

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Interdisciplinary workshop 'Toward a Global Shift in Drug Policy?'

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Institute of Geography – University of Neuchâtel

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Eugene McCann

Simon Fraser University (Canada)

Urban sites and global shifts: Placing the politics of harm reduction drug policy

Abstract. How and where are alternative ideas about drug policy produced? How are cities involved in the global circulation of harm reduction models of drug policy? This presentation will argue that in order to fully understand, or to effectively encourage a global shift in drug policy, we must attend to the local, and specifically urban, sites in which alternative models of drug policy are developed, experienced, and circulated. I will outline an understanding of policy-making as a situated, scaled process of politics, persuasion, learning, and policy mobilization. From this perspective, policy-making ties together wider fields of regulation with local sites of expertise, political struggle, and professional practice. I will draw on case studies from a long-term research project into the circulation of the harm reduction model among cities in North America, Europe, and Australia. The presentation will outline the notion of 'policy mobilities' as a conceptual framework for understanding harm reduction as a mobile policy model and a political movement. I will conclude by tentatively outlining some general lessons that may be drawn from the specific cases discussed.

Short bio. Eugene McCann is Professor of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada. He researches policy mobilities, urban policy-making, planning, social and health policy, and urban politics. He is co-editor, with Kevin Ward, of *Mobile Urbanism* (Minnesota, 2011) and of *Cities & Social Change*, with Ronan Paddison (Sage, 2014). He is co-author, with Andy Jonas and Mary Thomas, of *Urban Geography: A Critical Introduction* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015). He edits the journal *Geography Compass - Urban*. He has published in a range of journals, including the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *Environment and Planning A*, *Health & Place*, *The International Journal of Urban & Regional Research*, *Urban Geography* and *Urban Studies*.

David Bewley-Taylor
University of Swansea (United Kingdom)

Contemporary Challenges to the International Drug Control Regime: Markets, Knowledge and Increasing Systemic Tensions

Abstract. Beginning with an overview of the evolution of the UN based international drug control regime, this presentation explores diverging policy responses to what has become known simply as the ‘world drug problem’ and the resultant emergence of significant fractures within the so-called - and often mythologized - ‘Vienna Consensus’ on drug control. Incorporating examination of processes of regime change and the increase in consequential tensions within the control apparatus, particular attention will be given to national and subnational policy developments relating to coca and cannabis. Within the context of the fast approaching UN General Assembly Session on the World Drug Problem in April 2016 and the High-Level UN meeting on drugs in 2019, the presentation will conclude by examining not only prospects and potential options for regime reform and modernisation but also the related intersection between geopolitics and this increasingly important and dynamic policy domain.

Short bio. David Bewley-Taylor is a Professor of International Relations and Public Policy and founding Director of the Global Drug Policy Observatory (2013) at Swansea University, UK. He has been researching various aspects of drug policy for over 20 years with his main areas of interest being US drug policy, the UN and international drug policy and more recently counter narcotic strategies in Afghanistan. David has written two major research monographs - *The United States and International Drug Control, 1909-1997* (Continuum, 2001) and *International Drug Control: Consensus Fractured* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) - and is a co-author of *The Rise and Decline of Cannabis Prohibition: The History of Cannabis in the UN Drug Control System and Options for Reform* (TNI-GDPO, 2014).

Julia Buxton
Central European University (Hungary)

More Harm than Good: the development impacts of counter narcotics policies

Abstract. There is little evidence that counter narcotics policies that seek to eliminate the cultivation of narcotic drug crops through either repressive militarized responses or alternative economic development strategies have been successful in achieving sustainable reductions in drug crop cultivation, drug manufacture or drug trafficking. Rather the legacy has been one of violence, egregious human rights abuses and de-development. This presentation argues that poverty, conflict and structural inequality in countries of the Global South are the drivers of engagement in cultivation and related production and trafficking activities, necessitating the UN to reform the institution and mandate of the UNODC in order to promote system wide approaches, new metrics for evaluating drug policy 'success' and space for innovative national level approaches as pursued in Bolivia.

Short bio. Julia Buxton is Professor of Comparative Politics and Associate Dean at the School of Public Policy at the Central European University, Budapest. She is currently a commissioner for the Lancet special edition on Drugs and Health, co-convenor of the Budapest Group of European NGOs advocating for drug policy reform and Senior Research Associate at the Global Drug Policy Observatory at the University of Swansea, which has published her two most recent pieces of drug policy research: *Drugs and Development: The Great Disconnect* (2015) and *The Rise and Challenge of Dark Net Drug Markets* (2015). A specialist on Latin America, she has previously published on democratization, post conflict reconstruction, DDR (demobilisation, demilitarization and disarmament of combatants) and conflict sensitive development.

SESSIONS

Session 1: Actors, spaces and strategies

Cristina Temenos

Northeastern University (United States of America)

Drug policy activism and differential mobilities: Exploring the spatial strategies of transnational advocacy networks.

Abstract. In recent years policing of drug use has seen a marked shift in European and North American cities. Discourses characterizing a 'failed War on Drugs', the necessity to reallocate security resources, and the social and fiscal utility of 'compassionate' and public health approaches to marginalized people have emerged in international and domestic media, local governments, and international policy circles. Yet this shift has been slow moving, facing institutional and public opposition, and in some cases retrenchment towards punitive policy measures. This paper explores the institutional actors and policy activists, and transnational activist networks who negotiate unstable state and social movement spaces in order to effect policy change over time. Drawing together recent work on urban social movements and policy mobilities, this paper argues that seemingly 'fast policy' shifts, have much longer institutional and networked histories that transverse static spatial categories such as 'the state' and 'social movement space'. Examining policy activism as understood in relation to institutional infrastructures helps to expand attention to policies that may work towards alternative social policy spaces, spaces of possibility, alterity, and resistance within social policy mobilization.

Short bio. Cristina Temenos is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at Northeastern University. She is an urban geographer interested in the ways that social movements produce and mobilize knowledge about human rights and social justice to advocate for policy change in cities and the ways that policy mobilities remake urban spaces to contribute to reconceptualizing contemporary urbanism. Empirically, her work focuses on harm reduction drug policies as they are advocated for across cities in Europe, North America, and the Caribbean.

Julian Bloomer

Trinity College Dublin (Ireland)

A political ecology approach to extra-legal livelihood strategies: the cultivation and trade of cannabis in rural Lesotho

Abstract. The presentation will report the key findings of 13-months fieldwork in Lesotho, where the political ecology of the illegal cultivation of *Cannabis sativa* was investigated. The topic will be placed against the background of well-documented declining opportunities in rural livelihoods in Lesotho. Several important factors including retrenchment from the South African mines, declining agricultural productivity and the impact of HIV/AIDS on the rural economy have played a role in further marginalising many people in rural Lesotho. The research methodologies were designed to be sensitive to the illegal nature of the livelihood strategy and employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. With a combination of interviews and police statistics the findings of the fieldwork revealed the importance of the cross-border smuggling of cannabis into South Africa as well as the importance of social networks in the distribution chain. The research highlights the importance of an illegal livelihood strategy for meeting cash expenditures including health and education that is particularly important for households that have lost the middle-age cohort as a result of HIV and grandparents are raising their grandchildren. The research has also focused on the wider network of actors involved in the production and sale of cannabis, including the chieftaincy and police, as well as the implications for those dependent on income from cannabis production if a policy change occurred in Lesotho or the region.

Short bio. Dr. Julian Bloomer's (Department of Geography, Trinity College Dublin) research and teaching interests focus on environmental governance, political ecology, African political economy, natural resource management and rural livelihoods.

Julie de Dardel

University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland)

The bitter diagnosis of the "war on drugs": how academics contribute to the radical shift in the moral economy of drug policies

Abstract. During the past five years, the global landscape regarding drug policy has dramatically shifted, in a way that no one would have expected as recently as a decade ago. Critical voices denouncing the failure of the 'war on drugs' have been increasingly influential, while innovative policy experiments inspired by non-punitive and health-oriented approaches have spread internationally. Yet, the call for drug policy reform is far from new, since it has been supported by a strong international network of activists and grassroots organizations for at least 20 years. So why is this radical shift in drug policies only happening now? In this paper, I claim that the main reason of this turning point is the recent emergence of new actors that have been extremely influential among decision makers and in wider public debates. On the one hand, an advocacy network 'from above', composed of powerful representatives of an intellectual, political and business elite has rallied the cause of drug

decriminalization. On the other hand, these eminent personalities can rely on a growing academic literature that corroborates the inefficiency of the criminalization of drug users and the counterproductive effects of prohibition. Beyond their scientific production, critical academics are increasingly engaged in public advocacy, such as lobbying, testifying and writing opinion pieces to advance progressive drug policy reform. I will argue that both the advocacy network ‘from above’ and the critical scholars have played a fundamental role in the ongoing reversal of the ‘moral economy’ of drug policies at the global level.

Short bio. Julie de Dardel is a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute of Geography, University of Neuchâtel. Her research interests include policy mobilities in the penal field, contemporary prisons, drug policies, social movements and Latin America.

Session 2: Policies and innovations

Zoe Pearson

Ohio State University (United States of America)

Drug Policy Implications of “Coca Yes, Cocaine No” in Bolivia

Abstract. Bolivia’s current method of coca and drug control, often referred to as “coca yes, cocaine no” (CYCN), is increasingly recognized as an innovative alternative to prohibitionist drug control policy. A central feature of CYCN is that it legalizes cultivation of small plots of coca leaf (the main ingredient in cocaine, also a sacred medicinal plant), making coca growers and their political unions responsible for controlling the size and location of coca fields. Bolivian authorities use the once ubiquitous coca eradication measures only when CYCN agreements are broken, and they reject United States counter-narcotics interventions and aid. The UNODC recognizes that, under CYCN, the amount of land dedicated to coca cultivation decreased by 26% from 2010-2013.

My research investigates the politics of CYCN at multiple scales, with an emphasis on its grounded implementation and the experiences of coca growers subject to its dictates. Drawing from ethnographic research in Bolivia’s two main coca growing regions, and analysis of national coca politics and international drug control policy, in this paper I detail successes and challenges of CYCN, and its implications for drug policy reform. In particular, I show how and to what effect Bolivia’s coca grower social movement subverted prohibitionist drug interventions that associate a leaf deemed an illicit drug with bodily harm and social degeneracy. This subversion is important for having virtually ended violent military intervention in coca growing regions and for stabilizing coca grower livelihoods, but it also illustrates the necessity of a more radical challenge to drug war governance.

Short bio. Zoe Pearson is a PhD candidate in geography at Ohio State University. Her scholarship focuses on illicit economies and “drug war” geopolitics, environmental justice and political ecology, and feminist studies with a regional focus in Latin America. Since 2012. She has been conducting qualitative research on Bolivia’s current approach to coca leaf and drug control, which challenges past “drug war” policies. She also has been collaborating since 2011 on an interdisciplinary research project to study the social and environmental impacts of drug trafficking and counter-narcotics efforts across Central America.

Tania Pinc

University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)

How Latin American Governments Measure Success in Drug Policy and How It Should Be Measured

Abstract: In 2000s, Latin American countries started adopting a public health approach in drug policies; however, except Uruguay, the policies have kept the prohibition to personal consumption and to related activities. Therefore, drug users continue being a concern to law enforcement agencies. In order to know how Latin American governments have enforced the law after the drug policy reform, this study selected three countries – Brazil, Chile, and Argentina; taking into account that they came from a military regime; the military characteristic of polices; and the young democracy. The methodology employed quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze comparatively the three cases, considering the changes in the drug law and the indicators that measure the success of the policy. One of the main findings is that the three countries continue measuring the success in drug law enforcement through amount of arrests of drug dealers and users; and apprehended drugs, it means, the same strategy of “war on drug”. Law enforcement officials have used to focus their effort toward the measurable practices. Thereby, the results show that Brazilian, Chilean, and Argentine police have adapted their performance according to the changes of drug law, and continue increasing the amount of arrests related to the “drug problem”. The main conclusion is that a drug policy cannot diminish the level of coercion while measuring success in drug law enforcement through amount of arrests. To improve the drug policy, it is needed to create new performance indicators to ensure that drug users can be treated by health system and not by criminal justice system. I argue that government should bring the health system to the beginning of the process, and reorganize the institutional arrangements without interfering on the power of the criminal justice system.

Short bio. Tânia Pinc (University of Rio de Janeiro) is a former Brazilian Police Officer (1987-2012). She got her PHD from the University of São Paulo. She was a visiting researcher at the University of Texas in Austin (2009-2010) and a research fellow in the Drug, Security and Democracy Program (2013-2014).

Bengt Kayser

University of Lausanne (Switzerland)

War on drugs, war on doping: similarities, differences, opportunities and risks.

Abstract. The war on doping in elite sport shares similarities with the war on drugs. Both use logic of zero tolerance, infringe on human rights and public health principles, are excessively costly and foster changes in international legal frameworks to reach their objectives. There are other similarities: failure to reach their objective of eradication of use, creation of criminalized illicit markets, side-effects like the relegation of users into hiding, non-controlled and trafficked substances, and dangerous behavior such as non-hygienic injection of drugs. In spite of tremendous efforts with excessive surveillance of athletes infringing on

their privacy (obligation to inform about whereabouts for unannounced urine and blood sampling) doping continues while regularly innocent athletes are punished. Voices are heard calling for extension of anti-doping controls in amateur sports, fitness club members or even students after exams. In Denmark and Belgium fitness club members can be controlled and fined for use of anabolic steroids.

This suggests a trend towards generalization of anti-doping principles in society. It is paradoxical that fitness club members with a rather healthy life-style but using illicit substances are punished while the general population can freely engage in unhealthy behaviour such as sitting, smoking, drinking, and excessive eating. Anti-doping is inclusive, illicit psychotropic ('social') drugs are also on the list of forbidden products. The war on doping thus serves the war on drugs. The current trend for relaxation of the war on drugs and the generalization of harm minimization strategies may represent potential as alternative strategies for dealing with doping in sport.

Short bio. Bengt Kayser is full professor at the Institute of Sport Sciences and the Department of Physiology of the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. After his medical studies at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands he engaged in a research career in the field of exercise physiology with a special interest in hypoxia. After obtaining his PhD at the Free University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, he worked at McGill University in Montreal and at the University of Geneva. His research interests concern the factors limiting endurance exercise performance, altitude medicine and physiology, respiratory mechanics during physical exercise, and the relationship between physical activity, energy balance and health in different settings. Besides these fields he has a keen interest in the ethics of doping and anti-doping, human enhancement, and substance use in general.

Session 3: Marijuana regulation: emerging policies

Barbara Broers

University of Geneva (Switzerland)

The “medical cannabis club”: a model for access to medical cannabinoids in Switzerland?

Abstract. In Switzerland, prescription for medical cannabinoids for a limited number of indications is possible, but needs a special authorisation of the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health. Also, only a few medications are currently available (liquid and oral spray), that are expensive and often not reimbursed by medical insurance. So, patients using cannabinoids often turn to the black market to get their medication. In Geneva, an association defending access to medical cannabis was founded in 2006. Members, with a medical certificate, can obtain cannabis through the association in a semi-secret place. There is no formal authorisation for the cultivation of cannabis. The aim of our study was to describe the profile of the members, the impact of the “medical cannabis club” on their life and investigate problems in the organisation.

Methods: analysis of standardized questionnaires members fill in upon entry in the club (n=107), questionnaires and interviews at follow-up (n=20), participation in meetings

Results: Members are a majority (>2/3) men of average 48 years, with multiple somatic and psychiatric comorbidity, 60% on social welfare. They appreciate the social and practical support of the association, and found their quality of life improved. Their cannabis use did not increase over time. We observed that there were several problems within the association, due to non-respect of rules, tension to have sufficient medication and financial issues.

Conclusion: A “medical cannabis club” does not attract young people, and seems to benefit for multimorbid patients. Since the “backdoor” problem is not regulated, the legal situation is vague and uncertain, creating tensions for the active members. The “medical cannabis club” could be a model for access to medical cannabinoids, but the association should benefit from a legal production and distribution of cannabis, a professionalization and a chart that should be respected by all members.

Short bio. Barbara Broers is Professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Geneva and head of the Unit for Dependencies of the Department for Community Medicine, Primary Care and Emergencies of the Geneva University Hospitals. She is also vice-president of the Swiss Federal Commission for Drug-related affairs and of the Swiss Society of Addiction Medicine. This abstract is based on a master’s thesis of two medical students, Camille Goumaz and Jennifer Cau.

Anne Philibert

University of Geneva (Switzerland)

A sociological perspective of cannabis regulation policies

Abstract. In this paper, we propose to introduce some ways to interpret the current cannabis regulation policies from a sociological perspective. Central to this development, we pose the hypothesis that the application of the paradigm of risk governance is gradually seeping into the field of drugs policies. A first framework of interpretation is to understand how the risk society propagates in the field of drug policy, a field traditionally dominated by prohibitionist logic. The paradigm shift can therefore, by definition, take two forms: a logic of security risks management (public order), or a logic of sanitary risk management (biopolitics target of population management). Conducted in a comparative perspective between different models emerging, we will introduce the preliminary results of our first field case of Colorado. We will try to reconstruct public arenas through a reading of the controversies it raises and actors that are mobilized. These include checking whether cannabis regulation is the sign of a new kind of drug policy that is no more a regulation for individuals against a collective risk for society, and replaces it by assigning to individuals the responsibility for managing their risks.

Short bio. Anne Philibert is a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of Geneva and specialist in the field of drugs, addiction, and drug policies. Her thesis focuses on a comparative analysis of cannabis regulation policies in Netherlands, Uruguay, and United States.

Guzmán Castro

University of Pennsylvania (United States of America)

States On Drugs: Prohibitionism's Global Crisis and Legal Marijuana in Uruguay

Abstract. Proclaiming the “failure” of the “war on drugs” is rapidly becoming common-sense. In Latin America, defending the status quo on drug regulation is a practice in retreat across a variety of social domains -state and civil society. A bureaucratic field until recently stable under a punitive-prohibitionist paradigm is now in crisis. On December 2013, Uruguay became the first country in the world with a legal cannabis market. Considered the most radical alternative to the “war” model in decades, this reform was both constitutive of and only possible within this larger context of crisis. For a field as transnationally determined as drug control, the crisis meant an expansion in the limits of the politically possible that made Uruguay's cannabis regime feasible. However, if this crisis is a transnational one, why is Uruguay an exception and not the norm? What conditions made the crisis a productive terrain for significant reform in Uruguay? Drawing on interviews conducted with social activists, state officials and “experts,” textual analysis of media and official documents, and archival research, this paper traces the causal processes that explain the unmaking of a “war” on cannabis in Uruguay. I argue that the decision to re-regulate cannabis was determined by a transformation in the “problem of drugs” as a discursive space that structures state regulation. A shift in the harms, subjects, and policy solutions that constitute the “problem.” By uncovering how these ideas reached the state and why they became dominant in the bureaucratic field, I show how Uruguay's particular institutional history structured the conditions where transnational and local forces transformed the ways in which the state speaks about drugs, eminently through its legislative capital.

Short bio. Guzmán Castro is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania, Department of Political Science. His dissertation explores the evolution of drug regulation in the South Cone since the 1960s. He is particularly interested in exploring the interaction between drug regulation, state-making, and “social problems.” His work is currently supported by a Drugs, Security, and Democracy fellowship from the Social Science Research Council.