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Two Worlds of
Drug Consumption
in Late Modern Societies

European Centre Vienna

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This book reports on the findings of an empirical study on the situation of drug users, their consumption patterns and drug spending for the five most common illegal drugs, i.e. heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, ecstasy and cannabis.

The research is based on a newly created detailed survey instrument that was developed for the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). A state-of-the-art review from additional sources complements this comparison of the drug situation in six European cities, which represent a wide range of drug problems and public policies. The cities studied are from West to East: London, Amsterdam, Turin, Prague, Vienna and Warsaw.

Per capita consumption and prices were assessed by face-to-face interviews with 100 frequent consumers of heroin, cocaine and amphetamines per city (so-called “marginalized drug users”) and 100 occasional consumers of cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines and cocaine (so-called “socially integrated drug users”), including questions on the range of drugs and the drug combinations consumed, on the mode of consumption and on expenditures.

In order to select “typical” interview partners and to judge their responses, “thick city reports” on the respective local drug situation were compiled, beside epidemiological and other scientific studies based on expert interviews with up to 20 drug policy actors.

The final report includes the six “thick city reports” and five comparative chapters on the following topics: (1) social background of the two groups of drug consumers, (2) consumption patterns of socially integrated drug users, (3) consumption patterns of marginalized drug users, (4) consumption patterns of substituted and non-substituted drug consumers, (5) quantities, costs and sources of the drugs consumed.

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Contents

Acknowledgements	5
List of Figures and Tables	11
Introduction	21
<i>Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl / Jacek Moskalewicz / Betsy Thom</i>	
Part I: City Studies	31
Introduction to Part I	33
<i>Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl / Jacek Moskalewicz / Betsy Thom</i>	
Chapter 1	
Drug Consumption in London – A City of Diverse and Changing Scenes	39
<i>Jenni Ward / Betsy Thom</i>	
Chapter 2	
Drug Consumption in Amsterdam	57
<i>Dirk J. Korf / Marije Wouters</i>	
Chapter 3	
Drug Market and Drug Consumption in Turin, A Post-Fordist Metropolitan City	79
<i>Franca Beccaria / Amedeo Cottino</i>	

Chapter 4

Drugs in Prague in the Years of Transition 97

Ladislav Csémy / Pavla Chomynová

Chapter 5

The City of Snugness (“Gemütlichkeit”).

Drug Consumption and Drug Consumers in Vienna 115

Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl

Chapter 6

Drug Use in Warsaw. Commercialization

and Criminalization of Addiction 137

Janusz Sieroślawski / Jacek Moskalewicz

Part II: Comparative Chapters 167

8

Introduction to Part II 169

Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl / Jacek Moskalewicz / Betsy Thom

Chapter 7

The Social Position of Socially Integrated and Marginalized

Drug Users from an Objective and Subjective Perspective 175

Grażyna Świątkiewicz / Michał Bujalski

Chapter 8

Consumption Patterns among Socially Integrated Drug Users 199

Marije Wouters / Franca Beccaria / Amedeo Cottino / Dirk J. Korf

Chapter 9

Consumption Patterns among Marginalized Drug Users 213

Ladislav Csémy / Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl / Benno Patsch

Chapter 10

Maintained and Non-Maintained Drug Users 227

Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl / Benno Patsch / Ladislav Csémy

Chapter 11

Quantities, Quality, Costs, and Sources247
Jacek Moskalewicz / Jenni Ward / Betsy Thom

Conclusions281
Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl / Jacek Moskalewicz / Betsy Thom

**Annex: Consumption of Illegal Substances in Vienna:
Estimates of Patterns of Use and Expenditure**287
Anderson E. Stanciole

List of Contributors295