

Impact case study (REF3b)

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| Institution: Swansea University |
| Unit of Assessment: 21 - Politics and International Studies |
| Title of case study: Reframing drug policy discourse: Impacting high-level debates on international drug control |
| 1. Summary of the impact |

Professor Bewley-Taylor's research has provided a challenge to conventional wisdom within high-level debates on international drug control. His research has pioneered concepts that explain the increasing tensions between the United Nations (UN) drug control conventions and national policies on controlled drugs that deviate from punitive-prohibition, and it has classified policy options as conforming, challenging or contradictory to the UN conventions. Through publications, presentations and face-to-face consultation, he has influenced the work of non government organisations on drug policy and stimulated debate among national, UN and European Union drug policy officials and national ambassadors considering changes in policy or withdrawal of existing policy. In helping to reframe drug policy discourse, his research has facilitated consideration of policy approaches that aim to reduce a range of drug-related harms.

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| 2. Underpinning research |
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Professor Bewley-Taylor's research is ongoing and has all taken place while a Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Professor at Swansea University. His most recent major output is *International Drug Control: Consensus Fractured*. Funded by the Leverhulme Trust and the J. Paul Getty Jr. Charitable Trust, this research involved an extensive set of elite interviews and informal discussions with national government, European Union (EU) and UN officials, both in post and retired, as well as members of reform-minded drug policy non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition to fieldwork in the UK, USA, Japan, Australia, Canada and continental Europe, the work drew on participant observation of various UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) meetings in Vienna, as a member of a number of NGO delegations.

The book (R2) provides a unique fine-grained analysis of the operation of the international drug control regime between 1998 and 2009. Through the application of regime theory to empirical data, it introduces the twin concepts of soft defection (movement by parties to the conventions away from the regime's normative core that falls short of hard defection and 'breach') and resultant regime weakening (changes *within* rather than *of* the regime). Key examples of policy approaches behind this transformative process include engagement with the harm reduction approach and the decriminalisation of cannabis possession for personal use within many European states. As parts of a new framework, these concepts allow a better understanding of changes within the UN drug control regime. Highlighting shortcomings of the extant regime, including in relation to human rights and health related issues, *Consensus Fractured* also presents possible routes for revision of the UN drug control treaties upon which it is based. Journal articles in 2012 and 2013 (R1 and R3) accompanied the monograph by developing some of these themes.

Underpinning research dates back to late 1999 and the publication of Bewley-Taylor's first monograph (R5). This monograph is seen as one of the key texts in the field of international drug policy. Based on extensive archive work, it deconstructs the evolution of the international drug control system, and argues that the current US influenced UN conventions deleteriously limit the space of sovereign states in developing health oriented and culturally specific national drug control policies and as such require reform. This work was followed by a number of related journal articles and grey literature reports, prominent among them 'Challenging the UN drug control conventions: problems and possibilities' (R6) in 2003.

A combination of the monograph (R5) and a series of other publications (including R4 and R6) raised Bewley-Taylor's profile as an expert and 'opinion former' in the field and widened impact reach, including his engagement with a range of NGOs, governments and international bodies, among them the European Commission (EC), with an interest in aspects of international drug control.

The most recent related research project, funded by the Open Society Foundations, focuses on policy transfer and counter-narcotic strategies in Afghanistan. Involving fieldwork in Kabul and interviews and policy discussions with Afghan government officials as well as UN and NGO

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representatives, the findings reveal the role that the normative expectancy of the UN treaties has on the development of Afghan counter-narcotic strategies. Associated research will continue under the auspices of the newly established Global Drug Policy Observatory (See section 3).

3. References to the research

(R1) David R. Bewley-Taylor, 'Towards revision of the UN drug control conventions: Harnessing like-mindedness', *The International Journal of Drug Policy*, Volume 24, Issue 1, January 2013, pp. 60-68. ISSN 0955-3959 (IF – 2.405. 5 Year IF – 2.593)

(R2) David R. Bewley-Taylor, *International Drug Control: Consensus Fractured*, Cambridge University Press, March 2012, pp. 344. ISBN 978-1-107-01497-8 (Hb), ISBN 978-1-107-64128-0 (Pb)

(R3) David R. Bewley-Taylor and Martin Jelsma, 'Regime change: Re-visiting the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs', *The International Journal of Drug Policy*, Volume 23, Issue 1, January 2012, pp. 72-81. ISSN: 0955-3959 (IF – 2.405. 5 Year IF – 2.593)

(R4) David R. Bewley-Taylor, 'Emerging Policy Contradictions between the United Nations Drug Control System and the Core Values of the United Nations,' *The International Journal of Drug Policy* (Elsevier) Volume 16, Issue 6, December 2005, pp. 423-431 ISSN: 0955-3959 (IF – 2.405. 5 Year IF – 2.593)

(R5) David R. Bewley-Taylor, *The United States and International Drug Control, 1909-1997*, Pinter, A Cassell Imprint, London and New York, November 1999, pp. 234. ISBN 1-85567-670-9. Reprinted in paperback in March 2002 by Continuum, London and New York, ISBN 0-8264-5813-0

(R6) David R. Bewley-Taylor, 'Challenging the UN drug control conventions: problems and possibilities', *The International Journal of Drug Policy*, (Elsevier) Volume 14 issue 2 April 2003, pp.171-179. ISSN 0955 3959 (IF – 2.405. 5 Year IF – 2.593)

Awarded the journal's best paper of the year by a young author award in 2004 and was cited a number of times within *The Economist* in the same year.

Related Grant Capture

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| 2012 | David R Bewley-Taylor , <i>Global Drug Policy Observatory</i> , Open Society Foundations – Global Drug Policy Programme Research Grant (January 2013 - March 2015 - \$369,000) – Competitive and peer reviewed |
| 2011 | David R Bewley-Taylor , <i>Policy Transfer and Counter Narcotic Strategies in Afghanistan: Scoping Project</i> , Open Society Foundations – Global Drug Policy Programme Research Grant (July 2011- August 2012 - \$72,000) – Competitive and peer reviewed |
| 2007 | David R. Bewley-Taylor , <i>The Politics of Prohibition</i> , J. Paul Getty Jr. Charitable Trust, Research Grant (October 2007- October 2008 - £32,021) - Competitive and peer reviewed |
| 2005 | David R Bewley-Taylor , <i>Drug Policy and the Future of the UN</i> , Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship. (Oct 2005- Oct 2006 - £21,853) - Competitive and peer reviewed |

4. Details of the impact

Beyond the direct impact of his academic publications, Professor Bewley Taylor has communicated his formulation of the increasing tensions between the prohibition-oriented UN drug control conventions and national policies through his place on NGO delegations to CND between 2003 and 2013 and associated off-the-record briefings with a range of policy actors (national and NGO delegations, EC officials and UN secretariat). He has also presented his research findings, conclusions and policy recommendations at government and NGO sponsored satellite events at the UN in Vienna (2011, 2012 and 2013). These Chatham House rules events attracted a diverse and sizable audience (50+), including UN secretariat as well as diplomats and NGO delegates many of whom have provided impact testimonials listed below.

Bewley Taylor also achieved significant secondary reach through collaboration with the Netherlands based non-governmental organisation, the Transnational Institute (TNI; <http://www.tni.org/work-area/drugs-and-democracy>) and its Drugs and Democracy Programme director, Dr Martin Jelsma in a series of grey literature reports. These include *The UN drug control*

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conventions: The Limits of Latitude, www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/files/download/dlr18.pdf (March 2012, Spanish version: www.undrugcontrol.info/images/stories/documents/dlr18s.pdf), which outlines the policy-space nation states possess while operating within the confines of the extant treaty framework and classifies all policy options as either conforming, challenging or contradictory to the UN conventions. The reports have been widely disseminated via NGO cascade news alerts reaching civil society, government and International Organization end users numbering in the thousands and are referred to by policy makers. Indeed, the Spanish version of the *Limits of Latitude* brief was used as a key document during private discussions within the Bolivian government when considering moves to revise its position relative to the UN drug control treaties.

Further evidence of reach can be seen through citations to both this report and 'Challenging the UN drug control conventions: problems and possibilities' article (R6) within the Organization of American States' recent study on drug policy reform *Scenarios for the Drug Policy in the Americas: 2013-2025* (http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/press/Scenarios_Report.PDF). This is the first inter-governmental report to discuss international drug policy reform and Bewley-Taylor was an invited speaker at a high-level round-table event discussing the report's findings at Chatham House in July 2013. This took place within the context of the High Level Segment (HLS) of the CND in 2014 and the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) in 2016. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of Colombia (1994-1998), has played an important role opening up the drug policy debate within Latin America and it is of note that Bewley-Taylor's research is also cited within Samper's recent book on the issue, *Drogas Drigas: Prohibición o Legalización. Una nueva propuesta* (Debate Books, 2013)

Within the UK, Bewley-Taylor is the expert advisor on international drug policy to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Drug Policy Reform (APPG), and participated in a key meeting of national drug 'czars' and ambassadors at the House of Lords in November 2011 to discuss possible alternatives to the current system of UN drug control. His ideas on the formation of 'Like Minded Groups' is currently being applied in work with the APPG on the development of a group of European states to support drug policy reform in Latin America in the lead up to the HLS and UNGASS. Bewley-Taylor also presented research at an Expert Seminar Organized by the Czech Government, TNI and the NGO the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC <http://idpc.net/>), on drug policy reform in Prague in February 2012 to discuss possible routes for treaty reform.

Elite drug policy makers who have heard his presentations, been briefed by, worked with and/or read Bewley-Taylor's research testify to the significance of his impact on their work. Indeed, as the following testimonies demonstrate, while not claiming direct responsibility for specific policy shifts, which result from highly complex processes of change, his research can be seen to have had an impact in stimulating debate among national, UN and European Union drug policy officials and national ambassadors considering changes in policy or withdrawal of existing policy.

- Former Head of the Drugs Policy Coordination Unit of the European Commission, 'I have found Bewley-Taylor's work on the historical background, functioning, and future of the UN drug control system extremely valuable for contextualizing the geopolitical forces at play within what is a complex and fluid issue area. His accurate and realistic analysis of 'narco-diplomacy' in general, but particularly in relation to the role of the United States and parts of the UN drug control apparatus, helps provide the clarity necessary for decision-making within a multi-dimensional policy environment such as the Commission.'

- Member, Global Commission on Drug Policy, Geneva, Former President of Switzerland and Minister of Home Affairs: 'A growing number of States Parties to the UN conventions are moving away from a punitive approach to drug use, confronted with the public health and the security challenges (or consequences) of the policy followed for decades. Bewley-Taylor's ideas on 'soft defection' from the control regime and 'regime weakening' provide a useful conceptual lens through which to consider a global system more able to accommodate the complex and specific needs of individual nation states.'

- Former Mexican Attorney General), former Ambassador of Mexico to the UK, and Ambassador of Mexico to the US), Washington, DC, USA: 'Recent years have seen the

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regulatory regime of drugs come under increasing scrutiny... Bewley-Taylor's research offers an innovative scientific framework for understanding how the resulting policy shifts impact the global control system and constitutes a must-read for anyone interested or engaged in the drug policy debate. It is timely work that has practical application in the Americas and beyond'.

- Former UK First Secretary, Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Vienna and currently UNAIDS (senior expert adviser Most At Risk Populations), Geneva: *'As a member of the UK delegation to the CND between 2003 and 2011 I found Bewley-Taylor's research on the international drug control system, particularly his ideas around regime change and developing tensions within the UN framework, to be very useful for my work. He has done much to reframe the way 'practitioners' within the policy community view the UN environment, including the role of treaty bodies, both in terms of broader historical context and future policy options.'*

- Former UK Deputy Drug Czar and Head of Demand Reduction, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, current Chair of the IDPC and advisor to the Global Commission on Drug Policy, London: *'From the perspective of someone involved in national and international drug policy debates over many years, I can say that Bewley-Taylor's research has done much to promote reconsideration of law enforcement dominated policies dealing with the illicit drugs market. Many of his publications have stimulated new thinking and reframed debates amongst analysts and decision makers. He has consequently played an important role in helping to change the "mood music" of the drug policy debate, both at national and international levels, and provided useful conceptual frameworks for the consideration of alternative human rights and public health based policy approaches'.*

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- **Individual User 1** – Member of House of Lords and Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Drug Policy Reform, London
- **Individual User 2** – Member, Global Commission on Drug Policy, President of Switzerland (1999) and Minister of Home Affairs (2002-3)
- **Individual User 3** – UK Deputy Drug Czar (1997-2001) and Head of Demand Reduction, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2002-3), Chair of the IDPC and advisor to the Global Commission on Drug Policy), London
- **Individual User 4** – UK First Secretary, Permanent Mission to the United Nations (2003-2011), Vienna and UNAIDS (senior expert adviser Most At Risk Populations), Geneva.
- **Individual User 5** – Head of the Drugs Policy Coordination Unit of the European Commission, (2003-2012).
- **Individual User 6** – Michel Peron, Chief Executive, Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs, Ottawa, Canada
- **Individual User 7** – Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern, Bern, Switzerland (International Narcotics Policy, Federal Office of Public Health)
- **Individual User 8** – Deputy Permanent Representative, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the UN, OSCE and other international organizations in Vienna, Austria.
- **Individual User 9** – Mexican Attorney General (2003-6), Ambassador of Mexico to the UK, (2010-13), and Ambassador of Mexico to the USA, Washington, DC, USA
- **Individual User 10** – Ambassador of Colombia to the United Kingdom