

David Boyum y Mark A. R. Kleiman  
[Breaking the drug crime link](#)  
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Reseña escrita por Mauricio Villamizar

Extensive and tedious debates have flooded the past two decades about the legalization of drugs. Hitherto, the main argument for those who oppose the process of legalization is that due to the decrease in prices, addiction would increase dramatically and the aggregate effect would turn out worse. ([See explanation](#)) Those who support legalization, state that prohibiting drugs will only encourage black markets to appear, making streets unsafe, and boosting drug-related crime.

Arguments on this topic at hand are abundant. But ideas on how to improve a society where drugs are prohibited are rarely found. In the article “Breaking the drug crime link” by David Boyum and Mark A. R. Kleiman, policy measures are proposed on how to improve a society without necessarily legalizing drugs. Several key arguments the authors highlight are the following:

-Desistance, enforced with testing-and-sanctions programs for offenders on parole, probation or pretrial release, reduce the frequency of drug use. People who remain in drug abuse are more likely to be rearrested, and those who are unable to control themselves will be quickly identified.

-Conventional drug enforcements of imprisoning hundreds of people charged with drug offense, only draw more people into the market, replacing those that are only serving temporary sentences. When released from prison, the supply of dealers increase creating a downward pressure on prices. A possible solution would be to concentrate enforcement strategies on disrupting selective markets rather than making numerous arrests.

-Since the effect of enforcement against a market is inversely proportional to the size of the market, effectiveness on reducing crime is more effective when small, emerging markets are eliminated, thus preventing the initiation of new users. Trying to disrupt large markets is almost unfeasible due to the complex organization and links it has already established.

-Minor participants in drug trafficking are most of the time charged with long sentences, making prison cells a place where only few dangerous offenders are held. Given limited prison capacity, sentences should have into consideration prior arrests, and other standards to avoid minor drug offenders and mules to fill the space of people concerning more serious threats.

Concluding the article, the authors point out that “The testing-and-sanctions idea is the only single proposal to reduce drug-related crime swiftly and dramatically. Unfortunately, that promise depends on the mobilization of more political and administrative muscle than may in fact be available”

Other ideas and arguments suggested in the article can be found in the link: <http://www.thepublicinterest.com/current/article2.html>

