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A CRITICAL REVIEW  
DRUG USE AND CRIME: REPORT OF THE NIDA  
PANEL ON DRUG USE AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

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INTRODUCTION

Beginning with a one-day workshop early in 1975, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) began a systematic effort to better understand the drug/crime relationships as they currently were understood and from that knowledge base to "recommend research approaches" to further that knowledge. The product of that nascent effort was the NIDA Panel report entitled, Drug Use and Crime (The National Institute on Drug Abuse and Research Triangle Institute, 1976a,b). The resultant report became, for many, a focal point of controversy. The wide range of criticisms from detractors and kudos from supporters gave the report a Rorschach quality. In essence however, that quality accurately reflected the state-of-the-art in the drug/crime research and knowledge arena. Research findings were often contradictory and were challenged on a variety of levels from emotional harangues to political and policy disagreements to scientific methodological debates. In "telling it like it is", the report made itself vulnerable to the widest spectrum of debate and disagreement that the controversial topic of drugs and crime could entertain. The report offered no final resolution to these issues but suggested a multitude of strategies by which the many questions raised by research to date (or lack of it) might reasonably be answered.

A 1976 Congressional mandate gave LEAA's National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (NILECJ) the following task:

The Institute shall, in conjunction with the National Institute on Drug Abuse, make studies and undertake programs of research to determine the relationship between drug abuse and crime and to evaluate the success of the various types of drug treatment programs in reducing crime . . . . .

(NILECJ, 1977:1)

In response to this mandate, NILECJ undertook a variety of projects one of which was to develop a drug/crime research agenda.

Prior research on drug-crime relationships has been reviewed and summarized through the recently completed work of the NIDA Panel on Drug Use and Criminal Behavior. The work of this panel resulted in a state-of-the-art summary review, Drug Use and Crime, which appeared in September, 1976. Using the panel's work as a baseline, NILECJ will fund a project to develop a more detailed research agenda and strategies for carrying out further research in this area in light of realistic expectations concerning the necessary data. Such an approach, with its emphasis on research strategy development and pre-testing, is in line with the primary recommendations of the NIDA Panel.

(NILECJ, 1977:2)

In early 1978 the NILECJ drug/crime project began. The first step in the project was to review the voluminous literature in the drug/crime area including the NIDA Panel report. Following the literature review, research subtopic areas were identified. Those identified were methodological issues, economic issues, treatment issues, life cycle issues, and patterns of drug use issues. While the project team derived these through independent review, the subtopic areas were similar to those around which the NIDA Panel report was written, although the NIDA Panel report gave different labels to their areas (for example, economic issues were discussed under the heading of "The Drug User and Market Behavior" and treatment issues under the heading of "Impact of Demand Reduction on Crime and Criminal Behavior"). The subtopic areas identified by the project staff were reviewed by an Advisory Board convened especially to aid the staff in developing a research agenda. The Advisory Board confirmed that the subtopic areas fairly represented the drug/crime literature and then turned to generating a set of "burning" issues for each area which were then ranked by the Advisory Board according to their judged importance to research in the drug/crime area. In reviewing the first phase project products, the NILECJ staff recommended that the project turn its attention to the two subtopic areas of life cycle and patterns of drug use issues. These focal areas would, of necessity,

include methodological concerns. So, in essence, three of the five identified subtopic areas would be considered in developing a NILECJ research agenda. The rationale for excluding the economic and treatment subtopics was that at least two NILECJ projects were already underway in the area of economic drug/crime issues and that the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was directing much of its research attention to issues of drug supply and economics, while NIDA's research programs were focused on issues related to drug treatment. With these parameters set, a research agenda and accompanying designs were developed to speak to the basic questions of:

- . To what extent, and under what conditions, does drug use contribute to or "cause" criminal behavior?
- . To what extent, and under what conditions, does criminal behavior contribute to or "cause" drug use?
- . Are there common "causes" which tend to generate both criminal behavior and drug use?

The research designs were developed so as not to produce "more of the same" drug/crime research that the NIDA Panel reviewed and criticized. The research agenda attempted to confront issues, heretofore largely bypassed, in a rigorous scientific and economical fashion.

It is in the light of both the NIDA Panel report and the thinking about research in the drug/crime area that has since transpired that this critical review of the NIDA Panel report is done. The NIDA Panel report has been sometimes maligned, sometimes ignored, but seldom praised. However, in the opinion of this writer, the NIDA Panel report is comprehensive, fair, and highly valuable. What few criticisms the following review makes in no way contradict the immense contribution the NIDA Panel report can and has made to the complex and often thorny topic of the relationships between drug use and crime.

## THE NIDA PANEL REPORT<sup>\*</sup>

The Panel report is divided into two volumes. The first volume is the report of the Panel which organizes, summarizes, and evaluates the drug/crime research literature and presents conclusions and recommendations resulting from the Panel's deliberations (The National Institute on Drug Abuse and Research Triangle Institute, 1976b). The second volume, an appendix, is a voluminous document consisting of 23 specially commissioned papers on various facets of drug/crime issues (The National Institute on Drug Abuse and Research Triangle Institute, 1976a). The papers are divided into four major subject areas: definitions and measurements, state-of-the-art summaries, data analysis, and policies and programs. These papers review and critique the broad spectrum of issues one should encounter in a thorough consideration of drug/crime area issues.

### Scientific Judgments

The first or main volume of the Panel report organizes and summarizes what is known about the relationships between drug use and criminal behavior, based on the extant literature (this literature is largely covered in the report appendix) and from the opinions of the Panel itself. The Panel then makes a series of statements about what can be concluded about the relationships between drug use and crime based on the large amount of existing research data and research findings which they reviewed. These Panel statements and conclusions are highly cautious and were formulated in the context of invoking rigorous scientific standards of proof. The papers presented in the second volume appendix, however, tend to draw less cautious conclusions, by comparison, from research data and findings. The papers, while noting a variety of difficulties with such research, are more inclined to take a position that despite the difficulties and drawbacks of the research it is reasonable to conclude that certain relationships pertain. These apparent disparities are in no way fatal to the two volumes, rather they highlight ongoing scientific controversy in a positive sense. Controversy and disagreement often stimulate the emergence of a productive synthesis of new research approaches and findings from formerly disparate scientific views.

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<sup>\*</sup> Hereafter referred to as the Panel report.

A brief example of where the Panel finds itself at a point of "implied disagreement" with one of the papers in the appendix is the following. The Panel's report notes that:

In the absence of convincing research, the impact of treatment is still a subject of considerable debate.

(The National Institute on Drug Abuse and  
Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:86)

But, in the appendix volume, a review of twelve studies on the impact of treatment by Nash concludes:

Our review of studies of the impact of treatment on criminality strongly suggests that there is a role for each type of treatment.

(Nash, 1976:259)

Some would represent this as a major disagreement between the Panel and Nash. However, the Panel report is very careful to review the literature in the area of treatment impacts, including Nash's review and other research, and to note where and under what conditions treatment appears to have a significant impact and where this is not the case. The conservative position adopted by the Panel is not just a reflection of the concessions resulting from decisions made by a committee, but a rigorous judgment based on conflicting research findings and the variety of methodological difficulties surrounding those research efforts. Indeed, Nash in his review of twelve studies, notes their methodological shortcomings and their sometimes discrepant findings. But in balance, Nash chose to look to the trend that the twelve studies showed and to state that the studies "strongly suggest" treatment is useful in reducing criminal behavior.

#### Scientific and Policy Perspectives

The above example then represents perhaps the most serious controversy or discrepancy that one might find between the summation given by the report proper and its series of papers in the appendix. The Panel report is a fair and cautious representation of the state of scientific knowledge about drug/crime relationships. From a scientific perspective this is the report's strength. But, from a policy perspective, this is

a primary source of controversy surrounding the report. Weissman (1979), in an interesting and informative monograph, which relies heavily on the Panel, report states:

Accordingly, it is not difficult to appreciate the controversy evoked by the critical Drug Use and Crime report. Fundamental assumptions of American drug control policy were questioned. Social scientists employing their professional jargon of sampling, measurement and causality, have introduced uncertainty into what had previously been a politically sensitive but stable area of public policy.

(Weissman, 1979:2)

Indeed, the Panel report notes that "federal heroin policy assumes that simultaneously reducing supply and increasing treatment availability will reduce crime rates" (The National Institute on Drug Abuse and Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:5). The Panel, in this context, felt that 1) empirical data on drug use and crime were generally unavailable and 2) the Panel placed "little confidence in what research tells us about these assumptions." Weissman, in his discussion, goes on to say:

Numerous contemporary studies have demonstrated direct statistical correlations between narcotics use and criminality. From these data policymakers have drawn an inference of causality. Now, however, on the advice of a group of distinguished scientists, this conclusion is being opened to renewed examination.

(Weissman, 1979:2)

In interpreting existing research findings the crux of the controversy rests on choosing either a correlational or causal interpretation. The Panel report clearly comes down on the side of statistical associations having been established in past research. They note that there has not been the kind of evidence to date in the drug/crime area to scientifically assert causal relationships.

An association by itself, however, is not sufficient evidence of a causal relationship. While scholars have adopted a variety of philosophical positions

on the concept of cause, there is general agreement among social scientists that the evidence of causal relationships in complex human behavior will be less than perfect. Rather than abandoning the concept of cause entirely, many social scientists conceive of causality in probabilistic terms. In this sense, one must have information that would indicate the probability of a causal relationship. One must demonstrate that there is a statistical association between an independent (causal) variable and a dependent variable (effect). One must also show that the presumed cause is linked to its effect in a logical sequence and that the relationship between the presumed cause and the effect is neither attributable to another variable nor spurious.

(The National Institute on Drug Abuse and Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:53-54)

In essence then the report is highlighting, and to some extent documenting, the long-standing potential and real difficulties existing between researchers and policymakers. Policymakers need information for the rational development of policy. The policymakers, often lacking knowledge about or ignoring scientific caveats, often leap to conclusions about findings that are not warranted by the data. Scientists, on the other hand, often ignore the concerns and needs of policymakers.

This tension between scientists and policymakers is clearly demonstrated by the comments of the then director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Dr. DuPont, to a Congressional subcommittee in testimony about drug/crime issues.

Here I think the phenomenon we are dealing with is that our research scientists have a standard of proof that we simply can't meet . . . I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that all members who have contact with heroin-dependent individuals have no doubt, on the basis of their personal experience with addicts, as I have had for several years with many thousands of heroin users, about this relationship. It is clear and it is strong.

(DuPont, 1976:620)

The Panel, then, as representatives of the scientific community are not asserting that the existing American drug policy is necessarily wrong, but that the assumptions on which this policy rests and the hypotheses generated by the application of such policy should be more carefully examined. The Panel is encouraging research activities that, by virtue of their design and rigor, can serve as base data for policymakers. In part, though, policymakers will have to be more active participants in the process by clarifying for the researchers which questions, if answered, would be most policy relevant. This strategy, as opposed to the current trend of policymakers having to utilize bits and pieces of unrelated research to often produce a patchwork quilt of information on which to base their policy decisions, is much preferred.

Having briefly noted the sometimes tenuous relationship between scientific data and policy to which the Panel report sensitizes the reader, we turn to a short description of the stated goals of the Panel.

#### NIDA Panel Goals

The goals of the NIDA Panel report are couched in policymaking terms.

For policymakers, research can serve two distinct and important functions: to develop knowledge so as to inform policy decisionmakers and to evaluate policy alternatives both before and after those decisions have been made.

The overall aim of this report is to suggest directions for research in drug abuse and crime directions which will fulfill both of the policy functions of research.

(The National Institute on Drug Abuse and  
Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:1)

In order to achieve that policy-related goal, a panel of experts were convened and asked to -

...examine, review, and analyze available data; to determine what conclusions could be drawn about the state of the art; and to recommend research approaches.

(The National Institute on Drug Abuse and  
Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:i)

The state-of-the-art reviews and the research guidelines included in the Panel report are meant to -

...(1) describe what we know about the relationship between drug use and criminal behavior, (2) to identify what we need to know, and (3) to recommend ways to secure that knowledge.

(The National Institute on Drug Abuse and Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:1)

Later in the Panel report it is stated that one of the major goals of the report is to recommend "designs for policy relevant research" (The National Institute on Drug Abuse and Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:27). The intent throughout the report is not to generate policy issues and then to develop research that will answer those questions, but rather to insure research that could reliably serve policymaking functions (although the reciprocal effects of policy on research and research on policy are not ignored). This specific point is made early in the report.

The aim of this report is to present what is known in each area, to determine where gaps in knowledge exist, and to suggest a well-thought-out plan that will guide future research. In the report unanswered questions are outlined and approaches and research techniques to answer questions are suggested. Our objective is to develop a more complete and rational understanding of the relationship between drug use and criminal behavior and thereby to provide knowledge for a more informed and effective public policy.

(The National Institute on Drug Abuse and Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:6)

How well does the Panel report achieve these goals? The report and its appendix do an excellent job of stating what is known about the relationship between drug use and criminal behavior. Assessments are made of the scientific contribution that existing research makes to knowledge about drug/crime issues. At every turn data results are carefully analyzed for the quality of their contribution based on a variety of methodological criteria and the logic of the questions posed by the research efforts. Shortcomings are noted and suggestions are made to improve on these shortcomings when the overall approach of the research is judged to be valuable. Interpretations are made and conclusions are drawn from existing information, all in the context of the necessary

caveats drawn from scientific standards of proof and interpretation. Research approaches are suggested to improve existing design flaws, for methodological improvements in sampling and data collection, to provide guidelines to answering certain research questions, and as overall research design approaches (for example, a "descriptive" approach versus an "explanatory" approach and the increased use of longitudinal approaches). Finally, foci which are alternatives to past drug/crime research are suggested (for example, focus efforts on onset behavior and patterns of changing drug use and their relationships to criminal behavior).

The difficulties of achieving the goals of the Panel set for itself are best implicitly understood in the context of the Panel's disclaimer for drawing hard and fast conclusions from their efforts.

The Panel was faced with constructing state-of-the-art summaries from fragments of information rather than interrelated pieces. It is with good reason that the Panel concludes that there is a pressing need for research to provide more complete information. It does so, not to avoid the responsibility of making definite policy-relevant statements on what is now known in the crime/drug area, but because in many instances previous research did not permit the Panel to draw valid general conclusions. Consequently, what follows constitutes the Panel's best effort at doing what it could with what is at hand.

(The National Institute on Drug Abuse  
and Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:2)

Despite these very real concerns, the Panel report achieves its stated goals well. The report is replete with research hypotheses, research questions and issues, and broad research strategies and admonitions. Unfortunately, these major strengths of the report are severely weakened by their mode of presentation. The research hypotheses, questions, issues, strategies, and admonitions are scattered throughout the report with the only basis of organization for a research agenda being their presentation within the broad chapters of the report dealing with the major categories of concern in the drug/crime area (that is, concepts and measures of drug use, crime and criminal behavior; the relationship between drug use and criminal behavior; impact of demand reduction on crime and criminal behavior; and the drug user and market behavior). The first chapter of the report serves as a kind of executive summary

which brings much of the suggested research material together but only in proximity, not in order. The reader must work fairly hard to put the pieces together - all of the pieces are there but they need to be found. Due to this organizational problem, what might have emerged as a research agenda (with priorities setting out which research issues should be addressed), instead emerged as a series of disconnected research suggestions whose only common ground was that they deal with the drug/crime issue in some way.

### Past and Future Research

The Panel report serves well as a jumping off point for developing a detailed and specific research agenda in the drug/crime area. It also serves well as a resource that documents in great detail the major issues and research pitfalls in looking into drug/crime problems. The elements for a new direction to be taken in the drug/crime area are touched upon in the Panel report, but not stressed nor brought together into a single well articulated overall focal research strategy. Those elements will be reviewed later in this paper and presented in the context of the recommended research strategy developed for the NILECJ research agenda building effort.

In a call for the development of an overall research strategy in the drug/crime area, the Panel cites the lack of usable empirical data and the lack of a consensus concerning what is important to study as being past deterrents to the development of a drug/crime research master-plan.

One of the Panel's initial problems was to determine whether convincing empirical data on drug use and crime were unavailable or available but inappropriately used. It was concluded that data are generally unavailable--the principal reason being the lack of a longterm, well-coordinated, policy-relevant research program in the area. Furthermore, studies differ in methodology and in definitions and measurements of crime, criminal behavior, and drug use. As a result, few studies can be compared and few generalizations can be derived. The field as a whole has little coherence because of a lack of emphasis and consensus on what is important to study. It is apparent that both an overall strategy and specific guidelines are needed for future crime/drug research.

(The National Institute on Drug Abuse  
and Research Triangle Institute, 1976b:5)

The lack of convincing empirical data noted by the Panel report hinges, in part, on methodological problems such as measurement problems, lack of sample representativeness, and research design problems. The Panel report, in turn, makes a variety of suggestions for improving on and dealing with these problems.

The call for a new overall research strategy and the lament of the lack of "convincing empirical data" on the drug/crime issue is not totally traceable to what in retrospect appears to be inappropriate or inadequate efforts of past drug/crime research. There is at least one compelling reason for these research inadequacies which is exogenous to, and impacts on, past specific efforts. If the focus of such research has gone awry, it is not because researchers have failed to recognize what research strategies are necessary to answer the drug/crime dilemma, but rather they have found those strategies too difficult, for a variety of reasons, to pursue.

The ideal design, which would be a longitudinal study of a general population which traced onset behavior of drug use or criminal behavior through its complexities to unravel the drug/crime relationships, is, in fact, highly problematic in executing. The difficulties in such an effort, in its purest form, are so immense (in terms of funding and technical problems) that most research efforts have shied away from attempting it. Studying drug/crime relationships using captive audiences of persons arrested on drug charges, or arrestees indicating they use drugs, or looking at persons in treatment is far easier to accomplish than the "grand design."

In the next section some salient issues which emerge from the Panel report will be discussed. These points represent the pivotal issues on which the NILECJ drug/crime research agenda effort has built upon, expanded, and developed specific research strategies. A systematic program built upon these research strategies should result in the generation of new and useful data that would integrate and clarify the findings of past efforts and provide sound support to new efforts.

## SOME SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS OF EXISTING DRUG/CRIME RESEARCH

The following discussion is an admixture of the findings of the NIDA Panel report and the NILECJ drug/crime research agenda development project. The Panel report served as a base from which to reassess, reorganize, and develop the basic research concerns noted there into a highly focused and detailed research agenda. With the help of a NILECJ project Advisory Board, some of whom also served on the NIDA Panel, the issues and problems raised by the Panel report were brought into sharper focus in relation to developing an overall research program or agenda in the drug/crime area. Some of the insights gained in developing the recommended NILECJ agenda permitted a more insightful second reading of the Panel report. The NILECJ project found the various elements of the Panel report to be a firm base on which to build. Therefore, what follows reflects the intellectual debt owed to the Panel report as well as the newer contributions developed by the NILECJ project.

The Panel's review of the extant literature in the drug/crime area, their criticisms of past research, and their suggestions for future research resulted in the identification of gaps in knowledge proffered by the drug/crime literature. This activity of the Panel resulted in a report which sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly presents the salient characteristics (foci, assumptions, and findings) of existing drug/crime research. In turn, these major characteristics can serve well in guiding future research efforts. These major characteristics are discussed below in the context of developing new or alternative research strategies. While the Panel report, as noted earlier, does not present a specific research agenda in a unified fashion, it does provide many of the bits and pieces for such an agenda.

### Heroin Users

The most striking feature of the literature describing drug/crime research is the overwhelming focus on heroin users or addicts. Addicts are readily available for study through treatment programs and prisons. Addicts are of interest since their activities bear the most simplistic

relationships to crime (that is, the need to generate income for the maintenance of their drug habit with their income generating options being primarily illicit). And finally, in the public eye, heroin is the most serious and heinous of all illicit drugs (in part because of its assumed economic relationship to criminal behavior, in which the addict supports his or her habit by committing crimes). This central focus on heroin addicts has shortchanged our knowledge about the relationships of other drugs to criminal behavior. In refining knowledge about the relationships between drug use and criminal behavior, variations in the relationships need to be explored by drug type and crime type. In this way, the assumption that heroin generates the greatest social costs can be more adequately examined and potential policy relevant differences can be explored.

Recent evidence has challenged the assumption of the heroin user's inelasticity of demand for the drug. If the heroin user's demand is in fact inelastic, then the argument of the need for the addict to generate income through criminal activities is more plausible. If however, the addict is able to alter his consumption of the drug for whatever reasons, the argument that he will almost inevitably become involved in crime to support his habit becomes less compelling.

One way in which heroin addicts appear to reduce their demand for heroin is by substituting other drugs. The use of several drugs in lieu of heroin further complicates the relationships between heroin use and criminal behavior. If criminal behavior continues with the use of substitute drugs, it is difficult to know whether that behavior might be attributed to a continuation of patterns established during heroin taking periods, whether it is attributed to the use of substitute drugs, whether it is attributed to a third factor which is related to drug use and criminal behavior, or whether all these factors are simultaneously operative in varying degrees. The use of other drugs substituting for heroin and polydrug use in general, bring the argument full circle for the need to consider the relationships between all types of drugs and crime rather than to solely focus on heroin addicts.

### Captive Populations

Another dominant feature of existing drug/crime research is that it mostly draws its data from captive populations (those in treatment or arrested or in prison). The question is then raised concerning the generalizability of such findings to all drug users. Do types of drug users exist who either are not identified or rarely identified by some official source such as the police or treatment programs? If such drug users exist, what are their involvements in criminal behavior, and what are the relationships between those involvements and their drug use? In order to better understand the full range of relevant drug/crime phenomena, those involved in such drug use behaviors must also be included in future research efforts.

### Record Data

Much of the data drawn for drug/crime studies involve record data from treatment programs or arrest records. Data taken from records fall short on two counts. First they do not reflect the true incidence of undetected behavior of those on record. Secondly, they do not identify the persons who go undetected by official recordkeepers. The former shortcoming does not permit full analysis of the behaviors of interest either singly or interactively. In order to understand the apparently complex interrelationships between drug use and criminal behavior, more complete types of data are required. The second shortcoming also reflects a lack of completeness in existing data. In this case there is a lack of representativeness, because those who go undetected are not included in samples of persons involved in drug use and criminal behavior. Record data are useful mechanisms to study the drug/crime relationships but they represent, at best, only a partial solution to gathering useful drug/crime data.

### Self-report Data

Data not drawn from records are usually taken from the drug users themselves through retrospective self-reports. Retrospective reporting over short periods of time (i.e., days or several months) normally produces far fewer distortions than retrospective reporting for long

periods of time (i.e., years). The self-reporting of deviant behavior, whether over short periods or long periods, commonly suffers from the respondent possibly concealing or modifying such behavior. Moreover, in addition to these common problems, long-term reporting of information also suffers from memory decay, telescoping, and other distortions. Ideally, such data should be drawn in a prospective design which will permit observation of the phenomena, or retrospective reporting for short periods of time. These data can then be correlated with official record data, in order to assess the extent to which respondents conceal information that is officially recorded from other sources, and to assess the extent to which official arrest/treatment records do not reflect the self-reported drug use or crime activities of the respondents. Both assessments are needed to properly explore the drug/crime relationships. (It should also be noted that persons without official drug or crime records, that is, those undetected, should also be included in a prospective design in order to give the sample proper representativeness. Of course, record checks on such persons will not permit an assessment of the veracity of their reports, a task which needs to be accomplished in other ways).

#### The Drug/Crime Nexus

The issues discussed above are presented in one form or another by the Panel report (sometimes implicitly dealt with). The next issue is the result of reviewing the methodologies of many drug/crime studies. Typically, when questions are posed to respondents about their drug use and criminal behavior, this is done separately or piecemeal. That is, one section of the data gathering instrument typically asks about drug use behavior, while another section independently asks about criminal behavior. Any connection between the two behaviors is typically developed statistically during the analysis of these two data sets. What this suggests then is that a series of questions which focus on the interconnections of the two behaviors might be highly useful and yield more direct information about specific drug/crime relationships.

To date only a few ethnographic efforts have pursued this type of information. While the literature generated by such studies is not

totally devoid of this particular approach, it should be adopted by researchers as a standard form of data collection in drug/crime research. As was mentioned in an earlier context, questions of this ilk are significantly strengthened by a prospective study design where, in particular, onset behavior of drug use or crime is recent and more readily recalled in accurate detail by the respondent.

#### Research Foci

The Panel report clearly delineates the major focus of prior drug/crime research. Essentially, much of that research asks of those officially identified as drug users: once into drug use, what factors control the drug user's "need" for criminal activity? This, of course neglects the developmental patterns by which criminal behavior may lead to drug use, or in which the onset of drug use may or may not increment any established criminal behavior, or where drug use may or may not precede and be a "cause" of criminal behavior. Exploration of such causal relations needs to focus more on onset behavior than on existing behavior of officially identified drug users in order to disentangle the complexities of drug/crime relationships.

The Panel report does not fully or clearly lay out a recommended research agenda for a new focus on drug/crime relations, but does throughout identify the major elements for such a research agenda. The Panel report, at different places throughout the report, notes, suggests, or recommends considering research that looks at onset behavior and temporal sequencing of drug use and criminal behavior; research that insures the representativeness of the sample (that is, drug users who are unidentified by officials as well as those officially identified); research that takes an initially descriptive approach in order to develop working models for future research in the drug/crime area; and research that utilizes a longitudinal and prospective research design. These are the elements that will set the pace for a new research focus in the drug/crime area. Major questions of the extent to which, and under what conditions, drug use contributes to or "causes" criminal behavior (with the additional questions of criminal behavior's contribution to drug use and the common "causes" tending to generate both drug use and criminal behavior) can be

more effectively dealt with by a program integrating those strategies. The new research focus will provide baseline data from so-called normal populations (which will identify drug use and criminal behavior both known and unknown to officials) which will serve as a basis to establish generalizability of existing study findings. Existing data, while not dealing directly with the questions posed by the new research focus, do not have to be disregarded or ignored but rather can serve to provide minimal guidelines and hypotheses for support of these future research efforts.

## CONCLUSIONS

In sum, the NIDA Panel report on drug use and crime is a thorough two-volume work that provides a review of the state-of-the-art and draws implications for our present knowledge and future research. The first volume extracts and summarizes what the existing literature up to 1975 permits scientists to say with confidence about research findings on drug/crime relationships. This volume goes on to constructively criticize those research efforts. The volume calls for better and more relevant data to answer the core question of whether or not drug use "causes" crime. Although most of the key issues and elements for a revised research agenda are in the Panel report, the report itself does not structure this information in a way that provides a clearly identifiable and prioritized research program or agenda. While the report stops short of developing or recommending an integrated research agenda for the drug/crime area, it accomplishes, in grand fashion, the goals and objectives that it set out in its introduction.

The appendix to the report is an important document which reflects the collective knowledge and judgments of drug/crime researchers up to 1975. This volume, with some editing, could serve as a useful reference work and pedagogical device for drug/crime researchers and students.

In many ways the Panel report set the stage for the NILECJ drug/crime research agenda development project. The two-volume report served as a resource document and provided the basic framework on which to build a drug/crime research agenda to address basic questions of under what conditions and to what extent does drug use "cause" criminal behavior. Although the bulk of the NILECJ drug/crime research agenda development work was done independently of the NIDA Panel report, it was reassuring that conclusions reached by the NILECJ project were fundamentally in agreement with the implicit or explicit suggestions and recommendations made throughout the main volume of the NIDA Panel report. The Panel report is a significant contribution to research inquiry into the drug/crime area which should not be ignored.

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