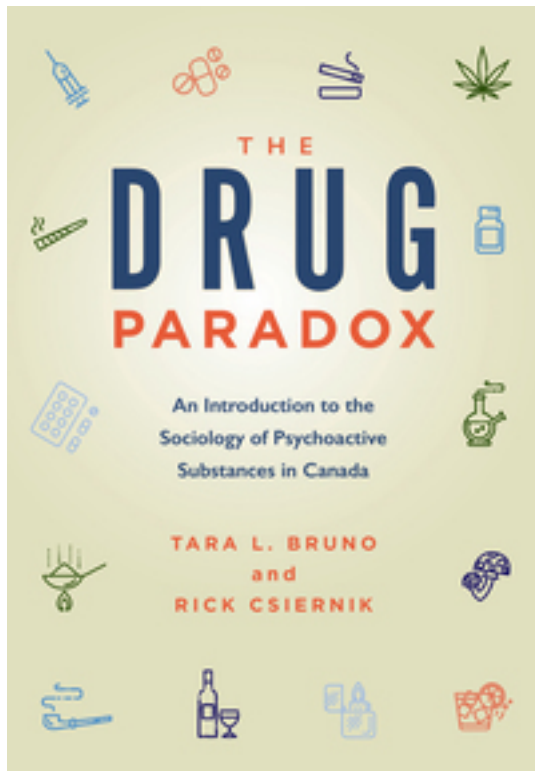


# The Drug Paradox

## An Introduction to the Sociology of Psychoactive Substances in Canada



### Subjects

Sociology of Health  
Addictions, Health, and Mental Health  
Mental Health and Addictions  
Medicine  
Social Work  
Health Studies  
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Why are some drugs considered socially acceptable while others are demonized? What makes these definitions so widespread? Who benefits from these conceptualizations? *The Drug Paradox* examines both the empirically founded and the socially constructed facets of drugs and drug use, highlighting the incongruous aspects of laws, policies, and programming that aim to address behaviours around drugs. The authors explore this paradox, arguing that Canada's punitive approach to addressing drug use continues to exist alongside harm-reduction strategies and that these competing approaches ultimately impede Canada's ability to deal effectively with substance misuse.

Using a policy-oriented approach while also emphasizing the utility of a multifaceted biopsychosocial model, this text provides students with a foundation in the sociology of psychoactive substances in the Canadian context. It covers a broad range of issues—models of addiction, the history of Canada's drug laws, media representation, government responses to substance use, and international perspectives on drug policy—and addresses various research areas that are important for students to consider when trying to make sense of the competing discourses on drugs in society. This timely textbook is ideal for use in sociology courses on drugs or drug use and will also appeal to those focusing on drug use from a criminology, public health, cannabis studies, or policy perspective.

### \*\*Features\*\*

- evaluates drugs and their use in Canadian society through a sociological lens
- provides an up-to-date discussion of both legal and illegal drugs
- each chapter includes a list of paradoxes and critical reflection questions

### Author Information

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Rick Csiernik

Rick Csiernik is a Professor of Social Work at King's College, University of Western Ontario. Csiernik has authored and edited several popular Canadian Scholars' titles including: *Substance Use and Misuse, Third Edition* (2021); *Just Say Know: A Counsellor's Guide to Psychoactive Drugs* (2014), *Workplace Wellness* (2014); *Responding to the Oppression of Addiction* (co-edited with William S. Rowe, 2017); *The Drug Paradox* (with Tara Bruno, 2018), and *Homelessness, Housing, and Mental Health* (co-edited with Cheryl Forchuk and Elisabeth Jensen, 2011). The author of more than 100 journal articles, his research interests include addiction, employee assistance programming and workplace wellness, social work education, and program evaluation. Rick has been recipient of both the King's University College Award for Excellence in Teaching and the McMaster University Instructor Appreciation Award.

### Reviews

"This book is an essential primer for anyone trying to navigate the social, legal, and health aspects of modern drug use. The authors' informed advocacy of a transition from punitive criminalization to a harm-reduction approach is timely and convincing." — Dr. Patricia G. Erickson, Professor of Sociology and Criminology, University of Toronto, and Scientist Emerita, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health\_

"In *The Drug Paradox*, Tara Bruno and Rick Csiernik provide the reader with a comprehensive sociological account of psychoactive substances in Canada. The authors do an excellent job of highlighting the complex and often contradictory nature of Canada's drug policy by bringing to light many of the taken-for-granted assumptions of how drugs are classified as either illegal or legal substances. This book is fastidiously researched and is an excellent resource for both undergraduate and graduate students." — Dr. Steven Cook, Lecturer in Quantitative Methods and Criminology, Cardiff University\_

"This book is an enjoyable, thought-provoking look at psychoactive drug use and abuse that approaches the problem from a Canadian perspective through the combined lenses of pharmacology, sociology, psychology, and law. The material is presented in a straightforward manner that transcends discipline, and the arguments are persuasive and certainly make one stop and think about the current state of psychoactive drugs in Canada." — Dr. Andrew Horne, Department of Anesthesiology, Pharmacology & Therapeutics, University of British Columbia\_

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