

Deterrence & Proterrence in Amsterdam's Coffeeshops

Résumé

Coffeeshops are the most famous example of Dutch tolerance. Yet these cannabis distributors are highly regulated. Coffeeshops are permitted to break the law, but not the rules. On the premises, there cannot be minors, hard drugs, or more than 500 grams. Nor can a coffeeshop advertise, cause nuisance, or sell over 5 grams to a person in a day. These rules are enforced by surprise police checks, with violation punishable by closure. Two concepts are key to understanding how the policy works: deterrence—scaring people out of being bad; and, proterrence—scaring people into stopping others from being bad. In this presentation, Scott draws on a big stash of data to show how deterrence and proterrence motivate, shape, and affect obedience and rule-breaking in coffeeshops.

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Mercredi 27 janvier 2021

11h45 à 12h30

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