

Estimation of Economic-Compulsive Drug-Related Crime in the Czech Republic

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BACKGROUND: Drug-related crime has multiple characteristics. Crimes committed to acquire drugs represent a significant part of it. This article presents detailed results of a study performed by the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction in cooperation with the National Drug Headquarters in 2018.

AIMS: The aims of the study were to estimate the range of crimes committed by drug users attempting to obtain funds for purchasing drugs for personal use and provide insights into the structure of this group of crimes.

METHODS: The study was designed as a cross-sectional questionnaire survey. The respondents were police officers working in regional departments. Data was collected through a 42-item questionnaire. The estimate was related to 2017. **SAMPLE:** A total of 80 territorial districts of the police were contacted, 78 of which completed the questionnaire.

RESULTS: In 2017, drug users committed an estimated 46,300 crimes in order to acquire funds for personal drug use, which represented 23% of all the crimes registered in that

year. Converted to cleared-up offences, an estimated 14,400 crimes (i.e. 15% of cleared-up offences) were committed by drug users. The most frequent offences included simple theft, burglary, and the manufacturing, distributing, and other unauthorized handling of drugs. The highest proportion of offences committed by drug users was estimated for the unauthorized handling of drugs, theft, unauthorized possession of payment instruments, and burglary.

CONCLUSIONS: Despite the limitations of the methodological framework, the study provided valuable insights into the incidence of drug-related crime in the CR, as this data is not collected in any existing data collection system. The results suggest that drug-related crime represents a significant share of the total registered crime and special attention should be paid to this problem. At the same time, in interpreting the results, the identified drawbacks and limited scope of the study need to be borne in mind. Therefore particular effort should be invested in the improvement of data collection in this area.

Keywords | Drug Use – Criminality – Illegal Drugs – Drug Related Crime – Acquisitive Crime – Economic-Compulsive Crime

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● 1 INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH TOPICS, AND AIMS

Drug-related crime is a widely and relatively unspecific and yet frequently-used term. Besides crimes directly involving drug handling, other criminal offences associated with illegal drugs are usually also included. Therefore, charting and subsequently evaluating the extent of drug-related criminality in its entire range is relatively complicated (EMCDDA, 2007).

While an overview of criminal offences that break the law regulating the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances (illegal drugs) is easily accessible because of accurate criminal authority records, the situation regarding other criminal offences associated with drug consumption and the drugs scene or market is much more complicated. The link between drug consumption and other offences – with rare exceptions such as endangerment under the influence of an addictive substance, which, moreover, does not distinguish whether the perpetrator was under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol – has no conceptual character from the point of view of legal or tactical-statistical classification. Therefore, exact and reliable identification of such cases in official databases containing records of criminal offences is not possible. It is estimated, though, that this type of criminality constitutes a significant part of the total volume of committed/registered crime, and considerable resources are deployed on its prosecution in terms of expenditure on law enforcement (EMCDDA, 2017; Singleton, Cunningham, Groshkova, Royuela, & Sedefov, 2018).

Although drug-related crime is referred to as one of the significant negative aspects of drug use, key documents defining drug policies affect only a part of it. In the EU Drug Strategy, which defines the drug policy of EU Member States and its priorities, drug-related criminality is given much attention, but because of the absence of relevant information its scope is reduced solely to a crime of breaking the law regulating the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances. The aim is therefore to reduce the availability of illegal drugs by combating their production and distribution. Other drug-related crime is implicitly included as a negative consequence of drug use under reducing demand, but it is not mentioned specifically. In the same spirit, a follow-up action plan is prepared (General Secretariat of the European Council, 2013a, 2013b).

The National Strategy to prevent and reduce the harm associated with addictive behaviour in the period 2019–2027 also devotes considerable attention to the criminal offences that break the law regulating the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances and law enforcement with the aim of reducing the availability of drugs. It also mentions crime (along with unemployment and family and social problems) as a negative social impact on drug users and addicts and emphasizes harm reduction interventions in this regard (Sekretariát Rady vlády pro koordinaci protidrogové politiky, 2019).

Mapping drug-related crime in the Czech Republic is currently part of the regular collection and evaluation of data carried out by the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction. This includes collecting information about criminal and administrative offences that violate the legislation regulating the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances, as well as the implementation of an expert estimate of the extent of the crimes committed by drug users attempting to obtain funds to purchase drugs. Information collected by the police about offences committed while under the influence of addictive substances is also regularly evaluated (Mravčík et al., 2018).

The article presents extended results of a study whose basic results were published in the Annual Report on the Drug Situation 2017 – Czech Republic (Mravčík et al., 2018). New data on the structure of criminal offences committed by drug users to raise funds for drug use is introduced here. 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”. The main objective of this project was to design a new procedure for detecting the extent and structure of secondary drug-related crime in the Czech Republic in order to obtain a realistic and evidence-based estimate of this phenomenon. The present study was analysed and critically evaluated under this project as currently, it represents practically the only available source of information on drug-related crime in the Czech Republic.

Crime and drug use are phenomena that have often been observed as occurring at the same time. Their relationship has been examined in many studies. Crime is usually linked to patterns of drug use, which are referred to as problem drug use or addiction syndrome (EMCDDA, 2007). For example, according to a British study on detained offenders, heroin users or users of heroin combined with cocaine or crack have a significantly higher illicit income than those who have never used drugs or used drugs other than heroin, cocaine, or crack (Holloway, Bennett, & Lower, 2004). Determining the cause and impact is rather complicated. Some authors see the use of drugs as a clear cause of crime (Collins, Hubbard, & Rachal, 1985; Menard, Mihalic, & Huizinga, 2001; Speckart & Anglin, 1985), while others are convinced that committing crime leads to drug use (Dietze et al., 2013) or that the perpetration of crime and drug use are caused by the same factors (White & Gorman, 2000). However, according to several authors, there is no clear relationship between drug use and crime, and the relationship can best be explained by the use of a set of identical factors (Welte, Zhang, & Wiczorek, 2001; White & Gorman, 2000).

A frequently-quoted conceptual framework for analysing drug-related crime is the tripartite model proposed by Goldstein, according to which drugs lead to violence through the integration of psychopharmacological, economic-compulsive, and systemic factors (Goldstein, 1985).

It is from the Goldstein model that the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) has devel-

oped a definition of the concept of drug-related crime. The term “drug-related crime” includes four types of crimes, namely psychopharmacological crimes, economic-compulsive crimes, systemic crimes, and offences violating the legislation regulating the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances. Psychopharmacological crimes are offences committed under the influence of a psychoactive substance as a result of acute or chronic use. Economic-compulsive crimes include offences committed to fund drug use (or obtain the drugs themselves). Criminal offences committed during the operation of illegal drug markets as part of the illicit supply, distribution, and use of drugs are identified as systemic offences. Finally, there are offences that violate the legislation regulating the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances, i.e. drug dealing, trafficking, or possession of drugs for personal use (EMCDDA, 2007).

In the Czech context, the term “drug-related crime” often includes two groups of offences – primary and secondary drug-related offences. Primary drug crime is defined as offences that directly concern the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances (Sections 283–287 of the Criminal Code, Act No. 40/2009). Secondary drug crime is a crime that does not directly involve the handling of drugs but is related to their use (Mravčík et al., 2019). Although the term “secondary drug-related crime” is often used in the Czech context, no unambiguous or exact definition exists (Zábranský, Běláčková, Štefunková, Vopravil, & Langrová, 2011; Zábranský, Mravčík, Gajdošíková, Kalina, & Vopravil, 2001; Zeman, Štefunková, & Trávníčková, 2015). But there are also authors who do not distinguish between primary and secondary drug-related crime. For example, Válková, Kuchta, Hulmáková, et al. (2019) describe five groups of drug-related offences: drug-related offences in the narrow sense (criminal offences involving the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances), drug-related offences in the broad sense (criminal offences involving promoting the use of drugs), criminal offences committed for the purpose of obtaining drugs or funds to obtain drugs, criminal offences committed under the influence of drugs, and criminal offences committed against drug users.

Eliminating this terminological inconsistency was one of the objectives of the project under the aegis of which this article was created. Another particular aim of the project was to define the concept of secondary drug-related crime for the needs of practice in the Czech Republic, both in the context of foreign and domestic concepts and with regard to the specifics of this type of crime. The proposed comprehensive definition of drug-related crime includes seven categories (Roubalová, Grohmannová, Trávníčková, & Zeman, 2019):

- criminal offences related to a violation of the legislation regulating the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances;
- criminal offences in which substance abuse is a factual element of the crime and which are committed under the influence of drugs (e.g. endangerment under the influence of an addictive substance – “drug driving”);

- criminal offences where the perpetrator’s primary motive is to obtain funds for purchasing drugs or acquiring drugs for personal use (e.g. theft committed in order to obtain funds for purchasing drugs or acquiring drugs for personal use);
- criminal offences committed as a result of acute intoxication or chronic drug use (e.g. violence under the influence of drugs);
- criminal offences committed by the perpetrator in response to the use of drugs by other persons (often persons close to the perpetrator, e.g. robbery committed in order to get money and buy drugs for the perpetrator’s partner);
- criminal offences committed in connection with ensuring the functioning of drug markets (e.g. bribery of a customs officer to let a drug consignment cross a border);
- criminal offences where the main trigger was increased vulnerability to becoming a victim—caused by the victim’s acute or chronic drug use (e.g. the rape of a strung-out drug user).

The first category above can be defined as primary drug crime according to the terminology used, while the other categories fall under the concept of secondary drug crime.

The extent of secondary drug crime and its proportion in the total volume of crime committed has not yet been summarized. Given the ambiguous definition of secondary drug crime and the nature of the phenomena under research, mapping drug-related crime is a difficult task. For most of the defined categories of secondary drug crime no reliable data is available (Roubalová et al., 2019).

The present study, carried out in the context of the monitoring of drug crime conducted by the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction, represents a rare attempt to quantify secondary drug crime – or a certain part of it. Its aim was to map the overall extent and structure of criminal activity committed by drug users attempting to raise funds to acquire drugs for personal use and to continually evaluate trends in this area.

The definition of drug-related crime in this study corresponds to economic-compulsive crimes as defined by the EMCDDA (EMCDDA, 2007). It therefore includes offences related to violations of the legislation regulating the unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances (referred to as primary drug crime) committed with the intention of acquiring drugs. The main reason is the motive for the criminal behaviour, not legal qualification of the deed. The present study was based on expert estimates of drug offences committed by drug users attempting to raise funds to acquire drugs for personal use. The National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction implemented the study in cooperation with the National Drug Headquarters and Police Praesidium of the Czech Republic.

● 2 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND DATA COLLECTION

The study was conceived as a repeated cross-sectional questionnaire survey. A questionnaire created for these purposes in previous waves of the study was used for the data collection. The items in the questionnaire were selected from the classification system used by the police to report crime in their Crime Statistics Recording System (*Table 1*). The police recording system includes 200 items in total (Policejní prezidium ČR, 2018). Items recorded into this system partially refer to crime in accordance with the Criminal Code (Act No. 40/2009 Coll.); however, some consist of two or more offences (e.g. the theft of dual-track motor vehicles involves the crime of theft and the crime of the unauthorized use of someone else's property) or specify the crime in detail (e.g. the crime of theft represents several items in the system, such as car theft, pickpocketing, or theft during sexual intercourse) (Roubalová et al., 2019).

Type of crime	Number of items in the police recording system	Number of items selected for estimation
Violent crime	34	6
Moral crime	15	0
Property crime	37	31
Other crime	23	1
Remaining crime	23	1
Economic crime	65	3
Military and unconstitutional offences	3	0
Total	200	42

Table 1 | Number of items in the police recording system and the number of items selected for estimating offences committed by drug users attempting to obtain funds in order to acquire drugs according to the type of crime

The list of items for estimating secondary drug crime was designed under a pilot project in 2003 (Mravčík et al., 2004). Representatives of the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction and the National Drug Headquarters were involved in preparing the list. The selection of items was motivated by the effort to minimize the administrative burden on the police officers who make the estimates. The criminal offences apparently most often committed by drug users were selected. The list contained a total of 42 items (offences) (Roubalová et al., 2019).

The questionnaire contained selected offences listed in a two-column table. The first column consisted of selected offences arranged one by one in the same order as listed in the police recording system. The second column was intended for the filling-in of the estimated proportion of drug users as offenders who committed the given offence in 2017. Instructions on how to fill in the table formed part of the request for cooperation. The police officers were instructed to estimate the proportion of each crime listed in

the questionnaire in their district committed by drug users attempting to raise funds in order to acquire drugs for each selected item. In the case of the production, distribution, and other handling of drugs (Section 283 of the Criminal Code, Act No. 40/2009), the respondents reported an estimate of the proportion of offenders who received funds to cover their own consumption by manufacturing, smuggling, or selling drugs.

Besides the estimates, no other data was collected regarding the selected offences. The questionnaire was created as an Excel spreadsheet and distributed by email.

In order to ensure maximum cooperation from the territorial police bodies and thus a maximum submission of responses, the National Drug Headquarters collected the data as a police unit with national competence. The request for cooperation was sent by a contact person from the National Drug Headquarters to the territorial units through the regional directorates of the Police of the Czech Republic.

The data was collected from May to June 2018. Completed questionnaires were sent by the authorized police officers to the National Drug Headquarters contact person, who created a summary data matrix after the survey. This person transmitted the data to the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction for processing.

2.1 Research Sample Description

In 2018, all 80 territorial districts of the police were approached, out of which 78 departments provided estimates. No exclusion criteria were established. The territorial units included district and city police headquarters, both of which included the following departments:

- the district (local) Police Departments and the Rail Police Department, which investigate and scrutinize offences punishable by law that carry a maximum prison sentence of no more than three years;
- traffic inspectorates, which investigate offences punishable by a maximum prison sentence of no more than three years;
- general criminal departments, economic crime departments, and case analysis and cybercrime groups, which investigate criminal offences the district court acts as the court of first instance for.

The study's respondents were selected police officers in territorial departments dealing with solutions for specific types of crime. The estimates were processed by police officers with long-term experience in detecting and documenting each type of crime. The selection of the specific police officers assigned to the estimation process was left up to the heads of the individual territorial bodies.

2.2 Data analysis

The information collected through the questionnaires was first transferred to the aggregated dataset. For this purpose, the Microsoft Excel® 2010 spreadsheet was selected. The database was then supplemented with variables describing the absolute numbers of selected registered and cleared-up offences, broken down by territorial districts. Information about registered and cleared-up offences – for the purposes of estimation – was provided by the Police Praelidium. Estimates for the proportion of missing districts were extrapolated according to the average values in the respective regions. The values for selected offences, i.e. the estimated proportion of offences committed by drug users attempting to obtain funds in order to acquire drugs, were weighted by the real number of registered and cleared-up offences in individual districts. The data analysis was conducted in the statistical software IBM® SPSS® Statistics v. 23. A descriptive data analysis was conducted (frequencies, proportions). Only data for individual districts was included in the analysis, mainly because of the unavailability of information about registered and cleared-up offences at the level of regional police headquarters necessary for weighting the estimated values.

● 3 RESULTS

In 2017, a total of 202,303 criminal offences were registered in the Czech Republic. Of these, an estimated 46,300 criminal offences (23%) were committed by drug users attempting to raise funds in order to acquire drugs. The most frequent offences committed by drug users to raise

funds for drug use include simple theft (an estimated 27,150 offences, 13% of registered crime), burglary (an estimated 8880 offences, 4% of registered crime), and the manufacturing, distributing, and other unauthorized handling of drugs (an estimated 4030 offences, 2% of registered crime). The highest proportion of offences committed by drug users was estimated for the manufacturing, distributing and other unauthorized handling of drugs (an estimated 89% of the instances of this offence was committed by drug users), simple theft (41%), unauthorized possession of payment instruments (37%), and burglary (37%). By contrast, the least frequent among the selected offences committed by drug users to raise funds for drug use include murder with the intention to commit robbery (no offence committed by a drug user), restriction and deprivation of personal liberty (an estimated ten offences), and extortion (blackmail) (an estimated 150 offences). The lowest proportion of offences perpetrated by drug users was estimated in the case of murder with the intention to commit robbery (0% of cases of this offence committed by drug users), restriction and deprivation of personal liberty (6%), and non-payment of maintenance (9%). Detailed results are presented in *Table 2*.

A total of 94,890 criminal offences were cleared up in 2017, of which an estimated 14,400 were committed by drug users (15%). The most common criminal offences committed by drug users to obtain funds for the acquisition of drugs were crimes involving simple theft (an estimated 5620 offences, 6% of cleared-up crime), manufacturing, distributing, and other unauthorized handling of drugs (an estimated 3540 offences, 4% of cleared-up crime), and burglary (an estimated 1850 offences, 2% of cleared-up crime).

Crime	No. of registered offences (officially)	No. of offences committed by drug users** (estimate)	Proportion of offences committed by drug users (%)
Murder with the intention to commit robbery	6	0	0.0
Robbery	1,563	470	30.1
Intentional harm to health (assault)	4,761	770	16.2
Extortion (blackmail)	1,050	150	14.3
Restriction and deprivation of personal liberty	161	10	6.2
Criminal trespass	1,936	490	25.3
Burglary	24,102	8,880	36.8
Simple theft	65,723	27,150	41.3
Manufacturing, distributing, and other handling of drugs	4,545	4,030	88.7
Non-payment of maintenance	8,979	780	8.7
Embezzlement	1,812	330	18.2
Fraud	3,678	780	21.2
Unauthorized possession of payment instruments	6,589	2,460	37.3
Other crimes*	77,398	0	0.0
Total	202,303	46,300	22.9

Table 2 | Number of criminal offences registered in 2017 and an estimate of criminal offences committed by drug users attempting to raise funds in order to acquire drugs.

*Estimates for other criminal offences were not implemented. For the purposes of analysis, it was assumed that the proportion of drug users among offenders was zero.

**The estimated number of offences committed by drug users attempting to raise funds for the purchase of drugs was rounded to the nearest ten.

Crime	No. of cleared-up offences (officially)	No. of offences committed by drug users** (estimate)	Proportion of offences committed by drug users (%)
Murder with the intention to commit robbery	6	0	0.0
Robbery	1,002	310	30.9
Intentional harm to health (assault)	3,370	530	15.7
Extortion (blackmail)	811	120	14.8
Restriction and deprivation of personal liberty	122	10	8.2
Criminal trespass	1,155	290	25.1
Burglary	5,711	1,850	32.4
Simple theft	17,065	5,620	32.9
Manufacturing, distributing, and other handling of drugs	3,996	3,540	88.6
Non-payment of maintenance	8,962	780	8.7
Embezzlement	1,218	200	16.4
Fraud	2,330	470	20.2
Unauthorized holding of payment instruments	1,820	680	37.4
Other crimes*	47,322	0	0.0
Total	94,890	14,400	15.2

Table 3 | Number of criminal offences cleared up in 2017 and an estimation of criminal offences committed by drug users attempting to raise funds for drug use

*Estimates for other criminal offences were not implemented. For the purposes of the analysis, it was assumed that the proportion of drug users among offenders was zero.

**The estimated number of offences committed by drug users attempting to raise funds for the purchase of drugs was rounded to the nearest ten.

Type of theft	Registered criminal offences			Cleared-up criminal offences		
	No. of registered offences (officially)	No. of offences committed by drug users (estimate)	Proportion of offences committed by drug users (%)	No. of cleared-up offences (officially)	No. of offences committed by drug users (estimate)	Proportion of offences committed by drug users (%)
Pickpocketing	11,297	4,328	38.3	750	263	35.0
Theft during sexual intercourse	7	2	26.4	5	2	35.0
Other thefts from persons	5,717	2,138	37.4	858	290	33.8
Among employees in the workplace	44	10	22.8	19	2	13.1
Of cars	3,594	1,146	31.9	1,046	265	25.3
Of motorcycles	428	95	22.2	129	21	15.9
Inside cars	13,116	8,508	64.9	1,505	958	63.6
Of motor vehicle parts	4,190	1,470	35.1	383	93	24.3
Of bicycles	4,948	2,789	56.4	1,141	597	52.3
Of domestic animals	33	0	0.9	2	-	0.0
In houses	2,461	812	33.0	1,114	345	30.9
At railway stations, consignments excepted	32	14	42.8	3	1	36.7
In means of transport, consignments excepted	145	60	41.6	5	2	43.0
From premises housing antiquities and works of art, including outdoor ones	12	1	6.7	1	-	0.0
From other premises	16,242	4,872	30.0	9,273	2,589	27.9
Other thefts	3,457	905	26.2	831	189	22.7
Total	65,723	27,151	41.3	17,065	5616	32.9

Table 4 | Number of thefts registered and cleared up in 2017 and an estimate of thefts committed by drug users attempting to raise funds for drug use, broken down by type of theft

Type of burglary	Registered criminal offences			Cleared-up criminal offences		
	No. of registered offences (officially)	No. of offences committed by drug users (estimate)	Proportion of offences committed by drug users (%)	No. of registered offences (officially)	No. of offences committed by drug users (estimate)	Proportion of offences committed by drug users (%)
Of shops	1,426	567	39.7	466	164	35.1
Of shop windows	44	8	17.9	17	3	14.8
Of restaurants and pubs	993	345	34.8	326	104	31.9
Of accommodation facilities	576	229	39.7	85	28	33.1
Of kiosks	303	85	27.9	95	27	27.9
Of lunchrooms, canteens, and catering facilities	22	3	12.3	7	0	2.9
Of premises housing antiquities and works of art, shops excepted	22	2	11.0	8	2	19.2
Of cultural facilities	27	2	6.2	10	1	9.5
Of safes	46	5	10.2	10	1	8.0
Of computer centres	-	-	-	-	-	-
Of schools	289	63	21.7	93	23	24.2
Of flats	2,518	1,040	41.3	681	240	35.2
Of weekend houses	1,768	631	35.7	543	175	32.3
Of family houses	2,947	1,162	39.4	703	245	34.9
Of other premises	13,121	4,736	36.1	2,667	834	31.3
Total	24,102	8,876	36.8	5,711	1,845	32.3

Table 5 | Number of burglaries registered and cleared up in 2017 and an estimate of burglaries committed by drug users attempting to raise funds for drug use, broken down by type of burglary

The highest proportion of drug users among the perpetrators of a crime was estimated in the case of the manufacturing, distributing, and other unauthorized handling of drugs (89%), unauthorized possession of payment instruments (37%), simple theft (33%), and burglary (32%).

The least frequent cleared-up offences committed by drug users to raise funds for drug use include murder with the intention to commit robbery (no offence committed by a drug user), restriction and deprivation of personal liberty (an estimated ten offences), and extortion (blackmail) (an estimated 120 offences). The crimes with the lowest proportion of drug users as perpetrators of the crime were murder with the intention to commit robbery (0% of cases of this offence committed by drug users), restriction and deprivation of personal freedom (8%), non-payment of maintenance (9%), and extortion (15%). Detailed results are presented in *Table 3*.

The most frequent property crimes committed by drug users in order to raise funds for drug use include simple thefts and burglaries. A total of 65,723 thefts were registered in 2017, of which an estimated 27,151 criminal offences were committed by drug users (41%) (17,065 cleared-up offences, of which an estimated 33% featured drug users as offenders). In the case of simple theft, the most frequent types of theft committed by drug users are estimated to be thefts inside cars, thefts from other premises, and pickpocketing. The highest proportion of thefts committed by drug users

was estimated to be thefts inside cars and thefts of bicycles, while the lowest proportion of thefts committed by drug users was estimated to be thefts of domestic animals and thefts from premises housing antiquities and works of art, including outdoor ones. Detailed results are presented in *Table 4*.

A total of 24,102 burglaries were registered in 2017, of which an estimated 8876 were committed by drug users (37%) (5711 cleared-up offences, of which an estimated 32% involved drug users as offenders). The most frequent types of burglaries committed by drug users are estimated to be burglaries of other premises and burglaries of family homes and flats. The highest proportion of burglaries committed by drug users was estimated to be burglaries of flats, shops, accommodation facilities, and family homes, while the lowest proportion of burglaries committed by drug users was estimated to be burglaries of cultural facilities, safes, premises housing antiquities and works of art, shops excepted, and lunchrooms, canteens, and catering facilities. Detailed results are presented in *Table 5*.

● 4 DISCUSSION

The study was conducted for the first time in 2005, then further in 2007 and 2008, and it has been repeated biannually since 2009. The results for the individual waves do not include any major fluctuations. The estimated proportion of

crimes committed by drug users attempting to obtain funds for the acquisition of drugs was 23% on average in the years that were monitored. The smallest proportion (17%) was estimated in 2004, the highest in 2013 (25%).

Since 2006, the estimate of the proportion of drug user crime rates has been relatively stable, with changes between the study's stages reaching a maximum of three percentage points. Another view of the trend provides an indicator in the form of the estimated number of crimes perpetrated by drug users per 100 thousand people aged 15–64.

In 2004–2007, the value of this indicator increased to 1158 offences (i.e. the maximum value for the duration of the study), but a decrease to 671 crimes (i.e. the minimum value for the duration of the study) then followed. The estimate for 2013 was an exception to the decreasing trend. A summary of the values of the indicators that were monitored in the individual years is presented in *Table 6*.

Year	Total no. of registered offences	Estimate of offences committed by drug users*	Proportion (%)
2004	351,629	59,660	17.0
2006	336,446	81,210	24.1
2007	357,391	85,130	23.8
2009	332,829	79,910	24.0
2011	317,177	76,940	24.3
2013	325,366	81,590	25.1
2015	247,628	54,660	22.1
2017	202,303	46,300	22.9

Table 6 | Registered offences and the estimated number of offences committed by drug users in 2004–2017

*The estimated number of offences committed by drug users attempting to raise funds for the purchase of drugs was rounded to the nearest ten.

On average (over the period 2004–2017), the estimated proportion of cleared-up offences committed by drug users was 13%. The lowest proportion (9%) was estimated in 2007, the highest in 2013 (17%). In 2004–2009, the estimated proportion of cleared-up offences committed by drug users was reasonably stable, with changes in the study's stages achieving only a maximum of one percentage point. On average, it was 10% (2004–2009). In the period 2009–2013, the estimated proportion of cleared-up offences committed by drug users increased visibly from 11% to 17%, followed by a slight decrease to 15% (2015 and 2017, respectively). A summary of the values of the indicators that were monitored for the individual years is presented in *Table 7*.

No larger study on mapping economic-compulsive drug crime in the Czech Republic which would make it possible to compare the results of the estimates has yet been conducted. The authors are not aware of a similar study (in terms of the focus, scope, and methodology used) being conducted in other countries (Singleton et al., 2018).

The only larger study that has addressed this issue in the Czech context (although marginally) is a representative questionnaire study of convicted prisoners repeated regularly at two-year intervals. In 2018 the survey comprised 1695 respondents. The study was primarily geared to mapping the experiences of substance use and gambling in the given population, but it also contained one question on drug-related crime. Theft or other offences in order to acquire funds for illicit drugs had sometimes been committed in the past by 23% of the prisoners (25% in 2014 and 26% in 2016). Despite the questions emphasizing theft, the study covered the full spectrum of crime. It concerned any time in the past, while the estimates were made for the previous year. Nevertheless, the values obtained are relatively indicative of the estimated proportion of registered offences committed by drug users attempting to acquire funds for the purchase of drugs (Grohmannová, 2017; Mravčík et al., 2018).

Regarding the types of crime most commonly committed by drug users attempting to obtain funds for the acquisition of drugs, according to the results of the estimates made for the Czech Republic that are presented here, they fall under primary drug-related offences, such as manufacturing, smuggling and drug distribution, and offences against property. Also according to the results of foreign studies cited below, these are offences of a property nature rather than violent ones. As regards the incidence of crime among problem drug users, especially in the UK and Ireland, there is a tradition of monitoring the rate and type of crime among clients entering medical treatment or programmes.

An analysis of 753 clients (most of whom were problem users of opioids, especially injecting users, recruited for a study in 1995) showed that 90 days before entering treatment, 50.2% of the sample were involved in property crime, of which 36.8% was theft in shops, 5.6% robbery, 12.5% burglary, 14.7% fraud, and 4.5% other thefts (Gossop, Marsden, Stewart, & Rolfe, 2000).

Year	Total no. of cleared-up offences	Estimate of offences committed by drug users*	Proportion (%)
2004	134,444	14,010	10.4
2006	133,695	13,910	10.4
2007	138,852	12,940	9.3
2009	127,604	13,350	10.5
2011	122,238	16,640	13.6
2013	129,181	21,440	16.6
2015	112,139	16,460	14.7
2017	94,890	14,400	15.2

Table 7 | Cleared-up criminal offences and an estimate of drug offences committed by drug users in 2004–2017

*The estimated number of offences committed by drug users attempting to raise funds for the purchase of drugs was rounded to the nearest ten.

Another study in the Drug Treatment Outcomes Research Study group (DTORS) showed that in the 12 months before treatment, 72% of the offenders had committed a crime, mainly theft in shops (47%), buying or selling stolen goods (41%), other theft (24%), and drug distribution (23%). A total of 42% of the respondents reported a crime committed four weeks prior to treatment, most often theft (26%), buying or selling stolen goods (19%), drug distribution (9%), or other thefts (8%). Almost a quarter of the respondents (22%) had committed a crime to obtain funds for acquiring drugs, and 17% had committed an offence while under the influence of a drug (Donmall et al., 2012).

The Irish ROSIE study in 2003-2004 on a group of 404 problem opioid users showed that 90% of them had committed a crime. Besides possession of drugs (76%), the majority of their offences were related to manufacturing and distributing drugs (70%). In the 90 days before entering treatment, 20% of the users had been involved in property crime and 30% in drug distribution (Cox & Comiskey, 2007).

The results of a study of 1039 problem crack users in the Netherlands showed that 41.5% had committed a criminal offence in the last 30 days, most notably drug sales (68.9%), minor property crime (34.4%), and, less frequently, violent crimes (9.7%). Lower age, housing problems, more intense patterns of drug use, and more experience with committing crimes in the past were factors linked to the actual committing of crimes (Oteo Perez, Benschop, Blanken, & Korf, 2015).

The summary of the results in each stage of the present study suggests the relative consistency of the estimated proportion of drug offences committed by drug users – both in terms of time and the known data on crime and drug users – and thus support reliability of the estimates.

While police information on the context of drug crime is considered relatively more reliable than other sources (self-reports or victimization studies) (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2013), at the same time it may carry a specific information bias that must be borne in mind when it is interpreted.

In the present study, the main source of distortion could be insufficient definition of the phenomenon under investigation in the instructions for the estimator or, alternatively, the absence of a warning on what kinds of offending drug users are not covered in the estimation of an economic-compulsive crime. Ambiguous instructions can lead to different interpretations of a subject. Estimated values should not include criminal activity committed by users for reasons other than obtaining funds for the acquisition of drugs (e.g. to buy food, clothing, or housing).

However, this matter is very complicated to judge. Often (and perhaps even in most cases), crime is committed to meet a variety of current needs. Furthermore, the police identify the real reasons (motives) of the perpetrator only when these are relevant to the criminal proceedings (for example, for legal qualification of the crime). Assigning a mo-

tive (if it is unknown) to a specific crime beyond the needs of criminal proceedings is often a rather subjective view of an assessment rather than objective reality. It is also possible that police officers will tend to label all the crimes committed by a person they think is a drug user as economic-compulsive drug crime.

Although the study focused on mapping drug-related crime, it did not address this issue in its entirety. As described above, the relationship between drug use and crime can be of a different nature; the study only examined one part of it. While it may be thought that economic-compulsive crime occupies a dominant position in secondary drug crime, this study does not fully exploit this issue. The estimates are also only limited to a selected list of offences.

Another limitation of the study was that the results did not cover the agenda falling under the competence of the regional police headquarters, which investigates crimes that the district court hears as a court of first instance. The reason for excluding regional office estimates from the analysis is that no data on the number of registered and cleared-up offences is available at regional police headquarters. This data is necessary for the subsequent weighting of estimated values.

Another fact that can lead to the data being greatly underestimated (and is likely to do so) is the latency in drug-related crime. Drug users often conceal the fact of drug use for fear of higher sanctions, detention, disclosure of this information to their loved ones, etc. (Zeman et al., 2015). The estimate of drug-related crime may therefore be much lower compared to the reality.

Despite the methodological limitations of the study, it describes and regularly evaluates some of the drug-related crime that is not recorded in any data collection system. The results suggest that drug-related crime is certainly not a marginal problem. Data concerning the extent of secondary drug crime is not only important from the point of view of criminal and drug policy but also for further research, in particular the study of the social costs related to the phenomenon of drug use (Zábranský et al., 2011). Therefore particular effort should be invested in the improvement of data collection in this area.

● 5 CONCLUSION

In 2017, a total of 202.3 thousand offences were registered in the Czech Republic. The crimes committed by drug users attempting to obtain funds for the acquisition of drugs accounted for an estimated 23%, i.e. about 46,300 crimes, representing 671 crimes per 100 thousand people aged 15–64. The most frequent property crimes committed by drug users in order to raise funds for drug use include simple thefts and burglaries. A total of 65,723 thefts were registered in 2017, of which an estimated 27,151 criminal offences were committed by drug users (41%) (17,065 cleared-up offences, of which an estimated 33% featured drug users as of-

fenders). The highest proportion of registered criminal offences committed by drug users was estimated in the case of the manufacturing, distributing, and other unauthorized handling of narcotic and psychotropic substances (89%) and simple theft (41%).

Cleared-up offences in 2017 represented a total of 94.9 thousand criminal offences. Drug users motivated by the effort to obtain funds for drug acquisition contributed an estimated 15% (i.e. approximately 14,400 crimes). Among the most frequently reported offences committed by drug users attempting to raise funds for drug acquisition were offences involving the production, distribution, and other illegal exploitation of illicit drugs (89%), unauthorized possession of payment instruments (37%), and simple theft (33%).

Despite a number of constraints imposed by the methodology that was selected, the study provides valuable insights into drug-related crime. Given that the issue is not yet recorded in any data collection system (and given the complexity of criminal records and the question of whether it ever will be), the present study is currently the only source that has monitored economic-compulsive drug crime in the Czech Republic. The benefit of the study lies mainly in its scope and the effort to provide data on the phenomenon under examination at the national level. The results of the study may find a use, for example, in estimating the social costs of drug use or stimulating further research activities focused on other areas of drug-related crime.

It is also a challenge to incorporate the research activities on drug-related crime into regular data collection in this area. The implementation of drug-related data collection into regular monitoring is also a part of the Action Plan of the National Drug Policy Strategy of the Czech Republic. This objective was addressed by the project under the aegis of which this article was created. The new procedure for detecting the extent and structure of secondary drug crime in order to obtain a realistic and evidence-based estimate of this phenomenon was developed in the framework of this project conducted by the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention (Roubalová et al., 2019). The project also addressed the limits mentioned in the context of the present study. For example, the concept proposes monitoring of extended drug-related crime so that the data that is collected will include other types of offences and interrelationships and cover all registered crimes.

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