

The Strict Swedish vs. the Loose Dutch System for Regulations on Prostitution and Drug Use

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Abstract: The author's research topics include economic and legal questions concerning prostitution and drug use. There are two extreme models in these two areas, one represented by Sweden and the other by the Netherlands. Sweden votes for the model of a "prostitution and drug free society", while the latter represents a looser, more liberal view. This presentation aims to answer the question whether the statistics support the presumptions of either model. To shed light on these issues, facts and figures published by the Swedish and Dutch statistics offices as well as other studies on the subject were analyzed. During the course of the past few decades, the income from the prostitution and drug markets in Sweden was virtually unchanged. This may be considered as a failure: prostitution and drug use could not be decreased further. It may also be considered as an achievement: while these two markets were growing in many countries, at least in the case of Sweden the situation did not become worse. It seems that the liberal regulation of drugs and prostitution in the Netherlands has not been a successful venture. It is no wonder that there are plans for changes and limitations to the prostitution sector with new regulations, although complete prohibition has not been raised as an issue. The consumption of drugs has been increasing. In this respect, alongside the liberal stance on the issue, increasing emphasis is placed on deterrence from light drugs.

Key words: Prohibitive policy of prostitution and drug, liberal approach of prostitution and drug, the countries of the Visegrad Group, Sweden and the Netherlands.

1. Introduction

The changes that began in the late 1980s—the fall of socialism in eastern European countries, the fall of the Soviet empire, the breakup of Yugoslavia, the separation of Czechoslovakia, the reunification of the two Germanys, the reshaping of Eastern Europe—have also caused a transformation in the economic-political-social system. A multitude of these transformations meant positive progressions for the impacted societies, which however were also accompanied by many difficulties and negative implications as well. Some of these problems were yet unknown to these societies, others, however, were a result of the alteration, transformation and swelling of past problems.

The phenomenon of prostitution was not unknown to the socialism, despite the punishment and outlawing of such activities. As a result of strengthening of liberal values, the disappearance of borders, the increase in social inequality, the expansion of poverty and hopelessness, the demise of long standing moral and ethical values, the proliferation and strengthening of the consumer society have all assisted the Eastern European and former Soviet states—to a varying degree, but almost without exception—to become sources and targets of Western European countries' sex market.

The above mentioned reasons may be one reason for the widespread use of drugs. In the United States as well as Western Europe, the 1960s beat and hippie era, the sexual revolution, as well as the multi day music festivals have all contributed to the spread and distribution of drugs. In Eastern Europe access to these substances was extremely limited almost non-existent.

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Inhalation of different chemicals, as well as the mixture of alcohol consumption and medicine was the primary form of drugs. This, however, was a more isolated phenomenon. The market of drugs in the countries of the former socialist block started off at the onset of the 1990s. Initially, these countries played the role of transit stations, while later on they became target countries. They are, however, not yet considered source countries as they have produced drugs only sporadically and in small quantities (the biggest increase was the area of home grown cannabis).

The governments of these countries have been caught unprepared for the regulation and treatment of problems relating to both prostitution and drugs. Actions by countries of the Eastern European block relating to the previous are characterized by uncertainty, and sporadically recurring arguments as well as law which no one can adhere to. In case of the later, there is increased commitment for stricter regulations, despite the occasional voice of proponents of so-called light drugs. Albeit policy is primarily prohibitive, the problem is reaching epic proportions.

2. Prostitution and Drug Use in the V4 Countries

Let us look at some data and facts about prostitution and drugs with respect to the countries of the Visegrad Group!

None of the four countries prohibit prostitution, however pimping and brothel ownership is outlawed. Each of these four countries (three countries at the time to be precise: Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary) have signed the United Nations' so-called New York Convention in the 1949, which served the fight against human trafficking and prostitution and declared that the traffic in persons for the purpose of prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person (*"Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others"*).

The Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary are all

source, target and transit countries when it comes to prostitution. Slovakia, on the other hand, is not characterized by the later.

Hungary proved to provide the most information and statistics, while the same for the Czech Republic was slightly less. The statistics bureaus of both of these previous countries have published information of prostitution. Poland in this respect published rather mixed and uncertain data on the Internet, while the same for Slovakia was literally non-existent (or at least I did not come across anything).

The Czech statistics bureau in February of 2009—at the request of EUROSTAT—estimated data regarding prostitution [1, 2]. The findings of the research showed that an estimated 9 billion Czech Korunas (100 billion HUF¹) was spent on prostitution each year. This equals 0.2% of the Czech GDP. According to the statistics bureau there are a total of 10-12 thousand prostitutes in the Czech Republic. The Czech civil group Bliss Without Risk (Rozkos bez rizika) reported that the average age of a prostitute was 26 years old. When analyzing by nationality, 60% were Czech, 12% Slovak, and a further 12% Ukrainian. "...Three fourths of prostitutes work in clubs, 10-15% on the streets, 4% as 'sole proprietors', and 3% at escort services" [3]. The bulk of prostitution is focused in Prague as well as in the cities nearing the German and Austrian borders, despite there is a large fall in demand from the later country in recent years.

Despite its partial legality, the "traditionally religious society morally condemns prostitution" [4] in Poland. Conservative estimates by authorities report 3 thousands, civil groups estimate some 12 thousand, while other sources cite 20 thousand women working in the sex industry.

Regarding Slovakian prostitution, all we know is that all forms of it exist: there are street girls, half legal erotic massage salons, where women also sell their bodies, and escort services as well. There is an abundance of related advertisement available on the Internet.

¹ 100 HUF \cong 0.5 USD.

Prostitution confined to personal space in Hungary has been largely allowing with adherence to certain criteria from 1999. Despite this fact, prostitutes have scarcely applied for a sole proprietor's license, while their number even according to conservative estimates is at least 20 thousand, although this number may be significantly higher.

One thing which is certain, however, is that the state has had zero income for the services offered by these sole proprietors. The Hungarian statistics bureau has estimated data relating to prostitution all the way back to 1995 [5]. Between the years 2000 and 2004, when considering gross sales prostitution went from 108 billion HUF to over 150 billion HUF in income generated. In other words it increases one and a half fold, while its overall share moved around 0.36% of GDP. When analyzing household expenditures, we will notice that total sexual services related expenditures have risen threefold over 12 years: from 50 billion HUF in 1995 to over 150 billion HUF in 2007. When analyzing its share of overall expenditures, however, we will notice that it declines from 1.7% to just around 1% of the total. This on one part is explained by the fact that the value of consumer expenses has increased some 4.1 times in the same period.

Not one member country of the V4 has legalized the use of drugs. What are different in each of these four countries are the relatively small quantities as well as the extent of punishment. All of these countries have information published in this field, attributable in part to the long standing cooperation between European countries and their system of sharing data. One example of this is the data found on the website of EMCDDA (The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction).²

All of the four countries have prevention, treatment and rehabilitation into society, reduction of risk and supply, and international cooperation at the centerpiece of their drug prevention policies. The most popular type of drug is cannabis (marijuana and hashish),

which is closely followed by ecstasy and amphetamines. A second general tendency is that following the rapid growth in first time users in recent years, this trend has slowed and stopped when analyzing the population as a whole; in terms of the high school or secondary school aged kids, however this growth is still continuing.

The Czech legal framework did not outlaw possession of illegal drugs for personal use until 1999, when laws were radically changed to disallow such. The changes in law effective January of 2010—in contrast to a number of misinformation appearing in the press, which stated the legalization of small quantities—have redefined the quantities where possession is considered a misdemeanor and not a felony [6]. In 2007 nearly 31 thousand drug users³ were arrested, in other words 3 persons to every 1000, which is nearly identical to previous years. Also in 2007 over 8 thousand drug user requested help and treatment, more than half of which for the first time. The deaths related to drug overdose have been on a continuous decline since 1998, however the number of persons involved in the needle exchange program thus the number and frequency of persons using a needle has increased.

The Polish drug law of 1997 on controlled substances follows the description and structure of international conventions. A modification to the related law on drugs in the year 2000 makes any and all possession of drugs a felony. The number of drug users in the year 2005 was estimated at 100-125 thousand persons, which represents a 2-3 fold increase from 2002. Accordingly, the per 1000 capita drug user was 3.7-4.7. In the year 2006, more than 13 thousand drug users were treated, half of which were first time patients. The number of drug use related deaths was highest in the year 2000; its number has been stagnating ever since.

The Slovakian law on drugs is enacted in 1999, which has been modified many times and separates

² Unless otherwise noted, I will have used the same sources.

³ When citing drug user, I refer to those users who use needles or are long-term/continuous users of opiates, cocaine, and/or amphetamines.

substances and their ill effects on health into three categories. Accordingly possession of small quantities is dealt with in expedited manner and is usually punished with mandatory sentence to rehabilitation and treatment program, or in extreme cases prison sentence. The newly adopted penal code effective from 2005 added a number of alternative options to punishment. The number of drug users in 2007 was estimated at 18 thousand, or 4.7 persons per 1000. In the year 2007 nearly 2,000 drug users were treated, 44% of which were first time patients.

The principle adopted in Hungary with respect to regulation was and still remains that of a “drug free society”. Pertinent sections of the penal code have imposed stricter sanctions. The number of drug users in 2005 was more than 24 thousand persons, or 3.48 persons per 1,000. In 2007, over 4 thousand drug user attended some form of treatment, 65% of which were first time patients. The deaths relating to drug use have stagnated over the past years.

When analyzing the datasets of the Hungarian statistics bureau [5], we will notice that the number and rate of drug use shows signs of increase in all aspects. Between the years 2000 and 2004, or in less than 5 years time, its total output went from 56.5 billion HUF to three times that (153.2 billion HUF), while its share has doubled (0.19% to 0.36%). When analyzing a longer time interval, the information available for the period between 1995 and 2007, the rate of drug related expenditures to total household expenditures is extremely high, and increased six fold from 21 billion HUF to 125 billion HUF. This means that the overall percent of total household consumption has increased from 0.64% in 1995 to almost 1% by the year 2007—despite there are small decreases around the turn of the millennium.

The previous short overview highlighted that, in the V4 countries:

- (1) The problem of prostitution—alongside diverging and often time unenforceable regulation—is unsolved;
- (2) A strict policy on drugs—despite its

successes—presents serious problems for society;

- (3) There are times, when debate of liberalization and total ban becomes a hot issue.

At times of these debates, proponents of either side cite the Netherlands for its liberal treatment of the topic, or Sweden with its very strict stance on the issue. It may be useful, therefore, to look at both countries and how the numbers and data support the theory, as well as the lessons we may be able to derive in either case.

3. Swede Rigor

In 1907 prostitution was legalized in Sweden. In the 1960s, however, pornography was spreading like wildfire in the country, as many saw sexual freedom in it. Since 1999, Sweden, moreover, has become one of few countries, where offering sexual services is not considered a crime, its purchase, however is, whether it is done on the street, in a brothel, in a massage parlor, or on the Internet. Prostitution in the country, therefore, is considered semi-legal, while the operation of brothels and pimping is illegal. The Swede model, thus, aims to limit demand by punishing the buyer. The punishment may be a fine or a maximum six month prison sentence.

A multitude of studies [7, 8] estimate the number of prostitutes working in massage salons, at escort agencies, private apartments or on the streets at the end of the 1990s to 2,500 women. A total of 700 women from the entirety of prostitutes was an immigrant. When compared to the population as a whole, 0.29% of the population of Sweden was a prostitute, which is the smallest rate in Western Europe (similar to France), and is about one tenth that of the Netherlands, or a mere 8% of that of Germany.

The Swedish statistics bureau last published a study on this illegal market⁴, and specifically prostitution and

⁴ Let's not forget that the illegal market or sector is not identical to the black economy. Illegal market activities are those prohibited by law. Activities relating to the black economy may be legal activities, where tax and tariff evasion may be committed. When studying the illegal market, the Swede statistics bureau examined prostitution, drug use, tobacco and liquor smuggling, illegal liquor producing, and illegal gambling activities.

drugs in 2008 [9].

The study showed that the rate of prostitution when compared to the illegal market or the GDP as a whole is insignificant in the country. With respect to prostitution, the legal changes 1999 were followed by a drastic decrease, which was most noticeable in street prostitution. Following this decrease, however, by the beginning of 2000 the income generated from prostitution started increasing once again and surpassed the largest measured data (measured in 1998). Since then, following a slight decline, levels have returned to the pre-change numbers.

The rate of prostitution when compared to the Swedish GDP as a whole was insignificant even before the changes in law (0.3‰), which slowly continued to decrease by the middle of 2000 to below 0.2‰. This trend is depicted in Fig. 1.

A study conducted at the request of the Swedish government showed that as a result of the law, the majority of street prostitutes disappeared. This, on the other hand, had numerous negative implications. On the one hand, the method of communication between the buyer and the seller transformed: advertisement of prostitution, and contact through the Internet, community sites, blogs and mobile phones have increased significantly. Additionally, the number sexual services offered for money in restaurants, hotels, places of entertainment, at conferences, as well as on the ferries operating between Sweden and Finland have increased. The migration of prostitutes to other countries, moreover, has also increased as a result of seeing better opportunities abroad. Thirdly, customers have also started seeking such services elsewhere (in other words, the role of sex tourism increased). Finally, prostitution moved from visible to “invisible” areas (such as private apartments, disguised brothels, etc.) which make prostitutes even more vulnerable and their life more difficult. Critics of the Swede model often cite these issues. At the same time, however, the Swedish experts don’t view this as a real problem, moreover emphasize that the rate of detection and

substantiation of such cases have actually increased⁵ as a result.

When comparing the three major types of prostitution, we will notice that almost half of those work in sex clubs, 40% on the streets, and a mere one tenth over the Internet. At the same time when looking at income, sex clubs generated 2/3-s, one fifth was generated over the Internet, an only 15% by street prostitutes. This diverging result in income generated is not surprising at all, considering the hierarchy of the different types of prostitution in prices and the differing method of settling business.

Up until the 1960s Sweden has had a liberal policy on drugs. Marijuana and amphetamine derivatives were the typically used drugs in the country. At the end of the 1960s, however, they decided that the liberal drug policy has failed and so in 1968 the country adopted a new law on drugs, which outlaws the use and possession of every type of drugs [10, 11]. In 1977, the country set the goal of a “drug free Sweden” and accordingly modified its law on drugs a number of times mostly tightening regulations. Aside from focus on the reduction of supply, increasing emphasis was placed on regulating the demand side (in other words the end users), as well as prevention and therapy.

The income derived from drugs—fundamentally due to the prohibitive drug policy—is low and decreasing in tendency in relation to the country’s GDP. This is true despite the fact that drugs make up the largest segment of Sweden’s illegal market [9]. This tendency has decreased similarly, although at a larger rate since 1999. While the income generated through the sale of drugs was 1.2‰ of the gross domestic product in 1993, it reached one and a half thousandth by 1999. Since then, this rate has steadily and continuously declined and by 2006 was cut in half to 0.7 ‰ of GDP.

⁵ The explanation to this surprising remark is simple. In street prostitution, the two parties agree verbally, which remains unknown for third parties. When prostitution becomes hidden the parties agree in writing (over the Internet), or through more easily controllable devices (mobile phone, Skype), thus there is tangible evidence of their conversations.

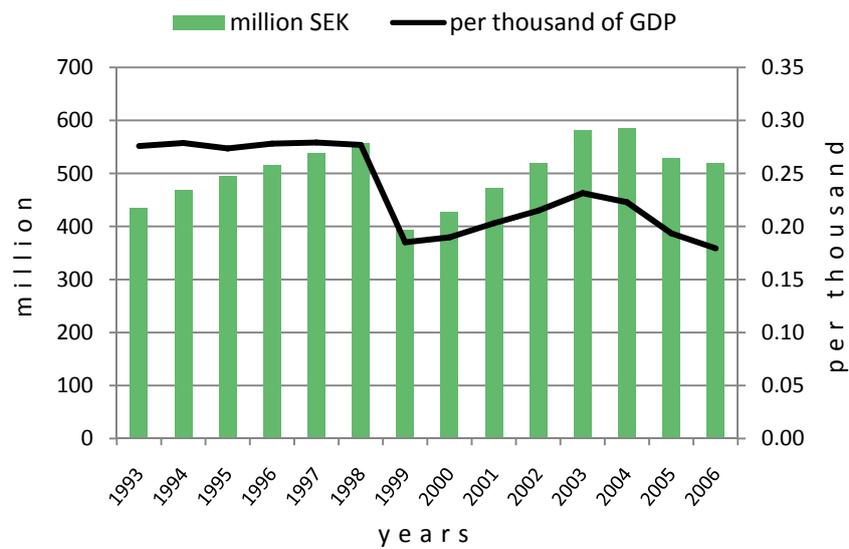


Fig. 1 The income generated by prostitution and its share of Swedish GDP.

Source: chart data from Ref. [9].

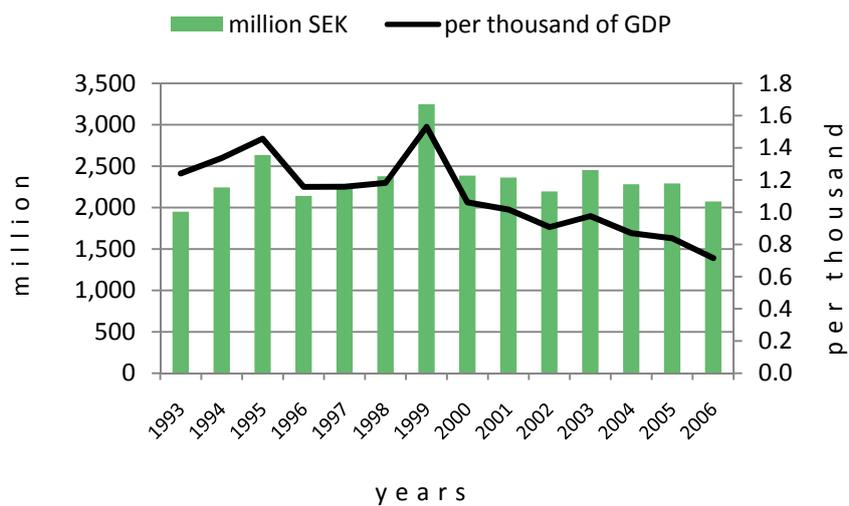


Fig. 2 The estimated income from drugs and its share of the Swedish GDP.

Source: chart data from Ref. [9].

The drastic decrease in the rate of drug income to GDP, however, can be attributable more to the rapid rise in GDP than the decrease in income from drugs. The income generated from the sale of drugs in 1996 was almost 2,000 million Swedish Kronas, and the only time this income surpassed the 3,000 million Swedish Krona mark was in 1999. The unorthodox jump in figures was explained by the unnatural rise in prices by the Swedish statistics bureau. Since then, this income

has been fluctuating between the 2,000 and the 2,500 million SEK range—roughly equaling the levels at the beginning of the 1990s. Fig. 2 allows a much easier understanding of the previous.

The picture we may have gotten from the previous data is somewhat dampened by the fact that between 1993 and 2006 the price of the majority of drugs decreased, some of the most typical drugs such as heroin by 40%, amphetamines by 30%, and cocaine by

20%. At the same time, however, the price of marijuana increased by 14%. These previous figures shed light on the fact that the decrease in income from drugs is only on one part due to the decrease in consumption, and in another part to the fall in prices. Nevertheless, Sweden has the lowest percentage of youths trying marijuana.

The positive image of the Swedish prohibitive drug policy is questioned by some studies. According to a study [12] conducted by the University of Stockholm since the passing of the drug law (1968) there has been a steady decrease among the 15 year old students and 18 year old soldiers who have tried drugs. At the same time, however, since the onset of the 1990s there has been a slow but steady increase in both of these groups.

Based on the statistics data from the EMCDDA we can conclude that the so-called “problematic drug cases” have steadily increased since the end of the 1970s (the number estimated at 12,000 in 1979, 17,000 in 1992 and 25,000 people in 1998), and their ratio to total population in 1998 (4.5/1000 persons) was higher than in the Netherlands (2.4-3.2/1000 persons). Their number however has continuously decreased since and has reached 25,000-28,000 persons in the past 10 years.

According to a study by the Swedish Drug Users’ Union (SDUU) [13], Sweden treats the problem of drugs as a crime fighting issue and not a health issue. As a result, those taking drugs intra venally are less likely to participate in HIV prevention programs due to their fear of being identified and the criminal repercussions it may have. This same study criticizes the Swedish government for insufficient needle and methadone programs for those in prison, when at the same time at nearly half of those imprisoned between 1996 and 2006 were daily users of intra venal drugs in the 12 months prior to their prison term.

4. The Merciful Dutch

An abundance of studies and reports [7, 14-16] cite the number of prostitutes working in the Netherlands to be between 30,000 and 37,500 persons, or 2.34‰ of the total population, which is the second highest rate in

Western-Europe behind Germany. According to studies half of all prostitutes in the Netherlands are foreigners.

The Netherlands has been the home of so-called “villages of bliss” often visited by sailors since the 1200s. Shop window prostitution, a Dutch “invention”, appeared in the country in the 17th century [17]. The Netherlands has not signed the New York Convention, as prostitution and all its forms have been legal in the country since 1911. Brothels have been legalized as of October 1, 2000 in order to allow more control and regulation of prostitution.

By the end of the 2000s, it has become apparent that full scale liberalization has not fulfilled its hopes and organized crime has become too entangled with prostitution. Despite this fact, there is no talk of prostitution being eradicated from the Netherlands. Nor is there talk of an end to the red light district or shop window prostitution. Plans are to limit a district of prostitution to a few streets, enact stricter laws and regulations to issuing permits and raises the minimum age from 21 to 23, as well as require a language exam.

The Dutch statistics bureau published a paper on the state of the illegal economy⁶ in 2005 [18]. The paper contains estimates for the year 2001 emphasizing that gathering information in this area is extremely difficult. The total income of the illegal economy in 1995 was 5 billion Dutch guilders, which represented less than 1% of the country’s GDP. This ratio has not changed significantly by the year 2001.

The statistics bureau used a study conducted by a foundation examining the working conditions in the sex industry. According to this report, there are a total of 11,000 prostitutes working every day⁷, and the total

⁶ When examining illegal activities, they considered drugs, prostitution and human trafficking, the illegal activities of HR companies, theft, and poaching.

⁷ Based on a number of studies, the initial assumption was that the total number of prostitutes is 25 thousand persons, 8,500 of which work in “shop window”, street, club or private apartments. Thus 18,500 prostitutes were left for escort and call girl services. According to the statistics bureau, however this number is high and assumed a total of 20,000 prostitutes. With this in mind, they believe that those working as an escort and call girl only work 4 days per week, thus their group was estimated at 6,600 persons, while all the others at 6,000 persons.

annual income they were able to keep was 240-410 billion Euros in 2001. The amount of money a prostitutes “manager” made was similarly high. When taking export, import, products, and consumption into account prostitution added 460 billion Euros to the value of the Dutch GDP. With this in mind, its share of the GDP was 0.1% of the whole.

When analyzing by numbers, we find that escorts and call girls are the largest group; when taking income into account we will notice that clubs and private apartments generate the most revenue. Shop window in both these respects are really not significant (compared to the other categories), while at the same time a general conception about the Dutch sex industry is the women in the shop windows in the red light district. The rate of street prostitution is totally insignificant—when compared to the other categories—despite the fact that as a result of the economic downturn, their numbers have increased.

The cornerstone of the Dutch drug policy is that creation of a drug free society is an illusion, thus the state should adopt a damage minimization drug policy. Accordingly, they view drug users as a health problem and not a criminal problem.

The Opium law was enacted in the Netherlands in 1919⁸. As a result of this law opium for non-medicinal use was banned. Hemp seeds were a legal substance until 1953 when it was admitted to the list of outlawed substances. As a result of the 1960s social-cultural movements marijuana use in the country spread, while at the same time new drugs (amphetamines, LSD,

heroin) appeared on the scene. As a result of state and civil proposals, councils on the issue recommended the separation of light and hard drugs, as well as drug use, and drug distribution in 1969. These concepts were incorporated into the modified 1976 Opium Law.

The system of treatment for hard drugs is rather broad and advanced. These include centers for awareness and consultation, methadone programs, services that assist the rehabilitation into society, as well as rehabilitation centers. Light drugs include hemp (cannabis) and its derivatives, hashish and marijuana. The so-called coffee shops (special coffee houses) were provided the opportunity to sell the later in small quantities starting the 1970s.

According to the Dutch statistics bureau, drugs comprise the largest segment of the illegal market. Within the sector of illegal market heroin, cocaine ecstasy and cannabis are especially dominant. The growth in the number of regular users in each of these sub-categories was significant—almost doubled in the period—between 1997 and 2001. The only category that was unchanged was the number of problematic drug users. A detailed description of this can be seen in Table 1.

In 2001, experts estimated the income generated by drugs at 1.960 million Euros. Almost 45% of this value was attributed to heroin and cocaine, and a further 40% to cannabis. The remaining roughly 15% segment was split between ecstasy and amphetamine (in other words synthetic drugs). The income derived from drugs represented one and a half percent of total GDP in 2001.

⁸ For the historical section I utilized the information found on a Dutch website as well as an article found on the website of the Hemp Seed Association [19], which cites Leuw, E-Marshall, H.: Between Prohibition and Legalization. The Dutch Experiment in Drug Policy (Kugler Publications, Amsterdam-New York, 1994) paper as its source. This paper can be found under http://books.google.hu/books?id=2mAVkStNG5EC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Edward+Leuw+and+Haen+Marshall&source=bl&ots=846-kOE8&sig=q4N8zWhgOogFbYCkejcgrwho3Hk&hlhu&ei=GOfRS56wOeSdONWpodwO&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CAgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false

Table 1 The number of drug users in the Netherlands.

Number of regular drug users (persons)	1997	2001
Number of problematic drug users	28,000	28,000
Number of cocaine users	26,000	54,000
Number of ecstasy users	34,000	67,000
Number of amphetamine users	18,000	30,000

Those using ecstasy and amphetamines somewhat overlap each other.

Source: chart data from Ref. [18].

5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of data from both the Swede and Dutch models the following deductions can be drawn.

The concept of a prostitution and drug free society is more easily attainable in a country where these two sectors were not significant before such regulations were imposed. During the course of the past few decades, the income from these two markets in Sweden was virtually unchanged. This may be considered as a failure: prostitution and drug use could not be decreased further. It may also be considered as an achievement: while these two markets were growing in many countries, at least in the case of Sweden the situation did not become worse.

One thing is certain, however, and that is that neither prostitution nor drug use can be completely stopped, but rather can be made more manageable and less noticeable by society as a whole. In order to achieve this, the majority of a society needs to accept the concept of a “prostitution and drug free society” and both politics and the media need to refrain from questioning the validity of this.

It also must be noted that with time the methods of both supply and demand will change, especially with the advent of the Internet and the possibilities it brings forth. The issue of prevention, treatment and dealing with the “quitters” also remains a paramount issue.

As a result of the changes in methodology, moreover, new forms, types and opportunities arise and there is a constant need to analyze this question in a complex manner. In other words, “prostitution” or “drug use” can never be regulated on its own, however, only their individual categories and types can be treated in different manners.

The liberal regulation of drugs and prostitution is based on the notion that if one cannot completely eradicate one or the other, one must make it more visible and thus treatable and creating the possibility of the illegal element and its ties to organized crime disappear. It seems like this approach to the issue in the

Netherlands has not been a successful venture. It is no wonder that there are plans for changes and limitations to this sector with new regulations, although complete prohibition has not been raised as an issue. The consumption of drugs has been increasing. In this respect—alongside the liberal stance on the issue—increasing emphasis is placed on deterrence from light drugs.

With the previous said, one must also point out that the liberal approach in the Netherlands and the increase in most numbers, prostitution and drugs aren't as significant as many experts or studies seem to suggest.

Upon closely examining the statistics from both states we can conclude that the prohibitive policy surely did not worsen prostitution and drug consumption, while the more liberal approach did not meet the expectations in relation to these two areas either.

The state, the economy, the society and values of that society is different for each country. There is no sure recipe for achieving the conditions of any given country. One must always take into account the unique features, opportunities, available tools, etc. when doing so. The goals may be similar; however, the paths that lead to them will almost always be differing. The task should always be to specify a given goal and identify the best available tools to meet them, and finally implement.

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