

point may offer a valuable corrective to the ambitions of simple-minded reformers. But it is limited in its power to counter more serious critiques of institutional reform.

For fatalists looking at the project of European integration, the failings of governance structures around the euro might confirm their sense that the designers of the grand project missed something vital in developing the single currency. For while muddling through got them so far, it caused the reformers to overlook a crucial and lethal challenge by not understanding the governance structure needed to back the euro. For the architects of the EU, on the other hand, the challenge remains how to design an economic and monetary system that is dynamic and politically convincing. Reading this book would simply tell them what they already know: It is not going to be easy.

Fixing Drugs: The Politics of Drug Prohibition. By Sue Pryce. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 200p. \$105.00 cloth, \$31.00 paper.
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— James A. Morone, *Brown University*

The Daoguang Emperor staged his own version of the Boston Tea Party when he seized a shipment of opium from the British East India Trading Company and had it destroyed on a Shanghai beach. The British responded with a military assault that forced opium into a reluctant China. The result was 40 million addicts, a disintegrating state that could not protect its territory from foreign invaders, and a trope that still resonates through the contemporary drug war. As Sue Pryce sums it up in her useful primer on international drug prohibition: “Everyone wants to try drugs. If they try them they will become addicted. Addiction corrupts individuals and society and could ultimately destroy the state” (p. 16). That logic leads to dangerous policy.

Fixing Drugs: The Politics of Drug Prohibition is a fierce criticism of international drug prohibition. The book repeatedly suggests a parallel between addicts hooked on drugs and prohibitionists addicted to their global war. Two major arguments run through the book: First, prohibition is futile; drugs, oil, and guns are the top three global industries and there is no stopping their flow around the world. As Pryce puts it, “drugs win the war on drugs” (p. 113). Second, and worse, prohibition has terrible side effects. Pryce writes movingly that she is the mother of a heroin addict and is especially vivid in describing the policy’s harms.

Drug prohibition creates a lucrative black market that produces criminals, lawlessness, and violence. It makes drug use dangerous and threatens the health of users with tainted products. Prohibition bulks up and corrupts law enforcement. It erodes civil liberties and, more subtly, wears down a nation’s vigilance over its rights. Prohibition turns resources from health care to punishment. It incarcerates

addiction. Worst of all, it is a plague on weak states, which face wealthy drug barons whose money and violence destabilize governments while powerful nations (usually including the United States) continuously intervene, further undermining the states’ shaky legitimacy.

For all these harms, 185 out of 200 nations have signed on to the prohibition regime. Why? Here, Pryce offers a simple answer: The United States, aided by England and France. Prohibition, in her view, is a big power project. And morals, sociology, and economics all drive powerful nations to keep pushing their failed policies.

Pryce ticks through the familiar explanations for prohibition in the United States and Britain: First, drugs are sinful. As James Q. Wilson put it in a government report, “nicotine alters one’s habits, cocaine alters one’s soul” (p. 20). Since people cannot resist the evil, the state must step in and stop it for them.

Second, the sin triggers the fear of dangerous others who use the drugs. In England this is a matter of class; prohibitions arise when drug use percolates from the elites (who are merely decadent) to the working class (who turn dangerous). For example, when gin became widely available around 1700, England was moved to prohibition by a plague of ragged children, bruised wives, and debased workingmen. In the US, of course, it is racialized others who trigger the (sometimes fanciful) drug panics—Chinese smoked opium (in the 1870s), black men used cocaine (1910s), Mexicans smoked marijuana (1930s), and urban African Americans unleashed the crack epidemic (1980s). In every case, the addicted other was constructed as a threat to innocent people and, ultimately, the community itself. Harsher prohibitions followed.

Third, economic fears also drive prohibition. Industrial economies cannot afford addicted workers. But economics also limit the restrictions and impose a “baffling inconsistency” (p. 23) on what is banned and what is tolerated. Tobacco and alcohol are legal, cannabis and ecstasy are forbidden. “In terms of danger or harm,” comments Pryce, “there is not a lot to chose between them” (p. 23). Moreover, one nation’s illegal drug is another nation’s cash crop, and that leads to an illogical patchwork of tolerance, regulation, proscription, and hypocrisy: Spanish conquistadores tried to extirpate coca chewing until they discovered that it enabled natives to work long and harder; then they began to pay natives with the leaf. The United States and Pakistan both turned a blind eye to opium in Afghanistan when it helped finance the resistance against Russia. The inconsistency leads Pryce to reflect how a shift in global power would produce a very different prohibition regime. If the Arab world were the international hegemony, alcohol would be banned and drinkers might very well be flogged.

In the end, Pryce believes prohibition is starting to crack under the weight of its own failure and illogic. “The days of drug prohibition are not over,” she concludes, “but it is

difficult to believe they are not numbered” (p. 139). In place of prohibition, a number of more sensible strategies are springing up: Harm reduction pays more careful attention to the problems prohibition causes for individuals and communities. Decriminalization shifts the emphasis from punishment to treatment. Legalization and regulation of less addictive drugs like marijuana are taking hold in Western Europe and even in parts of the United States.

Fixing Drugs is a fine introduction to the politics of drug control. It is an especially useful guide for readers who are new to the issue or for those who have not thought about it in an international context. This is a spirited synthesis of existing work. However, specialists will find the material familiar. *Fixing Drugs* does not construct new arguments, explore new issues, or present new data.

In fact, an American audience might find the book just a half beat out of date. For example, the book quite rightly notes that prohibitions in the United States are all tied up with race. More recent writing, however, has taken that familiar argument in complicated new directions. On the one hand, scholars suggest that a racialized war on drugs amounts to nothing less than a recrudescence of Jim Crow segregation. On the other, there is much more to be said about the black community’s complicated and painful reaction to drug use and drug enforcement.

Finally, the argument would have been more persuasive if Pryce had managed to suspend disbelief just long enough to develop a more sympathetic description of the prohibitionist argument. Yes, the model failed—and failed terribly. However, it is a mistake to underestimate the logic of prohibition or the sincerity of those that espouse it. The 185 nations signing on to the UN conventions were not merely cowed by Western bluster. People around the world pursue this painful prescription and it would be useful to give them a sympathetic ear before exposing the failure of their policies.

Still, the book is a success on its own terms. Pryce set out to review the evidence and the literature on global drug prohibition. Few books do it as well as this one. *Fixing Drugs* is a beautifully written, sharply observed, and formidably argued introduction to one of the most important global policy issues. I recommend this book to anyone who needs to get up to speed on international drug regulation as well as to colleagues looking for a book to use in class.

Social Forces and States: Poverty and Distributional Outcomes in South Korea, Chile, and Mexico. By Judith

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Judith Teichman has written a nuanced comparative-historical account of the evolution of poverty and inequal-

ity in Korea, Chile, and Mexico. Following other cross-regional studies comparing East Asia and Latin America, the stylized facts are well-known. Korea sustained rapid growth that reduced poverty while maintaining a relatively egalitarian distribution of income. Chile and Mexico have historically been much more unequal, establishing one axis of comparison between the Asian and Latin American cases. But despite high levels of inequality, poverty is much less pronounced in Chile than in Mexico, the second key comparative puzzle in the book.

Teichman is not alone in pursuing this particular puzzle, nor in the choice of a comparative historical approach for tackling it; other entrants in this genre include sociologist Diane Davis’s *Discipline and Development: Middle Classes and Prosperity in East Asia and Latin America* (2004); Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman’s *Development, Democracy and Welfare States: Latin America, East Asia and Eastern Europe* (2008); Nita Rudra’s *Globalization and the Race to the Bottom in Developing Countries: Who Really Gets Hurt?* (2008) and Jim McGuire’s *Wealth, Health, and Democracy in East Asia and Latin America* (2010), with its laser-like focus on infant mortality.

Yet three analytic features of the book—at least in combination—distinguish it from these other accounts: a direct focus on social outcomes rather than on social policy; a sustained focus on “social forces,” or underlying class dynamics rather than on institutions, and particularly democracy; and analysis of how historical sequences condition the causal effect of key variables. The last point is of particular methodological importance to the larger historical-comparative exercise, which is at pains to note the highly conditional nature of causal effects. For example, land reform may prove equalizing in one context, but generate what Teichman calls “reactive sequences” in others.

As with all long-historical accounts, the inherent selection and endogeneity problems and the difficulty of comparing a small number of cases on multiple dimensions make for a complicated and variegated argument. Yet like most other studies in this vein—including my own—Teichman puts substantial weight on critical junctures or what she calls “critical *conjunctures*.” Unlike critical junctures, these “conjunctures” involve separately determined sequences that merge by coincidence and have particular reinforcing or simply distinctive effects.

Yet the causal mechanisms at work for Teichman are not simply those of chance encounters; rather, her contribution centers on what she calls “social forces.” In explicit contrast to institutional arguments (for example, p. 3), Teichman starts from the sociological premise that “social structures give rise to social forces,” and that these social forces not only constitute and constrain institutions but appear to independently account for the social outcomes being explained.

This is a tricky argument. To the extent that the analytic focus is on poverty and particularly inequality, the