



EMCDDA SCIENTIFIC REPORT

Pilot Project to Describe and Analyse Local Drug Markets

First Phase Final Report: Illegal Drug Markets in Frankfurt and Milan

EMCDDA/2000

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Illegal Drug Markets in Frankfurt and Milan**

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Executive Summary

Over the past twelve months (starting in September 1999), the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law in Freiburg (MPI) has implemented the first phase of a pilot project on local drug markets in two European cities: Frankfurt and Milan. The project is financed by the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in Lisbon.

The research project has been co-ordinated by Dr. Letizia Paoli (MPI), who has also led the field-work at both sites. In Frankfurt, she has been assisted by Nimet Güller (MPI, Freiburg and Universität Bielefeld), in Milan by Prof. Dr. Salvatore Palidda (Politecnico di Milano).

It had been originally planned to extend the project to three additional cities during a year-long second phase: Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Paris. Additional fieldwork was also to be carried out in Frankfurt and Milan and the research material collected during the first phase to be ultimately examined. Due to the unavailability of funds on the part of the EMCDDA, however, the second phase will probably not take place, at least in its extended form.

In the first phase of the project, the MPI has employed a multifaceted methodology which emphasises qualitative research instruments and whose rationale is to collect information from as many different perspectives as possible. In particular, *secondary* and *primary* sources have been used. Among secondary sources, four main ones can be listed:

- existing studies, including grey literature
- the periodical and ad hoc information released by local and national law enforcement agencies, drug treatment services, and other public bodies
- judicial files, and
- media articles and reports.

In addition to secondary sources, the study also draws from *primary* ones. The research teams in Frankfurt and Milan have collected first-hand information from the four main actors of today's illegal markets: consumers, suppliers, law enforcement personnel, as well as public and private drug treatment providers. In particular, during the first phase the two research teams carried out more than 30 interviews with law enforcement officials, public drug treatment providers, and the representatives of drug-related NGOs in each of the two cities. Additionally, 70 drug users and suppliers were interviewed in Frankfurt and 55 in Milan. In order to obtain standardised and comparable results, a

questionnaire was developed. At both sites, more than half of the interviews with drug users and dealers were carried out by the core members of the two research teams, the rest by ad-hoc recruited interviewers.

The preliminary findings that were gathered so far show surprising similarities between the Frankfurt and Milan drug markets. In both cities, drug markets seem to have evolved in parallel ways, by and large following analogous time sequences.

The demand: diversification and normalisation

The similarities are most evident on the demand side. In both cities, the substances preferred by the users, the latter's social characteristics and the meanings they attach to drug use seem to have evolved along roughly parallel paths over the last thirty years.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, at both sites cannabis and LSD consumption spread among the youths who participated in the 1968 collective movement and who were most closely influenced by the 'flower power' American subculture. Around the mid-1970s opiates and then heroin made their appearance on both markets and heroin use spread among those who were disappointed by the failure of the youth protest movements and, increasingly among marginalised, lower-class youths.

While LSD largely disappeared from both cities in the late 1970s, during the following decade two large, parallel drug markets developed: one for heroin and one for cannabis. In both cities, these markets have always (with an initial exception in Frankfurt) been physically separate, as they have been located in different, though changing, parts of the two metropolises. During the 1990s, however, the polarisation of the illegal drug market was shaken by the diffusion of several new illegal drugs. Some of them, such as ecstasy, were indeed entirely new. Others, such as cocaine, amphetamines, and LSD, were largely rediscovered and/or became attractive to a wider pool of consumers.

In both contexts, the turn of the century recorded a strong diffusion of cocaine, which has become a '*passe-partout*' drug and is increasingly used by a wide-ranging spectrum of people. Since the early 1990s, even crack cocaine has registered a veritable boom on the Frankfurt open drug scene. Long a peculiarity of Frankfurt, crack cocaine has also become available in Milan in the late 1990s.

The wider drug supply has been paralleled in both contexts by the growing diversification of drug consumers. Today the latter can no longer be described with reference to a single cluster of demographic, social, and cultural characteristics, nor can their drug use be explained by referring to one or few economic or social variables.

In both cities, there is a strong core of heavy drug addicts, for whom drug use and the search for drugs represent two of the most important daily activities. In Frankfurt as well as in Milan, the latter are estimated between 4.000 and 7.000. At both sites, a growing portion of these marginalised, dependent drug users are foreign migrants.

Neither in Frankfurt nor in Milan, however, are illegal drugs exclusively used by the former category of people, the so-called 'junkies'. Though they are the most visible component of the drug using population, the latter by no means exhaust the demand for illegal drugs in either city. Indeed, 'traditional' heavy drug addicts represent only a minority. At least some illegal drugs – above all, hashish, but also increasingly cocaine, ecstasy and other synthetic drugs – are regularly or occasionally consumed by dozens of thousands of teen-agers and young (and not so young) adults, who belong to all social strata and cultural backgrounds.

In Milan, about 30 percent of high-school students admit to having smoked cannabis at least once in their life and 8 percent say that they have used cocaine or acid. Roughly seven percent have allegedly used ecstasy and more than 50 percent have friends who use it. Analogous percentages of cannabis and cocaine users can also be estimated among Milanese in their twenties and thirties.

At least 12-14.000 residents of Frankfurt are assumed to smoke cannabis regularly, 4.000 of whom are young adults. About 24 percent of the German young adults (age 18-24) admit to having used cannabis at least once in their life, whereas 13,2 percent report use in the last 12 months. Slightly more than five percent have tried ecstasy pills at least once and 3,2 percent admit use in the last 12 months.

The drug use of this new generation of consumers can certainly not be explained with reference to their supposed marginalisation. Rather, it is fostered by the mass youth culture, which –through songs, movies and entertainment stars– spreads the same myths, values, and expectations among young people at all corners of the world. This international cultural movement has also spread the positive, mythical image of psychoactive drugs and, above all, stimulants.

Over the past ten years, both metropolises have registered a normalisation of drug use. Despite their illegal status, the use of some drugs –above all, hashish, but in some contexts also cocaine and ecstasy– has by and large become 'normal' and it is widely practised and accepted. It is no longer the expression of a rebellious counterculture, but it has instead entered the mass youth culture. Though it may have dangerous consequences for some, the use of some illegal substances seems to have become a sort of generalised *rite de passage* from childhood into adulthood.

The supply: small enterprises, open markets

On the supply side too, there are striking similarities. In both cities, drug entrepreneurs of all kinds are subject to the constraints deriving from the illegal status of the products they sell. These constraints have so far prevented the rise of large, hierarchically organised firms to mediate economic transactions in the illegal marketplace. The factors promoting the development of bureaucracies in the legal section of the economy – namely, the advantages deriving from economies of scale and specialisation of roles – are outbalanced in the illegal arena by the very consequences of product illegality. Due to these constraints, within the drug economy there is no immanent tendency towards the consolidation of large-scale, modern bureaucracies.

In Frankfurt as well as in Milan, the great majority of drug deals, even those involving large quantities of drugs, seem to be carried out by numerous, relatively small, and often ephemeral enterprises. Some of them are family businesses: that is, they are run by the members of a blood family, who resort on an *ad hoc* basis to non-kin people in order to carry out the most dangerous tasks. Some are veritable non-kin groups, which are formed around a (charismatic) leader and then manage to acquire a certain degree of stability and develop a rudimentary division of labour. Others are ‘crews’: loose associations of people, which form, split, and come together again as opportunity arises.

Even Southern Italian mafia families, whose members were deeply involved in large drug deals in Milan during the 1980s and early 1990s, do not seem to operate like monolithic productive and commercial units. On the contrary, their members frequently set up crews with a few other mafia affiliates or even with external people to make drug deals. These crews are far from being stable working units that could be compared to the branch office of a legal firm. Their composition frequently changes depending on the moment when deals take place or on the availability of single members. After one or a few drug transactions some teams are disbanded, while others continue to operate for a longer time, eventually changing their composition to some extent.

Especially at the intermediate and lower levels, many dealers work alone, either to finance their own drug consumption habits or, more rarely, to earn fast money. Most of these drug entrepreneurs have no contact whatsoever with the underworld, but instead are often inconspicuous persons, who can hardly be distinguished from ‘normal’ people.

In both cities, the street drug market is largely dominated by foreign dealers, as both police statistics and interviews with key witnesses, drug users and dealers point out. Within a few years a veritable substitution process has taken place: the lowest and most dangerous positions, which used to be occupied by the most marginalised Italian/German drug users, are now taken over by foreigners, especially those who have immigrated recently, are applicants for political asylum or do not have a residence permit.

Like other forms of crime in the past, the involvement in today's largest illegal market is used by immigrants as a "queer ladder of social mobility". To a greater extent than in the past, moreover, migrants today have a harder time accessing the legal economy and, due to the restrictive policies adopted by most Western European states, are more likely to find survival means only in the informal and illegal economies. Many of them, finally, are also drug users, who have begun to deal drugs in order to finance their consumption patterns.

Especially during the 1980s, several mafia and underworld drug dealing enterprises operating in Milan tried to exercise monopoly claims over the areas in which they were settled, obliging the local intermediate and street dealers to buy drugs from them. Nonetheless, neither in Milan nor in Frankfurt has a person or group ever succeeded in controlling the city market for any illegal substance. The drug markets of both cities have always been open markets, in which anybody can try to earn his/her fortune, selling, importing, or producing drugs.

In both cities, illegal drugs arrive on the market through a plurality of different channels and the drug distribution chain is frequently much shorter than the six-level hierarchical model developed by Preble and Casey in the late 1960s for the New York heroin market.

At both sites, empirical evidence additionally shows that the relationships between drug dealing enterprises are closer to competition than to collusion. Although some suppliers may occasionally enjoy a considerable monopolistic power over a local (usually small) market, in Frankfurt, as in Milan, most drug enterprises seem to be price-takers rather than price-givers. That is, none of them are able to influence the commodity's price appreciably by varying the quantity of the output sold.

It is not by chance that the wholesale and retail prices of all the main substances – with the exception of cannabis– have steadily decreased in both contexts. This decline has been accompanied by a comparable fall of purity levels. Only cannabis prices are reported stable in Frankfurt and increasing in Milan. Apparently following international trends, the prices for all the main illegal substances are strikingly similar in both cities, though slightly higher in Milan than in Frankfurt.

The public response: repression and harm reduction

In their tensions and contradictions, even the drug policies of the two cities show basic similarities. Following the spread of the AIDS epidemic, in both cities a variety of harm reduction measures were introduced during the 1990s. The latter were often pushed through by public agencies against the initial opposition of many local NGOs, which

resisted change as they were largely used to offering drug-free treatment and counselling. The methadone treatment was first tested in Frankfurt in 1989 and then was extended to a wider clientele after 1992. In Milan, too, methadone substitution became a low threshold service in the early 1990s. Needle exchange and other types of outreach projects, as well as medical crisis intervention, were also set up in both cities during the last decade of the 20th century. In Frankfurt, additionally, safe injection rooms have been open since 1994.

Especially in Milan, the turn towards harm reduction has however been accompanied by an intensification of police repression. At both sites, the large open drug scenes were evacuated by the police (in 1989 in Milan, in 1992 in Frankfurt) and in neither city have the law enforcement agencies and the local administrations allowed similar concentrations of injecting drug users to re-establish again. As result, there has been a submersion and fragmentation of the heavy drug market. As more and more drug exchanges take place in private settings or in rapidly changing locations at the city periphery, transaction costs for users have consistently increased.

Whereas both the public and policy-making still largely focuses on injecting drug users and the open-drug scene, both in Frankfurt and in Milan public and private drug-related agencies have so far been largely unable to reach the new generations of non-injecting (largely non-heroin) drug users. Only a limited number of prevention and harm-reduction initiatives targeting this new type of drug user has been launched.

Foreword

In the following pages, the results of the first phase of the pilot project to describe and analyse local drug markets will be presented. The bulk of this document consists of the first-year site reports on the drug markets in Frankfurt and Milan. The two sites' reports are presented in Part II and Part III of the present document, respectively. Part I summarises the research activities carried out during the first phase of the pilot project. Part IV presents a comparative synthesis of the two site reports. Finally, as requested by the EMCDDA's call for tender, Part V makes proposals for the work during the second phase.

The present report was written by Dr. Letizia Paoli.¹ Prof. Palidda contributed to the drafting of the Milan site report. Nimet Güller drafted the sections on ecstasy for the Frankfurt site report.

A second phase of the pilot project was originally foreseen and the study was supposed to be extended to three additional sites: Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Paris. Due to unavailability of funds on the part of the EMCDDA, however, the second phase of the project will probably not be implemented as scheduled, at least in its extended form. As this news was communicated to the Max Planck Institute only thirty days before the deadline for the submission of the first-phase report, no major changes could be introduced in its structure. In particular, neither the Frankfurt nor the Milan research team were able to change their research schedule and carefully analyse all the information and material gathered during the fieldwork. Ever since the earliest phases of the pilot project, in fact, it was foreseen that the data collection and analysis could be conducted during a two-year period. In agreement with the EMCDDA supervisors, the MPI teams focused on the data collection and descriptive analysis during the first twelve months with the aim of analysing the data more deeply and conducting a limited amount of further fieldwork in the first two selected cities during the second phase. Given the short notice of the EMCDDA communication, this work plan could not be modified radically. In both the two site reports and the final Part V, reference will thus be made to what still needs to be done.

Hence, the following Frankfurt and Milan site reports should be considered as final reports of the first phase of the project.

¹ Paoli would like to thank Chloé Carpentier, the EMCDDA project leader, for her close support throughout the first phase of the project.

PART I. THE FIRST-PHASE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

This first part has two main aims: 1) to present the theoretical framework and the methodology adopted by the MPI for the pilot study and 2) to describe the implementation of the research protocol during the first phase.

1. The Theoretical Framework

Illegal markets – and specifically drug markets – have much in common with their legal counterparts. As Pino Arlacchi puts it, “there are buyers and sellers, wholesalers and retailers, go-betweens, importers and distributors, price structures, balance sheets, profits and, though less frequently, losses” (Arlacchi, 1998: 204). To understand these basic economic processes, the concepts and methods of the discipline of economics are very useful and have been extensively employed by the MPI in the first phase of the pilot project.

A mere economic approach, however, is not sufficient. Consumer demand and consumption patterns are influenced by cross-national cultural movements and, within each context, by local structural variables. The expansion of the use of cannabis in the 1960s, heroin in the 1970s, and ecstasy in the 1990s, for example, could not be explained without examining the international youth cultures and fashions that fostered and accompanied the increase in their popularity. Moreover, local structural factors, such as youth population numbers, family relations, social and economic development, geographical location, and drug policies, influence the development and the extent and patterns of consumption of the different substances. The dynamics of drug use and the shifts from one substance to another cannot be understood without taking into consideration the wider cultural and social context, within which drug exchanges take place.

The limits of a strict economic approach are even more evident on the supply side. Drug markets, in fact, have some peculiarities that do not allow a simplistic analogy between their enterprises and legal ones. Nor can drug-supplying enterprises be thought to follow the same evolutionary trends as licit firms and be roughly equated to multinational corporations, as is often the case in much of the contemporary discourse about organised crime. Although drug entrepreneurs often seem to embody the “animal spirits” of capitalism in their fullest form, they are subject to powerful constraints, which derive from the illegal status of the products they sell. These constraints have to do with the fact that all illegal market actors – and particularly drug traffickers and dealers - are obliged to operate 1) without and 2) against the state.

1) Since the goods and services they provide are prohibited, illegal market suppliers cannot resort to state institutions to enforce contracts and have the violations of contracts prosecuted, nor does the illegal arena host an alternative sovereign power to which a party may appeal for redress of injury (Reuter, 1983; 1985). As a result, property rights are poorly protected, employment contracts can hardly be formalised, and the development of large, formally organised, enduring companies is strongly discouraged.

2) All suppliers of illegal commodities – and specifically drugs – are bound to operate under the constant threat of being arrested and having their assets confiscated by law enforcement institutions. Each participant in the drug trade will thus try to organise his activities in such a way as to assure that the risk of police detection is minimised. Incorporating drug transactions into kinship and friendship networks and reducing the number of customers and employees are two of the most frequent strategies that drug entrepreneurs employ to reduce their vulnerability to law enforcement efforts (Reuter 1983; 1985; Moore, 1974: 15-31).

To gain a deep knowledge of the trends and the organisation of drug markets, economic tools and assumptions have been complemented by the analysis of social and cultural factors and by the investigation of the peculiarities of illegal markets. These are the theoretical assumptions upon which the MPI has founded its research.

2. Methodology

The illegal status of some substances implies not only constraints for those who buy and sell them, but also makes research quite difficult and irksome because all participants have an understandable interest in keeping their involvement unknown to law enforcement. The difficulties, in particular, tend to escalate if the research aims to investigate the higher levels of the drug distribution system and transactions involving socially well integrated, non-problematic drug users.

In order to overcome these difficulties, the MPI has employed a multifaceted methodology which emphasises qualitative research instruments and whose rationale is to collect information from as many different perspectives as possible. In particular, *secondary* and *primary* sources have been used. Among secondary sources, four main ones can be listed:

- existing studies, including grey literature
- the periodical and ad hoc information released by local and national law enforcement agencies, drug treatment services, and other public bodies
- judicial files, and

- media articles and reports.

In addition to secondary sources, the study also draws from primary ones. Under MPI supervision, the research teams in Frankfurt and Milan have collected first-hand information from the three main actors of today's illegal markets: consumers, suppliers, and law enforcement personnel. To these three categories of actors, a fourth one has been added: public and private drug treatment providers. Unlike the previous three sets of actors, the latter rarely intervene directly in the illegal drug market. Nonetheless, the diversified supply of drug treatment, prevention and harm reduction services, which have been developed in all EU states during the last thirty years, powerfully shapes the context within which drug transactions take place and must necessarily be taken into account. Furthermore, being in close contact with drug users and addicts, drug treatment providers often constitute a precious source of information on drug demand and exchanges at the retail level.

Confidentiality and anonymity have been ensured to all interviewees, most strictly to those who are vulnerable to law enforcement repression. Finally, whenever it was possible, the research teams have employed participant observation to reconstruct drug consumption and dealing patterns.

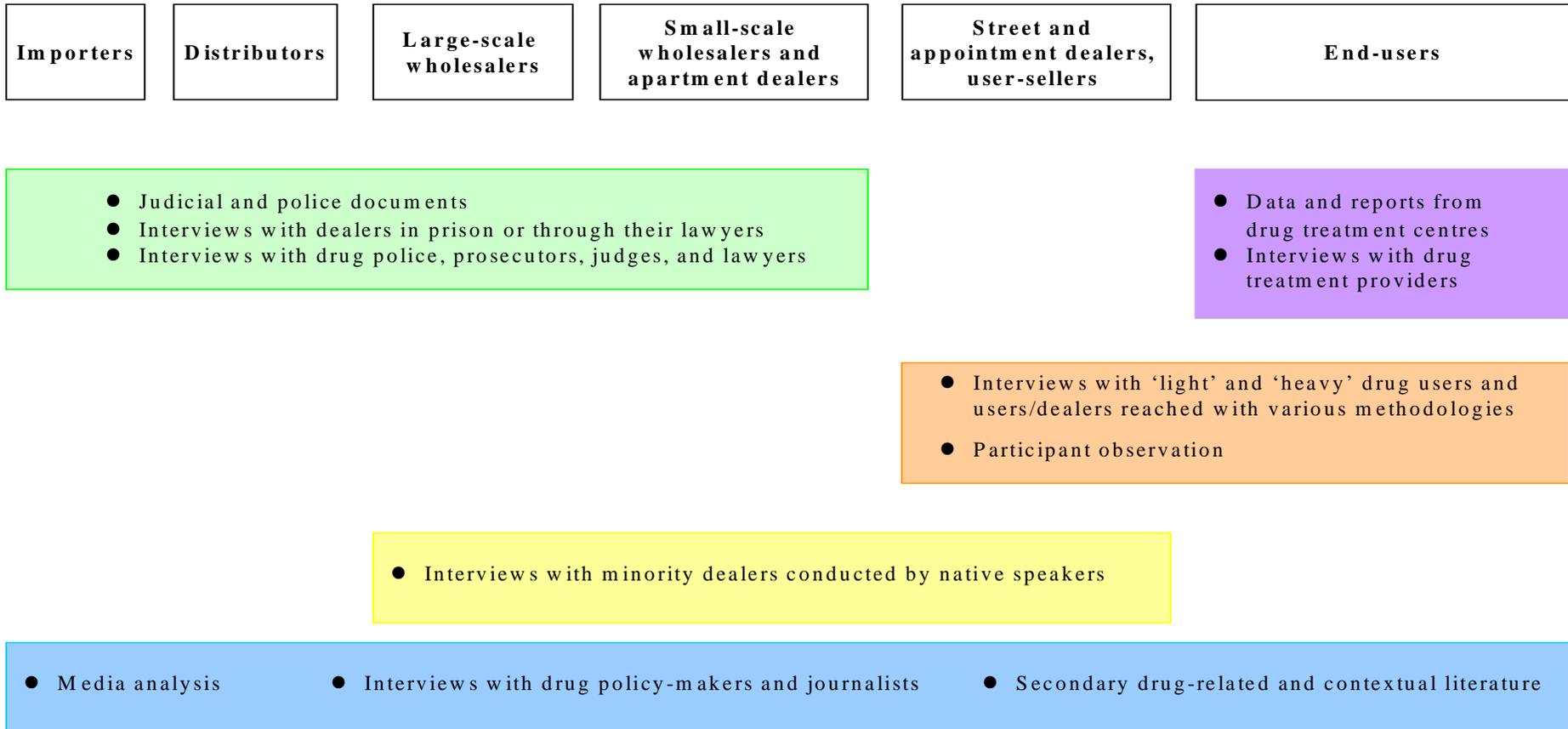
The sources and the research methods that are being used to study the actors and mechanisms at the various stages of the drug distribution system have been summarised in Figure 1. In order to represent the sources graphically, we have relied on the distribution categories elaborated from the empirical observations of heroin markets made by Roger Lewis and other researchers in several EU countries (1994: 42-54).² These categories, however, have not been considered as a blueprint. In each city and for each substance, MPI aims to assess to what extent local markets resemble or differ from this ideal-typical distribution system.

We are aware that most of our sources are partial and biased. As well known, most of the statistics and documents published by all the private and public drug-related agencies foremost reflect each agency's priorities and effectiveness of intervention. Only secondarily do these data also register trends and changes of the drug markets themselves (Kitsuse and Cicourel, 1963).

Interviews, too, are unavoidably biased, as they necessarily reflect each interviewee's *Weltanschauung* and experiences. Unlike quantitative surveys, in-depth qualitative

² Lewis' categories owe much to the six-level outline of the heroin delivery system in New York, which was drawn by Preble and Casey in the late 1960s (1969).

**Figure 1. THE DRUG DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (Heroin):
Sources and Research Methods**



interviews are also often criticised because they usually involve a limited number of interviewees, who are not recruited according to rigorous casual criteria and thus cannot represent the whole population of relevant subjects. Leaving aside the fact that many methodologists are quite sceptical about the alleged “representative power” of standardised surveys (Marradi, 1988), it is worth recalling that this research instrument can only rarely be employed by scholars studying illegal phenomena and, specifically, illegal drug markets. On the one hand, a “representative” sample can seldom be built, as the characteristics and even the extent of the whole population of drug users and dealers are usually unknown. On the other hand, standardised surveys among the general population are not only very costly and time-consuming, but are also unable to gather meaningful information on the mechanisms and trends of drug markets. The use of most illegal substances and, even more, drug dealing and trafficking involve only tiny minorities of the general population and this means that in a general survey a very large number of irrelevant interviews with uninformed persons would be made just to be able to interview a few drug dealers and heavy drug users. Moreover, the chances are very high that the latter would not be prepared to talk sincerely about their illegal activities with routine interviewers they have never met before.

For all these reasons, qualitative methods and, specifically, in-depth interviews are to be preferred in the exploration of drug markets. Though they have no guarantee of being representative, in-depth interviews may provide very detailed, first-hand and reliable information about the interviewee’s life-world and, specifically, about his/her involvement in the drug markets. In other words, their weakness – that is, their close link to the interviewee’s personal, specific experience – is, at the same time, their major strength.

By comparing the information obtained from interviews with drug users, dealers and key witnesses with information drawn from other, more ‘objective’ sources, we intend to answer the research questions originally agreed with the EMCDDA, which are again listed in Part V. At both sites, the information collected from all sources is being compared, analysed, and listed according to its degree of validity. While trying to cross-validate hypotheses with information obtained from various sources, our aim is to provide a reliable reconstruction of what happens in the drug markets of Frankfurt and Milan.

3. The Implementation of the Research Protocol

During the first twelve months, the research protocol was implemented according to the plans envisaged in the first and second progress reports. With minor exceptions, all the objectives listed in those documents were achieved and the research methods foreseen by the research protocol were extensively employed. As described in detail in the

following sections in particular, *secondary* sources were exploited since the earliest phases of the project. From December 1999 *primary* sources were also heavily considered and, specifically, in both cities the members of the two research teams – Letizia Paoli and Nimet Güller in Frankfurt and Paoli and Salvatore Palidda in Milan – conducted numerous interviews with drug users and dealers.

Primary sources

▪ Interviews with key witnesses

During the first twelve months of the project, the core members carried out more than thirty interviews with law enforcement officials, public drug treatment providers, and the representatives of drug-related NGOs in each of the two cities.

In Frankfurt, Paoli and Güller interviewed fourteen prosecutors working in the drug and organised crime divisions, as well as five judges of the Amtsgericht and Landgericht, who often deal with drug-related criminal cases. Nine interviews were additionally conducted with police officers working in the organised crime and drug trafficking section of the Frankfurt Polizeipräsidium (police) as well as with the head of that section. Further, the head of the organized crime and drug trafficking section of the Hessian Landeskriminalamt (Police Office of the State Hesse) was interviewed.

Contacts were also made with the City's Drogenreferat (Drug Policy Division, DPD). Besides outlining drug consumption trends in Frankfurt, the city officials provided Paoli with copies of their most recent yearly reports and a list of drug-related NGOs to be contacted. To a much greater degree than in Milan, in fact, most drug treatment and harm reduction services in Frankfurt are provided by NGOs, which are financed by the City of Frankfurt and the State of Hesse. Nine interviews with personnel from different NGOs were carried out. Finally, the head of the City's Gesundheitsamt (Health Office), which runs a methadone substitution program, was interviewed.

In Milan, Paoli interviewed six prosecutors of the Direzione Distrettuale Antimafia, the agency co-ordinating anti-mafia and drug trafficking investigations within the Prosecutor's Office, and two other prosecutors working on retail drug dealing and drug crime. Moreover, a judge and seven representatives of law enforcement institutions were interviewed. Among the latter was the chief of the police Squadra Mobile and the Sezione Antidroga, the head of the Milanese Centro Operativo of the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia (DIA), and the head of the Milan's section of the Carabinieri's Raggruppamento Operativo Speciale (ROS). Palidda and Paoli interviewed the Director and a social worker from the Milanese city prison, San Vittore. Additionally, Palidda interviewed the head of the San Vittore's physicians.

During a long interview with Paoli, Prof. Riccardo Gatti, the co-ordinator of all Milan's Servizi per le Tossicodipendenze (Ser.T) at the Azienda Sanitaria Locale – Città di Milano (ASL), reconstructed the evolution of drug markets and drug treatment services in Milan since the early 1980s. Furthermore, he provided a list of Milan's six Ser.T offices' heads and staff. Six of them were interviewed. Additionally, the Director of the Istituto di Tossicologia Forense, the university institute in charge of examining the purity of most drug seizures, was contacted.

Paoli and Palidda additionally interviewed seven members of different NGOs, who are currently implementing drug-related projects. Finally, two Milanese journalists working in the Milanese offices of *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere della Sera* (Italy's two largest newspapers) were asked to reconstruct the evolution of the local drug markets.

No standardised questionnaire was developed to carry out these interviews with experts. Prof. Hans-Jörg Albrecht, the Director of the MPI, and Paoli decided not to prepare it since they found it impossible to envisage questions suitable to encompass the diversity of interviewees' positions and experiences in a single survey instrument. Relying on experiences gathered in previous inquiries, both researchers were moreover convinced that most interviewees do not like to be asked *ex abrupto* questions on general themes such as drug markets or drug use.

It was decided, however, to divide each interview in two phases: first, to ask each interviewee to describe the drug-related activities of his/her office and, second, drawing from the latter, to expose his/her convictions on the functioning and evolution of the city drug markets and, in particular, on the market segments s/he knows best. Hence, prosecutors at both sites were foremost asked to describe the drug-related investigations that they have been co-ordinating over the past few years and then to make generalisations on drug trafficking and dealing on the basis of their professional experience. The NGOs personnel were first invited to describe the drug-related programs of their organisation, specifically the programs they have been involved in, and to identify a profile of the drug users, with whom they have been working. In the second phase of the talk, these interviewees were asked to expose their opinion about the present extent and patterns of drug use as well as its evolution in their cities.

By adopting such a flexible procedure, we have thus been able to highlight each interviewee's specific perspective and, at the same time, assess the reliability of his/her statements about the different aspects of the drug markets. If the interviewee has worked exclusively in a safe injection room or a methadone substitution program for example, his/her statements on heroin use will be weighed differently than his/her opinions on ecstasy. Finally, it is worth remembering that a high degree of standardisation and comparability was insured by the fact that many interviews were carried out by Paoli in both Frankfurt and Milan.

The above interviews were not only aimed to collect experts' information on drug markets at the two sites, but were also used to make concrete plans for the future stages of the research project by collecting statistical data and grey literature, asking for and eventually obtaining the necessary authorisations, and occasionally, by negotiating the terms of future co-operation.

- Interviews with drug users and dealers

From December 1999, most energies were invested in organising and conducting interviews with drug users and dealers.

In order to obtain standardised and comparable results, a questionnaire was developed during the first three months of the pilot study and then discussed with the EMCDDA staff at the December 1999 meeting. In early January 2000, several pilot interviews were carried out by Paoli and Güller in Frankfurt. The questionnaire was then revised and distributed to the ad-hoc recruited interviewers (enclosed document No. 1).

Though a considerable number of interviews were to be carried out by the core members of the two research teams, the research protocol also foresaw the entrustment of about 30 interviews to external interviewers in each of the two cities. Two reasons led to such a choice. First, there was the need not to be overly demanding with the MPI researchers and to give them enough time to concentrate on the analysis of the research material. Second, reaching a wide and diversified range of users and dealers in the two cities was thought to be eased by the recruitment of ad hoc interviewers. Because of their past drug user and/or dealer career, their ethnic origin and/or their current outreach work, the selected people do have a very close relation to some segments of the two cities' open or closed drug scene.

Together with the questionnaires, the external interviewers also received a note containing instructions on how to carry out the interviews in a proper way (enclosed document No. 2). Moreover, Palidda (in Milan) and Paoli (in Frankfurt) met all the ad-hoc recruited interviewers in January to explain the project objectives to them and to discuss the questionnaire with them. Once the first interviews were completed, Paoli and Palidda saw again, respectively, the interviewers working in the two cities in order to evaluate the results and adjust the questionnaire and the interview procedure.

In Frankfurt, Paoli, Güller, as well as the ad-hoc recruited interviewers of the *Junkfurter Ballergazette* (Jubaz), and the Integrative Drogenhilfe (IDH) carried out almost seventy interviews with current and former drug users and dealers. Fourteen interviews were carried out by the Jubaz and IDH staff; the rest by Paoli and Güller.

A wide range of people were interviewed, about twenty of whom were foreigners. About twenty of the interviewees are current (and, in some cases, former) users of different illegal drugs (ranging from cannabis to heroin and crack) who are socially

integrated, can (or at least could for a long while) keep their drug use under control and only infrequently visit the open drug scene in the Frankfurt Bahnhofsviertel (the Central Station quarter). Twenty-five other interviewees are current (and, in some cases, former) heavy drug users. Eight of the latter are currently registered in a methadone substitution programme.

Finally, ten, albeit occasional users of different drugs, earn or earned most of their money by selling drugs. Dealing experiences were additionally registered in about thirty of the interviews with drug users. As much as drug consumption, dealing experiences proved to be very diversified. While some of the interviewees have drifted into dealing to finance their drug consumption and today sell small drug quantities, others run or ran relatively large-scale businesses. Three of our interviewees regularly import 100 kilograms of hashish from Nepal, one of them imported several tonnes of hashish from Lebanon in the 1970s, while others used to buy at least 5.000 ecstasy pills in the Netherlands every week and sell them in the Frankfurt region. Several more regularly buy quantities ranging from 100 to 500 grams of heroin and cocaine from suppliers located in Frankfurt, in other German cities, or in Holland and distribute them to local customers.

Interviewees were recruited in different places: safe injection rooms, Cafe Fix, a meeting place for heavy-drug users in the Central Station quarter, shared flats for former light and heavy drug users run by NGOs (*betreute Wohngemeinschaft*), and two assistance and detoxification centres, one of which specifically targets socially-integrated non-injecting drug users. In May, moreover, Paoli and Güller conducted interviews with twelve imprisoned drug offenders in one high-security prison of the State of Hesse: Butzbach. The authorisation was also obtained to interview the prisoners of another state prison in Schwalmstadt and ten prisoners declared themselves ready to be interviewed. To focus on the analysis of the data already gathered, however, the fieldwork in the second prison was postponed until autumn. Finally, twenty interviewees were recruited by the interviewers directly among their friends and acquaintances.

The staff of the Jubaz and the IDH and the social workers of the Crack-Street-Project were unable to deliver the further interviews that were entrusted them in due time. In the first case, there were organisational problems, in the second, the lack of candidates was the main reason why the interviews were not conducted.

In Milan, too, a considerable, though slightly minor, number of interviews were conducted. Contacting her interviewees through different acquaintances, Paoli interviewed four users and one user-dealer of hashish, cocaine and party drugs. Gabriella Petti from the Lega italiana per la lotta contro l'Aids (LILA) interviewed ten socially integrated cocaine and party drug users and carried out a participant observation in several bars and discos in Milan and the surrounding area. Petti additionally

interviewed five non-injecting drug users who sought assistance from the Centro Aiuto Drogati (CAD), Milan's oldest drug-related NGO, which specialises in out-patient treatment. Another LILA outreach worker, Bruno Menotti, conducted ten interviews with users and dealers of different substances. Further, twenty in-depth talks were carried out by a Moroccan and an Algerian outreach worker, Moukrim Abdeljabbar and Hocine el Kebich, with drug users and dealers coming from North African countries.

Finally, Paoli interviewed ten clients of a Servizio per le Tossicodipendenze (Ser.T), which is responsible for the residents in Milan's historical centre and two different (middle and low-class) peripheral areas. Due to the transfer of the head of another Ser.T, further interviews, which were scheduled during Paoli's last stay in Milan, could not be accomplished. Nor were we able to carry out interviews with imprisoned drug dealers as scheduled. In late spring and early summer, in fact, the prison guards went on strike and, shortly afterwards, there were a series of protests by the prisoners. For this reason, the Director of the Milanese prison of San Vittore, who had already granted his authorisation for the interviews, did not allow Paoli and Palidda to go in and interview the prisoners. The interviews were postponed until autumn.

As much as in Frankfurt, a diversified pool of users and dealers was reached. All the most frequently used illegal substances are represented among the interviewees, twenty of whom are socially integrated cocaine and party drug users. Given his former drug user and dealing experiences, Menotti's interviews are particularly interesting: in two cases the interviewees are relatively high-level drug dealers and one of them used to be a member of a structured dealing organisation run by a Calabrian mafia family. The interviews carried out by the two North African outreach workers are also very valuable: since the mid-1990s the so-called *extra-comunitari* dominate street dealing in Milan and a growing number of them also have drug consumption problems, though the public and private drug treatment centres are hardly able to intercept them and offer help.

The analysis of the interviews was begun in late spring 2000 and, though advanced, it is not yet complete. As all interviews lasted at least one hour and some exceeded two, the transcription itself required much time and some of the interviews were typed only in August and could not be dutifully analysed to be incorporated in the present report. Further, the transcription process was slowed by the fact that one of the secretaries in charge of typing the interviews broke her arm and was, therefore, unable to work for several weeks. In both cities, about five interviews still need to be typed and will be analysed during the second phase.

Secondary sources

- Statistics, official reports, and grey literature

In both Frankfurt and Milan statistics, official reports, and grey literature were collected from the Drug Policy Divisions (DPD) of the two cities (and in Milan from the Ser.T as well), police institutions, and NGOs. Unfortunately, the latest report published by the DPD in the two cities refer to the year 1997. Provisional data concerning 1998 and 1999 were, however, obtained by the relevant institutions in both cities.

In order to better assess the peculiarities of both cities' drug markets, national and regional documentation was collected by MPI researchers. In Germany, the reports on organised crime and drugs published throughout the 1990s by the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA, Federal Police Office), the Hessian Landeskriminalamt (State Police Office), and the Frankfurt Polizeipräsidium (Frankfurt's Police Office) were collected and analysed. Yearly national reports and data about drug operations, seizures, reports and arrests in Milan and in Lombardy were also provided by the Direzione Centrale per i Servizi Antidroga (Anti-Drug Department) of the Ministry of the Interior. The last yearly reports on drug use and addiction in Italy were also obtained by the Dipartimento per le Tossicodipendenze (Drug Addiction Department) of the Ministry for Social Affairs.

- Judicial files

Thanks to contacts with police officers and prosecutors, the analysis of drug-related judicial cases was furthered, relying on the previous research experiences of the project core members. Since the early 1990s, in fact, Paoli has already achieved a high degree of familiarity with the major investigations carried out by the Milanese Prosecutor's Office of the local branches of the Southern Italian mafia associations, urban gangs, and the largest drug trafficking rings (Paoli, 1997; 2000). In 1997 and 1998, Palidda and his team also examined a wide selection of drug-related penal proceedings concerning members of ethnic minorities in Milan (Quassoli, 1998; 1999). Despite Germany's strict privacy laws, in spring 1999 Paoli obtained the authorisation to review a considerable sample of organised crime penal proceedings in Frankfurt. The examination of these documents, many of which concern drug trafficking, was begun during the first half of 1999.

To fulfill the specific objectives of the EMCDDA pilot study, it was decided that the interviewed police officers and prosecutors should be asked to point out a sample of relevant drug investigations, highlighting meaningful aspects and actors of the drug trade. The idea of analysing a random sample of drug-related penal proceedings was taken into consideration, but discarded. Since the funds for this portion of the project are quite limited, it was thought that with a random selection mechanism there would have been fewer chances of finding meaningful cases out of the huge pools of drug investigations which are opened in both cities each year.

In Milan, Paoli and Palidda collected about fifty new penal proceedings, including all the most relevant anti-mafia and drug-related investigations initiated by the Procura della Repubblica di Milano during the 1990s. Some of these proceedings list hundreds of defendants and contain sentences of over 2.000 pages. Furthermore, the over 500 drug-related proceedings acquired by Palidda in the previously mentioned research were partially re-examined according to the priorities of the current research. The re-examination will be completed during the second phase.

In Frankfurt a very considerable number of penal proceedings were also collected and are now being analysed by Paoli and Güller. Most of the interviewed prosecutors and judges indicated their most significant drug-related cases to the two researchers, who then requested the documents from the general administration of the Prosecutor's Office. Moreover, a judge and a prosecutor opened up their archives and each provided more than a hundred sentences, some of which go back to the 1970s and 1980s.

- Media analysis

Within Paoli's project on organised crime, she already analysed the articles published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Il Corriere della Sera* (Frankfurt's and Milan's largest newspapers, respectively) on this issue (including drug trafficking) from 1992 to 1998. Additionally, Paoli obtained access to the archive of the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, Frankfurt's second largest newspaper, and examined the files concerning crime, drugs, and prostitution in Frankfurt from 1945 to the present. In early 2000 analogous research was carried out in the archive of *Il Corriere della Sera*. The articles published in the local pages pertaining to Milan's drug markets, demand and supply starting from the early 1970s were collected and are currently being analysed.

- Scientific studies

A literature search about Italian, German and foreign scientific publications has been executed by Paoli, Palidda and Güller.

PART II. THE FRANKFURT DRUG MARKET

With 647.000 inhabitants (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1999: 53), Frankfurt is Germany's fifth largest city. Its economic and political importance far exceeds the relatively small size of its population, which however topples a million during working hours. Situated in the state (*Land*) of Hesse, Frankfurt is at the centre of the Rhine-Main area, one of the most productive and dynamic regions in Europe. About 4,8 million people live there and 320.000 enterprises employing 2,3 million employees are active, which produce a yearly gross domestic product (GDP) of DM 280 billion (Euros 143,1 billion; about 7,4 percent of the German GDP). Especially in Frankfurt itself, over the past 30 years, there has been a major shift from traditional manufacturing to financial, service, and high-tech industries.

As a result of these changes, Frankfurt has become one of the most important traffic junctions and financial and commercial centres in Europe. Its airport is the largest in continental Europe and the city is also well connected by land through a thick network of highways and railways. Frankfurt is the seat of the German central bank and stock exchange and, since June 1998 it has also hosted the European Central Bank. Furthermore, with 43.000 exhibitors, Frankfurt is the largest fair centre in Europe (see <http://frankfurt-interaktiv.de/frankfurt/geschichte>).

Whereas many wealthy citizens moved out of the city, over the past 50 years Frankfurt has attracted thousands of migrants. Since the mid-1950s most of them have come from Southern European states and then from the countries at the periphery of Europe. Over 28 percent of Frankfurt's inhabitants are foreigners and the city has the highest rate of foreign residents in Germany (Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 1999).

According to periodical population surveys, the relationship with foreigners and, above all, crime are generally considered by Frankfurt residents the two most serious problems afflicting the city (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 27 February 1998: 19). Indeed, ever since the end of the Second World War, Frankfurt has frequently been considered the "German capital of crime". No matter whether this statement is true or not (Gemmer, 1992), it is clear that because of its geographical position, its wealth and economic standing, and its developed infrastructure, Frankfurt ends up attracting not only legal entrepreneurs, but also illegal ones. As in all Western European cities (including Milan), most of the latter are currently involved in smuggling and distributing drugs. During the last three decades of the 20th century, in fact, the drug market has become the largest component of the city's illegal economy.

Furthermore, ever since the early 1970s Frankfurt has had an open drug scene, which has attracted not only users from the Rhine-Main area, but also from other parts of Germany. Thus, on both the supply and the demand side, Frankfurt's drug market has a super-regional dimension and can be considered representative of wider national trends. For these reasons, Frankfurt has been chosen as the German site of the present research project.

In this report, different facets of Frankfurt's illegal drug market will be described and at least roughly examined. The first chapter is devoted to the evolution of drug use. The second focuses on the geography and social organisation of drug exchanges: it aims to analyse where and how the drug demand meets its supply. The formation and evolution of the latter are the main themes of the third chapter. The following one has an economic approach and focuses on prices and purity levels of the most popular drugs. Finally, the fifth briefly examines the public response to the rise and consolidation of illegal drug markets in Frankfurt.

1. The Demand: Drugs and Users

Since their revival and large-scale diffusion more than thirty years ago, most illegal drugs are more widespread and socially accepted in Frankfurt than ever before. Next to traditional substances, such as hashish, heroin and cocaine, which have been available on the city market ever since the early 1970s, during the 1990s ecstasy, too, became popular.

Though ecstasy's success is closely linked to a specific type of music (techno and house) and its accompanying music events (raves), the use of illegal psychoactive substances today can hardly be associated with a specific subculture opposing the mainstream one. As many heavy drug users point out, even the open drug scene subculture has largely waned. The 39-year-old Andrea, for example recalls,

“The contemporary drug scene is much harder, much more aggressive, much more ruinous, more ruinous (*verelendeter*) ... When I began, there was still flower-power, there was still a bit of idealism behind it, mind-expansions and so on. It was not even so severely divided, there was still a hash field (*Haschwiese*), everything was sold there ...” (Interview FF32).

Today drugs are no longer a means of demonstrating one's opposition to the capitalist society or of distinguishing oneself from bourgeois lifestyles. No rebellious or revolutionary attitude is currently associated with drug use. Bollo, an employee of the city administration and a regular heroin user over the past ten years, recalls, for example, that

“for a while, after we supplied ourselves, I always sat with a friend of mine in my flat. Every evening, we got a gram of heroin and a gram of cocaine and then we closed the door, drank a beer, listened to some music or watched TV and, in turn, snorted heroin and cocaine” (Interview FF19).

Having largely lost their counterculture flavour, some illegal substances –above all hashish but, in some circles, also ecstasy and cocaine– belong to the everyday lives of thousands of people ranging from 15 to 40-years-old. Except for the age factor, these new generations of illegal drug consumers can hardly be distinguished from the rest of society. Though the *habitués* of the open drug scene frequently have a difficult family and social background, illegal drug consumption cuts across all social, economic and ethnic differences. Above all hashish, but also ecstasy and cocaine (and to a lesser extent, even heroin) are predominantly consumed by young people, who are usually well integrated and belong to the most different social strata and almost all ethnic groups present in Frankfurt. Though largely invisible to the media, law enforcement and drug treatment agencies alike, the “bourgeois user” (Kemmesies, 2000) constitutes a pillar of Frankfurt’s contemporary illegal drug market.

The beginnings: the development of the illegal drug market and the open drug scene

As in all large Western European cities, the use of illegal drugs, above all hashish and LSD, rapidly spread even in Frankfurt in the second half of the 1960s. Hashish and mind-expanding drugs, such as LSD and mescaline, became popular among the youths who participated in the student protest movement and who were influenced by the youth counterculture that had developed in North America. Up to the early 1970s, most illegal drug users came from bourgeois milieu (Sommer, 1972: 16). The 50-year-old Brigitte still recalls how she escaped from an elite college together with some friends – “we were all children of rich business people”, she says– and landed in Frankfurt in 1967 to begin her longer than thirty-year drug career (Interview FF43; see also Interview FF38).

For high-school and university students, hashish and other illegal drugs were primarily a means to distinguish themselves from the value system and lifestyle of their parents. As the forty-five-year-old Lukas recalls, “in the beginning drug use was, above all, a form of refusal of my parents, their values and norms” (Interview FF9; see also Interview FF43). Another heavy-drug user, interviewed by Peter Noller in the late 1980s, expressed the same point even more sharply:

“I wanted the old people to leave me in peace. I did not want them to affect my attitude towards life. This attitude was simply to be free, to do and to be allowed to do what I wanted, simply what I wanted” (Noller, 1989: 152).

Through hashish and LSD, the ‘flower children’ of the late 1960s and early 1970s also wanted to expand their mind, discover their inner self, and explore new forms of anti-

authoritarian and anti-capitalistic sociality. Some of our older interviewees still remember the meanings they attached to drug use at the beginning of their drug careers, though a few had some reservations talking about it “for fear of being laughed at”. As Paul put it, “these are things that easily look antiquated in our rationally-oriented world” (Interview FF31). The intentions of the ’68 generation in experimenting with drugs are clearly explained by Caddy, a 46-year-old resident of Frankfurt:

“When I started to use drugs in the 1970s, it was not only a matter of drugs, it was a way of looking at the world (*Weltanschauung*). We wanted to distance ourselves from the adults and lead better lives. We were among comrades and for this reason we helped each other. The youth movement implied a freedom, which encouraged experimenting of all kinds, no matter whether it was sexual, political or optical. One took drugs to broaden one’s mind and drugs were parts of the contemporary lifestyle (*Lebensgefühl*), together with our music, fashion and new forms of common life. We questioned the old values and were open to extraordinary ideas” (Interview FF69).

Though all the drug ‘experimenters’ of the 1960s and 1970s were strongly influenced by the American youth movements, in a few cases the first contact to hashish and LSD was directly mediated by American citizens, most typically by soldiers, who were stationed in Frankfurt and its surroundings. Paul recalls that, as he and his clique of friends “were looking for something that could bring us out of provincialism”, they were first offered hashish by ‘Amis’ (i.e. American soldiers). The latter gave them the opportunity to try something they had long read and dreamt about. “We wanted to try it for a long time, but up to that point we had had no chance to do it” (Interview FF31).

The relationship to the American soldiers was often characterised by a strong ambivalence. As young Americans, they were the symbols of the new values and way of life overseas. As soldiers, however, they were enemies because of the US involvement in the Vietnam war. Though Paul and his clique initially became close friends with the Americans and regularly gathered to smoke joints together, after a while they radicalised themselves, became members of revolutionary groups and distanced themselves from the “Vietnam imperialist Amis”. Only Paul’s esoteric turn prevented a violent contrast.

“LSD de-radicalised me. I was almost on the verge of entering the RAF [the Rote Armee Fraktion, German largest left-wing terrorist group, Author’s note] ... I started to give up the ‘armed opposition’ and to get more and more involved in esoteric things” (Interview FF31; see also Interview FF70).

The ideological turns of Paul’s clique mirrored the tensions of the whole youth protest movement. Indeed in Frankfurt, as well as in other German cities, the latter split into two opposing factions in the early 1970s. Those who tried more actively to change society, above all the communist groups, progressively distanced themselves from the drug users. The latter, many of whom were part of the hippie movement, were accused by the former of “fleeing reality” and of aiming at a “backward-looking utopia, irrational longing (*Sehnsucht*)”. By retreating from the active political fight and by

merely following their “subjectivist, petit bourgeois ideas”, drug users allegedly ended up playing a counterrevolutionary role. In the student house at the University of Frankfurt there was even an open fight between the anarchical *Haschrebelln* and the communist groups (Amendt and Stiehler, 1972: 67-72; see also Gerdes and v. Wolffersdorff-Ehlert, 1974: 47-52).

Following these conflicts, the group of drug users did not only draw away from other components of the youth protest movement, but also increased its closure and cohesion. Drug users began to meet almost exclusively among themselves. In the second half of the 1960s the first open drug scene consolidated in Frankfurt’s centre, next to the Marshall fountain in the upper part of the Taunusanlage in front of the Alte Oper. Around 1968, however, drug users began to gather in the park between the Alte Oper and the Stadtbad Mitte on the so-called *Haschwiese* (i.e. hashish field). The area would host the city’s open drug scene up to 1980, when the new city administration, led by the Christian Democratic Union, closed the park to drug users (Noller, 1991: 191).

Though the theme attracted the insistent attention of the mass media, in the early 1970s drug use still involved only a very small minority of the youth population. In 1972 the Hessian Ministries for Religion and Social Affairs conducted for the first time a survey on drug use among 11.610 high-school students. Accordingly, only 10,2 percent of the respondents reported that they had come into contact with an illegal drug and 1,3 percent of them were categorised as veritable drug users (Schenk, 1975: 24-36).³

As already mentioned, the most popular psychoactive substances were initially hashish and LSD. Between the 1960s and the 1970s, opiates made their appearance on the scene. For a while the so-called “Berliner Tinke”, a liquid opiate made of morphine base and vinegar, was to be found. As some of our interviewees recall, raw opium was also available, which was often imported by Iranian or other Middle Eastern students (Interviews FF38 and FF31). Then heroin became available, as the sudden growth of heroin seizures in the early 1970s shows. Whereas in 1968 a single gram was seized, five years later the police retrieved over 15 kilograms in all of Germany (see Table 1). Heroin was either directly imported from Southeast Asian countries by users themselves who made trips there to find their inner-selves or, more frequently, in Amsterdam.

³ It is worth noting, however, that the results of the Hessian survey were consistently lower than those carried out in other western German federal states, though, according to Schenk, there was no plausible reason to explain such a gap (Schenk, 1975: 24-36).

Table 1. Heroin seizures in Germany (Kg) ~ 1966-1973

1966	-
1968	0,001
1969	0,587
1970	0,494
1971	2,9
1972	3,7
1973	15,43

Source: Schenk, 1975: 18.

Parallel to the diffusion of opiates, psychoactive drugs began to have success not only among middle or high-class, well-educated youths, but also among the children of the working class. In particular, the open drug scene consistently and rapidly expanded when foster homes for difficult or orphaned youths (*Fürsorgeheime*) were closed. Most freed youths, who usually came from humble social strata and had a low social integration, rapidly joined the open drug scene (Noller, 1991: 191). Indeed, according to some observers, many of the former *Fürsorgezöglinge* (i.e. welfare children) soon ended up constituting the first nucleus of opiate and then heroin addicts (Gerdes and v. Wolffersdorff-Ehlert, 1974: 50-1).

The 1973 oil crisis and the consequent rise of youth unemployment also brought new recruits to the drug market, as an entire generation of youths abruptly were forced to realise that the *Wirtschaftswunderzeit* (era of the economic miracle) had come to an end. Hashish, but also heroin use, rapidly spread among the cliques of lower and middle-class youths who met in the self-governed youth houses of the city periphery. Following the example of their leaders, the so-called “kings”, whole youth gangs in the proletarian quarters of Niederrad, Schwanheim, Bornheim and Nordweststadt became heroin addicts (Noller, 1991: 192).

Whereas most hashish users easily succeeded in keeping their drug consumption under control, those who began to use heroin regularly were soon forced to start dealing drugs or to commit other crimes due to the substance’s addictiveness and its high costs, in order to pay for their daily doses. A drug economy unavoidably developed within the open drug scene, which progressively corrupted the original community relationships among its participants. As we will see in Chapter 3, in a few years a plurality of networks developed to regularly supply the Frankfurt market with the most popular illegal drugs. Whereas the first supplies had been organised directly by the users, with time non-using professional criminals, as well as inconspicuous drug entrepreneurs entered the market and, especially on the open drug scene, drug users were frequently locked up into the lowest and riskiest positions of the drug distribution chain.

Hashish

Some of our interviewees who regularly consume hashish, still refer to the ‘flower power’ subculture to explain and legitimise their hashish use and to distinguish themselves from heavy drug users. According to Heinrich, for example,

“Woodstock 1968, this is my life philosophy, this is my world. Eric Clapton, Joe Cocker, this is my music. I only smoke hashish or grass. I don’t smoke, I don’t drink alcohol. Hashish frees your mind. It makes people happy. Hashish should be legalised. No man would beat his wife, nobody would kill kids. People are so aggressive today. Instead I am always relaxed, peaceful and hashish makes me feel good” (Interview FF59; see also Interviews FF31 and FF45).

Heinrich’s attitude towards cannabis is, however, far from being dominant. On the basis of the interviews carried out so far, we hypothesise that cannabis is no longer considered by the majority of its users as a means to distinguish themselves and to oppose the mainstream society. On the contrary, cannabis use is fully integrated into the mass youth culture and has become a sort of *rite de passage*, that involves a large number of teenagers and young adults today. As the 29-year-old hashish and heroin user, Ralph notes,

“Today everybody comes in contact with hashish. Especially now, as far as hashish is concerned. For my younger brothers it is even more extreme. At their age, everybody comes in contact with hashish. At the latest, when one is fourteen or fifteen, everybody has contact with hashish” (Interview FF55).

Ralph’s reflections also find confirmation in the numerous messages that are left by German teenagers on several drug-related web sites on the internet. In June 1999, for example, Grow wrote the following text,

“I am sixteen-years-old, I have smoked hashish for 5 years now and have never regretted it. Furthermore, everybody has tried it anyhow. I go to school, where I get good grades, and am completely healthy. I think that it is outrageous how much nonsense is openly said about this noble and mysterious plant. By the way, I have never tried other drugs and I will never do it” (see <http://www.drugscouts.de/erfcen.html>).

As a matter of fact, the normalisation of hashish consumption was already pointed out in 1984 by Wolfgang Schneider in a pioneering qualitative study, which was based on in-depth interviews with regular cannabis users:

“The consumption of cannabis should no longer be considered a culturally foreign, but a culturally integrated fact. (...) Cannabis use is no longer at the centre of a lifestyle construction process. Nor does it promote the development of a sub-cultural identity” (1984: 316 ff.; see also 1994).

The extent to which cannabis use is diffused among mainstream youths and young adults is further demonstrated by the nationwide population surveys that have been carried out in Germany at irregular intervals since 1980. According to the latest survey conducted in 1997, the lifetime prevalence of cannabis use (at least once in a lifetime) is

estimated to be roughly 13,4 percent of 18 to 59-year-old western Germans. Many are occasional users. About 50 percent of all lifetime cannabis users tried it less than six times in their lives. However 4,5 percent of all western German interviewees report cannabis use in the last 12 months: in absolute figures this means about two million users over the past year. Three percent of respondents said that they had used cannabis in the preceding 30 days. An estimated population total of 240.000 18 to 59-year-olds use cannabis regularly: i.e., on at least 20 of the past 30 days (see also HLS, 2000).

In the former West Germany, moreover, about 24 percent of young adults (aged 18-24) said that they have tried cannabis at least once in their life; additionally, 13,2 percent report having used it in the last 12 months (Kraus and Bauernfeind, 1998, *passim*; see also Kleiber and Soellner, 1998). Finally, 9,3 percent of the 18 to 24-year-old respondents stated that they had smoked at least once cannabis in the previous 30 days.

Given that there were 45.296 young adults living in Frankfurt on December 31, 1997 (Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 1998), we can assume that about 11.000 of them had tried cannabis at least once in their life, about 6.000 young adults had smoked in the previous year and 4.200 had used it in the previous thirty days.

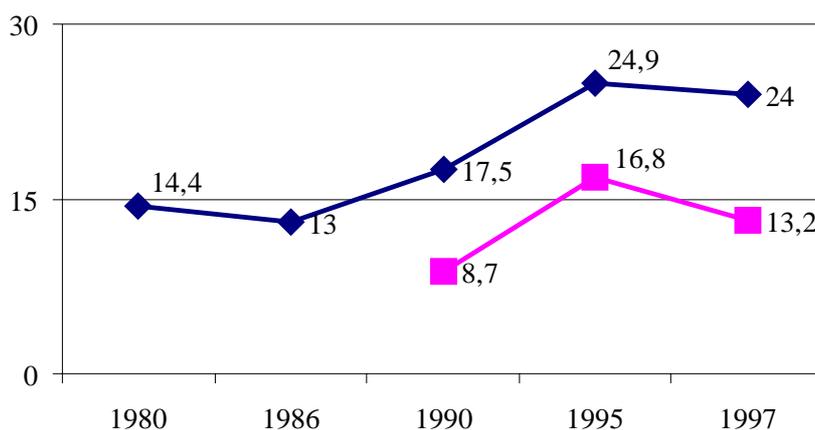
As of the same date, there were 392.569 Frankfurt residents between 18 and 59 years old. If the general prevalence rates are applied to this population, it turns out that 52.600 of them had experience with cannabis during their lives, almost 18.000 had used the substance in the previous 12 months and 12.000 used it in the previous thirty days. The Hessische Landesstelle gegen die Suchtgefahren (Hessian State Centre against the Dangers of Addiction) estimates that there are 146.000 cannabis users in Hesse. Considering that in Hesse there are about 6 million inhabitants and Frankfurt residents constitute roughly 10 percent, we reach a slightly higher estimate: about 14-15.000 Frankfurt residents can be assumed to regularly smoke cannabis (see HLS, 2000).

These figures are only meant to give a rough idea of the extent to which cannabis is used in Frankfurt and can be regarded as a minimal estimate of those who buy cannabis on the city market. There are two reasons supporting this hypothesis. First, the frequency of illegal drug use is usually higher in larger cities than in the country-side because illegal drugs are more easily available, and national surveys thus tend to underestimate prevalence rates in the former contexts. Second, the number of cannabis buyers in Frankfurt is larger than the number of mere consumers because many people come to Frankfurt from smaller towns and villages of the Rhine-Main area in order to buy drugs.

Though cannabis remains by far the most frequently consumed illegal substance, the data from the nationwide survey confirm what was said by the experts interviewed in Frankfurt: namely, that cannabis consumption is widespread, but stable, if not slightly

declining (Interviews FB7 and FA1). In 1997, lifetime and past year prevalence rates for cannabis finally inverted and for the first time the steep growth, which had begun in the mid-1980s, regressed. In comparison with 1995, in fact, lifetime prevalence among young adults in western Germany recorded a 0,9 percent decrease. The decline of past year prevalence was over 3,5 percent (Kraus and Bauernfeind, 1998: 57-63; see Graph 1).

Graph 1. Lifetime and past year prevalence of cannabis among western German young adults (age 18-24) ~ 1980-1997



Source: Kraus and Bauernfeind, 1998: 62.

Ever since the expansion of cannabis use in the late 1960s, the prohibition of this substance has often been justified by the thesis that cannabis is a starter drug. Indeed, in all our interviews with heavy drug users we found out that hashish or marijuana had been the first illegal substance that practically all had tried. Such a finding far from proves that all those who smoke joints will sooner or later begin using other drugs. Indeed, as Grow's above quote hints and population surveys show, there are reasons to believe that hashish will remain the only illegal drug most of its consumers ever experience.

Despite that, our data point out that the *de facto* normalisation of hashish consumption and the contemporary permanence of its illegal status, which equates cannabis with heavy drugs, perversely may end up achieving an effect contrary to what the supporters of the prohibitionist regime had in mind: namely, young people's experimenting of other, stronger illegal drugs. The point was clearly made by Ralph:

"You have a few experiences with hashish and you realise that it is not so extreme at all. You realise that what you have been told is a big lie, a bluff. You realise that it is not a big deal, that you do not physically become destitute, you do not give up your normal life, you do not steal from your parents and engage in other evils. And you also do not prostitute yourself. You realise that it is all terrible nonsense. And after a while you no longer believe in anything. You think that it is all propaganda. Exactly because the government says that everything is equally dangerous, you end up thinking that no drug is dangerous. The effect of the current drug policy is that you no longer

believe what you were told. When I was sixteen, I simply tried all of it. I sometimes took heroin, sometimes cocaine, sometimes speed and also regularly hashish, and alcohol and tablets” (Interview FF55; see also Interviews FF61 and FF31).

Ecstasy and synthetic drugs

The psychoactive substance that has most profited from the growing normalisation of cannabis use is ecstasy. As in all Western Europe, in Frankfurt ecstasy and, more generally, stimulant synthetic drugs became very trendy among young people at the beginning of the 1990s. “All the kids are crazy for ecstasy and speed”, an older cocaine user notes (Interview FF34). “Today, ecstasy is in”, a younger ecstasy user confirms (Interview FF38).

Within a few years, ecstasy became the second most frequently consumed illegal drug in Germany. According to the above quoted nationwide population survey, in 1997 the lifetime prevalence rate of ecstasy among 18 to 59-year-olds was 1,7 percent, the past year prevalence 0,9 percent and the past month prevalence 0,3. The rates are, however, considerably higher if the young adults (aged 18-24) are focused. In this age group, in fact, the lifetime, past year and past month prevalences are respectively at 5,5, 3,2 and 1,3 percent (see Table 2). Only at the end of the decade did ecstasy consumption begin to stabilise among young adults males (Interview FB7; Kraus and Bauerenfeind, 1998: 33). According to the Deutsche Hauptstelle gegen die Suchtgefahren (DHS, German Centre Against the Dangers of Addiction), however, young females are still largely not included in this decline (www.dhs.de). In the second phase of the project, we intend to interview several other ecstasy users, to clarify this and other points and to test our research hypotheses, that are now largely drawn from secondary sources.

Table 2. The prevalence of ecstasy use among western Germans ~ 1997

	age 18-59	age 18-24
Lifetime prevalence	1,7 %	5,5 %
Past year prevalence	0,9 %	3,2 %
Past month prevalence	0,3 %	1,3 %

Source: Kraus and Bauerenfeind, 1998: 33.

The diffusion of ecstasy and other amphetamine products was fostered by techno and acid house music, which was imported in Germany in the late 1980s from England and which became very popular in the 1990s (Parker *et al.*, 1998; Measham *et al.*, 1998). For the fans of techno music, ecstasy pills are a necessary complement to techno parties in discos and open air events, called raves. “I am an absolute techno fan, but you know, without pills you cannot understand the music, it is really true”, the author of an anonymous message on the internet points out. “Every other weekend I go to dance to

techno music. In the beginning of the evening I take a pill to warm up”, another user notes (www.suchtzentrum.de/drogenscouts/erfahrungen). Likewise, one of our interviewees stresses, “If you want to belong to the scene, you have to hold out to the end of the party, otherwise you can forget it. It is impossible to do that without a stimulant” (Interview FF46).

The techno scene can undoubtedly be considered a subculture. Not only a music and dance movement but also a certain clothing and lifestyle belong to it. Contrary to the hippie movement of the 1970s, however, the techno scene is inspired by an avant-garde modernistic attitude, that does not preach fleeing the world, but indeed fosters the full immersion in the fast rhythms of today’s world (Schroers, 1998:212-226). In the techno subculture, it is important to get out of normality, to overcome the internal and external borders, to experiment and experience oneself in an intensive way. The slogans are thus “to have fun”, “to be dynamic and fit”, “to be in a good mood”. Through the music and the stimulant effects of ecstasy, young people want to experience warmth, closeness, and they want to feel that they belong to a community, where the social origin and rank play no role, but each is open to, tolerant of and peaceful with the others.

Ecstasy is thought to help achieve such a status because it fosters communication and intensifies perceptions, especially those of the acoustic and optic type, and let its users dance for hours and feel as if they were in agreement with the rest of the world (Freye, 1997). One of our interviewees, Recep explains:

“With ecstasy you can not only keep on dancing throughout the whole party, but you are in a good mood, the people are in a good mood, you immediately have contact with everybody else. They all have the same mentality as you have, you belong to the party, you simply feel good, have fun and are cut off from everyday problems, like school, education, parents and so on. Above all, you really discover your limits” (Interview FF46; see also www.suchtzentrum.de/drogenscouts/erfahrungen).

The negative effects are hardly noticed by users, at least initially, though most surveys show that ecstasy users subjectively consider themselves well informed about the effects of this substance (Rakete and Flüsmeier, 1997). Looking like an aspirin pill, ecstasy is however considered harmless by most users or at least, they feel, its risks are easily assessable and its use is perceived to be ‘clean’, as opposed to that of other drugs.

The awareness that ecstasy is an illegal drug bothers very few users and hardly seems to prevent anybody from trying it. As a message posted on the internet states, “If I drink a couple of Red Bulls or take a small pill, it is the same”. Neither do ecstasy consumers perceive themselves as drug users nor believe that they are part of a drug scene. In interviews and internet messages, most of them stress how different they are from heroin addicts and some even admit being bothered by the mere idea of attending the same drug services the former do. “I am not a junkie”, writes a user and another recalls, “I have tried several times to stop using ecstasy and I even visited a counselling service,

but they wanted to put me together with heroin addicts: not a nice idea” (see www.suchtzentrum.de/drogenscouts/erfahrungen).

Closely associated with techno music and events, ecstasy is hardly purchased or consumed on the street, but is instead usually used and exchanged at parties, raves and the parades that are now periodically organised in numerous German cities (the largest and most famous being the Love-Parade in Berlin) (Walder and Amendt, 1997). In Frankfurt and its surroundings, there are not only several techno discos, but open air events are also regularly organised, which attract and bring together large numbers of ecstasy consumers from all of Germany. On this point a party-goer and ecstasy dealer maintains:

“As far as techno music is concerned, in Frankfurt there was always something going on. The sale of ecstasy always went very well and on weekends many customers came to Frankfurt from the towns in the surrounding area” (LGF, 1998a).

According to a study done by the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BzgA, Federal Centre for Health Education), drug experiences among the members of the techno scene are much more widespread than in the corresponding age-groups of the total population. Out of the 1.674 participants in techno events who were interviewed, 69 percent had consumed cannabis at least once, 49 percent ecstasy, 37 percent amphetamines, 37 percent hallucinogens and, finally, 31 percent had had experience with cocaine (BZgA, 1997; see also Tossman, 1997: 121-129). Additionally, 57 percent of the respondents currently used at least one illegal substance, ecstasy being by far the most frequently consumed drug.

The study also showed that ecstasy use was strongly influenced by young people’s involvement in the techno scene. The more friends and acquaintances belonging to the techno scene, the higher the chances of ecstasy and amphetamine use. The more frequently parties are attended and the longer they last, the more consumption rates increase. 73,4 percent of the respondents report belonging to the techno scene and more than 50 percent state that they consume ecstasy exclusively in discos and raves (BGA, 1997).

In these settings ecstasy is usually accompanied by other legal and illegal drugs. As Julia, one of our interviewees, admits, “in discos, I have taken almost everything” (Interview FF38). The same point also emerges from a survey carried out in 1996 by the Hamburgischen Landesstelle gegen die Suchtgefahren (Hamburg’s State Centre against the Dangers of Addiction) in several German cities, including Frankfurt. In fact, 93 percent of the 527 ecstasy consumers who were interviewed, reported additionally using cannabis and 63 percent mixed ecstasy, cannabis, LSD and speed (Rakete and Flüsmeier, 1997: 58).

Over 90 percent of the above respondents had used cannabis and hashish before starting to use ecstasy and only 6 percent of them stated that they only use ecstasy. Thus, ecstasy can hardly be seen as starter drug. Further proof of this thesis is given by the average age of first consumption. Whereas the first experiences with alcohol and cannabis usually occur between 13 and 15-years-old, on the average ecstasy is first tried by people between 16 and 18-years-old (*ibidem*: 52-54).

Ecstasy users belong to all social strata, they are usually socially well integrated and are hardly distinguishable from their peers who do not use drugs. Except for using ecstasy and other drugs on the weekend, most of them usually have a very 'normal life' (Measham, Parker, Aldrige: 1998: 9-23). The ecstasy users whom we interviewed in Frankfurt, confirmed such a picture: they either had a regular job, did an apprenticeship or went to high school or to the university and could not be identified as 'illegal drug users' at first sight.

These impressions, that have to be consolidated with further in-depth interviews, are confirmed by the results of the already quoted study carried out by the Hamburgische Landesstelle gegen die Suchtgefahren. As one can see from Table 3, almost 40 percent of the respondents had a grammar school degree (*Abitur*), allowing them to attend universities. 23 percent had gone through the first exam in secondary modern school

Table 3. Education of the ecstasy users interviewed by the Hamburgische Landesstelle gegen die Suchtgefahren ~ 1996

	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Total</i>
No degree	7,4 %	2,5 %	4,4 %
Secondary modern school (<i>Hauptschule</i>) without degree	2,0 %	1,9 %	1,9 %
Secondary modern school degree (<i>Hauptschulabschluss</i>)	9,9 %	17,3 %	14,1 %
Higher secondary modern or grammar school (<i>Realschule</i> and <i>Gymnasium</i>) without degree	15,8 %	13,0 %	14,1 %
First exam in secondary modern school (<i>Mittler Reife</i>)	27,1 %	24,1 %	25,3 %
Grammar school degree (<i>Abitur</i>)	37,9 %	41,2 %	39,9 %

Source: Rakete and Flüsmeier, 1997: 13.

and 14 percent had a secondary modern school degree. The same percentage attended a higher secondary modern or grammar school. Only 4,4 percent of the over 500 respondents did not have a high-school diploma (Rakete and Flüsmeier, 1997: 13).

Furthermore, the great majority of ecstasy users tend to be German. In the above survey, over 90 percent of the respondents had a German passport. Among foreigners, there was hardly anybody who did not possess a residence permit. The foreign nationals

interviewed were either born or at least grew up in Germany and could all speak German as native-speakers, and felt at home in Germany (*ibidem*: 17; see Table 4).

Table 4. The nationality of ecstasy users interviewed by the Hamburgische Landesstelle gegen die Suchtgefahren ~ 1996

German	90,9%
Turk	0,6%
Italian	0,8%
Greek	0,4%
former Yugoslav	0,6%
double nationality	2,7%
other	4,2%

Source: Rakete and Flüßmeier, 1997: 17.

Heroin and the open drug scene

Though heroin users have always been in the spotlight of mass media and public agencies, in Frankfurt, as in other cities, they have always represented a tiny fraction of the universe of illegal drug users. According to the above quoted nationwide population survey, the 1997 lifetime prevalence of heroin use among 18 to 59-year-old western Germans is 0,4 percent and the past year and past month prevalence rates are even lower (respectively, 0,2 and 0,1 percent) (Kraus and Bauerenfeind, 1998: 33).

Contrary to widespread stereotypes, some heroin users are able to keep their consumption under control and conduct a ‘normal life’ in all other aspects. The forty-two-year-old Lydia, for example, is an employee in a house agency, has a teenage daughter and has regularly snorted heroin since 1978.

“Heroin”, she says, “makes my daily life easier, so much that I can deal with my problems in a more distanced way. A typical day in my life is hardly different from those of normal people who do not use drugs, except for the fact that when I get up, I snort a line and after that I take care of my other tasks. Since I have to work for my consumption, I cannot snort as much as I would like, but I have to ration heroin carefully, to avoid going broke. In the past, I seldom bought heroin myself. Today, I probably invest the largest part of my salary in it” (Interview FF61; see also Interview FF29).

Lydia’s case is certainly not the only one (see Herrmann *et al.*, 1997). Despite the lack of information about socially integrated users, however, it is fair to hypothesise that most heroin users are not able to imitate her example and do have problems controlling their drug consumption. Though many begin their heroin career by snorting, most regular users end up injecting heroin to have a more intense effect and thus spare on the costs. Out of the 50 heavy drug users who were interviewed by Uwe Kemmesies in Frankfurt in 1993, 20 initially snorted heroin and 3 smoked it. At the time of the

interview, however, 45 respondents exclusively injected heroin and 4 alternated injection with other methods (1995: 154-55).

Furthermore, many heroin users end up the open drug scene, at least briefly or sporadically, and a considerable portion of them spend there most of their time and become fully integrated into the scene's economy. Contrary to the past, however, this is usually a half-hearted decision at best, which is taken because there are no better alternatives. Even in the eyes of heroin users, the open drug scene has lost any attractiveness it may once have had and is no longer regarded as a community of people with the same life philosophy and style. Though it still has its own rules and roles, the open drug scene is no longer experienced as a subculture opposed to the mainstream one. The transformation, which the open drug scene underwent, is most clearly highlighted by older users, who still remember how it all began. According to Caddy, for example,

“Today, many of the changes are negative. When the Frankfurt scene was still in Stadtbad Mitte [in the 1970s, Author's note], it was possible, for example, to obtain so much dope even without money, that you did not feel the monkey on your back (*Affen schieben*). Today, all activities are reduced to mere commercial relationships. The interpersonal contact has disappeared. No money, no honey. The 1990s are characterised by social coldness. The dog-eat-dog society mirrors itself on the scene and it looks even much harder here” (Interview FF69; see also Interview FF9).

Even younger heroin users realise that today economic profit is the main goal of most people attending the open drug scene. According to Ralph, for example, once you start regularly attending the scene,

“you become a businessman in the deepest sense. There are no better businessmen than junkies. Yes, they are the best businessmen because they discover a profit everywhere. In everything. The search for profit drives each of their actions” (Interview FF55).

Only few heroin addicts are able to finance their consumption with legal sources. To satisfy their daily heroin needs, most heroin users are obliged to engage in illegal activities, such as shoplifting, street prostitution and, above all, drug dealing. The point is clearly made by Ralph, who estimates that he needs about DM 200 (Euros 102,3) daily to buy heroin and to meet basic expenses.

“Every day I need about DM 200 (Euros 102,3). I get this through theft or something else. For a while I went to work. If I could keep my life going and I could finance my drugs, then I went to work when I got a job. But sooner or later it was always a flop because no person can earn so much money with a normal job. Who earns, as a trained locksmith, DM 6.000 (Euros 3.067,8) a month? Then I had to do something else to find money and once I started looking for something else, I had no time to work. It is not that I had no interest or no energy, but I had no time because I had to do something else” (Interview FF55).

The heroin need is such that the threat of penal sanctions does not constitute an effective restraint for most heroin addicts. Lukas, for example, states:

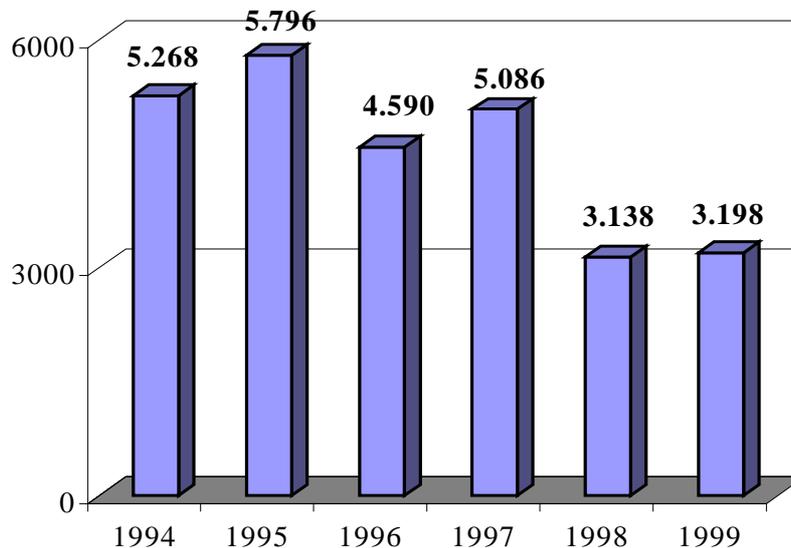
“Penal sanctions connected to drug use and dealing did not interest me. You want to take heroin and you are aware of all the consequences. All you know is that you are going to have pain, if you

do not have dope. You also know that you could end up in prison if you are caught, but this does not interest you” (Interview FF9).

Being the most visible segment of the drug using population, heroin users should be more easily and reliably estimated than the users of other illegal drugs. Nonetheless, even in this case there are problems. Unlike Milan, in Frankfurt there is not a register of all drug-using clients seeking assistance and treatment, as these services are provided by several different NGOs. Since the 1970s, however, the Frankfurt police register “heavy drug addicts” while on patrol. In 1999 there were 3.198 such addicts on police files.

This datum, however, does not constitute a reliable indicator of heroin users: first, because the percentage of heroin users of the total of ‘registered addicts’ has kept declining during the 1990s. In 1999, only 23 percent of the total were primarily heroin

Graph. 2. Registered heavy drug users in Frankfurt ~ Year 1994-1998



Sources: PPF, *Rauschgift Kriminalität*, 2000.

users, though almost half of the ‘registered addicts’ were poli-drug users. Second, this datum is strongly dependent on police activity and registration procedures. The change of the latter produced a sudden decline of registered users in 1998, as Graph 2 shows.

The police maintain that there is a large number of unregistered heavy drug users (PPF, 2000: 33). Nonetheless, a decline in the heroin demand seems to have taken place in Frankfurt over the last few years. The very steep decrease of heroin users in the police register of heavy drug addicts is the first, meaningful indicator of such a trend. Ten years ago, in their 1988 drug report, the Frankfurt police could safely state: “The Frankfurt drug scene should be considered above all a heroin scene, though in single cases cocaine is exchanged and consumed” (PPF, 1989: 24). Indeed, up to the mid-

1990s heroin remained the primary drug of more than half of the ‘registered addicts’. In 1996 and 1997, for example, heroin users represented 69 percent of all ‘registered addicts’. By 1999, however, their percentage was reduced to 23 percent.

As Table 5 shows, the percentage of poli-drug users has more than doubled within those years, making up for the ‘disappearance’ of most heroin addicts. These sudden changes are probably to a large extent due to changes in police registration procedures. Nonetheless, interviews with experts and with drug users themselves confirm such a view. As the Director of the City Health Office maintained, “in Frankfurt there are hardly any ‘pure’ heroin addicts today; indeed, we are dealing almost exclusively with poli-drug users” (Interview FA2). Likewise, according to a ten-year member of Frankfurt’s drug scene, “most people on the scene are poli-drug users” (Interview FF32).

Table 5. Percentage of heroin and poli-drug users of the total ‘registered drug addicts’ ~ 1996-1999

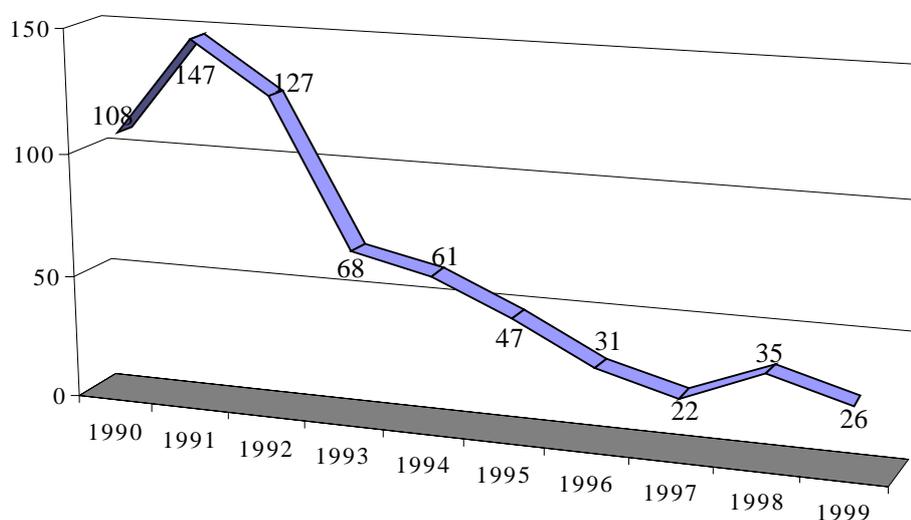
	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>
Heroin users	69 %	69 %	36 %	23 %
Poli-drug users	17 %	17 %	39 %	49 %

Sources: PPF, Rauschgift Kriminalität, several years.

Though at least partially due to harm reduction measures (low threshold methadone substitution programmes and safe injection rooms; see on this point Chapter 5), the sharp decrease of drug-related deaths can also be considered an indirect indicator of the decline of heroin consumption. Drug-related deaths reached their peak in Frankfurt in 1991, when 147 such events were registered. Although in 1998 there was a slight increase, during the 1990s the decline has been continuous and steep. In 1999, only 26 drug-related deaths were registered with an 83 percent decrease *vis-à-vis* 1991 (see Graph 3).

The decreasing trend affecting the heroin demand is also confirmed by our interviewees, who correctly associate it with the enlargement of the methadone substitution programme. As a former heroin user in Frankfurt puts it, “the demand for heroin today is very limited as a consequence of the methadone programme. Instead, the demand for cocaine and crack has correspondingly grown” (Interview FF33).

Graph 3. Drug-related deaths in Frankfurt ~ 1990-1999



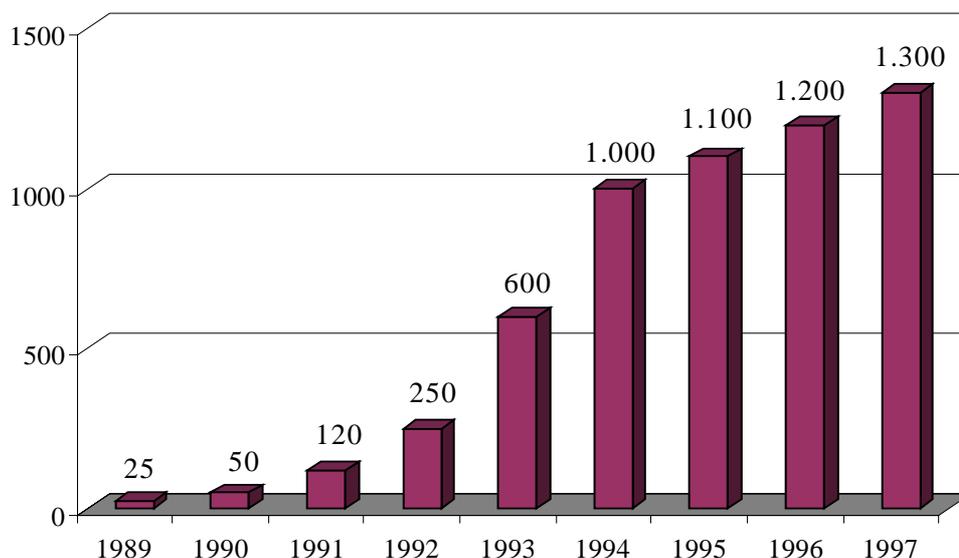
Sources: PPF, *Rauschgift Kriminalität*, 2000: 53; Drogenreferat, *Jahresbericht 01.01.1997 – 31.12.1997, 1998*.

Started in the late 1980s for 25 HIV-infected heroin-using sex workers, methadone substitution has, with time, become a low-threshold service. In 1997, the last year for which data are available, 1.300 people were officially enrolled in methadone substitution programmes, which were funded by health insurance companies (see Graph 4). The Drogenreferat (Drug Policy Division; DPD) of the City of Frankfurt estimates that 300-400 persons additionally obtain methadone directly from their private physicians, out of the NUB-scheme that was agreed with health insurance companies.

Today, the majority of older heroin addicts are currently enrolled in the methadone substitution programme and have sharply reduced, if not ended, their heroin consumption. This decline in the heroin demand is, however, partially off-set by the growth of two relatively new groups of users: foreigners and marginalised young people, above all from the former German Democratic Republic (DDR).

Though the former have been present on the Frankfurt open drug scene ever since the early 1980s, their number has substantially grown in the 1990s. In the 1988 drug report, the Frankfurt police could still write the following sentence: “The statement, according to which the German participants of the drug scene are consumers and the foreigners are dealers, is basically still valid” (PPF, 1989: 47). Indeed, out of the 237 heavy drug users, who were interviewed on the open drug scene by Irmgard Vogt in autumn 1991,

Graph 4. Patients enrolled in the methadone substitution programme ~ 1989-1997



Sources: Drogenreferat, *Jahresbericht 01.01.1997 – 31.12.1997*, 1998.

only 17 percent were foreigners. Throughout the 1990s, however, the latter became more and more numerous on the Frankfurt open drug scene. In 1995, foreigners represented 35 percent of the drug addicts registered by the police. In 1999 their number had grown to 42 percent. Again, police data are confirmed by the users' direct observation. Regarding this, for example, Lukas notes:

“In the past, foreigners used to be the suppliers of drugs, they did business with us, the Germans. Now there has been an apparent integration and more and more foreigners use drugs themselves” (Interview FF9; see also Interview FF29).

The spread of drug use among foreigners has also been noted by the personnel working in safe injection rooms. Although no personal data are recorded, the workers in two different *Druckräume* agreed that at least half of the clients are foreigners (Interviews FB3 and FB4; see also AGF, 1998).

The second new group of heroin users is constituted by a limited number of youths coming from other federal states, most often from the former DDR, who usually have a very difficult family background or were hosted in youth re-education centres. After fleeing these places, many of them land in the Central Station quarter of Frankfurt. Whereas males usually constitute over two thirds of the users attending the open drug scene (in 1999 they represented 83 percent of all 'registered drug addicts'), in this subgroup young women are about two thirds of the total and many of them work as prostitutes to survive. According to the social workers of the Walkman and Crack-Street-Projekt, many of these young people start to use heavy drugs in order to forget painful experiences or traumas in their past and present lives. Most of them begin with

crack and only later try heroin to placate the anxiety from the crack use. In the first half of the year 2000, however, the above street workers came in contact with an increasing number of marginalised young women, who had directly begun to inject heroin (Interviews FB5 and FB11).⁴

Cocaine and crack

As we have noted in the previous section, combinations of different drugs – including alcohol, medicines, as well as various amalgams of illegal drugs – are increasingly resorted to by the members of the Frankfurt open drug scene.

Though many heroin users additionally use alcohol and benzodiazepines (above all Rohypnol), the increase of poli-drug addiction and the diversification of the illegal drug supply on the open drug scene are, above all, due to the diffusion of cocaine and crack. As the Frankfurt police observe, “The trend, which was first observed in 1996, away from heroin and towards cocaine still goes on” (PPF, 1999: 75; see also Lux, 1997: 7).

According to several experienced users, cocaine started to be regularly available on the open drug scene in the late 1980s. As Robert put it, “ten or more years ago there was no cocaine on the scene. Only single dealers began to bring it in” (Interviews FF36; see also Interview FF9). Users’ perception thus confirms the police assessment in the already quoted 1988 drug report.

Despite the drug’s initial high prices, in a few years cocaine use became widespread among the local heroin users. Out of the 50 heavy drug users interviewed by Kemmesies in 1993, 31 declared that they had used cocaine in the previous 24 hours and 10 mentioned the previous week. Several interviewees complained, however, about cocaine’s high prices. Diana, for example, stated: “Coke only if I am invited; it is too expensive. I would not spend money on it” (Kemmesies, 1995: 165).

As prices declined, cocaine became an essential component of the open drug scene and most injecting drug users began either to alternate it with heroin or to mix the two substances in so-called ‘cocktails’. In the second half of the 1990s, the number of ‘registered drug addicts’, whose primary illegal drug is cocaine, grew significantly. Leaving aside poli-drug users, cocaine users represented 9 percent of the addicts registered by the police in 1996. By 1999, their percentage had grown to 13 percent of the total (PPF, 2000: 35 and 1997: 41; see Table 6).

⁴ In the first phase of the project, we entrusted a few interviews with some of these users to social workers of the above projects, but so far they were not able to find any candidates. They will keep on looking for them in the second phase of the project, if this is financed by the EMCDDA.

Table 6. Percentage of cocaine and crack users of total 'registered drug addicts' ~ 1996-1999

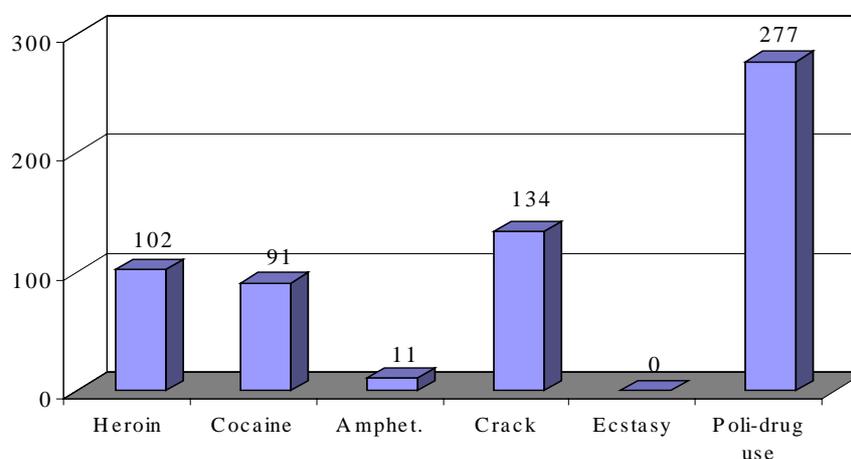
	1996	1997	1998	1999
Cocaine users	9 %	9 %	12 %	13 %
Crack users	3 %	3 %	9 %	12 %

Sources: PPF, *Rauschgift Kriminalität*, several years.

During the second half of the 1990s, the spread of cocaine powder on the open drug scene was, however, overcome by that of crack. This was allegedly introduced on the market in the early 1990s by black African dealers, who initially made the cocaine free base directly on the street. With time, 'crack kitchens' were also set up to meet the growing demand and, as we will see in Chapter 3, black Africans no longer are the exclusive suppliers.

The success of crack is foremost illustrated by police statistics. As shown in Table 6, the percentage of crack users has grown four times within four years in the police drug addict register. In addition to the 379 persons who were registered as crack users, also 785 of the 1.559 poli-drug addicts used crack. This means that in 1999, over one third (36,4 percent) of the total number of 'registered addicts' (3.198) regularly smoked crack (PPF, 2000: 42). In 1999, for the first time, more new crack users were registered by the police than new users of any other single drugs (see Graph 5).

Graph 5. Drug addicts registered for the first time by the police in 1999

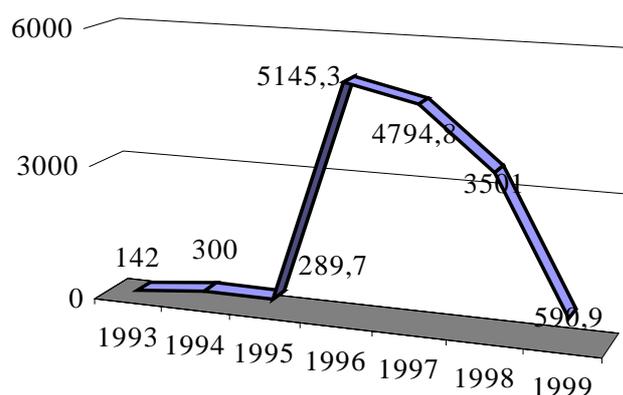


Sources: PPF, *Rauschgift Kriminalität*, 2000: 41.

The increased availability of crack is also proved by the number of seizures the Frankfurt police have initiated. As shown by Graph 6, between 1995 and 1996 there had been a sixteen-fold increase and since then, despite a slight decline, crack seizures remained relatively consistent up until 1998. Only in 1999 was there a sharp fall, that is explained by the police with the failed seizure of any single large amount of crack (PPF, 2000: 64-66).

Police statistics are confirmed by drug users themselves. Asked to point out the most important changes in the Frankfurt drug scene, almost all interviewees – with hardly any exceptions – reported the strong expansion of crack use (see, for example, Interviews FF12, FF16, FF17, FF21, FF30, FF33, FF26, and FF45). As Christina maintains, “today, on the scene you see mainly crack-people”. (Interview FF34). In her interview, Andrea also confirms: “Crack is the drug of the time. And the time is hard, aggressive and fast” (Interview FF32).

Graph 6. Crack seizures in Frankfurt (grams) ~ 1993-1999



Sources: PPF, *Rauschgift Kriminalität*, 2000: 65.

Many users also note that crack has practically substituted cocaine powder and today it is more and more difficult to buy the latter from street dealers on the open drug scene. As a former heroin and present crack user states, “there is hardly cocaine powder any more ... you have to buy crack .. because you no longer find powder” (Interview FF36). Likewise, according to Caddy,

“here in Frankfurt crack has become more and more widespread in the last five years. Even among the people who had previously used heroin. You can buy cocaine only from private dealers. Only crack is offered on the scene” (Interview FF69).

First, cocaine powder, and then crack have become popular among the clients of methadone substitution programme. As Lydia observed,

“heroin was strangely ousted by cocaine and crack. Many people who take methadone buy additionally some cocaine or crack because the substitutive substance does not give them the ‘high’ they would like” (Interview FF61; see also Interviews FF30, FF32; FF34, FF36, and FD5).

According to some drug treatment providers (Interview FA2), the “conversion to cocaine” by many former heroin users raises questions about the effectiveness of the entire methadone programme. This question is ‘hot’ because according to the existing regulations methadone substitutions are only paid by health insurance companies for a two-year period and are officially supposed to aim at complete detoxification.

Cocaine but, increasingly, also crack are far from being consumed only by the ‘junkies’ of the open drug scene. Already in 1997, in a report written for the Drogenreferat, an NGO representative pointed out that,

“Drug outpatient services have a growing demand for assistance and counselling from addicts whose primary drug is cocaine (often in combination with heavy alcohol abuse). Most of them are users, who are still integrated in a bourgeois lifestyle, but who risk losing their job or endangering their partner and/or family relations because of their drug abuse” (Heinz, 1997: 1; see Interviews FF15, FB6, and FB7).

As much as in other cities, up to the late 1980s cocaine was predominantly consumed by high-class socially integrated people, although, as soon as the prices declined, it gradually spread to all strata of the population. Asked to describe her clientele, a young woman, who sells cocaine in closed settings, answered:

“All kinds of people. From the policeman to the lawyer, they have all been there [to buy], housewives, everybody. You cannot describe that as a scene. They are very normal people, as you and me, that’s it” (Interview FF54).

Either in its powder or crack form, cocaine is becoming a *passe-partout* drug that is increasingly used by a wide-ranging spectrum of people and cuts across social and cultural stratification. Though media and political attention is almost exclusively focused on the heavy drug users of the open drug scene, the latter constitute only a component, certainly not the majority, of today’s demand for illegal drugs in Frankfurt.

2. The Geography and Social Organisation of the Retail Market

Ever since the late 1960s, there has been an open drug scene in Frankfurt. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the first meeting place for drug users was the Marshall fountain in the upper part of the Taunusanlage in front of the Alte Oper. Already around 1968, however, drug users began to gather in the park between the Alte Oper and the Stadtbad Mitte on the so-called *Haschwiese* (i.e. hashish field). The area hosted the city’s open drug scene up to 1980, when the new city administration, led by the Christian Democratic Union, closed the park to drug users (Noller, 1991: 191; see also Interviews FF9, FF42, and FF69).

In the park of Stadtbad Mitte, both ‘light’ and ‘heavy’ drugs were sold. According to some users (Interviews FF9 and FF42), however, after a while a sort of division developed within the park, so much so that cannabis products were predominantly sold on the one side and heroin at the opposite.

Since the ‘cleansing’ of the park in 1980, the geographical, but also psychological distance between the two retail markets and the users themselves of the two substances has grown steadily. Though a few dealers also sell hashish at locations where injecting

heavy drug users meet, no regular or occasional cannabis or ecstasy user would ever go there to buy his (or her) drugs. In fact, though ecstasy is classified as a heavy drug in Germany, hardly any ecstasy users are registered by the police as ‘heavy drug addicts’ because this registration takes place exclusively on the heavy drug scene. As demonstrated by Graph 3 in the previous chapter, no new ecstasy user was registered by the police in 1999.

The peregrinations of the open (heavy) drug scene

Immediately after the eviction of the open drug scene from Stadtbad Mitte, heavy drug users and dealers gathered on the terrace café of the Große Eschenheimer Tor but they were soon driven out. A relatively large group of users and dealers met for a while in a commercial arcade, called Lorelei, which was located between the Große Eschenheimer Tor and the Hauptwache, still in Frankfurt’s historical centre (Interview FF42). Even from there, however, the members of the open drug scene were soon expelled. For almost a year after this episode, the open drug scene did not have a stable meeting point, it moved within the city until it progressively settled in the *Kaisersack* in the Central Station quarter, at the other end of the city’s historical centre (Noller, 1991: 194).

Pushed by the conservative city administration and by the growing protests of the *Kaisersack* shop-keepers, during the early 1980s the police repeatedly tried to dissolve the new heroin scene. In the most consequent of these attempts, the police tried to move all injecting drug users to the so-called *Drogenknast* (drug prison) Hadamar at the city periphery, which was brand-new and surrounded by barbed wire. Drug users were forced on a bus and brought there. It soon turned out, however, that the *Hadamarexpress*, as it was soon labelled on the scene, did not have a legal basis and, after a few days, most users were back on the scene (*ibidem*: 195).⁵

Only in the late 1980s did the open drug scene move to the Taunusanlage, a small park next to the city’s financial district, which is located only a few hundred meters from the old *Haschwiese*. “From there”, Peter Noller writes, “the upper part of the Taunusanlage is within eye-sight, where, around the Marshallbrunne, the peregrination of the heroin scene through the inner city began. As much as the scene, the repressive policy simply moved in circles” (Noller, 1991: 197).

⁵ By analysing the newspapers clippings that were collected in the archive of the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, in the second phase we will reconstruct these police operations and the political and public debate that promoted them. We will also provide a map of Frankfurt, to show the different locations of the open drug scene.

Tolerated by the new left city administration, the open drug scene at the Taunusanlage ended up attracting dozens of users not only from the Rhine-Main area, but also from other parts of Hesse and other federal states, which enforce a more conservative drug policy. Up until its eviction in 1992, every day about 600 people – sometimes up to 800 – met there and openly exchanged and injected heroin and other drugs (Vogt, 1992; Lux, 1999). It is meaningful, for example, that only 40 percent of the 237 heavy drug users interviewed by Irmgard Vogt's team in the Taunusanlage in 1991 were Frankfurt residents. An additional 17 percent of the respondents said that they lived in one of the towns and villages that can be reached with the regional railway (S-Bahn), but over 34 percent admitted to living in other parts of Hesse or in other German federal states (Vogt, 1992: 12-13). According to the Frankfurt police, in 1992 only 28 percent of the 'registered addicts' were Frankfurt residents and at least an analogous amount came from Bavaria, Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg (PPF, 1993: 15).

Though there are no doubts that "the open drug scene [provided] many long-time addicts with a last piece of identity and social contact" (Drogenreferat, 1991), by the early 1990s the Taunusanlage pitilessly showed the hardness of the 'junkies' life. As Stefan, a former *habitué*, recalls,

"in the Taunusanlage a scene developed with completely new forms of behaviour, which had been previously seen only on the Platzspitz in Zürich. This means that junkies prepared and injected their portion in front of passers-by. Public opinion reacted to this supposed lawless space with indignation and called for 'cleansing'. Furthermore, the death rate among intravenous addicts was over 200 deaths a year in 1991 and 1992 and compelled policy-makers to develop a multivalent intervention and a 'visible solution' to the problem" (Interview FF68).

The misery and dirtiness of the place did not only bother the employees of the neighbouring banks and a large part of the bourgeois citizens, but also many users themselves. Many of our old interviewees still recall the open drug scene in the Taunusanlage with, at best, mixed feelings. As Frank-Joseph states, "it was fully out of control there. I often asked myself where all these 'junkies' came from, it was always full and terribly dirty, and syringes were everywhere. It was a very brutal, disgusting mess" (Interview FF42). Starting from November 1992, there was an intensification of police action to dissolve the open drug scene in the Taunusanlage (Kemmesies, 1995: 58).

"The severe persecution of the scene", Stefan again recalls, "resulted in the so-called 'Junkie-jogging'. From time to time 200-300 people were pushed by the police up and down the 600-700 meter long green strip, between the seat of the Deutsche Bank and the Main river. In February 1994 they finally found success with their strategy of eviction" (Interview FF68).

As we will briefly see in Chapter 5, this action was accompanied by a strengthening and diversification of help-services for injecting drug users. Most of the latter moved back to the Central Station quarter, especially on the right side of the Kaiserstraße (the street

that cuts the quarter in two halves), where meeting points and other services for users were set up. As Stefan again puts it,

“up until today the situation has gone back to where it was in 1985, i.e. the scene is located again next to the Central Station and the number of users has reduced to a fraction, probably thanks to the methadone programme” (Interview FF68).

With the ‘cleansing’ of the Taunusanlage, the open drug scene lost some of its attractiveness for users from other parts of Germany and the number of people who regularly attended the Frankfurt scene sank from 600-800 to 150-200. By 1998, according to police estimates, about 45 percent of the users who regularly visited the scene were Frankfurt residents (PPF, 1998: 41). The shrinking of the open drug scene was accompanied by a consistent decrease in the offences usually committed by drug addicts to finance their drug doses (shoplifting, petty theft, car and radio theft, pick-pocketing) (PPF, 1997: 48; 2000: 46). In its turn, the reduction of drug-related crime eased the toleration of the local drug scene by the local shop-keepers and residents.

Furthermore, with the opening of safe injection rooms in late 1994, it became much rarer to see drug users injecting on the street (see Happel, 1999). Due to increased police pressure, dealing, too, became more secretive and even at the retail level private dealers became more frequent. As a result, the quality of the substances sold on the street has further sunk. Today, only less experienced or less entrepreneurial users still regularly buy their doses on the street. The other ones do it only if they are forced to, when they cannot find their private dealer or have no patience to wait (Interviews FF69, FF28; FF34, FF32, and FF30).

The Central Station itself and the neighbouring streets are currently the only place where heavy drugs can be bought 24 hours a day. “There you get everything”, Udo states, though he himself and other interviewees report that only substances for injecting drug users and crack are on sale in the Central Station quarter (see also Interviews FF32 and FF49). Despite the increase of poli-drug addiction, even within the open drug scene a certain separation among different retail markets still tends to be reproduced. At the underground level of the Central Station, cocaine *Plomben* (i.e. balls), above all, can be found. In the streets left of the Kaiserstraße, heroin and other narcotic substances are predominantly sold (see, for example, Interviews FF21, FF25 and FF42).

Since the early 1990s, a street market for crack has also developed. In its early phases, there were, above all, two primary locations, though crack users and dealers kept on moving to avoid police interception: the streets that are located right of the Kaiserstraße up to the bank of the Main river and around the Hauptwache in the city’s shopping district out of the Central Station quarter (Interview FF15 and FF69). In the meanwhile, however, the crack and heroin scenes have largely become unified. As a report of the Crack-Street-Projekt highlighted,

“At the beginning of the project in September 1997 there was a clear division for us in the Station quarter. On the right of the Kaiserstraße there were crack users. On the left of the Kaiserstraße, there was, especially for the young users, the ‘Junkieland’ and only a small percentage of crack users had something to do with it. In the meantime, however, an integration of the two scenes has taken place ... Crack smoking has become a stable component of the drug scene around the Central Station” (Crack-Street-Projekt, 1998: 8-9;10).

Despite this integration, the open drug scene has largely lost its sub-cultural traits. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, a true atomisation process has taken place. Though most injecting drug users still visit the Central Station quarter to buy and to eventually inject their doses and some spend most of their time there, there is no longer a single place where all heavy drug users and dealers meet. The open drug scene is, instead, scattered around the safe injection rooms and the meeting places for heavy drug users, that were opened up in the first half of the 1990s. As Guido puts it, “there is not only a drug scene, there are many small drug scenes, which then compose a large one” (Interview FF26). Likewise, Udo remarks that “policemen have massively ousted people. The result is that now there are many small scenes. People have moved out” (Interview FF29). Much dealing, in particular, has moved to quieter city quarters and to several smaller cities of the Rhine-Main area, such as Freidberg, Bad Nauheim, and Butzbach. At these locations, however, there is no open drug scene and most transactions, even at the retail level, take place in private, closed settings (Interviews FF26 and FF69).

The fragmentation of the open drug scene and the intensification of police pressure have led to an increase of transaction costs. As is well known, these tend to be particularly high within drug markets because of the illegal nature of the commodities exchanged. The recent developments have, however, required the average user to invest more time and energy in order to buy drugs of relatively good quality. Many injecting drug users today are frustrated with the long waiting periods for their dealers. According to a long-time open drug scene player, “in the past it was relatively central, you got out of your train and, snap, snap. Today it is different, you have to look in different places suppliers simply need to be more prudent. They have to watch out. There are simply more policemen on the road” (Interview 32). This judgement is shared by another drug user too: “Policemen are always there. You have to complete the transactions walking; on the escalator, in the doorsteps, where there aren’t any police” (Interview FF34; see also Interview FF8).

Following the growing popularity of cocaine and crack, all the users and dealers whom we interviewed on the open drug scene, additionally point to an increase of violence and aggressiveness. “In the past it was all much more peaceful”, one respondent points out. “This is related to the diffusion of cocaine” (Interview FF55). For Milfina, “crack is the main reason why violence and the readiness to resort to violence have increased tremendously over the last few years” (Interview FF21; see also Interviews FF26,

FF69). Unlike heroin, cocaine and crack's stimulant effects allegedly make their users more aggressive and readier to use violence.

Hashish, cocaine and party drugs

After the 'eviction' of the open drug scene from the part of Stadtbad Mitte, many hashish users and dealers met in the Grüneburgpark. After repeated attempts by the police and the city administration, however, in the late 1980s they were largely driven out (Noller, 1991: 196). Only in the summer months do cannabis exchanges still take place there.

Ever since the late 1980s, the largest open air marketplace for cannabis has been the Konstablerwache (including the homonymous metro station) and the surrounding streets. Many young second-generation Moroccan migrants with family and integration problems gather there and some of the latter, as well as more recent migrants, predominantly from North African countries are involved in cannabis dealing (Weigt and Lorke, 1995; PPF, 2000: 76 and 1999: 74; AGF, 1994; Interviews FD5, FF69, FF38). More generally, in the area between the Hauptwache and Konstablerwache (including the two homonymous metro stations) a variety of street dealers, most of whom are foreigners, are also at work, variously selling cocaine, hashish and crack (PPF, 2000: 76-79).

The sale of cannabis, cocaine and party drugs, however, predominantly takes place in private, closed settings, largely out of the sphere of police control. According to some interviewees, one can buy cocaine, ecstasy and other synthetic drugs in almost every disco and every café attended by young people. As a cocaine dealer put it, "everywhere. In every disco, in every café. As final user, you only have to ask yourself, where it is most convenient for me to buy, because there is something everywhere" (Interview FF54).

In particular, in front of every large disco and techno rave there is always a good number of ecstasy dealers, willing to sell single pills to end-users, as well as a few dozens to whomever is interested in dealing. As Recep recalls, "we were always in the parking lot in front of the disco" (Interview FF46). Especially for *habitués* it is no problem to find drugs, as some dealers are relatively well known. "Everybody knew me on the scene", Costa proudly recalls. "You only had to ask for me" (Interview FF6). Even if one is relatively new, however, it does not take long to understand who sells the prohibited substances. Metin explains that in the beginning of his 'drug dealing career',

"I used to go to the disco with some money in my pocket and for a while observed what was going on. Then I found a dealer, bought some pills from him and on the same night I sold them to others" (Interview FF72).

As soon as drug consumption becomes a habit, most users tend to look for one or more private dealers from whom they can regularly buy. Both counterparts, in fact, have an interest in developing a stable relationship. The buyer is sure of the quality he buys and invests only a minimal amount of time and energy to obtain what he wants. The seller can better plan his business activity and can rely on a certain weekly or monthly turnover. Both sides, furthermore, reduce the risks of being intercepted by the police.

The first meeting usually takes place in a public place, such a street, a bar or a café. Once the customers are known, however, many dealers let them come to their places (Interviews FF6, FF54, FF28, and FF20). With a phone call, the buyer usually lets the seller know what he wants and an appointment is made. Though most buyer-seller relationships have a predominantly commercial nature, in some cases friendships develop out of it. Bollo, for example, recalls that he bought heroin and cocaine from the same person for over five years and developed a very trusting relationship with his supplier.

“I usually paid cash. But sometimes I also borrowed and then paid later or did not pay at all. As I said, we really had a very trusting relationship, we saw each other every day, it was a kind of a friendship. We often went out together for a walk. We both had dogs and we sometimes went in the centre together” (Interview FF19).

Not fitting in any criminological and ethnic stereotype and staying away from the ‘hot spots’ continuously patrolled by the police, most private dealers have a relatively easy life. The stress and risks of the open drug scene are far away.

3. The Drug Supply: The Local Distribution System and the Links to International Trade

Drugs arrive in Frankfurt from a plurality of countries. Quite often illegal substances enter the city’s drug distribution system directly from drug production countries. Cocaine comes from South America and every week at least a few passengers and suitcases containing the precious white powder land at Frankfurt International Airport, which is the busiest in all of Germany and the largest in Continental Europe. Along the traditional Balkan route and its deviations, ‘brown sugar’ heroin arrives from Afghanistan through Turkey and, increasingly, Central Asia. Furthermore, hashish and other cannabis derivatives are often directly imported from Morocco, where there are large cannabis plantations but also from countries as far away as Nepal. As we will see in the following pages, a variety of dealing enterprises are involved in this trafficking. Many dealers work alone or in small crews, which are founded on family or friendship ties. In a few cases, however, the final branches of relatively large-scale foreign trafficking organisations could be identified.

Ants' (and not only ants') trafficking from Holland

Notwithstanding the variety of drug sources and characters involved, it is fair to say that Frankfurt's drug distribution system is moulded by its closeness to Holland. Though large quantities of illegal drugs are imported directly from production countries, ever since the 1970s many dealers, and even users themselves, routinely have gone to Amsterdam and other Dutch cities, in order to buy 'light' as well as 'heavy' drugs. It is a typical case of ants' trafficking. Already in the late 1970s, one of our interviewees, Franz-Joseph used to buy high-quality 'white' heroin from acquaintances, who regularly drove to Holland to supply themselves. "Back then the border did not represent a big problem. The Dutch border was a joke", he recalls (Interview FF42; see also Interview FF9). During the 1980s and early 1990s, the border was heavily controlled by customs officials and police to prevent drug trafficking. Since March 1995, when the Schengen Treaty became effective, there are no longer custom controls on the border and the purchase of drugs in Holland has become even less risky than it used to be.

The analysis of the interviews with users and dealers is not yet finished and therefore it is not possible to say what percentage of our respondents go or have gone to Holland to buy drugs. Nonetheless, it is clear that quite a few used to or still make such trips and many others buy (or bought) their doses from people who supply themselves over the Dutch border. How easy it can be, is clearly described by Luigi, a part-time dealer, who regularly went to Amsterdam to buy ecstasy, amphetamines and LSD.

"On a weekend night you can be in Amsterdam in four hours. You leave at 4 o'clock p.m. and arrive at 8 o'clock p.m. It is already dark, you can drive home very well. You are back at midnight or 1 o'clock a.m. You hand the drugs out or whatever. At 7 o'clock a.m. I go to work as usual" (FF53).

A few precautions seem to be sufficient to avoid being stopped by the police. Costa, for example, recalls:

"I usually drove to Holland on a weekday and I always made sure to look like a businessman, very self-assured, well dressed and with a big car. I always had a shirt and a suit sitting on the backseat and then nobody checked if my suitcase was full of ecstasy pills" (Interview FF5).

Convenient prices or at least better drug quality for similar prices are the reasons quoted by most interviewees to explain why they thought Holland "the best address" (Interview FF42) to buy drugs. Hence, Iris used to drive every two or three weeks to a Dutch city right past the border to buy one kilo of hashish, which she then passed on earning DM 1.000 (Euros 511,3) per trip (Interview FF45). Heinrich, a truck driver, imported a kilogram of hashish every month from Amsterdam to finance his own hashish consumption and to enjoy a few luxuries (Interview FF59). Metin drove to Holland weekly to provide himself with 5.000-10.000 ecstasy pills (Interview FF72). During the

1980s, Michela regularly smuggled heroin in 2-3 kilogram lots out of Holland for her own supplier, who then paid her with drugs (Interview FF33).

Additionally, several users-dealers told us that their suppliers buy drugs in Holland, ranging from hashish to heroin (Interviews FF9 and FF28). Many users even go to Holland themselves or, less often, to Belgium to buy the doses they need (Interviews FF31, FF32, FF38 and FF21). Indeed, many German respondents no longer seem to regard Holland a true 'foreign' country and consider it 'normal' to go there to buy drugs. Asked if they have ever bought drugs abroad, some respondents spontaneously answered no and, only after thinking about it twice, recalled that they had been in Holland to buy heroin, hashish or other drugs.

Given this widespread practice, the drug distribution chain in Frankfurt is often very short. Indeed, if the consumers themselves buy drugs in Holland, the latter coincide with the importers. Then there is *strictu sensu* no national distribution system at all, as all German wholesale and retail dealers are bypassed by these entrepreneurial 'user-importers'. In any case, due to the Holland's closeness, a few transactions are sufficient to pass the illegal merchandise from the importer to the final user, even when the latter does not cross the border.

The ongoing analysis of penal proceedings seems to confirm the findings that emerged from the interviews with drug users and dealers. Whenever drugs are bought in neighbouring Holland, the distribution chain is usually composed of three levels: the importer, who sometimes relies on one or more couriers, the dealer, and the final customer. This is most likely the case when the drug quantities are rather small. A few hundred grams or one to two kilograms of hashish or heroin can be bought at any time in Holland by a variety of subjects (most of whom have a clean record) and reach German users with the mediation of only one or, at most, two other dealers (AGF, 1999a; StAF, 1998).

Sometimes, however, the quantities involved are far from being those of the ants' typical traffic. In less than two years, for example, a Turkish national, who was born and raised in Germany, was able to import at least 50.000 ecstasy pills from Holland, relying on a net of couriers. He then sold them in different lots to a variety of customers, some of whom sold the pills directly to end-users, while others supplied lower-level dealers (LGF, 1996). Moreover, the couriers, who went to Holland, were partially paid with pills and some bought drugs themselves during the trips, which they then sold directly to final users (StAF, 1996). An even larger business was run by Costa, who was, however, never caught by the police. In a three-year time span in the early 1990s, he bought almost half a million ecstasy pills from his supplier in Holland. Though larger lots were sold to dealers, during most of his dealing activity Costa partially sold the pills directly to users in front of discos and raves (Interview FF6).

As long as drugs are imported from Holland, the Frankfurt drug distribution system hardly resembles the six-level hierarchical outline, which was foreseen by Preble and Casey in the late 1960s and has long been considered a reliable approximation of the structure of heroin markets in Europe (Lewis, 1994; Arlacchi and Lewis, 1990; see Hess, 1989; 1990).

The shortness of Frankfurt's drug distribution chain is not, however, the only peculiarity that is a derivative of the city's closeness to Holland. Though drugs are imported from many other countries, often in larger lots, the widespread practice of buying drugs in the Netherlands has had another important structural consequence. Given this convenient and easy-to-reach source of drugs 'next door', Frankfurt has always remained an open market, in which anybody can try to earn his/her fortune, selling, importing, or producing drugs. No single dealer, group or ethnic community has ever succeeded in setting up a monopolistic regime over any drug market in Frankfurt. As a result, though there are some large importers and wholesalers, the city's drug enterprises have always been price-takers rather than price-givers. That is, none of them are able to influence the commodity's price appreciably by varying the quantity of the output sold.

Indeed, though with a certain time lag and a small mark-up to cover transport costs, drug dealers in Frankfurt and, more generally in middle Germany, have to set the price of their merchandise on the basis of the lower Dutch prices. If they do not (or cannot) do so, they are bound to be bypassed, as their customers either directly supply themselves in Holland or look for dealers in Germany who buy their products there. This, for example, was the reason why Luigi had to give up his hashish business.

"I stopped dealing with hashish because my customers started to drive to Holland themselves. And they bought better quality at good prices. You know, the prices went down two or three years ago. My customers no longer contacted me because I was too expensive. And my business went bad" (Interview FF53).

On the contrary, after a while Metin successfully bypassed the Italian intermediate dealer who had supplied him with ecstasy pills and started to drive to Holland to directly stock up on pills there.

"First I had to find out where the Italian bought the pills. When I found it out, I had to prove to the Dutch guy that he could also trust me. Obviously, everybody tries to bypass his intermediate dealer and to move up on the chain. The further up you are, the larger the profits are" (Interview FF72).

Foreign migrants and drug dealing

In such an open market, where there are no barriers for newcomers, foreigners have played a relevant role ever since the late 1970s and indeed, at least in the case of heroin, a process of ethnic succession can be singled out (see *infra*).

Foreigners' involvement in wholesale and retail drug deals must be placed in a larger context. This will be carefully reconstructed in the final report at the end of the second phase and it is only roughly sketched here. Throughout its history, a considerable fraction of Frankfurt's population has consisted of migrants, but up to the early 1950s most migrants came from rural areas within Germany and then from eastern German regions that were lost after the Second World War. From the mid-1950s onwards, foreign migration flows rapidly increased to satisfy the growing labour needs of German factories. First, Italians, Spaniards and Greeks arrived; from the late 1960s, the *Gastarbeiter* (that is, guest workers) were recruited in, above all Turkey, Yugoslavia, Portugal, Morocco, and Tunisia. By the early 1970s, foreigners represented about half of the workers in Frankfurt's factories (Karpf, 1993: 123-29; see also Borris, 1974).

Although this recruitment policy was stopped after the first oil crisis in 1973, for a variety of reasons the number of foreign residents has not sunk since then (Güller, 1999). Contrary to initial expectations, most 'guest workers' did not go back after a few years, but settled in Frankfurt, bringing their wives and relatives from their home countries and, on the average, were more prolific (i.e. had more children) than the Germans. As a result, the number of foreign residents has kept increasing in Frankfurt and in 1998 it represented 28,6 percent of the city's population (Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 1999; see Table 7).

Table 7. Foreign residents in Frankfurt am Main ~ 1946-1998 (absolute numbers and percent values of the total population)

1946	6 138	1,4 %	1970	73.012	10,4 %
1950	7879	1,5 %	1987	125.410	20,3 %
1961	31389	4,6 %	1998	185.719	26,6 %

Source: Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 1999.

In 1998 the most represented nationalities were Turkish (19,9 percent of Frankfurt's foreigners), Yugoslavian (10,7 percent), Italian (9 percent), Croatian (7,1 percent) Greek (4,5 percent) and Moroccan (4,4 percent) (see Table 8).

The rate of foreign residents would be even higher, if the so-called *Spätaussiedler* were considered. These are ethnic Germans who migrated to Germany from Eastern Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union. More than two million alone have come

from the USSR since 1988. On the basis of the German law, *Spätaussiedler* obtain

Table 8. Foreign residents in Frankfurt according to their nationality ~ 1998

	<i>absolute numbers</i>	<i>percent value</i>
<i>EU- States</i>	48.134	26,4 %
- Italy	16.395	9,0 %
- Greece	8.155	4,5 %
- Spain	6.028	3,3 %
- Portugal	4.116	2,3 %
<i>Rest of Europe</i>	90 285	49,6 %
- former Yugoslavian Republics	40.491	22,2 %
- Turkey	36.179	19,9 %
<i>Africa</i>	13.724	7,5 %
- Morocco	8.001	4,4 %
<i>North America</i>	5.075	2,8 %
<i>South America</i>	2.024	1,1 %
<i>Asia</i>	20.978	11,5 %
- Iran	4.426	2,4 %
- Afghanistan	2.640	1,4 %
<i>Australia</i>	260	0,1 %

Source: Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 1999.

German citizenship as soon as they arrive in the country. As they descend from Germans who emigrated to Russia and the Austro-Hungarian empire in 18th and 19th century, however, most of them hardly know the German language and indeed suffer the same integration problems that ‘true’ foreigners do (Reich *et al.*, 1999; Gründies, 2000).

Especially in the 1950s and 1960s, foreign workers contributed fundamentally to the German *Wirtschaftswunder* (i.e. economic miracle), and as German factories desperately needed workers, most of them rapidly underwent an economic integration, if not a social and cultural one. For the children of the first *Gastarbeiter* and the migrants who came after 1973, however, integration was much more difficult, as jobs became scarce even for local people and Germans realised that, against most people’s wishes and policy goals, their country had become an immigration country.⁶

Despite the increasing difficulties, since the early 1980s the *Gastarbeiter* have been followed by consistent flows of people seeking political asylum and by irregular

⁶ Even today the Christian-Democratic Union (CDU), the second-largest German party that governed the country up to 1998 under the leadership of Helmut Kohl, refuses to approve a law on immigration because this step would force the recognition that Germany is an immigration country.

migrants. Whereas there have no precise data concerning the latter group, the former consisted of almost 100.000 in all of Germany in 1998, after exceeding 300.000 in 1993 during the worst phases of the Balkan war (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1999: 66; see Table 9).

Table 9. Asylum seekers in Germany ~ Years 1980-1998

1980	107.818	1993	322.599	1996	116.367
1985	73.832	1994	127.210	1997	104.353
1990	193.063	1995	127.937	1998	98.644

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 1999: 66.

Both of these last two groups have hardly any chance of finding a job in the legal economy. Irregular migrants are prevented from it due to their “illegal” status, which makes them liable for deportation. As economic immigration is no longer allowed for poor people around the world desiring to earn a better living in rich Germany, the only way to enter the country legally is to ask for political asylum. On this issue, Germany has a generous policy and indeed, as table 9 shows, during the Yugoslavian war it hosted considerably more refugees than any other European country. As long as their cases have not been examined by the pertinent agencies, however, asylum seekers are not allowed to work.

For small fractions of the above-mentioned categories of foreign migrants – *Gastarbeiter*’s children who have not managed to integrate themselves into the ‘foreign’ society in which they were born, irregular migrants and asylum seekers aiming at a better life, and Germanised former Soviet citizens– the illegal economy is often the only arena which they can enter and in which they can compete. A consistent percentage of them, in particular, find jobs in the drug market, which today constitutes by far the largest component of the illegal economy in Frankfurt, as well as in most Western European cities.

Excluded from the legal market competition, foreign migrants often have a competitive advantage *vis-à-vis* autochthonous people in the drug market. As illegal drugs are produced or transit through the home countries of many foreign migrants, it is often much easier for the latter to organise the transfer of small or large quantities of drugs into Europe. The strength of family and ethnic ties, as well as the readiness to employ violence, also constitutes considerable advantages in the illegal marketplace. Foreign migrants, furthermore, are often more willing to take risks and, particularly, the risk of being arrested and imprisoned, as they do not have much to lose.

With its alleged high profits, drug dealing appears to many marginalised migrants a promising short cut to make money rapidly and thus to ‘buy’ the desired integration into the affluent western society. A paradox of our post-modern globalised society is, in fact,

that people at all corners of the world, especially youth, are socialised with the same images and goals of wealth and consumerism, but only few have access to the means that allow them to fulfil their dreams in a legal way. Profitable illegal activities, such as drug dealing, are thus considered by many foreign migrants as the only way to attain upward mobility. For some, it also becomes a means of revenge against a society that rejects them. For example, the son of a Turkish *Gastarbeiter*, who migrated when he was thirteen, explains his involvement in drug trafficking with his marginalised status in Germany:

“Only because you cannot speak German fluently, the Germans believe that they can do everything to you, they can oblige you to work as a slave. ... German society has exploited the generation of our parents extremely and treated them as people of second class and they keep on trying to do the same with us. Why should we not profit from this society? Why should we think about whether we hurt anybody? Nobody has ever done it to us” (Interview FF48; see also Weigt and Lorke, 1995).

Though attractive, drug dealing turns out to be an illusory short cut for many foreign migrants in Frankfurt. Police statistics are the most reliable indicator of the frequency of migrants’ ‘broken dreams’. In 1999, 3.480 persons were arrested in Frankfurt for drug offences, out of whom 1.944 were foreigners. As shown by Table 10, in previous years both figures were consistently higher.

Table 10. Persons reported for drug offences in Frankfurt ~ 1991-1999

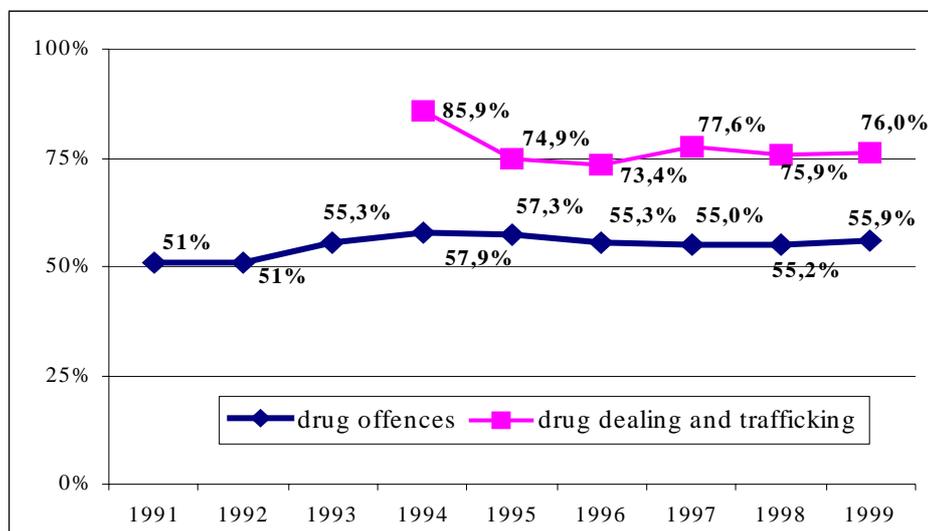
	<i>total suspects</i>	<i>of whom are foreigners</i>
1991	4.601	-
1992	4.829	2.462
1993	4.890	2.702
1994	4.708	2.724
1995	4.239	2.431
1996	4.335	2.397
1997	4.119	2.266
1998	3.755	2.073
1999	3.480	1.994

Sources: PPF, *Rauschgift Kriminalität*, several years.

As this table and the following graph show, foreigners represent the majority of people arrested for drug offences at least since the early 1990s. Their percentage, in fact, has shifted from 51 percent in 1993 to 57,9 percent in 1994, then stabilised around 55 percent in the following years. Considering only drug dealing and trafficking (thus excluding users’ crimes) the rate of foreigners is even higher: in 1999 it topped 76 percent (PPF, 2000: 12; 1999, 12; 1997; 1994; see Graph 6).

Following the national trend of decline in the number of asylum seekers, the latter's involvement in drug dealing is also decreasing. Whereas in 1993 more than a third of all

Graph 6. Percent rates of non-German suspects reported for drug offences and for drug dealing and trafficking ~ 1991-1999



Sources: PPF, *Rauschgift Kriminalität*, several years.

foreigners reported for drug offences were asylum seekers, in 1999 their percentage was reduced to 3,2 percent (see Table 11).

Table 11. Asylum seekers reported for drug offences in Frankfurt (absolute numbers and percent values of the total number of foreign drug offenders) ~ 1993-1999

1993	951	35,2 %
1994	691	14,7 %
1995	386	15,9 %
1996	230	9,6 %
1997	153	6,8 %
1998	117	6,2 %
1999	63	3,2 %

Sources: PPF, *Rauschgift Kriminalität*, 2000.

Almost 9 percent of the foreigners who were reported in 1999 for drug offences had no authorisation to live in Germany. But also most of those who were recorded as “legal” migrants in police files were far from being firmly integrated into the German society and its economy. Out of 1.773 foreign drug offenders with a “legal” status, in fact, 1.590 (89,7 percent) had a “special legal resident permit”. These are the relatives of regular migrants, asylum seekers who have been refused a residence permit but are authorised to stay for a few more months, as well as unemployed foreigners who previously had a regular job in Germany (PPF, 2000: 19).

Given the preponderance of the latter group, there are no doubts that drug dealing constitutes an attractive “queer ladder of social mobility” (Bell, [1953] 1988: 129), above all, for those marginalised migrants without access to the legal economy.

The substitution process in the retail market

Even more than other types of statistics, the law enforcement ones should not be taken at face value, as they represent the ‘world out there’ through the eyes of the agency that collects the data (see Kitsuse and Cicourel, 1963). Foreigners’ prevalence among drug offenders could, in particular, at least partially be attributed to the fact that the police overproportionally focus on them. Indeed, several German and non-German drug users and dealers, whom we interviewed, point out that foreigners are more likely to be checked by the police than German nationals (Interviews FF27, FF32 and FF69). Several other respondents, however, deny police racism. As Nicole, a forty-year-old injecting cocaine user, put it,

“In my opinion, police action does not orient itself according to the person’s nationality, but to the person’s appearance. They check if you are properly dressed, what you look like and so on. Even German people who look scruffy are checked severely” (Interview FF30; see also Interviews FF42 and FF41).

Furthermore, even more respondents confirm that foreigners do play a relevant role at both the retail and wholesale levels of the whole local distribution system, with the exception of party drugs. In particular, several interviewees regularly attending the open drug scene point out that “the proportion of foreigners has grown” among street dealers (Interview FF69).

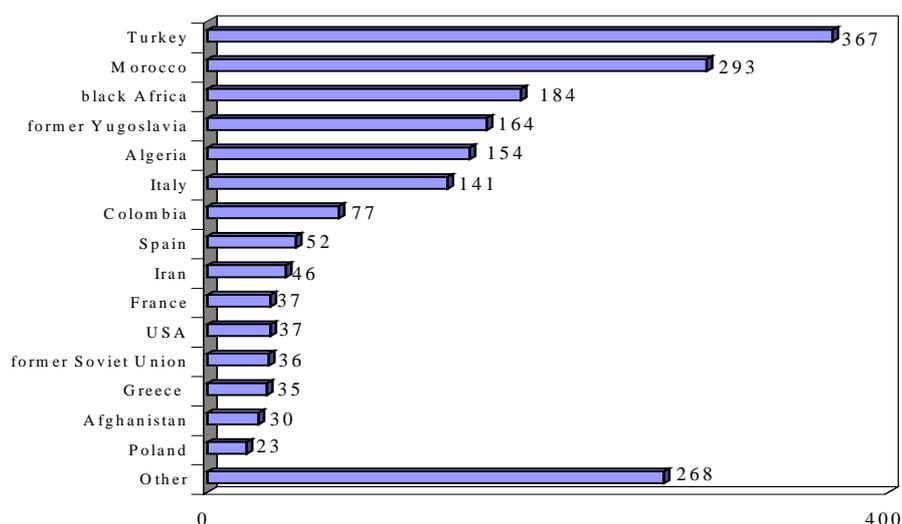
As foreign migrants increasingly have had problems finding jobs in the regular economy, a veritable substitution process has taken place: the lowest and most dangerous positions, which used to be occupied by the most marginalised German drug users, have now been taken over by foreigners, especially those who have recently immigrated, are applicants for political asylum or do not have a residence permit. As Andrea, a 39 year-old former heroin and current crack user maintains, “in the beginning my dealers were German, later on the situation changed, a Yugoslav came in and ... now, on the cocaine market, they are Arab and African” (Interview FF32).

It is not by chance that most of Frankfurt’s street dealers do not belong to the national groups that first immigrated to the city, such as Italian, Greeks or Portuguese. The most frequently represented nationalities are those of migrants who predominantly came to Frankfurt in large numbers in the last three decades of the 20th century and who experienced the most serious integration problems. Frankfurt’s retail market is currently populated by dealers coming from Morocco, Algeria and other North and Central African states, Turkey as well as several nations of what was once called the Second World.

Though not unbiased, the involvement of the main ethnic groups in drug dealing is shown by police reports for drug offences (Graph 7). Among the foreigners, the largest group is composed of Turkish citizens (18,9 percent of all foreign suspects), who also constitute the largest group of foreign residents in Frankfurt (19,9 percent). Turks are followed by Moroccans (15,1 percent), who are overproportionally present in law enforcement statistics, as they represent only 4,4 percent of Frankfurt’s foreign residents. The third group is a bundle of over 30 sub-Saharan nationalities (9,5 percent), which are collectively labelled by the Frankfurt police as “black Africa”. The fourth group includes the citizens of all the former Yugoslav republics, who account for 8,4 percent of all foreign suspects for offences. Despite the role played by Kosovo Albanians, the former Yugoslav people’s crime rate is inferior to their population: in fact, they make up over 22 percent of Frankfurt’s foreign population. The same can also be said for Italians, who constitute 9 percent of Frankfurt’s foreign population, but represent only 7,3 percent of drug reportees.

According to law enforcement agencies and consumers alike, North African people play a major role in the retail sale of cannabis products. On the matter, the 1998 Frankfurt police report states: “Hashish trade takes place [in the area of the Konstablerwache and Hauptwache] separate from heroin and cocaine trade and, as in previous years, it lies in the hands of North African nationals” (PPF, 1999: 66; see also Interviews FF22, FC1 and FD6).

Graph 7. Foreigners reported for drug offences in Frankfurt according to their nationality ~ 1999



Sources: PPF, *Rauschgift Kriminalität*, 2000.

North and black Africans also represent the majority of crack dealers, who operate around the Hauptwache in Frankfurt’s city centre, but some of them also sell cocaine

powder, to attract less police attention and thus minimise their interception risks (PPF, 1999 and 2000; Interviews FF30, FF53, FF12, FF16, FD4 and FD9). As Milfina sharply put it, “they are all foreigners. Coke is in the hands of foreigners. Above all, Moroccans. In the centre, they control the business” (Interview FF21).

Though they are only a minority, a few crack dealers can also be found among marginalised German nationals, some of whom are very young and deal with ‘rocks’ in order to finance their own consumption habits (Interview FB5). Indeed, in a sort of warning against all ethnic stereotyping, one of these German dealers proudly recalls that he could earn a lot of money whenever the police raided the crack scene and foreign dealers ran away to avoid being arrested.

“Sometimes there are a lot of police and I am German, I am not Algerian, the police don’t see it, they think that I am a small guy, I only smoke, I sell only to buy rocks. Then the police do not know anything. The police are against people who only sell and do not consume drugs, none at all. ‘I am an addict’. The police move on. And then there are 10 people who all ask ‘Do you have some? Do you have some? Do you have some?’. There are no longer any Moroccans on the street and I am there” (Interview FF53).

Likewise, most pushers selling heroin and cocaine *Plomben* (i.e. balls) in the basement of the Central Station are North African, though South Africans and Albanians are also present (Interviews FF2, FF8, FF9, FF45 and FF16; PPF, 2000).

On the western side of the Station quarter, where several safe injection rooms are located, there are also less recent foreign migrants, above all Turkish Kurds and people from the former Yugoslavia (Interviews FF34, FD5 and FC1; PPF, 2000: 76 ff.; see also AGF, 1994, LGF, 2000, 1999. The different level of cultural integration is again highlighted by Milfina:

“Heroin dealers are usually German or foreigners who have lived in Germany for a long time. It is funny, but in the case of cocaine ... they are all migrants who have been living here only very shortly. They hardly speak German” (Interview FF21).

As this interviewee points out and participant observation confirms, around the *Drückräume* even German addicts try to earn their living by selling ready-to-use doses, above all to people coming from the outside or by mediating deals with inexperienced customers (Interview FF9 and FF2). The role of the traditional user-dealers, however, is waning. As much as in other cities (including Milan), retail dealing is largely entrusted to recent foreign migrants, who are willing to take the risks and are preferred by larger suppliers because they do not use drugs and run their business in a more professional way (Interview FD6). Indeed, according to several interviewees, at least in some ethnic groups an intense informal social control is exercised to prevent members from becoming drug addicts and thus lose their professional reliability. According to Luigi, who for several years had a very close connection with a group of Algerian cocaine dealers, the latter

“have never smoked [crack] rocks. A few snorted cocaine through their noses. They never smoked it, because they hate it, smoking. They hate those people. It is a large community: they may accept snorting, but as soon as one begins to smoke these rocks, he has to leave, he no longer belongs to the group. He is an addict, bye. He must immediately leave. Then he winds up on the street. No Algerian dealer may smoke. If he does, he is no longer our friend” (Interview FF53).

Despite the informal control, however, with time some foreign pushers start using drugs themselves, in order to cope with the stress of their business. As Andrea notes, “the African dealers do not consume crack, they only sell it. There are only a few who use it, but they have fallen down in the social hierarchy” (Interview FF32).

A novelty pointed out by many interviewees and also highlighted in the last report from Frankfurt police is the rapid multiplication of dealers from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Interviews FF30, FF34, FF32, FF33, FF40, and FF69). According to Franz-Joseph, the Russians are currently selling heroin, which they directly obtain from Central Asia and which is much purer than the average quality available on the open drug scene (Interview FF42). During the second phase of the project, this information will be checked by asking law enforcement officers and outreach workers and by examining a few judicial cases concerning this new ethnic group. It also needs to be clarified whether the new Russian dealers are ‘true’ Russian nationals or instead belong to the group of *Spätaussiedler*. Furthermore, as much as we did in Milan, in the second phase of the project we plan to interview foreign, above all North African and Russian dealers, by entrusting some interviews to social workers who have their trust.

Closed scene dealing: autochthonous people’s last domain

Foreign retail dealers aim to abandon the street as soon as possible, move up in the drug distribution system, or at least develop a group of regular customers who can be supplied through set appointments in closed or semi-closed settings away from the open drug scene. These ambitions are clearly explained by Luigi:

“It begins on the street. Every Algerian or Moroccan begins to deal on the street. They get to know people, people want more. Sooner or later, the Algerian or Moroccan says, ‘I no longer have to go selling on the street, every day I have two large customers, I have my money, I don’t need to go running on the street’. Then they move out and new people come in” (Interview FF53).

The same trend has also been noted by the police in the case of black African crack dealers. Many of the latter, who were the first to regularly sell crack in Frankfurt, have allegedly stopped working on the street, but supply their customers through set appointments from hotel rooms and private flats (PPF, 2000: 76).

It is, by all means, a well founded strategy. All our respondents unanimously point out that the law enforcement pressure is much lower on the closed drug scene than on its open counterpart and, indeed, most dealers whom we interviewed state that as long as

they carry on their business in private settings, they have no problems at all with the police (see, for example, Interviews FF6 and FF20).

Though many foreign street dealers struggle hard to abandon the open drug scene, closed scene dealing is still largely carried out by German nationals or by second-generation immigrants, who were born and raised in Germany (AGF, 1999a; LGF, 1996; Interviews FD5, FF25 and FF19). Unlike recently immigrated foreigners, in fact, only the latter possess the “social capital” necessary to carry out closed scene deals. They have a network of friends and acquaintances, among whom they can at least initially sell drugs. They know the German language and the local social rules, which makes them appear incongruous and avoid police detection. They visit the cafés, bars, and public places where potential customers meet. Thanks to these skills, which can be acquired only slowly through socialisation, have local people been able to hold the lion’s share of retail and middle drug dealing in private settings.

Among the ecstasy dealers whom we interviewed, for example, we found no foreign migrant without a residence permit. Only second-generation foreigners, who have grown up in the country seem to be able to enter this profitable business, which is otherwise dominated by Germans. Indeed, for some of them, selling and using ecstasy and party-drugs become a short cut in order to achieve the desired integration into German society. “When I sold pills to foreigners”, Costa recalls, “the integration was 100 percent, it was complete. They were fully integrated on the scene and in the market” (Interview FF5). Though we interviewed several successful ecstasy dealers who were *Gastarbeiter*’s children, the latter still have a higher risk of being intercepted by police in discos and cafés, where party drugs and cocaine are usually sold. Sometimes they may also have problems entering these places at all. The Turkish Recep, for example, points out that

“if you look like Mediterranean or Middle Eastern, you can forget it, you stand out, you are checked by the police or you are not allowed to get into the disco. The best thing to do is to be accompanied by a blonde, sexy-looking German girl” (Interview FF72).

Some closed scene dealers do not use drugs themselves, but rationally choose to start dealing because they are attracted to the profits that this activity promises. Among the latter, there are true professional dealers, who usually handle relatively large quantities and who have been selling drugs their whole lives, hardly have regular jobs, and usually end up sooner or later in prison (Interviews FF21 and FF53).

Non-using, rational drug dealers can, however, also to be found among incongruous persons who have no contact to the underworld, usually have a regular job but sell illegal drugs part time, in order to supplement their salary or to increase their savings. Agnes, for example, currently works in a snack kiosk and sells 10-20 grams of cocaine weekly, which she receives from her employer. She herself consumes no drugs, she

does not look like a dealer (“if you look at me, you cannot tell what I do in my free time or at work”), has successfully completed middle school and an apprenticeship and has voluntarily begun to deal, in order to save money and set up her own entrepreneurial activity. To start her cocaine business, she borrowed the money from her mother and sister and now she has a monthly turnover of about DM 15-17.000 (Euros 7.669,4-8.692): DM 10.000 (Euros 5.112,9) are her costs and the rest is profit (Interview FF54).

Most closed setting dealers, however, do not merely consider illegal drugs a highly profitable commodity, but deal with them in order to finance their own consumption habits. In the early 1990s, for example, Martin began to sell cocaine to pay for his own snorting: in peak times, he said, he sniffed up to 5 grams a day. From 1991 to 2000, Martin bought cocaine, first at DM 90 (Euros 46) a gram and then at DM 80 (Euros 40,9), and sold it at DM 150 (Euros 76,7) a gram without cutting it. As he worked as security guard in discos and concerts, it was no problem for him to find customers. With time, Martin built up his own clientele and did not even bother to work any more. He just waited at home for phone calls and met his customers either at his place or in bars and cafés. Until early 2000, “my profession was drug dealing”, Martin admits but, despite that, he has never had problems with the police (Interview FF20; see also Interview FF53).

Unlike Martin, most user-dealers operating in closed settings work only part time in the evening and on weekends after their regular job. By chance or skill, some of them, however, succeed in setting up relatively large-scale, profitable businesses. Though he had a well-paid job as car mechanic, in 1976 Caddy

“began to sell drugs, above all to show a friend of mine that I could do it. I sold hashish, mescaline, LSD and, to good friends, also cocaine. I myself consumed, above all, cocaine and opium. I sold at least a kilo of hashish daily, from which I got DM 1.500 (Euros 766,9) profit. I had several hashish types for sale that cost between DM 3 and 12 (Euros 1,5-6,1), depending on the quality. I bought two types of mescaline, the natural one (only a small quantity) and the synthetic one. I myself consumed the good mescaline and I sold the synthetic one. In a week I sold about 1.000 units, which cost me either DM 1 or 2 (Euros 0,5-1), depending on the quantity. I also sold LSD in similar quantities. Finally, for my own consumption I bought 3 grams of cocaine daily at about DM 160-180 (Euros 81,8-92) a gram” (Interview FF69).

Some of these inconspicuous user-dealers do not let their drug consumption affect their drug business, which sometimes becomes their primary source of income. Ever since 1982, when he quit his job as an insurance salesman, Boris has been working as a heroin dealer. Today, he receives a minimum amount of 500 grams of heroin every week from a supplier in Holland and sells his merchandise to a selected group of apartment dealers, whom he has known for a long time, “preferably in quick 100 gram deals” (Interview FF28). When he started to deal, Boris used to inject heroin daily. In the meanwhile, however, he has succeeded in reducing his consumption and he now ‘merely’ snorts about a gram of heroin a day.

Boris' case seems to be an exception rather than the rule. Only few user-dealers are able to keep their consumption under control. And this, given that closed setting dealers are rarely targeted by the police, constitutes their main vulnerability and the most serious hindrance to their drug dealing careers. In early 2000, for example, Martin interrupted his dealing career to undergo detox therapy, hoping to get rid of his cocaine, heroin and alcohol addiction and thus to save his marriage (Interview FF20).

Either because they have plenty of drugs available or to cope with the stress of their job, many user-dealers end up becoming their own best customers. How easily this can happen is clearly explained by Caddy, who has become a veritable junkie and is obliged to buy his heroin doses on the open drug scene.

“Before, when I still had good connections, finding drugs was no problem. But in the long run it is difficult to run this business because high risks are associated with dealing. Even if you behave correctly with your customers, the laws are incredibly hard. Sooner or later you become paranoid and can no longer stand the pressure. As a consequence, you increase your own consumption and this goes on until you either completely lose control and become a nuisance to your business partners or consume more than you sell and go into the red” (Interview FF69).

Ethnic continuities and successions in wholesale trafficking

As we have seen at the very beginning of this chapter, many of Frankfurt's user-dealers or dealers with no specific underworld connection routinely import drugs directly from the Netherlands. From time to time, some of these inconspicuous autochthonous or semi-autochthonous dealers even succeed in importing drugs directly from drug producing countries. In the 1980s and early 1990s, for example, large quantities of hashish and cocaine were imported from Morocco and Spain by a crew that included an employee of the city of Frankfurt, a lawyer, an auto dealer, and an engineer (StAF, 1995).

The direct import channels from drug producing countries, however, are much more frequently controlled by people who are either born in, or originate from, these countries. In fact, in police statistics the rate of foreigners reaches its highest peak, if only the offence of drug smuggling is considered. In the years between 1994 and 1999, foreigners have consistently represented more than 85 percent of all the persons arrested in Frankfurt for drug smuggling into the country, and in some years, they have even accounted for 90 percent (PPF, 2000: 12 and 1999: 12; see Table 12).

Though cocaine arrives in Frankfurt through a plurality of routes, the direct import from Latin America still seems to be run by Colombian and other South American nationals. Cocaine is smuggled through Frankfurt airport either by body packers or in

Table 12. Non-German suspects reported for drug smuggling (absolute values and percent rates) ~ 1994-1999

	absolute values	percent rates
1994	104	86 %
1995	194	87,8 %
1996	232	86,2 %
1997	227	88,3 %
1998	144	90 %
1998	173	89,6 %

Sources: PPF, Rauschgift Kriminalität, several years.

accompanied or unaccompanied suitcases. In 1999, the latter modality was allegedly more popular than the former and the Frankfurt Polizeipräsidium seized 243 kilos of cocaine, which were hidden in several suitcases sent from Bogota (PPF, 2000: 86; see also Interviews FC11 and FD4).

Whereas the direct cocaine import is characterised by an unsurprising ethnic continuity, a clear ethnic succession process (see Ianni, 1973; Light, 1977) could be identified in the smuggling, wholesale and intermediate trafficking of heroin. According to several observers, in the late 1970s Israeli dealers supplied a consistent portion of the Frankfurt heroin market for several years (Interviews FC1, FF42 and FF40). Starting in 1983 or 1984, however, Turkish migrants began to import 'brown sugar' heroin from their home country in lots varying from less than a kilo to several hundreds. According to eye-witnesses, in a few years they replaced the Israelis, who had instead dealt with 'white' and 'grey' heroin coming from Southeast Asia or from Syria.

Though Turkish migrants never had the exclusive rights to the heroin smuggling, it is a common idea among law enforcement officers, as well as experienced drug users and dealers, that the former had the lion's share of the wholesale heroin market up until the mid-1990s. It is important to stress that Turkish heroin entrepreneurs never made up a single trafficking organisation, rather they formed a galaxy of independent dealing enterprises. We hypothesise that some of these were composed only of a few friends or associates. Some were family businesses, which sometimes reached a relative stability and could even develop a more or less rudimentary labour division. According to several observers, only the drug trafficking cells and members of the PKK, the Kurdish Communist Party, could be considered part of a large-scale criminal organisation (Interviews FF21 and FF55).

Depending on their financial and organisational capabilities, some Turkish dealing enterprises exclusively sold to wholesale dealers, whereas others directly provided drugs to users and/or apartment dealers, selling drugs only part time to supplement their legitimate income. Franz-Joseph, a long-time heroin addict, for example, recalls that in the second half of the 1980s he used to buy heroin in a Turkish bazaar in Frankfurt's centre (Interview FF42). According to him, but also to other open drug scene players,

the business was largely run “by very normal families”, who brought back heroin to Germany whenever they visited their relatives in Turkey. In fact, he recalls, the heroin quality was particularly good and the prices very low after each summer and Christmas holidays (see also Interview FF38).

Though large and small illegal Turkish enterprises are still involved in heroin smuggling (Interview FF55), since the mid-1990s Kosovo Albanians have become a fearful competitor in this business. In a complex investigation, opened in 1999 to tackle specifically ethnic Albanian drug traffickers (‘AG Diesel’), the Frankfurt law enforcement agencies have seized more than 75 kilograms of heroin and arrested 77 suspects, some of whom have already been convicted. *Vis-à-vis* the Turkish importers, who often hid large lots of heroin in trucks travelling from the Middle East to Europe, Kosovo Albanian rings have modified the smuggling techniques. They have set up heroin deposits in several Eastern European countries, above all, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and import few kilo lots in vehicles that they usually entrust to German couriers. The heroin they import is much less pure than that smuggled by the Turks and is ready to be distributed, without further cutting. According to users and law enforcement officers, the recent further decline of heroin quality on the open drug scene is due to the diffusion of ‘Albanian’ heroin. As an experienced heroin user notes,

“Even large quantities are no longer as good as those imported some years ago. The heroin is either not well prepared or is already professionally cut when it arrives in Germany. You hardly find heroin whose purity is above 40 percent” (Interview FF69).

Several penal proceedings concerning heroin smuggling by Turkish and Albanian rings, including several inquiries belonging to the ‘AG Diesel’ have been collected by Paoli and Güller and will be thoroughly analysed in the following months. On the basis of judicial sources and expert interviews, in the final report at the end of the second phase we will also examine the issue of hashish smuggling and wholesale dealing, which seems to be at least partially run by Moroccan criminals.

Small, flexible, ephemeral drug-dealing enterprises

Though the analysis of primary and secondary sources is far from being concluded, we hypothesise that the great majority of drug deals, even those involving large quantities of drugs, are carried out by numerous, relatively small, and often ephemeral enterprises. As we have seen, in closed settings drug entrepreneurs most often work alone or occasionally resort to one or two staff workers, in order to carry out the most dangerous tasks. Some drug enterprises are family businesses: that is, they are run by the members of a blood family, who may resort to a net of non-kin on an *ad hoc* basis (PPF, 1996: 36). Caddy, for example, recalls,

“We were a small organisation that I had built and was composed of six persons: relatives and very close friends. It was organised according to the drugs. My wife and I dealt hashish, my brother-in-law and his wife with cocaine, heroin and speed. A friend of mine and his wife sold drugs at lower levels. The group members had a differentiated clientele. Women were usually in charge of taking appointments. The organisation broke down when my brother-in-law was arrested” (Interview FF69).

Some enterprises are veritable non-kin groups, which are formed around a (charismatic) leader and then manage to acquire a certain degree of stability and develop a rudimentary division of labour. “There is a chief dealer, who has God knows how many smaller dealers working for him on the street or in private settings” (Interview FF9).

The organisation of foreign retail dealers still needs to be clarified. According to many of their customers, the latter compose relatively large groups, with a fairly high degree of internal organisation and struggle to defend their dealing position from competitors. According to other sources however, foreign pushers may buy their commodities together in order to obtain a better price and sometimes operate in the same area to minimise their risks and increase their market power, but are far from constituting a single economic unit. For example, this is Luigi’s description of his Algerian friends:

“On the street they have usually made their business together, but I always made my deals with single persons. Each of them works on his own. Each has his business, but they know each other very well. Although it is a community, in public they pretend that they do not know each other” (Interview FF53).

According to our data so far analysed, many of the organisational arrangements set up for the production and supply of drugs can be defined as crews: loose associations of people, which form, split, and come together again as the opportunity arises. In crews, positions and tasks are usually interchangeable and exclusivity is not required: indeed, many crew members frequently have overlapping roles in other criminal enterprises. On the matter, one of the officers working in the Frankfurt Police’s organised crime section, states,

“The structures, the stable hierarchic structures or family structures that are frequent in Italy, do not exist in Germany. As far as organised crime in Germany is concerned, specialists talk about a net-structure (*Netzstruktur*) and this is a correct representation that we can prove in our investigations. If some people want to commit a crime, they look for people specialised in the required tasks; the latter are asked and eventually recruited. Afterwards, the booty is divided and each of them goes their own way. Very, very rarely you can find steady gangs, which for a long period commit a series of crimes” (Interview FC5).

The constraints derived from product illegality (which were examined in Part I), have apparently so far prevented the rise of large, hierarchically organised firms to mediate economic transactions in Frankfurt’s illegal marketplace. As an experienced wholesale dealer maintains, “there are no vertical drug trafficking structures in Germany. Only horizontal ones. This means: ‘I know this person’, ‘let’s make a deal’” (Interview FF21).

The factors promoting the development of bureaucracies in the legal section of the economy – namely, the advantages deriving from economies of scale and specialisation of roles – are outbalanced in the illegal arena by the very consequences of product illegality. Due to these constraints, within Frankfurt’s drug economy there is no immanent tendency towards the consolidation of large-scale, modern bureaucracies. In their latest drug report, even the Frankfurt police categorically denied the presence of fearful Colombian ‘drug cartels’, but interestingly stressed the family nature of the Colombian drug enterprises that send cocaine to Frankfurt.

“The organisations involved in the organised cocaine smuggling are not drug cartels, but usually family clans. These not only have cocaine available in Colombia, but are also able to send representatives (the so-called residents) to foreign countries of their own choice. The latter take care of the couriers transporting the drugs and organise the distribution of cocaine to local wholesale dealers. The recruitment of couriers is also managed by the family clans in Colombia” (PPF, 2000: 85).

To external observers, illegal enterprises, specifically drug ones, often appear to be associated with networks. It is, in fact, through chains of individuals, crews, and small groups that narcotics and other illegal commodities - ranging from stolen cars to women, who will be exploited as prostitutes - are moved from one country to another and brought to the final consumers. In Germany, for example, several studies have come to the conclusion that networks are the typical manifestation of organised crime in that country (see Rebscher and Vahlenkamp, 1988; Weschke and Heine-Heiß, 1990).

The concept of a network is, indeed, a useful construct to describe the distribution system of illegal drugs. The strength and cohesion of most illegal networks, however, should not be overestimated. Although long-term relations may develop among network members, the majority of them are arm’s-length buyer-seller relationships, which are neither exclusive in any sense nor centrally organised. Each drug dealer is usually free to look for other partners to execute the next transaction and usually belongs to more than one network at the same time, since he has contact with several suppliers and has numerous customers, to whom he can sell his merchandise. Moreover, in any position of the network, the actors generally know only their immediate supplier(s) and buyer(s) and have no idea of the network’s overall extent and structure. Finally, it must never be forgotten that illegal networks are volatile constructions. They constantly change their form and extension, as partners are included, are occasionally or permanently discarded, or are replaced because they have been targeted by law enforcement action (Paoli, 1999a and b).

Drugs flow in Frankfurt through a plurality of intersecting and changing networks, which originate in many different countries. No matter how committed and efficient law enforcement action may be, it is doomed to only have a minimal impact on drug availability.

4. Drug Markets Trends, Turnover, and Social Impact

Only after all the fieldwork data have been completely analysed will it be possible to reconstruct the evolution of wholesale and retail drug prices and purity levels in Frankfurt. In this first-year report we will merely indicate some general trends, relying on the sources that have been examined so far.

Once the price structure is clear, we will also try to estimate the turnover of the Frankfurt drug markets. In particular, we will estimate the turnover of the heroin market on the basis of the average consumption patterns of users, following the method developed by Richard Hartnoll and Roger Lewis in an unpublished report for the British Home Office (n.d.). This method was tested by Pino Arlacchi and Roger Lewis in several ethnographic investigations of local Italian heroin markets (see, f. i., Arlacchi and Lewis, 1990) and it was employed by Paoli to estimate the turnover of the Italian heroin market (see Censis, 1992: 35-138). Combining these estimates with other types of data, this chapter will also attempt to identify and assess the social and economic impact of drug markets on the two cities.

Finally, by carefully analysing interviews with dealers and judicial documents, we will try to assess the proceeds, profits and costs of drug dealing enterprises operating at different levels of the drug distribution system. To achieve such a goal, we will predominantly rely on judicial sources, that are in some cases very detailed and have so far not been explored by any social scientist.

Oscillations and long-term trends

Before entering into details, it is important to stress that drug prices are subject to huge variations due to the illegal status of the commodities. Unlike legal goods, there are no standardised prices in drug markets. The illegal status of the substances strongly affects the interplay of demand and supply and sharply increases transaction costs, meaning as the time and energy buyers and sellers need to invest and the precautions they need to take in order to envisage and conclude a commercial exchange (Williamson, 1987: 18 ff.).

Only at the lowest level do open marketplaces exist where anybody can go and buy drugs, even if he (or she) does not personally know a dealer. If you buy a heroin *Plombe* (small ball) in the Central Station or in the surrounding streets, the prices and purity are the same for everybody: DM 20-25 (Euros 10,2-12,8) for a bit less than a quarter gram of heroin at about 5 percent purity (Interviews FF30 and FF42).

As soon as the quantities increase, the buyer needs to be introduced to the dealer by a common acquaintance, who guarantees the reliability of the former to the latter and vice versa. Furthermore, there are no impersonal mechanisms to let demand and supply meet. Due to the illegality of the goods under examination, sellers are prevented from publicising their merchandise and its prices, while buyers often have difficulties finding suppliers and are discouraged from acquiring information from several dealers, as looking around for drugs is always a risk.

The consolidation of standardised prices is further hindered by the widespread practice of heavily cutting drugs with amorphous substances. Depending on the source, even similar amounts of the same drug may be imported in Frankfurt with very different purity levels. And they may subsequently be cut by wholesale and retail dealers into different percentages. Even within the same quantity range, purity levels – and, consequently, even the price – of a substance may differ radically. Since the beginning of the 1990s the quality of street heroin in Frankfurt is usually below 10 percent. In private circles, however, large and small amounts of heroin with a 20-30 percent purity can still be purchased. As easy to expect, the prices vary accordingly. Whereas one can buy a gram of the first type for about DM 50-60 (Euros 25,6-30,7), in order to get a gram of the better quality, one needs to pay more than DM 100 and sometimes as much as DM 150 (Euros 76,7) (Interview FF9).

As soon as the lowest retail level is overcome, drug prices register even wider oscillations. The price of a certain drug amount is primarily affected by the drug purity, but other variables are also at play. The most important ones were listed by the Frankfurt police in their last drug report:

“The prices of narcotics and cutting substances swing according to the market law of the supply and demand and are dependent on:

- the quantity purchased
- the degree of purity
- the nationality of the sellers and buyers (German people usually pay higher prices)
- the trust relationship between the seller and the buyer
- the method of payment (cash/commission” (PPF, 2000: 75).

As a dealer even more candidly put it, “the purchase of drugs is always very much dependent on luck and chance and, above all, on connections” (Interview FF68). Only if all these variables are taken into account (and often they cannot be), long-term trends in drug prices can be identified in a reliable way. Notwithstanding these difficulties, most of the users, dealers and law enforcement officers whom we interviewed pointed to a long-term decline in wholesale and retail prices for all drugs, with the exception of cannabis, ever since the 1970s.

Heroin

The decline has affected, above all, heroin prices. The fall has, however, been accompanied by a sharp decreasing of heroin purity. Looking back at his ten year experience as heroin buyer, the 29-year-old Ralph notes that “the dope has worsened, but the prices have lowered. No doubt, the dope has become much cheaper, but the quality and the purity have also worsened” (Interview FF55; see also Interview FF29). The older Lydia also identifies the same trend:

“When I began using heroin about 20 years ago, you had to pay DM 300 (Euros 153,4) for a gram, but the quality was much better. Today you hardly find heroin from South Asia, you only find ‘brown’ from Turkey” (Interview FF61).

As Lydia notes and several other interviewees confirm, up to the mid-1980s the price of a gram oscillated between DM 200 and 300 (Euros 102,3-153,4). The purity was correspondingly much higher. Though the ‘white’ heroin from Southeast Asia disappeared from the Frankfurt market in the early 1980s, the quality of the ‘brown sugar’ heroin was initially rather high. According to several users, even on the street market heroin purity was about 30 percent and even end-users could obtain heroin with 40-50 percent purity levels from private dealers (Interviews FF69, FF28, FF68, and FF42).

Since the mid-1980s both prices and purity have sharply fallen and stabilised on very low levels only in the late 1990s. Since 1999 “a gram of heroin can be bought for DM 40 (Euros 20,5), but the quality is sometimes terribly bad” (Interview FF68). Most users estimate that the purity of street doses currently ranges between 5 and 10 percent. As a discouraged Lukas put it, “On the street 5 percent is sometimes already a high level ...” (Interview FF9). Similar estimates are also confirmed by law enforcement officers (Interviews FC1 and FC11). As a result, users’ savings are often more illusory than real, as they have to buy more in order to obtain the same effects: “If in the past I paid DM 50 (Euros 25,6) in order to be happy, now I have to pay at least DM 200 (Euros 102,3)” (Interview FF9). As another interviewee maintains, “the price-to-quality ratio was significantly better five years ago” (Interview FF32).

The minimal heroin dose is not the gram, but the *Plombe*, a new selling unit that became popular in the 1990s and has largely substituted the previous ‘packs’. *Plomben* are small amounts of heroin or cocaine that are wrapped in several strata of condom or other type of plastic. On the Frankfurt, as well as on other drug markets, *Plomben* were introduced by North American dealers, who keep them in their mouth and swallow them if they are approached by the police. A *Plombe* containing slightly less than a quarter of a gram can currently be bought for about DM 20-25 (Euros 10,2-12,3) (Interviews FF42; Interview FF30). Smaller *Plomben* (about 0,1 grams) can, however, be purchased for as little as DM 10 (Euros 5,1) (Interviews FF21, FF30, and FF29).

Better heroin can be obtained from private dealers for a price ranging from DM 70 to 120 (Euros 35,8-61,4) a gram. In these cases, the purity usually ranges from 20 to 30 percent (Interviews FF69 and FF68). If the user has a good contact, however, the quality can be even higher. Franz- Joseph, for example, states that in the early months of 2000 he repeatedly bought 3 grams of heroin from Russian dealers at DM 150 (Euros 76,7) a gram. Allegedly, the purity of 'Russian' heroin exceeds 30 percent (Interview FF42; see also Interview FF28).

Depending on the quality, the price of a kilogram of heroin is about DM 40-45.000 (Euros 20.451,7-23.008,1) (Interviews FF28 and FF29). For these amounts, the purity levels currently oscillate between 40 and 60 percent (Interview FC1). If the quality is much better, however, up to DM 80.000 (Euros 40903,3) may need to be paid (PFF, 2000: 75).

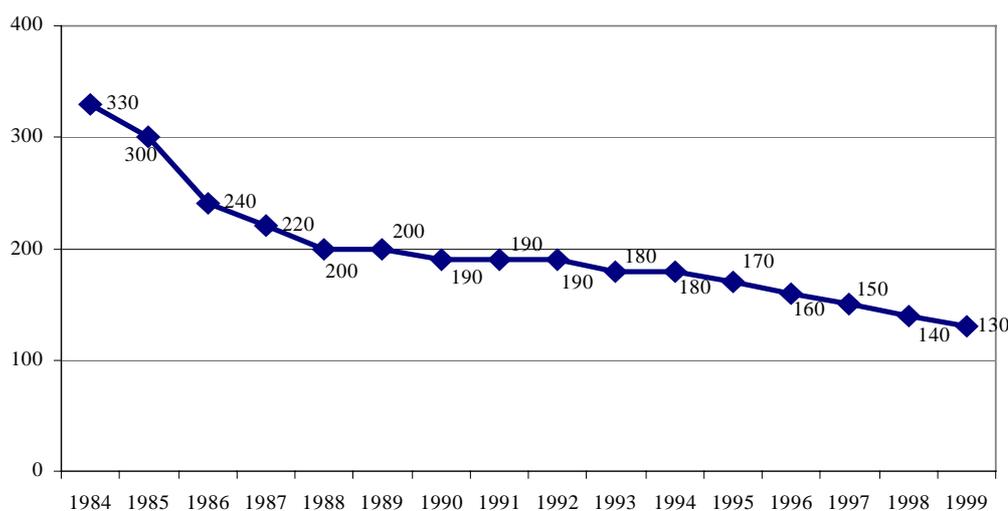
Finally, it is interesting to point out that, despite the size of the local open drug scene, many users and dealers point out that Frankfurt is not necessarily the best place to buy heavy drugs and, specifically, heroin. Indeed, many interviewees say that they used to go not only to Holland but also to several northern German cities to supply themselves with heroin. As Milfina put it, "the further north you go, the cheaper the heroin becomes" (Interview FF21). The difference was allegedly most pronounced at the beginning of the 1990s. "In the early 1990s", according to Lukas, "Bremen was the best place to buy heroin in Germany" (Interview FF9) and, for similar quantities, the purity levels were there at least twice those of Frankfurt. Not the drug quality, but its availability has thus been the main attraction of the Frankfurt open drug scene. According to other users, even in local neighbouring cities one can buy better heroin than in Frankfurt, because local dealers supply themselves directly in Holland.

Cocaine

Since the early 1980s the prices of cocaine have also sharply declined and stabilised only at the end of the following decade. According to several interviewees, in the early 1980s a gram of cocaine cost up to DM 350 (Euros 179). The average quality was, however, considerably high and users with minimal experience could easily buy cocaine at 30-40 percent purity levels (Interviews FF68 and FF20). In 1989, a gram of cocaine still cost around DM 200 (Euros 102,3) and, depending on the quality, could exceed DM 250 (Euros 127,8) (PPF, 1990: 22). During the 1990s, the prices of cocaine further decreased. According to the latest police drug report, in 1999 the price of a gram of cocaine oscillated between DM 70 to 130 (Euros 35,8-66,5) (PPF, 2000: 75). The lower end is, however, the price usually obtained by dealers who buy larger lots and then sell single grams to end-users. Agnes, for example, recalls that she buys her supply at DM 90 and she sells cocaine to her customers at DM 130 a gram (Euros 66,5) (see also Interviews FF20 and FF26). Agnes is the only interviewee who refers to a slight increase in cocaine prices in 1999. Up to the beginning of that year, in fact, she allegedly used to buy cocaine at DM 80 (Euros 40,9) a gram and to sell it at DM 120 (Euros 61,4) (Interview FF54). It is not yet clear whether Agnes' experience represents the beginning of a new trend, signalling the growing popularity of cocaine, or is a mere exception.

Graph 8 shows the trend of cocaine prices for end-users, as it has been reconstructed by Stefan, a former dealer and now consumer of cocaine. They refer to quantities ranging

Graph 8. The evolution of cocaine prices on the Frankfurt retail market (grams) ~ 1984-1999



Source: Interview FF68.

from 1 to 5 grams. Especially in the open drug scene, smaller units are also on sale. Cocaine *Plomben* of different size (ranging from 0,25 to 0,1 grams) can be bought at the Central Station and the smallest ones (0,1 grams) cost as little as DM 20 (Euros 10,2) (Interviews FF30 and FF21).

According to Udo, a kilogram of cocaine of “good Colombian quality” costs about DM 80-90.000 (Euros 40.903,3-46.010,3). Depending on the purity and the buyer’s connections, the same quantity can also be bought for as little as DM 50.000 (Euros 25.564,6) (PPF, 2000: 75). The price decline at the wholesale level has been much less steep than at the retail one. In the late 1980s, in fact, a kilogram of cocaine cost between DM 100.000 and 150.000 (Euros 51.129,2-76.693,8) (PPF, 1989: 22). The gap between the wholesale and retail trend is explained by the fact that cocaine is cut much more consistently now than in the past. Though there still seem to be dealers selling very pure cocaine (Interview FF20), according to other interviewees it has become very difficult to find cocaine on the retail market with a purity level of over 10-15 percent. Data on purity levels have been requested from the Frankfurt police, but are not yet available.

Ecstasy

The same declining trends have also affected the price and MDMA content of ecstasy pills. As Costa notes, “with time pills became cheaper and cheaper and the supply grew. There are many pills on the market today, also many that are rubbish. You can no longer trust what you buy, as you could in the past” (Interview FF6). Whereas in the early 1990s a pill cost as much as DM 30-50 (Euros 15,4-25,6) in a disco (PPF, 1996: 64; see also BGH, 1996, AGF, 1995), the prices now oscillate between DM 10 and 15 (Euros 5,1-7,7). The quality decline has been even deeper, so much so that now the label ‘ecstasy’ is used to indicate a variety of amphetamine derivatives and not necessarily the original MDMA. Cutting substances, such as lactose and saccharose, are also used more abundantly than in the past.

In the earliest phases of the techno scene a veritable marketing strategy was at work and different types of ecstasy pills were recognisable from their logos. The most common ones were Elephants, Smilies, Phantoms, Tulips or letters such as TC, PAX and H (Keup, 1997). As long as most of the ingredients to prepare ecstasy were legal, only a small number of producers, closely linked to the rising techno scene, were in charge of its preparation. Since ecstasy and its ingredients were prohibited, however, many new producers and dealers have entered the new market, hoping to reap fat profits from the new, illegal status of the substance. As a result, ecstasy recipes have multiplied and the content range has rapidly widened (Schmidt-Semisich and Neumeyer, 1997). Though the logos are still applied, the buyer has no certainty about the composition of the pills.

“In the past”, Recep recalls, “there were only a couple of pills and the market could be more easily assessed. When you took Elephants or Smilies, you knew the effect they were going to have, but now you cannot rely on the fact that the pills are going to have the same chemical composition, you have to trust your supplier that he does not sell you rubbish” (Interview FF46).

An anonymous user, who posted a message on the internet, made strikingly similar considerations:

“The Mitsubishi pill is not the same everywhere. In Hamburg there are other Mitsubishi than in Frankfurt. Yeah, according to my assessment, there are at least fifty types of Mitsubishi that I had in my hands. ... Though maybe not so extreme, the same is valid for any pill” (www.suchtzentrum.de/drogenscouts/erfahrungen).

Cannabis

According to most observers, cannabis prices have remained largely stable over the years. Depending on the quality, a gram costs DM 15-18 (Euros 7,7-9,2), for larger quantities (100-250 grams), one pays DM 6-7 (Euros 3-3,6) a gram and for kilograms, the price is around DM 4 (Euros 2) a gram (Interviews FF68 and FF28).

5. The Public Response and Its Impact on Drug Markets

The evolution of the public response to the rise and consolidation of drug markets in Frankfurt will be dutifully reconstructed in the final report, as the analysis of expert interviews, newspaper clippings and official programmes and reports is still ongoing. By comparing information drawn from all these sources, we will briefly describe the action of state and local public bodies, ranging from the law enforcement agencies to drug treatment centres, also paying attention to drug-related NGOs. By examining the goals and action of all these different actors, in the final report we will sketch the Frankfurt drug policy from the early 1970s to the 1990s. As far as possible, we will also try to assess its impact on the evolution of the local drug markets.

For the moment, it suffices to say that Frankfurt is usually considered at the forefront of the German drug policy. The latter, however, has traditionally been very conservative and up to the late 1980s, when the AIDS epidemic exploded, was veritably “intolerant, emphasising repression of users and (often coercive) drug-free treatment” (Hartnoll and Hedrich, 1996: 43). Unlike other cities, Frankfurt’s city administration, which was controlled by the SPD (Social Democrats) until 1977, initially tolerated an open drug scene in a park at the city centre. Shortly after the CDU (Christian Democrats) came to power, however, the open drug scene was closed down and in 1981, after the users were chased around the city, they were allowed to settle down around the main station (see Chapter 1). Only in 1989, when the SPD won back the city government, was the open

drug scene allowed to develop again at the other end of the park where it was originally located (Noller, 1991).

Up until the late 1980s, reform initiatives were predominantly developed not by the public (city or regional) administration, but by small groups of activists, who criticised the prevailing policy and pressed for alternative approaches. In 1982 the first outreach project was set up around the main station and was active up until 1988. A year afterwards, a Junkie Union was formed, but due to police pressure, it lasted only a few months. A telephone hotline was also established by a new NGO in the same year (Drogenotruf) (Interview FB8). In 1985, another outreach project was started by an independent NGO (AIDS-Hilfe) (Interview FB4; see also Hartnoll and Hedrich, 1996, and Kindermann *et al.*, 1989).

The main turn in the city's drug policy came in the late 1980s, when the AIDS epidemic became most acute. Though the change started in 1988 under the CDU administration, it was accelerated in 1989, when the Green/SPD (Social Democrats) coalition came to power. A few months afterwards, the Drogenreferat (Drug Policy Division) was set up under the responsibility of the Councillor for Women and Health. The latter also began to chair a drug co-ordination group, which was set up in autumn 1988 and involved regular meetings of the police, prosecutors and city health and welfare authorities. The meetings usually took place on Mondays, so much so that the group is known as 'Montagsrunde' (Monday group). In addition to that, weekly Friday meetings were started, which involved the DPD, local NGOs and the police, to discuss co-operation on more practical issues.

Through the (not always easy) co-operation among different social, judicial, administrative and political actors, during the 1990s there has been a noticeable shift in emphasis from repression of users and drug-free treatment to harm reduction, crisis intervention, and the acceptance of drug use. The core principles of the new philosophy were defined in a key document by the Monday group, "To Live with Drug Addicts", which was also approved by the City Council in 1991:

"The attempt to eliminate drugs and drug use from our culture has failed. It seems probable that in the future we will have to continue to live with drugs and drug users. Instead of denying this fact, we should create the conditions that enable the reduction of risks, limit damage, and reduce suffering" (Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 1991).

Some of the harm reduction measures that were implemented during the 1990s have already been mentioned in Chapter 1. The successes and failures of these measures will be reviewed extensively in the final second-year report. For the moment it suffices to say that many of the drug users whom we interviewed, praise the diversified supply of health and social services for injecting drug users and emphasise that much more is being done in Frankfurt than in most other German cities. As an enthusiastic Iris put it, "I find it simply very good. Here a lot is done for drug users. And the services are much better than in other cities" (Interviews FF45; see also Interview FF69).

After the opening of the safe injection rooms in late 1994 (Happel, 2000), however, the city drug policy seems to have lost much of its innovative power and has simply continued along the tracks that were set up in the early 1990s. The attention of the city administration and law enforcement institutions is still largely focused on the open drug scene (Interview FB6) because this is the most visible and problematic segment of the illicit drug market and the one that produces most nuisance for shopkeepers and the general public. Nevertheless, the city administration and its partners have been slow to react to even the challenges arising from open drug scene. In particular, except for a working group set up by the police and for a specific outreach project, which however focuses on young users (PPF, 2000; Crack-Street-Projekt, 19; Interviews FB5 and FC1), hardly any initiative has been taken to tackle the rapid expansion of cocaine and, specifically, crack use. As a discouraged Stefan, himself a former heroin and cocaine user and who is now enrolled in the methadone substitution programme, notes,

“because of their crack use, a large number of methadone-substituted addicts are today in a pitiful situation analogous to the past, as heroin addicts without methadone. They obtain their opiates from the doctor and today are even more dependent on cocaine as on heroin in the past” (Interview FF68).

Though discussed for almost a decade, the controlled distribution of heroin has not yet started. Its implementation was prevented, firstly, by the unavoidable tensions inherent in a drug policy based on multi-agency co-operation and, then, by the constraints set up by the national legislative framework. Christa Nickels, the Representative of the Federal Government for Drug Problems, has now pledged that in Frankfurt and few other cities heroin will be distributed under medical supervision to a first sample of addicts in early 2001 (Nickels, 2000; *Der Spiegel*, 29/2000: 19). As an actor on the open drug scene put it, “hopefully, it will not be too late”.

PART III. THE MILAN DRUG MARKET

With 1,3 million inhabitants (ISTAT, 2000a), Milan is Italy's second largest city and it heads one of Italy's richest and most developed regions. With over 320.000 billion *Lire* (1994 value; Euros 165 million), in fact, Lombardy produces 20 percent of Italy's gross domestic product (GDP) and also records one of the highest GDP shares per inhabitant (ISTAT, 1997: 80). Though it is no longer called the "moral capital" after the *Tangentopoli* scandals of the early 1990s, Milan has undoubtedly been leading the country both during the industrial and post-industrial revolutions. In the 1950s and 1960s Milan was, with Turin, the propulsive engine of Italy's industrialisation and its large Fordist factories attracted dozens of thousands of migrants, first, from the countryside and mountains in Northern Italy and then from the underdeveloped South (see Alasia and Montaldi, 1975).

While its large Fordist factories in the hinterland are forced to close or to restructure themselves, today Milan leads Italy on the uncertain path of post-industrialisation. It is not only the seat of the Italian financial market and of the media business, but it is also on the frontier of the 'new economy'. As such, it shows the potentialities of new development, but also the disequilibria, tensions and anxieties of the transformation process.

Since the late 1980s Milan has become a magnet for the new migration flows coming from the periphery of Europe: above all, North Africa and the Eastern European countries which belonged to the so-called the Second World. In 1998 there were almost 100.000 foreign residents in Milan, who made up for 7,3 percent of the population: Italy's second highest rate after Rome (*La Repubblica*, November 11, 1999: vii; ISTAT, 2000b). Though still far from Frankfurt's standards, the number of foreigners living in Milan is much higher in reality, if one considers the unregistered ones (Palidda, 1998 and 1999).

As in most large Western European cities, in Milan a large-scale market in illegal drugs developed during the 1970s and ever since then it has expanded and diversified. As in many other fields, Milan's drug markets do not only reflect national trends but, due to its size, wealth and geographical position, it also anticipates and magnifies them. For this reason, the city was chosen as the Italian site for the present research project.

In this report, different facets of Milan's illegal drug market will be described and at least roughly examined. The first chapter is devoted to the evolution of drug use. The second focuses on the geography and social organisation of retail markets: it aims to analyse where and how the drug demand meets its supply. The formation and evolution

of the latter are the main topic of the third chapter. The following one focuses on prices and purity levels of the most popular drugs. Finally, the fifth briefly examines the public response to the rise and consolidation of illegal drug markets in Milan.

1. The Demand: Drugs and Users

At the beginning of the 21st century, the demand of illegal drugs is more widespread and diversified in Milan than ever before. Throughout the 1980s, the most requested illegal substances were heroin and cannabis, which were consumed by different categories of people and which were sold in rigidly separated places (Rotaris, 2000). Starting from the end of that decade, however, the demand for illegal drugs has increased and diversified. While heroin use stabilised and then began to decrease, new drugs, such as ecstasy, became popular and other ones were rediscovered or became attractive to a large pool of consumers. Cocaine, in particular, which has been available in Milan ever since the mid-1970s, was consumed for a long time only within two restricted circles: the underworld and the so-called *Milano bene* (that is the city's economic, cultural and political elites). The last decade of the 20th century registered, however, a sharp growth in cocaine use, which, according to many observers, was favoured by its declining prices. At the same time, LSD and amphetamines, which lost popularity in the early 1970s after their admittance to the list of prohibited substances, also re-emerged in the 1990s, finding a limited, but meaningful number of fans among disco and party-goers. These consumption trends are fostered by the positive, mythical image of drugs which is diffused by the universal mass subculture: songs, movies, as well as the new stars of show business.

An increasingly diversified drug-using population

As a plurality of illegal substances became popular next to heroin and cannabis, a diversification process also occurred in the drug consumer population. Today the latter can no longer be described with reference to a single cluster of demographic, social, and cultural characteristics, nor can their drug use be explained by referring to one or few economic or social variables. Next to the 'traditional' heavy drug addicts (called *tossici* in the Italian slang), consumers of illegal drugs can be found within all social, age and cultural strata and their drug use, which is often occasional or at least under control, cannot be explained with reference to their supposed marginalisation. The "paradox of normality", that was highlighted by Faccioli and Simoni in the mid-1980s, seems to be even more true today. After analysing the files of 383 clients of a public drug treatment

centre in Bologna and comparing the information with a control group of “normal” non drug-using youth, the two researchers concluded:

“The sociological variables traditionally used to explain the wide phenomenology of social deviance are not able to carry out their reassuring function when the research object is a drug. On the basis of our research findings, we could not design a profile for the subject “clearly bent” [to become drug addict], but of a young person who is striking for his resemblance to his peers, whether they are drug users and not” (1984: 584; see also C.T.S.T.- U.S.L. 27 Bologna Ovest, 1985 and Faccioli and Quarnolo, 1987).

Our research shows that many of the so-called *tossici* were born and grew up in difficult social and economic conditions. The latter, however, are not overproportionally registered among the new generations of illegal (largely non-heroin) drug users. Most of them are high-school or university students, employees, entrepreneurs, intellectuals or unemployed: in a word, persons who can hardly be distinguished from ‘normal’ non-drug using citizens.

The Milan demand for illegal drugs acquired a new component in the 1990s. As a result of immigration flows, foreigners have suddenly and (somehow) unexpectedly become a growing portion of Milanese drug consumers. Using cannabis, but also increasingly heroin and cocaine, the so-called *extra-comunitari* frequently occupy the most marginalised and criminalised positions of the Milan drug market (Interviews MF17, MF27, and MF29).

The spread of drug use among non-EU foreigners does not emerge from the data collected by the six Milan Servizi per le Tossicodipendenze (Ser.T, Offices for Addictions): these public drug treatment offices, in fact, are entitled to provide treatment only to Milan residents. There are, nonetheless, other indications of this trend. It is meaningful, for example, that in Lombardy, out of 3.327 new prisoners, who declared to be drug users in 1997, 1.114 have been foreigners (ISTAT, 1999: 493). In the Milanese city prison of San Vittore, since 1999 more than 50 percent of all prisoners admitting drug problems are foreigners (Comune di Milano, 2000: 4). Likewise, according to a foreign social worker involved in an outreach project next to the Stazione Centrale, in only a few months 115 new contacts were established with drug users coming from North and Central Africa (Palidda, 1999).

To gain information about this new phenomenon, at the beginning of 1999 the Comune di Milano launched an explorative project on “*Tossicodipendenti extra-comunitari a Milano*”. The results of this investigation and the over 20 interviews with foreign drug users which were carried out in the present project show that, whereas many North African migrants had already smoked cannabis in their home countries, they start to consume hard drugs once they come to Italy (or to Europe). Some of them begin to use heroin and cocaine because they are already involved in drug dealing or in order to get ‘high’ before committing property crimes. Others, instead, start to experiment with

drugs together with friends in order to be accepted into the community or to forget the hard conditions in which they are obligated to live. In the early phases of drug consumption, foreigners usually sniff or smoke cocaine and/or heroin but, once they become addicted, some of them overcome their cultural barriers and begin to inject drugs (Bruno, 1999; Palidda, 1999; see also Comune di Milano, 2000).

In this increasingly diversified demand for illegal drugs a common trend can nonetheless be identified. Despite their illegal status, the use of some drugs –above all, hashish but, in some contexts also cocaine– has by and large become ‘normal’ and is widely practised and accepted. The consumption of cannabis is so widespread that, according to Giovanni, a university law student and regular hashish smoker, the lawmakers should legalise soft drugs:

“Wherever you go in Milan at night, you meet people smoking joints and many smoke them also at 6 o’clock in their homes. There are people who smoke [joints] every day. Given that, it seems a stubbornness to me, not to legalise this thing. I believe that among the lawmakers’ tasks there is also the task to adapt laws to the people’s will and the people’s will seems to me to smoke joints” (Interview MF21).

The diffusion of party drugs and cocaine has been stressed by another interviewee, who works in discos on weekend. “In discos, the drug use is so enormous that, if you work there it becomes rather normal to use drugs over a weekend” (Interview MF23). This normalisation tendency has been recently highlighted even by the Comune di Milano and the Azienda Sanitaria Locale – Città di Milano, on which the six Ser.T depend. In a joint directive issued in May 2000, the two bodies state:

“We observe the diffusion, both among young people and adults, of a culture fostering the substantial normalisation of drug use. The collective symbolic system seems to accept consumption patterns of some (legal and illegal) substances, while it criminalises and marginalises exclusively heroin addicts, who are considered as the only problem users. This ‘normalising culture’ deprives youths from protective instruments which can help them to make choices functional to their health. It increases, instead, the risks of shifting from occasional drug use to abuse and dependency” (Comune di Milano, 2000: 3; see also ASL - Città di Milano, 2000).

The development of the Milan’s illegal drug market

Up until the mid-1960s the consumption of psychoactive drugs was restricted to a close circle of people belonging to Italy’s economic and cultural elites. And drugs were considered as an elite, expensive hobby by the public. In a 1973 study of drug users’ image in the Italian press, the researchers concluded that wealth was the factor most frequently associated with drug consumption. None of the newspapers examined (*Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, *Il Giorno*, *L’Unità*, and *L’Avvenire*) mentioned the equation, which was later to become common, between drugs and marginalisation (Caraccia *et. al.*, 1974). A great part of the population was not only extraneous to, but also ignorant about drug use. “Narcotics are a mysterious universe for the public.

Newspapers provide an image drawn from the repertoires of decadence Italian style” (Rusconi and Blumir, 1972: 154).

From the mid-1960s, however, the experimentation with drugs – above all, cannabis and some hallucinogens – spread among young people, socialised to the American counterculture. In these cliques, founded on friendship ties, common musical tastes, and political ideas, the use of drugs was not compulsory. Following a series of sensationalistic press campaigns, however, it progressively became an instrument to define the group identity and to strengthen its cohesion. The scandal of the “drug boat” in Rome and the news of drug parties in numerous Italian cities helped to create a reputation of transgression around these youth circles, which, in turn, strengthened the feeling of group belonging among the initiates (Blumir, 1976; Arlacchi e Lewis, 1990: 57-66; Ruggiero, 1992: 135-48; Ravenna, 1993: 47-55).

The study carried out by Luigi Cancrini and his staff in Rome in 1969–70 portrayed this phase of the evolution of the Italian drug market. By carrying out an extensive survey in public and private hospitals, prisons and some high schools, the research proved that drug consumption was a different and more limited phenomenon than the media showed. No more than 2-3.000 people were estimated by the Cancrini team to regularly use drugs in Italy. Most of them were males and belonged to all social classes. Cannabis above all, but also hallucinogens and cocaine, were the substances most frequently used ([1973], 1977).

According to several scholars, the development of the heavy drug market in the 1970s was not so much built up by cannabis use, but by the high diffusion of psychopharmaka and, in particular, amphetamines, which were sold freely up to 1972 (Capelli and Grassi, 1982). As Bandini and Gatti put it, “the mass diffusion of psychopharmaka created a habit which can be called ‘drug-friendly’ (*tossicofilo*) and prepared the diffusion of illegal drugs, particularly of heroin” (1987: 293). This thesis is also confirmed by one of the most experienced drug treatment providers in Milan. According to this respondent,

“Drug use reached popular levels through amphetamines. After 1968, when ‘flower power kids’ who had introduced the use of acid and psychedelic substances were phasing out, there was an amphetamine market in Milan. Brera [the artists’ quarter close to the city centre, Author’s note] was the typical place where these substances could be bought” (Interview MA9).

It was in 1972, when amphetamine sale was restricted, that the first morphine lots came to Italy. Produced by German firms, large morphine quantities were sent to Bangladesh within an international aid programme, but were then largely smuggled into Pakistan. There they were bought by European tourists and, in a ‘disorganised’ way, imported back into many Western European countries and also into Italy (Capelli and Grassi, 1982).

Once the morphine lots ran out, heroin arrived. The first official drug-related death was registered in 1973, but only at the end of 1974 did heroin become available in the developing drug marketplaces of large Italian cities. In the late 1970s, according to Saverio Morabito, who later co-ran one of Milan's most successful drug dealing enterprises, "heroin was [still] a rare thing. Cocaine was maybe known in better circles than those of drug addicts but heroin, let's say, was a real novelty. We did not have a network of clients" (TrMI, 1997: 960).

According to other sources, however, the first groups of regular heroin users consolidated around 1975. Blumir, who carried out several studies on drug use in those years (1976; see also 1973), estimated that about 5.000 people in all of Italy were initially involved. Most of them were "former amphetamine users, stunned freaks, completely ruined people" and as soon as heroin prices increased, they rapidly became "a squad of full-time workers in street dealing", further contributing to the diffusion of the new drug. In those years, heroin attracted many people who had participated in the 1968 and 1977 youth protest movements and who were disappointed by their failure. One of our interviewees, for example, is a former terrorist whose ideological and political crisis drove him to become a drug user and dealer in the late 1970s (Interviews MB1 and MA9; Rotaris, 2000).

From the early 1980s heroin also became an illusory panacea for the marginalised youths of Milan's peripheries, most of whom were born somewhere else and had moved to Milan with their families during the 1960s. Within a few years this component rapidly became predominant and heroin progressively lost any rebellious characterisation. By the mid-1980s, as Arlacchi and Lewis point out, "almost any trace of the alternative ideology of the early 1970s [had] disappeared from the heroin addicts' subculture. Even the image of the misunderstood young junkie, who scrapes up a living in his way and fights against an oppressive society, lost all its appeal. Heroin use lost its transgressive status" (1989: 45).

Although the analysis of the research material is far from being accomplished, it is clear that from the early 1980s two largely separate illegal drug markets consolidated in Milan (Rotaris, 2000). On the one hand, there was the cannabis market, which progressively lost its close association with the 1968 counterculture and attracted a wider young public, cutting across all social and educational distinctions. On the other hand, there was the heroin market, which increasingly found its recruits among the marginalised youths of the city periphery. In the 1980s, hallucinogens and amphetamines, which were previously diffused, disappeared from the market, while cocaine kept on being used for most of the decade within very restricted cliques.

Cannabis

In Italy, no surveys are regularly conducted to assess the prevalence of drug use in the general population and hardly any scientific research has been specifically carried out on cannabis use in Italy (at least none is known to the author of this report). Cannabis users are hardly recorded in general epidemiological statistics, because most of them have no contact with public or private drug treatment providers. The point was clearly made in the most recent “Annual Report on the State of the Drug Problem in Italy”, which was submitted by the Italian Ministero degli Affari Sociali to the EMCDDA. On page 38, it states: “There is limited information on trends in terms of the use of cannabis, as users tend not to seek treatment” (2000: 38).

The only national statistical data that can be referred to are the estimates submitted to the United Nations Drug Control Program by the Italian Government in the 1997 World Drug Report. According to this source, a prevalence of 1,4 percent annual use of cannabis was estimated in 1994, which in absolute figures means 600.000 to 800.000 persons (UNDCP, 1997: 270).

Despite the lack of ‘hard data’, there is no doubt that ever since the early 1980s cannabis has been the most frequently used illegal drug in Milan and, more generally, in Italy. This fact is not only compatible with research findings in most other European countries, which also show the widespread popularity of cannabis derivatives (EMCDDA, 1999, 2000), but also in the Milan area it is confirmed by in-depth interviews with several regular hashish and marijuana users and by some local studies.

A 1997 survey, which was conducted in several Milanese high schools, shows that hashish use is more widespread than the above-quoted national estimates would suggest and involves at least one third of Milanese teenagers. More than 30 percent of the 689 respondents, in fact, admitted that they had used hashish. 36,7 percent said that the majority of their friends smoke it, while almost a third answered that they had a few friends who were hashish users. The drug availability also seems to be very high. More than half of the respondents stated that, if they wanted, they could easily find hashish and an additional 15 percent said that they would probably be able to buy it (Ginosa, 1998: 21).

On the basis of our in-depth interviews, furthermore, we can hypothesise that cannabis use is at least equally widespread among young people of older age groups, cutting across all social and educational distinctions. Up to their early thirties, many university

▪ Table 1. Hashish use and familiarity among Milan’s high school students

Percent of

	respondents
I have used hashish	30,8 %
I have <u>some</u> friends who use hashish	29,5 %
I have <u>many</u> friends who use hashish	36,7 %
If I wanted, I could <u>easily</u> find hashish	53,1 %
If I wanted, I could <u>probably</u> find hashish	15,2 %

Source: Ginosa, 1998: 211-31.

students, employees, licit and illicit entrepreneurs occasionally or regularly smoke cannabis derivatives. Alfredo, a twenty-six-year-old law student belonging to Milan's upper class states, for example, that

“especially in my city, Milan, among the people I go out with it is truly difficult to find someone who does not at least smoke some joints. I have no friends who neither smoke hashish or marijuana; some use ecstasy” (Interview MF20).

Hashish use seems to be widespread among foreign migrants as well. Some, especially Moroccans, had already smoked it in their home countries (Interview MF41). Others have become familiar with it in Italy.

Consumption patterns also vary. For many Italians and foreigners, cannabis is the only illegal drug they use, though it may be accompanied by alcoholic beverages. Others smoke hashish, after sniffing cocaine or taking an ecstasy pill, to come down from the ‘highs’ of these drugs (Interviews MF43 and MF22).

Most users smoke joints only occasionally. Some do it every day, smoking between two and five joints (i.e. about 1-2 grams a day). A dealer stated that for a while he smoked up to 50 joints a day (20 grams of hashish). For most users, cannabis consumption undergoes huge variations with time. Alfredo, for example, told us that he spends on the average 30.000 *Lire* (Euros 15,5) a week on hash and with this amount he prepares 6-9 joints. But he also points out,

“I cannot talk about a weekly or monthly frequency because there are phases when I don't have as many commitments or the situation allows me, or I see certain friends ... on these occasions I smoke [joints] every evening. In other phases, for work or study reasons, it may happen that for about two months I smoke [joints] very rarely” (MF20).

Both users and law enforcement officers claim that in the second half of the 1990s there was a revival of marijuana, which had been largely absent from the market in the previous fifteen years (Interviews MC5, MC6, MF22; see Chapters 3 and 4).

Heroin

After the peak in the second half of the 1980s, the 1990s have registered a stabilisation and even a decline in heroin demand in Milan. As a Tunisian dealer, who has lived and worked in Milan since 1994, notes, “heroin users have diminished. There are not so many as there used to be” (Interview MF29).

It is especially the traditional role of the ‘junkie’ that seems bound to disappear. Though with some years delay, the AIDS epidemic promoted low threshold and harm reduction measures that aimed to bring users in contact with public drug treatment bodies, to make them aware of the risks associated with injecting drug use and to help them adopt healthier consumption patterns. This policy was quite successful. From 1990 to 1998, the Ser.T operating in Milan increased their clients by 47 percent. In 1990 they had 2.341 clients; eight years later, the latter had grown to 3.442 clients (Comune di Milano, 2000: 3; see Table 2).

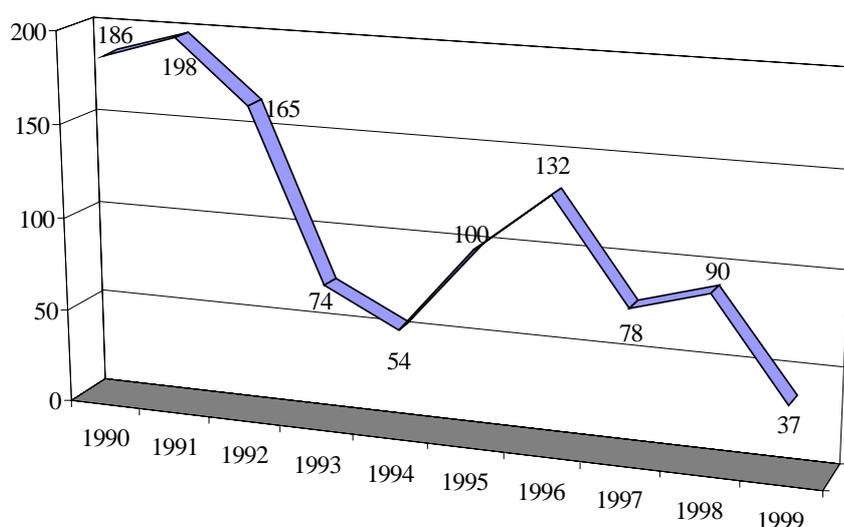
▪ Table 2. Ser.T old and new clients ~ Years 1990-1998

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Clients	2.341	2.327	2.679	3.043	3.393	3.363	3.637	3.561	3.442

Sources: Comune di Milano, *La tossicodipendenza a Milano*, several years.

In parallel with the diffusion of methadone substitution treatments, the number of overdose deaths has also steeply decreased during the 1990s (Graph 1). The highest

Graph 1. Overdose deaths in the Milan province ~ 1990-1999

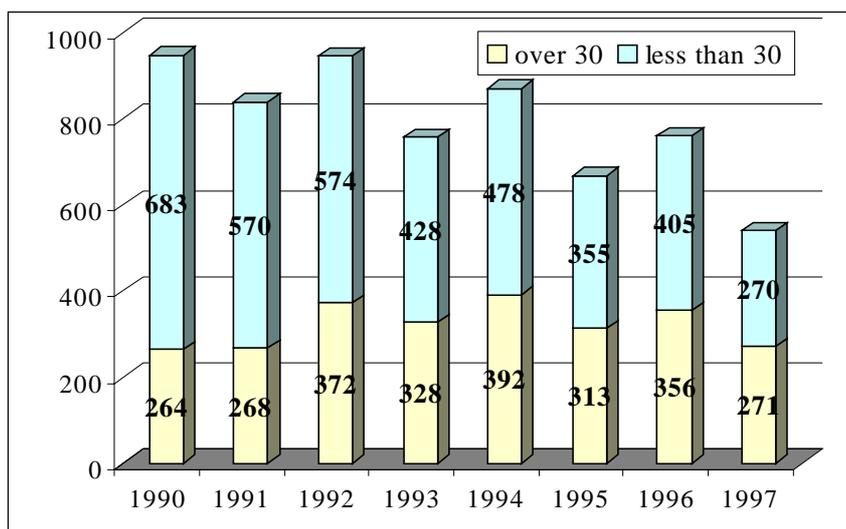


Source: Direzione Centrale per i Servizi Antidroga, 2000.

peak was reached in 1991, when 198 overdose deaths were registered. In the following three years, the latter underwent a sharp decline: in 1994 only 54 drug-related deaths were recorded. Although in the mid-1990s there was again an increase, the reversing trend stabilised in the late 1990s. In 1999 only 37 deaths were recorded in the Milan province, with an 81 percent decrease *vis-à-vis* 1991.

Indeed, the decline of overdose deaths has been so steep, that these data can also be regarded as indicator of heroin demand stabilisation. Further evidence of this trend is given by the ageing of known heavy drug users. During the 1990s, for example, the average age of the clients of the six Milanese public drug treatment units (Ser.T) has been constantly increasing. As illustrated in Graph 2, users over thirty represented 27 percent of the new clients in 1990. In 1997, however, they exceeded 50 percent of the

Graph 2. New Ser.T clients according to age ~ 1990-1997



Sources: Comune di Milano, *La tossicodipendenza a Milano*, several years; Ser.T, Data provided by dott. Roberto Mollica, Director of Ser.T 4, 1999.

total. This datum is particularly interesting because the great majority of Ser.T clients are primarily heroin users, even though the latter's percentage has been slightly declining in the last five years. In 1994, 95 percent of all Ser.T clients declared heroin to be their first drug of choice; four years later, in 1998, the percentage declined to 86 percent (see Table 3).

Table 3. Milan's Ser.T clients consuming heroin ~ 1994-1998

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Ser.T clients consuming heroin	3.224	3.228	3.379	3.212	3.154
Percent of heroin using clients of total clients	95,0%	95,9%	92,9%	90,3%	86 %

Sources: Comune di Milano, *La tossicodipendenza a Milano*, several years; Ser.T, Data provided by dott. Roberto Mollica, Director of Ser.T 4, 1999.

The data referring to the clients' age can therefore be largely related to heroin users. Given the ageing of their clients, many Ser.T workers are convinced that the great majority of the resident heroin users in Milan have been their clients at one time or another (Interviews MA1 and MA2). This conviction is confirmed by the results of two outreach projects (*unità mobili*) that have been going on in the city of Milan from 1996 to the present. Approximately half of the people contacted during the first project, which lasted from 1996 to 1998, were currently clients of one city Ser.T office, whereas 75 percent of them had (or had had) contacts with public drug treatment institutions. According to the co-ordinator of the outreach project, the percent rate would be even higher if cannabis and cocaine users who contacted the *unità mobili* were excluded and only injecting drug users were taken into account (Interview MA3).

The above data leave no doubt: ageing Italian heroin users have been increasingly inserted in the public treatment net and have been either sent to private community centres to undergo detoxification and rehabilitation programmes or involved in the methadone substitution programme. Though some of the latter may continue to use other drugs and occasionally even heroin, the methadone treatment has helped many to normalise their living patterns, to find a job and increase their social productivity (Mollica, 1997; Interview MA3).

As the datum concerning the ageing of Ser.T clients shows, there are hardly any young Italians willing to imitate the traditional heroin users. The 'junkie' career no longer has any appeal. The mass campaign for the stigmatisation of heroin has undoubtedly reached its goals. The rapid spread of AIDS consistently increased the effectiveness of this campaign. Experienced drug treatment providers recall that from the mid-1980s a whole generation of injecting drug users died because of the immune-deficiency virus and the surviving few were increasingly marginalised. As the head of a Milanese Ser.T put it, "AIDS taught a lesson to everybody and syringes and injections were avoided by all but the incurable ones" (Interview MA9).

Despite these successes, the decline of heroin consumption is less steep than could have been expected. Though the traditional 'junkie' is 'out', in the last few years new typologies of consumers have emerged. Heroin is increasingly used today by *extra-comunitari*, who largely smoke or inhale it. The respect for the body, which is particularly strong in the Muslim culture, prevents most of them from injecting heroin (Interviews MF2 and MF15). Once they become addicted, however, some of them overcome their strong cultural prejudices and use heroin intravenously to maximise its effects (Interviews MF27 and MF 29). A Tunisian migrant described his 'drug career' in the following way:

"I started in 1994, as soon as I arrived in Rome. Then I stole from supermarkets and department stores, I began to use pills like Rohypnol, sometimes I smoked joints, and I also started to drink beer because I lived in an abandoned house together with some friends and using drugs was like a

joke. We all did it, we had fun and then by chance I used heroin, it was very beautiful and since then I never stopped, up to today. It is stronger than I am” (Interview MF29).

Though he initially smoked heroin, this respondent has been long injecting it and consumes about four grams a day, selling drugs on the street to survive. Though unwillingly, more and more foreign migrants end up in the ‘junkies’ marginalisation trap, out of which most Italian drug addicts have (with difficulty) been taken.

Furthermore, heroin is used by an increasing percentage of Italian cocaine and party drug users to come down, to placate the anxiety which assails them when the cocaine or amphetamine effects diminish. After sniffing and smoking cocaine in large quantities for two years, for example, Alex started to use heroin by chance, when a friend offered it to him and soon became an addict, using up to three grams daily.

“It was a time when we used Rohypnol to fight the post-coke anxiety. That evening a high school classmate of mine showed me three or four grams of *bonzo* (or *rebonza*, *cabbaiò*, the history, flash), which was basically brown sugar. He showed these grams of heroin, but I did not want [to try it] because I could not stand junkies and I had promised myself to try everything except for heroin. Instead, it did not happen this way because that evening this friend of mine prepared eight lines and, as soon as we sniffed it, we were totally relaxed, the anxiety had disappeared and we no longer cared about anything, we felt very well. In the beginning, after sniffing [cocaine] I had my quarter of heroin and I was safe. I said to myself, I am using it for two weeks and then ... I was seventeen and a half-year-old and I initially sniffed a heroin quarter every Saturday night and smoked hashish on top of it, to have a stronger effect. With time, I consumed three grams of heroin a day” (Interview MF 22).

After a while, Alex abandoned sniffing and started to inject heroin. Only painfully did he succeed in breaking free from his heroin addiction and after an abstinence phase he has since then stuck to his first ‘love’, hashish. According to interviews with public and private drug treatment providers and some users themselves, Alex’s case is far from being an exception and many young people using cocaine and party drugs also become acquainted with heroin (Interview MF42). Though most smoke or sniff it only occasionally, some inadvertently drift into addiction. Even the Ser.T staff have started to treat this new generation of heroin users (Interview MA9).

Cocaine

A perverse, unwanted effect of the successful stigmatisation of heroin has been the diffusion of other illegal psychoactive drugs. Undoubtedly, the substance that has profited most from this campaign is cocaine. An occasional user states, “As far as I can understand, the cocaine market has widened a lot over the last few years” (Interview MF21; see also Interviews MF22 and MF28).

For its characteristics and effects, in fact, cocaine is most adequate to cope with the increasing challenges of a society cultivating performance myths in all fields. Cocaine

is hence used to pass an examination at school, to obtain better results at the workplace or in a sport competition, to have success with people of the other (or same) sex, and to face the challenges of dangerous or deviant behaviour. According to several law enforcement officers and drug treatment providers, the diffusion of cocaine was also favoured by the sharp decline in its prices (Interviews MC2; MB3; MA3; MF20). Others, including many users and dealers, however, are sceptical about this latter thesis (see Chapter 4).

Whatever the reasons, cocaine has become a *passe-partout* drug that is increasingly used by a wide-ranging spectrum of people and cuts across social and cultural stratification. Cocaine is no longer consumed only by a wealthy, elite public, as it mainly had been in the 1980s. Truthfully, top managers, models, people working in show business and in stock and financial institutions, and even allegedly some high-level local politicians remain affectionate users of this substance. As one of our interviewees points out, “many people, even those above suspicion, make use of cocaine. It is more widespread than you would guess” (Interview MF24). In 1997, the Carabinieri investigated the cocaine supply channels of people working in the largest commercial TV production centre, which is located in Milan. Several starlets were involved in the inquiry who regularly consumed cocaine (Interview MC3, and *Corriere della Sera*, November 9, 1997: 44 and December 1, 1997: 29).

During the 1990s, however, cocaine use has expanded from its traditional public. First, cocaine consumption has become popular among injecting heroin users and methadone-substituted addicts. After noting the decrease of heroin users, the already quoted Tunisian street dealer goes on, “today there are a lot of people who use cocaine, crack or ecstasy” (Interview MF29; see also Interviews MF38, MA3 and MA9). Likewise, Gennaro, a long-time heroin user and street dealer, points out that, “today everybody uses cocaine and ecstasy. Ninety-nine percent of all junkies use these things” (Interview MF38). For many heroin addicts, especially for those who have not yet entered the methadone substitution programme, cocaine often shakes their already precarious life equilibrium. On this point Gennaro states:

“People say heroin, instead what ruined me is coke. ... Despite it all, as long as I injected heroin, I managed to have a normal life, but as soon as I touched cocaine, my life changed. ... Cocaine made me do things that I thought I was not capable of doing. Cocaine is really a bastard. It is deadly. ... Now I no longer want to touch cocaine. Only heroin. If it happens, heroin and that’s it” (Interview MF38).

Furthermore, cocaine increasingly interests many young people who have previously been most closely associated with ecstasy and cannabis use. On weekend nights many of them buy a gram of cocaine together with some friends, spending about 150.000 *Lire* (Euros 77,5): that is, no more than they would to buy an ecstasy pill (whose average retail price is about 40-50.000 *Lire* (Euros 20,7-25,8); see Chapter 4). According to a Milanese university student, who occasionally snorts cocaine and works on weekends in discos, “ecstasy use, even in discos, has been substituted by cocaine. Generally

speaking, cocaine use has increased astonishingly, at least as far as I have witnessed” (Interview MF20; see also Interviews MF22, MF24 and MF43). Likewise, the leader of a Milanese NGO carrying out an outreach project in discos and information campaigns in schools states on this matter:

“There is an exponential growth of cocaine [use] ... among the people that we contacted in schools and in discos. We’ve realised that there is no awareness of cocaine’s danger, it is believed that it is less dangerous than ecstasy ... we have started an outreach project on ecstasy. We thought we would find a widespread use of this substance and, instead, we have realised that, next to ecstasy, ... cocaine consumption is very, very strong. How did we realise this? In addition to what we saw, many boys and girls kept on asking us why we had so much information about ecstasy, but nothing about cocaine” (Interview MB2).

The main difference between these two new groups of cocaine consumers is that the former tend to inject this drug, as they already do with heroin, whereas the latter usually snort it.

There is, additionally, a third type of new cocaine users: foreign migrants, above all those that take part in the drug market as dealers, but also those who have integration problems and start to use cocaine and other drugs to forget their sorrows. It is above all through them that two new modes of administration have become popular: smoking cocaine in a cigarette or joint or chasing it in a bottle (Interviews MB2; MF30). In order to do that, cocaine is processed with ammonia or sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) and water and heated to remove its hydrochloride part. What is obtained are ‘rocks’ of cocaine free base, which are known on the street market as crack and, unlike the hydrochloride powder, are effective when smoked. The chasing route is so explained by a Moroccan cocaine dealer, who himself practices every day:

“You take some cocaine, wash it with some ammonia, putting the coke in the ammonia and then you warm it up to make the cutting and all the extra substances evaporate. You are then left with small pieces of pure coke which look like small rocks. Then you take a plastic bottle and you make a hole on one side. You put a piece of tinfoil on the usual bottle lock, light a cigarette and let it go. Then you take the ashes and put them on the tinfoil, which is above the bottle, together with the coke pieces, you warm it up and you inhale from the hole on the bottle side” (Interview MF30).

Crack rocks have become increasingly popular in Milan, first among foreign migrants but also increasingly among Italian users.

“In the beginning I exclusively sold cocaine”, a Senegalese dealer explains. “But when my customers began asking me for crack, I organised myself in a couple of days to get it for them and now, for the past two years I have been selling crack almost exclusively and I sell it more and more especially on Fridays and Saturdays” (Interview MF41).

Though most cocaine users escape the law enforcement as well as the treatment net, the expansion of cocaine use is also highlighted by official statistics. Among Ser.T clients, the rate of those seeking help primarily because of cocaine consumption has grown from 1,8 percent in 1995 to 8,7 percent in 1999. Likewise, in 1995 cocaine was listed as a secondary drug for about 28 percent of all clients. Four years later, a 5 percent

- Table 4. Cocaine as a primary and secondary drug among Milan's Ser.T clients ~ Years 1995-1998

	1995		1996		1997		1998	
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
Ser.T clients using cocaine as a primary drug	57	1,8	91	2,5	188	5,3	318	8,7
Ser.T clients using cocaine as a secondary drug	666	27,8	719	27,5	743	31,2	782	32,8

Sources: Ser.T, Data provided by dott. Roberto Mollica, Director of Ser.T 4, 1999.

increase had been recorded (Table 4). The data of private treatment centres are even more emblematic. Since 1997 at least half of the clients of the Centro Aiuto Drogati (CAD), a private outpatient centre in Milan, report cocaine as their primary drug of choice (Interview MB6).

Ecstasy

As much as in the rest of Europe, ecstasy became popular in Milan during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Techno and house music promoted its sudden diffusion among young people, especially among those attending discos and special techno music events called raves (Cantoni, 1998; Bagozzi, 1996). In Milan, the peak of ecstasy diffusion was reached in the mid-1990s. According to the 1997 high-school survey, which was quoted above, almost 7 percent of the respondents admitted to having used ecstasy at some point in their lives (see Table 4). 38,2 percent said that they had many friends who use ecstasy and another additional 21 percent said he (or she) had a few friends who were

- Table 4. Ecstasy use and familiarity among Milan's high-school students

	Percent of respondents
I have used ecstasy	6,9 %
I have <u>some</u> friends who use ecstasy	38,2 %
I have <u>many</u> friends who use ecstasy	21,0 %
I know somebody who has had problems due to ecstasy use	32,3 %
If I wanted, I could <u>easily</u> find ecstasy	47,2 %
If I wanted, I could <u>probably</u> find ecstasy	22,2 %

Source: Ginosi, 1998: 211-31.

ecstasy users. 32,3 percent reported to have at least one friend who has problems due to ecstasy use.

Though consumption rates were consistently lower, ecstasy availability was largely equivalent to that of hashish. Almost half of the 689 respondents answered that he (or

she) could easily find ecstasy if wanted, and another 22,2 percent also thought that they could probably find it (Ginosa, 1997: 216-229).

Interestingly, most respondents wildly overestimated the diffusion of ecstasy use among their peers. More than a third of them, in fact, affirmed that between 25 and 50 percent of their peers use ecstasy; slightly less than a third referred a 10 to 25 percent rate. Fourteen percent of respondents even hypothesised that more than half of their peers were ecstasy users. Only 13,5 percent of the interviewees got close to the most realistic estimates, by stating that less than 10 percent of their peers use ecstasy.

The same exaggerated estimations of ecstasy use among the peers also emerged from another survey, which was carried out in 1998 among 18.000 Lombardy high school students by a Milanese NGO, the “Associazione italiana lotta AIDS” (ALA). When asked how many of their peers used ecstasy, the respondents answered as follows:

▪ Table 5. How many of your peers use ecstasy?

	<i>absolute values</i>	<i>percent values</i>
less than 3%	3.822	21,1%
between 3% and 10%	5.763	31,8%
between 10% and 20%	4.651	25,7%
more than 20%	3.155	17,4%
no answer	733	4,0%
Total	18.124	100 %

Source: Ala, 1999.

About 43 percent of all respondents believed ecstasy use to be much more widespread than it probably is. This means, as the Ala researchers point out, that “ecstasy use is considered almost normal, diffused in a double sense: the availability of the substance and the psychological and social closeness” (Ala, 1999: 25).

Despite the large diffusion of ecstasy use, public and private drug treatment institutions were slow to react to the new phenomenon. Only the leaders of a few Ser.T, often on a personal basis, and few NGOs launched initiatives to understand the success of this newdrug and the context, in which its use takes place, and to prevent its further diffusion and minimise the harm of its use (Cantoni, 1998; Gatti, 1998). Only the death of a young ecstasy consumer in autumn 1999 in a disco at the outskirts of Milan provoked a sudden burst of attention from the media and the national political bodies. For several days, ecstasy and its consumers were on the front pages of all national newspapers (see, for example, *Corriere della Sera*, November 3, 1999: 1-2, and November 4, 1999: 5).

Although the public concern had long been a necessity, many of our interviewees point out that it has come too late and maintain that ecstasy popularity has been declining since 1997. According to Alfredo, for example,

“ecstasy use has recently decreased a lot, but not because there have been some deaths. It has decreased because a certain type of music in discos has declined. It has gone down because it is difficult to get the permissions, because organising [raves] is a jump in the dark and the rave music went down as Claudio Villa went down ... the 24-hour-long rave with techno and house music is out. As a matter of fact, in 1992 when I started to work in discos and raves, ecstasy use was extremely high, everybody used pills. The recent alarms are thus unjustified, not because ecstasy is harmless, but because with a closer look at the matter it would have been easily recognisable that ecstasy had its boom six years ago” (Interview MF20; see also Interview MF23).

Likewise, Raffaele maintained that “five years ago there was a boom of ecstasy, trips and poppers together with underground music. Now, however, the market is all concentrated on coke and even heroin is coming back. I believe that synthetic drugs are not very popular among people in their thirties” (Interview MF24).

Other illegal substances and the increase of poli-drug use

Many other legal and illegal psychoactive substances are currently consumed in Milan. Long absent from the Milan markets, LSD stamps are again present in the Milan drug market and, according to some interviewees, they have enjoyed a consistent burst in their popularity (Interview MF43), whereas others point out that their revival is already phasing out (Interview MF22). Interestingly, the 1997 survey among Milanese high-school students shows that acid was the third most frequently used illegal drug after hashish and cocaine. 8,4 percent of the 689 respondents, in fact, admitted to using acid, whereas the cocaine rate was only slightly higher (8,7 percent) (Ginosa, 1998).

As shown in the single sections devoted to each substance, many users are not content with consuming only a single drug. Poli-drug use is increasing among all typologies of Milan drug consumers. Most of our interviewees have not only tried several drugs during their short or long ‘drug careers’, but in most phases have been using different drugs simultaneously. This tendency does not only concern traditional ‘junkies’, who alternate or add cocaine to heroin and frequently use benzodiazepines. The latter are powerful legal tranquillisers, whose trade names are Rohypnol and Darkene, that are diverted to the black market from the medical one.

Poli-drug use also increasingly involves the new generation of young, socially integrated (mostly non-heroin) drug users. In discos or meeting places for youths, such as bars, cafés and pubs, the latter are offered a variegated catalogue of psychoactive drugs and often experiment with them all. As the twenty-four-year-old Alessia states, “I have been going dancing for three years and it ended up that we use this, that and that

again: all together” (Interview MF43). In Milan as in other cities, most teenagers and young adults seem to be convinced that as long as you do not shoot up, you are not a drug addict (see Ginosa, 1998; Interviews MA1 and MB5).

2. The Geography and Social Organisation of the Retail Market

The development of the cannabis and heroin market in the late 1970s implied the establishment of open drug scenes: not merely marketplaces to buy and sell drugs but open air meeting points where drug users and dealers, many of whom also consumed illegal substances, gathered and spent most of their day. People attending these open drug scenes were united by a common subculture and by the will to differentiate themselves from the dominant society.

As soon as heroin use began to spread among lower-class youths in the periphery, meeting points for heroin users also spread out of the centre. The geography of the heroin and cannabis retail markets in the 1970s and 1980s will be carefully reconstructed in the second-year report, after interviewing some heroin (and, if possible, cannabis) users and user-dealers of the time and analysing old newspaper clippings. As mentioned, the latter have already been collected, but not yet carefully examined. In the final report, a city map with the different open drug scenes and drug exchange points will also be enclosed.

Cannabis

Since the development of a cannabis market in Milan, the two largest open scenes have been piazza Vetra and the adjoining Basiliche park, in the city centre, and the Sempione park, which is next to the Castello Sforzesco and is also in the city centre. Several generations of hashish and marijuana users have gone there, above all in the evening, to buy hash or marijuana, meet their friends and smoke one or more joints together (Interviews MF38, MA1, and MC5). Even when cannabis lost its original transgressive status and increasingly became integrated into the youth mass culture, piazza Vetra and the Sempione park kept on attracting customers. Despite the changing meanings attached to cannabis use, they have remained the two retail marketplaces for hashish throughout the decades. Only recently, after the area was fenced by the city administration, did piazza Vetra lose much of its business (Interview MF43).

Next to these “drug supermarkets”, as one of our interviewees defined them, there have always been smaller and more intimate open drug scenes in the squares of Milan’s residential quarters. There, the youths of the neighbourhood meet at the end of their

study or working day, spend time together and eventually buy and smoke hash and marijuana. Alfredo, for example, explains:

“I always buy [hash] in a square, a square next to my flat, where my pusher works. When I go to see him in this square, it is like going into a bar to have a beer. He was introduced to me by a friend, then I went once or twice and just went on. In this square there are many people, it is like a meeting place. It is a beautiful place because there is a small, slightly protected park, there is a bar and some benches. In the summer you really have a good time there. Those who are there, are above all users. It is a place for users and a meeting place. In the end, instead of stealthily smoking somewhere else, you remain there. There are maybe forty people, at least ten-fifteen joints go around, we know each other rather well, though I do not know them all. It is really a meeting place” (Interview MF20; see also Interview MF43).

Heroin

Heroin marketplaces have traditionally been sharply separated from the cannabis ones. As a Milanese police officer put it, “here heroin is sold, there you can find cocaine, there hashish” (Interview MC1). Piazza Vetra has long been the only square where both drugs could be bought. Even within that square, however, a geographical segregation was immediately reproduced. On the square itself, predominantly cannabis products are sold; on one side of it, under the columns of the S. Lorenzo Basilica, heroin is also dealt (Interviews MC1 and MC2).

The largest heroin marketplaces, however, have always been somewhere else. In the early 1980s, several peripheral quarters – like Giambellino and Baggio, in south-western Milan, Quarto Oggiaro and the Comasina quarter in the north-western part – were renowned retail points and attracted customers from other city quarters as well. When these markets were largely disrupted by police intervention, new marketplaces developed in other city areas, such as the Stadera quarter in southern Milan, piazza Prealpi and the buildings of via Emilio Bianchi in the north-western part of the city, and Ponte Lambro at the eastern periphery.

Heroin street dealing was also carried out in most towns composing the Milanese ‘belt’ (i.e. the hinterland), where the largest Fordist factories are located. These are places like Cinisello Balsamo, Cusano Milanino and Sesto San Giovanni in the North and Corsico, Buccinasco and Pieve Emanuele in the South. As we will see in detail in Chapter 3, a common characteristic of all these peripheral heroin marketplaces is that most of them were controlled – though in different moments and for varying periods of time – by a single wholesale dealing group that obliged the local pushers to buy from their own intermediaries. Obviously, as poli-drug use spread and many heroin users began to inject cocaine as well, this drug was also added to the catalogue of the local pushers. Though the retail dealers might have been different depending on the substance, at each location the dominant supplying organisation tried to control this market as well.

Up until 1989, the largest open heavy drug scene was Parco Lambro at Milan's eastern edge. There several hundreds of users gathered every day, to exchange and use heroin and other drugs "in a climate of quiet routine" (Rotaris, 2000: 4). Unlike the peripheral markets, Parco Lambro was never controlled by a single trafficking organisation and, for this reason, the first foreign street dealers started to work there (Interview MC5).

Parco Lambro was evacuated in autumn 1989 (Mazzi, 1994: 11-20) and since then law enforcement agencies and the city administration have not allowed similar concentrations of injecting heavy drug users to re-establish again. After the evacuation of Parco Lambro, heavy drug users and dealers did indeed move to other city parks and squares, such as Parco Alessandrini in south-eastern Milan, Parco delle Cave at the opposite side of the city, and piazza Argentina not far away from the Central Station. Due to the intolerance of the local residents and continuous law enforcement action, however, 'junkies' and dealers have hardly been able to settle in any of these locations for a long time in large numbers. As recently as autumn 1999, enraged citizens set up rounds in Parco delle Cave in order to discourage users and dealers (*La Repubblica*, September 22, 1999: 22; Interviews MF17 and MB3).

The largest concentration of 'junkies' today can be found in the area around the Stazione Centrale. Though repeatedly cleaned by the police, heavy drug dealing and consumption still takes place there today, but the area has a relatively bad reputation among drug users because the product quality is very low. During the day only very marginalised drug users or visitors to Milan buy there. More customers come at night because the Central Station is currently the only location offering 24 hour drug sales (Interviews MB1 and MB3). Local heavy drug users, who have some time to invest, tend to buy their doses in rapidly changing, hidden places at the city periphery. According to some of our interviewees, in early 2000 three of the most frequented places were an open field in via Ripamonti at Milan's southern edge, an abandoned building and a railway track under a bridge next to the metro station Romolo (Interviews MF42, MB1, and MB3; Paoli's personal observation).

The submersion and fragmentation of the heavy drug market has led to an increase of transaction costs. As is well known, these tend to be particularly high within drug markets because of the illegal nature of the commodities exchanged. Increased police pressure and the dispersion of open and consolidated dealing locations have over the last few years required the average user to invest more time and energy in order to buy relatively good quality drugs. Many injecting drug users today are frustrated with the long waiting periods for their dealers. According to a NGO worker, "you can reach peripheral dealing places only if you are introduced by another customer and, frequently, you have to wait your turn for several hours, if not a full day" (Interview MB3).

Cocaine and synthetic drugs

The users of cocaine and synthetic drugs currently have it much easier finding their substances than heroin users. The distribution of cocaine, ecstasy and other party drugs is, in fact, less affected by police intervention because it takes place primarily in closed settings and through chains of ‘friends of friends’.

All the above substances can be bought in discos, pubs and cafés right before being consumed. As Alfredo maintains, “in night cafés and discos a lot of coke can be found, if you know the right person or if you are introduced by some friend. There are famous places for that” (Interview MF20). Though there might be police raids from time to time, the law enforcement repression is considerably lower in these closed settings than outside. Dealing and consuming is, in fact, less visible and scapegoats, such as foreign dealers, are more difficult to find. Furthermore, as their own children are often involved, ‘right-minded citizens’ are less likely to protest and loudly request police intervention. Indeed, several of our interviewees, who regularly attend discos and buy and sell drugs there, were themselves surprised by the low police pressure (Interviews MF24 and MF43).

If you have a connection, cocaine and synthetic drugs can be easily bought outside of the night cafés as well. “The best way for buying coke is over the phone” (Interview MF24). The user calls his (or her) supplier, explains his wishes, by using some keywords and at the agreed time, a meeting takes place, during which the drugs and the money change hands. To minimise their risks, even many foreign dealers, who used to sell on the street, have selected a few regular clients and do most of their business by appointment and cellular phone (Interviews MF41 and MF30)

In many youth circles, there is often not even the need to make a phone call and to look around a lot. In fact, the supplier often is one of the user’s friends or acquaintances. “Those who sold me coke”, the twenty-four-year-old Alessia explains, “were people I have known for ages. I never bought cocaine from people I did not know. A kindergarten friend of mine was the one that sold cocaine to the people in our neighbourhood”. There does not seem to be a scarcity of pushers, as many users start dealing in order to finance their own consumption. Alessia goes on: “In my area [piazza Corvetto, a residential quarter at Milan’s south-eastern edge] out of twenty young people, eighteen sell it” (Interview MF43). These private dealers are preferred by drug users because you can obtain better quality, negotiate payment conditions and minimise interception risks (Interview MF24).

If you have no connection, you are in a hurry, or your dealer has temporarily run out of cocaine, you can go to piazzale Loreto and the neighbouring viale Monza, not far away from the Central Station. Despite repeated police interventions, this area has become an established marketplace for cocaine. Indeed, it is the only open air place where Milanese can buy cocaine from dealers whom they have never seen before, without an introduction from somebody else (Interviews MF20 and MF22). Two of our respondents habitually sell cocaine in piazza Loreto and their interviews will be carefully analysed in the final report (Interviews MF29 and MF41).

Finally, if nothing else works, users can buy cocaine quarters, sold as *palline* (i.e. small balls) from foreign dealers at the Central Station. The place, however, is considered “the last resort” by most users because the cocaine you get there is of very low quality and cannot easily be snorted (Interview MF24).

As much as their heroin counterparts, the users and dealers of cocaine and party drugs also realise that the repression has increased and lament that “it was easier before to buy drugs in Milan’s centre, now it is no longer so” (Interview MF23). Some interviewees even point out that some small cocaine scenes (like the Santo Stefano square next to the Cathedral and the Guastalla garden), which had a limited turnover in the 1980s, have been shut down by the police (Interview MF22).

Despite the increased police pressure and the consequent fragmentation of the drug market, most of the users and dealers whom we contacted agree that the increased repression bothers, but does not consistently hinder drug deals (Interview MF24). Indeed, unlike heroin addicts, this new generation of drug users does not even report a consistent increase in transaction costs. The availability of all drugs, with the possible exception of heroin, seems to be as large as ever before. As an interviewee candidly put it: “According to me, Milan, at night, transforms itself into a drug party” (Interview MF43).

3. The Drug Supply: The Local Distribution System and the Links to International Trade

Today drugs are imported and sold in Milan by a plurality of dealers who have different ethnic and social backgrounds and resort to a variety of organisational models and *modi operandi*. Some are Italians and among them, many belong to Southern Italian mafia associations or to one of the criminal groups and gangs of Southern Italian origin. During the 1990s, foreigners have occupied a growing portion of the wholesale and, above all, the retail market. The street market today is, in particular, dominated by foreign dealers.

Dealers differentiate themselves not only by their ethnicity and nationality, but also by their social background. Some of them, such as the ritually initiated members or the unaffiliated supporters of mafia associations, grew up in a specific criminal subculture and were socialised since their youth to carry out a plurality of illegal activities and to earn their living by committing crimes. Some others, Italian and foreigners, belong to the sphere of professional crime and have consciously chosen drug dealing “as a queer ladder of social mobility” (Bell, [1953] 1988). Profit-making also constitutes the main motivation of a small subset of ‘inconspicuous’ dealers, who are well educated and have (or had) a regular job in the legal economy but who nonetheless trade in illegal drugs, hoping to achieve great wealth rapidly.

Most of Milan’s drug dealers, especially those active at the middle and low levels of the city drug distribution chain, however, are neither inveterate criminals nor would go on selling drugs if they had alternatives. Many of them deal drugs in order to finance their own drug consumption habits. Furthermore, most of today’s foreign street dealers are recent migrants who started to sell drugs because they did not find regular jobs in the legal economy or could no longer stand being exploited and underpaid in the informal one.

Third, another important variable to be taken into account is the organisation and *modus operandi* of dealing enterprises. Most of the dealers active in Milan work alone or in small crews. The latter sometimes have an egalitarian nature but most often emerge around a leader. Only in a few wholesale drug dealing enterprises, usually run by the members of Southern Italian mafia organisations, were relatively stable structures found. Composed of few full-time employees, even these relatively large enterprises, however, usually buy most of the services they need on the market and sell drugs to independent dealers, who sometimes operate in a sort of franchising.

No single individual or collective actor today is able to control the supply or distribution of any drug in Milan. As the Chief of the Milan Police Narcotics Squad candidly put it, “the market is free, the drug is not” (Interview MC6; see also MC10). In no sector of the local drug market, furthermore, could we identify a rigid distribution system. As heroin, cocaine and other drugs are imported in Milan through a plurality of independent channels, the length of the distribution chain – that is, the numbers of transactions occurring between the importer and the final user – depends foremost on the amount of the substance imported and, secondarily, on the connections of the importer, the intermediate dealer(s), and the user. In some cases, there are numerous transactions and the drug distribution system tends to approach the six-level hierarchical model that was developed by Preble and Casey in the late 1960s to represent the New York heroin market. This model has long been thought a reliable approximation of the structure of heroin markets in Europe (Lewis, 1994; Arlacchi and Lewis, 1990). In most cases, however, especially in the market for party drugs, but also increasingly in the heroin market, the distribution chain is much shorter and two, maximally three transactions link the importer to the final users.

The entrance of mafia groups into drug trafficking

In Milan, as much as in other cities, cannabis and, subsequently, heroin were imported by users themselves who made trips to Holland, India, or other Eastern countries in order to buy drugs for their own use and then sold a portion of the substance to their acquaintances in order to pay their own travel costs. It was a typical ‘ants’ trafficking’. As Vincenzo Ruggiero put it, “the [drug] distribution network and the network of friends’ solidarity *coincided*” (1992: 149, italics in the original). As in Rome (Cancrini, 1977; Arlacchi and Lewis, 1986), Verona (Arlacchi and Lewis, 1990: 57-66) and Turin (Ruggiero, 1992; see also Blumir, 1976), up to the mid-1970s the drug dealer was not a professional role of the underworld.

Ever since the late 1970s, however, the development of a large-scale drug market fostered the progressive reconversion of professional crime into the drug business. According to some observers, the underworld and, particularly, the northern branches of the Southern Italian mafia families even played an active role in fostering and shaping drug use. In particular, it is often repeated that the creation of a stable pool of heroin users was the result of a precise marketing strategy: allegedly cannabis abruptly disappeared at some point in the late 1970s and the market was suddenly flooded with cheap heroin (Ravenna, 1993: 54).⁷ This thesis, however, does not seem to have any

⁷ The same thesis is also repeated by many drug users and dealers interviewed by Ruggiero in the late

proof, as the ongoing analysis of the anti-mafia inquiries carried out by the Milan Prosecutor's Office in the 1990s proves. The members of the local underworld and the Milanese settlements of Southern Italian mafia families did not actively promote the development of the local drug market. Rather they reacted –sometimes with few years' delay– to this process and exploited it, progressively neglecting and in some cases even abandoning other less profitable and riskier criminal activities, such as robberies, kidnappings, fencing and tobacco smuggling.

The older members of the Calabrian Di Giovine family, who moved to Milan in the 1970s, were originally tobacco smugglers and fencers. Between 1949 and 1985, the head of the family, Rosario Di Giovine, was sentenced 65 times for tobacco smuggling and 23 other times for violations of the tobacco monopoly rules. Starting from 1970s, his wife, Maria Serraino, who came from one of the most important and powerful Calabrian mafia families, stood seven times for trial on tobacco smuggling grounds and 6 times for fencing. Only in the late 1970s, however, did the oldest of their 12 children, Emilio, enter the drug market, exploiting the contacts he had acquired in smuggling stolen cars. Within a few years' time, the whole family's energies concentrated on the drug business and by the late 1980s, the Di Giovine family ran one of the largest and most successful drug dealing enterprises in Milan (Maggi, 1999: 12-18; see also TrMI, 1997 and 1993).

Likewise, Franco Coco Trovato, an ambitious '*ndranghetista* who migrated to Milan in the 1970s, began his criminal career with robberies and kidnappings. By 1982, however, he had abandoned these activities to devote himself to drug dealing and trafficking. As Antonio Zagari, a former member of the '*Ndrangheta*, recalls,

“By then [early 1980s] many of us had completely devoted ourselves to drug trafficking ... My brother and I, together with some associates controlled the Varese marketplace ... and I knew that Coco had acquired control of drug trafficking in the Lecco and Como areas and in their surroundings” (TrMI, 1994: 193).

Undoubtedly, drug trafficking promised much higher profits than those granted by more traditional criminal activities. The comparative advantages of drug trafficking clearly emerge from the first-degree sentence of one of the largest anti-mafia inquiries carried out in Milan in the 1990s. The judges of the so-called '*Nord-Sud (North-South) trial*', in fact, write:

“Already in the 1980s, when the drug boom begins, the profits of narco-trafficking are exceptional. A kilo of heroin can be bought at 35-40 million *Lire* (Euros 18.076-20.658,3) (...) and with the usual cuttings, you can obtain on the average (depending on the purity level) two other ones. The three kilos thus obtained can then be sold on the Italian market at the average price of 50 million *Lire* (Euros 25.822,8). Even though management, transportation and personnel costs must be

1980s in Turin. Ruggiero himself is however quite sceptical about it (see 1992: 151-58).

detracted (...), the final profit is very high and for this reason narco-trafficking rapidly substituted other riskier and less profitable illicit activities” (TrMI, 1997: 945-6).lxii

The moment and extent of each mafia or criminal group’s involvement in drug trafficking was, however, not the result of a wide-ranging strategy, but depended on the contacts the group members had. The members of what was later called the Sergi group, which became one of the most successful drug-trafficking enterprises of the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta, began dealing drugs independently. Saverio Morabito, a core member of the Sergi group, who was however not ritually affiliated to the ‘Ndrangheta, entered into the drug business in the late 1970s thanks to his contacts with Michele Amandini, a character of the Milanese underworld. The two of them mediated the sale of several lots of morphine base between a Turkish exporter and some French gangsters from Marseille, who then transformed the drug into heroin in a laboratory in San Remo (TrMI, 1997: 958-965). In those years Morabito himself supplied the group led by Francesco Sergi, who had then just entered the drug business and who belonged to an important family of the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta. In 1983, after having spent some time in prison, Morabito first worked together with an old associate of his, Mario Inzaghi, who was neither a Southerner nor was born in a mafia environment. Subsequently, they became partners, first with a subordinate role then as a full associate, of the Sergi brothers, who in the meantime had structured their drug business successfully. Francesco Sergi, Saverio Morabito and Mario Inzaghi became the core members of the Sergi group, that remained active with considerable success up to 1993, when Morabito’s confessions stimulated the anti-mafia investigations and led to the arrest of all the group members (TrMI, 1997; see also TrMi, 1993 and Colaprico and Fazzo, 1995).

The involvement in the drug business allowed the members of mafia families to quickly achieve great wealth that was unimaginable just a few years before. It also provoked, however, sharp tensions within the mafia group. As in the case of the Sergi group, drug-dealing crews were set up, involving mafia affiliates as well as non-members. This mixed composition often cut across the hierarchy of the mafia family, thus causing rivalries and grudges.

Furthermore, especially in Northern Italy but also to some extent in the home regions of the mafia groups, drug trafficking often became a full-time occupation for many ‘men of honour’ (i.e. the members of Southern Italian mafia associations), who consequently neglected the rites and practices necessary to foster the cohesion of the mafia group. As a former affiliate to the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta nostalgically (and blasphemously) put it,

“the Money God is the only one that exists today. The God as the Trinity is finished One of our [mafia] laws was the Trinity God, i.e.: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that is the chief, vice-chief and administrator: in other words, the [mafia] association. Now this Trinity God has ended up in the Money God” (Maggi, 1999: 15).

The rapid enrichment of the leaders involved in the drug business also magnified the conflict of interests between the high- and low-ranking mafia members, which had always existed, but which were less evident as long as the mafia bosses were not much richer than the low-level affiliates. Several interesting examples emerge from the ongoing analysis of judicial documents. The former affiliate of the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, Vincenzo Calcara, for example, recalls that after working for several years as courier in the drug trafficking business he and some of his associates were “fed up of eating only crumbs, while the chiefs were pocketing billions” (Bettini, 1994: 10).

Though multiplying their economic power, the middle range mafia families emerged weaker by the entrepreneurial transformation. As soon as the law enforcement agencies started to tackle them, many mafia groups in Milan broke apart and many of their members became *pentiti*, that is they started to co-operate with law enforcement agencies.⁸ It is not by chance that this trend hit most strongly those Southern Italian mafia groups (or, more often, subgroups) that had most sharply deviated from the traditional mafia norms and behavioural models and had subordinated all other needs to money making.

Significantly, many of those who became *pentiti* were not ritually affiliated with the mafia group, though they were fully involved in the drug business and other illegal entrepreneurial activities. The behaviour of these unaffiliated supporters can be read as a confirmation of the importance of secondary socialization processes in mafia organizations: nobody had transmitted the mafia cultural system to them; nobody had taught them the importance of values such as solidarity, honour and *omertà*, no ritual had reinforced their feeling of belonging and their submission to the association. Faced with the possibility of spending the rest of their life in prison, no interiorised cultural orientation or emotional bond has restrained them from utilitarianly opting for the most convenient solution, that is, betraying an association, to which they were never formally admitted (Paoli, 1997; 2000).⁹

The decline of the traditional underworld

Just as much as Southern Italian mafia families, the Milanese underworld also became quickly aware of chances for enrichment granted by the development of a large cannabis and heroin market. From the late 1970s, many professional criminals began to

⁸ Literally meaning 'repentant', the word *pentito* is commonly used in Italy to point to members of mafia associations and other criminal groups who have become turncoats. *Pentiti* who are protected under the state 'Witness Protection Program' are also called *collaboratori di giustizia* (i.e. justice collaborators).

⁹ On the expansion of the Southern mafia in Northern Italy and, specifically, in Milan, see CPM, 1994, Portanova *et al.*, 1996, and Colaprico and Fazzo, 1995.

deal drugs, realising that they could earn much more and risk less than they would with their traditional occupations. As a woman interviewed by Michela Bianchi in the early 1980s put it:

“In my opinion, today it is no longer worth it to work as a pickpocket or as an apartment thief, because ‘smoke’ [i.e. cannabis] sale is much more profitable, if you consider the amount of work. If you sell ‘smoke’, you are not too thrifty (that is, you do not sell too little asking too much) and you have good quality stuff, you can easily sell a hundred grams each evening. This means that you get around 300.000 *Lire* (Euros 154,9). Even if you work with two others and each of you get 100.000 (Euros 51,6), there is no fuss: you just sit and wait for the customers to look for you” (Bianchi, 1986: 878).

If these considerations were valid for a marginalised woman belonging to the *Lumpenproletariat*, they were even more compelling for those professional criminals who were active in the highest levels of the Milan underworld. Within a few years’ time, most of the latter started to deal drugs and inserted themselves into the drug distribution chain, in the anonymous and interchangeable roles of drug-dealers and traffickers. “I have always gone out with many robbers”, an informant told Vincenzo Ruggiero in his study of the heroin market in Turin, “and I can say that 90 percent of those I know moved from robberies to dealing” (Ruggiero, 1992: 196).

This shift implied the decline of the ‘traditional’ underworld, with its well defined roles such as thieves, robbers, ‘pimps’, ‘fences’ as well as managers and employees of gambling dens. To a large extent, their differentiated criminal expertise rapidly waned. Beginning in the early 1980s, some of the less profitable and difficult illegal activities started to be carried out by marginalised heroin users, who resorted to crime in order to buy their daily drug doses. These addicts, however, are known to shoplift, snatch bags, steal car radios (and more rarely cars) and sometimes carry out small-scale burglaries or robberies with much less professionalism and skill than their forerunners. Contrary to most suppositions, the majority of most drug addicts refuse – or are not able - to learn the skills necessary to commit the most serious crimes (see Ruggiero, 1992). Indeed, many users take a lot of care to differentiate themselves from underworld characters and present themselves as victims of the current drug control regime (see Interviews MF2 and MF29).

Increasingly, foreign migrants have occupied the places left free by locals, monopolising some of the most skilful, but low-paying, underworld activities. Starting in late 1970s, for example, pick-pocketing in Milan became largely a business of Slavs and then South Americans (Bianchi, 1986: 886-89), who were despised by the few active Italian pick-pocketers. In 1986 a fifty-three-year-old professional pick-pocketer commented:

“Today is hard, it is not as it used to be. You have to use all your skills and ingenuity to stand the competition. Milan is ruined, only after nine o’clock, you can reason. The one thing that bothers me most are foreigners: our laws are too attractive and they all come here. ... We who are left are

few against the competition. Some foreigners have a very aggressive technique. We try to avoid them. ... They are not professionals. They are bewildered: they work in the metro. And for this reason we do not go there, in order to avoid clashing with them. Among us, Italians of this profession, we respect each other very much. We are all friends: when one of us is imprisoned, the others take care of the lawyer and the money. ... It is a decaying profession, it becomes more and more difficult" (quoted in Bianchi, 1986: 887-89).

Many other underworld roles, however, rapidly disappeared. By the early 1980s, the traditional figure of the pimp had waned and it became fashionable again only in the mid-1990s, when Albanian migrants tried to gain control of the city prostitution market. With the arrest of Epaminonda and his gang members in 1984, the season of the great robber gangs ended. Since then, nobody has inherited the role and prestige of Francis Turatello, Renato Vallanzasca and Angelo Epaminonda, who organised robberies and ran gambling dens, frequently occupying the front pages of Milanese newspapers (see, for example, Carlucci and Rossetti, [1991], 1997).

Though occasionally resorting to other criminal activities, most of the members of the Milan underworld quickly realised the potentialities of drug business and became involved in drug distribution in Milan. Both Turatello and Vallanzasca were arrested in 1977 and hardly had time to turn to drugs (see Giorgianni, 1989: 120-21). In the early 1980s, however, Angelo Epaminonda got involved in cocaine dealing and sold the drug to a selected elite, above all in the illegal gambling dens that his gang ran. According to the Chief of the Milan Police Squadra Mobile, Epaminonda was the only drug trafficker who ever, though briefly, held a monopoly position on the Milan drug market. For a brief time, in fact, before others followed in his steps, Epaminonda controlled Milan's cocaine supply, as he bought all the substance that few Uruguayan nationals managed to import from South America (Interview MC5).

After the arrests of the three charismatic leaders and the disbanding of their robber gangs, the few members who emerged unscathed from investigations or served short imprisonment sentences turned to drug dealing and some of them rapidly gained profitable positions in the new business. In 1977, for instance, Giuseppe Flachi, a former associate of the Vallanzasca gang, set up a group that rapidly managed to supply most heroin dealers in the Comasina quarter and other north-western neighbourhoods. At the very beginning, Flachi worked together with his former associates of the Vallanzasca gang. When the latter were arrested or sentenced to long-term imprisonment, however, Flachi got free of them and became the undisputed chief of the drug dealing enterprise. Though changing some of its members and interweaving alliances with other gangs, the so-called Flachi group held a leading position in street dealing in north-west Milan up to 1994 (TrMI, 1997a; 1994c).

The polarised market of the 1980s

Out of the experimental phase of the 1970s, two large retail markets consolidated in the 1980s: the heroin and cannabis ones. Though available, cocaine was primarily consumed up to the late 1980s by two restricted subgroups, the underworld members and the so-called *Milano-bene* (i.e. the economic, political and social elites) and it was only occasionally sold by street dealers.

Especially in the case of heavy drugs, most of the retail dealers were, themselves, drug users, who had started dealing in order to finance their own consumption habits. Though some of them worked independently and were free to buy their ‘merchandise’ from whomever they wanted, we hypothesise that most of them were linked to a supplier in a stable way: that is, they received drugs from their dealers on a regular basis without paying it or paying only a small advance and then brought the money back to them when they received a new lot (MF22; MF16). The usual Italian expression to describe such a relationship is that each dealer had his own *cavalli* (i.e. horses). The spread of this relationship constitutes an interesting difference *vis-à-vis* Frankfurt, where most user-dealers have always been free to buy drugs from whomever they want and usually have more than one supplier at each time. Up until the early 1990s, the great majority of user-dealers, and their suppliers as well, were Italians.

To supply the booming drug markets, starting from the early 1980s drug dealing enterprises were founded by affiliates and unaffiliated supporters of Southern Italian mafia associations, members of the Milanese underworld as well as blood families, that were already active in the sphere of professional crime. Especially in the heroin market, some of these enterprises quickly reached the wholesale level and even managed to acquire a monopolistic position in the areas where they were settled, obliging the local intermediate and street dealers to buy drugs from them. Throughout the 1980s, for example, the Di Giovine family bought dozens of kilograms of heroin from Syrian and Turkish importers and, after selling it, sent money every week ranging from 500 million up to one billion *Lire* (Euros 258.228,4-516.456,9) into Swiss banks (Maggi, 1999: 17). The husband of one of the Di Giovine’s sisters, who got deeply involved in the family business and subsequently became a turncoat, recalls:

“Especially at one of the brothers’ place I would meet a Syrian trafficker and two Turkish ones who supplied heroin to the family ... in this period [the 1980s, Author’s note], the quantities were large ... Packages of ten and twenty kilos came in on a monthly or weekly basis” (Maggi, 1999: 20).

After cutting it, the Di Giovines sold heroin to a variety of intermediate dealers coming from different city quarters. In the neighbourhood where they lived (around Piazza Prealpi in northern Milan next to the historical centre), they also successfully exercised a monopoly claim for many years and obliged all the local dealers to buy from their

representatives. “My mother-in-law”, recalls the turncoat, “said that piazza Prealpi was exclusively a family business. It was run by the family or by people to whom they delegated”. After marrying into the family, the *pentito* was in charge of supplying local pushers with heroin and keeping order in piazza Prealpi for several years (Maggi, 1999: 21). The ‘justice collaborator’ goes on:

“My family did not want retail traders to be extorted. Anybody who had racket problems could turn to my mother-in-law and she adjusted the matters ... Whatever happened in piazza Prealpi, she was directly responsible. It was her feud” (*ibidem*, 30).

Though the analysis is ongoing, it is clear that these monopoly claims constitute an important peculiarity of Milan’s drug market. Due attention will be given to these dealing enterprises in the final report and, as far as possible, sources will be cross-validated. According to Alex, a former hash and cocaine dealer, in the late 1980s the gang headed by Fiore had control of the cocaine and hashish markets at Sempione park, the city’s largest selling point, and at the Guastalla garden, next to the University (Interview MF22). Fiore’s role was, however, not mentioned by other sources, most notably by law enforcement officers. Indeed, according to most respondents, the marketplaces in the city centre have never been rigidly controlled by one single organisation and even mafia families exercised their monopoly claims in peripheral neighbourhoods. By retrieving the penal proceeding concerning his gang, we will try to assess the validity of Alex’s statements, who long worked as a *cavallo* for Fiore’s gang.

The organisation and functioning of the above-mentioned groups will also be carefully studied. Some of these groups, in fact, enjoyed relative longevity and even developed rather elaborate forms of labour division. In the early 1980s, there were seven core members of the Flachi group and each of them had his specific tasks. In addition, several other people worked for this group and held contacts to the lower dealers. Some received a regular salary, others received a reward on a percent basis. After leaving some of his associates in the late 1980s, Flachi made an alliance with Franco Coco Trovato, a high-ranking member of the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta who controlled the Lecco area next to Lake Como. The new alliance not only strengthened the control on its two original turfs, but according to the judges of the Milan Court, also incorporated other smaller drug dealing enterprises operating in other communities of Milan’s northern hinterland (TrMI, 1997a). The relationships set up by the Coco-Flachi group together with these smaller entities will have to be carefully examined during the second phase and the judges’ reconstruction will be dutifully tested. These dealing networks, in fact, may be regarded as a proof-bench of the research hypothesis elaborated in the theoretical framework at the very beginning of this project: namely that the constraints deriving from the illegal status of the products discourage the development of large and stable drug dealing enterprises.

With time, some of the most successful drug dealing enterprises even succeeded in importing heroin and hashish and later, even cocaine from abroad. In the late 1980s, the Di Giovine family regularly imported tons of hashish, first from Spain and then directly from Morocco and sold the substance not only to dealers in Milan and from other Italian cities but also exported it in other European countries such as England (TrMI, 1997b). In the early 1990s, a coalition of seven Calabrian mafia families - Mazzaferro, Pesce, Ierinò, Cataldo, Barbaro, Morabito and Romola – (some of which had branches in Milan) succeeded in importing at least 11 tons of cocaine in eight different shipments. The last shipment - 5.490 kilos - was seized in March 1994 on the outskirts of Turin and accounts for the world largest cocaine seizure ever made outside of production areas (TrTO, 1994).

As many participants in these drug dealing enterprises became turncoats, an extensive amount of inside information (so far unexamined) is available. Many *pentiti*, in fact, provide detailed information about their own drug dealing career, the functioning of their 'firm' and its turnover, profits and costs. Moreover, some of our interviewees also used to work for some of the largest dealing enterprises and it will be particularly interesting to compare the information deriving from primary sources with the data contained in judicial documents.

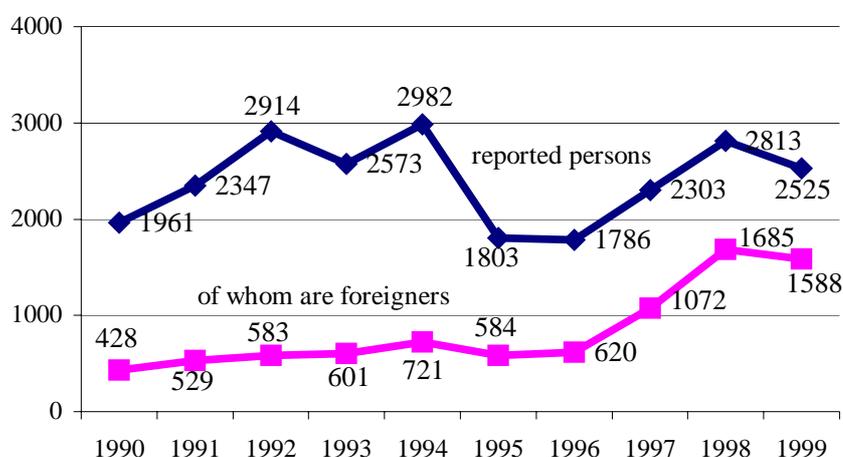
The rise of foreign dealers

The main change affecting the drug distribution system in Milan during the 1990s is no doubt represented by the sudden growth of foreign dealers. Today they control the street dealing of all illegal drugs on all of the larger *piazze* and have increasingly occupied even the higher levels of all drug distribution systems, with the exception of cocaine and party drugs.

Foreigners' increasing involvement in drug dealing emerges with great clarity from police statistics. As shown by Graph 3, in fact, the number of foreigners reported for drug offences has more than tripled in the second half of the 1990s. In the early 1990s, foreigners used to represent slightly more than 20 percent of all reported persons for drug offences in the Milan province. By the end of the decade, their percentage was over 62 percent.

Foreigners, moreover, tend to be more likely arrested than Italian nationals. At the end of 1997, foreigners represented almost half (49,4 percent) of Lombardy prisons' inmates (Palidda, 1999a). More generally, if national data are taken into account, the percent rate of foreigners convicted for drug matters has grown from 10,2 percent in 1990 to

Graph 3. Persons reported for drug offences in the Milan province by the police forces to the judicial authority, of whom are foreigners ~ 1990-1999



Source: Direzione Centrale per i Servizi Antidroga, 2000.

25,9 percent in 1997 and was more than a third in 1995 (Table 6; see Paoli, 1999). In 1999 foreigners represented over 28 percent of all prisoners detained in Italian prisons, whereas their percentage at the beginning of the 1990s was about 15 percent (Palidda, 2000b).

Table 6. Convictions for drug offences ~ Years 1990-1997

	Total convicted	convicted foreigners	% of convicted foreigners
1990	7.852	799	10,2 %
1991	13.139	1.276	9,7 %
1992	14.810	2.338	15,8 %
1993	13.402	3.174	23,7 %
1994	11.945	3.550	29,7 %
1995	12.197	4.132	33,9 %
1996	20.227	5.977	29,5 %
1997	19.622	4.920	25,1 %

Source: Istat, *Annuario di Statistiche Giudiziarie*, several years.

The statistical over-representation of foreigners may be interpreted as the result of police discrimination towards them. There is probably some truth in such a hypothesis, as some recent scientific inquiries show (Quassoli, 1999; Palidda, 1999) and some interviewed experts maintain (Interviews MA5 and MC5). As also shown in Chapter 5, foreigners do tend to be more likely reported and arrested than nationals for drug offences. A small drug amount recovered from an Italian national can be easily justified as possession for personal consumption and is hence usually not reported, because the Italian legislation foresees only administrative sanction and not penal ones for the possession of illegal drugs for personal use. On the contrary, foreigners found with the same drug quantity are immediately arrested for dealing.

Nonetheless, experts with different backgrounds, as well as users and dealers themselves, by and large confirm what law enforcement statistics indicate (Interviews MF20, MF24, MF23 and MF22). That is, foreigners do, indeed, play a dominant role in Milan's street, but also wholesale, drug market. As a former Italian hash and cocaine dealer sharply put it, "ten years ago, the dealers were mostly Italian, now they are predominantly foreigners" (Interview MF22).

According to several observers, foreigners' initial involvement in street dealing was fostered in the late 1980s by Italian intermediate dealers, who no longer wanted to rely on Italian user-dealers to sell drugs on the street. The latter, in fact, were considered unreliable, because they were dependent on drugs and could be easily checked and blackmailed by police officers (Interviews MF17 and MF40). Within a decade, a veritable substitution process took place, which was fostered by the sudden growth of immigration into Italy. The lowest and most dangerous positions, which used to be occupied by the most marginalised Italian drug users, have been taken over by foreigners, especially those who have immigrated recently, are applicants for political asylum, or do not have a residence permit (Palidda, 1998; Rotaris, 2000). Though foreigners were initially preferred because they did not use drugs, a growing portion of foreign street dealers now regularly consume drugs and many of them are veritable addicts (Interviews MF17, MF27 and MF29).

The reasons why foreign migrants are overproportionally present in Milan's and, more generally, the Italian drug market today, will be examined in the final second-year report. To do so, we will rely not only on Palidda's extensive work on the topic, but also on more than twenty in-depth interviews that we carried out with foreign users and dealers. To give a hint, it is worth stressing that the harsh immigration law, racist prejudices and the difficulties to integrate into the legal economy have pushed many foreign migrants onto the drug market. A Senegalese dealer, whom we interviewed, explains:

"I have sold drugs since 1997, but before that I distributed ads. It was extremely hard. They paid me according to the quantity of ads I distributed. I had to bring them to people's flats and struggle to convince them to open the door for me, it was hell. Then a guy of my own country brought me to the shops of the Chinese in via Sarpi and piazza Lima, where commodities for peddlers are on sale, and I started to work – as people say it – as a *vu cumprà* (peddler), but I did not succeed in earning enough and I was sick of hearing people talk badly about me and sometimes even insult me and I was also sick of living with 20 mates in a one-room apartment.

I met some Nigerians who proposed to give me cocaine on credit and to pay for it as soon as I sold it. I accepted their offer because I did not have money and I had to pay my fee for the bed. It worked well and then I went on doing it. You should not think bad of me, you know quite well how people live here. In this country they taught me that I have to arrange myself. Here there are no subsidies for unemployed, nor are there social assistants, it is not like in Belgium. Moreover, there are many racist people who do not give work to coloured people and I have spent two shitty years with these racists" (MF41).

Whatever the reasons, there are no doubts that most street dealers today are foreigners and, particularly, North Africans. They tend to work on the largest open drug scenes, which are open to everybody and where everybody can buy drugs. The cocaine market in piazza Loreto, for example, has been run since the early 1990s by Moroccans and Tunisians (Interviews MF18 and MF28). Though less numerous, there are also Albanian and black African street dealers. Above all, the former sell marijuana, which is imported directly from Albania where it is grown (Interviews MC1, MC2 and MD1). Many of the latter increasingly sell crack, as the Senegalese dealer whom we interviewed (Interview MF41).

A very worrying change over the last few years is that a small, but growing, percentage of foreign street dealers are minors and some of them are veritable children, as they are younger than 12 years old (Interview MC10 and MF42; Palidda, 2000, Paoli's personal observation). Many of them are exploited by adults, but some work independently or in small groups of peers. Most not only deal, but also regularly consume drugs. These 'baby-pushers' have so far been largely ignored by law enforcement and drug treatment providing agencies alike. They cannot be arrested or reported and there are no public institutions to host and take care of them.

At smaller drug selling points in residential quarters and in closed scene settings, illegal drugs are still sold by Italians. Especially in discos, bars and other youth meeting places, the latter are still in charge of distributing party drugs and cocaine (Interviews MF20, MF21, MF22, and MF26). Unlike the foreign dealers, the latter only sell to known customers and, being much less visible and less obviously deviant, they are much less bothered by the police than the former. The division of the retail market is clearly explained by Giovanni, a regular hashish user:

"As far as drug dealers' nationalities in Milan are concerned, you have to make a distinction. On drug supermarkets, as I call them, the large squares, they sell to everybody, indeed they jump on you to sell you [drugs] and they are all *extra-comunitari* [that is foreigners coming from non-EU countries, Author's note]: Moroccans, Albanians and there are also some black Africans. The other squares function much more on friendships, on acquaintances, and they are attended by Italian pushers" (Interview MF21).

All our sources unanimously state that Italian user-dealers work alone and do not belong to any large association (Interviews MF26, MF21, and MF20). There is no unanimity, instead, as far as foreign dealers are concerned. End-users believe that the latter are organised in dealing squads run by a superordinate chief, referring to the "*cavalli-structure*" that was adopted by mafia groups. Giovanni, for example goes on:

"In drug supermarkets there is an organisation, there is always a chief, there is then a restricted number of people who are in charge and, below, there is a host of kids and boys who change, make their shifts, and so on. Ninety percent of dealers such as my own, instead, work independently, maybe they buy drugs together to get a better price, but fundamentally they work autonomously" (Interview MF21).

The foreign dealers whom we interviewed, however, did not confirm such a view and referred that each of them works independently and buys drugs from different and changing suppliers (Interview MF40; see also Colombo, 1998). The question of foreign street dealers' organisation will be conclusively dealt with in the final report at the end of the second phase, when the analysis of interviews and judicial documents is completed.

By exploiting their connections to home countries and the judicial campaign against the large Italian drug dealing enterprises, many foreigners have also managed to enter the wholesale drug trade and to import drugs from abroad. Moroccan crews are more and more often involved in imports of hashish from their homeland. Albanians smuggle domestically produced marijuana, but are also increasingly active in the heroin market, taking the place of the Turks, for whom they used to work as couriers (TrMI, 1998; PrMI, 1998).

Foreigners' involvement in the import of drugs is not an absolute novelty. Ever since the 1980s, heroin has been traditionally supplied by Turkish nationals, who smuggled it into Europe through the Balkan route and its variations (Interviews MC6, and MC10; see also TrMI 1996b; Lewis, 1998). Likewise, Colombians and South Americans have always been involved in smuggling cocaine into Europe, though some Italian mafia consortia and a plurality of smaller, independent autochthonous dealers have also imported cocaine into Milan. What is new, however, is the growing marginalisation of Italian dealers. The latter are often bypassed and more and more frequently all the phases of the drug distribution chains are run by foreigners. According to Italian police officers, especially in the case of heroin, it frequently happens that drugs are imported, distributed and, finally, sold to the final consumers without ever involving an Italian national (Interview MC2).

Loose structures and the short distribution chain

The weakening of Southern Italian mafia associations has created open spaces in the Milan drug distribution system that have been largely filled by foreign drug dealing enterprises. Based on the sources analysed so far, the latter seem to be smaller and more ephemeral than those set up in the 1980s by Southern Italian *mafiosi* and by characters of the local underworld. In particular, while foreign drug dealing enterprises are based on trust rooted in family, friendship and locality ties or the common ethnic origin, no institutionalised mechanism to create ritual brotherhoods has been singled out so far, as it is instead the case in Southern Italian mafia associations (see, on the point, Paoli 2000a and 2000b).

The second half of the 1990s has also seen the multiplication of drug dealers who do not belong to a specific criminal subculture, have a clean record, an education, and a regular job. This type of drug entrepreneur is most frequently found at the retail level of cocaine, hashish and party drugs, above all in closed scene settings. Most of Raffaele's six cocaine suppliers, for example, are "normal people, they deal to supplement their salary. They are all Italian and Milanese" (Interview MF24). Likewise, Giovanni's hash dealer is

"a serious person, though it seems a bit funny to say that about a drug pusher, he is not a hot head, he reasons, he has a job, a girl-friend, two dogs, he is a body-building fan, he is as normal person, as I am, I smoke, he deals" (Interview MF20).

Some of these 'normal persons', however, do not content themselves with selling drugs at the retail level, but adapting to the globalisation era, also directly import illegal substances to reap fatter profits. This pattern seems to be, above all, frequent in the cocaine market: Alex, for example, states that,

"One of my acquaintances used to go to Colombia alone to get coke in not very large quantities. He got caught a year ago with a kilo and a half of coke and now he is in prison. He had very good quality and he sold it to models, yuppies, lawyers, physicians, in other words, high society people and he sold it at 250.000 *Lire* (Euros 129,1) per gram" (Interview MF22).

Not only small drug quantities are imported by people beyond suspicion; indeed, two of the largest cocaine importers, who have been active in the Milanese area over the last few years, belong to the sphere of white-collar crime. The first was a Milanese, Umberto Orio, who invested money earned from loansharking in the drug business and was able to import 600-800 kilograms of cocaine directly from Colombia each time. The second one was a former bank manager from Naples, Pasquale Centore, who was responsible for several 400-700 kilogram cocaine shippings. Both of them supplied a plurality of wholesale traffickers, including members of Southern Italian mafia groups, who resided in several parts of the country (Interview MD5; TrMI, 1999).

Despite the large quantities occasionally imported by this or that dealer, none of the known traffickers have been able to influence the commodity's price appreciably by varying the quantity of the output sold. Although some suppliers enjoyed a considerable monopolistic power over some Milan neighbourhoods and could even sell drugs to local dealers with a mark-up, most drug enterprises have always been price-takers rather than price-givers.

The market has become even more open and competitive in the second half of the 1990s, as the large drug dealing enterprises set up by Southern Italian mafia groups have been disbanded by law enforcement. Though some mafia groups still claim a certain power on a few hinterland communities (such as Corsico, Buccinasco and Trezzano sul Naviglio at Milan's southern edge), most local monopolies have been

disbanded. It is not yet clear to what extent foreign drug dealers depend on higher ranking Italian suppliers (Interview MC5, MF30 and MF22). According to Alex, for example,

“The Fiore have been all arrested and if I may be sincere, it was better before. The marketplace in this area [Zara, in northern Milan not too far away from the Central Station, author’s note] is still run by people who have come out [of prison] and anyhow belong to Fiore’s group. However, the “management” is carried out more stealthily, once five or six of them arrived and brutally beat the pusher who did not buy from them, now they beat you the same, but with more discretion ... All in all, there is now less territorial control by organisations; before it was all controlled and there were alliances” (Interview MF22).

Shippings of several-hundred kilograms have also become rarer, as there are only few dealing enterprises that have the necessary financial means and high-level contacts. None of the Moroccan hashish enterprises that have been detected by law enforcement agencies imported tonnes of hashish, as the Di Giovine family used to do in the early 1990s. As the imported quantities are smaller, the distribution chain is usually rather short, indeed much shorter than the six-level model foreseen by Preble and Casey. With few exchanges, the substance goes from the importer to the final users. In the case of ecstasy but even of cocaine, there is also sometimes an identification between the importer and the retail dealer: as in the case mentioned above, the same person who buys the drug abroad also sells it to the final consumer.

Even the heroin distribution system today is much shorter than it used to be. This is due to the fact that the Kosovo Albanians, who presently play an important role in the heroin smuggling business, no longer import large quantities as many Turkish smuggling rings used to do. Unlike the latter ones, Albanians apparently deposit the drugs in Eastern European countries and let heroin be smuggled into the EU by Western European couriers, who travel with Western European cars carrying relatively small quantities of drugs. These lots of heroin are quickly distributed and, with at most two transactions, reach the final users. As a police officer put it, “the Albanian importer sells heroin in Italy to the North African dealer, who buys half a kilogram and re-sells it to the pusher. The latter supplies the end-customer” (Interviews MC2, MC10, and MC11).

Far from being a blueprint, the six-level hierarchical model developed by Preble and Casey seems to be only one of the possible forms a city drug market may assume. Moreover, even when this model works, it is worth remembering that individuals and groups may quickly change positions within it or play different roles in the distribution chain of different drugs. Up until the early 1990s the crew headed by Salvatore Di Marco and Antonino Guzzardi, two Sicilian Cosa Nostra members living in Milan, for example, was able to import cocaine directly from Colombia in hundred-kilogram lots. At the same time, however, the leaders of the crew used to sell one or two kilograms of heroin to a plurality of smaller dealers (TrMI, 1996).

Not even in the 1980s, when Southern Italian mafia families dominated the Milan's drug market, was the stratification rigid. The already mentioned Sergi group, for example, usually supplied heroin and cocaine in lots ranging from several kilos to 50 grams. Antonio Schettini, a leading member of the Coco-Trovato group, recalls that from 1985-86 onwards, he used to buy from 5-10 up to 30 kilograms from the Sergi group three or four times a month (TrMI, 1997a). But occasionally the latter even sold five grams at a time. As one of the Sergi's smallest buyers referred to the judges,

“Saverio [Morabito] let me know, indeed he told me explicitly, as his boys later confirmed, that they usually did not sell drugs in the quantities that I asked for, namely five grams at time. They told me that they usually refused contacts with people asking for such small quantities. Seeing how bothered they were, I realised that they usually dealt with much larger quantities. Anyhow, Morabito agreed to give me cocaine and the first time I asked him, called a guy telling him that if I asked for cocaine, he could give it to me” (TrMI, 1997: 1122-23).

Though no rigid distribution system could be detected and large-scale enterprises have become even rarer than they used to be in the 1980s, illegal drugs flow *ad abundantiam* in the Milan market through a plurality of channels and are sold by a multiplicity of actors. The “invisible hand” of the market makes law enforcement action even more difficult, as not even the arrest of wholesale dealers has an impact, not even briefly on drug availability. And at the retail level, the “industrial reserve army” willing to sell drugs seems to have no end. As Giovanni put it, “for every five Moroccans who are arrested, there are at fifty ready to do the same job for even less” (Interview MF21).

4. Drug Markets Trends, Turnover, and Social Impact

Only after all the fieldwork data have been completely analysed, will it be possible to reconstruct the evolution of wholesale and retail drug prices and purity levels in Milan. In this first-year report we will merely indicate some general trends, relying on the sources that have been examined so far.

Once the price structure is clear, we will also try to estimate the turnover of Milan drug markets. In particular, we will estimate the turnover of the heroin market on the basis of the average consumption patterns of users, following the method developed by Richard Hartnoll and Roger Lewis in an unpublished report for the British Home Office (n.d.). This method was tested by Pino Arlacchi and Roger Lewis in several ethnographic investigations of local Italian heroin markets (see, f. i., Arlacchi and Lewis, 1990) and it was employed by Paoli to estimate the turnover of the Italian heroin market (see Censis, 1992: 35-138). Combining these estimates with other types of data, this chapter will also attempt to identify and assess the social and economic impact of drug markets on the two cities.

Finally, by carefully analysing interviews with dealers and judicial documents, we will try to assess the proceeds, profits and costs of drug dealing enterprises operating at

different levels of the drug distribution system. It is worth stressing that the inquiries carried out by Milan law enforcement agencies in the 1990s constitute an unprecedented, and to a large extent still unexplored, source of information. Since they are largely based on the declarations of former associates, these arrest warrants, public prosecutors' final speeches and judicial sentences contain very detailed hints at profits, costs and proceeds of large-scale drug dealing enterprises, that usually remain unknown to academic researchers and often even to law enforcement officers.

Oscillations and long-term trends

Before entering into details, it is important to stress that drug prices are subject to huge variations due to the illegal status of the commodities. Unlike legal goods, there are no standardised prices in drug markets. The illegal status of the substances strongly affects the interplay of demand and supply and sharply increases transaction costs, meaning as the time and energy buyers and sellers need to invest in order to plan and conclude a commercial exchange (Williamson, 1987: 18 ff.).

Only at the retail level do open marketplaces exist where anybody can go and buy drugs, even if he (or she) does not personally know a dealer. If you buy a heroin *pallina* (small ball) on the few open drug scenes left in Milan, the prices and purity are the same for everybody. With 20-25.000 *Lire* (Euros 10,3-12,9), everybody can buy such a *pallina* at the Stazione Centrale, at all times, day and night (Interviews MC5 and MC6).

As soon as the quantities increase, the buyer needs to be introduced to the dealer by a common acquaintance, who guarantees the reliability of the former to the latter and vice versa. Furthermore, there are no impersonal mechanisms to let demand and supply meet. Due to the illegality of the goods under examination, sellers are prevented from publicising their merchandise and its prices, while buyers often have difficulties finding suppliers and are discouraged from acquiring information from several dealers, as looking around for drugs is always a risk.

The consolidation of standardised prices is further hindered by the widespread practice of heavily cutting drugs with amorphous substances. Depending on the source, even similar amounts of the same drug may be imported in Milan with very different purity levels. And they may subsequently be cut by wholesale and retail dealers into different percentages. Even within the same quantity range, purity levels – and, consequently, even the price – of a substance may differ radically. If you buy 5 grams of cocaine directly from the importer, who has not cut them, they will have a certain price. The same lot bought from a petty dealer after it has changed hands several times, will cost much less (Interview MF22).

As a result, as soon as lowest retail level is overcome, drug prices register wide oscillations. The price of a certain drug amount is primarily affected by the drug purity, but other variables are also at play. The most important ones were mentioned by the chief of the Milan Narcotics Squad:

“The wholesale price is merely indicative, as it varies on the basis of the required quantity and the quality, ways of payment, relationships among traffickers, drug availability on the part of the traffickers and ways of transport, meaning transport risks” (Interview MC6).

Only if all these variables are taken into account (and often they cannot be), can long-term trends in drug prices be identified in a reliable way. Notwithstanding these difficulties, most of the experts whom we interviewed pointed to a slow decline of wholesale and retail prices for most drugs ever since the early 1980s.

Heroin

Wholesale prices have declined most sharply in the case of heroin. The Albanian rings that are largely in charge of importing heroin in Milan (and, more generally, in Northern Italy) since the mid-1990s, sell a kilogram of heroin at 30 million *Lire* (Euros 15.493,7) and sometimes even less. Throughout the 1980s and up until the early 1990s, Italian wholesale enterprises used to buy large lots of heroin at about 40-50 million *Lire* (Euros 20.658,3-25.822,8) per kilogram (Interviews MC10 and MC11; Maggi, 1999: 33).

The purity of the heroin currently imported by the Albanians is, however, much lower than in the past. It is hardly above 50 percent, but police forces have also seized lots from importers, the purity of which was significantly below that level (35-40 percent). The Albanian dealers, in fact, have modified the traditional heroin smuggling techniques. They no longer import large quantities, as the Turkish traffickers used to do, but usually import 10-15 kilo lots from deposits in Eastern Europe, after cutting it there. In such a way, no heroin deposits are held in Milan and the drug can be quickly divided into smaller lots and sold (Interviews MC6 and MC10). Instead, the drug dealing enterprises, that were run by Southern Italian mafia associates in the 1980s and early 1990s, used to buy heroin at about 70 percent purity level from the Turks (TrMI, 1997a and 1997b).

The same declining trends affecting both prices and purity levels can also be detected further down on the drug distribution chain. In the mid-1980s the associates of the Sergi group, who bought heroin directly from the Turkish traffickers, could sell kilograms of heroin at about 60-65 million *Lire* (Euros 30.987,4-33.569,7) but by the early 1990s, prices among wholesale dealers had already declined to about 50 million *Lire* (Euros 25.822,8) per kilo (TrMI, 1997b). Fifty grams of heroin could be bought at 70-80.000 *Lire* (Euros 36,1-41,3) per gram in the 1980s, whereas now the price for the same

quantities is around 50.000 *Lire* (Euros 25,8) (Interview MF39). On the open drug scene, a ‘gram’ of heroin (which is however much less) is currently sold at about 70-80.000 *Lire* (Euros 36,1-41,3). Throughout the 1980s the standard price was around 100.000 *Lire* (Euros 51,6) (Interviews MF38 and MF40).

The standard unit for injecting drug users is the *quartino* (i.e. a quarter, though the dose is usually less than 0,25 gram). Nowadays it is no longer sold in *bustine* (that is, small ‘packs’), but in small rocks, which are called *palline* and are much harder to dissolve: as a heroin user put it, “you now almost need a hammer to break it” (Interview MF38; see also Interview MA9). In the 1980s a ‘quarter’ was sold at about 30.000 *Lire* (Euros 15,5), now the standard price is about 20-25.000 (Euros 10,3-12,9) (Interviews MF22 and MB3), but according to Gennaro, a former heroin addict now undergoing methadone treatment, some of his friends pay as little as 15.000 *Lire* (Euros 7,7) (Interview MF39).

On the retail level, heroin purity oscillates between 5 and 10 percent. Despite its decreased purity at the import, wholesale dealers, who are usually North African, still cut it at 1: 3 as the Italians used to do a decade before: that is, they make three kilos out of one (Interview MC5).

Cocaine

Cocaine wholesale prices are also down *vis-à-vis* the 1980s. At the end of that decade, the Di Giovines imported cocaine at about 50 million *Lire* (Euros 25.822,8) per kilogram. By adding lactose, they made two kilos out of it, and then sold it in quantities ranging from 10 grams to half a kilo at a price of about 100-140.000 *Lire* (Euros 51,6-72,3) per gram. Hence, they made a profit of about 150-230.000 *Lire* (Euros 77,5-118,9) per gram (Maggi, 1999: 34). In late the 1980s and early 1990s Saverio Morabito and his associates of the Sergi group usually sold cocaine at 90 million *Lire* (Euros 46.481,1) pro kilogram. For good friends and relatives the price went down up to 80 million *Lire* (Euros 41.316,6) (TrMI, 1997b).

Now the average price at the import is about 50 million *Lire* (Euros 25.822,8) per kilogram but, as the chief of the Narcotics Squad points out,

“if you have a very good relationship with the Colombian supplier, you can even get it at US\$ 2-3.000 per kilo, hence very, very cheap. Obviously this takes place if you buy 500 kilos, if you take 50 kilos, you may pay 30 million. Cocaine prices vary enormously according to the relationship between the trafficker and suppliers” (Interview MC6).

According to the chief of the Gruppo Antidroga of the Guardia di Finanza, counter-tendencies were registered in 1999 and early 2000. Due to the success of law

enforcement action in Colombia, cocaine prices are again on the increase. Allegedly, traffickers have paid up to 100 million *Lire* (Euros 51.645,7) for a kilo of cocaine to avoid losing their clients (Interview MC10).

The trends affecting cocaine retail prices are also not as clear as those concerning heroin. Today a gram of cocaine costs around 150.000 *Lire* (Euros 77,5) on the retail market (Interviews MF22 and MB2). The price can decrease to 120.000 *Lire* (Euros 62), but the purity also correspondingly declines and, according to Luca, an occasional cocaine user, you get rubbish (Interview MF23). Good quality cocaine costs from 180.000 up to 300.000 *Lire* (Euros 93-154,9), depending on the relationship with the supplier and the place of sale (*ibidem*; see also Interviews MF22 and MF20).

To make cocaine more attractive to younger consumers, in the late 1990s dealers started to sell doses at about 100.000 *Lire* (Euros 51,6), allegedly offering 0,7 grams cocaine. According to Raffaele, one of our respondents, however, the 100.000 *Lire* (Euros 51,6) package usually contains no more than 0,5 gram (Interview MF24). Finally, starting in the early 1990s *palline* of cocaine were also on sale on the open drug scene attended by injecting drug users. Their price is roughly equivalent to heroin 'balls': 25-30.000 *Lire* (Euros 12,9-15,5) (Interviews MC5 and MF39).

There are diverging opinions on the evolution of cocaine prices in the 1980s and 1990s. According to many of the users whom we interviewed, the cocaine price has remained relatively stable over the past 10-15 years. According to Gennaro, for example, in the 1980s a gram of cocaine cost roughly as much as now, though in the early 1990s there was a decline and cocaine could be bought at about 120.000 *Lire* (Euros 62) (Interview MF39).

Additionally, many users point out that the true amount of cocaine doses has decreased. "Now a 150.000 *Lire* (Euros 77,5) dose, which is called a *pezzo* (literally, piece) contains 0,7 gram, a year ago it contained 0,8, and ten years ago a real gram" (Interview MF24; see also Interview MF22). Many drug treatment providers and law enforcement officers, however, explain the diffusion of cocaine use throughout the 1990s as due to the sharp decrease of the drug prices (Interviews MB2, MA9, and MC5). The issue is not entirely clear yet; despite the attractiveness of the above-mentioned explanation, however, judicial documents seem to confirm the users' perception of cocaine prices.

The following episodes, for example, are reported in the 'Nord-Sud' sentence involving the so-called Sergi group. In the late 1980s, a baker and occasional cocaine seller bought 50 grams of cocaine from the Corsico people on 10-15 occasions. He paid 90-100.000 *Lire* (Euros 51,6) for each gram and resold it to final customers at 120.000 *Lire* (Euros 62) (TrMI, 1997b: 1117-19). If the customer personally knew some of the Sergi group's associates, the price was even lower. Another small dealer informed the judges

that in 1987-88 he repeatedly bought five grams of cocaine at about 300-350.000 *Lire* (Euros 154,9-180,8): “certainly a privileged price, due to the fact that I knew Morabito”. This means that despite the small quantities he bought, this pusher paid 60-70.000 *Lire* (Euros 31-36,1) for each gram (*ibidem*).

Whatever the price trends, there is no doubt that purity has decreased. Long-time users maintain that the cut is often made by inexperienced dealers, so much so that substances of different colour can be detected in a cocaine dose (Interview MF24). The purity decrease may be seen as a further indicator of cocaine’s success. As Luca put it, “the reason why coke has worsened is that there is too much demand and dealers are not able to meet the requests” (*ibidem*). Likewise, according to Claudio, “coke’s quality has worsened because it is very much in demand and everybody wants it, even the kids, who do know anything about it and are easy to cheat” (Interview MF26). Nonetheless, if you have good connections, especially in the underworld, or you are ready to pay a premium for quality, you still can find high-purity cocaine (Interview MF20).

Cannabis

Throughout the last fifteen years, hashish prices seem to have remained rather stable at the wholesale level and, according to several users, have risen in the retail market: as Claudio maintains, “hash, *cavolo*, has become expensive” (Interview MF26).

Depending on the quality, hashish today costs 3 to 6 million *Lire* (Euros 1.549,3-3.098,7) per kilogram in Milan (MC6). If a dealer buys very large quantities, however, the price is lower. In the early 1990s the Di Giovine sold their Moroccan hashish in 50 or 100 kilo lots at 2,5-3 million *Lire* (Euros 1.291,1-1.549,3) per kilo. It was a profitable business, as the Di Giovine were first able to import tonnes of hashish from Spain and then directly from Morocco. When they bought it in Spain, they paid 1-1,1 million *Lire* (Euros 516,5-568,1) per kilogram. After finding contacts in Morocco, they succeeded in buying it at 300-500.000 *Lire* (Euros 154,9-258,2) per kilogram. Even after subtracting transport and personnel costs, they achieved a 1,8-2 million *Lire* (Euros 929,6-1.032,9) mark-up on each kilogram of hashish they handled (Maggi, 1999: 40-41; TrMI, 1997c).

Massimo, a former wholesale dealer who had *cavalli* in piazza Vetra, recalls that in the mid-1990s he bought five to ten kilos of Moroccan hashish weekly, each time at 3.000 *Lire* (Euros 1,5) per kilo. His mark-up varied according to the quantity he sold. “If we sold 100 grams, we sold it at 6-7 [thousand *Lire*] (Euros 3,1-3,9). If somebody bought a few kilos, we sold it at 5 [thousand *Lire*] (Euros 2,6)” (Interview MF38).

Moroccan hashish is currently the most widespread on the retail market and it costs about 10-12.000 *Lire* (Euros 5,2-6,2) per gram. Because of its success, the prices have gone up over the last ten years. As an experienced hashish consumer notes, “there has been an evolution in tastes: now they all want the Moroccan [hashish]. A year ago it cost even more, now it has slightly declined, five years ago you paid less for it, 8.000 *Lire* (Euros 4,1) per gram, ten years ago nobody wanted it” (Interviews MF22 and MF20).

According to Alex, the black hashish is the best quality, but is hard to find. Now it costs 12.000 (Euros 6,2) a gram, one year ago it could not be found, five years ago it cost 7-8.000 (Euros 3,9-4,1) a gram, and ten years ago 5.000 *Lire* (Euros 2,6) (Interview MF22). According to our respondents, the decreasing availability of this type of resin is related to the changes among consumers. “The black, which was once very popular, is now difficult to find. This happens because there are now many more kids who smoke hashish and they do not like the black type, because it is thicker, has a stronger effect and is therefore more difficult to consume” (*ibidem*).

Indian hashish, called Charas, is also hardly available and it cost 25.000 *Lire* (Euros 12,9) per gram. Its prices have also sharply increased during the 1990s. At the beginning of that decade it cost 10-12.000 (Euros 5,2-6,2), in mid-1990s 15.000 *Lire* (Euros 7,7) (*ibidem*; see also Interview MF39).

Another sign of hashish’s growing popularity is the change affecting its basic selling unit. On the retail market, in fact, the selling unit is not expressed in gram but in money. Nowadays the standard unit is a *deca* (that is, 10.000 *Lire*, Euros 5,2) and, though it is said to contain a gram of Moroccan hashish, the customer usually receives 0,7 gram and can prepare 2 or 3 joints. Today it is no longer possible to buy 5.000 *Lire* (Euros 2,6) of hashish and, indeed, according to some users, some dealers try to impose a 20.000 *Lire* (Euros 10,3) minimum dose. Alfredo, for example, refers,

“Prices have changed a lot. In the past you could buy 5.000 *Lire* (Euros 2,6) hashish, now you get nothing for less than a *deca*. Some friends of mine, who buy from Moroccans, told me that the latter do not sell for less than 20.000 *Lire* (Euros 10,3). It is not 20.000 *Lire* a gram. You have to buy a minimum amount of 20.000 *Lire*’s worth (Interview MF20; see also Interview MF27).

From the mid-1990s marijuana has reappeared in the Milan drug market. The best quality is the Dutch marijuana and it is usually imported by consumers themselves and small groups of dealers, who go to Holland to buy the drug. On the street level it costs 15-20.000 per gram (Euros 7,7-10,3). Occasionally, also marijuana produced in Calabria can be found and can be bought at about 8.000 *Lire* (Euros 4,1) (Interview MF22).

The most common type of marijuana, however, is the Albanian, that is cultivated in Albania and imported into Italy through the same channels used for smuggling people. In most cases it is brought into Apulia with fast boats and is then transferred to Milan by car or truck. This type of marijuana is the cheapest (5.000 *Lire* per gram; Euros 2,6) but it is also the worst. Its THC is about 2 percent on the retail level, whereas the other types of marijuana have a 19 percent THC on the average (Interviews MC5 and MC6).

Ecstasy and synthetic drugs

Ecstasy pills are sold on the retail market at prices ranging from 25.000 to 50.000 *Lire* (Euros 12,9-25,8). As Claudio, an ecstasy consumer himself, notes,

“ecstasy costs about 50.000 *Lire* (Euros 25,8) in discos, where the price is standard. In piazza you can find it at 40.000 (Euros 20,7), instead from acquaintances [you can buy it] at 25-30.000 (Euros 12,9-15,5), but you need to take a dozen [pills]. A year ago in discos they sold it at 45 [thousand *Lire*] (Euros 23,2), more or less the prices were the same. Maybe you could still get it at 20.000 *Lire* (Euros 10,3) from dealers you knew well. Five years ago the cost was the same. Instead eight years ago it cost 80.000 *Lire* (Euros 41,3), but it was completely different. Foremost it was a round plate that could be broken in four smaller pieces, and it was better, the quality was fantastic, it lasted the whole night. Ten years ago I did not use pills, but I have heard that they cost 90.000 *Lire* (Euros 46,5), but they were pills that mess you up for 24 hours” (Interview MF26; see also MF43).

On the wholesale level there are also huge differences, depending on the quantities bought and the contacts with the traffickers: prices range between 4-5.000 (Euros 2-2,5) to 15.000 *Lire* (Euros 7,7) (Interviews MC5 and MB2).

5. The Public Response and Its Impact on Drug Markets

The evolution of the public response to the rise and consolidation of drug markets in Milan will be dutifully reconstructed in the final report, as the analysis of expert interviews, newspaper clippings and official programmes and reports is still ongoing. By comparing information drawn from all these sources, we will briefly describe the action of state and local public bodies, ranging from the law enforcement agencies to drug treatment centres, also paying attention to drug-related NGOs. As in the rest of Italy, in Milan private detoxification and treatment centres also played a key role in setting up an emergency response to the sudden growth of heroin use in the early 1980s. Despite the institution of the public Servizi per le Tossicodipendenze (Ser.T) in the early 1990s, these NGOs still powerfully influence local and national drug policies, though they had to accept the orientation and control powers of the Ser.T. By examining the action of all these different actors, in the final report we will sketch the Milan drug policy during the 1980s and 1990s. As far as possible, we will also try to assess its impact on the evolution of the local drug markets.

For the moment, it suffices to say that the contemporary drug policy is characterised by two, to some extent mutually contradictory, tendencies. On the one hand, from the mid-1990s there has been a sharp intensification of law enforcement repression. On the other hand, following but also furthering a national trend, the six Ser.T operating in Milan with the support of the city and regional drug policy divisions, promote harm reduction measures with great determination.

Starting in 1993, the Milan Prosecutor's Office co-ordinated far-reaching investigations of practically all the local settlements of Southern Italian mafia families and disrupted most of the large drug dealing enterprises that had consolidated during the previous decade. Thanks to the confessions of numerous turncoats, over one thousand people were arrested and subsequently convicted to long-term imprisonment [Paoli, 2000; *Panorama*, March 25 1999: 57].

The law enforcement action, however, has not exclusively focused on the wholesale dealers. Under the impetus of two right-wing local administrations, the pressure on street dealing has also sharply intensified. As a Moroccan street dealer put it,

“in the last two-three years, working has become almost impossible. The cops are very numerous, they have increased a lot and the squares are now full of policemen and *Carabinieri*, even with armoured vehicles, now it is more dangerous to deal” (Interview MF28; see also Interviews MF29, MF30, MF20).

Statistical data also show the increase of law enforcement repression, which, not by chance, had two peaks in 1994 and 1998; these were the first years of two right-wing city administrations, which had promised the restoration of law and order (see Graph 4).

This change was also fostered by large sectors of public opinion and by some conservative media, that keep asking for a ‘heavy hand’ against street drug dealers and users by law enforcement agencies (Palidda, 2000; Interview MA9). In different parts of Milan, most recently in the Parco delle Cave at Milan's western periphery, ‘noisy minorities’ have mobilised, organising public protests and even private armed squads to free their areas from drug dealers.

Graph 4. Persons arrested on drug charges in Milan province ~ 1990-1999



Source: Direzione Centrale per i Servizi Antidroga. 2000.

The most frequent target of this second strand of repression have been foreign dealers. In a country still largely unused to immigration, the latter frequently tend to become the scapegoat of public opinion that still has to adjust to the growing uncertainty of post-industrial society and loudly requests more security. Not only the foreign migrants whom we interviewed, but Italian users and dealers as well, agree that the former are overproportionally targeted by law enforcement repression. As an Italian cocaine user notes,

“Undoubtedly the police focus on foreigners, they must demonstrate that they can clean the streets and the foreigners are the easiest to catch. With minimal efforts they fulfil their duty, without stepping on the feet of those who are important in these circles” (Interviews MF24 and MF43).

Most of the our foreign interviewees also mention that they are often mistreated or blackmailed by policemen, who extort them for drugs or money in exchange for non-prosecution (Interviews MF27, MF28, and MF31 and MF38).

Whenever they are arrested, foreigners also tend to be discriminated against in all phases of the criminal justice system. Italian user-dealers hardly tend to enter prison and, if arrested, they are encouraged to start a detoxification therapy. Irregular foreigners, instead, are excluded from all beneficial treatment and are kept imprisoned as long as they are not expelled. Even if they have a regular residence permit, migrants do tend to be considered mere dealers, regardless of their drug using habits, and their drug dependence is hardly taken care of by public drug treatment bodies (Palidda, 1999). Only in the last two years the latter have become aware of the growing drug addiction problems among migrants and have realised the need to offer drug treatment and detoxification services to migrants, especially to the imprisoned ones, regardless of their legal status (Nannicini, 1999).

Despite the intensified efforts, law enforcement repression does not seem able to reduce drug availability. As one user remarks, the main change that took place over the last few years is that “it has become easier to buy any type of drug, if you do not insist on quality. Pushers have increased and many are *extra-comunitari*” (Interview MF24).

Though not officially declared, police action has also concentrated on some drugs, most notably heroin and, more recently, ecstasy. The users and dealers of the former substance are usually the most marginalised ones and thus provoke the sharpest reactions among the ‘normal’ citizens and are, therefore, also most frequently and aggressively targeted by law enforcement agencies. Long ignored by public bodies and the media, ecstasy briefly became a top issue in the national public discourse, after the sudden death of an occasional user in a disco on Milan’s outskirts in late 1999. After this episode, all public bodies, including law enforcement agencies, focused on ecstasy and this sudden change was registered by our interviewees, especially those who were interviewed in early 2000. As one of our interviewees points out,

“The police have focused on some drugs, for example, heroin. They really do not tolerate it. Now, if they find you with pills, you are ruined. Hash instead is very tolerated, I have often smoked [a joint] with policemen” (Interview MF22).

As hinted in the previous quote, cannabis is almost *de facto* decriminalised. The police’s changing attitude has been well described by another of our interviewees:

“The police have changed their attitude. Ten years ago, if you were stopped even with a single joint, they registered your name and opened a file Nowadays, ninety percent of the time, unless they have gone out for that [reason] to look for people to register, they let you go without problems in the case of hash. The police have become more tolerant but I believe that they had no choice: given all the people who smoke [hash], if you have to stop them all, you could do nothing else” (Interview MF21).

Despite the “zero tolerance” slogans adopted by Milan’s mayor, Gabriele Albertini and his party followers, his city administration and the Azienda Sanitaria Locale (ASL), coordinating Milan’s six Ser.T, have recently adopted a very liberal directive on drug abuse and addictions that is clearly inspired by the harm reduction philosophy (Comune di Milano, 2000). The three year action plan is based on the assumption that the decline of heroin consumption has been sided by the “rise of a variety of dependencies from different substances: not only illegal drugs but also alcohol and legal drugs” (*ibidem*).

Moreover, this directive does not constitute a sudden policy turn, but is born out of a series of initiatives that, despite shrinking funds, have been taken by the city’s six Ser.T and the city and regional administrations to reduce heavy drug use-related harm and to intercept non-heroin users. Since the early 1990s, the methadone substitution programme, which has been available for a limited number of heroin users since the late 1970s, was extended and low threshold units were set up to contact as many heavy drug users as possible (Interviews MA1 and MA3). In 1996, outreach projects (*unità mobili*)

were started in several parts of the city to exchange syringes, allow for HIV testing, and provide information to whomever asked for it (Interviews MA4, MB8, and MB7). These initiatives will be systematically analysed in the final report at the end of the second phase.

Here it suffices to say that over the last few years harm reduction and even legalisation options have found a variety of supporters among local politicians and the representatives of state authorities, including those in charge of law enforcement repression. Following the comments of General Prosecutor Galli Fonseca at the opening of the judicial year in 1999, the Milan General Prosecutor Francesco Saverio Borrelli and several other well-known anti-mafia prosecutors in his office have time and again stigmatised the failures of a mere repressive approach and favoured the legalisation of cannabis and the controlled distribution of heroin, in order to subtract drug profits from mafia and criminal associations (*La Repubblica*, August 30, 1999: 15; September 1, 1999: 18; September 4, 1999: 21; *Corriere della Sera*, January 18: 2). Notwithstanding the “zero tolerance” slogans, even Milan’s current mayor, Gabriele Albertini, who belongs to the right-wing party Forza Italia, has declared himself favourable to drug liberalisation, though stressing that it is his personal opinion and not a political proposal (*Corriere della Sera*, March 23, 1999: 21).

PART IV. COMPARATIVE SYNTHESIS

The findings that were gathered so far about Frankfurt's and Milan's drug markets leave us with few doubts: on both the demand and the supply side the similarities between the two cities overshadow the differences by far. In both contexts, drug markets seem to have evolved in surprisingly parallel ways, by and large following analogous time sequences.

1. The demand: diversification and normalisation

The similarities are most evident on the demand side. In both cities, the substances preferred by the users, the latter's social characteristics and the meanings they attach to drug use seem to have evolved along roughly parallel paths over the last thirty years.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, at both sites cannabis and LSD consumption spread among the youths who participated in the 1968 collective movement and who were most closely influenced by the 'flower power' American subculture. Around the mid-1970s opiates and then heroin made their appearance on both markets and heroin use spread among those who were disappointed by the failure of the youth protest movements and, increasingly, among marginalised, lower-class youths.

While LSD largely disappeared from both cities in the late 1970s, during the following decade two large, parallel drug markets developed: one for heroin and one for cannabis. In both cities, these markets have always (with an initial exception in Frankfurt) been physically separate, as they have been located in different, though changing, parts of the two metropolises. During the 1990s, however, the polarisation of the illegal drug market was shaken by the diffusion of several new illegal drugs. Some of them, such as ecstasy, were indeed entirely new. Others, such as cocaine, amphetamines, and LSD, were largely rediscovered and/or became attractive to a wider pool of consumers.

In both contexts, the turn of the century recorded a strong diffusion of cocaine, which has become a *passe-partout* drug and is increasingly used by a wide-ranging spectrum of people. Cocaine is no longer consumed only by a wealthy, elite public as it mainly had been in the 1980s, but according to several sources in both Frankfurt and Milan, over the last few years cocaine consumption has become popular among injecting heroin users and methadone-substituted addicts. Furthermore, it increasingly interests many young people who have been most closely associated with ecstasy and cannabis use. The former, however, predominantly inject cocaine, whereas the latter sniff it.

Since the early 1990s, even crack cocaine has registered a veritable boom on the Frankfurt open drug scene. Long a peculiarity of Frankfurt, crack cocaine also became available in Milan in the late 1990s.

The wider drug supply has been paralleled in both contexts by the growing diversification of drug consumers. Today the latter can no longer be described with reference to a single cluster of demographic, social, and cultural characteristics, nor can their drug use be explained by referring to one or few economic or social variables.

In both cities, there is a strong core of heavy drug addicts, for whom drug use and search represent two of the most important daily activities. In Frankfurt, 3.198 such drug consumers were registered by the local police in 1999 and, according to some experts, their real number currently oscillates between 4.000 and 6.000. In Milan, too, slightly more than 3.000 heavy drug users are officially known because they are clients of the city's six public drug treatment units. Their true amount is variously estimated between 4.000 and 7.000. At both sites, a growing portion of these marginalised, dependent drug users are foreign migrants.

Neither in Frankfurt nor in Milan, however, are illegal drugs exclusively used by the former category of people, the so-called 'junkies'. Though they are the most visible component, the latter by no means exhaust the demand for illegal drugs in both cities. Indeed, 'traditional' heavy drug addicts represent only a minority. At least some illegal drugs – above all, hashish, but also increasingly cocaine, ecstasy and other synthetic drugs – are regularly or occasionally consumed by dozens of thousands of teenagers and young (and not so young) adults, who belong to the most different social strata and cultural backgrounds.

In Milan, about 30 percent of high-school students admit to having smoked cannabis at least once in their life and 8 percent say that they have used cocaine or acid. Roughly 7 percent have allegedly used ecstasy and more than 50 percent have friends who use it. Analogous percentages of cannabis and cocaine users can also be estimated among Milanese in their twenties and thirties.

At least 12-14.000 residents of Frankfurt are assumed to smoke cannabis regularly, 4.000 of whom are young adults. Cannabis's lifetime prevalence is estimated at about 24 percent of young adults (age 18-24) in western Germany, whereas 13,2 percent report use in the last 12 months. Within the same age group, the lifetime, past-year and past-month prevalence rates for ecstasy are estimated respectively at 5,5, 3,2, and 1,3 percent.

The drug use of this new generation of consumers can certainly not be explained with reference to their supposed marginalisation. Rather, it is fostered by the youth mass

culture, which –through songs, movies and entertainment stars– spreads the same myths, values, and expectations among young people at all corners of the world. This international cultural movement has also spread the positive, mythical image of psychoactive drugs and, above all, stimulants. For many young people, both in Frankfurt and Milan, drugs have thus become a means to easily achieve the feeling of belonging, conviviality, fun, evasion and to remove sufferings and fears.

Though all these hypotheses need to be checked with further research and some additional interviews, the impression is that the risks associated with drug use are strongly underassessed by most young people in Frankfurt and Milan. Except for heroin, the other illegal substances are hardly considered dangerous, especially if consumed occasionally and in limited doses. In the young people’s perception, only those who ‘shoot’ are considered drug addicts.

Unsurprisingly, both metropolis have registered a normalisation of drug use over the past ten years. Despite their illegal status, the use of some drugs –above all, hashish, but in some contexts also cocaine and ecstasy– has by and large become ‘normal’ and it is widely practised and accepted. It is no longer the expression of a rebellious counterculture, but it has instead entered the mass youth culture. Though it may have dangerous consequences for some, the use of some illegal substances seems to have become a sort of generalised *rite de passage* from childhood into adulthood.

2. The supply: small enterprises, open markets

On the supply side, there are also striking similarities. In both cities, drug entrepreneurs of all kinds are subject to the constraints deriving from the illegal status of the products they sell. These constraints have so far prevented the rise of large, hierarchically organised firms to mediate economic transactions in the illegal marketplace. The factors promoting the development of bureaucracies in the legal section of the economy - namely to take advantage of economies of scale and specialisation of roles - are outbalanced in the illegal arena by the very consequences of product illegality. Due to these constraints, within the drug economy there is no immanent tendency towards the consolidation of large-scale, modern bureaucracies.

In Frankfurt as well as in Milan, the great majority of drug deals, even those involving large quantities of drugs, seem to be carried out by numerous, relatively small, and often ephemeral enterprises. Some of them are family businesses: that is, they are run by the members of a blood family, who resort on an *ad hoc* basis to a net of non-kin in order to carry out the most dangerous tasks. Some are veritable non-kin groups, which are formed around a (charismatic) leader and then manage to acquire a certain degree of stability and develop a rudimentary division of labour. Others are crews: loose associations of people, which form, split, and come together again as opportunity arises.

Even Southern Italian mafia families, whose members were deeply involved in large drug deals in Milan during the 1980s and early 1990s, do not seem to operate like monolithic productive and commercial units. On the contrary, their members frequently set up crews with a few other mafia affiliates or even with external people to make drug deals. These crews are far from being stable working units that could be compared to the branch office of a legal firm. Their composition frequently changes depending on the moment when deals take place or on the availability of single members. After one or a few drug transactions some teams are disbanded, while others continue to operate for a longer time, eventually changing their composition to some extent.

In both cities, especially at the intermediate and lower level many dealers work alone, either to finance their own drug consumption habits or, more rarely, to earn fast money. Most of these drug entrepreneurs have no contact whatsoever with the underworld, but are often inconspicuous persons, who can hardly be distinguished from 'normal' people.

In both cities, the street drug market is largely dominated by foreign dealers, as both police statistics and interviews with key witnesses, drug users and dealers point out. Within a few years a veritable substitution process has taken place: the lowest and most dangerous positions, which used to be occupied by the most marginalised Italian/German drug users, are now taken over by foreigners, especially those who have immigrated recently, are applicants for political asylum or do not have a residence permit.

Like other forms of crime in the past, the involvement in today's largest illegal market is used by immigrants as a "queer ladder of social mobility". To a greater extent than in the past, moreover, migrants today have a harder time accessing the legal economy and, due to the restrictive policies adopted by most Western European states, are more likely to find survival means only in the informal and illegal economies. Many of them, finally, are also drug users, who have begun to deal drugs in order to finance their consumption patterns.

Especially during the 1980s, several mafia and underworld drug dealing enterprises operating in Milan tried to exercise monopoly claims over the areas in which they were settled, obliging the local intermediate and street dealers to buy drugs from them. Nonetheless, neither in Milan nor in Frankfurt has a person or group ever succeeded in controlling the city market for any illegal substance. The drug markets of both cities have always been open markets, in which anybody can try to earn his/her fortune, selling, importing, or producing drugs.

Especially in Frankfurt, the openness of the illegal drug market is guaranteed by the city's closeness to Holland. Ever since the 1970s, dealers and users alike cross the Dutch border to supply themselves with illegal drugs. As a result, the drug distribution chain in Frankfurt is often very short. Indeed, if the consumers themselves buy drugs in

Holland, the latter coincide with the importers. Then there is *strictu sensu* no national distribution system at all, as all German wholesale and retail dealers are bypassed by these entrepreneurial user-importers. In any case, due to Holland's closeness, a few transactions are sufficient to pass the illegal merchandise from the importer to the final user, even when the latter does not cross the border himself.

In Milan, too, illegal drugs arrive on the market through a plurality of different channels and the drug distribution chain is frequently much shorter than the six-level hierarchical model developed by Preble and Casey in the late 1960s for the New York heroin market.

At both sites empirical evidence additionally shows that the relationships between drug dealing enterprises are closer to competition than to collusion. Although some suppliers may occasionally enjoy a considerable monopolistic power over a local (usually small) market, in Frankfurt, as in Milan, most drug enterprises seem to be price-takers rather than price-givers. That is, none of them are able to influence the commodity's price appreciably by varying the quantity of the output sold.

3. Drug prices: parallel declines

At both sites the wholesale and retail prices of all the main substances – with the exception of cannabis– have steadily decreased. This decline has, however, been accompanied by a comparable fall of purity levels. Only cannabis prices are reported stable in Frankfurt and increasing in Milan. Apparently following international trends, the prices for all the main illegal substances are strikingly similar in both cities, though slightly higher in Milan than in Frankfurt.

In Frankfurt, in early 2000 a gram of heroin could be bought on the street market for as little as DM 50-60 (Euros 25,6-30,7). In this case, however, the purity is bound to be very low, most probably below five percent. To buy heroin of better quality, one needs to pay more: depending on the purity level, up to DM 150 (Euros 76,7-102,3). On the Milan open drug scene, a 'gram' of heroin (which is always a bit less, however) is currently sold at about 70-80.000 *Lire* (Euros 36,1-41,3), with a purity level ranging between five and ten percent. The price decline seems to have been steeper in Frankfurt than in Milan (even allowing for the different inflation rate, which was traditionally much higher in Italy than in Germany and caused the repeated devaluation of the Italian *Lira* up to the mid-1990s). In Milan, drug users recall that throughout the 1980s the standard price for a street 'gram' of heroin was around 100.000 *Lire* (Euros 51,6 at today's exchange rate). In Frankfurt, interviewees maintain that up to the mid-1980s the price of a gram was above DM 200 (Euros 102,3).

In both cities, however, the standard unit for injecting drug users is not the gram, but the 'quarter', (though the dose is usually less than 0,25 gram). Nowadays it is no longer sold in 'packs', but in small rocks, which are called *palline* in Milan and *Plomben* in Frankfurt. These were introduced by North American dealers, who keep them in their mouth and swallow them if they are approached by the police. During the 1980s, in Milan, a 'quarter' was sold at about 30.000 *Lire* (Euros 15,5); now the standard price is about 20-25.000 (Euros 10,3-12,9). Smaller *palline* are also on sale for as little as 15.000 *Lire* (Euros 7,7). Likewise, a *Plombe* containing slightly less than a quarter of a gram, can currently be bought in Frankfurt for about DM 20-25 (Euros 10,2-12,3). Smaller *Plomben* (about 0,1 grams) can be purchased for as little as DM 10 (Euros 5,1).

Consistent similarities can also be detected in the trends of cocaine prices in the two cities. A gram of cocaine is usually paid by final users in Frankfurt for about DM 130 (Euros 66,5). Likewise, in Milan a gram of cocaine costs today around 150.000 *Lire* (Euros 77,5). The price can decrease to 120.000 *Lire* (Euros 62), but the purity also correspondingly declines. In both cities *palline/Plomben* of cocaine are also on sale on the open drug scenes attended by injecting drug users. The smallest ones cost DM 20 (Euros 10,2) in Frankfurt and 25-30.000 *Lire* (Euros 12,9-15,5). As in the case of heroin, in both cities cocaine prices have fallen since the early 1980s, but the decline has been less pronounced in Milan than in Frankfurt. In the latter city, a gram of cocaine cost up to DM 300 (Euros 179) in the early 1980s. In Milan, though many observers point to a consistent decline of cocaine prices, several drug users/dealers as well as the results of judicial investigations only point to a slow and soft downward trend since the mid-1980s and, for some of our interviewees, there has been a veritable stability over the past 15 years.

In both cities, the price of ecstasy has declined consistently during the 1990s. In Frankfurt, an ecstasy pill used to be sold to final users for DM 30-50 (Euros 15,4-25,6) in the early 1990s; today, the prices oscillate between DM 10 and 15 (Euros 5,1-7,7). In Milan, ecstasy pills are sold on the retail market at prices ranging from 25.000 to 50.000 *Lire* (Euros 12,9-25,8), down from 80-90.000 *Lire* in the early 1990s (Euros 41,3-46,5). At both sites, users lament a quality decline that has accompanied the fall of prices.

The considerable gap in the ecstasy prices of the two cities can be explained with Frankfurt's closeness to Holland, where most ecstasy pills sold in both cities come from. The Milan prices of ecstasy pills incorporate the higher travel costs and reflect the different structure of the trafficking network. Whereas many Frankfurt's users go themselves to Holland to buy drugs and, specifically ecstasy, this practice involves a much more limited number of Milan's youths, because the distance is higher.

Cannabis is the only illegal substance the prices of which have not been falling in the 1990s in either city. According to most observers, in Frankfurt cannabis prices have

remained largely stable over the years. Depending on the quality, a gram of Moroccan hashish costs DM 15-18 (Euros 7,7-9,2) in Frankfurt. In Milan, Moroccan hashish costs about 10-12.000 *Lire* (Euros 5,2-6,2) per gram and, according to several interviewees, the prices have gone up over the last ten years. In both cities, lots of a hundred grams are sold at about Euros 3-3,9 per gram (respectively DM 6-7 in Frankfurt, and 6-7.000 *Lire* in Milan). For kilograms, the price is around Euros 2: DM 4 in Frankfurt and 3-5.000 *Lire* in Milan.

4. The public response: repression and harm reduction

In their tensions and contradictions, even the drug policies of the two cities show basic similarities. Following the diffusion of the AIDS epidemic, in both cities a variety of harm reduction measures were introduced during the 1990s. The latter were often pushed through by public agencies against the initial opposition of many local NGOs, which resisted change as they were largely used to offering drug-free treatment and counselling. The methadone treatment was first tested in Frankfurt in 1989 and then was extended to a wider clientele after 1992. In Milan, too, methadone substitution became a low threshold service in the early 1990s. Needle exchange and other types of outreach projects, as well as medical crisis intervention, were also set up in both cities during the last decade of the 20th century. In Frankfurt, additionally, safe injection rooms have been open since 1994.

Especially in Milan, the harm reduction turn has, however, been accompanied by an intensification of police repression. At both sites, the large open drug scenes were evacuated by the police (in 1989 in Milan, in 1992 in Frankfurt) and in neither city have the law enforcement agencies and the local administrations allowed similar concentrations of injecting drug users to re-establish again. As result, there has been a submersion and fragmentation of the heavy drug market. As more and more drug exchanges take place in private settings or in rapidly changing locations at the city periphery, transaction costs for users have consistently increased.

Whereas both the public and policy-making still largely focuses on injecting drug users and the open-drug scene, both in Frankfurt and in Milan public and private drug-related agencies have so far been largely unable to reach the new generations of non-injecting (largely non-heroin) drug users. Only a limited number of prevention and harm-reduction initiatives targeting this new type of drug user has been launched.

These are, in a nutshell, the research hypotheses that could be elaborated during the first phase of the pilot project. Their refinement and ultimate test will be hopefully carried out during the second phase.

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Note on Interview Codes

All interviews with public and private drug treatment providers, law enforcement officials as well as users and dealers are maintained anonymous and are referred to with a code (for example MF1 or FA1).

The first letter of the code refers to the city: hence M for Milan and F for Frankfurt. The second letter points to the specific background of the interviewee. In particular, A stays for representatives of public drug treatment centres; B for representatives of private drug treatment centres; C refers to police and prison officials; D prosecutors; E judges; and, F users and dealers.

Finally, to distinguish interviews with people of the same category, a progressive number has been added according to the interview's date and/or its transcription's arrival at the Max Planck Institute.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEWS TO DRUG USERS AND/OR DEALERS

FOREWORD

We are researching drug markets in Frankfurt and in Milan. The project is financed by the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction in Lisbon and here in Milan/Frankfurt it is supported by the City's Drug Office. The aim of the project is to analyse the functioning of the illegal drug markets in Frankfurt and Milan in order to formulate strategies that can reduce the pains and damages associated with drug use.

To achieve this, here in Milan/Frankfurt we are interviewing about 65, Italians/Germans and foreigners, users and dealers of illegal drugs. With these interviews we would like to understand the motivations and first-hand experiences of users and dealers in order to reconstruct the functioning of the drug markets not only from the law enforcement perspective but also from the perspective of its main actors – that of users and dealers.

The information provided during the interviews will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this research. Moreover, we want to know neither your real name nor that of any other person involved. You are free to choose a fake name for yourself as well as for any other person that you might mention during the interview.

We thank you for your co-operation. It is really valuable for us.

1. BIOGRAPHY

To begin with, could you tell me something about yourself? **How old** are you? **Where** were you born? If you were not born in Milan/Frankfurt, when did you come here?

Only for foreigners: If you were born abroad, **when** and **why** did you **come to Italy/Germany**? Was the integration in Italy/Germany difficult? Do you now have a residence permit or Italian/German nationality?

How is your **family** composed? What is (was) the job of your parents? How is your relationship with them?

Which kind of **school** did you attend? How long? What's your **job** now and which kind of jobs have you ever had?

2. DRUG USE

Do you use illegal drugs? *If the interviewee answers No, please go to the next section.*

Please describe **your relationship to illegal drugs**, the different phases of your drug user career and, eventually, your contacts with drug assistance and treatment. *The interviewee should be allowed to talk freely; the interviewer should however make sure that the following themes are discussed:*

- **the beginning of drug use:** Since when and how did you first start to use drugs? What was the first substance that you have ever tried? What was your first drug of choice? How much and how often did you use it? When, how and with whom? Why did you start using drugs?
- **the evolution of drug use:** when, where, why, with whom did you start to use other substances? Which substances and how much?
- **kind and quantity of used drug(s) and methods of consumption in each phase of the user's drug career:** What kind of illegal drugs do you use now? How much and how often do you consume each drug daily (weekly/monthly)? What kind of illegal drugs and how did you use in each Phase of your drug career? Please provide details in grams other doses. Which is your preferred way of consumption (smoking, injecting, basing, etc.)? Do you use drugs alone or with other people?
- **lifestyle changes produced by drug use:** What has changed since you started to use drugs? Are your current friends all linked to the drug world? Do you still have contacts with your old friends? How is your relationship with your family now? Does your family know that you use drugs? Can you ask them for help?
- **detoxification attempts and 'clean' phases:** Have you ever tried to give up using drugs? If yes, please tell us when and how and describe the treatment agencies you came in contact with.
- **drug scene changes:** How was the drug scene when you started and how is it now?

3. PURCHASING DRUGS

How often do you buy heroin/cocaine/crack/ecstasy or other drugs? **How much** do you buy usually at each purchase? **How much money** do you usually invest every day (or every week/month) in drugs?

And in the **past**? **How often** did you buy heroin/cocaine/crack/ecstasy or other drugs in each phase of your drug (user or dealer) career? **How much** did you usually buy at each purchase? **How much money** did you usually invest every day (or every week/month) in drugs in each phase of your drug (user or dealer) career?

Please describe your **typical purchase** of drugs in each phase of your drug (user or dealer) career, specifying the substance, the weight, the purity, the frequency, the method of payment, and the place of purchase.

Where do you usually buy heroin/cocaine/crack/ecstasy and the other drugs? Do you always go to the same place to buy drugs or are you obligated/willing to go to different places in order to buy them?

Do you go every now and then **out of town** to buy drugs? If yes, where? Have you ever been abroad? If yes, where?

What is the largest amount of drugs that you have ever bought in a single purchase? Please describe your **largest ever purchase of drugs**, specifying the substance, the weight, the purity, the method of payment, and the place of purchase.

How do you **earn** the **money** necessary for buying drugs? How much money do (did) you earn every month? Were you ever obligated in one or the other phases of your drug career to resort to illegal activities in order to finance your drug use? If yes, of which kind?

Have you ever carried out **services** for **drug dealers**? If yes, what did you do?

4. SELLING DRUGS

Do you sell drugs yourself? *If the interviewee answers no, please go to the next section.*

If you sell drugs, which **substances** you deal with? **When** and **how** did you start? Is it a part-time or a full-time activity?

The following questions should refer not only to the present but to all the different phases of the interviewee's drug career.

How much of each drug do (did) you usually sell to each customer? And **how many customers** do (did) you usually have every week?

To whom do (did) you usually sell drugs? Users or dealers? Do most of customers belong to the drug scene?

Where do (did) you sell usually drugs? On the streets or in close settings?

Please describe your **typical sale of drugs** in the last six months, specifying the substance, the weight, the purity, the frequency, the method of payment, and the place of sale.

What has been the largest amount of drugs that you have ever sold? Please describe your **largest sale of drugs**, specifying the substance, the weight, the purity, the method of payment, and the place of sale.

Do you **work alone** or **with other partners/staff**? If you have partners/staff, are they friends or relatives? How is your group organised? Is there a stable division of labour? Is there a chief? If yes, who? Which are the tasks of the group members? Which are your tasks? Have there been changes over the years?

How much and **how** do you **cut** drugs? Have there been changes over the last few years?

Have you ever **prepared** drugs **yourself**? If yes, how, where and for whom?

How do you **select** your **customers**? Do you sell everybody drugs? Do you have a customer policy? If yes, which one?

What is the usual **monthly turnover of your dealing activities**? Which are your **expenses**?

What do you do with the **money** earned with drugs? Have you ever had problems with getting rid of small denominated amounts of cash? Have you ever had problems cleaning it?

Do you usually **reinvest** the money in the drug business or have you somehow reinvested it in **licit activities**? If yes, in which field?

To reinvest your money in licit activities, have you ever relied on the advice or material help of a **professional consultant** (lawyer, notary public, tax consultant, etc.)? Have you ever thought about it? If not, why?

How many dealers selling as much as you do are (were) active in Frankfurt/Milan? How many dealers sell (sold) more?

5. THE MARKET: PRICES, PURITY, AND PLACES

What are the **retail prices** of heroin/cocaine/crack/ecstasy and the other drugs that are sold in Frankfurt/Milan? How have they changed since you started to use drugs? Have they increased or diminished? Please provide exact information on the prices of a gram (or a unit) of the drugs that you consume and/or deal with:

now:	a gram	a unit
a year ago:	a gram	a unit
five years ago:	a gram	a unit
ten or more years ago:	a gram	a unit

Do you also know the **prices of larger amounts** of drugs? If yes, please provide exact information on the substances, the quantities and the time frame.

And the drug **purity/quality**? Please try to estimate the purity of the illegal drugs that are sold at retail level in Milan/Frankfurt. Since you started to use drugs, has purity increased or diminished? Please provide exact information on the purity of the drugs that you consume and/or deal with:

now:	a gram	a unit
a year ago:	a gram	a unit
five years ago:	a gram	a unit
ten years or more ago:	a gram	a unit

Do you also know the **quality/purity** of larger amounts of drugs? If yes, please provide exact information on the substances, the quantities and the time frame.

In your opinion, have there been **changes in consumers' requests**? Are there drugs that are more requested now than in the past (for example, crack)?

Where are heroin/cocaine/crack/ecstasy and the other drugs most frequently sold?

Have **dealing places changed** over the last few years? If yes, please describe the changes.

Are there **different marketplaces for the different drugs**? Or are there places where you can buy everything? If yes, where? Are there **dealers** who sell everything or are they usually **specialised** in a specific drug?

6. SUPPLY

From whom do you usually buy drugs? (*Obviously we want to know no names*). Do you have different **dealers** for different drugs? Do you always buy from the same people or sometimes from unknown dealers? Do you buy drugs only from Italians/Germans or also from foreigners? What nationality are your suppliers at the moment?

If you have only a few regular suppliers, why? Was it difficult to find a **trustworthy supplier**? Since you have started to buy drugs regularly, **how many suppliers** have you had?

Please briefly describe your **suppliers**, highlighting the differences between the early and the most recent ones.

Do your **suppliers use drugs** themselves? Of which kind?

Which drugs do your suppliers sell? **How much** are they able to sell on the average every week? **How many** customers do they have in addition to you?

How and **where** do they operate? Only by appointment or do you always know where you can find them?

Which are the usual **methods of payment**? What do they do with their **money**?

Are any of your suppliers capable of importing heroin/cocaine/crack/ecstasy or other drugs directly **from abroad**? From whom do they usually buy drugs? One or more persons, depending on the drug? In your opinion, how much of each substance do they usually buy every week?

How are your suppliers **organised**? Do they work alone or with partners/staff? And, if they have partners/staff, how many people is their group composed of? What about other drug suppliers?

Do all the members of your suppliers' group(s) share the same **nationality** or origin? If yes, which one? Do they come from Frankfurt/Milan or from other parts of Germany/Italy? Are they relying on family, friendship, or locality ties? What about other suppliers?

More generally, **where** do drugs come **from**? **Who is bringing** them to Milan/Frankfurt? Do you have information or suppositions on this point? Are there groups or subject specialised in major trafficking? Have there been changes over the last few years?

Only in Milan: according to you, how large is the involvement of Southern Italian mafia groups (Cosa Nostra, 'Ndrangheta, camorra)? Have you ever met people whose mafia membership was known or suspected?

In your opinion, how has the **drug supply changed** over the last few years? Is the involvement of foreigners grown? Have new ethnic groups come into the market?

7. VIOLENCE

Have you ever been **victim of violence** because of drug matters? How often and why? By whom? With which instruments? Were you only threatened or really hit?

Have you **resorted to violence** yourself because of drug matters? How often and why? Against whom? With which instruments? Did you only threaten or really hit?

According to you, has the **use of violence** within the drug scene **increased** or **diminished** in the last few years?

If the use of violence has increased, **why**? Because of the diffusion of new drugs, the arrival of new dealers, more competition, or more professionalism?

How many **users** and **dealers**, whom you know, have been **victims** of violence? Please describe the single cases.

8. LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION

What is the **impact of law enforcement action** on the drug market? Are you often obligated to refrain from a drug transaction because of police action?

Have **dealing places changed** over the last few years due to police pressure? If yes, please describe these changes. Only for Frankfurt: If you have witnessed the evacuation of the Taunusanlage, please describe it.

How has the **law enforcement action changed**, since you started to use/deal with drugs? Has it increased or diminished? Has it concentrated in some particular areas?

How often have the police **seized** your drugs? And before that, how often did it happen? After the seizure, have you always been arrested?

How often (on the average) are you **controlled** by the police? In your opinion, is law enforcement action disproportionately directed towards **foreigners**?

Is **police corruption** widespread in Milan/Frankfurt? Has any policeman demanded you drugs, money, or other services? How many cases of police extortion have you heard of? Please describe the most relevant cases.

9. IMPRISONMENT

Have you ever been **arrested**? Have you ever been in **prison**? (*If the interviewee answers no, please go to the next section*). If yes, how many times and for how long? For which crimes? Where were you arrested the first time?

Do **drugs** circulate in **prisons**? If yes, of which kind and of which quantity? How are they brought in? Have you ever used drugs in prison?

Is **corruption** widespread among prison guards? In the last twelve months has a prison guard demanded you drugs, money, or other services? And before? How many cases of police extortion have you heard of? Please describe the most relevant cases.

Have your **prison** friendships and **contacts** been useful to find drug suppliers and, eventually, to help your dealer career?

How was your time in prison? Was it possible to receive help? From whom? Have you yourself received help? From whom?

10. DRUG TREATMENT AND DRUG POLICY

How did you like the **drug assistance/treatment centres** that you contacted? Which **services** did you receive? Which services would you have liked to receive? How are the people working in the drug centres that you know? How should they be?

Do you approve of the **current drug laws and policies**? Should some substances be **legalised**?

What about the **controlled distribution of heroin**? Is it, in your opinion, a good idea? If such a program were launched, would you like to participate? Would you also be ready to give up drug dealing and other illegal activities in order to participate?

Do you think that special **provisions** should be adopted in order to make the use of drugs safer or at least to **minimise its harms**? If yes, which ones? Which services are, in your opinion, most necessary to improve the life conditions of people like you?

Do you support **information campaigns** directed at youth to inform them about the dangers of drug use? If yes, of which type?

What should be done, in your opinion, to improve the current drug policy?

Thank you very much for your help. Do you any question or suggestions for us?

NOTES FOR INTERVIEWERS

The enclosed document is a guide for interviews held with drug users and dealers, with whom you have been able to establish a minimal trust relationship. Obviously the interview is completely anonymous and, if it is possible, it should be recorded during an ad-hoc meeting between the interviewer and the interviewee with no one else present.

The guide should be adapted to the interviewee and does not necessarily have to be rigidly followed. Indeed, some questions may have to be reformulated in order to take into account the interviewee's biography or the interview setting. For example, if the interviewee is currently clean or if the interview takes place in a prison, questions about actual drug consumption may refer to the previous phase of drug use. Likewise, if the interviewee has no previous jail sentences, all the questions about the penitentiary system should be skipped.

Further, even the questions' order can be altered depending on the flow of the discussion. As in a long conversation, the interviewer should intervene only to make sure that all themes are discussed thoroughly. It is therefore important that the interviewer carefully reads the guide of recommended questions carefully: s/he should know the major themes of the interview in order to ask appropriate questions with ease.

It is essential to be very sensitive to the interviewee and to pay close attention to the way s/he responds or avoids some questions. If you see that s/he does not want to talk about some matters, please do not insist and go on to the next topic. Only if you regard it appropriate, you can try to suggest the topics, that were previously avoided, once again at the end of the discussion.

Ideally the interview should turn out to be a pleasant exchange between the two counterparts, resulting in mutual enrichment. It is therefore important to propose the interview tactfully. In particular, it is up to the interviewer to clearly explain that the final goal of the research: to help national and European public institutions to formulate strategies that reduce the pains and damages associated with drug use. Finally, 40 German Marks or a gift of the same value should be given to the interviewee for the time and energy that they devoted to us.

For the best results, the interview should be conducted in several stages. After typing out the stage and reflecting on what the interviewee told you during it, you can determine what still needs to be covered.

Last but not least, directly after each meeting the interviewer should write down notes about the interviewee, his/her attitude and behaviour during the interview, and its setting.

If you have any questions or doubts, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following address:

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