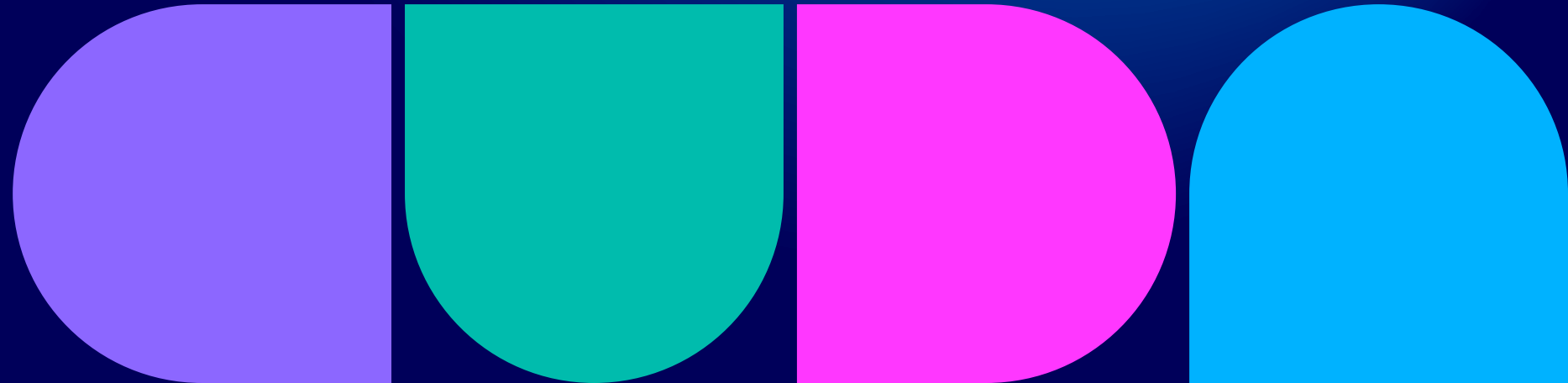


European Conference on Drug-Related Violence

This presentation was delivered at the European Conference on Drug-Related Violence on 26-27 November 2024 in Brussels. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.



Drug-related crime prevention

On what exactly do we focus?

26-11-2024

European Conference on Drug-Related Violence

Charlotte De Kock, PhD

Drug related crime a context dependent & ambiguous relation

Not per definition interrelated

(see e.g. Bennet & Holloway, 2005; Caulkins & Kleiman, 2014; Stevens et al., 2005, 2022; Young 2004)

- **Elephant in the room = possession** (<> UN 2019 call to promote alternatives to conviction and punishment)
- **Bidirectional** / reciprocal: accelerant
 - substance use can lead to offending / violence
 - offending / violence can lead to substance use
- **Independent** / coincidental
- **Common individual and external factors** (e.g. legal frameworks, opportunity, access, socio-economic factors, etc.)

Drug related violence ≠ crime

What's in a name?

Mainstreamed typology (Goldstein, 1985) drug-related **violence** is often erroneously equalled to drug-related **crime**

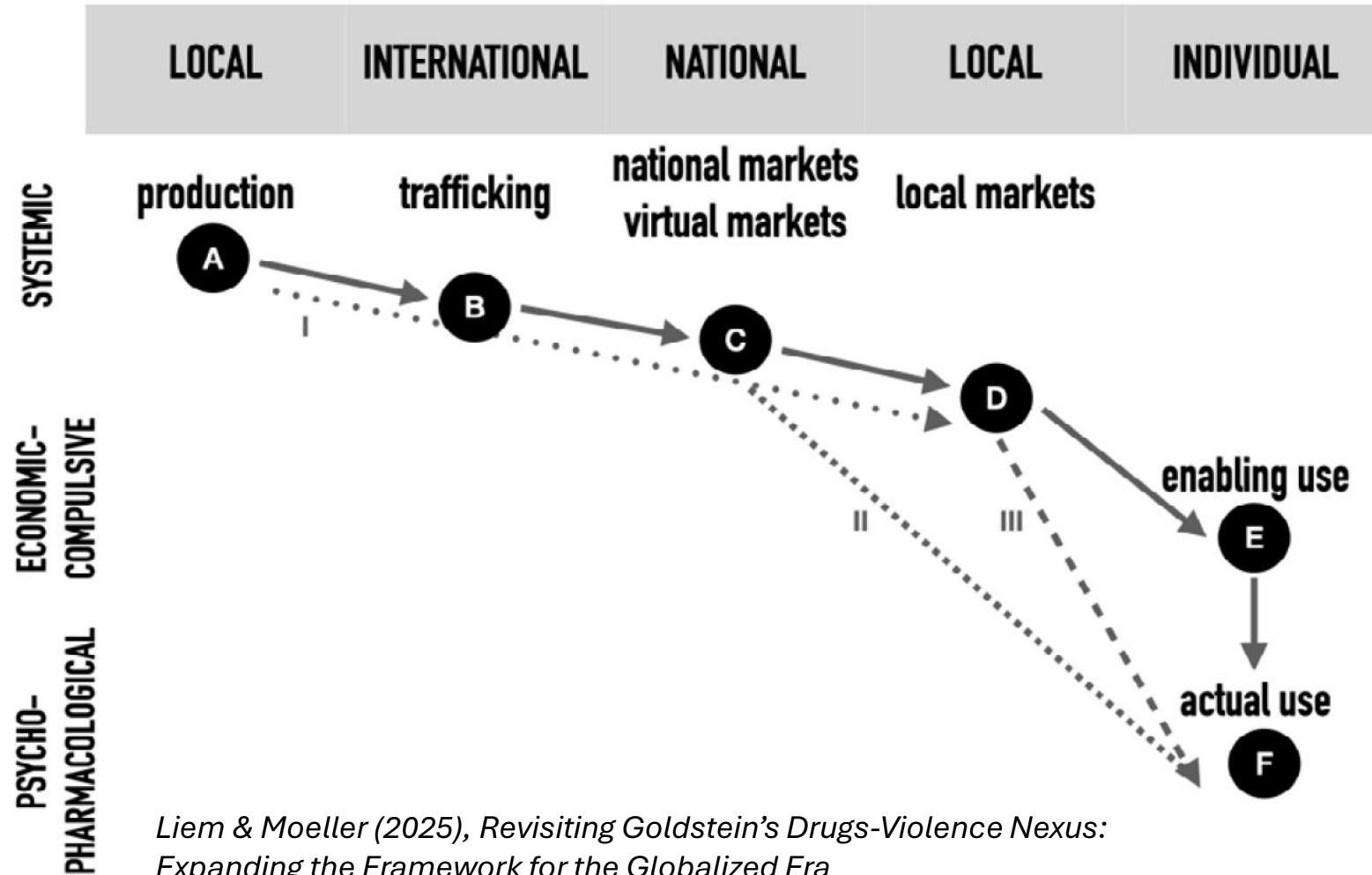
- **Psychopharmacological** (*under the influence*)
- **Economic compulsive** (*to maintain substance use*)
- **Systemic (violence)** (*related to markets and organised crime*)

- ◆ Presupposition = interconnectedness <> variance in time and space
- ◆ Analytic overlap, Validity of causal pathways?
- ◆ Psychopharmacological
 - ◆ Offending versus victimisation > psychopharmacological victimisation (Stevens 2007, Kilmer & Hoorens, 2010)
- ◆ Systemic insufficiently fine-grained and attuned to current tendencies (Liem, 2023)
 - ◆ less to production and distribution
- ◆ Capture contemporary patterns?

> Addition of community disorganisation effect of the drug industry (Blumstein, 1995) & victimisation

Drug related violence

An expanded framework (Liem, 2023)



Liem & Moeller (2025), *Revisiting Goldstein's Drugs-Violence Nexus: Expanding the Framework for the Globalized Era*

Challenges in understanding and modelling drug related violence or crime

- Historically **dominant focus** on drug-related violence
- **Model core** = analytical oversight of systematic / market related violence
- Potentially **overshadowing** other types of drug-related crime and harm that may be more harmful
 - Substance use initiation during incarceration
 - *Domestic violence and substance use*
 - *Traffic and substance use*
- What about more **fine-grained categories for e.g. health-related harm?**
 - *Need to extend the focus from violence to crime and harm*
 - *Allow for differentiation between types of substances*
 - *Elaborate 'individual' level*



Liem (2023), *Revisiting Goldstein's Drugs-Violence Nexus: Expanding the Framework for the Globalized Era*

What can serve as an integrated policy framework allowing for monitoring and prioritising?

We need to identify (as researchers and policy makers)
how
which
individual and
external factors work in
mechanisms to produce
which specific drug related crime outcomes
to which degree
in what contexts and
act subsequently in
policy making based on both
existing evidence and new encompassing baseline assessments.

A monitoring example: SOCOST in Belgium anno 2016

(Vanderlaenen, Lievens et al. 2016)

First measurement of social costs of addictive substances (alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, and psychoactive medication) in Belgium (2012)

Some facts on direct, indirect and intangible drugrelated costs related to health, crime, and traffic accidents

- **Direct public costs: 75% treatment, 24% security**
- **Less than 1% JOINTLY for prevention, harm reduction, coordination & research**
- *1,19% of Belgian gross domestic product (direct and indirect costs)*
 - *46% alcohol related, 32% tobacco, 16% illegal substances, 5% medication*
- **Direct costs (treatment, law enforcement, traffic) = mainly alcohol related (45%), 5% tobacco, 21% illegal substances**
- **Indirect costs (loss of productivity) = mainly health related (85%), 10% traffic, 5% crime**
= mainly alcohol related alcohol related (44%), 42% tobacco, 7% illegal substances, 5% medication

Step 1: Understand and contextualise the problem

- Law enforcement related in relation to other societal problems (Cook & Ludwig, 2000)
 - security <> health**
 - Alcohol <> illegal substances**
 - Prevention <> sentence implementation**
- Inform public action based on evidence (Dominguez-Rivera & Raphael, 2015)
 - law enforcement <> health and social interventions**
- Cost-benefit analysis (Brand & Price, 2000) & baseline assessment based on broad enough drug related crime models

Advocacy as a key strategy for health promotion and public health (EUPC)

Step 2: Identify populations, settings, situations, context, risk and protective factors

Substance use and offending can be influenced by common factors, including individual behaviour, social environment, and systemic influences. (see e.g. Stevens et al. 2005; Burkhart et al. 2022)

→ Comprehensive and encompassing interventions (*prevention infrastructure*) include strategies and interventions that address **individual, community, environment, situation and context.**

[Subscribe for updates about best practice by e-mail](#)

Search for programmes

Search

By age group

By setting

By outcomes targeted

By risk factor

Country

Xchange rating

<u>Programme title</u>	Date added	European countries where evaluated	Xchange rating
STAD – (STockholm prevents Alcohol and Drug problems): an environmental strategy in nightlife environments focussing on the improvement of the compliance of alcohol legislation regarding overserving and age limits.	14.02.2023	Sweden	Possibly beneficial
Local environmental alcohol licencing strategies	09.07.2020	Netherlands, United Kingdom	Possibly beneficial



What works? (for whom, under which circumstances): a focus on developmental interventions

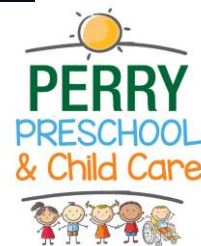
1. **Youth:** social and cognitive support adapted to specific risk factors and developmental phases

*E.g. **Preventure** (a personality targeted intervention), the **Olweus bullying prevention programme** and **brief social norms intervention** are promising (rated possibly beneficial and up in Xchange).*

2. **Parents**, specifically those at-risk and, of youth involved in offending: Effective interventions focus on life domains and family specific factors in addition to cognitive, behavioural and emotional factors.

*E.g. **Functional Family Therapy (FFT)**, **Multisystemic therapy (MST)**, **Nurse-family partnerships** and **multidimensional treatment** are promising (rated possibly beneficial and up in Xchange)*

3. **At-risk adults:** Treatment, substitution therapy, drug courts, drug rooms show promising effects on reducing crime but more research is needed. (See e.g. Egli et al. 2009, Koehler et al. 2014, Killias 2009)



What works?
(for whom, under
which
circumstances):
The role of the
environment

Community ≠ environment ≠ situation as context ≠ structure

What works? (for whom, under which circumstances)

(Pawson 2006; Pauwels,
De Kock et al. 2018)

- **Community** prevention (e.g. communities that care)
 - comprehensive interventions that aim to prevent social issues such as substance abuse, violence, and crime within a specific community
 - by means of focussing on risk factors
- **Environmental** prevention (Burkhart et al. 2022) =
 - Changes context / environment (physical, economic, social, regulatory)
 - Makes healthy decisions easier
 - Secondarily: changes norms, value and attitudes
 - Responsible beverage training in multi-agency partnership reduces violence in an around bars (STAD, Wallin et al. 2003).
 - Encompassing local environmental alcohol licensing strategies can reduce alcohol related violence, assault, nuisance (de Vocht et al. 2017; 2020; De Goeij et al., 2017).
- \cong **Situational** (*versus social*) prevention in criminology =
 - *opportunity-reducing, influencing effort, risks, rewards, provocations and excuses (Tilley & Laycock, 2002).*
 - Place managers can reduce property offences (Welsh et al. 2024).
- **Structural factors** that affect / characterise (at risk) populations
 - How do substance users experience environments (Brotherhood, 2021)?
 - Analytically study stigma / social exclusion (Burkhart et al. 2022)
 - Differential impact of universal prevention

Building robust prevention infrastructures

= *“A pivotal structural intervention aimed at building the capacity to implement and sustain prevention to entire communities by changing government and organizational policies.*

“A framework for improving the use of evidence-based interventions at the community, state, and national levels, focusing on early intervention and prevention rather than on treatment or remediation efforts alone.”

(Crawley et al., 2024)

In a nutshell...

**On what exactly
to focus in drug
related crime
prevention?**

- 1. When analysing the structure, we tend to forget the individual and when looking at the individual we tend to forget the structure.**

In a nutshell...

On what exactly
to focus in drug
related crime
prevention?

2. Crime is real, but also a social construct.

In a nutshell...

**On what exactly
to focus in drug
related crime
prevention?**

3. We need a broad enough analytical model to understand drug related crime.

In a nutshell...

**On what exactly
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**4. Policy making needs to be grounded in
encompassing baselines assessments.**

In a nutshell...

**On what exactly
to focus in drug
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prevention?**

5. A sustained dialogue between the health and security perspective is needed in theory, policy and practice.

More info on the EUDA XChange Prevention Registry? Check:

https://www.euda.europa.eu/best-practice/xchange_en