

# The War on the Mind

How the case for global legalization  
of drugs impacts the rest of us

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# Outline

- Why Drug Control?
- What choices are we facing? What are the trade offs?
- Who are the players? What is their end game?
- How do we mount a modern defense of the mind?



SINGLE CONVENTION

ON

NARCOTIC DRUGS, 1961

As amended by the 1972 Protocol amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961,

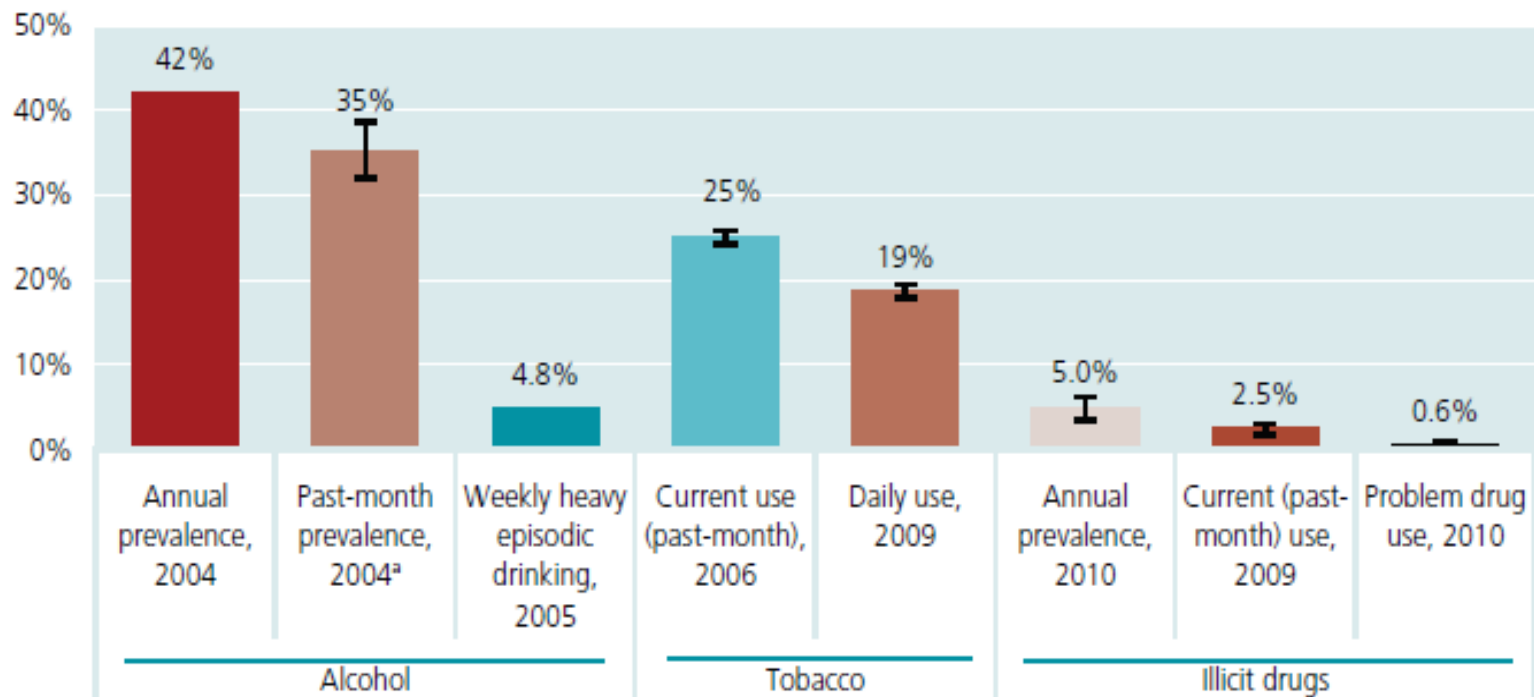
UNITED NATIONS

- Opium
- Cocaine
- Cannabis

Restricts use of narcotic substances for medical and scientific purposes only

# Result of Drug Control

**Fig. 1.** Use of licit versus illicit psychoactive substances among youth and the adult population (Percentage)



Source: Estimates for illicit drugs based on UNODC data from the annual report questionnaire; alcohol statistics: World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health* (Geneva, 2011); and *Global Health Risks: Mortality and Burden of Disease Attributable to Selected Major Risks* (Geneva 2009); tobacco statistics: World Health Organization, *World Health Statistics 2010* (Geneva 2010).

<sup>a</sup>Tentative estimate.

# Where are we at?

- Globalization of use and trade
- Interplay between regulation and control
- Discussion on costs and gains?
- Strong support for the conventions but also some criticism
- USA, Latin America (Uruguay), Portugal

# The Legalizers Narrative

War on drugs is lost and counter-productive

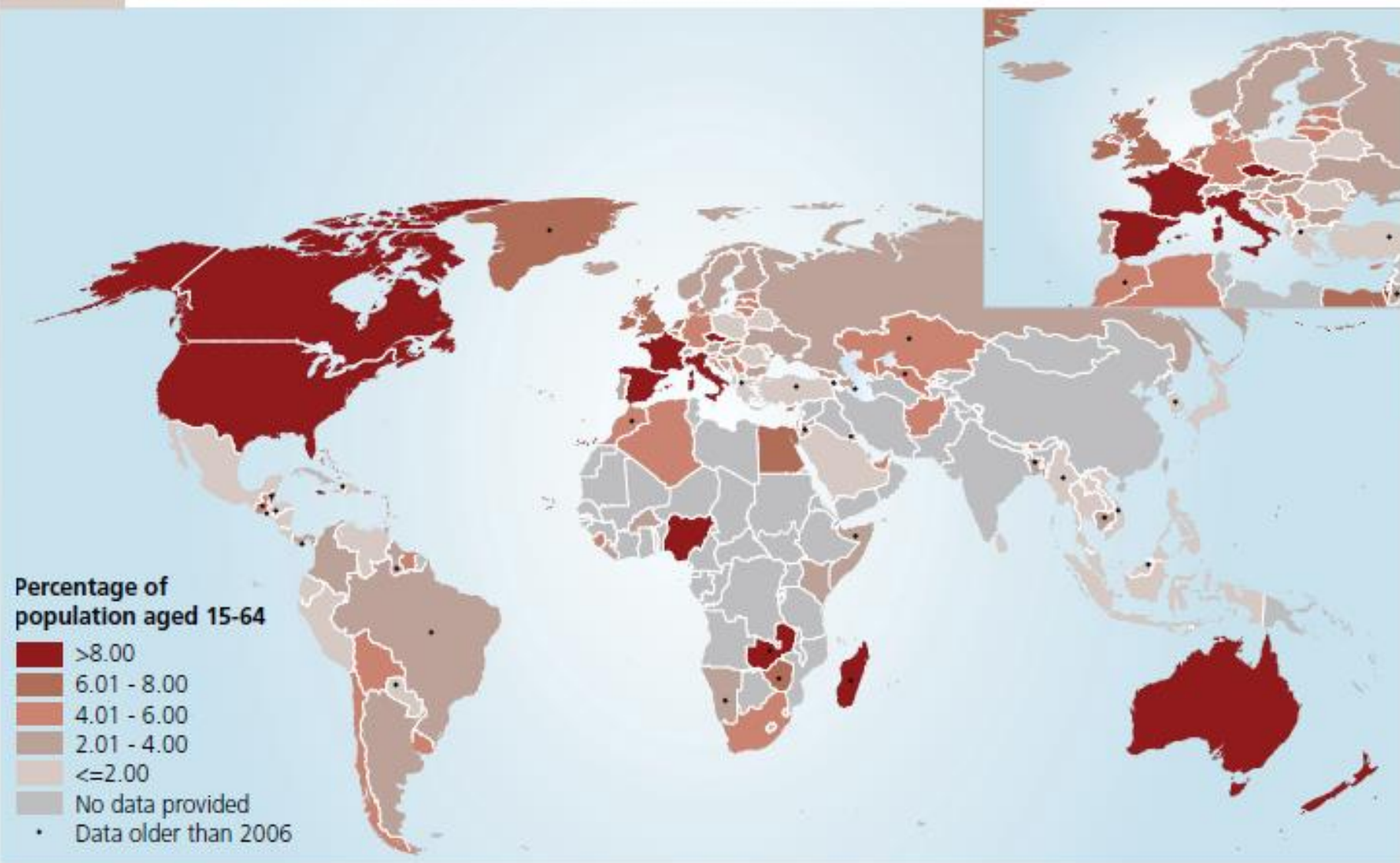


Violation of human rights, spend our resources on health (harm reduction) and treatment instead of the criminal justice system



Harm minimisation policy: decriminalization/legalization of some or all drugs, starting with cannabis

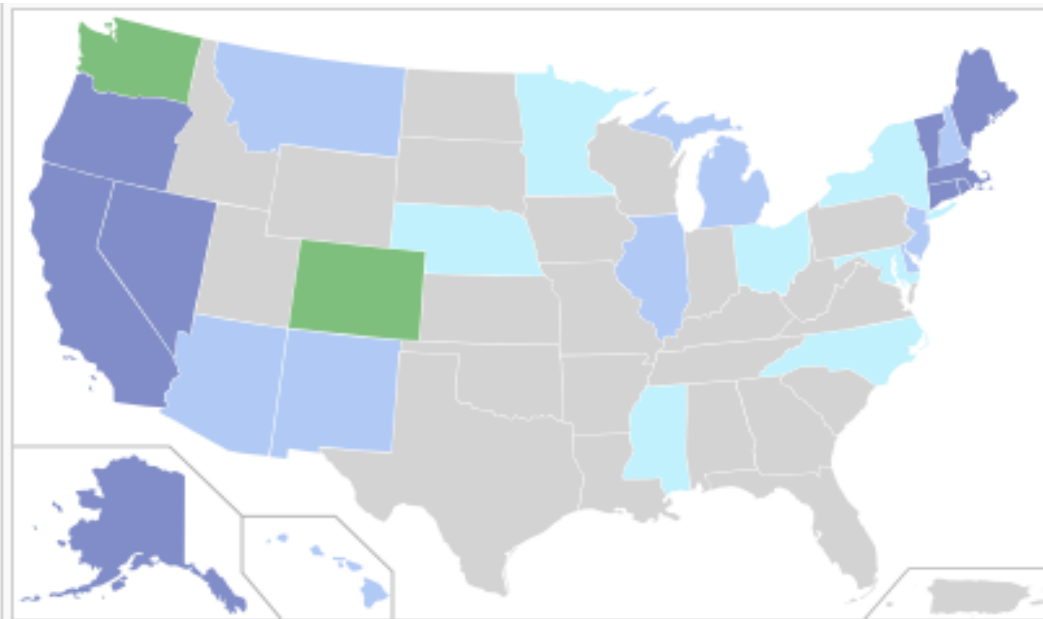
**Map 1.** Prevalence of cannabis use in 2010 (or latest year)



Source: UNODC estimates based on annual report questionnaire data and other official sources.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dashed lines represent undetermined boundaries. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

# Medical Marijuana is the road towards legalization



- State with legalized cannabis
- State with both medical and decriminalization laws
- State with legal medical cannabis
- State with decriminalized cannabis possession laws

Note: Cannabis remains a Schedule I substance under federal law as of 2013.





**grow  
the  
economy**

**LEGALIZE IT. TAX IT.**

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# Users – Activists – Commercial Interests



1866



52



U.S.

## Marijuana Use in U.S. Doubled Over Recent 10-Year Period

About 3 in 10 users are abusing or dependent on the drug, according to a new study

By [SHIRLEY S. WANG](#)

Oct. 21, 2015 11:02 a.m. ET

The use of marijuana in the U.S. doubled over a recent 10-year period, and about 3 in 10 users are abusing or dependent on the drug, according to a new study using national survey data.



# Legalization in practice

*"... The ugly truth is that Colorado was suckered. It was promised regulation and has been met by an industry that fights tooth and nail any restrictions that limit its profitability."*

- Ben Cort, Director of Professional Relations for the Center  
for Addiction Recovery and Rehabilitation at the University of Colorado Hospital

⑤ Special report, 'Clearing the Haze:' Black market is thriving in Colorado

⑤ Medical marijuana industry still growing in Colorado

⑤ Concerns over adolescents' use

⑤ Legalization didn't unclog prisons

# Ideologies and Drug Control

	Socialism	Liberalism	Conservatism
Central Value	Economic and Political Equality	Individual Freedom and self accomplishment	Protecting Communities, common sense arguments
Case for legalizers	"stigmatization of lower classes" "poor and minorities affected harder by drug control"	"breach of individual freedom"	"prohibition costs too much and can't be upheld"
Case for drug control	Drugs harm the poorest the most. Are a weapon to pacify populations	Dependency undermines free will and jeopardizes freedom	Drugs threaten social fabric of communities. Liberalization of drug laws costs more.

# Mounting a modern defense of the Mind

- Win the idea of cannabis
  - Concret harms of use based on credible facts
  - Dissect the myth of medical marijuana
  - Emphasize communitarian values (caring for each other)
- Environmental prevention
- Emphasize the roal of the criminal justice system to promote treatment and uphold norms of non-use

# Mounting a modern defense of the Mind

- Step out of the trench – honest and open debate
- Disaggregate prohibition of drugs from other issues:
  - Economy
  - crime
  - human rights
  - security
  - class
  - ethnicity etc

# Thank you for listening

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