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Drug Smugglers on Drug Smuggling: Lessons from the Inside. Scott H. Decker and Margaret Townsend Chapman. Reviewed by E. Michael (Mike) Gorman.

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compelling vision for retooling such models to reflect the reality of parental “sacrifice.”

Lorelei Mitchell, Portland State University

Scott H. Decker and Margaret Townsend Chapman, *Drug Smugglers on Drug Smuggling: Lessons from the Inside*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008. \$23.95 papercover.

Scott H. Decker is Professor and Director of the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University; Margaret Chapman is an associate at Abt Associates. They have written an informative account about cocaine and marijuana smugglers incarcerated in U.S. penitentiaries. They write “drug use is a major issue in the United States,” but note that to date most knowledge about smuggling comes from a few sources. Here they examine cocaine and marijuana smuggling—from Colombia to the U.S. from the perspective of drug smugglers. The book reflects the world of those engaged in the enterprise from an “emic” (or native) perspective. They do a credible job of capturing that perspective.

The book has seven chapters, two appendices, notes and references. Chapters follow a similar structure, offering a brief overview of the material and a summary of the major points. The first chapter provides an introduction to the book, its rationale, and its relationship to other work. The authors provide an understanding of the dynamics of drug smuggling and a description of interdiction efforts. Chapter 2 explains the organization of the study and its funders. The authors describe how their sample was drawn, factors they considered and how they wound up interviewing 34 drug traffickers out of 415 cases. They describe how these 34 subjects were involved in the drug trade which provided insight into how operations were organized and how they assessed risk. Here this reviewer would have appreciated hearing a bit more about human subjects concerns, given the nature of the incarcerated subjects.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 address dynamics of drug smuggling, movement of drugs and roles, recruitment and career(s) involved in drug smuggling. Some findings are surprising given

misperceptions about the drug world. The authors provide informative details about the demise of the Medellin and Cali cartels and the transition to myriad organizations characterized by significant divisions of labor. Chapter 6 describes balancing risk and reward quotients. It turns out that few subjects had much knowledge about conspiracy legislation or that they could be prosecuted, convicted and sentenced to long terms even if they were not in possession of the actual drugs.

The final chapter summarizes lessons learned from the study. The authors note that while the perception about drug smuggling is that it is "highly organized, pays high dividends, has high rewards, is easy to recruit for," the reality is different. Smugglers use small, non-interconnected cells, and there is lack of connection to institutions in the U.S., a lack of specialization, and most networks are self-contained. Such differences between perception and reality raise important questions about U.S. drug policy.

In sum, the book provides a fascinating overview of dynamics associated with cocaine and marijuana smuggling and of the challenges facing smugglers. The authors gained valuable information with respect to the sociology of the drug smugglers' worlds, and also about the perceptions of risk. They also gained insight with respect to current U.S. drug strategy, which suggests that current strategies appear out of sync with realities.

The book makes a significant contribution to the field of criminology as well as social work as the profession strives to enhance its knowledge of the ecology of drug abuse and to develop its expertise in the area of substance abuse. Social work as a profession might be well served to draw on both the methodological lessons and the knowledge of scholars such as Decker and Chapman in improving its somewhat ambivalent embrace of substance abuse as a field of specialization and an area of emphasis in U.S. social work curricula. While there has been progress in recent years (including NIDA's pilot research initiative), substance abuse is still viewed with suspicion by too many social workers and schools of social work. Social work policy educators, practitioners and those concerned about the future of the profession might inform themselves with the work of these authors.

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