

International Drug Policy

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AUGUST 28, 2018

Key topics

- ▶ Historical perspective of the international drug control
- ▶ Ministerial Meeting 2019: what to prepare for?
- ▶ Does international drug control matter at all?
- ▶ Colonialism and the Cold War

Since 1920: League of Nations

1925

International Opium Convention

authorizations for 'Indian hemp'
statistics on production of opium/coca

1931

Convention for Limiting the
Manufacture and Regulating
the
Distribution of Narcotic Drugs

Limited manufacture to the
medical and science needs

1936

Convention for the
Suppression of the Illicit Traffic in
Dangerous Drugs

certain drug offences
international crimes

Since 1953: United Nations

1953

Limiting and Regulating
the Cultivation of the
Poppy Plant...*

Prohibited non-
medical use of opioids

1961

Single Convention
on Narcotic
Drugs

Control over 119
drugs

1971

Convention on
Psychotropic
Substances

Response to 'NPS'

1988

Convention
against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic
Drugs and Psychotropic
Substances

Focus on
transnational
organized crime

UN and Cold War

- ▶ The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights(USA, clear and simple language)
 - ▶ **Each** State Party to the present Covenant **undertakes**: (a) To ensure that any person whose rights and freedoms as recognized in the present Covenant are violated **shall have an effective remedy** even if this violation was committed by persons acting in an official capacity
- ▶ The Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights : (USSR, vague language)
 - ▶ Each State Party . . . undertakes **to take steps**, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, **to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively** the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measure General concern of the USSR about the interference of the international community in domestic affairs
- ▶ The result was a 1952 General Assembly Resolution mandating creation of two treaties instead of one

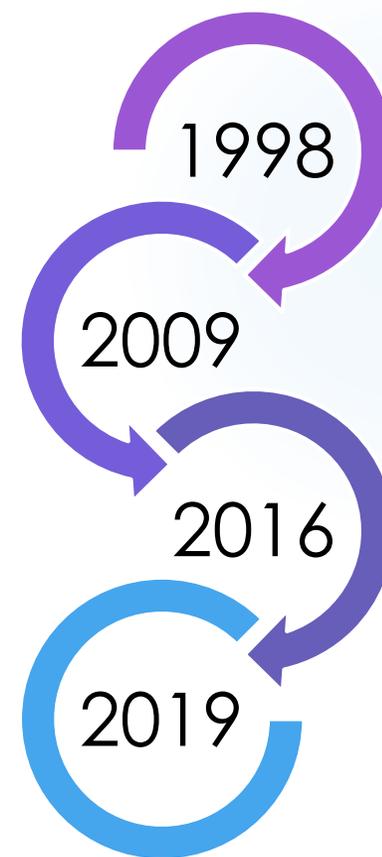
Lyon B. *Discourse in Development: Post-Colonial "Agenda" for the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Through the Post-Colonial Lens*

Drug Policy and Cold War

- ▶ At the level of "private opinion" and "yellow press"
- ▶ Strengthening the DEA and drug control structures after the collapse of the USSR
- ▶ The United States and Latin America (20% of US financial assistance goes to the "fight against drugs")

Global high-level meetings

- UNGASS 1998:
 - World consensus on the goal to eliminate drugs
- HLM 2009:
 - We acknowledged that there have been 'unintended consequences', but the goal is fine – so let's intensify our efforts
 - Divide between countries
- UNGASS 2016:
 - We will not challenge UN drug conventions or the concept of 'drug free world'
 - But we acknowledge that there are different opinions on that
- Ministerial Segment 2019:
 - Do we even want to have an outcome document?



Civil Society Asks for the Ministerial Meeting 2019

▶ UNCERTAINTY WITH THE OUTCOME DOCUMENT

1. Move away from 'drug-free world' targets
2. Meaningfully reflect the impacts of drug policies on the UN goals of promoting health, human rights, development, peace and security
3. Reflect the realities of drug policies on the ground, both positive and negative – the 'elephants in the room'
4. End punitive approaches and put people and communities first

The Status of Cannabis



- ▶ 2004: GA Resolution 59/160 requested UNODC to conduct a global survey on cannabis
- ▶ 2006: World Drug Report, chapter 'Cannabis: Why we should care':
 - ▶ Inaccuracy of previous statements
 - ▶ Medical value of cannabis compounds
 - ▶ "This incongruity undermines the credibility of the international system, and the time for resolving global ambivalence on the issue is long overdue"
- ▶ 2016: Not discussed
- ▶ 2019: Was supposed to be discussed, but is not likely to

Rule or Obey

Are international drug policy regulations designed to be followed by those who design them?

Do Group A countries need a global drug policy reform to legitimize what they do domestically?

Or global drug policy debate is just a format of political influence?

Group A

Shape the language

- Provide funding

- Do whatever you want in your country

Group B

Join others or just ignore

- Get funding

- Allow pilot projects

Does International Drug Control Matter?



Dan Bigg, Chicago Recover Alliance



Naloxone Programs



CND Resolution 55-7

- ▶ Also requests the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in collaboration with other relevant international organizations, including the World Health Organization, as appropriate, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to provide Member States, upon request, with advice and guidance based on scientific evidence, and provide capacity-building, on preventing mortality from drug overdose, in particular opioid overdose
- ▶ Further requests the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in collaboration with other relevant international organizations, including the World Health Organization, as appropriate, to include initiatives to prevent mortality from drug overdose, in particular opioid overdose, and related mental health issues as part of their drug demand reduction programming
- ▶ **Invites Member States and other donors to consider providing extrabudgetary resources** in accordance with the rules and procedures of the United Nations

How to Predict the Effect of Global Drug Policy Debate?

- ▶ Does your country lead in the debate?
- ▶ Is it eligible to the international funding?
- ▶ Where did it belong during the Cold War?
- ▶ Was it a colony or a metropole?

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Colonialism and International Development

- ▶ By the mid 20th century colonial structures defined research architecture in the Colonies
 - ▶ Creation of research centers in British Indian and South Asian territories and later in the Caribbean
 - ▶ *"... administrative and medical interests in population difference at the centre of the new epidemiology came to map onto political apparatus initially created to know, reform and govern colonial subjects"*
- ▶ Continued after the WWII, and framed much of the research across international and post-colonial networks

Moore M. D. (2016) *Harnessing the Power of Difference: Colonialism and British Chronic Disease Research, 1940–1975*

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5526454/#hkv130C8>

- ▶ Critiques to literacy education

Post-Colonialism and International Development

World Bank and UNESCO literacy programs

World Bank financial literacy programs

Creation of NGOs in South America

Health research agenda

Summary

- ▶ Drug policies are shaped by various overlapping and contradictive conceptual frameworks, including
 - ▶ Public health
 - ▶ Criminology
 - ▶ Economics
 - ▶ Law and human rights
 - ▶ Post-colonial studies
- ▶ Knowledge arising from studies that belong to different fields, schools and cultures/countries is contradictive
- ▶ No consensus on key definitions or explanatory theories
- ▶ Political discourse is more influential than rigorous research
- ▶ Generalization and simplification of evidence-based data is road to hell

Our way forward

- ▶ Behind almost every public stereotypes (“marihuana is gateway to heroin“ or “all drug users are criminals”) there is a story on how and why it was built and fed to the public
- ▶ To destroy it, we need to understand its origin
- ▶ Read, analyze and take **nothing** for granted

How to read

- ▶ Avoid conspiracy theories and yellow sources
- ▶ Search through *scholar.google.org*, *discover* or university libraries (DISCOVER Search)
- ▶ Prioritize “fresh data” (from 2014) and “old concepts” (70ies-80ies)
- ▶ Always check references
- ▶ Make notes