

DRUGS, CRIME, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

THEORY, RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND POLICY



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PREFACE

Surveys administered to high school students, studies carried out on jail and prison inmates, and interviews conducted with substance abusers undergoing treatment all point to the same conclusion: that is, drugs and crime are strongly correlated. Why they are correlated is harder to decipher. Comprehending the nature and implications of this relationship could go a long way toward managing the ubiquitous problem of drugs and crime in society. A cursory review of the literature reveals that the drug–crime connection is complex and multifaceted; so complex, in fact, that it is a misnomer to refer to the relationship in the singular as there are multiple drug–crime connections. In an attempt to understand these connections, this book explores several different drug–crime nexuses, from the simple unidirectional model (drugs cause crime or crime causes drugs), to the more intricate bidirectional model (drugs and crime are reciprocally related), to several third-variable models (moderation, mediation, epiphenomenal).

The purpose of this book is to provide an overview and analysis of the many facets of drug–crime relationships. To accomplish this, the book is divided into four parts. The first part contains the first four chapters of the book and provides an introduction and overview of theories on drugs, crime, and their relationships. The next four chapters are covered in the second part of the book, which explores the relevant research on the biological, psychological, sociological, and static/situational correlates of drug–crime relationships. The three chapters that comprise the third part of this book explore the practical implications of drug–crime connections for the criminal justice system, offender assessment, and treatment programming. The fourth part of this book encompasses the final four chapters and examines the policy implications of the drug–crime relationship as they pertain to prevention, harm reduction, and society’s response to drugs and drug-related crime.

Given the overlap that exists between drugs and crime, it is not surprising that it is often difficult to separate the two. The opening chapters of this book nevertheless attempt to do just this by discussing drugs and crime separately to set the stage for later discussions on drug–crime relationships. Chapter 2, for instance, focuses exclusively on drugs and Chapter 3 concentrates solely on crime. As the book proceeds, however, the boundaries between drugs and crime begin to blur. In Part II (Research), the drug, crime, and drug–crime correlates of each biological, psychological, sociological, and status/situational variable are reviewed in sequential subsections, whereas in Part III (Practice) drugs and crime are discussed in the same subsection. By the time we get to Part IV (Policy), the overlap is nearly complete. Here, drugs and crime are no longer discussed separately but simultaneously. All of this is designed to provide the reader with a complete understanding of drugs, crime, and their relationships.

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