



The Changing Use and Misuse of Catha Edulis (Khat) in a Changing World: Tradition, Trade and Tragedy

welcome

Participants

- 59 Participants
- Belgium, Denmark, Ethiopia, Germany, Hungary, Kenya, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Saudi-Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, South Africa, UK, USA, Yemen

Support

European Science Foundation & partners

German Federal Foreign Office

University of Konstanz, Germany

Khat Research Program (NIH; PI: Prof. al'Absi)

International Society of Ethnopharmacology

Links to Madagascar conference

- 1983 ICAA conference in Antananarivo
- Dr. Kalix, participant 1983
- Prof. Rataemane, Board member ICAA

Defining the context

Khat history

- Legends going back to Alexander the Great
- First mentioned in medieval Arab handwriting
- Use and abuse have been accounted for centuries
- Controversy surrounding virtues and dangers since centuries
- Krikorian (1984): use gets more prevalent, mode of use shifts from infusion to mastication

Prevalence of khat use

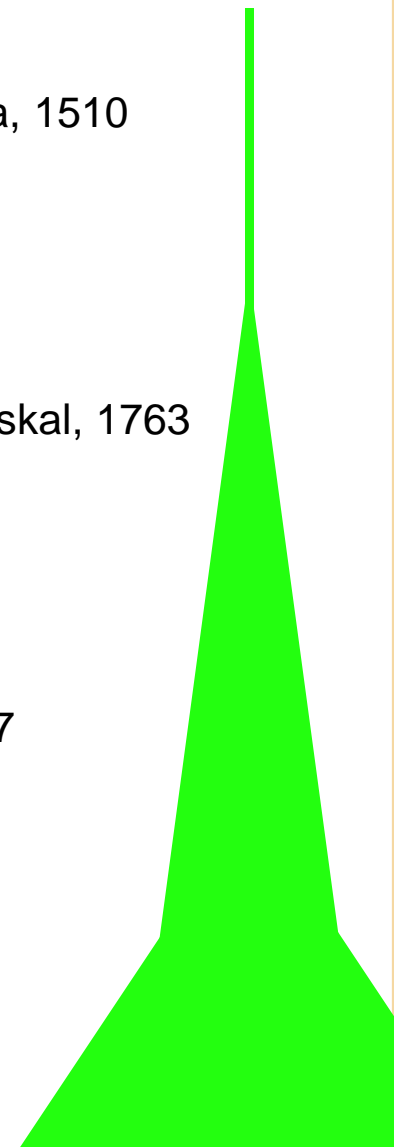
Da Varthema, 1510

Niebuhr, Forskal, 1763

Botta, 1841

Deflers, 1887

Today



economic success story

niche crop - cash crop

5 - 10 mio. consumers per day

Ethiopia: 2nd cash crop, 14% of export

Yemen: 10% of GDP, 1 in 7 jobs

Kenya: 2nd cash crop in Meru District

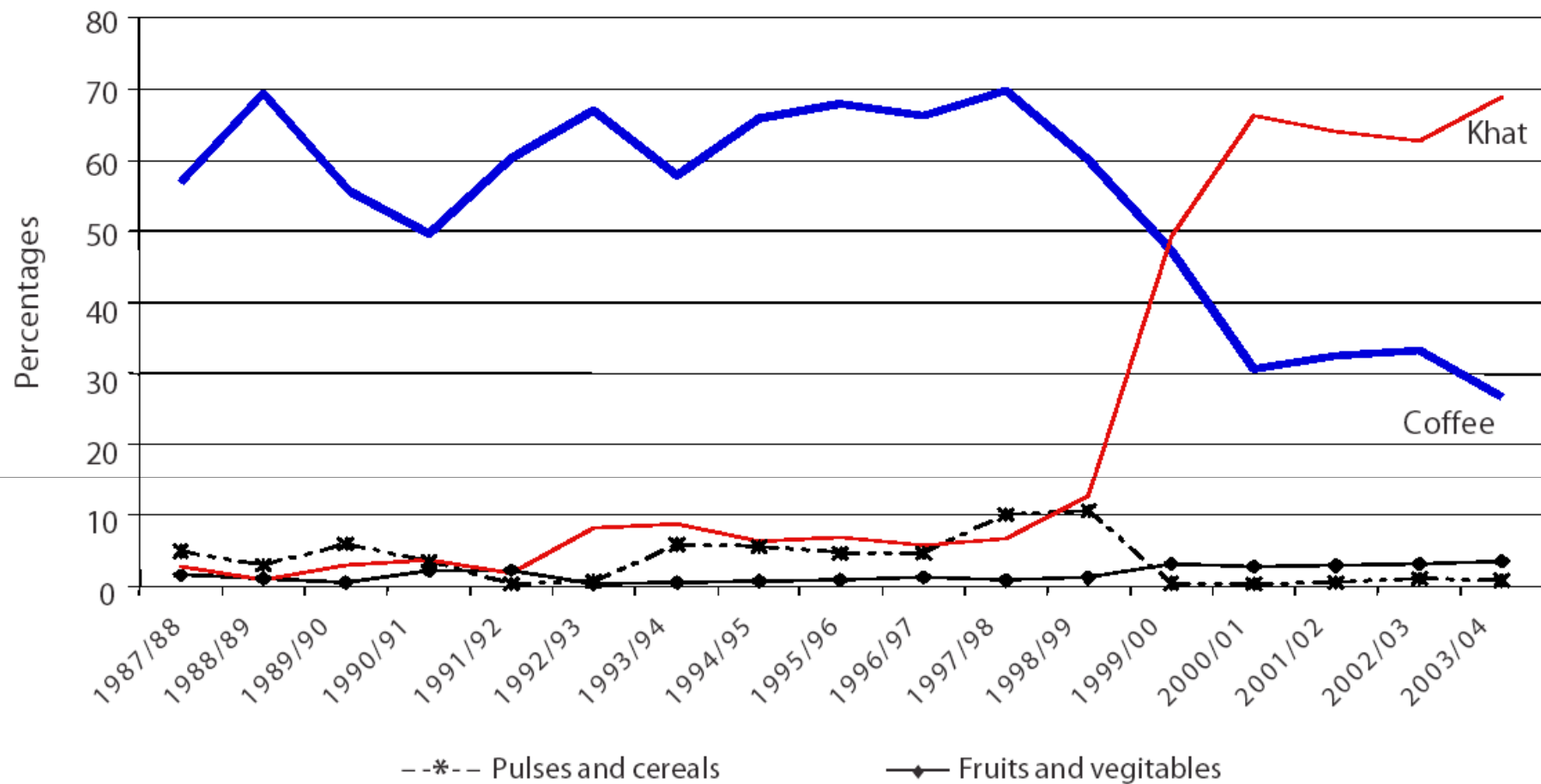
Djibouti: 10% of imports

Millions of farmers and traders
depend economically on khat



- Market context changed
 - Other crops (e.g. coffee) less profitable
 - High and stable margins with khat
- Supply increased
 - Production technology improved (fertilizers, irrigation)
 - Higher quality and quantity
 - Cheaper end prices
- Distribution improved
 - Motor vehicles, tarmac roads, air transport
- Demand increased
 - Social regulation mechanisms disappear
 - New user groups: high culture vs. everyday drug
 - Growing international market (UK, Netherlands, USA)

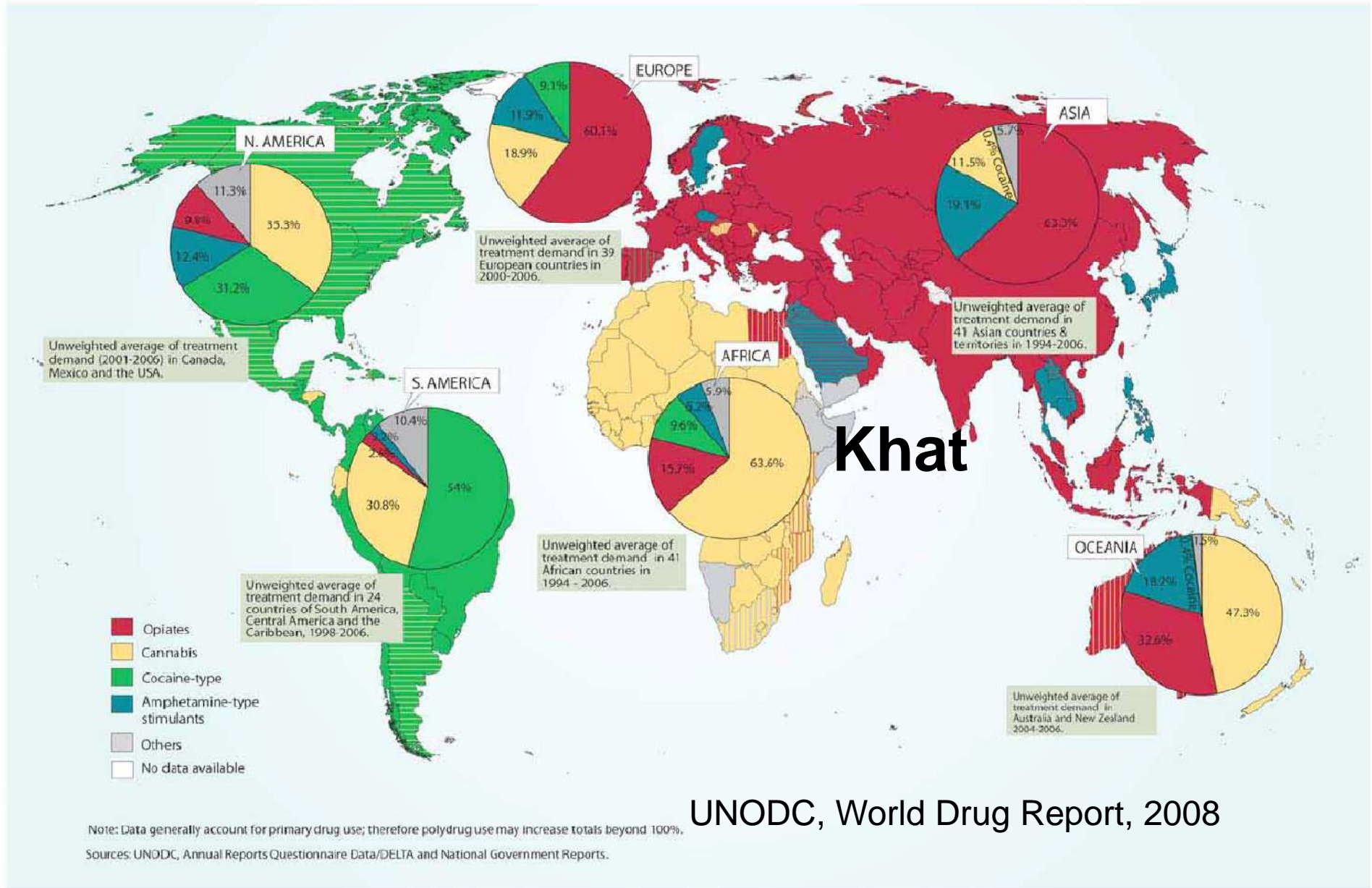
Share of Total Export Earnings from Eastern Ethiopia, 1987-2004



Source: Anderson et al. 2007.

Dr. Degol Hailu, Director, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, UNDP

Main problem drugs (as reflected in treatment demand), 2006 (or latest year available)



UNODC, World Drug Report, 2008

Problems linked to khat

- Medical problems
 - Somatic
 - Psychological
 - Vulnerable user groups: children, mental disorder
- Social problems
 - Family breakdown
 - Malnutrition, food insecurity
 - Unemployment
- Environmental problems
 - Groundwater
 - Pesticides
 - Forest decline

TABLE 6. Area and Water Used for Qat Production (Adapted from Almas and Jefferies, 2001).

Year	Area (ha)	Water (M m ³ /a)
1970	8,000	160
1975	35,000	700
1980	45,000	900
1985	56,000	1,120
1990	77,000	1,540
1995	89,000	1,780
1996	91,123	1,832
1997	93,246	1,864
1998	97,672	1,953
1999	130,000	2,600

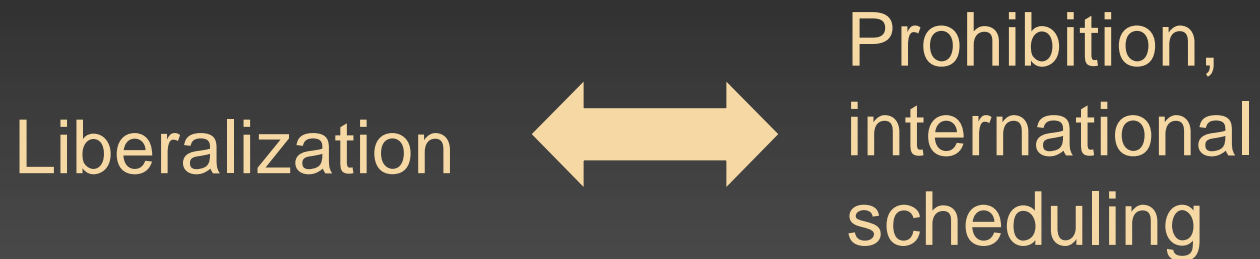


Figure 1: Production and Distribution of Qat in the Horn of Africa (Source: <http://www.ogd.org/fr/21ASORLA.html>.)

Positive accounts

- Longstanding khat culture
- Khat center of social life
- Khat-based development:
 - Benefits for farmers (good & stable prices)
 - Khat growing communities better development indicators (e.g. schooling)
 - Regional and local traders, no multinationals
- Cultural identity in immigrant communities

The khat controversy



Both sides neutralize each other, no middle ground
Legal status differs between countries

“ With regard to the chronic effects of khat use, it is difficult to make definite statements, mainly because the literature tends to either overindict the habit because it is strange and obvious, or to minimize its consequences in the view of its longstanding tradition and ethnological interest.”

Peter Kalix (1990, p. 411)

“ Those who have felt a given substance should be controlled, tend to exaggerate reports of harmful biological consequences of its use and ignore or discredit those attributing no such consequences. On the other hand, people who have not felt control is necessary often exaggerate evidence of biological harmlessness or the lack of evidence of harmfulness.”

Abraham Krikorian (1984, p. 164)

Scientific evidence re khat effects

- Little scientific interest - few studies
 - Problem of low-income countries
 - Little resources for research
- Methodological shortcomings
 - Intermingling of khat and socioeconomic factors
 - Current view of addiction does not fit
 - Types of khat and modes of use not studied
- Little exchange across disciplines
- Contradictory findings

What can we learn from history?

“Civilization began with distillation”

William Faulkner

The Gin Craze

United Kingdom, 17th and 18th century

Year	Gallons per year
1685	500.000
1750	11.000.000
1751	2.000.000
1790	1.000.000

1 gallon = 4,5 liters

**William Hogarth, 1751
Gin Lane**

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Causes for Gin Craze

- Technological development: industrial distillation
 - Raw materials from oversea colonies
- => Increased availability of gin (price/quantity)
- Economic protectionism (war with France)
 - Legislation encouraged national distillation
 - No legal regulation and strong producer lobby
-
- Large uprooted & poor working class
 - Use motivation: escapism

Gin regulation and its effects

- Publicity campaign to educate the public
 - Dangers of Gin use
 - Promotion of “Good alcohol use”
- Legal measures taken 1751:
 - Tax on gin
 - Sale is licensed
 - Collection of alcohol-related debts restricted
- Dramatic reduction of use

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Beer Street

Gin Lane

What do we learn from the Gin Craze?

Public opinion and economic interests play an important role for regulation

Double sidedness of the topic needs to be accounted: High Culture vs. Low Culture

Patterns of use and types of preparation need to be the focus instead the use *per se*

Future role of science in the khat debate

- Strictly neutral
- Interdisciplinary
- High methodological standards
- Identify the important research questions



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Attitude

- Scientific, evidence-based
 - Interdisciplinary
 - Willingness to listen, learn and discuss
 - Work hard
-
- This conference is a (the) chance
 - Take up the momentum

Goals

- To discuss the “middle ground”
- To define steps ahead:
 - Future research that closes knowledge gaps and informs politics

Working groups

- Five groups
 - 1: Economy, development, ecology/agriculture
 - 2: Somatic & psychological health, public health
 - 3: Pharmacology, chemistry, laboratory research
 - 4: Regulation, legislation, scheduling, cultures of use
 - 5: Refugees and Immigrants in high-income countries
- Develop brief recommendations
 - For future research that will address the urgent issues and will be able to guide politics
- Informal meetings, evenings, Wed. afternoon
- Present outcomes Thursday evening

Thank you
