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## **How to Measure Drug-Related Crime? A Big Challenge for the Czech Police Statistical System**

### **Jak měřit sekundární drogovou kriminalitu? Velká výzva pro český policejní statistický systém**

#### **Abstract**

The aim of the article is to introduce to the non-Czech audience the development and key outcomes of a project aimed at establishing a streamlined, systematic approach to monitoring drug-related crime in the Czech Republic. It introduces an original theoretical framework for defining drug-related crime, developed specifically for this context. While tailored to national conditions, the conceptual model and core data parameters may offer valuable insights for international application. A pilot data collection based on this project is currently underway at the police level.

**Keywords:** drug-related crime, Czech Republic, data collection, theoretical concept, police.

#### **Abstrakt**

Cílem článku je zahraničnímu publiku přiblížit proces a hlavní výstupy projektu zaměřeného na vytvoření jednoduchého a systematického monitoringu sekundární drogové kriminality v České republice. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována originálnímu teoretickému konceptu sekundární drogové kriminality, který byl vytvořen speciálně pro tento účel. Ačkoli byla teoretická východiska i klíčové parametry sběru dat přizpůsobeny českému prostředí, mohou posloužit jako inspirace i pro mezinárodní

využití. V současné době probíhá na úrovni policie pilotní sběr dat vycházející z tohoto projektu.

**Klíčová slova:** drogová kriminalita, Česká republika, sběr dat, teoretický koncept, policie.

#### *Grant support*

The article was created under the aegis of the research project “Possibilities of Detecting the Extent and Structure of Secondary Drug-Related Crime in the Czech Republic” (VI20172019053) carried out by the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention and funded by the Security Research Programme of the Czech Republic 2015-2020, run by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic.

#### *Grantová podpora*

Článek vznikl v rámci výzkumného projektu „Možnosti zjišťování míry a struktury sekundární drogové kriminality v podmínkách České republiky“ (VI20172019053) podpořeného z Programu bezpečnostního výzkumu České republiky 2015-2020 Ministerstva vnitra ČR.

## **How to Measure Drug-Related Crime? A Big Challenge for the Czech Police Statistical System**

### **1 Introduction**

Substance use and criminal offending are phenomena which are often found to co-occur. Research shows that perpetrators of criminal offences are more likely to engage in substance use in comparison with the general population. This finding holds vice versa, too, i.e. people who use drugs are more likely to be involved in criminal activities.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the evidence of substance use being associated with crime, the nature of this relationship remains rather unclear. This topic has been addressed by numerous studies which present a range of theoretical concepts, propose various categorisations

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<sup>1</sup> BEST, David et al., 2001. Crime and Expenditure amongst Polydrug Misusers Seeking Treatment: The Connection between Prescribed Methadone and Crack Use, and Criminal Involvement. *British Journal of Criminology* [online]. 41(1), 119–126. ISSN 00070955, 14643529. Available from: doi:10.1093/bjc/41.1.119

JOHNSON, Bruce D.; NATARAJAN, Mangai; DUNLAP, Eloise and Elsayed ELMOGHAZY. 1994. Crack Abusers and Noncrack Abusers: Profiles of Drug Use, Drug Sales and Nondrug Criminality. *Journal of Drug Issues* [online]. 24(1), 117–141. ISSN 0022-0426, 1945-1369. Available from: doi:10.1177/002204269402400107

KOKKEVI, Anna et al. 1993. Criminality in a sample of drug abusers in Greece. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* [online]. 31(2), 111–121. ISSN 03768716. Available from: doi:10.1016/0376-8716(93)90063-V

MAKKAI, Toni and Marni FEATHER. 1999. *Drug use monitoring in Australia (DUMA): Preliminary results from the Southport site, 1999*. B.m.: Australian Institute of Criminology.

TURPEINEN, Pirkko. 2001. Outcome of drug abuse in a 20-year follow-up study of drug-experimenting schoolchildren in Finland. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry* [online]. 55(4), 263–270. ISSN 0803-9488, 1502-4725. Available from: doi:10.1080/080394801681019129

and approaches to the subject matter, and offer evidence of the two being, or not being, related.<sup>2</sup>

Both theory and research suggest that substance use has a certain effect on criminal offending. Specifically, irrespective of the offender's individual predisposition, there is a direct relationship with certain criminal offences which would probably not have been committed unless substance use was involved. This criminal offending can be referred to as "drug-related crime".

The evident association between drug use and crime does not necessarily mean that this type of criminal offending should be unequivocally and exclusively attributed to drug use. The underlying causes should usually be sought elsewhere (e.g. socioeconomic or psychological factors). In this respect, therefore, we deliberately talk about "relationship" rather than "causality".

As regards the theoretical definition of drug-related crime, the best-known concept, built up on by the majority of the subsequent works, as well as being criticised by some authors,<sup>3</sup> is Goldstein's tripartite model, formulated in the 1980s. Depending on the type of the mutual relationship, the model distinguishes psychopharmacological,

<sup>2</sup> BEAN, Philip. 2014. *Drugs and Crime* [online]. B.m.: Routledge [accessed on 2023-01-14]. ISBN 978-0-203-07714-6. Available from: doi:10.4324/9780203077146

BENNETT, Trevor and Katy HOLLOWAY. 2007. *Drug-Crime Connections* [online]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Cambridge Studies in Criminology [accessed on 2023-01-14]. ISBN 978-0-521-86757-3. Available from: doi:10.1017/CBO9780511611315

BENNETT, Trevor; HOLLOWAY, Katy and David FARRINGTON. 2008. The statistical association between drug misuse and crime: A meta-analysis. *Aggression and Violent Behavior* [online]. 13(2), 107–118. ISSN 13591789. Available from: doi:10.1016/j.avb.2008.02.001

CLAYTON, Richard R. and Barry S. TUCHFELD. 1982. The Drug-Crime Debate: Obstacles to Understanding the Relationship. *Journal of Drug Issues* [online]. 12(2), 153–166. ISSN 0022-0426. Available from: doi:10.1177/002204268201200203

HAMMERSLEY, Richard. 2008. *Drugs and crime: theories and practices*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Crime and society series. ISBN 978-0-7456-3618-4.

MCBRIDE, Duane C. and Clyde B. McCOY. 1982. Crime and Drugs: The Issues and Literature. *Journal of Drug Issues* [online]. 12(2), 137–152. ISSN 0022-0426, 1945-1369. Available from: doi:10.1177/002204268201200202

MENARD, Scott; MIHALIC, Sharon and David HUIZINGA. 2001. Drugs and crime revisited. *Justice Quarterly* [online]. 18(2), 269–299. ISSN 0741-8825. Available from: doi:10.1080/07418820100094901

PERNANEN, Kai; COUSINEAU, Marie-Marthe; BROCHU, Serge and Fu SUN. 2002. *Proportions of crimes associated with alcohol and other drugs in Canada*. B.m.: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse Ottawa, ON.

WHITE, Helene and Dennis GORMAN. 2000. Dynamics of the Drug-Crime Relationship. In: *The Nature of Crime: Continuity and Change*. B.m.: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Criminal justice, pp. 151–218.

<sup>3</sup> PACULA, Rosalie Liccardo; LUNDBERG, Russell; CAULKINS, Jonathan P.; KILMER, Beau; GREATHOUSE, Sarah; FAIN, Terry and Paul STEINBERG. 2013. *Improving the measurement of drug-related crime*. Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy. STEVENS, Alex. 2010. Beyond the tripartite framework: The subterranean structuration of the drug-crime link. In: *Drugs, Crime and Public Health*. B.m.: Routledge-Cavendish, pp. 47–65.

economically compulsive, and systemic crime.<sup>4</sup> This framework is also reflected in the definition adopted by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.<sup>5</sup> Unlike Goldstein, however, the EMCDDA<sup>6</sup> applies this model not only to the drug use/violence relationship, but to drug-related crime in general, adding to the three core modules criminal offences involving violations of the drug legislation. According to the EMCDDA, thus, drug-related crime encompasses four types of criminal activities:

- psychopharmacological crimes, involving criminal offences committed under the influence of a psychoactive substance as a result of its acute or chronic use;
- economic-compulsive crimes, involving criminal offences committed in order to obtain the means to support drug use;
- systemic crimes, i.e. criminal offences committed within the functioning of illicit drug markets as part of the business of the supply, distribution, and use of drugs;
- drug law offences, i.e. criminal offences committed in violation of drug legislation and other related legal norms.

Some authors<sup>7</sup> extend this framework to include categories accounting for indirect links between crime and drugs. For example, a child living with a severely drug-dependent parent can have long-lasting problems caused by neglect and malnutrition. Moreover, children who are placed in foster care because of their parents' drug use are at a significantly higher risk of engaging in crime in the future than children who have grown up in stable two-parent or even one-parent households.

Given the complexity of the issue, each theoretical framing is inevitably a simplifying one. It is, however, a step that must be taken in order to find a way of grasping and describing the vague concept of drug-related crime and use it as a theoretical background for examining the phenomenon. How large a proportion of the overall crime rate is related to drug use? How are we to measure the degree of the relationship in order to attribute a specific criminal offence to substance use? How are we to identify such cases in practice? These questions are the subject of ongoing discussions among both academics and practitioners.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> GOLDSTEIN, Paul J. 1985. The Drugs/Violence Nexus: A Tripartite Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Drug Issues* [online]. 15(4), 493–506. ISSN 0022-0426, 1945-1369. Available from: doi:10.1177/002204268501500406

<sup>5</sup> On 2 July 2024, the EMCDDA became the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA). For the purposes of this article, we will use both names and acronyms according to relevant time period.

<sup>6</sup> CARPENTIER, Chloé. 2007. *Drugs and crime — a complex relationship* [online]. 2007. B.m.: EMCDDA. [accessed on 2025-05-29]. Available from: [https://www.euda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index36331EN.html\\_en](https://www.euda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index36331EN.html_en)

<sup>7</sup> PACULA, Rosalie Liccario; LUNDBERG, Russell; CAULKINS, Jonathan P.; KILMER, Beau; GREATHOUSE, Sarah; FAIN, Terry and Paul STEINBERG. 2013. *Improving the measurement of drug-related crime*. Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy.

<sup>8</sup> BEAN, Philip. 2014. *Drugs and Crime* [online]. B.m.: Routledge [accessed on 2023-01-14]. ISBN 978-0-203-07714-6. Available from: doi:10.4324/9780203077146  
CAULKINS, Jonathan P. and Mark A. R. KLEIMAN. 2014. *How Much Crime Is Drug-Related? History, Limitations, and Potential Improvements of Estimation Methods*. 2014. B.m.: U.S. Department of Justice.

Attempts at quantifying the proportion of drug-related crime are particularly associated with cost-of-illness (COI) studies. Their methodology involves the identification of relevant conditions, the exact proportion of such conditions attributable to substances, and the pertinent cost items. The attributable fraction can be determined on the basis of the correlation between the phenomenon under scrutiny and substance use, logical connection, or the isolation of other factors, e.g. in clinical trials.<sup>9</sup> Attributable costs generally include the costs of crime.<sup>10</sup> Estimates of this attributable crime were based, for example, on the statements of offenders who had been asked to consider what part of their offending was due to their drug intoxication or need to obtain money to fund their use. Self-report studies looking into the relationship between crime and drugs have typically been conducted in the United States, Canada, and Australia.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the above cases represent rather ad hoc attempts at quantifying drug-related crime or involve the results of relatively complicated and costly studies, i.e. they are not suitable for continuous monitoring. Moreover, these estimates generally account for only a part of the spectrum covered by these criminal activities. Given the complex nature of the issue, no simple formula for calculating the attributable fraction is available.

In the countries of continental Europe, in particular, because of the lack of other reliable data, estimates produced by, among others, COI studies are limited to what is

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<sup>9</sup> FENOGLIO, Philippe; PAREL, Véronique and Pierre KOPP. 2003. The Social Cost of Alcohol, Tobacco and Illicit Drugs in France, 1997. *European Addiction Research* [online]. 9(1), 18–28. ISSN 1022-6877, 1421-9891. Available from: doi:10.1159/000067730

<sup>10</sup> BARTON, William I. 1980. Drug Histories and Criminality: Survey of Inmates of State Correctional Facilities, January 1974. *International Journal of the Addictions* [online]. 15(2), 233–258. ISSN 0020-773X. Available from: doi:10.3109/10826088009040011

COLLINS, David J. and Helen M. LAPSLEY. 2008. *The Costs of Tobacco, Alcohol and Illicit Drug Abuse to Australian Society in 2004/05: (674312010-001)* [online]. 2008. B.m.: American Psychological Association. [accessed on 2023-01-13]. Available from: doi:10.1037/e674312010-001

HARWOOD; NAPOLITANO; KRISTIANSEN and COLLINS. 1984. *Economic Costs to Society of Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Mental Illness: 1980 | Office of Justice Programs* [online] [accessed on 2023-01-14]. Available from: <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/economic-costs-society-alcohol-and-drug-abuse-and-mental-illness>

PERNANEN, Kai; COUSINEAU, Marie-Marthe; BROCHU, Serge and Fu SUN, 2002. *Proportions of crimes associated with alcohol and other drugs in Canada*. B.m.: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse Ottawa, ON.

REHM, Jürgen; BALIUNAS, Dolly; BROCHU, Serge; FISCHER, Benedikt; GNAM, William; PATRA, Jayadeep; POPOVA, Svetlana; SARNOCINSKA-HART, A. and B. TAYLOR. 2006. *The costs of substance abuse in Canada 2002*. B.m.: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

<sup>11</sup> MAKKAJ, Toni and Jason PAYNE. 2003. *Key findings from the drug use careers of offenders (DUCO) study*. B.m.: Australian Institute of Criminology Canberra.

PAYNE, Jason and Antonette GAFFNEY. 2012. How much crime is drug or alcohol related? Se-reported attributions of police detainees. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice [electronic resource]* [online]. (439), [1]-[6]. Available from: doi:10.3316/informit.578766962455960

referred to as “drug law offences”.<sup>12</sup> The reason is that drug law offences can easily be identified from routine crime statistics. What cannot be derived from statistics, however, is the number of reported criminal offences associated with drugs in another way. Unlike drug law offences, these are not reported separately, as they comprise various offences, the common denominator of which is only a certain connection with illicit drug use, a characteristic which is not accounted for in the databases of crime statistics. However, this type of crime is likely to constitute a substantial proportion of the total volume of reported criminal offences and consumes considerable costs incurred in relation to law enforcement (but also in other ways).<sup>13</sup>

Additional data providing a more comprehensive picture of the spectrum of drug-related crime could therefore contribute significantly to a better understanding of the full scope of the problem associated with drug use. The importance of more thorough monitoring of drug-related crime, beyond the framework of drug supply monitoring, was also highlighted by the EMCDDA.<sup>14</sup> The EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025<sup>15</sup> uses this term particularly in the context of drug supply control and monitoring of this indicator is a part of the remit of the newly established EMCDDA successor—the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA). Finally, high quality data is vital for the planning of effective drug policy responses, including the allocation of necessary funds, and, last but not least, for the more accurate quantification of drug-related costs to society.

The concept of drug-related crime is accepted in the Czech Republic, too.<sup>16</sup> The classification used in this respect distinguishes between “drug law offences”,

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<sup>12</sup> FENOGLIO, Philippe; PAREL Véronique and Pierre KOPP. 2003. The Social Cost of Alcohol, Tobacco and Illicit Drugs in France, 1997. *European Addiction Research* [online]. 9(1), 18–28. ISSN 1022-6877, 1421-9891. Available from: doi:10.1159/000067730

GARCÍA-ALTÉS, Anna; OLLÉ, Josep Ma; ANTOÑANZAS, Fernando and Joan COLOM. 2002. The social cost of illegal drug consumption in Spain: Social cost of illegal drug consumption in Spain. *Addiction* [online]. 97(9), 1145–1153. ISSN 09652140. Available from: doi:10.1046/j.1360-0443.2002.00170.x

<sup>13</sup> ZÁBRANSKÝ, Tomáš; BĚLÁČKOVÁ, Vendula; ŠTEFUNKOVÁ, Michaela; VOPRAVIL, Jiří; and Miroslava LANGROVÁ. 2011. *Společenské náklady užívání alkoholu, tabáku a nelegálních drog v ČR v roce 2007 [Social costs of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs in the Czech Republic, 2007]*. Praha: Centrum adiktologie, Psychiatrická klinika 1. LF UK v Praze a VFN v Praze. ISBN 978-80-260-1680-9.

<sup>14</sup> EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTRE FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION., 2017. *Developing drug supply monitoring in Europe: current concepts*. [online]. LU: Publications Office [accessed on 2025-05-29]. Available from: <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2810/56933>

EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTRE FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION. A EUROPOL, 2018. *Improved drug supply indicators for Europe: progress report*. [online]. LU: Publications Office [accessed on 2025-05-29]. Available from: <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2810/176855>

<sup>15</sup> Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/49194/eu-drugs-strategy-booklet.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> GRIVNA, Tomáš; SCHEINOST, Miroslav and Ivana ZOUBKOVÁ. 2019. *Kriminologie*. 5. aktualizované vydání. Praha: Wolters Kluwer. ISBN 978-80-7598-554-5.  
CHOMYNOVÁ, Pavla; GROHMANNOVÁ, Kateřina; ČERNÍKOVÁ, Tereza; FRANKOVÁ, Eva; GALANDÁK, Daniel; and Jiří VOPRAVIL. *Zpráva o nelegálních drogách v České republice 2024* [online]. 2024. B.m.: Úřad vlády České republiky. Available from: <https://www.drogy-info.cz/publikace/vyrocní-zpravy/zprava-o-nelegalnich-drogach-v-ceske-republice-2024/>

immediately involving the unauthorised handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances or the promotion of their use and covered by the provisions of Sections 283 to 287 of Act No. 40/2009 Coll., the Criminal Code, and “other drug-related crime”. Other drug-related crime means criminal offences which have a different link to illicit drug use. Rather than involving the immediate handling of drugs, these offences are committed in connection with drug use.<sup>17</sup> Several attempts at quantifying drug-related crime have been made in the Czech Republic.<sup>18</sup> These studies suggest that this type of criminal offending accounts for a considerable proportion of the overall crime rate. None of these sources, however, can be used for continuous standardised monitoring that would cover the drug-related crime phenomenon in its full scope. The main limitation of social cost studies is that despite their efforts to achieve methodological accuracy, they are dependent on the quality of the secondary data.<sup>19</sup> The drawbacks

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VÁLKOVÁ, Helena; KUČTA, Josef and Jana HULMÁKOVÁ. *Základy kriminologie a trestní politiky*. 3. vydání. Praha: C. H. Beck. 2019. Beckovy mezioborové učebnice. ISBN 978-80-7400-732-3.

- <sup>17</sup> CHOMYNOVÁ, Pavla; GROHMANNOVÁ, Kateřina; ČERNÍKOVÁ, Tereza; FRANKOVÁ, Eva; GALANDÁK, Daniel and Jiří VOPRAVIL. *Zpráva o nelegálních drogách v České republice 2024* [online]. 2024. B.m.: Úřad vlády České republiky. Available from: <https://www.drogy-info.cz/publikace/vyrocní-zpravy/zprava-o-nelegalnich-drogach-v-ceske-republice-2024/>

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ZÁBRANSKÝ, Tomáš; BĚLÁČKOVÁ, Vendula; ŠTEFUNKOVÁ, Michaela; VOPRAVIL, Jiří and Miroslava LANGROVÁ. 2011. *Společenské náklady užívání alkoholu, tabáku a nelegálních drog v ČR v roce 2007 [Social costs of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs in the Czech Republic, 2007]*. Praha: Centrum adiktologie, Psychiatrická klinika 1. LF UK v Praze a VFN v Praze. ISBN 978-80-260-1680-9.

ZÁBRANSKÝ, Tomáš; MRAVČÍK, Viktor; FIDESOVÁ, Hana; KALINA, Kamil and Jiří VOPRAVIL. 2001. Ekonomické náklady společnosti na zneužívání nelegálních („pouličních“) drog v České republice 1998 [The Social Costs of Illicit Drugs Abuse in Czech Republic 1998]. *Adiktologie Supplementum [Vybrané substudie analýzy dopadů novelizace drogové legislativy v ČR / Selected Substudies of the Impact Analysis Project of New Drugs Legislation in The Czech Republic]*. 1, 142–189.

ZEMAN, Petr; ŠTEFUNKOVÁ, Michaela and Ivana TRÁVNÍČKOVÁ. 2015. *Drogová kriminalita a trestní zákoník*. Vydání první. Praha: Institut pro kriminologii a sociální prevenci. Studie. ISBN 978-80-7338-151-6.

ZOUBKOVÁ, Ivana; MAREŠOVÁ, Alena and Petr PŘECECHTEL. 2016. Rozhodování pachatelů sekundární drogové kriminality – výzkumný záměr. In: VEGRICHTOVÁ, Barbora (Ed.) *Bezpečnostní hrozby současnosti*. Praha: PA ČR v Praze.

- <sup>18</sup> ROUBALOVÁ, Michaela; GROHMANNOVÁ, Kateřina; ZEMAN, Petr and Ivana TRÁVNÍČKOVÁ. *Možnosti zjišťování míry a struktury sekundární drogové kriminality v podmínkách České republiky*. Vydání: první. Praha: Institut pro kriminologii a sociální prevenci, 2019. Studie. ISBN 978-80-7338-180-6.

- <sup>19</sup> ZÁBRANSKÝ, Tomas; BĚLÁČKOVÁ, Vendula; ŠTEFUNKOVÁ, Michaela; VOPRAVIL, Jiří and Miroslava LANGROVÁ. 2011. *Společenské náklady užívání alkoholu, tabáku a nelegálních drog v ČR v roce 2007 [Social costs of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs in the Czech Republic, 2007]*. Praha: Centrum adiktologie, Psychiatrická klinika 1. LF UK v Praze a VFN v Praze. ISBN 978-80-260-1680-9.

ZÁBRANSKÝ, Tomáš; MRAVČÍK, Viktor; FIDESOVÁ, Hana; KALINA, Kamil and Jiří VOPRAVIL. 2001. Ekonomické náklady společnosti na zneužívání nelegálních

of self-report prison studies include their implementation being very demanding in terms of administration and finance.<sup>20</sup> While police-level expert estimates are a promising approach with regard to the possibility of identifying the relationship between crime and illicit drug use, the current configuration of the system has its limits which make it unsuitable for continuous monitoring.<sup>21</sup>

In response to the absence of reliable relevant data a project titled “Possibilities of Detecting the Extent and Structure of Secondary Drug-Related Crime in the Czech Republic” was launched by the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention in 2017. The main objective of the project was to propose a new procedure which would make it possible to carry out simple systematic monitoring of drug-related crime in the Czech setting. Its purpose was thus to develop a tool for continuous and standardised data collection and reporting.

The objective of this article is to present the findings of the project to an international, non-Czech audience. While the project and its outcomes are specifically tailored to the Czech context, the insights gained may hold relevance for other countries facing similar challenges. The article draws upon the project’s monograph<sup>22</sup> and provides a concise overview of the efforts to identify a more effective approach to data collection.

A fundamental prerequisite for developing a methodology to measure drug-related crime is the operationalisation of the concept for data collection purposes. To this end, a new theoretical framework for defining and classifying drug-related crime has been developed. This article outlines the process of conceptual development and introduces the constituent categories of the newly proposed classification system.

## 2 Methods

The new drug-related crime data collection procedure was developed in several consecutive stages. In general, six questions needed to be addressed:

- What will be measured?
- What is the definition of drug-related crime?
- Who will collect the data?
- Who can provide the information that a crime is drug-related?

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(„pouličních“) drog v České republice 1998 [The Social Costs of Illicit Drugs Abuse in Czech Republic 1998]. *Adiktologie Supplementum [Vybrané substudie analýzy dopadů novelizace drogové legislativy v ČR / Selected Substudies of the Impact Analysis Project of New Drugs Legislation in The Czech Republic]*. 1, 142–189.

<sup>20</sup> GROHMANNOVÁ, Kateřina. 2017. Užívání návykových látek a hraní hazardních her ve vězeňské populaci ČR. *Zaostřeno*. (15(6)), 1–16.

<sup>21</sup> GROHMANNOVÁ, Kateřina; ROUBALOVÁ, Michaela and Viktor MRAVČÍK. 2020. Estimation of Economic-Compulsive Drug-Related Crime in the Czech Republic. *ADIKTOLOGIE Journal* [online]. (03/2019) [accessed on 2023-01-13]. Available from: doi:10.35198/01-2019-003-0003

<sup>22</sup> ROUBALOVÁ, Michaela; GROHMANNOVÁ, Kateřina; ZEMAN, Petr and Ivana TRÁVNÍČKOVÁ. *Možnosti zjišťování míry a struktury sekundární drogové kriminality v podmínkách České republiky*. Vydání: první. Praha: Institut pro kriminologii a sociální prevenci, 2019. Studie. ISBN 978-80-7338-180-6.



- How will the data be collected technically?
- How can the maximum reliability and validity of the data be ensured?

The first stage involved thorough desk research into the area. Analysis of the information systems maintained by the relevant criminal justice agencies (the police, public prosecutors, courts, and the probation and mediation service) and used to collect and report statistical data about crime and its perpetrators indicated that, in their current form, such systems are not usable for the purposes of systematic collection and processing of reliable data on drug-related crime. Documentary analysis (looking into the effective legislation, professional literature, strategic and policy materials, grey literature, etc.) was performed, too. It revealed that contrary to drug law offences, the definition of which is clear-cut, there is some disagreement as to what the term “other drug-related crime” actually covers. The definition is often limited to “acquisitive offences” or involves various modifications of the EMCDDA classification. Operationalisation and a single overarching definition of “drug-related crime” is, indeed, the prerequisite for the development of a method for measuring it. The desk research therefore resulted in the first draft of a new theoretical concept of drug-related crime. The mere adaptation of the EMCDDA, or Goldstein’s concept, has proven insufficient for this purpose. The unclear delineation of the individual categories and their incompatibility with the Czech setting, in particular, appear to be an issue. For example, it has turned out to be improper to rank criminal offences against intoxicated victims among psychopharmacological crime or categorise driving under the influence of drugs under offences violating the drug legislation. For these reasons, a new concept of drug-related crime and its classification reflecting the Czech setting was proposed. The aim was to create a universal definition which does not need to change according to the needs of the individual studies, as well as being compatible with the EMCDDA definition and providing grounds for a simple and clear-cut delineation for use in the monitoring of drug-related crime.

In order to ensure that the outcome reflects practical needs and resources to the greatest extent possible, throughout the process, emphasis was placed on a participative approach, i.e. working closely with data users and experts who have been concerned with drug-related issues in the context of criminal justice.

As the first step, a focus group was held with experts concerned with the issue of drug-related crime. Purposive sampling was used to address experts studying drug crime in theory and those who are involved in the practice of law enforcement. Four experts, representing the police, public prosecutors, the Ministry of the Interior, and the academic domain/NGOs, eventually participated in the focus group. The session addressed two core thematic areas: a draft of the theoretical concept of drug-related crime and the optimal method for keeping records of drug-related crime. In their discussion, the experts made a point of the concept covering the phenomenon of drug-related crime to the greatest extent possible, including any and all illegal acts which may be associated with the use and handling of illicit drugs. The objective was to develop clear guidance as to when a criminal offence is considered drug-related and beyond which point it is not and which category it should come under. In addition, emphasis was placed on such cases being easily and effectively identifiable and measurable in practice. In this respect, the experts recommended, for example, that the definition should cover only the direct relationship between illicit drug use and crime and that monitoring should be reduced to criminal offending related to current drug use

only. The transcript of the discussion was subjected to content analysis and the findings were incorporated into the proposed theoretical concept. The police level, as the offender's "first contact" with the criminal justice system, was indicated by the experts as the best point for the identification and collection of drug-related crime data. If the information about the relationship between the criminal offending and drugs is not relevant for the purposes of criminal proceedings, it is not recorded anywhere and for individuals and entities entering the criminal proceedings in their later stages and relying solely on mediated information about the circumstances of the offence, such an association is therefore virtually irretrievable. Considering the situation, a police officer dealing with the case thus has the greatest chance of disclosing and recording the relationship.

Another expert survey was conducted to verify the technical feasibility of the data collection at the police level. It was specifically aimed at identifying possibilities and limits in recording and reporting drug-related crime within the police information systems. Employing the Delphi method,<sup>23</sup> the survey was conducted among the officers and civilian staff of the Police of the Czech Republic from both national and regional bodies whose responsibilities include the collection and processing of crime-related data. The expert panel was recruited using the purposive sampling method. The selection criterion was an insight into the issue of recording crime data within the police information systems. Thirty experts eventually participated in at least one round of the survey. The data was collected by means of questionnaires distributed among the experts via email. The survey looked for the most suitable drug-related crime data collection procedure, with an emphasis being placed on the minimising of the administrative burden and the formulation of accurate, yet brief, instructions for identifying relevant cases. The survey was conducted in three rounds. First, the respondents received questionnaires which, in addition to the general information about the respondents needed to describe the research sample, included questions seeking the experts' opinions about the possible ways of identifying cases of the individual drug-related crime categories in practice and the ways of entering the information about the crime being drug-related into a selected information system of the Police of the Czech Republic. The information obtained from the experts was processed and analysed in qualitative terms. This served as the basis for the formulation of the initial working draft of the procedure to be used in recording the defined categories of drug-related crime. In the second round of the survey, the respondents were briefed about the results of the first round, familiarised with the tentative version of the procedure for collecting data about different categories, and asked to express their opinions about its suitability and feasibility and to comment on some other aspects concerning the confidentiality of the data being collected or whether such data could also be entered into other information systems of the Police of the Czech Republic. The outcomes of the second round were used to modify and extend the previous draft of the data collection procedure to take account of the major points of the respondents' input. In addition to the main results of the second round, this by now very specific proposal was presented to the respondents in the third round of the survey. At that stage, the respondents were asked to assess the practicability of

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<sup>23</sup> CEJP, Martin. 2011. *Aplikace výzkumných metod a technik v kriminologii: obecná část*. Vydání 1. Praha: Institut pro kriminologii a sociální prevenci, 2011. Studie. Vybrané metody kriminologického výzkumu, vol. 1. ISBN 978-80-7338-108-0.

the proposed solution and provide input on where the new drug-related crime data entry item should be placed within a selected information system. Following the processing and analysis of the answers from the third round and the evaluation of the findings from the survey as a whole, the first working version of a methodology for identifying the extent and structure of drug-related crime to be piloted was drawn up. The Czech Police Statistical Unit and the National Drug Headquarters were also consulted about the draft methodology throughout the process.

The proposed data collection procedure was subsequently piloted in two regions: Olomouc and South Bohemia. The aim of the pilot testing was to collect ideas and feedback from practice as regards the formulations of the individual categories of drug-related crime and the procedure for the recording thereof in the police reporting system. Another objective was to verify the feasibility of the guidelines in terms of their comprehensibility and user-friendliness. A form for recording drug-related crime cases was created for the purposes of the pilot testing which was to simulate an independent module in the information system. The pilot testing methodology differed slightly between the two regions. In both cases, however, the point was that within a certain time period (one month) the police officers assessed all the cases completed by their departments according to the instructions provided. In other words, they conducted a trial data collection procedure aimed at establishing how many cases could be identified as drug-related, which category they came under, and which drug they were associated with. The pilot data collection process was evaluated by using a questionnaire looking into the degree of comprehensibility of the instructions for recording drug-related crime, the degree of difficulty in assessing the relationship between criminal offending and drugs, the degree of difficulty in categorising the cases and determining the relevant drug, and, last but not least, the degree of the extra administrative workload. A total of 103 evaluation questionnaires were collected. The pilot testing revealed no major issues. Relevant feedback was incorporated into the final definition of drug-related crime and the data collection procedure as proposed.

### **3 Results**

The key outcome of the project is the proposal for a new procedure which will make it possible to conduct simple systematic monitoring of drug-related crime in the Czech setting. The procedure is based on an original theoretical concept. Thanks to experts' involvement in their development, both the concept and the data collection procedure reflect practical needs and resources, which makes them a strong asset and enhances their chances of successful implementation.

The theoretical framework is derived from the drug crime dichotomy involving the division into drug law offences and other drug-related crime. The concept is strict in distinguishing between these two groups. Drug law offences are thus excluded from the final categorisation, which covers (other) drug-related crime only. If a criminal offence comes under drug law offences (Section 283 to Section 287, Act No. 40/2009 Coll., hereinafter referred to as the Criminal Code or CC), it cannot be simultaneously assigned to the other drug-related crime group, even if it meets the characteristics of any of its categories (such as the distribution of drugs in order to obtain the means to purchase drugs for personal use). This approach was chosen for practical reasons, too, as it makes it possible to follow and analyse both drug crime groups separately.

Drug-related crime is divided into six subcategories ordered according to the level of association with drug use.

**Table 1.: Categories of drug-related crime**

1. Offences where the influence of drugs is part of their definition
2. Acquisitive offences
3. Offences committed in consequence of drug use
4. Offences committed in connection with another person's drug use
5. Offences committed in order to support the functioning of the drug market
6. Offences against drug users

All the drug-related crime categories account only for acts associated with any of the illicit drugs. In the event of a combination of illicit drugs and other substances (such as alcohol), criminal acts where the influence of drugs predominated are included.

### 3.1 Offences where the influence of drugs is part of their definition

The first category comprises **criminal offences where the influence of an addictive substance is part of their definition and which were committed by a perpetrator while under the influence of illicit drugs**. In the Czech Republic, this specifically applies to five criminal offences: typically, the offence of endangering others under the influence of an addictive substance (Section 274, Criminal Code), i.e. “drug driving”, and also the offences of inebriety (Section 360 CC), evasion of military service (Section 384 CC), negligent evasion of military service (Section 385 CC), and evasion of the duty to be on guard, supervise, or perform another such duty (Section 388 CC).

This category was ranked first in the classification, as, in a sense, it lies on the borderline between drug law offences and other drug-related crime. In fact, it involves “psychopharmacologically induced” criminal offending where the influence of addictive substances in combination with specific conduct is serious to the extent that such cases need to be prosecuted as criminal offences in their own right. While the above constituent elements of crime apply to all addictive substances, it can be assumed that a significant part of these criminal activities is related to alcohol. With the military-specific criminal offences as indicated above, additionally, substance misuse constitutes only one of the objective aspects of the crime. It is therefore appropriate to identify them within this classification independently, beyond the framework of the standard statistical records.

### 3.2 Acquisitive offences

The second category consists of **criminal offences where the perpetrators' main motives were to obtain the means to purchase illicit drugs for personal use or procure drugs for personal use from other individuals**. It basically coincides with the category referred to by the EMCDDA<sup>24</sup> as economic-compulsive crime. As this

<sup>24</sup> CARPENTIER, Chloé. 2007. *Drugs and crime — a complex relationship* [online]. 2007. B.m.: EMCDDA. [accessed on 2025-05-29]. Available from: [https://www.euda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index36331EN.html\\_en](https://www.euda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index36331EN.html_en)

criminal offending is typically associated with people who engage in problem (high-risk) drug use, we ranked it second in our classification. In terms of its form, this type of crime would involve especially offences against property and violent crimes, such as robbery (Section 173 CC), shoplifting (Section 205 CC), credit frauds (Section 209 CC), and embezzlement (Section 206 CC). However, it also encompasses acts involving a person resorting to a criminal offence in order to obtain drugs for personal use from another person (including stealing drugs from a dealer and robbery from another user in order to get hold of drugs). In such cases, though, the appropriation must involve a drug which the offender uses himself or herself rather than a precursor used by the offender subsequently to manufacture his or her drug. Acts committed by users as reciprocal services in exchange for drugs for their personal use (such as bodily harm (Section 146 CC) inflicted by a user on a third party at the instigation of a dealer who had promised to provide him or her with drugs) also fall into this subcategory, in addition to those committed by offenders by obtaining drugs for personal use using resources intended for meeting their statutory obligations (e.g. the failure to observe a statutory maintenance obligation (Section 196 CC) as a result of a lack of resources on the part of the offender because of his or her having spent them on purchasing drugs for personal use). Contrary to a number of other definitions, including that proposed by the EMCDDA, this category does not include drug law offences, even if committed with the intent to obtain the wherewithal for the purchase of drugs for personal use (such as drug dealing) or obtain a drug for personal use directly (e.g. drug manufacturing). As drug-related crime should be associated with current use only, neither should this category account for acts committed by current non-users, even if such offences were committed in relation to their history of drug use (e.g. when a current non-user whose previous drug career left him or her destitute commits thefts to make ends meet).

### 3.3 Offences committed in consequence of drug use

The third category covers **criminal offences committed as a result of the perpetrator's intoxication or his or her withdrawal syndrome or physiological changes related to his or her current drug use**. These involve what is referred to as "psychopharmacologically induced crime". While this type of offending has greater relevance to alcohol, it undoubtedly plays a significant role with regard to "illegal" drugs, too. It includes offences committed by impaired perpetrators, including cases of intoxication for disinhibition purposes (to "brace up" one's courage), e.g. bodily harm (Section 146 CC), robbery (Section 173 CC), theft (Section 205 CC), damage to someone else's property (Section 228 CC), disorderly conduct (Section 358 CC), etc. In addition to offences committed under the influence of acute intoxication, this subcategory includes acts committed in consequence of the perpetrator's withdrawal symptoms or changes in his or her body related to his or her current prolonged or intensive drug use (e.g. an act committed by a user in a state of toxic psychosis). The act must be related to current use. Hence, a violent crime committed by a current non-user because of a schizophrenic disorder, which he or she had developed as a result of his or her previous drug use, does not apply. The effect of a drug must be the key factor leading to the commission of the crime. Therefore, this category does not include acts in which drug use did not have a major influence on the unlawful conduct (such as shoplifting committed by a person who had used a small quantity of marijuana several hours prior to the offence, the psychoactive effects of which had

subsided by the time of the offence, although the active ingredient could still be detected in the perpetrator's body). Offences committed under the influence of drugs which the offender would have perpetrated even without having used them (such as bodily harm inflicted on a victim with whom the perpetrator had had long-term disagreements and whom he or she would have been most likely to physically assault in a given conflict even if not under the influence) do not apply, either.

### 3.4 Offences committed in connection with another person's drug use

This newly conceived subcategory encompasses **criminal offences caused mainly by drug use on the part of a person other than the perpetrator and victim**. This group differs from the previous ones in that the association with drugs concerns another person's drug use rather than the offender's. It is noteworthy that offending resulting from the victim's drug use comes under a separate subcategory. The objective was to capture other possible correlations that may arise in connection with drug use and crime. This category may cover various acts, including property offences (such as thefts – Section 205 CC and credit frauds – Section 209 CC) committed with the intent to obtain the financial means to buy drugs for another person (e.g. the offender's partner) or offences committed by a person by procuring drugs for another person using his or her own resources intended for him or her to meet his or her statutory obligation (e.g. the offence of neglecting a statutory maintenance obligation – Section 196 CC committed by the perpetrator because of his or her lack of finance as a result of spending the money on drugs purchased for his or her partner's need); i.e. a "quasi-acquisitive crime". Unlike the next category, systemic crime, this type of criminal offending is not necessarily perpetrated in order to support drug use. For example, it also accounts for violent offences committed in response to other people's drug use (e.g. bodily harm – Section 146 CC inflicted on a dealer as a revenge by a parent of a minor user whom the dealer had supplied drugs to). As with acquisitive crime, drug law offences do not belong here, even if committed with the intent to obtain a drug for another person (e.g. the manufacturing of drugs for another person or dealing in drugs in order to obtain the means to purchase drugs for another person).

### 3.5 Offences committed in order to support the functioning of the drug market

Traditionally, drug-related crime includes **offences committed as part of the activities aimed at supporting the functioning of the drug market, also referred to as systemic crimes in the EMCDDA classification**.<sup>25</sup> With this category, any associations are somewhat more difficult to identify, as the offences involved are not linked to a specific person's use. The situation is further complicated by the fact that it is sometimes challenging to draw a clear distinction between criminal offences attributable to drugs and those committed in relation to the functioning of the illicit market in general. While this subcategory is more reflective of the reality of the producing and transit countries within drug markets, it certainly has its place in a drug-related crime classification adapted to the local setting. It may encompass acts involving bribery (Section 332 CC) associated with the operation of the drug market (e.g. drug importation-related bribing of a customs officer), violent crimes among drug

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<sup>25</sup> CARPENTIER, Chloé. 2007. *Drugs and crime — a complex relationship* [online]. 2007. B.m.: EMCDDA. [accessed on 2025-05-29]. Available from: [https://www.euda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index36331EN.html\\_en](https://www.euda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index36331EN.html_en)

market operators (such as violent offences among dealers competing for sales opportunities), or acts involving money laundering (Section 216 CC) in relation to the proceeds of drug trafficking. As in the previous cases, this category does not include drug law offences, even if they involve the organisation of drug trafficking.

### 3.6 Offences against drug users

The last group comprises **criminal offences committed against drug users as a result of their greater vulnerability because of drug use**. According to the EMCDDA classification, these offences come under what is referred to as psychopharmacologically induced crime. Considering the distinctive nature of the association involved, however, it appears more appropriate to reserve an independent category for them. In particular, this group includes property crimes (e.g. theft – Section 205 CC, fraud – Section 209 CC etc.), crimes of violence (e.g. bodily harm – Section 146 CC, robbery – Section 173 CC, extortion – Section 175 CC, dangerous threatening – Section 353 CC etc.) , and sexual (e.g. rape – Section 185 CC, pimping – Section 186 CC etc.) or indecent crimes committed against victims who have their defence capabilities compromised as a result of intoxication, or, as the case may be, offences against property (such as fraud) committed against victims whose drug-induced impairment of cognitive capacities makes them easier to deceive. Importantly, the perpetrator does not necessarily have to be aware that the victim's vulnerability is enhanced by drug use. This category also accounts for offences against highly vulnerable victims, the perpetrators of which were not particularly aware of any link between the victims' greater vulnerability and drug use (e.g. theft committed against a highly intoxicated victim whom the offender had singled out for his or her apparent incapacity without the former knowing whether such a state was due to substance use or illness). However, it does not cover criminal offending where a drug is used by the offender as a means of committing the crime. This includes offences involving the victim using the drug unknowingly and involuntarily (such as those committed after the perpetrator had, unnoticed, spiked the victim's drink with a drug and rendered him or her helpless).

The term "drug-related crime" is often used to refer to situations when an offender engages in drug law offences, especially drug dealing, in order to finance his or her own use. Within the concept presented here, however, such criminal offences are not regarded as drug-related crime. They are nevertheless a truly interesting and important indicator, as was also pointed out by the experts participating in the focus group. It would therefore be advisable to follow these criminal activities, too, although they lie beyond the scope of the proposed concept.

Concerning the possible ways of monitoring drug-related crime, the research has shown that it would be ideal to integrate it into the existing official crime statistics system, which would enable continuous and standardised data collection and reporting. The data collection guidelines were developed as part of the project. The guidelines provide instructions on how to establish a procedure for the unified, systematic, and continuous monitoring of drug-related crime by simply incorporating the relevant data collection process into the existing police reporting system. The guidelines are intended for police officers at the frontline departments who deal with specific cases and enter data into the information system. These police officers, who will use their insight into cases to determine any relationship between the offence

and drugs and record the data, can find in the guidelines clear and comprehensible instructions as to when an offence should be recorded and when it is not relevant to do so, including practical examples and prompts. The data collection procedure was designed in such a way as to pose a minimum burden for the police officers in terms of time and administrative work.

## **4 Conclusions and discussion**

The key outcome of the “Possibilities of Detecting the Extent and Structure of Secondary Drug-Related Crime in the Czech Republic” project is a new procedure which allows simple systematic monitoring of drug-related crime in the Czech setting. It is a tool for continuous and standardised data collection and reporting.

The procedure is based on an original concept intended to cover the phenomenon of drug-related crime to the maximum extent possible for it to include all and any unlawful conduct associated with the use and handling of illicit drugs in the context of the Czech Republic. Drug-related crime is divided into six categories, ranked according to the degree of their association with drug use: offences where the influence of drugs is part of their definition, acquisitive offences, offences committed in consequence of drug use, offences committed in connection with another person’s drug use, offences committed in order to support the functioning of the drug market, and offences against drug users.

As regards the feasibility of monitoring drug-related crime, the survey carried out as part of the project has shown that the best solution would be to incorporate its monitoring into the existing official crime statistics system. In this respect, data collection at the police level appears to be the most promising approach, as this is where offenders’ “first contacts” with the criminal justice system take place. Guidelines providing instructions as to how to identify drug-related crime and assign it to one of the proposed categories were developed as part of the project. The data collection procedure was designed in such a way as to impose the smallest possible burden in terms of time and administrative workload. Its technical and practical feasibility was verified during the pilot testing. The guidelines received certification from the Police Presidium.

This marked the official end of the project. The developed guidelines were handed over to the Police of the Czech Republic for independent use, and the implementation of the procedures continued beyond the project’s formal scope. Unfortunately, the research team was not actively involved in this implementation phase. While it is widely acknowledged that introduction data collection within police structures and system is a complex and demanding task—requiring extensive negotiation and coordination—the absence of the research team may have contributed to the underestimation of several critical factors that could have facilitated smoother implementation.

This was particularly evident during the communication phase, where limited time was available to thoroughly explain the rationale behind the procedures, motivate data collectors, and persuade senior officers and decision-makers of the long-term benefits. Additionally, there was insufficient focus on ensuring that the guidelines were clearly understood and effectively communicated across all levels. These missed



opportunities underscore the importance of sustained engagement and support beyond the formal end of a project.

Despite these challenges, pilot nationwide data collection was launched by the Police of the Czech Republic in 2024. Unofficial feedback indicates that the initial phase encountered some difficulties, raising concerns about the reliability of the preliminary statistical reports. Nevertheless, corrective measures are currently being undertaken and it is hoped that the expected data will become available in the near future. Although the concept and the drug-related crime reporting procedure based upon it are adapted specifically to the Czech setting, the theoretical concept that was devised and the core parameters of the data collection may serve as inspiration for other countries.

The development of a mechanism for determining the proportion of criminal offending attributable to addictive substances is not an easy task. The relationship between drug use and crime is dynamic and affected by numerous factors. People who use drugs represent a very heterogeneous group. Many of them commit no offences other than the possession of drugs for personal use. Salient factors would include lifestyles and setting, sources of income relative to drug use and the prices of drugs, the patterns and frequency of use, and the user's ability to "control" their use.

Involving a more accurate theoretical framework and data collection procedure, the solution as proposed provides a possible way of at least coming close to knowledge of the actual extent of drug-related crime. Even if the data collection is carried out following the proposed procedure, nevertheless, it will hardly be possible to regard the data obtained in such a manner as the ultimate accurate picture of drug-related crime. It is virtually impossible to establish with certainty whether a specific criminal offence would have occurred if it had not been for drug use.

The data obtained always needs to be interpreted in terms of its apparent limits. It may not always be easy for a police officer to identify drug-related offences and one can reasonably assume that in many cases it may in fact be impossible. On the other hand, a person making an entry may tend to mislabel a criminal offence as drug-related just because, for example, it was committed by a person who uses drugs, without examining the circumstances in any greater detail.

Without sufficient information, which is often not so obvious, it is not easy to resolve whether an offence was committed in association with drug use, unless it is determined by its definition. The question is, for example, whether all criminal offences committed "under the influence" can simply be attributed to drugs. Ideally, only criminal offences which the perpetrator would not have committed if it had not been for his or her intoxication or addiction, while his or her control and recognition capacities were not completely impaired, should be identified as psychopharmacologically induced. Multiple factors come into play here, including the type of substance, dosage, route of administration, individual characteristics, and biological aspects, such as tolerance, as well as the social context which people act in.<sup>26</sup> The situation is further complicated by the fact that in many cases the effects of multiple drugs, rather than a single one, are involved. Additionally, significant biases may occur through ignoring the role of alcohol.

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<sup>26</sup> PERNANEN, Kai. 2002. *Proportions of crimes associated with alcohol and other drugs in Canada*. B.m.: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse Ottawa, ON.

It is therefore important also to look for correlations between different types of offending and the individual types of drugs, including their combinations.<sup>27</sup> Each case needs to be treated individually.

Moreover, not all people who use drugs necessarily “make a living” by engaging in criminal activities. “Economic-compulsive crime” will obviously not be a major issue among people who use drugs with a lower addictive potential, such as hallucinogens or cannabis, which, also because of their relative inexpensiveness, will probably be affordable for the users without having to break the law. Neither does it inevitably hold for drugs such as heroin or methamphetamine that these substances must be responsible for any criminal activities their consumers become engaged in. It is impossible to determine a universal criminogenic effect of a specific type of substance.<sup>28</sup>

The situation is no less complex with regard to what is referred to as “systemic crime”. In addition to enforcing “the law” and protecting “private property”, violence is used as a way of managing the sphere of influence on drug markets. The presence of violence on drug markets makes it more likely for users to become perpetrators or victims of violent crimes. On the other hand, such acts may show a high level of latency. Because of the illegal nature of these activities, such concomitant phenomena are rarely reported and registered. This type of delinquency thus often remains set aside even in attempts at quantifying drug-related crime.<sup>29</sup>

Hence, the relationship between drug use and crime must always be assessed in context with other elements which may have an effect on the onset, duration, and frequency of a specific individual’s criminal offending rather than in isolation. While substance use is generally recognised as a risk factor for crime, as stated earlier, this does not always involve a causal relationship.<sup>30</sup> Any attempts at quantifying drug-related crime thus face a number of challenges.

In view of the above, it can be reasonably presumed that some categories will be overreported while others remain underreported because of the lack of necessary information. The data collection will always be primarily influenced by the subjective view of the person who decides whether a criminal offence meets the characteristics as set out. This is a limitation, however, which always needs to be taken into account when recording data on aspects of crime which is not totally straightforward.

In addition to being costly, capturing only a part of the target group and making it impossible to conduct continuous monitoring, offenders’ self-reports, for example, may

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<sup>27</sup> PACULA, Rosalie Liccardo; LUNDBERG, Russell; CAULKINS, Jonathan P.; KILMER, Beau; GREATHOUSE, Sarah; FAIN, Terry and Paul STEINBERG. 2013. Improving the measurement of drug-related crime. *Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy*.

<sup>28</sup> BEAN, Philip. 2014. *Drugs and Crime* [online]. B.m.: Routledge [accessed on 2023-01-14]. ISBN 978-0-203-07714-6. Available from: doi:10.4324/9780203077146

<sup>29</sup> PACULA, Rosalie Liccardo; LUNDBERG, Russell; CAULKINS, Jonathan P.; KILMER, Beau; GREATHOUSE, Sarah; FAIN, Terry and Paul STEINBERG. 2013. Improving the measurement of drug-related crime. *Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy*.

<sup>30</sup> ŠTEFUNKOVÁ, Michaela. Drogy a kriminalita – jaký je mezi nimi vztah? *Adiktologie Journal*. (3/2011), 156–164.

tend to absolve the offender of guilt by claiming substances were “responsible” for their intentional acts.<sup>31</sup>

The degree of subjectivity should be minimised by specific instructions contained in the guidelines, which provide a clear clue as to when an act should be identified as drug-related and how it should be classified without undue hesitation. Not even the most thorough guidance in itself, however, guarantees the quality of the data obtained. In this respect, the key factor is the police officer’s commitment to recording the data accurately. Their motivation may not be high if the data collection is viewed as an unnecessary extra administrative burden which keeps the police officers from their day-to-day law enforcement work. It is therefore vital that the final chosen data collection procedure is designed to be as simple as possible and its purpose and the prospective benefits of its implementation properly explained to the officers involved.

Attention should be focused on data protection, too. While it is collected as part of a criminal investigation, the data is primarily intended for statistical purposes. It is therefore imperative that its anonymity is maintained and it is disclosed in aggregate form only. Presumably, the police possess appropriate mechanisms against data misuse which are already applied when data is collected.

Moreover, it should be advocated that the data generated by means of the procedure as proposed is not the only source of information about drug-related crime but that other sources are used to feed in the relevant information where possible. The aim of the project was to devise a procedure making it possible to estimate the proportion of drug-related crime in the registered criminal offences. The data obtained in such a manner thus provides no indications as to latent crime.

Finally, it is essential to recognize that quantifying drug-related crime is an inherently complex task—even at the theoretical level, as discussed throughout this article. Therefore, data collection must be grounded in practical realities, otherwise, the process risks becoming disconnected from actual practice, leading to wasted time and effort for everyone involved. In this sense, the conclusion of the project does not mark the end of the work—it marks the beginning of the most demanding phase. The next critical step is to ensure that the collected data is interpreted within the appropriate context, with the limitations clearly acknowledged and communicated. This phase can be supported through targeted training, ongoing collaboration between researchers and practitioners, and the establishment of feedback mechanisms to continuously refine both the data and its interpretation.

In the Czech Republic, we are currently facing significant challenges in this implementation phase. It appears that the process may not have been set up optimally, as the data collected so far does not meet expectations. Furthermore, the consistency and reliability of the data depends heavily on the officers’ willingness to fill out the required forms carefully. Unfortunately, feedback from the police shows that many officers lack this motivation. These difficulties highlight the critical need for sustained support, clear communication, and practical adjustments during the transition from research to practice.

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<sup>31</sup> BEAN, Philip. 2014. *Drugs and Crime* [online]. B.m.: Routledge [accessed on 2023-01-14]. ISBN 978-0-203-07714-6. Available from: doi:10.4324/9780203077146

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