

# Reconfigurations of Security: Governing Heroin Users in Frankfurt am Main, 1975–1995

*Sebastian Haus*

## *1 Introduction*

Today, the city of Frankfurt am Main is widely known as one of the first major cities in Germany having adopted so-called “harm reduction” policies towards heroin users. Rather than repressing or forcing users towards abstinence, the city administration primarily focuses on reducing the risks of drug use and on stabilizing the health of addicts with a multi-faceted series of measures such as safe injection sites, methadone maintenance programs, legal advice services, and assisted housing projects. Praising “Frankfurt’s path in drug politics” as a “role model for many municipalities at home and abroad,” the city administration highlights that its drug policy has the double effect of not only improving the situation of drug addicts but also contributing to the “protection of citizens.”<sup>1</sup>

Considering social and medical assistances for heroin users as measures to improve citizens’ security resonates in many ways with the long and complex history of controlling the city’s heroin scene. Since the 1970s, Frankfurt am Main, as well as many other cities across Europe, have had to cope with the increasing presence of heroin users in the urban public space. The consumption of so-called “hard drugs” such as heroin as well as its spatial manifestations, the public gatherings of drug-consuming youth in plain sight for passersby, attracted strong media attention and caused a moral panic about the radical delinquency of teenage heroin users. The local authorities in Frankfurt considered heroin addicts as both threats to urban security and ill persons in need of medical and psychological care, therefore necessitating not only criminal persecution by the police, but also social service measures by the city administration. Consequently, the logics of governing the heroin scene oscillated between coer-

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1 <http://www.frankfurt.de/sixcms/detail.php?id=3007>, February 28, 2017. This quotation and all following quotations are translated by the author.

cive measures such as police raids and compulsory hospitalizations of addicts on the one hand, and more liberal and communicative approaches such as street work or health orientated assistances on the other. These different and often very contradicting approaches indicate that the history of drug policies in Frankfurt am Main is one of shifting governmental rationalities and power relations evolving around a group of socially marginalized people who did not obey hegemonic ideas of normality.

This article addresses the transformations of drug policies in Frankfurt am Main between 1975 and 1995. Exploring the different ways in which the city administration intended to cope with the heroin scene, it will point out the political dynamics that led to the emergence of today's approach towards heroin users in the city. The article focuses on two aspects: on the one hand, it focuses on the discourses and practices by policy-makers and city officials, asking how they framed heroin use and which practices they adopted to regulate the problems associated with heroin use. On the other hand, the article will address the reactions and political activities of both heroin users and groups claiming to represent users' interests in the field of drug politics, such as AIDS self-help organizations. In taking the perspective of those who were the object of the city's drug policy, the article endeavours to focus on the power relations in local drug policies, especially on the power effects of governmental practices as well as on the agency of heroin users in different policy regimes.

Historical research on drug politics in West Germany has mainly focused on the 1960s and 1970s so far.<sup>2</sup> The 1960s were marked by the so-called first "drug wave," which was strongly related to counter-cultural protests, the events of 1968 and to a larger controversy about democratization and social reform. In this context, emerging policies regarding drug-consuming youth replaced traditional, more stigmatizing framings of drug use. Local authorities even supported anti-authoritarian self-help projects for drug addicts anchored in the counter-culture milieu.<sup>3</sup> In highlighting that policies addressing heroin users were mainly orientated towards a

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2 Most historians have analyzed drug consumption of youths in the context of the emerging alternative youth cultures and the history of consumer societies in the twentieth century. Research on the 1980s and the early 1990s, especially on the impact of HIV/AIDS on West German drug politics, is scarce. See Briesen 2005; Holzer 2007; Weinbauer 2006; Weinbauer 2010; regarding the impact of HIV/AIDS on German drug policies, see Schmid 2003.

3 Stephens 2007; Morris 2014.

spatial logic, transforming the social problem of heroin use into a problem of the urban space, historian Jan-Henrik Friedrichs has argued that research on the strategies against heroin scenes provides insights into the crisis of disciplinary societies. Spatial policing of heroin scenes, Friedrichs argues, was part of a larger historical shift towards what French philosopher Gilles Deleuze has called “societies of control”.<sup>4</sup>

Rather than distinguishing ideal types of power regimes or arguing for clear-cut transformations, this article will suggest a different narrative. I will argue that different logics and practices of governance strongly overlapped in the history of drug policies in Frankfurt am Main between 1975 and 1995. The article will point out a series of reconfigurations of the city’s drug policy, which resulted from shifting political backgrounds, such as changes of local government, from unexpected events, such as the outbreak of HIV/AIDS, and the side effects of political interventions, such as the increase of overdose deaths, but also from criticism of repressive strategies by social workers, social scientists, and AIDS self-help groups. The article will argue that “security” – the security of the urban space, of the public order as well as the security of the citizens and “third parties” – was a continuous and controversial point of reference in these changing constellations. This dynamic of (de-)securitizing heroin users was decisive in transforming not only the relations of power between state authorities, non-governmental organizations and heroin users, but also the logic of governing heroin users in the city.

In the first section, I address the framings of heroin use in the 1970s. Policy-makers on the state level, on the one hand, constructed heroin addicts as objects of therapeutic care and took coercive measures against users “unwilling” to undergo therapy. The city administration, especially after the election of conservative mayor Walter Wallmann in 1977, on the other hand, highlighted the issue of “addiction criminality” and securitized heroin users as a threat to “urban security.” These framings resulted in two interconnected practices against the city’s heroin scene: spatial policing and involuntary commitments of heroin addicts into rehab clinics. Both practices aimed at making heroin users invisible in the urban public space. These strategies did not solve the problems associated with the heroin scene, but had strong negative effects on the users’ health conditions (Section 3). The city’s drug policy was strongly challenged in the context of

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4 Friedrichs 2013.

the emerging AIDS epidemic. I will show that critics of repressive drug policies such as gay self-help organizations questioned the rationality of the administration's AIDS policy, demanding a strategy against the spread of HIV/AIDS among heroin addicts based on acceptance and communication rather than state coercion and exclusion (Section 4). These shifting power relations resulted in a fundamental change of local drug policies in general when a new city government began to introduce harm reduction measures in 1989/90. Rather than expelling junkies from the urban public, this new approach accepted the existence of drug use in the city and tried to regulate the most unfavorable phenomena, such as the worsening health conditions (Section 5). While heroin users had been silenced and strongly excluded from any kind of participation in drug politics until the late 1980s, I argue that harm reduction policies helped them to get involved in political activities, and to call for decriminalization and for their right to the city. Analyzing the dissolution of the heroin scene during summer 1992, I show that the securitization of heroin users continued to play a decisive role in the early 1990s. In the context of trying to improve the city's image to the outside, security concerns prevailed again over the far-reaching liberalizing demands of harm reduction proponents and junkie activists (Section 6).

## 2 *Securitizing junkies: framings of heroin use in the 1970s and 1980s*

In the Federal Republic of Germany, coping with heroin users and addicts was the task of states and local authorities – in this case the state government of Hesse, the Frankfurt police and the city administration. After having pointed out the social specifics of heroin use as well as the transformations in dealing with delinquent youth in postwar Germany, this section will address the framings of heroin use which influenced the strategies of both the state government and the local authorities in the city of Frankfurt.

While US-American cities such as New York had been dealing with heroin as a major social problem since the late 1940s,<sup>5</sup> heroin did not occupy West German authorities until the early 1970s. In Germany, heroin use evolved out of an unprecedented rise in drug consumption among

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5 Schneider 2008.

youth in the late 1960s. While youth in this first “drug wave” mainly turned to so-called “soft drugs” such as marijuana, the number of heroin users has increased very rapidly since 1971/2. At that time, the supply of and the demand for heroin rose very quickly, resulting in the emergence of so-called “hard drug scenes” in many big cities across the country. In Frankfurt am Main, the police department registered 85 junkies in 1969, 598 in 1975 and 2,295 in 1980. Roughly two-thirds of these registered users were male. The overall number of users was higher, with an estimated number of more than 4,000 heroin consumers in 1980, a number which made Frankfurt’s heroin scene one of the largest in Germany.<sup>6</sup> Historians interested in the self-understanding of Frankfurt heroin users in the early 1970s consider heroin use as an “everyday radicalism,” which expressed both a strong disapproval of hegemonic values and their belonging to the counter-culture milieu. Traces of this radical self-understanding were still present in Frankfurt’s heroin scene in the 1980s, although connections between heroin users and the counter-culture had already dissolved by the mid-1970s.<sup>7</sup>

One of the reasons for this dissolution was the changing social structure of young people turning to heroin during the 1970s. The social background of heroin users was much different from that of drug users of the first drug wave, which mainly consisted of middle-class cannabis-smoking youth. In 1976, the drug counseling center “Drop-In” in Frankfurt stated that the city’s users were mainly youth from a lower-class background with little education, attending lower secondary or special needs schools.<sup>8</sup> At the end of the decade, social studies made similar findings in West Berlin, describing the typical heroin consumer as a male member of the lower classes, quite often jobless and without a home, who had started his “drug career” as a young teenager and had been addicted to heroin for many years.<sup>9</sup> These kinds of reports were often strongly biased, for they usually based their conclusions on data from heroin users in prison or from addicts in therapy institutions. Information about the background of users being able to control their consumption habits, preventing addiction and imprisonment, was not included.<sup>10</sup> These reports characterized, how-

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6 Thomas 1982, p. 33.

7 Morris 2014; Noller 1987.

8 Berger/Zeitel 1976.

9 Skarabis/Patzak 1981.

10 Scheerer 1983, p. 15.

ever, the type of user local authorities mainly had to deal with on a day-to-day basis: addicted youths at the margins of society breaking with hegemonic rules of behavior.

By the time West German policy-makers began to systematically address the growing number of heroin-consuming youth, the ways of coping with youth delinquency in West Germany had changed considerably. Biologistic concepts of youth criminality, for example, which were rooted in the nineteenth century and had played a major role well into the postwar period, lost their dominance during the 1960s. They were replaced by sociological approaches which focused on the social conditions of deviant behavior rather than on the delinquent's supposed abnormality or "inferior" disposition.<sup>11</sup> These transformations in addressing youth delinquency also influenced the emerging debates about drug-using youth in the late 1960s. While the field of drug politics in the postwar era had been marked by personal and ideological continuities from the Nazi past,<sup>12</sup> the 1960s brought a series of fundamental changes in framing and addressing drug users. Rather than seeing drug use as a moral failure endangering the fabric of society, the first policies towards drug-using youth refrained from moral judgements and considered drug consumption as a comprehensible reaction of teenagers against the downsides of modern society. This framing of drug use tended to normalize the individual drug consumer and replaced more stigmatizing understandings based on psychiatric notions such as "abnormality". Problems emerging from teenage drug use became, in the medium term, an issue of the aspiring professions of psychotherapy and social work.<sup>13</sup> Historian Robert Stephens has argued that this new "therapeutic mind-set" fit well in the era of liberalization of the late 1960s, for it fostered a liberal culture of governing the problems associated with teenage drug use for several years. State authorities even supported anti-authoritarian self-help groups such as "Release," which aimed at reaching out to young drug addicts to help them overcome their addiction in self-organized, non-hierarchical therapeutic communities.<sup>14</sup>

When the political focus shifted from the "protest consumption" of middle-class cannabis smokers to the so-called "hard kernel" of "chronic

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11 Baumann 2002; see also Ubbelohde 2002.

12 Holzer 2007.

13 See Schmid 2003, pp. 139–168.

14 Stephens 2007, pp. 121–159, 184–218; Schmid 2003, pp. 130–138.

drug users” with little school education,<sup>15</sup> the therapeutic mind-set influenced the making of policies towards heroin addiction, for treatment agencies were mainly based by psychotherapeutic rather than medical or psychiatric categories. The general background of these policies, however, had changed considerably. Besides the changing social structure of users, policy-makers had to face the rising number of junkies dying from heroin overdoses. In West Germany, the federal police registered a continuous rise of deaths by overdose from 67 in 1971 to 195 in 1975, to its first peak of 623 in 1979.<sup>16</sup> These numbers attracted massive public attention. Illustrated with pictures of dead junkie bodies in filthy public places, such as train station toilets, media reports told stories about youth having fallen victim to the drug who were lost in the disastrous downward spiral of addiction, social exclusion and crime, often ending in death by overdose.<sup>17</sup> Against this background, the Hessian state government claimed that the “fight against drug addiction” would be one of the most important tasks of the 1980s. This was, the government stated, the “fight for thousands of youths in danger of drugs and death by the needle.”<sup>18</sup>

In 1980, the state government of Hesse, a coalition of social-democrats and liberals, passed the “Hessian Program to Fight Drug Abuse,” which outlined the general policy frame for coping with heroin users in Frankfurt am Main.<sup>19</sup> While this program generally announced anti-drug prevention campaigns and the expansion of the drug counselling system, it also presented the government’s strategy towards drug addicts.<sup>20</sup> In accordance

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15 Stellungnahmen der Bundesregierung zum Drogen- und Rauschmittelmisbrauch. Dokumentation zum Drogenproblem, 30.10.1972. In: Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit (ed.) (1972): *Dokumente zum Drogenproblem*. Bonn, pp. 11–96, here pp. 19, 21–22.

16 Thomas et al. 1982, p. 47.

17 See for example the cover story „Heroin-Welle: ‚Mord auf Raten‘. *Der Spiegel*, 30.6.1977, pp. 184–195.

18 Hessische Landesregierung (1980): *Hessisches Programm zur Bekämpfung des Drogenmißbrauchs*. Wiesbaden.

19 Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main (ISGF), Fürsorgeamt 4.454, Bericht des Magistrats auf eine Anfrage der SPD-Fraktion zur Rehabilitation Drogenabhängiger, 8.5.1981.

20 Quite typical for these kind of policy documents at that time, the Hessian government did not clearly differentiate between different forms of drug use and drug habits on the one hand, and drug addiction on the other. All kinds of drugs seemed to lead directly to heroin, heroin was addiction, and addiction in turn was a constant threat to youths.

with the mainstream of West German drug experts, the program adhered, *firstly*, to the normative idea of orientating all political efforts towards the objective of a drug-free society.<sup>21</sup> Heroin addiction was believed to be a condition of extreme unfreedom from which no one could escape without the help of professionals. Social studies drawing a more differentiated picture of heroin use – pointing to non-addicted forms of using heroin or to so-called “self-healers,” users overcoming their addiction without passing through the state treatment system – hardly had any influence on policy-makers.<sup>22</sup> Abstinence from drugs was consequently the unquestioned objective of treatment, including the rejection of methadone maintenance treatment as being a “capitulation to addiction.”<sup>23</sup> *Secondly*, the Hessian government argued that the causes for addiction were rooted in a supposed deviation from a ‘normal’ process of socialization. In order to address these “maturity deficits” (*Reifungsdefizite*) of addicts, the government announced to expand the system of long-term rehab centers. If addicts were, *thirdly*, unwilling to undergo voluntary treatment, local authorities were motivated to consider adopting the “Hessian Law on Forcible Confinement” (*Hessisches Freiheitsentziehungsgesetz, HFEG*), a state law passed in 1952 regulating involuntary commitment proceedings in cases where persons posed a threat to the public order due to mental illness or drug addiction. In situations where addicts “were unable to self-responsibly decide for therapy and rehabilitation,” the Hessian government legitimized the adoption of coercive actions in order to provide addicts “with an opportunity to overcome their inability to exercise their freedom rights.” The therapeutic aim of these compulsory hospitalizations was to separate users from the drug milieu and to “make addicts realize their need for treatment.”<sup>24</sup>

This agenda of the “Hessian program to fight drug abuse” turned addicts into patients in need of psychotherapeutic care. Rather than addressing the social inequalities present in heroin addiction, the Hessian government focused on correcting supposed psychological deficits through thera-

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21 Schmid 2003, pp. 164–167, 178–185.

22 See Voigt/Scheerer 1989.

23 Hessischer Landtag, Drucksache 9/6365: Antwort der Landesregierung auf eine Große Anfrage der SPD-Fraktion, betreffend das Hessische Programm zur Bekämpfung des Drogenmißbrauchs, 27.4.1982, p. 13.

24 Id. pp. 4-5; Hessische Landesregierung (1980): *Hessisches Programm zur Bekämpfung des Drogenmißbrauchs*. Wiesbaden, pp. 23–24.



peutic treatment. Presenting coercive measures as a means of liberating addicts from a condition believed to strongly restrict a person's freedom shows that this was not about a backlash of authoritarian traditions. This approach rather fit quite well into the logic of the West German liberal welfare state of the 1970s which was generally committed to foster prosperity and democracy by extensive state activities in the field of social welfare.<sup>25</sup> According to this logic, addicts were made the objects of strong state interventions for policy makers who believed that addicts suffered from a state of mind incompatible with a modern, liberal society. However, the liberalizing intention was based on a legal framework which addressed security issues. Referring to *HFEG* in the case of junkies presumably "unwilling" to undergo therapy constructed addicts as dangers to themselves and others, allowing local authorities to address heroin users through coercive measures.

Besides this framing of heroin use on the level of state policy making, the spatial dimension of heroin use played an important role in addressing junkies in the city of Frankfurt. In contrast to previous patterns of drug consumption throughout the twentieth century, junkies appropriated certain parts of the city public space where they did not only buy, sell or consume heroin, but where they also maintained social connections and reaffirmed a specific identity and self-understanding.<sup>26</sup> In Frankfurt, this "scene" spanned over several areas, including the *Bahnhofsviertel*, the area around the central train station, and the so-called "*Haschischwiese*" (Hash Meadow), a public park in *Bockenheimer Anlage*. Dozens of heroin users visible in the middle of the city, shooting heroin in plain sight of passersby instead of using the urban space how it was initially intended, was a strong and often intended provocation. Historian Jan-Henrik Friedrichs has argued that the problem with heroin users was not simply about the violation of laws. It was also about the radical social otherness of junkies combined with their provocative visibility in the public space, the fact that they visibly broke with hegemonic expectations regarding decent behavior and basic standards of outer appearance.<sup>27</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s, this visible social otherness of heroin users became deeply entangled in conflicts about the urban space. After

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25 Metzler 2005.

26 See Noller 1987; Scheerer 1989.

27 Friedrichs 2013, pp. 66–67.

the era of reconstruction, economic growth and rational city planning,<sup>28</sup> the city of Frankfurt faced a series of social and economic problems, including rising unemployment rates, growing financial debts, housing shortages and environmental damages. Against this background, political tensions in local politics increased considerably. While a strong leftist milieu made Frankfurt a center of the squatter movement, the postwar consensus between the local Social-Democratic Party (SPD) and the conservative Christian-Democratic Union (CDU) broke apart.<sup>29</sup> In June 1977, after the CDU had won the local elections by a landslide, the city parliament elected Walter Wallmann, the former manager of the CDU parliament group in the *Bundestag*, mayor of Frankfurt am Main. Wallmann was the first CDU mayor since the end of the Second World War, ending a long era of social democratic reign over the city. His election therefore drew much national attention, as many conservatives considered this election to be another sign for a general turn (“*Tendenzwende*”) against the politics of democratic social reform promoted by social-democrats and liberals who were forming the government on the national level and in many states at that time, including the state of Hesse.<sup>30</sup>

Wallmann’s tenure marked a considerable shift in politically addressing the heroin scene in Frankfurt. In being concerned about the bad image of the city, he promoted a series of political projects that came down to a re-arrangement of the urban space. While supporting cultural initiatives such as the (re-)construction of the *Römerberg* and the *Museumsufer*, he also made “urban security” a major issue in local politics for the first time since the integration of the municipal police into the state police in the 1960s.<sup>31</sup> In 1980, Wallmann stated that it would be impossible “that a big city can keep its world-wide flair” when “aggressive and antisocial elements” occupied the urban space at “the expense of the citizens and their claims for security.”<sup>32</sup> In this context, he did not only securitize leftist protesters, “tramps,” “social misfits,” and sex workers, but also “drug criminals” and “drug addicts,” whom he considered a threat to “the inner

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28 Bendix 2002.

29 Tüffers 2011.

30 See Balser 1995, pp. 378–404; Kittel 2011, pp. 1–6, 411–440; Tüffers 2011, pp. 182–197.

31 Schipper 2013, pp. 160–161; Beste 2000.

32 Quoted in Schipper 2013, p. 160.

peace” of the city.<sup>33</sup> Regarding the *Bahnhofsviertel*, Wallmann made clear that he regarded these different dangerous phenomena to be spatially entangled, constructing whole city areas as dangerous spaces where the police severely struggled to uphold a minimum of security: “The entanglement of prostitution, drug dealing and other forms of criminality”, he wrote in 1984, “gets stronger and more and more intolerable. The so-called ‘entertainment district’ has become a district of criminality.” This situation near the central train station, “at the ‘entrance gate’ of the city,” he continued, “cannot be tolerated anymore.”<sup>34</sup>

Relating drug dealers and users to spatial concentrations of criminality indicates that Wallmann did not just consider violations against the Federal Narcotics Law. Wallmann also politicized the growing number of criminal activities committed by junkies, an issue both criminologists and the Frankfurt police department had been worrying about since the mid-1970s. Crimes committed by addicts to finance drugs, the so-called “*Beschaffungskriminalität*,” became a new field of crime control focusing on individual junkies whose dangerousness, according to the criminologist Arthur Kreuzer, “could hardly be underestimated.”<sup>35</sup> In a comprehensive study about police strategies against the city’s heroin scene, three Frankfurt police officers calculated that the typical heroin addict needed 3.000 DM per month to finance his addiction, whereby a large part of that sum was organized by crimes such as burglaries, shoplifting or pickpocketing. Without making any comparisons to the average number of crimes committed by other social groups, the authors assumed that an average addict, who is not in prison or therapy, commits five offenses per day, so that “the isolation of only one addict for one year may prevent 1800 offenses.”<sup>36</sup> The issue of *Beschaffungskriminalität* shifted attention at the end of the 1970s. While the police had mainly directed criminal persecution against dealers in the early 1970s, the notion of *Beschaffungskriminalität* con-

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33 Eine Stadt mit menschlichem Gesicht. Kommunalpolitischer Situationsbericht von Oberbürgermeister Dr. Walter Wallmann. *Mitteilungen der Stadt Frankfurt am Main* 2: 11–20, here pp. 16–17; see also Schipper 2013, p. 160.

34 ISGF, Hauptamt 6, Schreiben des Oberbürgermeisters der Stadt Frankfurt an den Regierungspräsidenten in Darmstadt, Vorordnung zum Schutze der Jugend und des öffentlichen Anstandes für das Gebiet der Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 5.4.1984. Regarding the regulation of prostitution in Frankfurt am Main see Koch 2012, p. 270–281 and Molloy 1992.

35 Kreuzer 1980, p. 147.

36 Thomas 1982, pp. 52–53.

strued heroin users as highly active criminals beyond violating the Federal Narcotics Law, resulting in stronger controls of users.

In late 1970s and early 1980s, the discourse surrounding heroin use made heroin users the object of two different kinds of power. On the one hand, local drug policy was about the control of the urban space, for the heroin scene was regarded as a threat to the public order. This discourse focused on the presence and movements of the heroin scene in the city and made junkies part of spatially entangled areas of crime and insecurity. On the other hand, the framing of heroin use by the state government focused on individual addicts and was driven by a more biopolitical concern, for it focused on saving individual lives and enabling users to reintegrate into the hegemonic social order. As security arguments played a decisive role in both discourses, extraordinary measures such as involuntary commitment into psychiatric clinics appeared to be legitimate to solve the problems associated with heroin use. In Frankfurt am Main, both discourses resulted in two interconnected security practices.

### *3 Spatial control and involuntary commitment: practices against heroin users around 1980*

In the 1970s and 1980s, keeping control over the urban space became a central concern of state authorities facing a series of urban phenomena which seemed to undermine the public order.<sup>37</sup> From the perspective of local authorities in Frankfurt am Main, these spatial challenges included such different phenomena as the squatter movement, the strong and violent protests against the expansion of Frankfurt International Airport (*Startbahn West*) and the “massive disturbance of public security” in the *Bahnhofsviertel*.<sup>38</sup> In this context, both the Frankfurt police and the Wallmann administration intensified their efforts to dissolve the city’s heroin scene by intensifying spatial policing and trying to obtain involuntary commitments of junkies in rehab clinics.

The Frankfurt police began to increase pressure on the city’s heroin users by reinforcing surveillance and control measures as part of an “immediate action program to intensify police operations against drug crimi-

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37 Friedrichs 2013; Weinbauer 2013.

38 ISGF, Hauptamt 6, Bericht des Polizeipräsidenten Frankfurt am Main über das Bahnhofsviertel an den Regierungspräsidenten in Darmstadt, 27.8.84.

nality” by the Hessian minister of the interior.<sup>39</sup> In trying to address the insecurities associated with the presence of heroin users in the urban space, these measures culminated in the attempt to banish the local heroin scene, the *Haschischwiese* in the *Bockenheimer Anlage*, from the urban public. In February 1980, the police commissioner ordered a series of concerted actions by the city’s police forces in order to fully dissolve the *Haschischwiese*.<sup>40</sup> Starting on February 11, 1980, about 30 officers permanently controlled heroin users over a period of several months, carrying out more than 30,000 controls and hundreds of arrests and criminal charges in 1980 alone. These measures resulted in a sharp rise of convictions. In 1977, seven percent of the prison population in the state of Hesse had been sentenced based on the Federal Narcotics Law. This proportion increased to 22 percent four years later.<sup>41</sup> The police forces considered this operation to be a success, for they associated, for example, a decline in shoplifting in spring 1980 with the dissolution of the scene.<sup>42</sup>

Against the background of intensified spatial policing, the Hessian state expanded drug counselling and addiction treatment. Following the dominating therapeutic treatment paradigm, the so-called “therapeutic chain,”<sup>43</sup> the state government and the city administration tried to establish a consistent treatment system ranging from drug counseling centers and withdrawal clinics to long-term therapies and aftercare assistances.<sup>44</sup> This expansion was accompanied by the city administration’s support of the intensified police controls. The head of the office for social welfare (*Fürsorgeamt*), who was in charge of coping with drug addicts in Frankfurt, initiated a coordinating committee between the police department and several municipal offices. The city administration was committed to improving the administrative proceedings regarding addicts taken into custody by police controls. As supported by the Hessian state government, the city officials intended to adopt the *Hessisches Freiheitsentziehungsgesetz (HFEG)*,

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39 Regarding this program see „In Hessen mehr schlagartige Razzien gegen Rauschgift Händler.“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20.9.1979, p. 7, and Hessischer Landtag, Drucksache 9/6365, pp. 28–30.

40 Thomas et al. 1982, pp. 74–79.

41 Hessischer Landtag, Drucksache 9/6365, Anlage 1.

42 Thomas et al. 1982, p. 53; „Seit zwei Wochen ist die Haschischwiese überall“, *FAZ*, 27.2.1980, p. 33.

43 Schmid, Drogenhilfe, p. 169.

44 ISGF, Fürsorgeamt 4.454, Bericht des Magistrats auf eine Anfrage der SPD-Fraktion zur Rehabilitation Drogenabhängiger, 8.5.1981.

allowing compulsory actions against heroin users who “pose a danger for public security and order.” The health office believed the requirements of *HFEG* to be fulfilled when a physician had diagnosed a person to be heroin addicted. Thus, *HFEG* should be adopted without giving other reasons for the supposed danger of the addict.<sup>45</sup> This procedure was agreed upon by the police, the offices for health and order and the district court. The aim of these measures was to isolate addicts from the scene for a longer period of time. The police calculated that the situation in the *Bahnhofsviertel* would improve if the involved authorities removed two to three addicts from the scene per day. Reservations towards coercion should therefore be overcome, as argued by the head of the *Fürsorgeamt*: “The aim is to set aside existing timidities concerning coercive measures and to recognize that in lots of cases the compulsory removal from the milieu means the first step towards a successful treatment.”<sup>46</sup>

In practice, the cooperation between the different local authorities did not run very smoothly. The Frankfurt police repeatedly complained about finding junkies back on the scene who had just been removed a few days earlier. The office for welfare criticized district judges for too often refusing to order compulsory commitments, and social workers generally preferred voluntary treatment over compulsion. However, these activities show the strong commitment of local authorities to solve the problem with the heroin scene by coordinating police controls and involuntary commitments of heroin users into withdrawal clinics based on *HFEG*. Practices of criminal persecution and spatial policing on the one hand, and disciplining drug addicts by involuntary commitments on the other, were therefore strongly interconnected. Both practices aimed at making heroin users invisible by dissolving the scene and committing addicts to the closed wards of psychiatric clinics.

In the early 1980s, the strategy of connecting coercion and treatment regarding drug addicts was not restricted to Frankfurt am Main. There was a

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45 ISGF, Fürsorgeamt 4.454, Ergebnisprotokoll über eine Besprechung zwischen Vertretern des Ordnungs-, Sozial- und Gesundheitsamtes, sowie des Amtsgerichts vom 25.1.1982, betr. Lösungsmöglichkeiten für eine bessere Zusammenarbeit bei der Bekämpfung der Rauschgiftkriminalität, 26.1.1982.

46 ISGF Fürsorgeamt, 4.454, Ergebnisprotokoll über ein Gespräch zwischen Vertretern des Ordnungs-, Sozial- und Gesundheitsamtes, der Polizei, der Kriminalpolizei und des Unterausschusses Sucht des Psychosozialen Ausschusses der Stadtverordnetenversammlung am 10.8.1982, betr. Drogenabhängige im Bahnhofsbereich, 17.8.1982.

general tendency in West German drug politics towards the idea of “*helfender Zwang*” (helping by coercion), that is combining criminal persecution and social welfare measures such as addiction treatment. In 1982, the *Bundestag* passed a reform of the Federal Narcotics Law under the label “*Therapie statt Strafe*.” Judges were now able to order therapy instead of imprisonment.<sup>47</sup> Because of this legal reform, the percentage of users attending a treatment program on a voluntary basis declined from circa 75 percent in 1977 to under 50 percent in 1980. In some institutions, only one out of 10 addicts were treated voluntarily, that is without any judicial obligations.<sup>48</sup>

The results of the drug policy in Frankfurt did not improve the situation of heroin users, nor did it reduce the number of users in the public space. Due to heightened pressure, heroin users were forced to spread into other areas of the city. At the end of the 1980s, a new meeting place emerged in the *Taunusanlage*, a public park between *Opera Square* and *Kaiserstraße*. At constant risk of being arrested, heroin users were always on the move, paid higher prices for dope of less quality, were forced to shoot up in highly stressful situations and compensated withdrawal symptoms by taking other sedative drugs in times of low heroin supply. This situation heightened the risk of abscesses, infections and overdose emergencies. Even before the appearance of AIDS, the annual mortality rate of German heroin addicts was two to three times higher than that of the rest of the population. Drug policies based on spatial policing and *helfender Zwang* therefore did not only reinforce the social marginalization and deprive heroin addicts of basic rights, critics argued; strong police pressure also contributed to worsening their health conditions.<sup>49</sup>

While some proponents of repressive strategies in drug politics might have seen these devastating effects as a success, because they separated the heroin scene from other subcultures and deterred youths of turning to heroin,<sup>50</sup> drug policies such as those adopted by the city of Frankfurt hardly complied with the needs of addicts on the scene. At the beginning of the 1980s, social research found that both drug counselling centers and treatment institutions only reached a very small number of heroin users, indi-

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47 Schmid 2003, pp. 175–178.

48 These numbers refer to different local treatment institutions in Hamburg and Bremen. See Bossong 1983, p. 33.

49 See Bossong et al. 1983; Scheerer 1989, pp. 292–298.

50 Id., p. 290.



cating that the whole system of drug counselling and addiction treatment was out of contact with their potential clients.<sup>51</sup> Around 1980, local authorities in West Germany therefore tried to change this situation by financing street workers who tried to build contacts with heroin addicts on the streets. In 1983, the city of Frankfurt began to finance a street worker program in the *Bahnhofsviertel*, the so-called “M41,”<sup>52</sup> which aimed at restoring the trust of addicts in state sponsored treatment institutions.

Compared to drug policies in other German and European cities, the strategy adopted by the authorities in Frankfurt am Main appears to be very repressive. According to Klaus Weinhauer, the West Berlin senate had adjusted its confrontational strategy towards the city’s junkies in the late 1970s, paving the way for a more liberal culture in coping with heroin addicts. Weinhauer argues that this culture resembled policies in cities such as London, which were generally more orientated towards communication, trust and mutual acceptance.<sup>53</sup> Drug policy in Frankfurt am Main demonstrates that local politicians and city officials had chosen a different route. Although the city administration also expanded the number of drug counselling centers, the strategies against the heroin scene were mainly based on practices aiming at regaining control over the spaces of heroin use and forcing addicts into treatment. During the 1970s, the way the marginalized group of heroin users were governed therefore hardened considerably, for they were subject to state-centered policies, increased coercion and social exclusion. These policies did not only have strong negative effects on the junkies’ health. It also restricted their political agency. Efforts by some Frankfurt activists to found and run a “junkie union” based on the model of Dutch junkie activism failed due to strong exclusion and lacking support from more powerful political actors.<sup>54</sup>

In the city of Frankfurt, this situation did not change until the emergence of the AIDS epidemic, when the debates about HIV/AIDS prevention resulted in more liberal and inclusive approaches towards drug addicts. These reconfigurations, however, were not simply introduced by state officials, as we will see. They rather had to be fought for by self-help groups and critics of the city’s drug policy.

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51 Bossong 1983, pp. 29–32.

52 ISGF, Fürsorgeamt 4.464, M41 – Aufsuchende Drogenhilfe in Frankfurt, Tätigkeits- und Erfahrungsbericht 1983, 5.1.1984.

53 Weinhauer 2010, p. 287; see also Weinhauer 2006.

54 Scheerer 1984; for the more successful Dutch junkie unions see Blok 2011.



#### *4 Challenging 'security': shifting power relations in the context of the emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic*

Starting in 1985/6, controversies over HIV/AIDS prevention fundamentally challenged the way of coping with heroin users in Frankfurt am Main. While the city administration identified heroin addicts as "high risk groups" and transferred the security logic of its drug policy to AIDS prevention practices, self-help organizations founded by gay men, the largest group affected by HIV/AIDS, organized strong protest against these procedures. In questioning the rationality of the city government's AIDS policy, these grass-roots initiatives not only promoted new drug policies but also provided a new political environment for heroin users by engaging in a politics of antidiscrimination for people directly affected by the epidemic.

Besides gay men, heroin users were the group most affected by HIV/AIDS. After having detected a human retro virus as the causal agent of AIDS, the sharing of syringes was believed to be the main vector of virus transmission for heroin users. When AIDS emerged as an issue of public health in West Germany around 1982/83, however, it mainly appeared to be a disease spread by sexual practices of gay men. The West German mass media reported about a so-called "gay plague" reaching Europe from the United States, depicting AIDS as a dangerous disease of gay men that seemed to necessitate harsh interventions into gay communities. In order to oppose both the spread of HIV and AIDS-related discrimination, West German gay activists engaged in AIDS discourses, founded self-help organizations and promoted individual preventive behavior such as "safer sex". These strategies proved to be quite successful as gay AIDS activists and organizations started to play an influential role in the emerging AIDS expert networks.<sup>55</sup> In the mid-1980s, at the time when the health administration in Frankfurt began to systematically address HIV/AIDS, the city's gay scene therefore did not appear as a field of intervention. In contrast, the local public health authority experienced homosexuals as reliable, health-conscious men who were eager to take responsibility for themselves by raising awareness for AIDS prevention within the city's gay community.<sup>56</sup> In this context, the city's health department began to cooper-

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<sup>55</sup> Haus 2016.

<sup>56</sup> ISGF, Stadtgesundheitsamt (StGA) Sachakten 632, Bericht Deutscher, Überwachung von AIDS-Risikogruppen, 13.8.86.

ate with *AIDS-Hilfe Frankfurt* (AHF) and agreed to cover part of its expenses.<sup>57</sup> On August, 23 1985, the mayor, several city offices, regional medical associations, the university hospital and the AHF founded a so-called “AIDS-coalition,” thereby integrating gay AIDS activists into the local public health system.<sup>58</sup>

At about the same time, the municipal health office began to direct its attention towards male and female sex workers. In the mid-1980s, prostitution attracted much attention when the media began to speculate about the spread of AIDS into parts of the society that had not been believed to be at risk so far. Prostitutes were believed to be a “reservoir for Aids,”<sup>59</sup> spreading the virus from risk groups into the general population, as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* claimed in September 1985. In this context, the health office organized a survey to gain knowledge about the spread of HIV, then called LAV/HTLV-III, among the city’s more than 1,000 registered male and female sex workers.<sup>60</sup> This survey resulted in the identification of a specific group of people in Frankfurt whom the administration considered to pose a severe threat. It found that the general prevalence of LAV/HTLV-III among the tested population was very low, while 60 percent of the positively tested persons were female street prostitutes with intravenous drug addiction.<sup>61</sup> Interpreting these results in February 1986, the head of the health office wrote that “the risk groups, which were considered to be exceptionally endangered a year ago, have now to be reevaluated.” From then on, rather than solely addressing gay men, the authorities were intended to focus on “persons with intravenous drug addiction” in general and heroin-addicted persons financing drugs by prostitution, or so-called “*Beschaffungsprostituierte*,” in particular. The latter “pose an imminent threat for third parties” because they were “practically

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57 See ISGF, StGA Sachakten 635, Vermerk Hartwig, Beurteilung der AIDS-Hilfe Frankfurt, 25.10.85; Vermerk über ein Gespräch zwischen dem Gesundheitsdezernenten Rhein, dem Leiter des STGA Schildwächter und der AIDS-Hilfe Frankfurt, 26.2.86.

58 See „Beratungsstelle soll Fragen über Aids auffangen.“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24.8.1985; ISGF, StGA Sachakten 635, Zusammenarbeit des Stadtgesundheitsamtes mit der AIDS-Hilfe Frankfurt, Vorbereitung der Sitzung am 9.3.87.

59 „Die Prostitution – ein Reservoir für Aids“. *FAZ*, 25.9.85.

60 ISGF, StGA Sachakten 633, Rundbrief Schildwächters betr. geplante Untersuchung von Prävalenz des HTLV III Virus unter Prostituierten, o.D. [August 1985].

61 ISGF, STGA Sachakten 633, Schreiben Schildwächters an Dr. Rappich und Dr. Staszewski, betr. Untersuchung auf HTLV-III-Antikörper, 4.12.85.

inaccessible” for any kind of education regarding infection risks and preventive behavior.<sup>62</sup>

In the following months, this knowledge about high infection rates among “inaccessible” heroin-addicted sex workers strongly influenced the making of the city administration’s HIV/AIDS policy. While HIV-positive prostitutes without a drug addiction did not have to fear coercion for they were believed to comply with safer sex rules, using condoms was not an option for *Beschaffungsprostituierte*. Concerning this group, city officials had to “acknowledge the behavioral unreliability due to drug addiction,” as mayor Wolfram Brück wrote in August 1986 to the Hessian Minister for Social Affairs, explaining the city’s HIV/AIDS strategy.<sup>63</sup> The city administration therefore planned to convince heroin-addicted persons to entirely abandon prostitution. In a second step, the city officials intended to carry out coercive actions based on the Federal Contagion Law, such as compulsory blood testing, against those “undiscerning and reckless” persons who did not comply with the instructions given by the health office.<sup>64</sup> In extreme cases, this explicitly included “lifelong quarantine,” as the head of the health department, Peter Rhein, stated in a press conference, without stating exactly what this would mean for infected persons considering the lack of medical treatment.<sup>65</sup>

Planning coercive measures against so-called “risk groups” and HIV-positive persons believed to be unreliable or inaccessible for education messages was a highly controversial issue in political debates about AIDS prevention throughout the 1980s.<sup>66</sup> On the level of national politics, the Bavarian state government was the most powerful proponent of adopting the Federal Contagion Law in the case of HIV/AIDS. In deciding to focus on identifying and intensely controlling “high risk groups” believed to endanger the general population, the city administration in Frankfurt decided

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62 ISGF, StGA Sachakten 636, Schreiben Schildwächters an das Ordnungsamt, betr. Zusammenhänge zwischen Drogenabhängigkeit und Prostitution, 21.2.86 und 12.3.86.

63 ISGF, StGA Sachakten 629, Brief des Oberbürgermeisters Brück an den Hessischen Sozialminister, Maßnahmen gegen die Verbreitung von Aids – Zusammenhänge zwischen Drogenabhängigkeit und Prostitution, 29.8.86.

64 ISGF, StGA Sachakten 632, Schreiben Stadtrat Rhein an Stadtrat Brück, betr. Maßnahmen gegen Angehörige von besonderen Risikogruppen, 16.6.1986.

65 „Ärzte und Behörden schlagen wegen rasanter Aids-Ausbreitung Alarm“. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3.10.86.

66 For a general overview see Geene 2000; Reutter 1992; Tümmers 2012.

to follow a similar HIV/AIDS policy. The image of the “undiscerning” heroin addicted prostitute, unable to act responsibly, strongly corresponded with the idea of the junkie “unwilling” to undergo voluntary treatment. From the perspective of city officials, “unwilling” or “undiscerning” junkies posed a threat to others and justified coercive interventions in order to protect others.

In contrast to the strategy against the heroin scene around 1980, though, strong actions against heroin addicts faced resistances in the context of HIV/AIDS. In September 1986, city officials brought certain heroin-addicted sex workers to the health office in order to detect their HIV blood status.<sup>67</sup> In this context, measures by health officials and the railway police against 10 male sex workers at the main station, conducted on September 17, 1986, attracted much media attention and lead to a local and national wave of protest against the city administration’s practices in AIDS prevention.<sup>68</sup> The social-democratic and green opposition in the city parliament strongly criticized the health office for implementing a senseless, counterproductive AIDS policy.<sup>69</sup> The *AIDS-Hilfe Frankfurt*, after having unsuccessfully protested in writing, declared the “AIDS-coalition” to be broken, because state coercion, as the *AIDS-Hilfe* publicly stated, undermined its efforts in AIDS prevention based on trust and cooperation.<sup>70</sup> In protest writings to the Frankfurt health office, a series of different actors, ranging from local health authorities to many local *AIDS-Hilfe* organizations, demanded the halt of these compulsory measures. Coercion was highly ineffective, as the health authority of Bremen criticized, for it undermined AIDS education based on anonymity and trust, leading only to

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67 ISGF, StGA Sachakten 632, Stadtrat Prof. Dr. Rhein, Maßnahmen gegen die Verbreitung von AIDS, Ergebnis einer Besprechung vom 17.9.86, 18.9.86; Vermerk Forßbohm, GK-Abteilung, Maßnahmen gegen die Verbreitung von AIDS, 19.9.86.

68 See „Blutprobe wegen AIDS-Verdacht im Bahnhof.“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19.9.1986; “Razzia am Hauptbahnhof: Strichjungen auf AIDS untersucht.“ *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 19.9.1986; “‘Strichjungen’ mußten Blut für AIDS-Kontrolle lassen.“ *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, 19.9.1986; „Am Ende des Vertrauens. Frankfurts Prostituierte müssen zum Aids-Test“. *Die Zeit*, 24.10.86.

69 „Strichjungen sind für Aufklärung unzugänglich“, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 20.9.1986; ISGF, StGA Sachakten 632, Anfrage der Grünen im Römer, betr. Razzia des Gesundheitsamtes am Südeingang des Hbf, 23.9.86.

70 Proteste gegen AIDS-Razzia im Bahnhof, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25.9.86; „AIDS-Hilfe will eigene Wege gehen“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4.2.87.

the “retreat of affected persons into invisibility,” with the dangerous effect of making any form of prevention in these groups impossible.<sup>71</sup>

Being quite representative for the AIDS debate in the 1980s, this criticism expresses how a broad political coalition questioned the effectivity of coercive measures against people with HIV/AIDS. Arguing that coercion weakened state control for it pushed affected people into “invisibility” indicates a general shift in addressing heroin addicts. *Firstly*, visibility was made an important precondition of effective AIDS prevention. While up until the early 1980s, drug policies in Frankfurt had aimed at banning heroin use from the public space, heroin users now ought to stay visible and accessible for prevention campaigns and education work. This approach implicitly accepted the presence of heroin users at public meeting places. *Secondly*, concrete measures recommended by actors such as the *AIDS-Hilfen* practically undermined the idea of heroin addicts being “unwilling” or “undiscerning,” the city’s legitimization of coercive measures in both drug policy and AIDS prevention. Backed by successes of safer sex campaigns in gay communities, the *Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe (DAH)*, the national umbrella organization of the local *AIDS-Hilfen*, for example, began to recommend so-called “safer use” programs, which could provide heroin consumers with sterile needles in order to stop HIV transmission via needle sharing.<sup>72</sup> The *DAH* believed this measure to be quite effective, for it assumed, in contrast to city officials and mainstream drug experts, that heroin users were indeed “accessible for assessing and evaluating infection risks.”<sup>73</sup> By reframing heroin users as rational subjects, the *DAH* promoted a fundamentally different idea of drug addiction than embodied in policy documents by both the Hessian state government and the Frankfurt city administration, which considered addiction as a strong restriction of the junkies’ capacity for reasonable decision-making. In 1988, after AIDS expert commissions had recommended the provision of sterile needles,

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71 ISGF, StGA Sachakten 636, Brief der AIDS-Beratungsstelle des Hauptgesundheitsamtes der Stadt Bremen an den Gesundheitsdezernenten Rhein, 6.10.86. The other protest writings can be found in ISGF, STGA Sachakten 635.

72 Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe 1987, pp. 15–17.

73 Ahrens/Michels 1988, p. 19.

too,<sup>74</sup> the city officials began to fund the *Verein für Arbeits- und Erziehungshilfe* in order to start a corresponding program.<sup>75</sup>

As the wave of criticism against the administration's measures regarding male sex workers indicate, self-help networks, especially the *AIDS-Hilfen*, played a decisive role in organizing protest against coercive measures. The *AIDS-Hilfen* thereby did not only challenge the security framing of heroin addicts by questioning its efficiency. They also claimed to articulate political demands of those groups mostly under pressure from both the disease and state authorities. This partisanship did not only include gay men, but also sex workers and heroin users. Thus, heroin users for the first time gained a strong political representation in political controversies about AIDS prevention and drug politics in general. As a direct reaction to state and city administrations planning to adopt the Federal Contagion Law against people they believed to be "undiscerning", the *DAH* organized a political action day called the "solidarity of the undiscerning" in Frankfurt am Main on July 9, 1988, bringing together not only gay and prostitution activists and social workers, but also national politicians in support of the *DAH's* concerns, such as the social democrat, and later mayor of Frankfurt, Volker Hauff. Speakers expressed their strong disapproval of labeling and excluding people as undiscerning and unteachable and tried to motivate sex workers, gay men and heroin users for a common "politics of encouragement and anti-discrimination."<sup>76</sup> In the following years, such claims resulted in the emergence of distinct identity politics for HIV-positive people, institutionalized in so-called "national assemblies of positives." These assemblies tried to participate in national health politics by formulating political claims in the name of people with HIV and AIDS. These *AIDS-Hilfe* activities created a new political environment for heroin users because they also gave junkie initiatives such as "JES – Junkies, Ex-Users, Substitutes" the opportunity to publicly demand treatment innovations and the decriminalization of heroin use.<sup>77</sup>

Until the introduction of methadone programs, the willingness and potential of heroin users to participate in self-help initiatives was much less

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74 Deutscher Bundestag 1988, p. 12.

75 ISGF, StGA Sachakten 632, Rhein an Sozialdezernat, Spritzenaustauschprogramm für i.v. Drogenabhängige zur Aids-Prophylaxe, 15.4.88.

76 These were the words of the *DAH's* expert for drugs, Helmut Ahrens, see: Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe, Solidarität, p. 13.

77 See the documentation Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe 1990; see also Hermann 1990, p. 34.

profound than that of gay men due to their strong social exclusion, criminalization and the effects of addiction. However, the activities of AIDS self-help groups claiming to represent heroin users discriminated as “undiscerning” show how power relations in drug politics have changed in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Heroin users gained an influential (and well-financed) political advocate. The model of AIDS prevention promoted by the *AIDS-Hilfe* networks undermined stigmatizing images of heroin addiction by considering heroin users as subjects capable of taking reasonable action, such as using sterile needles. Rather than considering addicts as threats to the urban space, HIV/AIDS prevention was based on strategies of acceptance, trust and communication. In this context, both the *AIDS-Hilfen* and junkie initiatives formulated claims to liberalize West German drug politics in general. As we will see, this new political situation eventually resulted in reconfiguring drug policies in Frankfurt, for critics of the city administration’s AIDS policy also became the most ardent proponents of harm reduction.

### *5 Making the case for survival: the establishment of harm reduction policies, 1988-1991*

Around 1990, the political controversies about HIV/AIDS and heroin addicts underwent a profound transformation. Discourses on heroin use, which had strongly overlapped with discourses on HIV/AIDS for some years, now shifted to problematizing the worsening living conditions of heroin users in general. In this context, “harm reduction,” a drug policy paradigm mainly focusing on improving the health of heroin users, gained much influence. In 1989, Frankfurt am Main became one of the first cities in Germany to systematically adopt harm reduction policies. This approach reconfigured the ways of governing heroin users because it questioned well-established framings and practices.

In March 1989, the social democrats and the greens won the local election in Frankfurt am Main and agreed upon creating a new city government under the leadership of social-democratic mayor Volker Hauff. Already in the years before the election, Volker Hauff and the new head of the department for health, the green politician Margarethe Nimsch, had been promoting alternative approaches in drug politics. It was no surprise, therefore, that the new mayor declared that his administration wanted “to go new ways in drug politics,” because he considered existing approaches



to have failed and to be ineffective in achieving sustainable solutions for the city's heroin scene.<sup>78</sup> One of the first drug-related decisions of the new government concerned the reorganization of responsibilities in drug issues. By creating the "*Drogenreferat*," a new division in Nimsch's department which ought to coordinate the city's drug policies, the city government transferred responsibilities from the department of social affairs to the health department. This institutional rearrangement indicated that the new administration wanted to address drug issues from a more health related perspective.<sup>79</sup>

In 1989, highlighting health aspects in drug politics referred to the worsening living conditions in the city's heroin scene. Although the bad health conditions of junkies had been known to Frankfurt drug experts since the mid-1970s,<sup>80</sup> improving the heroin user's health had always been subordinated to the aim of abstinence. Measures that did not contribute to drug abstinence were strongly rejected for not aiming at the supposed cause of the junkies' miserable condition: addiction to heroin. At the time when Hauff and Nimsch took office, reports about the heroin scene showed strong tendencies of physical deterioration of junkies, especially of those long-time addicts who had no home and frequented the scene daily.<sup>81</sup> Even more disturbing was the dramatic and unforeseen rise in death cases related to so-called "accidental overdoses."<sup>82</sup> The Federal Police counted 1,000 drug-related deaths in Germany in 1989, which rose to 1,491 in 1990. Within the next year, this number further increased by more than 42 percent to its all-time peak of 2,125 deaths. In the city of Frankfurt, the police counted 62 such deaths in 1988, 108 in 1990, and 147 in 1991, which meant that the police found two to three dead bodies related to the consumption of heroin on average per week during that year.<sup>83</sup> Such developments shifted attention in debates about drug policies. While the

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78 „Frankfurt braucht das soziale, ökonomische und ökologische Gleichgewicht. Kommunalpolitischer Situationsbericht des Oberbürgermeisters Volker Hauff.“ *Amtsblatt für Frankfurt am Main* 25/1990: 481-497, quote p. 491.

79 See ISGF, Hauptamt 38, Mit Drogenabhängigen leben! Rahmenplan zur Gestaltung der Drogenpolitik in Frankfurt am Main, 29.4.1991.

80 Berger/Zeitel 1976, pp. 163-164.

81 See ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 4, Irmgard Voigt, Abschlussbericht der Studie „Offene Drogenszene in Frankfurt am Main“, Mai 1992.

82 See Schmid 2003, pp. 197-198.

83 ISGF, Hauptamt 38, Kurzanalyse Rauschgifttote in Frankfurt am Main 1993, 27.1.1994.



question of how to prevent HIV/AIDS from spreading in the group of heroin users had dominated discussions in previous years, HIV/AIDS now became part of a much larger concern: heroin users' chances of survival.

The rising mortality rate in the group of heroin users stimulated fundamental criticism of existing drug policies among drug experts, social workers and local politicians across the country. Critics of existing drug policies claimed both criminalization and the aim of abstinence institutionalized in the addiction treatment system were responsible for the worsening health conditions of users. Until the appearance of HIV/AIDS, a majority of the addiction treatment experts had considered a "consciously experienced level of suffering" (*Leidensdruck*) as a necessary motivational precondition for withdrawal treatment and psychological therapy. Thus, a certain degree of personal misery was considered the precondition of kind of assistance.<sup>84</sup> Having to face high HIV infection rates and thousands of drug-related deaths made many actors rethink this kind of approach. One of the most radical criticisms was formulated by the *Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe*. Its "drug strategy paper" of 1988 made "conventional drug policies," repression and an "absolutized need for security" responsible for the severe "health crisis" of heroin users. Formulating "a claim to survive" in the name of junkies, the paper demanded a general paradigm shift away from securitization and criminalization towards a drug policy that focused on stabilizing the users' health rather than penalizing them or forcing them into abstinence. Concretely, the DAH asked for a broad portfolio of harm reduction measures, or in terms more common in West German discussions, "low-threshold" assistances for heroin users, including methadone maintenance programs, "crisis intervention centers," legal counselling, self-help projects and meeting places such as junkie cafés.<sup>85</sup>

As these demands indicate, proponents of harm reduction tried to establish a new way of governing drug addiction. In contrast to drug policies based on security, criminalization and abstinence, harm reduction followed, in Foucauldian terms, the logic of governmentality.<sup>86</sup> While the former intervened into heroin scenes in order to alter the reality of drug consumption and addiction according to a strict normative idea of the social, the idea of a drug-free society, harm reduction proponents intended to set these ideals aside. In April 1991, the red-green government in Frank-

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84 Berger/Zeitel 1976, p. 167.

85 Ahrens/Michels 1988, quotes on pp. 15, 16, 19, 24.

86 Foucault 2006.

furt stated that “the attempt to eliminate drugs and drug consumption from our culture has failed ... Instead of denying this fact, we should create conditions that enable us to diminish risks, limit harm and reduce suffering.”<sup>87</sup> Thus, harm reduction approaches accepted the reality of drug use in order to be able to influence certain unfavorable phenomena, such as the worsening health conditions of addicts.

This reorientation also implied a new framing of heroin use. In 1990, social scientist Heino Stöver, a strong proponent of harm reduction at that time, argued that addiction did not necessarily mean a heteronomous condition of unfreedom rooted in a disorder of the user’s personality. Stöver preferred a less dramatic idea of addiction. Rather than seeing addiction as a life-long enslavement to drugs, Stöver highlighted that there were elements of autonomy and responsibility in the drug addict’s behavior despite addiction-related constraints. He considered addiction as a “form of human expression,” a way of life characterizing certain biographical phases. For professionals, “acceptance-driven drug work” (*akzeptierende Drogenarbeit*) was therefore about accompanying addicts in this biographical phase, about overcoming the “object status” of addicts and promoting their individual capacities and “self-healing powers.” Stöver believed that this new approach had a better chance of being accepted by drug consumers than therapies strictly aiming at abstinence. He argued that harm reduction “is about accepting drug consumption of those people who cannot or do not want to stop consuming. It is about creating low-threshold offers in order to make contact with these kinds of users.”<sup>88</sup>

Initiated by the controversies about HIV/AIDS prevention, this new paradigm strongly broke with concepts of West Germany drug politics in general and Frankfurt am Main in particular. Rather than legitimizing coercive state intervention by pathologizing heroin users or depicting them as threats to public security, the paradigm of harm reduction desecuritized heroin use in terms of dedramatizing and normalizing heroin use and addiction, arguing that heroin addicts were able to make their own responsible decisions – including the decision to continue using heroin. Proponents of harm reduction such as Heino Stöver and the *DAH* therefore demanded a more liberal and tolerant culture in treating heroin addicts by respecting their decisions, their way of life and their “right to humane,

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87 ISGF, Hauptamt 38, Mit Drogenabhängigen leben! Rahmenplan zur Gestaltung der Drogenpolitik in Frankfurt am Main, 29.4.1991.

88 Stöver 1990, quotes on pp. 14–15, 21.

healthy and social living conditions.”<sup>89</sup> By liberalizing the way of coping with heroin addicts, however, harm reduction proponents also hoped to increase the outreach and efficiency of drug assistances compared to policies based on the logics of security and abstinence. In this regard, harm reduction was about expanding rather than limiting state control of heroin addiction by adapting drug policies to the potentials and capacities of heroin users.

Although the new city government in Frankfurt did not follow these arguments in every respect, Volker Hauff and Margarethe Nimsch were generally in favor of de-dramatizing heroin users and therefore tried to orientate the city’s drug policy towards harm reduction. On the one hand, they established four “crisis centers” run by various non-governmental organizations such as the local *AIDS-Hilfe*. Each of these centers provided users with stress-free places near the scene where they should feel accepted and where they found overnight accommodation and hygiene facilities (but where they were not allowed to deal or consume drugs).<sup>90</sup> With regard to methadone, the red-green city government had to face the strong opposition of federal and regional medical associations, which had reservations towards maintenance therapies.<sup>91</sup> The health department therefore made strong efforts to thoroughly coordinate its plan with the Hessian medical association, the health insurances and the Hessian state government. After long discussions, the involved institutions agreed upon introducing a medically controlled “methadone-based drug assistance” (*methadonbasierte Drogenhilfe*) in 1991.<sup>92</sup> In contrast to a previous “high-threshold” program, the methadone-based drug assistance was not restricted to prostitutes with HIV-drug addiction.<sup>93</sup> As an “aid for survival” (*Überlebenshil-*

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89 Id., p. 15.

90 See ISGF, Hauptamt 40, Drogenreferat der Stadt Frankfurt, Tätigkeitsbericht 1.10.92 bis 31.12.93, 22.4.94.

91 See „Ersatzdrogen. Stellungnahme des gemeinsamen Arbeitskreises des Wissenschaftlichen Beirates und des Ausschusses für ‚Psychiatrie, Psychotherapie und Psychohygiene‘ der Bundesärztekammer.“ *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 5, 4.2.1988; ISGF, Stadtverordnetenversammlung 4.401, Presseerklärung der Landesärztekammer Hessen, betr. Methadonsubstitution, 28.11.1987.

92 ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 2, Rahmenvertrag über die Verordnung, Vergabe und Verabreichung von Methadon (L-Polamidon) zum Zweck der Substitution Heroinabhängiger in Hessen, 27.6.1991.

93 See ISGF, StGA Sachakten 631, StGA AIDS Arbeitsgruppe – Ambulanz für medikamentengestützte Hilfe zum Ausstieg aus der Beschaffungsprostitution, 12.9.88.

fe), the program was run at the four crisis centers and principally addressed all heroin addicts.

The city's new drug policy based on harm reduction principles achieved imminent success when measured by the number of drug-related deaths, the number which had given local drug politics its strong dynamic in 1989/90. In 1992, the Frankfurt police counted 127 death cases, a decrease by 13 percent compared to 1991. This reduction was even higher in 1993, when there were 68 deaths by overdose, a decrease by 46 percent compared to the previous year.<sup>94</sup> At the same time, the number of ambulance calls due to drug-related emergencies also decreased drastically. Regarding social assistances, the *Drogenreferat* reported that "addiction accepting and pragmatic assistances" had sustainably broken the "deep social isolation especially of long-term intravenous drug addicts."<sup>95</sup>

As these numbers indicate, harm reduction measures introduced by the red-green city government strongly improved the health situation of the city's junkies. In late 1991 and early 1992, however, reports about the heroin scene showed that parts of the city's users were still not responding to the existing assistances because they were neither willing to substitute heroin for methadone nor to be socially reintegrated. Social researchers especially highlighted the miserable situation of homeless addicts who suffered from high HIV infection rates. In order to reach out to these persons, they recommended the expansion of harm reduction measures, for example, by providing addicts with clean heroin and safe consumption sites under medically controlled conditions.<sup>96</sup> Other actors in the field of local drug politics reminded the city administration, though, that the effects of expanding medical assistances were limited. In a letter to the city administration, the director of the *Verein für Arbeits- und Erziehungshilfe (VAE)*, which ran one of two crisis centers in the *Bahnhofsviertel*, stated that "the bad general health of junkies results not least from the illegality of their activities. Therefore, the improvement of medical care cannot replace efforts to reform the Narcotics Law."<sup>97</sup>

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94 ISGF, Hauptamt 38, Kurzanalyse Rauschgifttote in Frankfurt 1993, 27.1.94.

95 ISGF, Hauptamt 40, Drogenreferat der Stadt Frankfurt, Tätigkeitsbericht 1.10.92 bis 31.12.93, 22.4.94.

96 ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 4, Irmgard Voigt, Abschlussbericht der Studie 'Offene Drogenszene in Frankfurt am Main', Mai 1992, p. 2–3.

97 ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 4, Schreiben des Vorsitzenden des VAE an das Büro des Oberbürgermeisters, betr. Ausbau der Drogenhilfe in Frankfurt am Main, 20.1.92.

In the course of 1992, these demands for decriminalizing junkies, however, did not resonate with the city's political leaders. In contrast, making junkies an issue of urban security continued to play an important role in local controversies about the heroin scene. It was especially the recipient of the VAE's letter, new mayor Andreas von Schoeler (SPD), who decided to highlight security issues in drug politics rather than promoting the reform of the Narcotics Law. Similar to Walter Wallmann's stance towards drug users back in the early 1980s, Schoeler's security policy culminated in the shutdown of the heroin scene in the *Taunusanlage* during summer 1992, thereby not only provoking a conflict with the local green party and the city's drug help associations, but also with the city's junkies, who began to articulate protest towards their securitization.

6 *"All of Frankfurt will be a drug scene": politicized junkies, urban security and the dissolution of the heroin scene in 1992*

Desecuritizing heroin use was one of the major political demands by proponents of harm reduction, for they related the miserable situation of many long-term addicts to the stigmatization and criminalization of the heroin scene. When in 1989 the red-green government began to introduce the harm reduction measures, it also supported efforts to reduce criminal persecution of heroin users. In the so-called "Frankfurt Resolution" of November 1990, Margarethe Nimsch, along with city officials from Zurich, Hamburg and Amsterdam, demanded that punishing the possession and use of small amounts of illegal drugs including heroin be ceased.<sup>98</sup> However, while having no influence on federal law making, the city government depended on the pragmatic cooperation of the police and public prosecutors. The Frankfurt police, recognizing the junkies' growing impoverishment due to their daily contact with the scene, generally supported the expansion of social and medical assistances.<sup>99</sup> It could not

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98 ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 5, Frankfurter Resolution, unterzeichnet anlässlich der 1. Konferenz: Europäische Städte im Zentrum des illegalen Drogenhandels in Frankfurt am Main, 22.11.90.

99 See the protocols of the so called "Monday Circle", a weekly coordination meeting by the state prosecution office, several city authorities and the directors of the local drug help associations, chaired by the health department. In ISGF, StGA Sachakten 472.

agree, though, on completely tolerating junkies in the *Taunusanlage*, especially due to the issue of *Beschaffungskriminalität*. In press releases, the police continued to show its strong commitment to take consequent actions against the criminal activities of the city's junkies.<sup>100</sup>

These kinds of statements both reflected and intensified the general concern about the insecurity of the urban space, which preoccupied the police, the public and local politics to an increasing extent in the early 1990s.<sup>101</sup> These discourses were pretty similar to those in the Wallmann era ten years earlier. *Firstly*, insecurities were related to a vague unease about the *Bahnhofsviertel*, “the horror scenario of a big city,” where foreign gangs, prostitution and drug trafficking seemed to create an impermeable network of crime, as the *FAZ* wrote in July 1991.<sup>102</sup> Urban insecurities, *secondly*, were connected to an economic concern, the bad image of the city. As an effect of neoliberal transformations since the 1980s, cities such as Frankfurt more and more began to consider themselves as being in competition with other cities for capital and human resources. As shown by human geographer Sebastian Schipper, this idea of the “entrepreneurial city” prevailed in local political discourses in the early 1990s and was associated with worries about the supposedly bad image of the city due to the insecurity of the urban space.<sup>103</sup> Petra Roth (CDU), for example, then the opposition leader in the city parliament, criticized that the city would not profit from its presence in the media, because the image of the city was mainly formed by the *Bahnhofsviertel*, criminal dealers, and the junkies on the streets.<sup>104</sup> These argumentations became more and more important in the early 1990s and involved drug policies into the marketing logic of the “entrepreneurial city.”

The city administration under Volker Hauff, while principally in favor of decriminalization, had to adjust to both worries about the junkies' role in drug criminality and the feelings of insecurity in the local public. The Hauff administration did so in trying to show understanding for the con-

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100 ISGF, Hauptamt 38, Pressemitteilung des Polizeipräsidiums Frankfurt – operative Maßnahmen gegen die Straßen- und Raubkriminalität sowie Auswüchse der offenen Drogenszene, 3.8.92; see also Polizeipressestelle Frankfurt, Straßenraub im ersten Halbjahr 1992, 25.6.92.

101 See Schipper 2013, pp. 194–198; Beste 2000.

102 „Schreckensbild einer Großstadt. Organisiertes Verbrechen im Bahnhofsviertel“. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28.7.1991.

103 Schipper 2013, pp. 191–212.

104 Quoted id., p. 196.

cerns and anxieties of many citizens towards the drug scene.<sup>105</sup> It tried to raise support for its drug policy in arguing that harm reduction measures and low pressure on users made it possible to disentangle criminals from sick addicts in need of help, thereby enabling the police to be more effective in prosecuting dealers and large-scale drug trafficking.<sup>106</sup>

This argumentation changed when Hauff's successor, Andreas von Schoeler (SPD), took office in May 1991. Against the background of local electoral successes by extreme right-wing parties, Andreas von Schoeler made "urban security" one of its major political issues. The mayor was well aware that his security policy was not about an empirical rise in crime rates, but rather about feelings of unsafety rooted in social and economic transformations. Schoeler therefore planned to combine a "preventive social policy" with a security policy "that takes the fears of the citizens seriously."<sup>107</sup> Regarding the city's drug policy, Schoeler argued that security, on the one hand, and the expansion of harm reduction measures, on the other, belonged together.<sup>108</sup> But before expanding harm reduction assistances, such as safe injection sites, Schoeler focused on security issues. In September 1991, Schoeler ordered to create an administrative working group on "security" in September 1991, charged with "improving security and enhancing the public image especially in the city center and the *Bahnhofsviertel*."<sup>109</sup> In March 1992, the *Deutsche Bahn* started the campaign "*Bahnhof als Visitenkarte*" due to Schoeler's initiative. The campaign engaged private security services instructed to assist the railroad police in expelling homeless people and heroin addicts from the train station area.<sup>110</sup> This campaign was quite paradigmatic of the city's security policy under Schoeler, for it linked the concern of improving the city's image with taking security measures against underprivileged groups.

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105 ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 2, Memorandum Margarethe Nimschs an OB Volker Hauff, betr. Lage der Drogenszene in Frankfurt, 10.7.1989.

106 See ISGF, Hauptamt 38, Mit Drogenabhängigen leben! Rahmenplan zur Gestaltung der Drogenpolitik in Frankfurt am Main, 29.4.1991.

107 Schoeler as quoted in Schipper 2013, p. 195.

108 „Wir bleiben bei unserem Kurs“. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1.8.92.

109 ISGF, OB Schoeler 4, Verfügung des Oberbürgermeisters, Sicherheit und Erscheinungsbild der Stadt, hier: Bildung einer dezernats- und ämterübergreifenden Arbeitsgruppe, 27.9.91.

110 "Nicht länger Wohnsitz und Treffpunkt für Süchtige." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18.3.1992.



In mid-1992, Schoeler's security policy culminated in an event which did not only cause conflicts between the ruling parties, but also provoked the protest of junkies. On June 6, 1992, the mayor and the vice president of the Frankfurt police publicly announced to gradually dissolve the heroin scene in the *Taunusanlage* until the end of the year. Schoeler argued that these measures were part of "concrete actions to improve the security situation in the city," aiming especially at both reducing the crimes committed by addicts and lowering the attractiveness of the heroin scene for users coming from areas around Frankfurt.<sup>111</sup> During the summer of 1992, the police forced hundreds of long-term junkies to leave the *Taunusanlage*. At different times each day, the police conducted raid-like controls in order to "keep the scene in movement," as a police spokesman stated in the local press.<sup>112</sup> By late-summer, the police had reduced the number of users to about 100 to 150, most of those being "impoverished and in an endangered health condition," as a police officer remarked in a meeting with the city administration.<sup>113</sup> After the *Taunusanlage* had been dissolved completely at the end of 1992, the police did not tolerate any gatherings of junkies in the public space anymore.

The dissolution of the heroin scene in the *Taunusanlage* provoked strong criticism. Both the Hessian drug aid associations and Schoeler's coalition partner, the greens, criticized plans to shut down the *Taunusanlage* as a "de-facto expulsion." Prior to expanding social and medical assistances to include the junkies, expelling junkies from the scene would only worsen the situation and therefore endanger the city's successes in caring for drug addicts.<sup>114</sup> On a special party conference summoned to discuss the issue of closing the scene, the local greens, especially their leaders, were not willing, however, to put the coalition in question. Some criticized that the greens too often avoided the issue of security. They vaguely de-

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111 ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 4, Pressekonferenz „Vorgehen gegen die offene Drogenszene“, OB Schoeler, stellv. Polizeipräsident Frerichs, 5.6.1992; „Taunusanlage: Polizei löst die Drogenszene auf.“ *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, 6.6.1992.

112 „Stadt kann süchtigen noch nicht helfen-“, *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, 2.7.1992.

113 ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 3, Protokoll der Sitzung des Arbeitsstabes „Auflösung offene Drogenszene“ am 18.8.1992.

114 , Brief von Akzept Hessen e.V., Landesverband für akzeptierende Drogenarbeit und Drogenpolitik, an den Oberbürgermeister A. von Schoeler, btr. Vertreibung der offenen Szene i.d. Taunusanlage, 27.5.1992; see also „Schwerwiegende Differenz mit Schoeler.“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15.8.1992.



mandated an “alternative concept of security” which should not repeat the mistakes made by the Wallmann administration around 1980.<sup>115</sup>

On July 1, a flyer appeared on the scene in the *Taunusanlage* addressed to “all shop keepers and restaurant owners, to customers, buyers, and window shoppers in Frankfurt.” Signed by “we, the drug users from the Taunusanlage,” the flyer stated that “mayor Schoeler expels the junkies from the scene into the inner city. While in the past, the drug scene was only in the Taunusanlage, all of Frankfurt will soon be a drug scene, only the Taunusanlage will be clean then. We feel sorry that we, the junkies, will be forced to use your salesroom as drug bunkers and your toilets to shoot heroin. The mayor can crush the scene, [...] but he cannot make magically disappear the users [*wegzaubern*].” After exposing the shut-down of the scene as a “short-sighted election strategy to catch votes,” the flyer listed a series of demands, documenting the radical difference between social workers, politicians and the police on the one hand, and the perspective of junkies on scene on the other: “we, the junkies want only one thing, to be left alone. Using our stuff in peace. If we got our opiates in pharmacies, you would barely realize that we exist [...]. Please support, also in your interest [...] massive expansion of methadone under human conditions, [...] safe injection sites, morphine and heroin supply, Taunusanlage instead of department stores!”<sup>116</sup> In articulating their wish to “be left alone,” to use their drugs “in peace” and in demanding to keep the *Taunusanlage* open for junkies, this flyer expresses the strong opposition of heroin users against any attempt to dissolve or remove the heroin scene from the public space. In contrast to the dissolution of the *Haschischwiese* in 1980, the flyer indicates that there were junkie activists ready to oppose actions taken to get rid of heroin users in the city center.

This flyer resulted from the increasing political energy of junkies in the early 1990s. Junkies became more and more politicized, not only trying to engage in drug politics on the level of national self-help networks, such as the *Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe*, but also in local conflicts. The effects of harm reduction measures provided the background for this dynamic. These did not only improve the junkie’s health, but also created less stressful living

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115 „Energisch gegen Räumung zur Wehr setzen“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20.8.1992; „Die Grünen entdecken ihr Verhältnis zur Polizei“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20.8.1992; see also ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 4, Brief der Grünen im Römer und der Dezernentin M. Nimsch an den Oberbürgermeister, 27.5.92.

116 The flyer is filed in ISGF, Büro OB Schoeler 3.

conditions. This was especially the case for participants of the local methadone program. Already in November 1990, an anonymous ex-user from Frankfurt stated that “I see a big chance since I have met participants of the [methadone] program, showing an incredible activity and an incredible self-confidence [...] They make it possible that persons from the drug milieu speak about their situation and actively intervene into drug politics. Their power illustrates that the muzzling of drug consumers is based on the narcotics law and criminalization, while one can use the potential of language as soon as you are not occupied with hiding and getting the essential things illegally anymore.”<sup>117</sup>

Criticizing the “muzzling” of drug users problematized the discursive position generally assigned to junkies in the field of drug politics. Within this discursive formation, junkies usually appeared as criminals, victims, sick people, patients or research objects, all positions that strongly subjected junkies to different forms of power. Both the statement by the ex-user, hopeful about junkies making use of the “potential of language,” as well as the medium in which his letter was published, indicate that junkies tried to be subjects and not only the objects of discourses about heroin use. In November, the *integrative drogenhilfe*, an association in favor of harm reduction ideas founded in 1986,<sup>118</sup> published the first edition of the “*Junkfurter. Die Ballergazette*” (*JuBaz*), a small magazine brought into being to provide junkies with their own media of information and articulation. In the second edition, the editorial board, mainly consisting of HIV-infected, substituted addicts, invited all junkies on the scene, in prisons and therapy institutions, to engage in the making of the *JuBaz* in order to make the magazine to the “voice for those who are never heard.”<sup>119</sup> In the following months and years, the *JuBaz* served as a platform of political articulation in Frankfurt. In 1991, reacting to the campaign “*Bahnhof als Visitenkarte*,” *JuBaz* authors also helped to start an initiative which tried to document and report the rising violence of railway policemen and private security agents against junkies in the central train station.<sup>120</sup>

During the dissolution of the heroin scene in the *Taunusanlage*, the activism of junkies in Frankfurt am Main peaked. Junkie activists organized demonstrations in cooperation with self-help groups by gay men and pros-

117 *Junkfurter* 1990(1), p. 4.

118 Integrative Drogenhilfe 2011.

119 Editorial. *Junkfurter* 1990(2), p. 3.

120 *Junkfurter* 1991(3), p. 7.

titutes in order to achieve an end of the police practices in the *Taunusanlage*. On September 19, about 50 protesters spontaneously assembled at the *Taunusanlage* for a demonstration under the slogan “*Räume statt Räumung*.” The protesters marched to city hall, where they presented a letter to mayor Schoeler, demanding to stop “smashing the scene” and to respect the human rights of junkies: “Junkies do not have a lobby in the city; they are left alone in their social, medical and humane misery; even drug aid institutions cannot change that due to their restricted possibilities. Although the city government is about to expand public health measures, the ongoing [...] smashing of the drug scene has to be exposed as an attack on the elementary right to human dignity, which also has to apply to drug users.”<sup>121</sup> In trying to make the “smashing of the scene” a question of human rights, claiming to get “spaces/rooms” instead of being expelled from the urban public, the protesters tried to claim their right to be a legitimate part of the city.

The results of these junkie protests were very ambivalent. On the one hand, junkies were able to express their own political agency, which had been impossible in local drug politics since the 1970s. Furthermore, parts of their health-related demands were realized by the city administration. At the beginning of December 1994, after much effort by the health department, the first so-called “health room” of Frankfurt, a safe injection site, was opened in the crisis center in *Schielestraße*, located in an industrial park in the east of the city.<sup>122</sup> On the other hand, though, both criminalization and the aim of preventing public gatherings of junkies continued to play a decisive role in drug politics under the red-green city government. After the conflicts between Schoeler and the greens had settled, the city government officially began to argue that both harm reduction and security measures were interconnected elements of the city’s drug policy. Regarding the first safe injection site, a measure principally aiming at lowering health risks for heroin consumers, mayor Schoeler stated that health

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121 The letter to mayor Schoeler is printed in *Junkfurter* 1992(5), p. 8; see also “Drogendemonstration: ‘Räume statt Räumung’”, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 19.9.1992; a second demonstration took place in Oktober: „Fixer sind nicht unzurechnungsfähig“, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 23.10.1992.

122 „Druckraum für Drogenabhängige wird diese Woche eröffnet“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1.12.1994.

rooms also contributed to the establishment of security in the city.<sup>123</sup> The junkies' most radical political claims – decriminalization, legal heroin supply in pharmacies, and the right to be part of the city public – therefore hardly resonated with the city's decision-makers.<sup>124</sup>

## 7 Conclusion

This article has analyzed the transformations of drug policies in Frankfurt am Main between 1975 and 1995. It has pointed out several configurations of governing heroin users which were generally marked by two very different, often overlapping but also contradicting concerns about heroin users. On the one hand, junkies and the heroin scene were the object of discourses about “urban security,” an issue which emerged as an important field of local politics at the end of the 1970s and continued to occupy politicians well into the 1990s. This security framing of heroin use was not only promoted by the police, but also by political leaders such as the mayors Walter Wallmann (CDU) and Andreas von Schoeler (SPD), who were concerned about certain dangerous urban areas and the bad image of the city, which they associated with quarters such as the *Bahnhofsviertel*. On the other hand, heroin users were also the object of concerns about the mental and physical health of addicts. Actors highlighting these aspects of heroin use strongly disagreed, though, on how to arrange social and medical assistances. Until the mid-1980s, policies were mainly determined by the paradigm of abstinence in this respect. Against the background of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, however, the urgency to address the poor health conditions of heroin addicts induced a paradigm shift towards harm reduction measures which prioritized health related assistances over the normative objective of a drug free society.

Focusing on the relation between (de-)securitization and power, the transition towards harm reduction policies in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic marked a decisive shift regarding the power relations in the field of local drug politics on the one hand, and regarding the logic of power determining the ways of governing heroin users since the mid-1970s on

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123 „Frankfurt richtet ‚Druckräume‘ für Drogenabhängige ein“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12.11.1994.

124 See ISGF, Hauptamt 40, Drogenreferat der Stadt Frankfurt, Tätigkeitsbericht 1.10.92 bis 31.12.93, 22.4.94.

the other. Proponents of harm reduction challenged securitizing discourses and practices, such as the shutdown of the heroin scene in the *Bockenheimer Anlage* in 1980. They not only demanded to decriminalize the individual consumer but also put forward normalizing framings of heroin use which regarded addicts capable of acting responsibly making reasonable decisions. This framing strongly undermined the image of the irresponsible, undiscerning junkie which had dominated the city officials' view on heroin addicts and legitimated extraordinary coercive interventions such as involuntary commitments. Rather than govern heroin users by exerting strong control over the spaces of heroin consumption, harm reduction policies were based on creating addiction-accepting environments and promoting self-regulating capacities of users in order to influence the most unfavorable phenomena of heroin consumption such as high mortality rates. Furthermore, rather than making users invisible, the accessibility of users for social workers was an integral part of harm reduction policies. Desecuritizing discourses were therefore decisive in transforming the power logic of local drug policies towards, in Foucauldian terms, the logic of governmentality.

Between the emergence of HIV/AIDS in the mid-1980s and the shutdown of the Taunusanlage in 1992, the power relations in local drug politics also changed. Until the mid-1980s, self-help groups such as "junkie unions" hardly had a chance of making themselves heard due to the strong criminalization and the lack of political supporters. In the late 1980s, junkie activists made political use of the new freedoms accompanying the introduction of harm reduction measures. On the one hand, by organizing protest such as the "solidary of the undiscerning," gay activists aimed at including junkies in their politics of anti-discrimination and encouragement against AIDS-related discriminations, thereby giving junkie self-help groups such as JES the opportunity to get involved in drug political debates. On the other hand, methadone maintenance treatment helped junkies to escape stressful and illegalized living conditions and get involved into a series of political activities on the local level. By protesting against the dissolution of the Taunusanlage, junkie activists demonstrated that their political demands for legalizing heroin consumption did not only differ from the police and leading local politicians, but also from the supportive network of social workers. The desecuritizing and normalizing aspects of both HIV/AIDS prevention and harm reduction policies were therefore the basis for this kind of political activism.

The renewed shutdown of the heroin scene in 1992, legitimated by security concerns, demonstrates the limits of the desecuritizing dimensions of harm reduction policies. Harm reduction was based on framings of heroin use which de-dramatized heroin users by acknowledging their lifestyle, decisions and basic rights. This liberal approach not only made drug policies more efficient in terms of improving contacts to the scene and lowering health risks of addicts but also created the preconditions for demanding more fundamental liberalizations, such as the general decriminalization of drug use. While these demands found the support of some social scientists and social workers, they did not resonate with the crucial political actors on both the local and the national level. At a time when Frankfurt was about to transform into a neoliberal, “entrepreneurial city,” Mayor Andreas von Schoeler rather considered harm reduction assistances as part of the city’s security policy, which was orientated towards the management of vague feelings of insecurity in the local public and the improvement of city’s supposed bad image, ignoring the political demands of a small group of marginalized people demanding to have a right to the city.

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