

which would help readers to distinguish which conditions, processes, and changes in the social structure and values are specific to the Czech Republic, and which it has in common with other post-communist countries. But perhaps this would be too much to ask of this publication, given the non-existence of comparative data in some cases, and the methodological problems involved in comparing some of the data that exist.

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Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl, Jacek Moskalewicz and Betsy Thom (eds.):
Two Worlds of Drug Consumption in Late Modern Societies
London 2009: Ashgate, 298 pp.

This book aimed to compare the quantities and costs of illicit drug use across six European Union cities: London, Amsterdam, Turin, Vienna, Prague, and Warsaw. Split into two parts, these findings formed the second part of the book with the first part given over to contextual detail for each city from which the findings could be embedded. In contrast to the dense and often superfluous detail provided in the first part, the second part of the book gives an illuminating picture of drug consumption across the six cities. Set against the backdrop of Europe as one of the largest consumers of illicit drugs, this book identified a dearth of information on the quantity of drugs consumed per capita across the continent. Where there was available information, the book reported, it is often limited to 'heavy' drug users and employs varying methodologies in the different countries. Additionally, the price of drugs is also often ignored.

The overall aim of the research was to 'contribute to the development of useful

and appropriate models of estimating drug consumption through the assessment of consumption patterns of five main drugs – heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, ecstasy and cannabis.' (p. 22) However, a key subsidiary aim was to estimate the consumption and spending patterns of two distinct types of drug user for the five most prevalent illicit drugs (Amphetamine, Cannabis, Cocaine, Ecstasy and Heroin) across six European Union cities; a focus which was kept throughout the book.

This book followed in the footsteps of the Pompidou Group, who are well known for carrying out comparative multi-city research, by examining two drug using populations from the six large Northern European cities mentioned above. They first examined the social and political situation for each city largely in the context of its drug using population. However, a clear rationale for this choice of 'multi-city' approach and for the choice of cities was not made apparent in the book.

The authors were keen to point out that this study aimed to extend the drug using population under study beyond the frequently researched 'hardcore' samples who are often more visible through contact with police and treatment facilities. As such, they identified two distinct drug using groups. The first group, containing frequent (at least twice a week) users of heroin and/or cocaine and/or amphetamines, and recruited principally through health services and penal (drug) services, are likely to be the commonly researched 'hardcore' group. The second, containing relatively frequent users of 'recreational' drugs, such as cannabis, cocaine, and ecstasy, are likely to be the less frequently researched drug users. Thus, reflecting on the definitions used by the authors to classify drug users into the two groups it seems that they have indeed succeeded in their aim to extend beyond the 'hardcore' sample. However, the authors' use of the labels 'marginalised' and 'socially integrated' for these two

groups of drug users seems somewhat misleading given that the criteria for categorisation into the groups was not based at all on levels of social integration. Since the study also sought to examine the social position of drug users from both groups, as a way of identifying differences in social status amongst the 'socially integrated' and 'marginalised' groups, it might be assumed that these labels were assigned to these groups retrospectively. However, since at no stage in the book was a rationale for the choice of labelling given, one is left to one's own assumptions.

The book was split into two parts. The first part reports on a review of currently available literature for each city for a number of criteria such as its socio-economic background, its drug policy, the local drugs scene, and the reported purity and price of drugs. This is supplemented, on occasion, with interviews involving key people from that city. These 'thick' city reports were written for the purpose of providing a framework for the subsequent discussions in part two. Part two uses a quantitative survey that is answered orally by drug users and completed by an interviewer. This survey forms the focus of the study since it is from this survey that the estimates on the quantities and price of drugs used for each city are based.

Both parts of the book are very different from one another; the second part is in my view much more informative than the first. Some contextual information in part one is useful for interpreting the results reported in part two, particularly the social and political situation for each city. However, a significant proportion of the information included in part one was not utilised or discussed in part two. For instance, some of the 'thick' city reports in part one provided information on purity levels, usually based on national figures. Part two also examined the issue of purity, reporting participants' perceptions of drug purity on a scale of 1 (low quality) to 3 (high

quality). Given that the purity information from part one could have been used to complement the purity information in part two, it seems strange that there was only one mention of part one's purity figures included in the discussion in part two. This begs the question of why the purity information from part one was included at all. With a mixture of interviews that involve a wide variety of 'informants' together with a vast number of varying sources and varying authors for each city, there was a lack of the consistency that is so evident in the second part of the book.

Part two on the other hand was well structured, following clear lines of enquiry that provide informative results and comparisons. For example, the book revealed that, across all six cities, differences were found between the 'marginalised' (problematic) and the 'socially integrated' (recreational) drug user. The marginalised drug users were found to use illicit drugs more frequently and in greater quantities than the socially integrated group. As a result, monthly expenditure on their illicit drug use was more costly for marginalised drug users when compared to socially integrated drug users. Although this difference is perhaps in itself unsurprising, the multi-city approach allowed interesting comparisons to be made between cities, finding for example that the most extreme difference between the marginalised and the socially integrated drug users was in Turin where marginalised drug users spend nine times more on their illicit drug use than socially integrated drug users. With comparative information also available on the price of drugs, the perceived quality of drugs, and the types of drugs used across cities, the authors were able to point to the comparatively high cost of certain drugs in Turin together with their perception of lower quality drugs as a possible explanation for these findings.

The study also gathered information on the social position of drug users from

both groups, as a way of identifying differences in social status amongst the 'socially integrated' and 'marginalised' groups. A wide variety of objective indicators were examined including education, housing, and economic resources. This information was supplemented by questions regarding the drug users' own perception of their social well-being including their health status, financial situation, access to health services, and feelings of control over one's life. Although not one of the key aims of the study, this information provided illuminating findings when compared across city and across both drug using samples. For example, it was found that Amsterdam had the highest proportion of marginalised drug users who reported to be most satisfied with their health. Conversely, London had the highest proportion of marginalised drug users who reported to be least satisfied with their health. An interesting observation from these findings was that Amsterdam and London have the oldest population of drug users. The findings on social position and perceived level of marginalisation were also used as possible explanations for observed differences between cit-

ies and certainly identify areas for further work.

In sum, this book offers a model for which consumption and expenditure patterns of drug use can be estimated in a large urban setting. The success of the book lies in its second part, which focuses on the findings of the study. Although the first part of the book provides context for these findings, this part could have been condensed given that information included in the section was not used in the subsequent part. As a result, more detail on the methodology employed, including the rationale for the methodology, could have made this book more informative. As a researcher in the drugs field, I found the comparative discussions on the patterns of drug use across the six cities highly interesting and insightful. However, with the need for more details of the methodology employed, together with the use of a multi-city approach that does not allow for a wider application of the findings, I am led to wonder who the intended audience is for this book.

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