

## Taking Aim: Target Populations and the Wars on AIDS and Drugs (American Government and Public Policy)

Mark Donovan



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As elected lawmakers confront complex social problems, they inevitably make choices to single out certain populations for government-sanctioned benefits or burdens. Why some groups and not others are targeted is the central question explored in this analysis of the congressional response to two related public health crises.

Weaving case studies from the wars against AIDS and drugs with an empirical analysis of fifteen years of congressional action on these issues, Mark Donovan shows how members of Congress balance problem solving with re-election concerns, paying particular attention to their need to craft compelling rationales for their actions. His analysis shows that, counterintuitive as it may seem, most target populations with negative public images are selected to receive benefits rather than burdens.

Demonstrating that it is possible to analyze simultaneously both policy rhetoric and policy outputs, this book shows how problem frames and policy decisions evolve through the dynamic interplay of conflict participants.

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