



2006

Illicit Drug Policies, Trafficking and Use the World Over.
Cathrina Gouvis Roman, Heather Ahn-Redding
and Rita J. Simon.

Sean R. Hogan
University of California, Berkeley

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>

 Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hogan, Sean R. (2006) "*Illicit Drug Policies, Trafficking and Use the World Over.* Cathrina Gouvis Roman, Heather Ahn-Redding and Rita J. Simon.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 33 : Iss. 2 , Article 19.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol33/iss2/19>

This Book Note is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.



proportion of hard-working Americans have experienced stagnating or declining real incomes while another group of highly qualified and skilled workers have enjoyed improvements in standards of living. In addition, those with sizable assets have benefitted enormously as a result of booming investment opportunities and significant tax cuts. Globalization, outsourcing and creative destruction has not, he contends, brought the promise of prosperity to the great majority of the population.

Aronowitz writes well and makes a persuasive case that will no doubt be challenged by mainstream neoliberal economists. But it will be difficult to undermine the solid empirical data he has amassed to show that the problem of economic growth without sustainable and remunerative employment presents a huge challenge for the future. As many more families experience economic hardship and struggle to make ends meet, the paradox of jobless growth accentuates the wider problem of distorted development and demands a concerted policy response. Hopefully, his call for action will mobilize support from social workers and others who are aware of the glaring problems of poverty and deprivation in American society today.

Caterina Gouvis Roman, Heather Ahn-Redding and Rita J. Simon, *Illicit Drug Policies, Trafficking, and Use the World Over*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005, \$75.00 hardcover .

Historically, scholarship examining cross-national drug policy has been limited to the countries of North America and Western Europe. Recently, comparative drug policy has expanded to include less studied parts of the world, such as South America, Russia, and the Middle East. This expansion has allowed researchers to begin the process of synthesizing drug policy information as well as understanding the diverse social, cultural, and political responses to illicit drug use from around the world. Unfortunately, barriers to reliable research such as incomplete and poorly collected data have hampered efforts to effectively compare cross-national drug policies.

In this book, Roman, Ahn-Redding, and Simon present a compendium of comparative drug policy information from twenty-four countries around the world. The countries represented are quite diverse, ranging from the typical United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands to less well documented locations such as Nigeria, Costa Rica, and Israel. Each chapter is organized with a brief description of each country's demographic, criminal justice, drug use, law enforcement, and existing drug policy information. In this work, the authors focus primarily on cannabis, cocaine, and heroin; and the information on "trafficking" is limited to intra-country low-level drug sales between individuals rather than international drug sales related to illicit criminal organizations.

Illicit Drug Policies, Trafficking and Use the World Over is a book that leaves the reader wanting more. While the work is rich in its breadth, it is fairly modest in its detail; most chapters are less than eight pages in length. It would be easy to criticize the authors for a lack of depth if they did not explicitly state that the intent of this book is simply to encourage readers to pursue further examination of their own cross-national drug policy interests. To this extent, the authors are successful. The information in this text is interesting and informative. However, if readers are interested in comparative drug policy analysis or an interpretation of cross-national drug policy, they will be disappointed. The text offers virtually no direct comparison of drug policy information between countries but merely presents descriptive information related to each country's drug policy experience. The authors leave it up to the reader to make comparisons. Another concern for readers is the quality of data from some of the countries studied. While the authors are forthright in recognizing the dubious nature of some of the information presented, these admissions do not necessarily compensate for questionable results. Consequently, some of the information provided must be regarded with a degree of caution.

Sean R Hogan, University of California, Berkeley