



Tough Choices: Risk, Security and the Criminalization of Drug Policy (Clarendon Studies in Criminology)

Toby Seddon, Lisa Williams, Robert Ralphs

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In recent years, British drug policy has undergone a transformation: tackling 'drug-driven' crime through criminal justice interventions has arguably become the central priority and focus. The 'criminal justice turn', as the authors refer to current UK drugs policy, is based on three simple and linked assumptions: drug-driven property crime is a major driver of local area crime rates, especially in deprived neighbourhoods; the criminal justice system can be used to target these drug-motivated offenders and direct them into treatment; and treatment can lead to significant reductions in their offending.

Tough Choices: Risk, Security and the Criminalization of Drug Policy explores a series of questions about the 'criminal justice' turn in British drugs policy, from why it happened at all to what led policy to unfold in the way that it did, by analyzing policy documents and over 200 interviews conducted with key players in the policy development and implementation process. At the practice level, the authors explore how the strategic vision of the drug-crime 'problem' has shaped the ways in which drug-using offenders are identified, targeted and managed - in other words, why the implementation of the Drug Interventions Programme on the ground has taken the forms that it has. This is addressed through a detailed examination of practice in three local areas. Both the emergence of this new policy direction and its implementation in practice can best be understood as part of a wider transformation in governance in which risk-based thinking has become central to the ways in which we seek to address our contemporary insecurities.

The book is based on a 30-month ESRC-funded research project on the Drug Interventions Programme and draws on the extensive empirical data generated during the project.

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