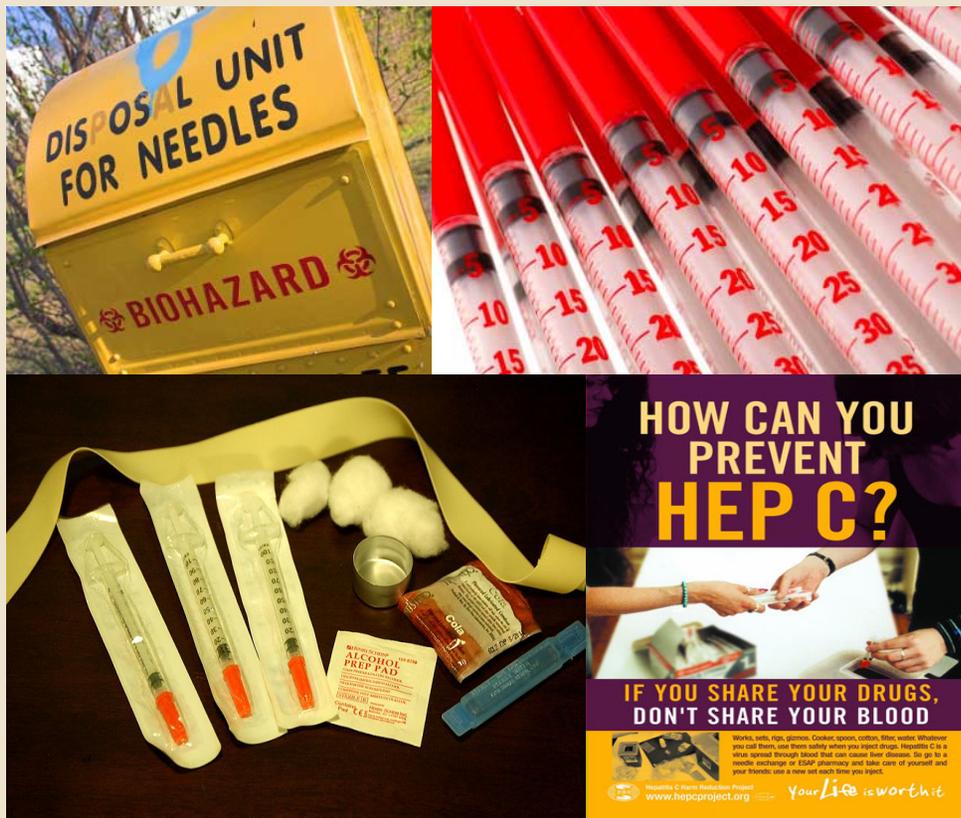




# HARM REDUCTION AS A GLOBAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT

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# What is Harm Reduction?



- “Harm Reduction’ refers to policies, programmes and practices that aim primarily to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of the use of legal and illegal psychoactive drugs without necessarily reducing drug consumption.” (International Harm Reduction Association, 2010)

# HR as a Global Social Movement

- **Social Movements:**  
“The organized efforts of multiple individuals or organizations, acting outside the formal state or economic spheres, to pursue political goals”  
(McCarthy, 2009)



# What's geography got to do with it?

## □ *What are geographers interested in?*

### ■ Difference and connection

- The distinctiveness of places and the commonalities / connections among them

## □ *What is this geographer interested in?*

- Global networks of Harm Reduction activists & practitioners (i.e., connection)
- Place-specific characteristics of Harm Reduction policy & politics (i.e., difference)
- How HR seeks to improve places and peoples' lives

# HR Cities: Different but connected

## Supervised Drug Consumption Rooms

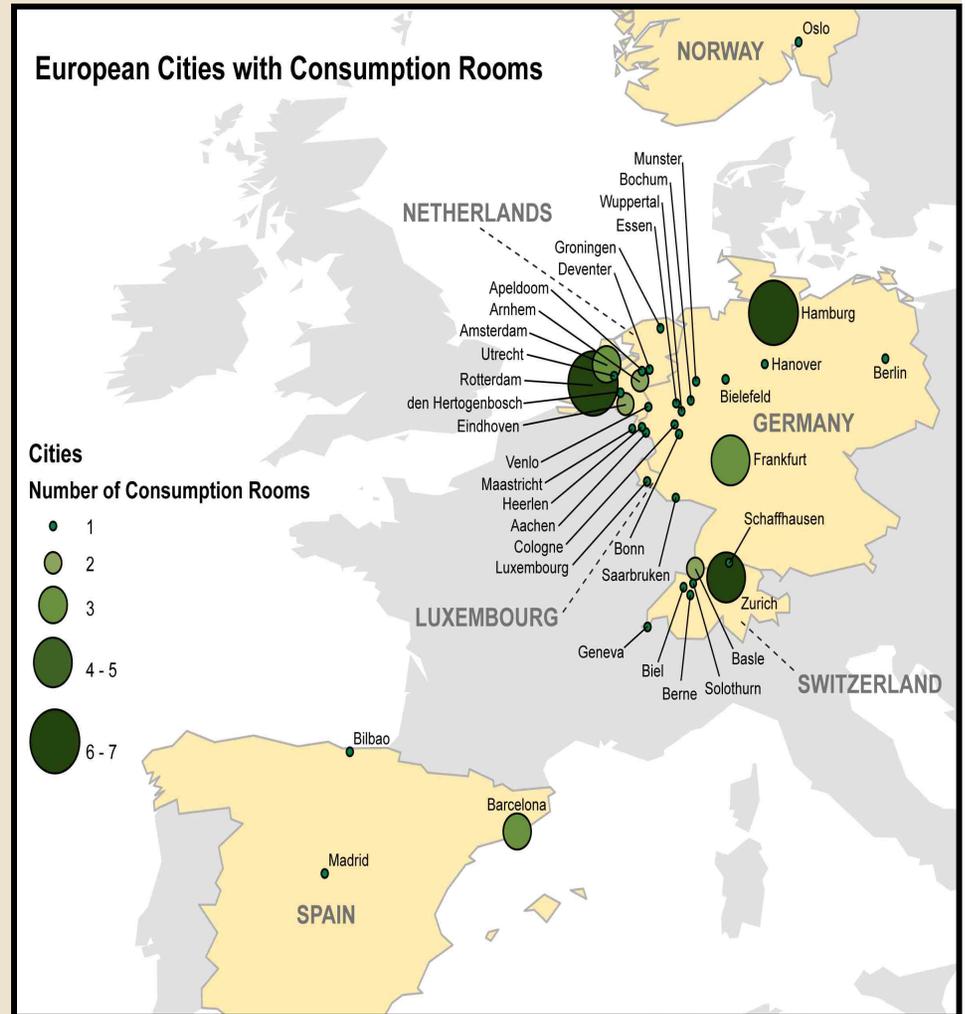
Vancouver



Zürich

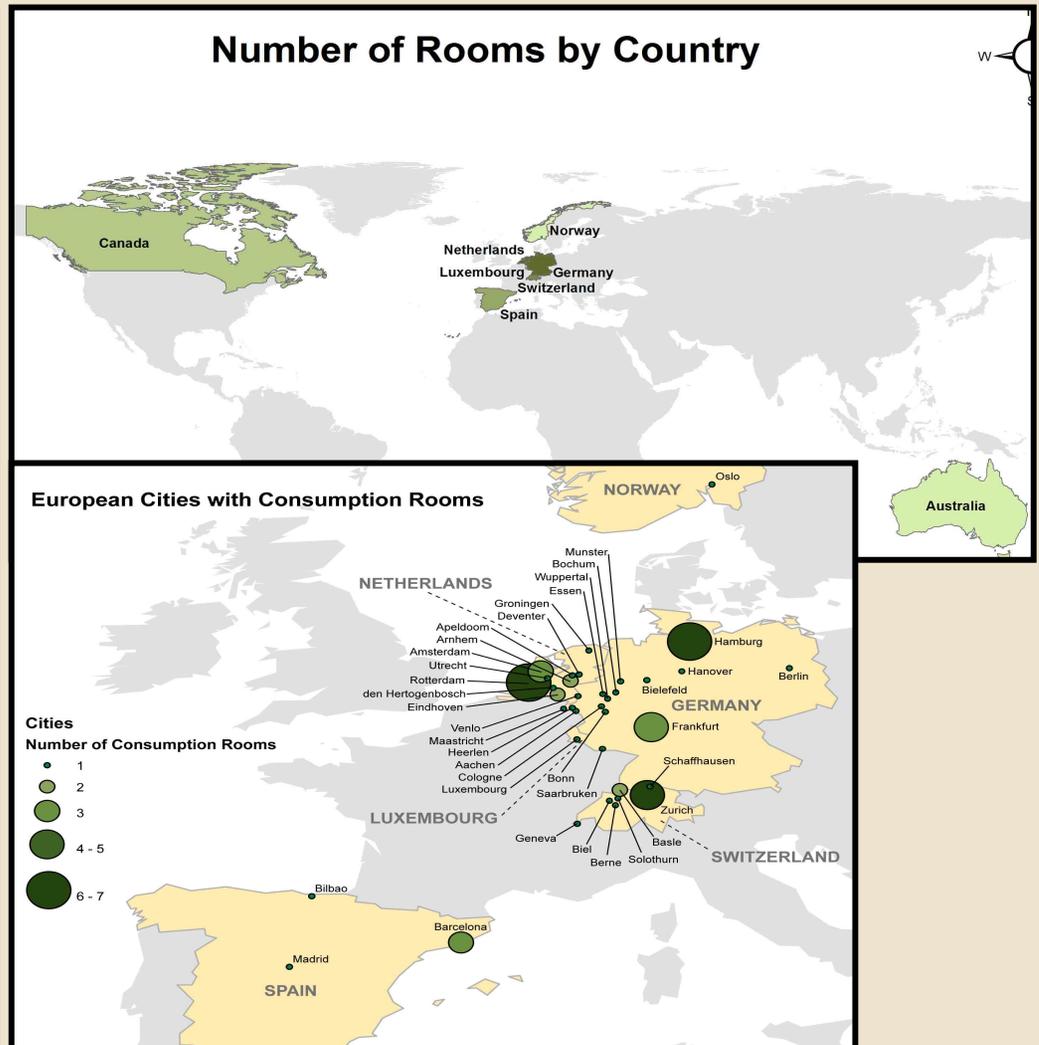


Geneva



# The global-urban geography of DCRs

Country (8)	# of Cities (40)	# DCRs (67-77)
Germany	14	23
Netherlands	12	22 (32)
Switzerland	7	12
Spain	3	5
Canada	1	2
Australia	1	1
Luxembourg	1	1
Norway	1	1



# The HR Social Movement

## □ Actors

- Politicians; policy professionals (e.g., planners, social workers, medical professionals) and public health departments; police departments; AIDS activists, & drug policy activists, including users; think tanks; ...

## □ Organizations & Institutions

- International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA); *International Journal of Drug Policy*; *Harm Reduction Journal*; Drug Policy Alliance; Keeping the Door Open; Hungarian Civil Liberties Union; International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD); popular media; documentary film makers; ...

## □ Key cities & other 'sites of persuasion'

- Core cities: Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Zurich; Key 'outposts': Sydney, Vancouver
- Offices of activist organizations; government chambers; public spaces (public meeting rooms, streets, parks; health care facilities, including consumption sites); ...

# Key sites: Drug Consumption Rooms (DCRs)



Eastside DCR, Frankfurt



Insite DCR, Vancouver



Quai 9 DCR, Geneva

- DCRs: “Protected places for the hygienic consumption of previously obtained drugs, in a non-judging environment & under the supervision of qualified personnel” (Akzept, 2000.)



La Strada DCR, Frankfurt

# ‘See for yourself’: The power of site visits & first-hand experience



< Members of the Council of Europe's 'EXASS Network' of frontline drug workers meeting with a DCR staff member (right) at La Strada DCR, Frankfurt as part of a fact-finding trip, June 2008.



International Harm Reduction Association conference delegates visiting Barcelona's mobile DCR, May 2008.



< Geography students (from Frankfurt) talking to an Insite DCR staff member (left) after a tour, Vancouver September 2008.

(Insite holds regular tours to educate the public and 'normalize' the idea of DCRs.)

# 'See for yourself': The power of site visits & first-hand experience

"I think that when you tell people that you've actually seen [a DCR], they lend greater credence to what you're saying ... Personal experience cannot ever be underestimated, right? ... You know, it normalizes it" (Social service agency representative, Vancouver).



Crack smoking room,  
La Strada DCR, >  
Frankfurt, 2008



^

Common room, K&A  
Kaserne DCR, Zürich,  
2010 (with flag  
signed by Swiss  
World Cup football  
team)

# One global network: International Network of DCRs (INDCR)

- “[K]eep and promote the communication directed to exchange knowledge and experiences;”
- “motivate the internal development of these resources based on this exchange;”
- “support the implementation [DCRs] in new contexts of need;”
- “work towards the incorporation of other entities, centres and harm and risk reduction institutions into the Network in order to strengthen it and increase its impact and social utility.”

**INDCR** International Network of Drug Consumption Rooms

**MAIN MENU**

- About us
- About our activity
- INDCR articles
- Library
- Search
- Contact us
- Links

**FAQS**

What services does a drug consumption room usually offer?

Are substances provided at drug consumption rooms?

Who uses drug consumption rooms?

Is there any documented evidence on the efficacy of drug consumption rooms?

What is the impact produced by drug consumption rooms within a community?

What is the economic impact produced by drug consumption rooms?

**WE SUGGEST...**

**HAVE YOU VISITED OUR LIBRARY?**

Formación Continua en Trastornos Adictivos

Investigación en Dependencias

**About us**

The 1<sup>st</sup> International Network of Drug Consumption Rooms (INDCR) is a platform born on the initiative of consumption rooms from all over the world that attended the 1st International Scientific Meeting on Drug Consumption Rooms. The Meeting was organized by **Munduko Medikiak** on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2007 in Bilbao (Spain).

This Network aims at:

- Exchanging scientific knowledge and reaching consensus on best practices.
- Implementing multicentered research that contributes to increasing the efficacy and efficiency of drug consumption rooms.
- Improving and harmonizing data collection from drug consumption rooms.
- Providing support and advice on the creation and opening of new drug consumption rooms.

**WHAT ARE DRUG CONSUMPTION ROOMS?**

Drug consumption rooms emerge at the end of the 80s, with the first room ever being opened in Switzerland (Berne) in 1986. They are defined as "protected places for the hygienic consumption of previously obtained drugs, in a non-judging environment and under the supervision of qualified personnel" (Akzept 2000). Their aim is to reduce the risk and harm associated to drug consumption both at individual and community level, allowing people to consume drugs in safer and more hygienic conditions and reducing public nuisance associated to drug consumption. These facilities are open to people who are legally of age, with a preceding history of consumption (injection, smoking or sniffing) of illegal drugs. More specifically, they are open to drug users who are in situations of social exclusion and marginalization, whose basic needs are often not met.

Drug consumption rooms represent a strategy among others within the framework of "Risk and Harm Reduction" policies, the latter consisting of the collection of sanitary or social actions, at individual or community level, that aim at reducing adverse effects of any kind (sanitary, social, psychological, economic, family or work related, etc.) that may derive from the consumption of illegal substances. Together with drug consumption rooms, needle (syringe) exchange programs, low threshold access centres for drug users, street and peer work programs or low demand treatment centres also constitute strategies of acknowledged efficacy in "risk and harm reduction".

If you would like to learn more about drug consumption rooms and drug use Risk and Harm Reduction policies you can carry an **advanced search** within our website or visit **our archive**.

**HIGHLIGHT**

Help preventing the shutdown of InSite.

Help InSite to continue their work for a safer and more hygienic drug consumption. Don't wait, act!

**LATEST CONTENT ADDED**

'La Calle de Todos' #1 #0 of "La Calle de Todos" out

Manual Introductorio a la Investigación en Drogodependencias

International Survey of Supervised Injecting Centres 1999-2000

Las Salas de Consumo Higiénico

Global Overview of Injecting Drug Use and HIV Infection among Injecting Drug Users

**WE SUGGEST...**

#2 La Calle de Todos

Finally online

Mouse-flip through its pages

**WHO'S ONLINE**

# Conclusion

- ❑ Harm Reduction is both a public health approach and also a political movement.
- ❑ It is both global and also local.
- ❑ It seeks to improve places & peoples lives.
- ❑ It seems to be expanding and becoming more popular in certain parts of the world and it exists in some form in every part of the world.