

## **Methods in studies of illegal trading on social media. A case based on the Nordic Drug Dealing on Social Media study**

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### **Abstract**

Digital criminology has moved a long way from its early studies on “cybercrimes”. One of the central developments has been the focus on how crimes are produced in an entangled network of both social and digital relations and where the instruments are as well digital as well as social leaning. This paper reports on the Nordic Drug Dealing on Social Media study and what methodological tools has proven to work in studies of the digital embedded behaviors of drug dealers on the internet.

Big data analysis has started to become one of the standards in Sociology. However, while scraping and digital analysis of larger social media data sets could have been interesting, the hidden and encrypted nature of drug dealing on social media deemed us to apply a set of more ethnographic and interpretative methods. The short report describes the methodological considerations and tools necessary for researching across Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland.

Further, we will outline the considerations in relations to the ethical perspectives for working with profiles on social media in order for further studies to be able to replicate the productive pathways and avoid problems.