

Selling Drugs on Darkweb Cryptomarkets: Differentiated Pathways, Risks and Rewards

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Abstract

Cryptomarkets, anonymous online markets where illicit drugs are exchanged, have operated since 2011, yet there is a dearth of knowledge on why people use these platforms to sell drugs, with only one previous study involving interviews with this novel group. Based on 13 interviews with this hard to reach population, and data analysis critically framed from perspectives of economic calculation, the seductions of crime, and drift and techniques of neutralization, we examine the differentiated motivations for cryptomarket selling. Throughout the interviews, we observe an appreciation for the gentrified norms of cryptomarkets and conclude that cryptomarket sellers are motivated by concerns of risks and material rewards, as well as non-material attractions in a variety of ways that both correspond with, and differ from, existing theories of drug selling.

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