



Drug injection paraphernalia #BODY

written by Rafael Clua Garcia
May, 2014



In the proximity of neighbourhoods of Barcelona where drugs are sold, the entrances of buildings, parking lots as well as public spaces are transformed into spots of consumption, as well as the dumpsters of drug use. Spoons with which to “cook” the fix, cotton balls to filter the drug, tourniquets to tie off the vein, cleaning alcohol to leave the injection site blank and even bloody syringes are disseminated among the plastic bottles, milk cartons and empty boxes that fill the streets. Alternately, they are laid at the full sight of other consumers for potential re-use, even at the risk of being infected with HIV and hepatitis. In aiming to reduce the harm of drug street consumption, Barcelona city council launched in 2001 spaces called ‘Drug Consumption Rooms’ (DCR). The DCRs provide a space that allow drug users to consume and utilise clean material under the supervision of health professionals. Notwithstanding, not all the drug users are willed to consume within the building. Rejecting these facilities by arguing that to consume drug in these centers ‘breaks the feeling’, provokes paranoia or bust their head, some continually prefer consuming their drugs in



other places. Simultaneously as the DCRs close in the afternoon, homeless users have no other choice than to return to the streets, and thus again contributing to the accumulation of used utensils around in the neighbourhoods. In this context, my research explores the Barcelona DCRs' users consumption patterns and needs through ethnographic fieldwork in different selling and consuming spots in the city. I focus on the evaluation of current harm reduction policies with the aim of providing both an in-depth understanding of of the issues related to DCRs, as well as suggesting for improvements that would improve the life quality of drugs users.