

Policing Illegal Drug Markets: Geographic Approaches to Crime Reduction (Criminal Justice Press Project)

George F. Rengert, Jerry H. Ratcliffe, Sanjoy Chakravorty



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A multipronged policing strategy to reduce drug trafficking in local communities is proposed in this new book by three Temple University researchers. The proposed strategy has been developed during a comprehensive study of illegal drug markets in a medium-sized East Coast city. According to the authors, the U.S. "war on drugs" has been largely ineffective, both at home and abroad. Evaluations have reported little positive impact from policies intended to: a) interdict the supply of illegal drugs imported from foreign countries; b) reduce demand for illegal substances among youths through Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) programs; and c) arrest large numbers of drug sellers during "crackdowns" in high-risk neighborhoods. The alternative strategy outlined in this book begins with detailed economic and geographic analysis of what makes particular locations attractive sites for illegal drug markets. Police then select from a menu of 76 tested crime prevention tactics intended to make those locations unprofitable for drug trafficking, with different combinations of techniques targeted at indoor sales of illegal substances, or the purchasers of illegal drugs, and/or the dealers. The authors conclude that: "The police officers who patrol on a daily basis are in a unique position to determine what the problems of a particular site are. In tackling these [drug] problems, the police should be encouraged to think beyond their traditional role as crime fighters into a new role as problem solvers."

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