

Review of: "The Hidden Aspects of A Century of Substance Use Policymaking in Iran"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear Authors,

Your empirical delimitation is consistent. Analyzing substance use, especially opioid use, as a (consistently neglected) and long-standing problem in Iran. It is worth emphasizing that it is not only Iran that experiments with a range of policies that are inconsistent and relegate human rights and the pursuit of social justice: armed non-intervention, state regulation, criminalization, prohibition and criminalization. His historical analysis though makes explicit how regulation of substance use neglects medical approaches in favor of more oppressive but politically expedient options. However, his scientific contribution relegates other fields of knowledge on drugs such as the anthropology of consumption, the ethnography of social and economic inequalities embedded in the networks of growers and dealers as well as the disputes over rights and the processes of politicization that are part of the social conflicts surrounding drug regulation in Iran, in Asia and on a global scale.

With the aim of motivating a continuity in the study of drug policies in Iran, it is striking that the authors do not analyze the historical, social and current problems of marijuana consumption, commercialization and regulation in Iran (as in Asia). To mention a current tension, in Tehran, there are dealers who deliver locally produced marijuana strains such as Royal Queen, DNA and Nirvana to homes (after receiving phone calls from their customers).

The main contribution of the article (which perhaps the authors themselves are not yet aware of), Despite the ahistorical paradigm of substance use policymaking in Iran, the present review strives to analyze the latent sociological dynamics [16] that might better explain the motivations behind the implementation of particular types of policies at different points in Iran's history.

In order to strengthen the results, and above all to extend the conclusions to other publications on drugs (for example, in Latin America, Europe or on other prohibited substances such as psychedelics, ancestral plants, or synthetic drugs), the authors may point out (and explain) that the prohibition of opium cultivation and the consequent reduction of public revenues from its taxes, not only evidences the predominance of political exercise over the consumption of substances in Iran but also, manifests how state institutionality operates conveniently to deny and also to expand rights. And perhaps even more important, it shows how such institutionality politicizes the prohibition of drugs and criminalizes the life of those who relate to drugs.

In short, this article is publishable after applying the suggestions described. All this, in search of the consolidation of a

solid text that dialogue (and to be part of the State of the art on conflicts, regulation and drug policy on a global scale) with indexed research that is part of the current academic debate on the reformulation of the International Drug Control Regime. The Conclusions section can draw on the elements of the Discussion section. The authors could be more direct, safe and forceful to position themselves with respect to judicial processes, institutional, moral and health issues that unfairly blame people who use substances as co-responsible for other long-standing social problems in Iran and the whole world. Finally, this article with academic pretension (like hundreds more) can disarm the political discourse and the pretension of truth of the prohibitionist paradigm that insists on associating, directly and irreversibly, low socioeconomic status and unemployment with problematic substance use and criminal actions.

In addition, four bibliographical references are recommended (supplementary data) that can strengthen their socio-historical analysis of drug policies in Iran