



# Combating Corporate Crime: Local Prosecutors at Work (Northeastern Series on White-Collar and Organizational Crime)

*Michael L. Benson, Francis T. Cullen*

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While most believe that white-collar crime is prosecuted only by federal agencies, local prosecutors are playing an increasingly important role in the social control of corporate violators. Yet many are reluctant to take legal action at the local level because such cases often entail unique challenges and difficulties. Michael L. Benson and Francis T. Cullen present exhaustive research that combines quantitative data on cases with qualitative information on the procedural and legal constraints facing local enforcement. Drawing on extensive interviews, they investigate how local prosecutors respond to corporate crime (or whether they do at all) within a community context. As watchdogs of community morals, district attorneys and others decide which lawbreakers to pursue, but as elected public servants they may hesitate to indict companies on whose stability the community depends. Factors such as population size, region, crime rate, economic conditions, and legal culture influence a community's attitude toward corporate crime, which, in turn, influences the decision to prosecute. The authors also show that questions concerning jurisdiction, resource allocation, or appropriate punishment may dissuade local prosecutors from pursuing some cases. They address the limitations of the federal government in prosecuting corporate crime and offer suggestions to facilitate more positive action at the local level, including better access to laboratories, more information exchange and networking, and improved training. An insightful work on a too-long neglected aspect of white-collar crime, this is essential reading not only for students of criminal justice and public administration but also for practitioners who confront these special problems and obstacles every day.

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