

T02P31 / Drug Policy Analysis: Definition, Concepts and Methodology

Topic : T02 / Comparative Public Policy sponsored by Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis

Chair : Luis Rivera Velez (Center for Mexican and Central American Studies CEMCA)

Second Chair : anne philibert (Geneva University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Drug policy has been a subject of analysis since the 1980s, with a focus on the policymaking process, especially at an international level, dominated by the US and Europe. The main focus of research to date has been the conception and spread of the prohibitionist model in the Western World: the so-called “war on drugs”. However, in reality drug policy has evolved during the last 30 years in a number of divergent directions. Suffering from a fashionable renewal linked to the development of new models of regulation of the drug markets, drug policy and its study need to be analyzed through a critical lens.

The aim of this panel is to explore the complexity of drug policy around the world, through analyses of both the policymaking process and the methodology used to generate that analysis. With the increase of complexity in the policymaking process, the very definition of drug policy has changed and needs to be re-examined. “Drug policy” now engenders question of public health, morality, security, human rights, economy, even as this definition changes across time and geography. In addition, actors are becoming more and more diverse. Beyond the state apparatus, multi-level governance is spreading (in different intensities according to the regions of the world) and the dynamics of change are moving away from the UN sphere. Bottom-up forces, rather than top-down political processes, are increasingly driving debates, legislation and implementations, and thus local experiences are having a greater impact on national and international policymaking.

This raises the question of how to measure this new complexity of drug policies. When studying the process of policymaking, implementation or evaluation, the scientific tools must take into account these new configurations. The panel thus seeks to question models, instruments and indicators that are often used in drug policy analyses in order to discuss the broader issue of causal inferences. Being a highly politicized subject, many studies expose a cause and effect link that is inclined to be biased for or against prohibition.

By raising these questions, the panel intends to encourage the conceptualization of drug policy analysis. Hence, papers comparing more than one case study or putting one case into perspective are privileged. Also, studies integrating a multidisciplinary approach are encouraged. The idea of the panel is to better understand how policies work and, in a policy science perspective, how academia can contribute to the renewal of knowledge around drug policy. In sum, by improving the understanding of drug related issues and proposing a new way of measuring drug related phenomena, the panel will enhance the studies of and for drug policy.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel aims to review the conceptualization of drug policy with a more systematic understanding of its analysis. We are looking for papers based on case studies that develop concepts and measuring tools that increase the operability of drug policy analysis.

The main themes of the panel are the following:

1. Drug policy definition. With the increasing diversity of drug policies, we are interested in studying the continuity or change of paradigms and ideas towards drugs inside the policies. As some countries have introduced a new approach to drug policy weakening the sanctions for drug policy offenders, others are reinforcing the old paradigm of strong repression. The current divergence calls into question the idea of a monolithic drug policy, and researchers ability to make meaningful comparisons.
2. Drug policies and the state. With the diversification of actors and levels of governance, we want to explore the role of consultants, think-tanks, interest groups, civil society, etc., in the production of knowledge for drug policy, the circulation of ideas, policy transfers and the multiplication of policy management. Although international organizations still have a nominal supremacy given by the conventions, authority over drug policymaking and outcomes is increasingly distributed among different organizations and actors.

3. Drug policy evaluation. Being a politicized issue, there are meaningful questions about the accuracy of existing measures of drug use, drug trafficking and drug policies. We encourage papers that question the metrics used to date, and which develop new ways to evaluate drug related issues, whether intended to supply input when developing policies or measure policy outcomes.

These themes are not mutually exclusive and we encourage papers that present a comparative perspective and that take into account approaches from other disciplines. The panel seeks to enhance the understanding and study of drug policy so originality is strongly encouraged.

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Session 1 Alternative Approaches of Drugs Regulation

Wednesday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (Oei Tiong Ham OTH 1 - 1)

Discussants

Luis Rivera Velez (Center for Mexican and Central American Studies CEMCA)

A comprehensive approach to drugs : prohibit, treat, regulate. Perspectives for a quiet revolution from the Netherlands, the US, and Uruguay.

anne philibert (Geneva University)

Participatory democracy and drug policy

Alison Ritter (UNSW)

Kari Lancaster

Rosalyn Diprose

State and Drug Policies: A mitigation-of-risk policy appraisal

Oliver Meza (Tecnologico de Monterrey)

Edgar Guerra (Consejo Nacional de Humanidades, Ciencias y Tecnologías CONAHCYT)

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Session 2 Methodology and Drug Policy Evaluation

Wednesday, June 28th 16:15 to 18:15 (Oei Tiong Ham OTH 1 - 1)

Discussants

anne philibert (Geneva University)

Measuring the effectiveness of ASEAN's drug control strategy

Gloria Lai (International Drug Policy Consortium)

Fixing the Drug Problem, Ignoring the Workplace : the Promotion of Expertise and Medical Tools against Occupational Drug Use. The case of drug testing in France and in the United States.

Renaud Crespin (CNRS - CSO -SciencesPo)

The last opium war?: Roles of the state and opium poppy eradication in northern Thailand

Patamawadee Jongruck (Chiang Mai University)

Bobby Anderson (Union of Myanmar National Community Driven Development Project)