

Albuquerque International Association

presents

The Global Significance of African Cannabis

Chris Duvall, PhD

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Botts Hall, Albuquerque Special Collections Library

423 Central NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102 (Central & Edith)

The global importance of African agricultural and horticultural knowledge in cannabis economies cannot be overestimated, even if it has been overlooked. Moreover, cannabis in Africa epitomizes unfair trade relationships that exist in the global economy. Bioprospectors consider African cannabis varieties important sources of genetic diversity in the highly valuable cannabis horticulture of the Global North, yet cannabis is an illegal crop for most farmers in Africa. Cannabis is diverse in Africa because farmers have practiced agricultural selection on it for centuries, with local production and consumption systems and African knowledge underlying currently predominant practices of cannabis use worldwide. Colonial administrations devalued the expertise embedded in the crop, and enacted cannabis controls in Africa that were earlier and stricter than elsewhere worldwide. Consequently, cannabis has been excluded from agricultural development initiatives in Africa, and no public institutions work to conserve crop genetic diversity. The shifting legality of cannabis worldwide warrants an evaluation of its roles in African agriculture and how cannabis genetic diversity is managed and controlled.

Dr. Chris Duvall joined UNM's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies in 2008. As a biogeographer, his research has focused on people-plant interactions from multiple perspectives, ranging from ecological biogeography to cultural studies. He has studied plants and people in Mali, historical western Africa, and current U.S. cities. He is interested in how social constructions of human difference affect access to and use of environmental resources, human-environment interactions involved in illicit drug commerce, and the environmental meanings of foods. His books *Cannabis* and *The African Roots of Marijuana* focus on his research on cannabis and other plants that enslaved people in Central Africa.

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