. It is believed that it was at this point that tobacco was smoked for purposes of enjoyment. (Istituto Superiore di Sanita 2005.)

After the early explorations of the Americas, tobacco slowly made its way to Europe. To the original explorers of the Americas, namely Christopher Columbus, it appeared tobacco was used for functional and medicinal purposes such as driving away the mosquitoes and curing diseases. In fact, tobacco was one of the most widely consumed substances in the Americas embedded within a shamanistic cosmology in which it had a pivotal role with regard to religion, medicine and belief. In 1560, the ambassador of France in Portugal sent King Francisco II and Caterina de' Medici tobacco seeds, boasting of some of the curative virtues: he said that they were effective for the ulcers and the diseases of the stomach, that they cured plagues, asthma and several respiratory diseases and that they could also be used like tooth-pastes. Some doctors recommended the use against the bites of snakes and bugs and against headaches. In Great Britain it was used as protection against the plague. The use of the tobacco spread quickly throughout Europe in the late sixteenth century, and eventually extended through Turkey into Asia and through Spain into Africa. (Istituto Superiore di Sanita 2005.)

¹ Quoted from <http://www.isit100.fe.it/aprogetto/itc/9900/4Bmercurio/fumo/02brevestoria.htm>

It was only during the next century that tobacco became an object of intense scrutiny of governments throughout Europe. At first tobacco was widely regarded as a negative force; King James I of England (1566-1625) famously called it ‘an invention of Satan’ believing it was unpleasant for the nose, dangerous for the brain and disastrous for the lungs. Other countries implemented strict punishments to those caught using it; in Persia, for instance, if caught, smokers’ lips were cut and, in Russia, smokers were condemned to being beaten and crippled. Gradually smoking gained popularity, however, and an increased number of people turned to it for enjoyment purposes. In fact, the pros and cons of smoking at the time were ambiguous and in fact, created a conflict of interest: the use of tobacco is evil but there were business interests. (Istituto Superiore di Sanita 2005.)

In the 18th century, tobacco entered the international trade markets. By the late 19th century, after the official invention of the cigarette by soldiers in the Middle East who threaded a little tobacco in cylinders of paper, the United States had already dominated the markets and cigarette advertisements were introduced. In the late 19th century and the 20th century, primarily through advertising and the increase of smoking in war times, cigarette companies turned into multinational enterprises aimed at global markets, which eventually led to the dissolution of the American dominance. At the turn of the 21st century, the world’s tobacco crop was dominated by Asia. (Istituto Superiore di Sanita 2005.)

Thus, tobacco spread around the world both in terms of use and in terms of production. At the same time, perceptions of smoking drastically changed. The first purpose for smoking in Europe was medical treatment of certain diseases. Discussions on tobacco use were already quite prevalent in the scientific milieus and debates ensued as to whether smoking had good or bad effect on one’s health. Despite these concerns, the pleasure of smoking outweighed its dangers, still underestimated, in the 19th century while smoking was already widely spread. By the early 20th century cigarette smoking had become an indicator of degenerate behaviour, though still popular particularly with the soldiers in such times of war. By the mid-20th century the serious harmful effects of tobacco were scientifically indicated and action was taken against tobacco industry

including restrictions placed on advertising and additional taxes imposed. (Slovic 2001: 29-32.)

By that time, however, smoking cigarettes had already become a widely accepted activity.



With the spread of popular culture came an extensive hidden promotion of smoking as images of film stars such as Humphrey Bogart and Audrey Hepburn smoking glamorously were spread worldwide (see images at left).

At the time, smoking represented power, wealth and sexual attractiveness. For women, smoking became a symbol of emancipation and equality, as the gender roles started to change². Simultaneously, governments started fighting against the growing problem of smoking-related diseases³. Presently, in our increasingly health-oriented society, smoking is slowly obtaining a negative image. Nonetheless, the World Health Organisation (2002) points out that one third of the global male population still smokes and smoking is still on the rise in the developing countries.

3. Structure and composition of smokers as a social actor

Smokers have been defined as a social actor representing the smoking culture above. Indeed, smokers' social representations and networks, their environment and practices as well as spatial and temporal factors establish them as a closely tied group that share something in common. In the following, these elements of smokers' life world will be analysed in detail, demonstrating their social relatedness.

3.1. SOCIAL FACE AND NETWORKS

Smoking is presently a global phenomenon: smokers represent both sexes, all nationalities, different professions and most age groups⁴. Yet, some common stereotypes of smokers do exist, reflecting the so-called "social faces" of smokers. In effect, artists, philosophers, students, middle-class and night shift workers as well as military personnel

² See for instance Lezard, Nicholas 'Fatal Attraction: the vanishing culture of smoking', *The Independent*, 29 October 2005.

³ See Slovic 1998, 30-31 for instance for the development of anti-smoking campaigns in the U.S.

⁴ See for instance the demographic profile of smokers in the United States in Slovic (2001), p. 34.

(see image at right) have been associated with smoking through decades. Glamorous film stars and celebrities have contributed to an image of a seductive, sexy and mysterious smoker, which again has had a huge promotional impact on tobacco use⁵.



These stereotypes indeed are still supported by, for instance, a number of musicians, such as Ville Valo from the rock band H.I.M., who would not appear on stage without a cigarette burning in their hand. Similarly, in the everyday life, it is easy to locate a group of factory workers or psychiatric wards having their cigarette break, particularly during the night shift. The prominent role of smoking in history has led people to produce strong images about smokers, which are again reproduced and supported by public figures and media⁶.

Research on the demography of smokers provides evidence to some of the common beliefs that people have. With regard to gender and age groups, the World Health Organization (2002) estimates that among young teens aged from 13 to 15, about one in five smokes worldwide and that about a third of the global male adult population smokes. Given these statistics, firstly, it seems that young adulthood is a critical period considering smoking⁷. In fact, Bachman et al. (1997: 10-11) emphasise that both initiation and cessation of all drug use most frequently occurs in late adolescence and early adulthood. Secondly, the global male population comprises a major proportion of smokers. More precisely, according to the World Health Organization (2005), it is poor and uneducated men who are more likely to smoke. These estimations imply that, globally speaking, initiation and activity of smoking indeed are related not only to sex and age, but also to socioeconomic status.

Unfortunately detailed global data on smokers' background is difficult to collect. Yet, some national statistics can provide with general implications. For example, with regard to employment status, National Statistics of the United Kingdom (2001) indicate that British workers in routine and manual work report the highest smoking rates, whereas persons working in management roles smoke the least. Furthermore, Bachman et al. (1997: 57) point out that half-pack or more smoking rates seem to be much lower among

⁵ See chapters 2 and 3.5 for more elaboration on the topic.

⁶ See chapter 2 for a brief history of smoking.

⁷ For an analysis of why young adults start to smoke, see for instance Bachman et al. (1997), pp. 8-15.

American college students compared to their age-mates. This is somewhat contrary to common beliefs about students as active smokers, but corresponds to the World Health Organization's estimated figures of smokers' education level. According to National Statistics of the United Kingdom (2003), marital status also seems to have an influence on smoking: smoking rates are the highest among cohabiting couples and singles, whereas married couples smoke the least. These findings coincide more or less with, for example, the American data in Bachman et al. (1997). Altogether, smoking is a global health problem and, yet, in the light of statistics, some groups of people appear to be more subject to tobacco use.

Nonetheless, when considering the crucial role of young adulthood, demographic background does not seem to be as decisive a factor for starting smoking as adolescent's social networks, particularly those with peers. Lloyd et al. (1998: 53) found in their research on British youth that, first of all, family background can have an effect on smoking: adolescents living with both parents are less likely to start smoking than those living in single-parent families or stepfamilies. Nevertheless, it is primarily the example given by the social environment that exposes an adolescent to smoking. What emerged as more substantial about family background in the study by Lloyd et al. (1998: 67) is the effect of family smoking on adolescent's tobacco experimentation: if both parents and an older brother or sister smoke, adolescents are four times more likely to take up smoking habits. If the family does not smoke and strongly disapproves cigarette use, smoking becomes at least more complicated, since the adolescent feels obliged to hide his or her prohibited habits.

A social group that becomes even more important than family in young adulthood, however, is peer groups⁸. In fact, Lloyd et al. (1998: 72) describe peer networks as an arena of equal individuals to try, learn and practice new activities. For example, in the data by Lloyd et al. 83.7% of non-smokers reported that their best friend did not smoke, whereas 77.1% of smokers said that their best friend smokes regularly. In fact, Lloyd et al. (1998: 80) point out that almost all the non-smoking participants in their study mentioned peer pressure existing in one form or another. Lloyd et al (1998: 74) further note that once an adolescent starts to smoke, the shared smoker identity and the

⁸ See Lloyd and Lucas (1998, 71-72) for a brief overview on the recent changes in parental influence on adolescents.

emotional bond created by smoking make changing cigarette use habits difficult. This bond is rather strong and lasts long enough for physical addiction to develop. Thus, dynamics of social and physical addiction apply differently at critical stages of cigarette use: social pressure influences the initiation in adolescence, whereas at a later age, when social addiction could be better controlled, the physical addiction has already taken over and quitting is more difficult.

Smoking not only becomes a part of the everyday routines and the identity of the smoker, but it also has an impact on the smoker's physical appearance. In fact, a smoker quite quickly adopts certain routines that he or she integrates into his or her identity⁹. As smoking becomes more regular and long-term, the cigarette use obtains an increasingly important role in the individual's everyday life through routines, while self-perception and feelings of self-control are also very related to smoking. According to Slovic (2001: 134-136), smokers associate cigarette use with feelings of relaxation, popularity and having fun, which strongly correlates with exposure to cigarette advertising. These images of smokers are more common among smokers than among non-smokers. This allows us to assume that the smoking status is directly related to image building and thus self-perception, further supported by advertisement.

When describing their identity, smokers might not mention smoking at all and, yet, cigarettes form an essential part of their daily life. Thus, for instance missing "the first cigarette of the morning" might eventually effect the way the individual functions during the day and, what is more important, how the individual perceives the possible downfalls of the day, associating them with the missed cigarette. Smoking also influences the formation of identity through changes in physical appearance. Indeed, long-term smoking leaves marks on teeth, skin, hair, eyes, voice as well as on the smell of breath to the extent that at least another smoker can recognise a regular smoker. Even yellowish marks on fingers, produced by the cigarette held between the fingers, reveal the individual's tobacco use. Another physical symptom of smoking is an increased saliva production, for which particularly rebellious adolescents spit frequently, strengthening the "tough" image of a smoker. Thus, altogether, cigarette use has important effects on identity-building and physical appearance, visible not only to the smoker himself, but also to other people.

⁹ See chapter 3.3 for a detailed analysis of smokers' social practices.

In addition to the effects of smoking on the individual identity, smokers also have a strong sense of shared identity. Cigarette use seems to unite people in a way that cigarette breaks become opportunities for bonding and forming a deeper relationship. A cigarette break often means taking time off of the everyday tasks. In other words, people relax and often withdraw to somewhere peaceful and quiet for a cigarette break, which allows them to fully concentrate on the company at the spot. This strong bonding might lead to a feeling of exclusion among some non-smokers. Some people even smoke only when they go out with friends, solely for being part of the group and adapting to the environment. Vice versa, if a smoker should be the only smoker of a group, he or she might feel excluded from the rest because of the need to withdraw for cigarette breaks. This feeling of being out of a group becomes even more relevant at a young age¹⁰.

3.2. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Smokers are surrounded by objects that identify them with cigarette use. These objects become meaningful only to smokers. In the centre of the whole activity is the cigarette. Already different brands and the various levels of nicotine in them have different implications. For instance, young women prefer light cigarettes, whereas red Marlboro creates the image of a masculine 'Marlboro man' (see image at right). Furthermore, a number of brand names and logos are easily recognisable worldwide, considering that many cigarette companies are international corporations. Thus, a smoker might be able to find the same cigarette brand even abroad. It is also worth noticing that cigarette packs vary in size, colour, style and image use¹¹. In addition to the brand, the type of tobacco might give implications on the smoker's personality. Rolled tobacco can refer to a lower socioeconomic status in countries such as Finland where cigarettes are more expensive and not affordable. Additionally, according to the American Lung Association (2004), a number of alternate tobacco products are available, even though they do not have a similar popularity level as cigarettes¹². Such products include cigars, briar, slate, and clay pipes, water pipes, pan, betel quid, snuff tobacco,



¹⁰ See chapter 5.2. for more elaboration.

¹¹ See chapter 4.3 for a detailed analysis of signs and images on cigarette packs.

¹² Most of the discussion in this paper is limited to smoking cigarettes, since it is the most common mode of tobacco use.

chewing tobacco, pellets of tobacco, loose-leaf, twist, snuff tobacco, nasal (dry) and oral (moist) snuff. Nonetheless, for instance in the United States, cigarettes are the most popular tobacco product, followed by cigars and chewing tobacco (Slovic 2001: 43), whereas in Africa, hand-rolled tobacco is most commonly smoked (WHO 2000). The statistics might, however, change according to the sample, as for instance rural population report more use of chewing tobacco. In any case, smokers are often highly selective with regard to tobacco type and brand.

In addition to tobacco products, many other objects are important but not always so visibly present in smokers' everyday life. For instance, lighters, matches and ashtrays also form an essential part of a smoker's social environment, since without fire cigarettes cannot be lighted, whereas ashtrays often give permission to smoke in public places. Furthermore, the smoke and smell produced by smoking is also characteristic of the social environment. Smoke might even permanently shade the walls in a smoking house, whereas the smell of smoke is easily noticeable by, for instance, parents who are trying to control their child's cigarette habits. For this reason, smokers also tend to use a great amount of chewing gum and mints. On the other hand, however, smoke seems to create certain type of atmosphere. For instance, a jazz club obtains some of its "chilled-out" feeling because of the smoke hanging mysteriously in the air. Thus, tobacco use leaves its marks and creates a unique smokers' environment.

3.3. SOCIAL PRACTICES

Smokers have certain activities that they repeatedly do that associate them instantly with smoking. The most obvious of such practices is the physical act of smoking: it distinguishes smokers from non-smokers. This act thus is the defining factor of the social actor of smokers. Smoking in itself contains various phases. Firstly, one lights up the cigarette. Already this first step might include different practices and messages. The next phase is the actual smoking: inhaling and exhaling the smoke and tapping the ash off. And finally, there are many ways of extinguishing a cigarette. For instance, one might inconsiderately just throw it on the ground without actually extinguishing it. It is generally considered to be more polite to press the cigarette out in an ashtray. Another way to do it is to extinguish the cigarette by placing it under a foot. Furthermore, flicking the cigarette away seems to show some type of coolness at least among young

people. Thus, the activity of smoking itself might seem simple and straight-forward but does actually include a great deal of indicators of social activity¹³.

In addition to the actual practice of smoking, smokers can be identified with many other activities associated with cigarette use. For instance, one obligatory stage in smoking is buying the pack of cigarettes. This can be done in different ways: in some countries there are cigarette dispensing machines on the streets, whereas in other countries, the laws are extremely strict with age limits and more control of cigarette sellers. In the case of under-aged youth, this might lead to different patterns of obtaining cigarettes. For example, if an under-aged person manages to buy a pack of cigarettes, he/she will most likely impress the peers and will gain a certain increased status. In any case, under-aged are normally forced to find somebody to buy cigarettes for them, which again creates a new social network of the smokers and “the dealers”. According to Slovic (2001: 44), most under-aged obtain cigarettes from friends, whereas for the over 18-years-old it is more common to get them directly from convenience stores. There is however, according to Slovic’s study (2001: 44), a relatively high number of under-aged adolescents, that is 24.3% of 14-15 years-old Americans, reported buying cigarettes themselves from convenience stores. Accordingly, attitudes toward the age limitations seem to vary greatly.

In addition to these “cigarette dealing rings”, another type of social networking by smoking is the sharing of cigarettes. Smokers normally tend to share cigarettes, which in most of the cases strengthens the bond between the two smokers. On the other hand, it is not rare to see a stranger asking for a cigarette from a smoker, particularly in pubs, bars or nightclubs. Among closer friends it is also common to share a cigarette. Furthermore, asking for a cigarette or simply a light is considered a natural and easy way of approaching a person in order to show interest to him or her and to initiate a conversation. Finally, when smoking, a person might unconsciously show his or her nervousness by fidgeting with the pack or by playing with the lighter. If sitting by a table, a person can for example make different figures of the plastic wrapper and the foil surrounding the pack or just tap the cigarette pack against the table. Thus, smoking

¹³ This will be further analysed in the discussion of non-verbal communication associated with smoking in chapter 4.2.

includes and permits many different social practices that can convey a surprising number of different social meanings.

3.4. SOCIAL SPATIALITY

Smokers' space is now often limited by the law that defines separate areas for smokers and non-smokers. This clearly emphasises the categorisation of people by their smoking status, making it sometimes difficult for smokers and non-smokers to interact in public places. The laws restricting smoking are becoming increasingly common in Western countries, only obeying the law varies¹⁴. In any case, the law seems to reflect public disapproval of smoking, limiting the access of smokers to more limited areas in public places. This is often even clearly designated by signs¹⁵. It is also worth noticing that in some countries, such as France and Italy, cigarettes can be bought only in specific tobacco shops, which thus again emphasises the different social spatiality of smokers and non-smokers. Law regulations presently therefore tend to distinguish smokers from non-smokers and indicate the difference by concrete designations in spatiality.

Some traditional typical areas for smoking do still exist. For instance, smoking is often associated with pubs, bars and nightclubs. As Slovic (2001: 134-135) points out, cigarette use is often associated with relaxation and having fun, which supports the observation of increased smoking among people when they go out. Moreover, people tend to smoke more when they are waiting for something or somebody. Thus, for instance the smoking areas of airports, train stations, bus stations and student lounges are filled with people waiting for their plane, train or bus to leave or their class to start. Also smoking in the car when driving is common, particularly on long journeys, when the time is getting long. Other common places for smokers are, particularly because of increasing law regulations, outdoors areas such as parks and outside entrances of public buildings. Many people also tend to smoke on their balconies or from their windows in order to prevent the smell of smoke from infiltrating their apartments. In many rental houses, for example, smoking indoors is prohibited which obliges smokers to find alternative ways for smoking in their apartment. Smoking outdoors in more quiet places also allows people

¹⁴ See for example chapters 6, 7 and 8 for illustrations of law regulations in Italy, Finland and the United States.

¹⁵ See chapter 4.3 for an analysis of sign systems.

to concentrate on discussion, since it is more peaceful and neutral ground for deeper discussions. This might be also why many smokers withdraw themselves outside to have a cigarette and to make a phone call at the same time. Moreover, some individuals have personal patterns of relaxing with a cigarette in a quiet place, such as in a bathtub or in a garden. All in all, smoking tends to be limited to certain areas even without law regulations.

3.5. SOCIAL TEMPORALITY

Smokers have been a visible part of society throughout the history of tobacco. When tobacco was first carried from the New World to Europe, it was considered to be a cure for certain illnesses. Naturally slavery has also left its marks on the early history of tobacco, making the association between tobacco and slavery relatively common still today. The bad effect on smokers' health was soon discovered and smoking became a disapproved habit though a great deal of the population had already taken up smoking and thought it to be a pleasure more than an unhealthy habit. (Slovic 2001: 29-30.)

Advertising has played an important role in the evolution of the image of smokers. By the early 20th century smoking had become an indicator of degenerate behaviour for all those who disapproved of cigarette use, whereas for smokers it represented a way of exciting life, promoted by advertisements of seductive smoking men offering attractive women cigarettes. The prohibition of cigarette advertisements started becoming more and more common in the 1960s, though even to this day, people still have strong images of "Marlboro men" and other symbols and favourable images of cigarette brands. Even as advertising was banned, the film, music and show-business industries continued to promote cigarette use in their own way. Many glamorous film stars had smoking as their "trademark", whereas for rock musicians smoking was considered an essential activity, indicating the true "sex, drugs & rock 'n' roll" mentality. Even at the end of the 20th century, images of glamorous women wearing fur coats and tough guys smoking a cigarette still persist among young adolescents. (Slovic 2001: 29-30.)

Nonetheless, even though smoking continues in most areas to reflect wealth, power, status, popularity, sexiness and "coolness", negative images of marginalised smokers, for example those in slums, have become more and more dominant, as Lloyd et al.

(1998: 117, 120) point out. Indeed, at the beginning of the 21st century healthy habits are taking more ground and smoking is increasingly seen as a negative activity. Medical and technological advances have contributed to this image and have helped people to quit through the increased means available for substituting cigarettes. Thus, it seems that in this healthy era smoking is becoming more and more disapproved and is not anymore provided by a similar appeal as before.

With regard to individual smokers and their temporal agendas, there are many similarities, but also personal tendencies in the timing of cigarette use. Smoking is easily integrated into everyday routines. Smoking can be associated, first of all, with certain times. In effect, smokers tend to have a cigarette in the morning, during the breaks at work or school and at night, particularly when going out and just before going to bed. Moreover, cigarette use can be associated with certain activities and feelings. For instance, it is typical to have a cigarette after meals or with coffee as well as after some pleasant experiences, such as sex or a concert, or after unpleasant and stressful experiences, e.g. meetings and exams.

Though there exist many typical times during the day to smoke, many smokers have individual agendas for smoking, in other words their own rhythm of smoking related to certain types of situations or times. Some people need a smoke when they are sad, whereas others will have it when they are extremely happy; some need a cigarette for better concentrating, whereas for others smoking is distracting. What is also interesting is that smokers do pay attention to their smoking rhythm, sometimes explicitly expressing the need for a smoke after a good meal, for instance. Also frequent but often unconscious counting of cigarette consumption indicates smokers' need to regulate their smoking. Thus, no generalisations can be made with regard to smokers' rhythm, but some tendencies can be indicated.

4. Language Culture of Smoking

Language, in its many forms, is a key element in defining the boundaries and limitations of a culture. Dictionary.com (2005) defines language as “communication of thoughts and feelings through a system...of signs, symbols, gestures, or rules used in communicating...by a nation, people, or other distinct community...”. In other words, language is described as a means of communicating, either through verbal or non-verbal communication, between the members of a social actor such as smokers. According to Stockinger (2005), the patterns, rules, terminology and socio-linguistic competences of a language create a *language culture*. Smokers have a unique language culture, one that is evident in the way smokers communicate verbally and non-verbally as well as through a specific system of signs and symbols.

4.1. THE VERBAL LANGUAGE OF SMOKING

Smoking, as mentioned before, is an international phenomenon. It is present in almost all forms of society whether developed or emergent and continues to be a highly popular activity despite the increasing awareness of the associated health hazards. As such, the language culture that has formed around smoking is relatively universal. However, certain elements vary according to specific cultures and spoken languages¹⁶. One word representative of this social actor is *tobacco*. The word tobacco translated into other languages often has a similar sound; hence it is easy to understand among smokers across cultures¹⁷. For example, in Italian the word becomes *tobacco* and in French, it is *tabac*. Even in languages without latin roots it is often similar, for example in Dutch it is *tabak*, in Polish *tabakony* and in Finnish *tupakka*. Similarly, the act of smoking itself, *to smoke*, has similar sounding translations: for instance, in French it is *fumer* and in Italian *fumare*. In German and Dutch the word has a different structure and sound but it is close to each other in its translation as *rauchen* and *roken* respectively.

Smoking is also defined by another set of verbal words and expressions, most of which are different forms of slang. For example, cigarettes are often referred to as *fags*, *ciggs*, *butts* and even, in a sort of denied acknowledgement of the health risks, *cancer sticks*.

¹⁶ For purposes of this discussion, we will use English as the basis for language analysis.

¹⁷ See Part 5 for a discussion about the intercultural dimension of smoking.

These terms can vary largely based on the location, and naturally, if they are spoken in a different language. In New York City for example, they may refer to a cigarette as a *bogey* or *dart* and in Australia they are sometimes called *durries*. However, the term *fag* as mentioned above is not used in the United States where this is considered a derogatory term for a male homosexual¹⁸. Certain expressions unique to smoking are used as well, for instance, in asking for a cigarette from someone else, one might say *can I bum a fag?* One would have to know what a fag is to even begin to understand this sentence, and then, also be familiar with the use of the slang term *bum* which implies *can I have*. Another common expression is *do you have a light*, which is basically asking if you have matches or a lighter. Though the latter is perhaps easier to understand, if you are not privy to the smoking world or language, you might be caught off guard when someone asks you these questions on the street.

Aside from words and expressions, there also tends to be a commonality in the kinds of conversations and topics that are discussed. Conversations tend to be more informal and casual among smokers even if it is the first time meeting the other person. Smoking creates a kind of bond among people and breaks down any formal barriers that may have existed otherwise. This affects the kind of topics discussed. For instance, often the conversation will turn to relationship matters or other personal affairs not normally talked about with strangers. On the other hand, smokers tend to talk about subjects relevant to their situation at present. In this sense, the smokers' space and temporality (as we have seen above) are determining factors in what kinds of topics are talked about. For example, the conversation may be about the class they are breaking from or turn into a brainstorming session about a current project at work. Overall, the kinds of conversation that take place between two smoking strangers, classmates or colleagues can be dramatically different from that had between two non-smokers.

¹⁸ Most of these terms are taken from the authors' combined knowledge of smoking, however some were also found on www.wikipedia.org (see bibliography for full reference)

4.2. THE UNSPOKEN LANGUAGE OF SMOKING

While it may seem that communication is achieved through spoken words and expression, in fact, it has generally been argued that almost 80% of communication is non-verbal. In other words, gestures, appearance, smell, eye contact and how closely people stand together are just a few ways in which a message can be communicated without using words. Smokers have perfected the art of non-verbal communication and use it whether knowingly or not to identify and communicate with other members of this social actor. This is evident from the very beginning of the smoking process when someone asks another for a cigarette by bringing their hand back and forth to their mouth holding an imaginary cigarette. Likewise, if two smoking friends decide they want to go have a cigarette, they may signal to each other by clicking or nodding the head towards the door as if to say *Let's go smoke*. Similarly, if someone is in need of a light, they may simply act as if they were holding a lighter and light it in midair questioningly while looking at another. This is particularly the case when smokers try to communicate with one another while not speaking the same language. Often these gestures are used in conjunction with verbal language – almost as if by showing the gesture it becomes a password into a kind of secret society of smoking and that person is more included. On the other hand, it could simply be so as to get their message across faster depending on the need or desire to smoke.

Smokers smoke for various reasons, most because of an addiction to the nicotine or for social reasons. Non-verbal communication is a revealing way of identifying who *needs* the smoke and who *wants* the smoke. For instance, according to Pease (2004: 266-267), addicted smokers tend to take longer, slower puffs of the cigarette and often smoke by themselves whereas social smokers take shorter, quicker puffs and are seen smoking in groups. The act of puffing or blowing smoke also conveys certain messages. Blowing circles or other figures is a classic example. In fact, there are websites devoted entirely to “cool ways to smoke” which describe methods such as French Inhaling, Shot Gunning, Zippo Trick and Smoke Bubbles¹⁹. Aside from making a person look cool, the way one smokes can also signify how one feels about themselves or the current situation. Pease (2004:270) points out that blowing the smoke upward, for example (see image below), shows approval or superiority whereas blowing it downward implies a negative attitude

¹⁹ See for instance <http://www.smokingsection.com/tricks.html> for full explanations of each method.



or “secretive or suspicious frame of mind”. On the other hand, by blowing smoke towards or away from a person the smoker might show consideration or lack of it. Most places consider it rude to blow smoke in someone’s face and, yet, Pease (2004: 269) notes that in Syria it is actually seen as a sexual advance if it is blown towards a woman. In any case, the eye contact when blowing the smoke is often associated with personal interest towards the other person or other important message depending on the context.

The speed at which one smokes varies but is very revealing about a person’s personality or mood. Pease (2004: 270) points out that, similar to when the smoke is blown upward, the faster one smokes the more positive they are feeling whereas the opposite is true when one smokes slower or in a downward direction. At the same time, smokers tend to associate quick smoking with a person with a great deal of temper or with a person in a hurry, whereas slow smoking is a sign of enjoying the cigarette and giving full attention to the process, i.e. the cigarette itself and perhaps the company. The overall impression given by the speed of smoking is often emphasized by how they are standing and their overall appearance. To Ralph Harris, for example, author of *Murder a Cigarette*, “...a young woman furtively drawing on a cigarette in the doorway of her office...has the look of a woman who has just strangled her pet cat in a fit of rage and feels thoroughly ashamed of herself” (1998: vii).

The physical appearance of smokers vary depending on how they blow smoke, as we have seen above, how they hold their cigarette and how they finish it. In general, women and men use different gestures when they smoke. For instance, Pease (2004: 268) notes that most women smoke holding the cigarette up with their wrist facing out keeping an open stance. Men, on the other hand, tend to hold their cigarette across their body just below their chest in a more closed and defensive stance. Additionally, women often hold the cigarette as more of an accessory item whereas the men tend to take on a “tough guy” image. Furthermore, when they have finished smoking their cigarette, women are more likely to slowly stub the cigarette out while men crush it with their thumb or foot. Pease (2004: 272) points out that if a person extinguishes their cigarette before they have finished, this often signifies they no longer want to take part in the conversation. These kinds of smoking gestures often indicate a person’s personality and/or their intentions. Moreover, smoking gestures such as frequently tapping or flicking can indicate the

mental or physical state of the person smoking, such as stress or nervousness (see for instance Pease, 2004: 268).

The distance at which one stands from the other person, or proxemics, can also say a lot about that person. For instance, if they are close, they may be lonely and looking for a feeling of connectedness or perhaps just extraverted and want to talk with the other person. If they are standing further away or with their back turned, however, they may be introverted and not as open to conversation or perhaps angry, sad or focused on something else. Nonetheless, it is also worth noticing that standing away from non-smokers when smoking shows consideration, as non-smokers are likely not to appreciate being subject to smoke. Thus, the distance can be a clear social indicator to other smokers as well as to non-smokers.

Those who are likely to stand close to one another are also the people who are more likely to share their cigarettes or offer a light to newcomers. There are in fact different ways of offering a cigarette to someone that are also demonstrative of a person's personality. If asked for a cigarette and the person opens the pack and holds it out for the person asking, for example, this usually means that the person does not mind sharing. Conversely, if they give the whole pack to the person asking, they are not as willing to offer or share their cigarettes (they are after all expensive), but, as a fellow smoker and member of the same social actor, it is their duty to share – and also good karma for them as some day it may be them on the other end asking to have a cigarette.

This unspoken language of smoking therefore is an important element in the social ritual of smoking. It is not only effective in communicating messages or indicating a person's personality, but it can also indicate the status of a person, both in general and within the "smoking group". Most status barriers, however, are broken down among smokers through the bonding that occurs in knowing the language culture of this community. In fact, most smokers are on equal terms with one another. They share similar experiences such as stepping outside into the cold to have a cigarette or, nowadays, they form a group and perform an activity that many are opposed to. These experiences, in addition to the unspoken language and subconscious understanding of those gestures that they are specifically attune to, create a bond and group identity that they can relate to.

4.3. SIGN SYSTEM OF SMOKING²⁰



In any discussion about the *sign system* of smoking, one cannot avoid thinking of the universal sign used to prohibit smoking (see image on the left). This is indeed a sign, more specifically, a regulative sign, but there are many others that comprise the language culture of smoking. Signs are non-verbal units of expression and can be differentiated as symbols, indexes, icons etc. According to Stockinger (2004), sign systems are used, preserved and learned by people that have common interests, in this case, smokers. They define a territory, reinforce the identity of the members of a social actor and preserve the social practices. In the case of smoking, they are also used to send warnings about the known dangers of smoking, as we will see. In this brief semiotic analysis, we will see the signs and symbols that convey specific messages to smokers and non-smokers alike and what they represent.

The universally recognised sign for *no smoking* is one of the most recognised signs in the world. Despite the language or cultural differences, the message is clearly conveyed. There exist variations on the above of course, some more interesting and effective than others. Often the sign will vary depending on whether smoking is prohibited in one specific area or in the whole place. In this case it may define, for example, the area in which smoking is allowed by saying where you cannot smoke (see image on the to left)²¹.



It may also vary depending on the individuals it is directed towards and in what context. For example, the instructions can be more informal and even humorous if used in a personal or informal setting such as around colleagues and people you know, but the point is still made (see image on the left). Similarly, often people find playful ways of getting their point across (see image on the right). For instance, the sign gets the point across in two ways: leave your *butt* outside, as in do not enter if you smoke and certainly, leave



²⁰ Signs and symbols fall under the same category as non-verbal communication, however we will deal with the subject separately here.

²¹ This is a sign common in Australia taken from www.aha-nsw.asn.au/main.php. See image bibliography for all other sign references and sources.

your *butt* outside, meaning do not bring in your cigarette (*butt* being a slang term for cigarette). Some signs have even been picked up on this new smoking culture trend created as a result of the recent laws being implemented that restrict smoking rights. One sign in Dublin for instance, where smoking in the pubs has been banned, comments on the friends and connections one can make through smoking – as long as it is done outside (see image on the right).



The signs vary also in the level of politeness they use, often characteristic of the culture it is in to begin with. For instance, British are often thought of as very polite people. In other words, they tend to use negative politeness strategy and put things indirectly. In a Starbucks coffee shop in Cambridge, they used the following words to emphasize that smoking was not allowed: *To protect the quality of our coffee, we kindly ask you to please not smoke.* In other cultures, like Italy for instance, a high context culture frequently using positive politeness strategies, the signs are much more direct and forceful where they *prohibit* you from smoking. Ironically, Italians are more likely than most people to ignore the signs completely²². In Ireland, on the other hand, the prohibition of smoking in the pubs is often emphasised by using the word *illegal*, frequently even underlined. Thus, the phrasing of the signs are often reflective of the current status of smoking in that particular culture and how responsive people are to rule of law in general, specifically the laws that restrict smoking.



Another element of the sign system of smoking is the cigarette packs themselves. It is worth noticing that cigarette packs vary in size, colour, style and image use (see image below) as determined by the individual brands. As marketing techniques changed over the years and the popularity of smoking increased, the packs changed as well. Each cigarette brand has a logo or colour that people can easily recognise. Some have become more recognizable than others, such as the red and white pack of Marlboro and the logo of the camel in the desert on Camel packs, and some are associated with particular countries, such as Lucky Strikes are definitely American and Gitanes are extremely popular in France. The amount of recognition is often parallel to the amount of advertising each company did and to what extent worldwide. Many of the marketing

²² For more discussion about the smoking culture in Italy, see part 6.

campaigns were so successful that certain images come to mind upon hearing the name of the pack. For instance, the Marlboro man (as we have already seen in chapter 3.2) and the perception created that if one smokes Marlboro cigarettes, one will be a good looking tough masculine man as well. Nowadays, most cigarette companies only have these perceptions to go on to sell their cigarettes, as in most countries, advertising and marketing of tobacco have been banned²³.

In fact, the reliability on the pack itself by cigarette companies to sell the product is being threatened since most packs now come with large printed text on both sides with warnings about the health hazards of smoking. These are so prevalent that they too can be considered part of the sign system of smoking. Most people are aware, though many still smoke, of the effects smoking can have on a person. In an effort to decrease the number of people smoking not only for their own health but also for the health of others as a result of ‘second-hand smoke’, governments are imposing these labels on all cigarette brands. The text varies from country to country and, yet, similarly to the signs prohibiting smoking, the point is clearly conveyed. For instance, packs in the United States may have the following text: *Surgeon General’s Warning: Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health*, whereas in the United Kingdom, packs will be as blunt as to say: *Smoking Kills* or *Smoking can cause a slow and painful death*. Italy tends to portray similar messages to that of the UK (see image at right). Canada, considered the world’s leader in tobacco control, seems to have the strongest and most poignant campaign against smoking in the label warnings they produce with text such as: *Cigarettes may cause sexual impotence due to decreased blood flow to the penis. This can prevent you from having an erection* and more recently, graphic images of diseased lungs and mouths caused from smoking²⁴.



Cigarette pack labels, company brand logos and the warning texts, are just one element of the sign system of smoking. The latter could be discussed as a sort of an “other” language culture of smoking. Used by smokers and non-smokers alike, there are words

²³ See parts 6-8 for instance for a discussion about the smoking laws in Italy, Finland and the U.S.

²⁴ It is interesting to note in fact, that from October to January 2006, Canadian tobacco health warnings are to become an exhibit at the New York Museum of Modern Art. See <http://www.tobacco.org/news/207537.html> for article and information as well as link to some images of those labels.

and expressions related to this social act, but actually, opposed to its existence. The anti-smoking campaign is growing in strength as governments realise the real health consequences of smoking and implement new laws and legislation against it. As such, a new language has been created and is transmitted through anti-smoking advertising campaigns on television, billboards, newspapers and websites. Some anti-smoking campaigns are cleverly using the recognised and traditional symbols associated with smoking and the tough guy image such as Marlboro man to deliver a strong message (see image above). Terms and expressions such as *second-hand smoke*, *quit now*, *give up smoking*, *smoking kills*, *don't quit alone* etc... are now part of the smoking language culture verbally, non-verbally and specifically through the use of signs and symbols.



4.4. DIGLOSSIA IN SMOKING

According to Ferguson (1959), a diglossic speech community is one where there exist two kinds of language often categorised by high prestige (H) and low prestige (L). The high variety is often used in formal or legal writings whereas the Low variety is present in more informal and “unofficial” contexts such as in everyday language use. The combination of the two varieties, each unable to truly exist without the other, creates a bilingual atmosphere that Ferguson (1959) referred to as *diglossia*. This diglossia is indeed present in the smoking culture, as there is a definite presence of both the High and Low varieties of language.

It could be argued that smoking actually started out as a High variety. Most of those who smoked were of upper class origin and, thus, the language that was created around this smoking environment belonged to that class. Slowly, however, smoking increased in popularity and soon people of all classes were using tobacco and a new language was created, that of the Low variety. The Low variety of smoking is quite evident in the words and expressions unique to it as described above, such as the slang terminology and brand names and references. It can also be seen in the recent warning labels on cigarette packs where the language is quite direct and informal to

catch the attention of the smoker. Additionally, the anti-smoking and quit smoking campaigns use a similar Low variety of language so as to communicate more effectively with the population at large, particularly smokers, addressing people in their own language register.

On the other hand, the language originally used on the cigarette pack warnings was High variety. For instance, on the packs in the U.S., there is a formal warning from the Surgeon General about the risks of smoking. Additionally, the more formal deliberations and debates about smoking risks and restrictions, in both verbal and written forms, are of the High variety. This includes the medical and science articles written about smoking as well as actual law specifying restrictions and limitations. Hence, there does exist a diglossic schema in the smoking culture. The languages that compose it are key elements in defining the semiosphere and culture of this social actor. Knowing the Low and High variety of the languages present in the smoking culture, in other words having sociolinguistic competence in this particular field, is an even more important skill for members of the smoking culture to have so as to continue to belong to the group and also preserve and continue it.

5. The Intercultural Dimension of Smoking

This section will present smoking from an intercultural perspective. Even though no globally viable statistics exist, some cross-cultural tendencies in smoking can be indicated, both in terms of national stereotypes and in terms of regional characteristics. On the other hand, if smoking is seen as a culture, also the contrast between smokers and non-smokers can be approached from a cross-cultural perspective. Finally, global legislation merits some attention, since national legislations reflect the social status of smokers and the attitudes towards smokers.

5.1. TYPICAL STEREOTYPES AND GENERAL CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISONS

Some general stereotypes of smokers were introduced in chapter 3.1, but also some national stereotyping does exist. For instance, Central and Southern European are often seen as big smokers, the French and the Italians in the front. Not long ago one could see even Mediterranean shopkeepers smoke inside their cloth stores and grocer's stores. Also Middle Eastern and Asian populations are associated with smoking. Images of these areas contain a great deal of tobacco use, usually connected with more variable forms of tobacco than solely cigarettes. For instance, even in Western internet cafes run by Arabs one can see men smoking with the Arabic pipe. On the other hand, the association of smoking with low economic status also reinforces the image of the "smoking developing countries" such as those in Latin America, the origin of tobacco. It is also worth noticing that for Asian and Middle Eastern cultures the Western woman is probably still strongly associated with smoking, cigarettes seen as representing emancipation of women. By contrast, also the trend towards non-smoking has produced some new stereotypes. For instance, Nordic countries and North America seem to represent the healthy lifestyle, which thus implies low rates in cigarette consumption and strict politics in anti-smoking campaigning. Thus, overall, people seem to have stereotypes about smokers, sometimes reinforced by media, sometimes by the cultural diversification of the world.

Some general statistics on smoking at a global level have been introduced and, indeed, these statistics seem to support the common stereotypes. The proportion of smokers in the country and the development of the percentage of smokers have been the factors

that have mostly been observed, whereas smokers' backgrounds are more difficult to categorise globally. For example, according to the American Lung Association (2004), tobacco use rates in recent years have been in decline in many North American and Western European countries, whereas as in many others, especially in Asia, tobacco use has indeed been increasing. American Lung Association (2004) further points out that, in fact, over 25 percent of the world's smokers are Chinese, with over 300 million Chinese men smoking, this being equal to the entire U.S. population. Thus, the contrast between the West and the East in smoking trends seems to be constantly growing. These findings are supported by the studies conducted by the World Health Organisation: the World Health Organization (2002) draws attention to the fact that one in three cigarettes is consumed in the Western Pacific Region. Interestingly, according to the World Health Organization (2002), despite the extremely high consumption rates in this region, the tobacco market is controlled by a few corporations, which are namely American, British and Japanese. This leads to quite an unfair distribution of consequences of smoking, i.e. economic benefits and health problems: most of the economic benefits go to the West and developed countries, whereas the economic situation in developing countries is heavily burdened by health problems caused by tobacco use.

Nonetheless, even though the extent of tobacco use seems to vary from a continent to another and from a country to another to some extent, the act of smoking seems to represent similar things to smokers. Social factors play an extremely important role in this, as has been demonstrated above. Indeed, for example Lloyd et al. (1998, 72) point out that effects of peers on adolescent smoking behaviour have been demonstrated in various cultural settings, such as among Black and White Americans, Norwegians, New Zealanders, Jamaicans and Brits. Thus, the smoking culture can be seen as a trans-national culture that extends through all nations, nonetheless to a varying extent.

5.2. SMOKERS VS. NON-SMOKERS

If smokers can be seen to represent the culture of smoking, their culture can be opposed to non-smokers' culture. Indeed, characterisations and distinctions of and between of these groups are clear, as pointed out before. At the moment, as anti-smoking campaigning is obtaining more and more visibility at least in the Western media, the situation has become even more clear-cut. Smokers are forced to retrieve

to the particular areas designated for them or even to somewhat “shamefully” go outside to have their cigarette. In effect, in this situation, both smokers and non-smokers have become victims, as Crumley (2003) points out. Passive smoking is a medically proved physical threat to non-smokers, whereas the exclusion of smokers from public places when smoking can be seen as a social threat: smokers’ freedom to practice their enjoyable activity is reduced or even entirely diminished. Crumley (2003) notes that this has caused “smoking wars” all over Europe, referring for example to a Parisian restaurants that posts a defiant message “nonsmokers tolerated” on their door. Similarly, he relates a story from a London restaurant where smoking is seen to enhance the enjoyment of the meal. Thus, the growing anti-smoking campaigning has created an atmosphere of total confrontation of smokers and non-smokers.

This feeling of total confrontation of the two groups may become more important in young adulthood, when issues of identity are being processed. Indeed, adolescents pay a great amount of attention to the smoking status of each other, which creates strong categorisations. Lloyd et al. (1998, 76, 117-118) point out that, in their data of British adolescents, non-smokers described smokers as *active, predatory* and *demanding conformity to their smoking* as well as having *low self-esteem* and being *stupid* and *not doing well at school*. Furthermore, many remarks were made related to certain ‘toughness’ in a smoker (p. 117). Generally smoking was also identified with business world, sociability, fun-lovingness, sophistication and glamour on one hand and, on the other, with working class and the unemployed as well as marginalised groups such as *drop outs, rebels* and *homeless* (pp. 118-119). On the other hand, smokers in Lloyd et al.’s study (1998, 133) perceived themselves as having a more negative identity, but being less conforming and more fun-loving than non-smokers. They also portrayed themselves as being more likely to break rules, like partying and be popular (p. 143). All in all, smoking status is a strongly categorising factor in terms of image and identity-forming, as it seems to produce an intuitive sense of in- and out-group among people, creating a feeling of social addiction to smoking in case of smokers.

5.3. SMOKING AND GLOBAL LEGISLATION

Laws prohibiting smoking are becoming increasingly popular worldwide, as governments struggle against the risk effects of smoking. Strict legislations and their effects on society as well as directly on the social actor of smokers, naturally, are diffused all around the world with media. Most of this development has been positive, both in terms of results and attitudes of the majority of the population. Thus, more and more countries follow the example of the pioneering countries in the anti-smoking policies.

The smoking culture in Europe is gradually changing but it is taking time, despite the fact that “all of Europe is enveloped by a nicotine cloud that causes more death and disease each year than Chernobyl”, as Crumley (2003) expresses it. According to BBC Online (2004), the smoking in Europe kills approximately 500,000 people a year – 10% of that resulting from second hand smoke. Laws and other measures to cut smoking levels are slowly creeping into different European countries. For instance, according to BBC Online (2004), in France, famous for its smoking culture, the government raised the price of cigarettes by 20% in an effort to dissuade people from buying them and therefore smoking them. In Ireland, famous for its pub culture which would not be the same without the massive cloud of smoke lingering in the air all hours of the day, has taken a huge progressive step and recently banned smoking in pubs, restaurants and other enclosed workplaces. (BBC Online 2004.)

In Montenegro, the European country with one of the highest rates of smoking in Europe (approximately 40%), smoking was banned in public places and in advertising in 2005, as BBC Online (2004) points out. Meanwhile, BBC Online (2004) reports that the Netherlands which has approximately 16 million smokers (about 30% of the total population), has also banned smoking in many public places and soon plans to impose those restrictions on restaurants, bars and hotels. The United Kingdom has also taken strict measures against smoking and has banned it in most enclosed places. The UK however is home to some of the liveliest debates in Europe about smoking laws and seems to be making slower progress than most of the other European countries. Crumley (2003) refers to Europe’s state in the struggle against smoking as following: “Laws can never completely stamp out smoking, of course, because Europe's craving for cigarettes goes so deep — tapping into impulses that are political

as much as physical or cultural”. Efforts are being made however, as we have seen above, to “stamp out smoking” and the European Union is also taking steps towards implementing certain restrictions.

While tobacco advertising on television has been banned in Europe since the early 1990s, it was only recently that a new law initiative was introduced that restricted the other avenues of advertising. In July of 2003, the European Union introduced a *Tobacco Advertising Directive* with a cross-border dimension that restricts advertising tobacco products on the radio and Internet, as well as in sponsorships and cross-cultural sporting and cultural events. Unfortunately this recent Directive does not have as large of an effect as one would anticipate as advertising in cinemas, on billboards and café parasols for example are still not included in the Directive and there are many other loopholes that one can go through to still get their marketing tactics across.²⁵

Elsewhere in the world, smoking laws have already been implemented or are in the process of being introduced. Canada for instance, has banned smoking in workplaces and most public places and has an intense anti-smoking campaign, which is manifested in the labels placed on cigarette packs showing graphic images of damaged lungs and diseased mouths and so forth. According to BBC Online (2004), such efforts are certainly making a difference as Canada now claims to have some of the lowest smoking rates in the world with only 21% of Canadians smoking. In Australia and Iran, smoking has been banned in most public places and India has placed stricter laws on the sale of tobacco to minors. Bhutan can perhaps be considered the most revolutionary in its efforts to curb smoking as it has introduced a total ban on tobacco sales in an effort to become a smoke-free nation. No businesses are allowed to sell tobacco anymore and even foreigners who try to sell it are fined, as BBC Online (2004) points out.

All in all, it seems that law regulations banning smoking in Europe are becoming more and more common and, at the same time, more and more efficient. This trend also gets a great deal of media coverage. At the same time, also some Asian countries and North America are becoming increasingly smoke-free, at least if considering the law regulations.

²⁵ See

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1013&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

Nonetheless, it is most of all the mental images that also need to be influenced by these changing attitudes.

6. Smoking in Italy

Italy has somewhat strict politics against smoking in public places. The basic Italian law prohibiting smoking is Law 11 November 1975 n.584²⁶. This law introduced no smoking in schools, hospitals, public entertainment and on public transportation. After that, according to CODACONS (2005), the law was widened in 1995 to also apply to all premises opened to the public, pertaining to Public Administration and the private shopkeepers in public service. All such agencies are now required to put notices of these law regulations in their premises. This change and new wording of the law was important, since before the premises in question were defined as "*premises in which a public meeting is carried out*", which is considerably less restrictive. Furthermore, non-smokers are now even more protected from passive smoking, as the Financial Law 2002 determines even higher fines to premises not applying the regulations²⁷. Thus, the law in Italy protects today rather well the non-smokers, as more restrictions on smokers and premises allowing smoking are established.

There still remains, however, a somewhat controversial point: is the prohibition of smoke also applicable to bars and restaurants? With regard to this, sentence of Constitutional Court n. 399 of 11 Decembers 1996 is of particular importance. This deals with the preventive protection of people in the work places, making efforts to either eliminate or reduce the health risks caused by smoking to the extent that their work environment does not put their health at risk. In light of such sentence, and also in virtue of a decision from the Directive of the Prime Minister of the Ministers of 1995 that said the application of the law has increased the prohibition of smoking, there is now no smoking in bars and restaurants.

The conflict between the smokers' personality and the non-smokers' want to avoid passive smoking is evident in Italy. Thus, the same victimization of both parties, referred to in chapter 5.1, is evident in Italy as well. In fact, in Italy, in the conquest of the world

²⁶ See CODACONS 2005 (<http://www.iss.it/sitp/ofad/Fumo/legi.html>) for more information.

²⁷ See CODACONS 2005 for more information.

by tobacco, the main allies often are the people who say “no smoking” in words but not in action. These ambiguous relationships continue to exist: according to DOXA (2003), for instance, the Italian Post created a stamp in 1982 against smoking and, yet, the mark they used is identical to the mark in the State monopoly cigarette shops. The jurisprudence has tried to bring a solution to the conflict between smokers and non-smokers, arriving at two pronouncements from the Constitutional Court, in consideration of *neminem ledere*. It has recognized, openly and for the first time, the principle of subordination of the freedom to smoke to the right to health of the third parties²⁸. In both the occasions, the Constitutional Court has asserted that only the right to health is constitutionally protected, while freedom to smoke is not regarded as a freedom of “behaviour”.

Italy, in terms of cigarette consumption, seems to represent the average among the countries of the European Union. To understand briefly how the tobacco market in Italy has developed, we will use 1962 as a reference year when tobacco advertising was prohibited²⁹.

- 1962: 55.8 billions of cigarettes
- 1985: the market doubles, is 105.3 billions of cigarettes
- 1986-1992: radical change of direction
- 1992: 88.2 billions of cigarettes
- 1996: light increase (approximately 90 billions of cigarettes)

According to Fumo.it (2005), between 1985 and 1995, the annual consumption for individuals diminished from 2470 to 1607 cigarettes. Yet, the change was only apparent. In fact, in Italy more than in the many other countries, the phenomenon of contraband is flourishing. Kataweb (2005) points out that between 1983 and 1993, the smuggled sales increased by 800%, up to 13% of the entire market.

Cigarettes in advertisement have been prohibited for a long time already in Italy. According to Fumo.it (2005), the first law in Italy about regulating publicity for cigarettes was in 1962: Law 165 prohibits all publicity of tobacco products on printed paper, in sport meetings, TV, T-shirts or other clothes. Even despite this law, tobacco is still a legal state monopoly in Italy. In this context, advertising is not regarded necessary,

²⁸ See article 32 of the Constitution and Article 2043 of the Civil code. (Sent. n.202/1991 and n.399/96), see CODACONS 2005.

²⁹ See <http://www.fumo.it/fumatore/focus/pubblicita/#1> for more details.

as Fumo.it (2005) points out. The law was again changed in 1991³⁰. The new law prohibited television advertising of cigarettes and all other tobacco products, even if carried out in indirect ways by means of names, marks or symbols of companies and manufacturers. But what has really happened? Often the symbols or marks of tobacco are associated with “neutral” products such as clothing. Equally frequently tobacco companies sponsor sport meetings that get press coverage. For instance, Formula One, where the Italian Ferrari has taken advantage for years of the sponsorship of a famous marks of tobaccos. The Italian Law against smoking has indeed progressed over the years: tobacco marks must be covered or replaced on occasion of the more important races. However, the Grand Prix is a world-wide recognized and watched race and the countries that host it do not always have the same legislative restrictions. Therefore, in these instances tobacco advertising is present and visible on television screens in Italy³¹.

Italian legislation has an increasing effect on the Italian public and the smoking statistics. Many studies have been done on the number of smokers in general, as well as the attitudes towards the prohibition law about smoking in public premises, health warnings on the box of cigarettes and level of education and smoking. According to the DOXA study (2005), the following table is representative of the various percentages of smokers in Italy:

Year	Male	Female
1957	65%	6.2%
1975	53.2%	16.3%
2001	34.8%	23.6%
2005	29.3%	22.1%

From the table above, it is significant that Italian people’s behaviour is changing. Moreover, it is interesting to note the inverse movement between women and men. In general, the percentage of smokers since World War II is decreasing. On the other hand, of the total population of Italy, 90.4% of people are in favour of the laws prohibiting smoking in public premises. Also, 87.3% of people are convinced that this prohibition is respected. It could thus be said that there is a different consciousness about health now in Italy.

³⁰ Law 165 of the Ministerial Decree 425 of 1991.

³¹ See Fumo.it (2005) <http://www.fumo.it/fumatore/focus/pubblicita/#1> for more information.

With regards to how smoking is related to the level of education, the ISTAT (2005) conducted a study which examined the estimates deriving from the survey “Aspects of daily life 1999”³², done annually by ISTAT on a group of approximately 24,000 families from all over Italy. It turns out that “higher education corresponds to smaller propensity to smoking and, consequently, the children of parents with higher education also are less exposed to the risks of passive smoke”. Moreover, a survey completed by DOXA in the months of February and March of 2003, based on 3535 personal interviews to a representative group of the adult Italian population discovered that for men and women, the greater percentages of smokers have been found in individuals with level of advanced or medium education. In fact, 34-36% of men with higher education smoke (as opposed to 24.4% for the men with less education) and 26-27% of women with higher or medium education smoke (as opposed to 12.5% of women with less education).

Altogether, Italy seems to be adopting more and more anti-smoking policies over the years, which also reflects the attitudes of Italians. Indeed, pavement-smoking is becoming a distinctive characteristic of Italian cities particularly in the night-time.

7. Smoking in Finland

Smoking has been extremely popular in Finland, for which many law regulations have been established. According to the Finnish ASH² (2005), in the 1920s Finnish men smoked more than any population group in the world, whereas during the last 30 years smoking rates have drastically decreased, overall smoking in Finland being at the moment the lowest in Europe. Thus, it seems that smoking regulation policies have been effective in Finland. Nonetheless, even until the 1960s smoking regulation was mainly concentrated on adding tax income and on securing production and marketing of tobacco, as Finnish ASH⁴ (2005) points out. Finnish ASH³ (2005) notes that it was only the 1977 Tobacco Act that marked a change of perspective of the government: it introduced compulsory health warnings on tobacco packages, prohibited all forms of tobacco advertising, set upper limits on harmful substances in tobacco, prohibited smoking at schools, on public transport and in most public indoor venues. Thus, at once, health issues were brought into tobacco legislation on a massive scale. According to Finnish ASH³ (2005), the law was extended in 1995 to limit workplace smoking, raise

³² See <http://www.windoweb.it/dossier/fumo/fumo.htm>

the buying age from 16 to 18, stop sales of smokeless tobacco and stop modern forms of sales promotion of tobacco. Smoking on school playgrounds was also banned. The law was altered once more in 2000. The new amendments required the establishment of smoke-free areas in bars and restaurants by 2003 and a ban on smoking at bar service counters. Moreover, environmental tobacco smoke was classified as a carcinogen substance in 2000.

It is also worth noticing that a Finnish plaintiff, Pentti Aho, brought up the first case of litigation against tobacco companies in Europe. It came to court in 1988 and lasted until 2001, after the plaintiff had died. The case was dismissed in City Court, in the Court of Appeals and in the Supreme Court. Thus, even if the Finnish government has been sending clear signals on the dangers of tobacco use since 1977; for instance, by banning advertisement of tobacco, the justice sees the consumer as the main responsible for the health problems caused by smoking. What also needs to be emphasised is that the Finnish law regulation is extremely well obeyed, as a majority of shopkeepers, clerks and other personnel selling tobacco products do check the age of a young person buying the product. Furthermore, they are obliged to make a concrete plan for preventing selling these products to under-aged people and to observe the realisation of the plan. All in all, by the 21st century, smoking has become a highly limited activity in Finland, clearly distinguishing smokers from non-smokers in public spaces. (Finnish ASH² 2005.)

Tobacco use has been evolving over the years and, at the same time, the image of smokers has also been changing. Tobacco first came to Finland in the 17th century. Pipes were the most common mode of tobacco use until the end of 19th century. Snuff and cigars were also quite popular. At the end of the 19th century, the first cigarettes came to Finland from Russia. Cigarette consumption quickly increased and cigarettes became the most used tobacco product. During the Second World War, women adopted smoking habits, as they were forced to work. (Finnish ASH⁴, 2005.) With regard to the present smoking habits of Finns, Finnish ASH¹ (2005) notes that a rather drastic change has occurred, as quitting rates are currently increasing and less young people are starting to smoke at an early age. On the other hand, the proportion of female smokers has grown. Indeed, youth smoking is higher among girls than boys and, moreover, smoking rates among adult women have risen, while the number of smoking men has declined. The steady rise in smoking rates of women is attributed to the successes the tobacco

industry has had in associating smoking with independence, sophistication and emancipation. (Finnish ASH⁴ 2005.) Indeed, the trend in tobacco use actually reflects changes in women's position in society towards greater independence. In this sense, advertisement, even though now forbidden, has had an influence on the mental images of smoking in Finland and, on the other hand, Finnish women are a concrete example of a smoking, emancipated woman. Television and cinema have also promoted this image, even if the Finnish television programs and films present relatively few examples of symbolic smoking. Thus, smoking in Finland seems to reflect more or less the global tendencies, with the exception of the growing rate of smoking women.

Some distinctive characteristics of Finnish smoking culture can be pointed out. First of all, smoking can indicate social classification in Finland. Smoking remains a class problem, the poorest and less educated population section using more tobacco products, as the Finnish ASH¹ (2005) state. This follows the global pattern. What makes the class distinction more visible is the use of different tobacco products: lower classes use rolled tobacco, whereas upper classes use cigarettes or cigars. In fact, rolled tobacco is less expensive than cigarettes or cigars; this makes it natural for the working class, as well as students for that matter, to use more rolled tobacco. On the other hand, an interesting practical aspect of smoking in Finland is that Finns still smoke, despite having to go outside to do it in Finland's harsh winters. Indeed, it is relatively rare to smoke indoors even at home and, yet, smoking continues normally throughout the year. Also probably related to cold winters is the typical posture of smokers: it is typical for a person to wrap arms around himself or herself while smoking for keeping the body warm. This typical posture most likely has to do with the coldness of the weather, but, nonetheless, can be frequently seen in the summertime as well. All in all, Finns assimilate well to the global smoking culture and yet have some distinctively Finnish characteristics.

8. Smoking in the U.S.

“The cigarette is one of the most remarkably successful products of twentieth-century American life. Less than a century ago, it was an idiosyncratic and stigmatized use of tobacco. In a relatively short time, it would become phenomenally popular.” (Lock et al. 1998: 164)

Given the roots of tobacco, it is not surprising that the United States is such a large producer and consumer of cigarettes and other tobacco products. As the popularity of

tobacco increased on an international level, the capitalist and materialistic society of America took hold of the market. Through extensive advertising campaigns and a highly effective production process, cigarettes became increasingly widespread. Present in all areas of American society, the cigarette became an icon of twentieth-century American life. Representative of independence and attractiveness, cigarettes were used by people in every wake of life. The physical effects of smoking were buried under the fantasized popular culture of smoking. (Lock et al., 1998:165.)

In 1964, U.S. Surgeon General Luther Terry announced that smoking causes lung cancer. At this time, grass-roots organizations started to push for their constitutional right to not be affected by smoking despite their choice to not smoke, in other words, they wanted a smoke-free environment. The first piece of legislation towards this goal was passed in 1965 with the Federal Cigarette and Labelling and Advertising Act which required US Surgeon General's warnings on all cigarette packs³³. In 1970 television advertising was banned, followed immediately in 1971 with a ban on radio advertisements. In 1973 there was a federal restriction placed on smoking on airlines requiring the creation of non-smoking sections. This was the foundation for a series of legislation prohibiting smoking that are still debated over today.

Smoking legislation in the U.S. is slightly more complex than in other countries due to its federal system, which gives states the power of legislation on issues that have not been legislated by the national government, such as smoking. According to Locke et al. (1998: 173), California was the first state to implement any smoking regulations when it banned smoking in 1991 at Oakland Coliseum, an outdoor baseball stadium. Vermont was the first state to implement a statewide ban of smoking in indoor public places in 1993. McDonalds, one of America's largest and most recognized corporations, soon followed suit and banned smoking in its restaurants in 1994. Lock et al. (1998: 172) point out that by the mid-1990s, approximately 40 different states and many large corporations had adopted similar smoking restrictions. Though regulations vary dramatically from state to state, it can generally be said that at present, smoking has been banned, or at least restricted, in most workplaces, restaurants and bars and modes of transportation³⁴.

³³ See chapter 4.3 for different warnings and types of cigarette packs.

Despite these regulations, smoking statistics remain high. Smoking is responsible for approximately one in five deaths in the U.S. and has killed over 440,000 people each year since 1995. In 2002 it was estimated that approximately 45.8 million people (or 22.5% of adults) smoked and 376.4 billion packs of cigarettes were sold. The highest percentage of smokers are American Indians/Alaskan Natives at 40.8% and the lowest are Asians at 13.3%. Studies show that the more educated a person is, the less likely they are to smoke and moreover, men are more likely to smoke than women (25.2% and 20% respectively). The above smoking statistics are in fact lower than those of forty years ago, when for example, 640 billion packs of cigarettes were sold, almost double that which was sold in 2002. As smoking becomes less popular, tobacco companies are spending more money to encourage people to smoke and counter the anti-smoking and quit smoking campaigns.³⁵

According to the American Lung Association (2004), in 2002 tobacco companies spent the most money recorded in history on advertising with a record \$12.5 billion (as opposed to \$1.6 billion in 1981). Because of the increasing regulations on advertising and smoking, combined with the number of people quitting and associating smoking as a social taboo, tobacco companies have to be more creative in the way they get people to buy their cigarettes. The targeted audience has changed to African Americans and Hispanics, who, generally, are less educated and have less money. American Lung Association (2004) points out that tobacco companies are spending lots of money getting advertisements on billboards and in other means of communication where not restricted by law, in areas heavily populated by these groups, and have also given money to sponsor cultural or sporting events. Moreover, they target teenagers, who, despite federal law that prohibits minors from buying cigarettes, often still fall prey to the reputation smoking has of creating a “cool” image and the overall social bond that comes with it. Before they are fully able to understand the overall health consequences, they will have become addicted. In fact, American Lung Association (2004) claims that studies have shown that over 90% of smokers started smoking before the age of 21.

³⁴ See <http://www.smokefreeworld.com/usa.shtml> for a basic chart of where smoking has been regulated in each state.

³⁵ All statistics in the above paragraph were taken from a November 2004 American Lung Association report on *Trends in Tobacco Use*.

Despite their efforts, however, smoking remains a dirty, unhealthy and expensive habit. This is certainly a changed perception from how smoking was viewed half a century ago. In fact, the entire culture of smoking in the U.S. has changed significantly. Not being allowed to smoke in most public places and viewed in an extremely negative light by non-smokers (see cartoon at right that is highly representative of the current perception of smokers³⁶), smokers now seem to smoke



in private or in the close surroundings of friends or family that know them. When they do smoke among other people, it has become custom to ask first to ensure that people do not mind. Moreover, the smoking culture in America is increasingly defined by the ongoing debate between smokers and non-smokers over the ‘right to smoke’. The argument is conflicting: non-smokers argue that they have a constitutional right to a smoke-free environment while smokers argue that it is their constitutional right to freedom of choice. Moreover, some businesses, particularly bars, argue that the increased smoking restrictions hurt their business. Both arguments are epitomized by the American expression, ‘it’s a free country’. Many organizations have been formed and have created websites devoted entirely to either opposing or promoting smoking³⁷.

³⁶ Cartoon by John Fewings, see www.fewings.ca

³⁷ See chapter 5.2 for a brief discussion about smokers vs. nonsmokers.

9. Conclusive remarks

WHO (2000) estimates that the global population of smokers is 1.2 billion and that, each year, 3.5 million lives are lost to tobacco use. WHO (2000) also estimates that by 2030 annual deaths from tobacco-related diseases will have reached more than 10 million worldwide. Thus, smoking is a serious problem in today's world and merits attention. Physical addiction of smoking is evident and has been analysed for decades already. Yet, also the social factors have a significant role in the initiation of tobacco use. For this reason, this paper aims at exploring smoking as a social habit, leading to social addiction.

The image and purposes of tobacco use have been changing dramatically through history, as shown in part 2. Tobacco came from Latin America, where it was first used in ceremonial rituals and as a medicine. It was brought to Europe for medical purposes. The unhealthy effects of smoking gradually became known and, yet, cigarette use had already its place as a desirable and enjoyable consumer good. While the markets expanded and tobacco companies became international, cigarette use was promoted by the media, leading to favourable images of smokers. In the beginning of the 20th century the image of smoking is slowly degrading because of the trends supporting healthy lifestyle and because of technical and medical advances.

The social world of smokers as a social actor consists of many categories defining everyday life. These aspects were discussed in part 3. First of all, smoking provokes strong stereotypes, such as the always smoking musician, elegantly smoking film stars and the lower-class workers with a cigarette in their hand during the night-shift. Some of the stereotypes are true, while statistics show that the biggest smokers are less educated men. Smoking also creates social networks between different sub-groups of smokers, since cigarette use facilitates social networking and creates a strong bond between smokers. The habit thus easily becomes a part of the smoker's identity, leaving its marks in the social environment (e.g. an ashtray on the balcony) and introducing new social practices to a smoker (e.g. blowing circles with smoke). Smoking also limits the social environment of this social actor, as many laws are currently being established to restrict smoking areas in public places. Also other characteristics determining the social spatiality of smokers can be indicated, such as quietness of the place and the need to spend time waiting for something, for instance. Furthermore, smoking influences the social temporality of the

social actor, as smokers tend to adopt certain temporal routines in their smoking. The historical aspect also has had an effect on the social representation of smokers.

Smoking has a specific language culture. This language culture was analysed in detail in part 4. Smokers' verbal communication contains a great deal of vocabulary particular to smokers, which cannot necessarily be understood by non-smokers. On the other hand, nonverbal communication also contains a number of gestures specific to smokers. Through various ways of holding a cigarette, blowing the smoker and standing in the "smoking circle" a smoker can transmit several messages, at the same time implying different factors of one's personality. Furthermore, smoking has introduced a vast sign system not only through various types of signs prohibiting smoking, but also through different brands and symbols used by cigarette companies. In addition, labels on cigarette packs to note the risks of smoking are a form of the sign system of smoking. When considering smoking culture as a diglossia, it can be noted that the variety of the language is constantly evolving, leading to a more and more high variety in terms of sign system. All in all, with regard to the effects of the language culture on the social actor of smokers, it can be said that the bond between smokers is reinforced by the language, as smokers have a type of a secret language and coding system.

Smoking is an international phenomenon. Yet, some cross-cultural comparisons can be made, as shown in part 5. Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Asian cultures are usually associated with smoking, whereas statistics show that Asians are the biggest smokers with constantly increasing rates, whereas in the West smoking is decreasing. The developmental status of the country seems to have an influence on the smoking rates. The negative consequences of smoking are thus unequally distributed, as most of the economic benefits go to the West through cigarette companies, while the health system is heavily burdened by regular smokers in developing countries. It is also worth noticing that also the distinction between smokers and non-smokers can be seen as a cultural difference, as, indeed, both parties hold extremely strong images of each others, particularly in young adulthood. The distinction between the two distinct smoking cultures is now leading to a "smoking war" particularly in Europe, as new anti-smoking are constantly established. Indeed, law regulations have an influence on the image of smokers among the population, which is an important view point now that many countries follow the example of the pioneering countries in anti-smoking regulations.

This development was here illustrated through the examples of Italy, Finland and the United States, all representing somewhat different development of the anti-smoking attitude, eventually leading to a rather accepting and supportive reception of the law regulations. All in all, even though smoking seems to an increasing problem in Asia, new attitude towards smoking is evolving, transforming the image and perception of smokers.

Altogether, this paper proposes that smokers can be defined as a social actor, representing the smoking culture. The image of this social actor is today evolving, as new law regulations and new health trends become more and more popular. On the other hand, smokers are facing a need to redefine their lifeworld, as laws restrict their habits. As smokers are pushed on the streets by the law, the beginning of the 21st century is becoming an arena of a new emerging 'pavement-smoking' culture.

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