

Drug use and harm reduction in techno parties

Some lessons learned from
20 years of fieldwork

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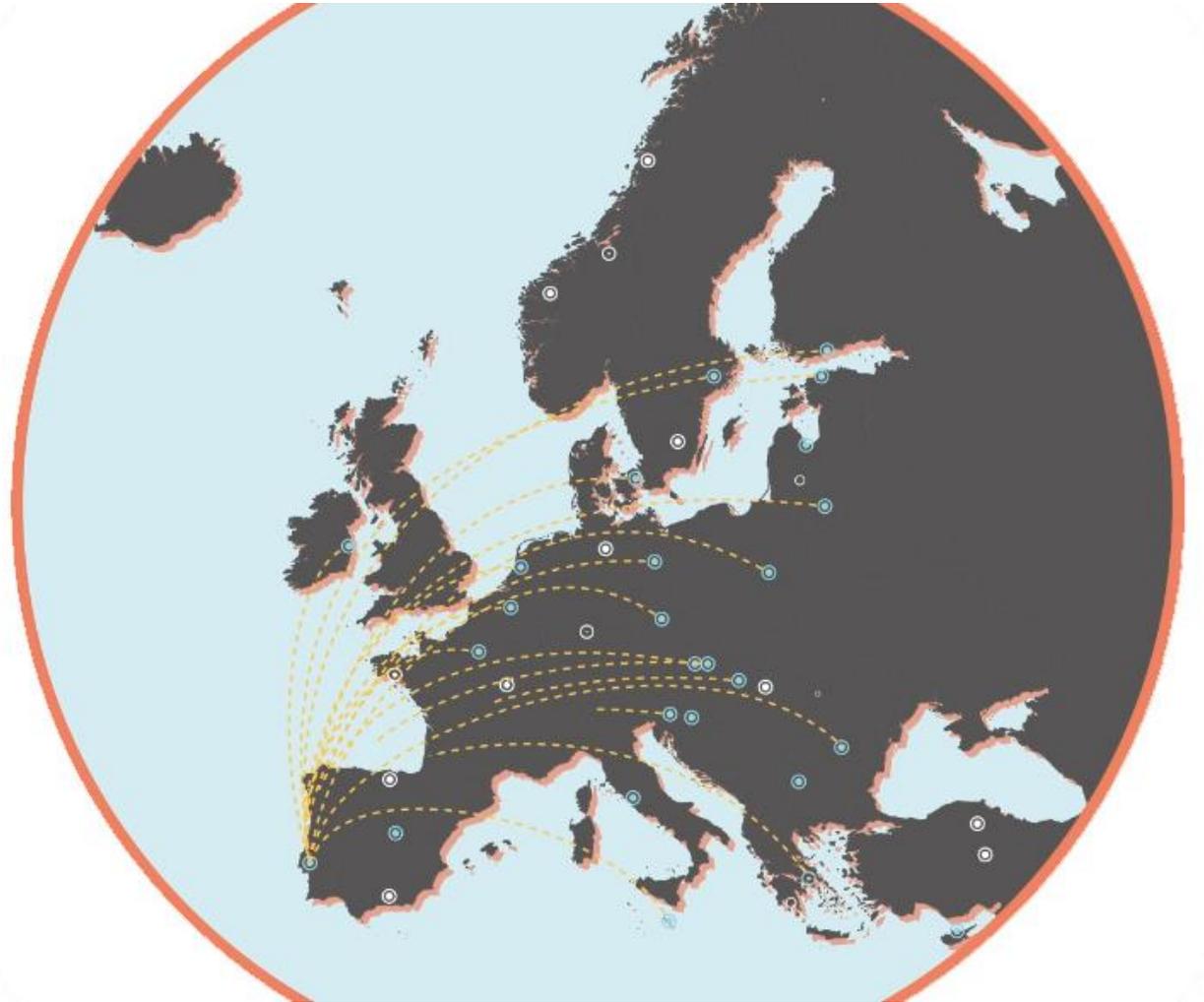
25th November



REITOX member

OFDT is the French focal point for the EMCDDA.

OFDT is a member of the European Information Network on Drugs and Drug Addiction (REITOX).



Outline

1

Free parties: privileged events for observing the use of psychoactive substances

A repressive policy that changes the shape of free parties

Diversified, numerous and specific drug uses

Heroin and injection: the social limits of a permissive framework

2

Reshaping of the techno party space: investigations carried out in commercial techno parties

Cultural legitimization of techno music and the spread of drug use

The particularities of drug use and products consumed in nightclubs

3

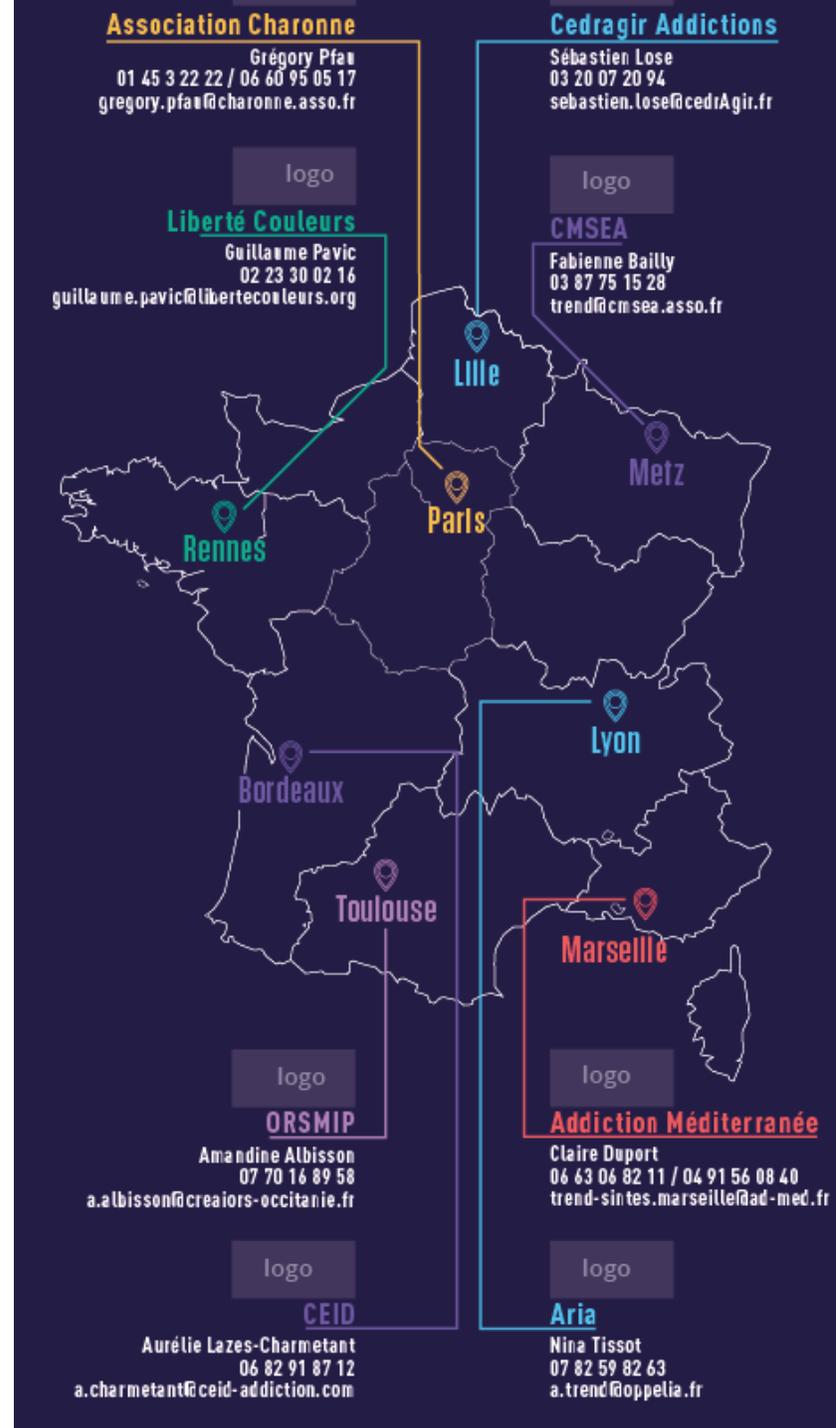
Harm reduction in commercial party context: a public health issue

Network of the 8 local coordination sites

Each site has at least:

- 1 general coordinator
- 1 person in charge of observations of the most precarious drug users (living on the street, squat etc.)
- 1 person in charge of observations in the festive spaces (both alternative and commercial).

He/she can make his/her own direct observations and/or collect information (individual or collective interviews) among public of free parties, party organizers, volunteers from harm reduction organizations, etc. He/she knows informants who collaborate in the fieldwork.



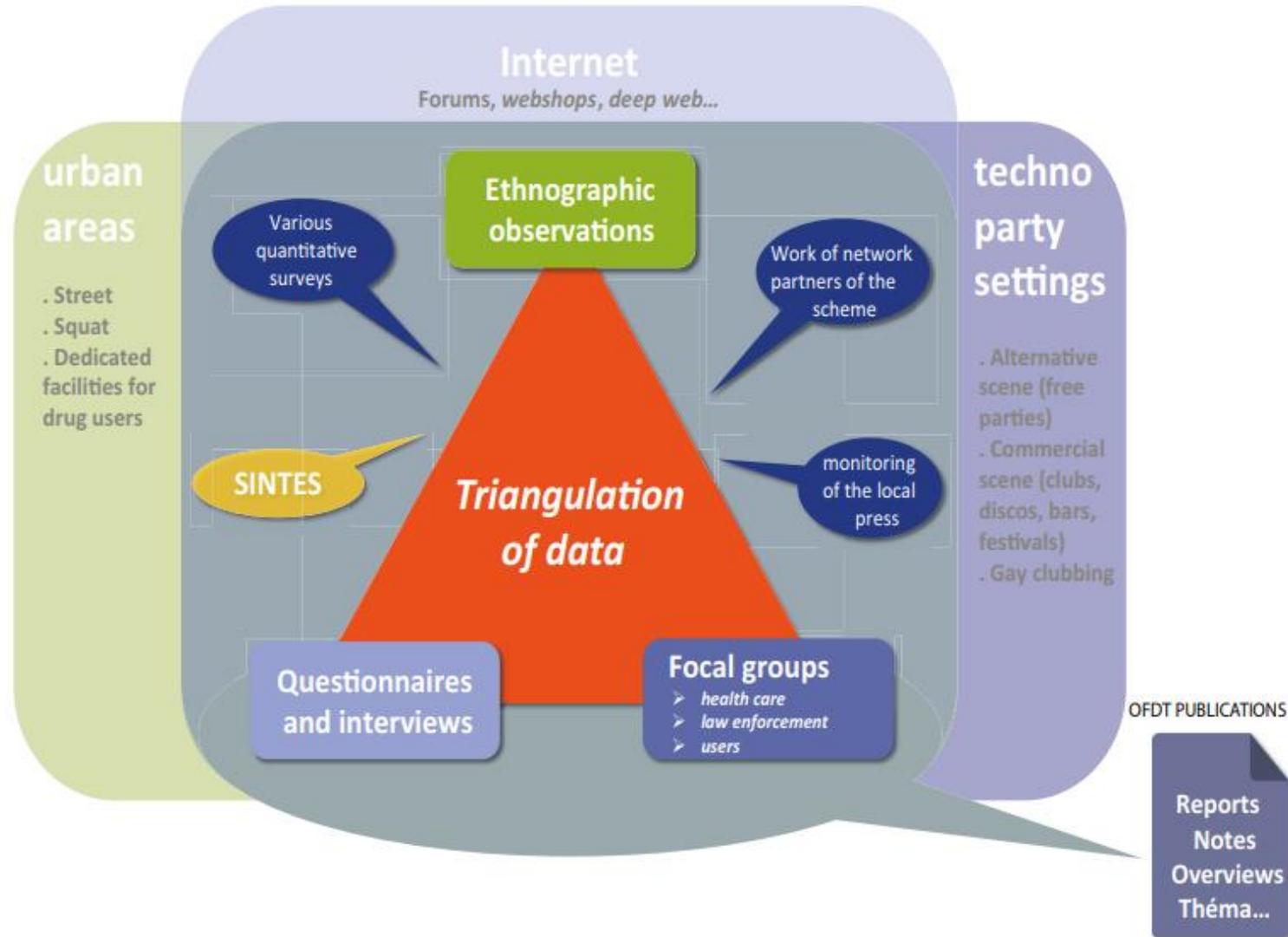
The shared methodology is described in a guide that contains practical sheets that present the skills expected and the actions to be taken during the different stages of the observation process and its report.

GUIDE MÉTHODOLOGIQUE DU DISPOSITIF TREND



Septembre 2020

Sources of information and specific areas of observation covered by the OFDT' TREND system





Free parties: privileged events for observing the use of psychoactive substances

■ A repressive policy that changes the shape of free parties

2002: obligation to declare party Project (limit 250 people)

Behind an authorization system: a prohibition system

Effects: les large-scale parties, more small parties OR very large events

■ A repressive framework that runs counter to risk and harm reduction

Difficulties to intervene due to the increase number of small parties and their geographical spread

2005: ban of drug testing

■ Diversified, numerous and specific uses of drugs

Availability and variety of substances incomparable to other festive events

Stimulants (MDMA, cocaine) & hallucinogens : LSD, ketamine (special spatio-temporal framework)

Combinations of substances

■ Heroin and injection: the social limits of a permissive framework

All products and all drug use practices do not enjoy the same degree of acceptability

Reshaping of the techno party offer: investigations carried out in commercial techno parties

■ Cultural legitimization of techno music and the spread of drug use

Users who move between alternative scenes and more conventional and commercial scenes

New “alternative” scene : warehouse parties

■ The particularities of drug use and products consumed in nightclubs

Restricted range of products (cocaine & ecstasy/MDMA)

Hidden consumptions

Ecstasy/MDMA: factors of success

Harm reduction in commercial party context: a public health issue

■ Development of techno music, new partygoers in context of high availability of drugs (digitalization of drug trafficking, delivery services)

> information on substances and access to risk reduction material are important public health issues

■ Unequal access on drug information and use material depending on type of space

- Available in free parties, teknivals and warehouse parties (presence of stand, chill out área, etc.)
- Managers of clubs or festival organizers often refuse to make consumption material or information flyers available (“bad image” risk of closure)

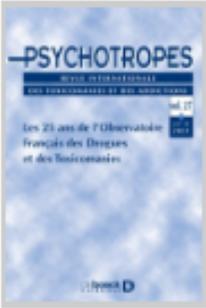
Conclusion

In France, since the 90s, harm reduction actions have been developed during illegal events.

Proximity and alliance between free party organizers, activists and organizations convinced of the usefulness of community health approach.

On the other hand, these same actions encounter numerous limits in order to exist during legal events.

Economic and reputational interests of bosses and business involved in the commercial scene are powerful barriers to the effectiveness of a harm reduction policy moreover as the repressive framework of free parties.



Free party, counterculture, drug uses, harm reduction, repressive measures

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Thanks for your attention

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