



December 1994

Wheeling and Dealing: An Ethnography of an Upper-level Drug Dealing and Smuggling Community. Patricia A. Adler.

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

 Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(1994) "*Wheeling and Dealing: An Ethnography of an Upper-level Drug Dealing and Smuggling Community.* Patricia A. Adler," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 21 : Iss. 4 , Article 21.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol21/iss4/21>

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.



Low income people and those from ethnic minorities are over-represented in the proportion arrested and prosecuted for criminal acts and in the proportion accommodated by the correctional system. The popular assumption that this skewed representation reflects the true distribution of crime patterns in society has been challenged by those who claim that agencies of social control discriminate in the way they select people for processing by the criminal justice system. In addition, they argue that these discriminatory tendencies reflect wider inequalities in power and wealth in society. The criminal justice system does not operate primarily to protect the community against criminals but to maintain existing structures of power and inequality.

Although the issue is not a new one, Bridges and Myers point out that the relationship between crime, social control and inequality is poorly understood. This book presents the findings of a group of twenty scholars drawn from different social science disciplines who met at the University of Georgia in 1992 specifically to investigate the issue. The book deals with different aspects of the problem including the theoretical basis for discussions about crime and inequality, the role of the police, racism and gender discrimination in punishment, the treatment of minorities by the criminal justice system and the role of social agencies in controlling behavioral variations among children. Two chapters dealing respectively with white collar criminals and lynching and capital punishment in the South are particularly trenchant. The book is essential reading for anyone interested in the issue of crime and inequality today.

Patricia A. Adler. *Wheeling and Dealing: An Ethnography of an Upper-level Drug Dealing and Smuggling Community*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. \$45.00 hardcover; \$14.00 papercover.

The 'War on Drugs' has been waged for many years but there is little evidence that drug consumption has decreased. Although vast sums of money have been spent on law enforcement, expanded prison facilities, interdiction and similar programs, drugs continue to play a central role in American society. In the light of these facts, the continued pursuit of policies designed to suppress drug use appears to be futile. Their

futility are only more evident when sociological studies of drug use, such as those provided by Patricia Adler, are examined.

This book reports on a follow up study of drug dealing in an upper-middle class Californian community. The original study was undertaken in the late 1970s, and its findings were published in 1983. As the issue of drug abuse became more prominent, Adler sought to trace the careers of the drug dealers she originally interviewed. Using ethnographic techniques, Adler presents a powerful analysis of the reasons people enter the dangerous world of drug dealing. Her research contradicts popular images of drug dealers showing that they come from diverse backgrounds and interact symbiotically with 'respectable' society. Her finding that drug dealers are motivated by the same values and aspirations that drive America's obsession with success and glamour has profound implications for policy.

Jalna Hanmer and Sheila Saunders. *Women, Violence and Crime Prevention*. Aldershot, England: Avebury, 1993. \$59.95. (Distributed in the United States by Ashgate Publishing Co., Old Post Road, Brookfield, VT 05036)

This book reports in considerable detail on a study undertaken for the West Yorkshire Police in Britain into crime against women and the ways in which such crime can be prevented. The authors begin with the premise that crime against women is extensive but under-reported. They review numerous studies which show that much violent and sexual crime against women is committed not by strangers but by persons who are intimately associated with their victims. In addition, the way the criminal justice system responds is highly colored by gender stereotypes. Both factors contribute to the popular but fallacious perception that women are only marginally affected by crime. In fact, as the author's reveal, women are the most fearful population of all social, economic and cultural groupings in Britain today.

The study's major goal is to foster new criminal justice strategies that provide improved services to women. Particular emphasis is placed on prevention. The book combines an analysis of quantitative research with the insights of qualitative studies which focus on personal experiences and subjective