

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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An apparent consequence of the petroleum boom of the 1970s is the exposure of Saudi Arabia, a formerly closed society, to a massive onslaught of customs and values emanating primarily from western societies. The illegal use of drugs is one such phenomenon which has gained momentum and rapidly expanded. The purpose of this study is to record and describe the illicit use of drugs in the urban setting of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Detailed information concerning how drugs are obtained and used in this setting, why they are being increasingly consumed, and the unwritten agreements and practices observed by

the network of drug users is presented from the insiders' perspective.

A review of the literature provided background information on drugs and some fundamental issues relevant to the study. The unit of the study was a group of eight intimate friends who belonged to the affluent and economically advantaged stratum of society. Participant observation, casual conversations, and formal interviews were the main tools of information gathering over the months of August and September of 1986.

The data indicates that society's contact with other cultures, coupled with the enormous wealth generated during the fore mentioned petroleum boom, played a prominent role in the increased circulation and subsequent use of illicit drugs. The circulation and spreading use of these substances seems to constitute an illegal but financially profitable establishment and a fast growing subculture that cuts across all layers of Saudi society.

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Super Rockets:
A Case Study of Illicit Drug Use in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

by

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SUPER ROCKETS:
A CASE STUDY OF ILLICIT DRUG USE IN JEDDAH, SAUDI ARABIA

INTRODUCTION

The illegal use of drugs appears to be one of the most pressing issues afflicting the Saudi Arabian society today. Until recently, Saudi Arabia was a closed society veiled from the world both physically and psychologically. It has opened its gates to the West under the pressure of modernization. Although social research is almost nonexistent in this field at the present point in time, illicit drug use seems to be a fast growing phenomenon. The economic boom of the 1970s, a consequence of increased petroleum exports and higher oil prices, is apparently an active agent in the availability, accessibility, and use of drugs.

Modernization, or better yet westernization, has necessitated not only the massive import of advanced technology and western expertise, but also a relatively large labor force. Composed of people of diverse socio-economic origins and cultural backgrounds, this imported labor force appears to have contributed to the increased circulation of various types of drugs in the

society.

The wealth generated in the 1970s gave rise to a sudden economic boom that trickled down to most of the society in varying degrees, thus, enabling many people to purchase drugs. The availability of substantial amounts of money made it possible for some to travel abroad where they became exposed to alcohol first and then to drugs.

The West provided the technical expertise to implement and operate the newly acquired technologies. New roads appeared overnight and cars crowded the streets. New architectures mushroomed from the desert soil and the houses became bigger. The lust for money activated a previously slumbering society. Servants and chauffeurs imported from the Near and Far East penetrated the seclusion of the house. The traditional sanctity of the house was violated by the daily presence and contact of foreigners within the nucleus of the family: from both The East and The West came the onslaught of new values. Illicit drug-taking is one of them. Boredom, curiosity, and the quest for the exotic have generously contributed to the illegal use of drugs. This is not to say that drugs were never used prior to the 1970s, but rather that the increasing use of drugs seems to be directly related and apparently linked to the cultural turbulence caused

by the petroleum boom.

The purpose of this study is to present an objective account of a group of drug users in order to contribute to our knowledge and enhance our understanding of the drug culture in Saudi Arabian society. It is not, however, a study of the chemistry of drugs. Nor is it a study of how drugs affect the mind and the biochemistry of the body. It is primarily a descriptive attempt to shed some light and provide information on issues such as how drugs are obtained and used by persons belonging to a certain social class and why they are increasingly being used. These are all perceptions and perspectives that reflect the insiders' point of view. The focus of the study is on the drug users rather than on the drug itself.

The absence of social research in Saudi Arabia makes this study a pioneering task, which as a stepping stone may pave the way for further research in the field of drug usage, providing perhaps some vital information about the present nature of Saudi society in the process of development.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A prominent part of any research is a review of the existing literature pertaining to the subject under investigation. In my search for literature related to drug use in Saudi Arabia, I have consistently met with failure. According to Niblock (1983: 11), two major factors account for the absence of social research in Saudi Arabia:

statistical data (outside of the purely economic) have often proved difficult if not impossible to obtain... sensitivity to many of the issues which researchers would care to examine has inhibited research activities.

This chapter, therefore, is a review of the literature on drug use generally without consideration of specific national communities.

Furthermore, the list of significant issues related to illicit drugs is limitless. Hence, I have selectively reviewed some of the issues that are relevant to this study. The following sections provide background information on drugs and a few assertions that are supported by the study. However, further inferences and

deductions depend on the interest and background of the reader.

In the following sections, I will present a few definitions of some drug related terms, a general categorization of drugs, a brief description of common methods and patterns of drug usage, an historical, social, and economic overview of drugs and their use.

Definitions

Drugs:

In the broadest and most general sense, a drug is any chemical substance that changes the structure and/or the functioning of the living organism (Duncan, et al, 1982). Stated differently, a drug is any chemical substance, regardless of the quantity taken or the route of administration, that is capable of producing a physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral change in the user. Included in this definition are the "nondrug drugs" (Oakley, 1978) such as alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, and over-the-counter drugs. Although foods and water technically fit the definition, they are not considered drugs.

In most of the literature reviewed, drugs are defined on the basis of their effects on mood, personality, or behavior of the user. A drug is typically defined as any chemical substance that:

alters the mood, the level of perception, or brain functioning. [This includes] all these substances [that] are capable of producing changes in mood and altered states of learning (Shuckit, 1983: 3).

According to McConnell (1986), a drug is any substance that, due to its chemical nature, produces a significant increase or decrease of cellular activities when taken in relatively small amounts.

For the purposes of this study, the psychoactive (mind-altering) capabilities of drugs are emphasized. Thus, drugs such as nicotine or caffeine are intentionally ignored.

Use, misuse, and abuse:

When describing the taking of drugs, the terms use, misuse, and abuse are often confused or used interchangeably. The term "use" may refer to the suitable and proper taking of drugs in accordance with the intended medical purposes and procedures of use.

Violation of the stated definition constitutes drug misuse including self-medication and wrong application of the drug. When the misuse of a drug becomes harmful to the welfare of the user, drug-taking patterns are considered abuse of drugs (Kaplan, 1970).

Duncan, et al, (1982) defined drug use on the basis of the consequences of drug-taking on both the individual and society, without any consideration of the morality or legality of such use. When the effects desired can be achieved with minimal peril to both the individual and society, drug-taking is described as drug use. Misuse is characterized by a significant increase of hazard as a consequence of the dose or the conditions under which the drug was taken. Abuse occurs when the individual continuously misuses a drug and, as a result, his/her life is disturbed. Thus, the sequel of taking a drug determines the applicable term.

Referring to drug-taking as use, misuse, or abuse is clearly value laden and culture bound. It becomes a matter of who defines bad or excessive use (De Rios, et al, 1977). According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), drug abuse exists when drug-taking results in "the physical, mental, emotional, or social impairment

of the user" (Jones-Witters, et al, 1984: 6). Still, it is a matter of who defines and measures "impairment".

In this study, drug use (drug-taking) refers to the actual taking of a drug for nonmedical purposes, regardless of the quantity (dose), the conditions under which it is taken, legality, morality, or the route of administration. Because of the fact that misuse and abuse embody value judgement, it is left up to the reader to characterize the drug-taking patterns described in this study. Illegal drug use refers to the use of drugs that are prohibited by law and/or disapproved by society's norms.

Addiction, dependence, and habituation:

Drug addiction, dependence, and/or habituation are often used interchangeably. In 1969 the World Health Organization (WHO) defined drug dependence as:

A state, psychic and sometimes also physical, resulting from interaction between a living organism and a drug, characterized by behavioral and other responses that always include a compulsion to take the drug on a continuous or periodic basis in order to experience its psychic, and sometimes to avoid the discomfort of its absence (Glatt, 1977: 1).

The concept of addiction had become too narrow and it is primarily associated with the compulsive use of opium. The states produced by the continuous use of drugs is better described by the concepts of dependence and habituation (Glatt, 1977: Edwards, et al, 1983; Jones-Witters, et al, 1983).

For present purposes, the distinction between drug dependence and habituation is adopted from Duncan and Gold (1983). Drug dependence is characterized by an obsessive need to take the drug, a tendency to continuously increase the quantity, psychological and/or physical dependence on the drug, and detrimental effects on both the user and society. Habituation is identified by a desire (not need) to use the drug, the tendency not to increase the dose, low degree of psychological dependence without any physical dependence, and harmful effects, if any, on the individual only.

Categories of Drugs

There appear to be no agreement on an optimal systematic design for classifying drugs. Different categorizations of drugs are based on the need, interest, and background of the classifier. Considerations such as

the molecular structure of drugs, effects on different parts of the body, usefulness in clinical settings, family resemblance, as well as legal and moral issues result in different drug arrangements and schemes.

For present purposes, below is a summary of drug categories adopted from Jones-Witters, et al, (1983). The divisions include:

A) Sedatives and Hypnotics:

The primary effect of this group of drugs is decreasing the Central Nervous System arousal. Medically, they are used to reduce anxiety, stimulate relaxation, and induce sleep. The size of the dose determines the difference between a sedative and a hypnotic where a smaller dose constitutes a sedative. These drugs have the potential to produce physical dependency under a variety of different conditions. Included in this category are alcohol, the barbiturates, minor tranquilizers, and a variety of sleeping pills.

B) Stimulants:

By increasing the CNS arousal, stimulants produce a sense of exhilaration, alertness, and a decrease of fatigue. Cocaine, amphetamines, and khat (leaves of a shrub that are chewed) are major drugs of this category. This group can produce strong psychological dependence.

C) Psychedelics and Hallucinogens:

Drugs in this group are characterized by their capacity to induce highly complex psychological effects and profound alteration in sensation, consciousness, and mood (hallucination, perceptual distortion, and transcendental experiences). LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), peyote (mescaline), and many other synthetic or plant derived substances are drugs of this group.

D) Opiates:

This category of drugs is medically used for the relief of pain. They have the capacity to produce a detached, pleasant, and visionary euphoria. As the name

suggests, these drugs are derivatives of the opium poppy such as heroin, morphine, and codeine. In addition to the plant derivatives, there are many synthetic opiates such as methadone, meperidine, and dipipanone. Drugs in this category can strongly cause physical dependence.

E) Volatile Solvents:

Anaesthetic gases, glues, lacquers, paint thinners, and gasoline are common materials which when inhaled are capable of invoking similar effects to the sedatives and/or hallucinogens.

F) Nonnarcotic Analgesics:

Drugs purchased without prescription, i.e. AsprinR, and used to relieve pain and fever are members of this category.

G) Antidepressants:

This group of drugs have the capacity to elevate and erect the mood in depressed people. Examples of this category are TofranilR and NardilR. Amphetamines may

alleviate depression too.

H) Major Tranquilizers:

Drugs in this group are mainly used to reduce symptoms of severe mental disorder (psychosis). ThorazineR, StelazineR, and CompazineR are examples of this group of drugs.

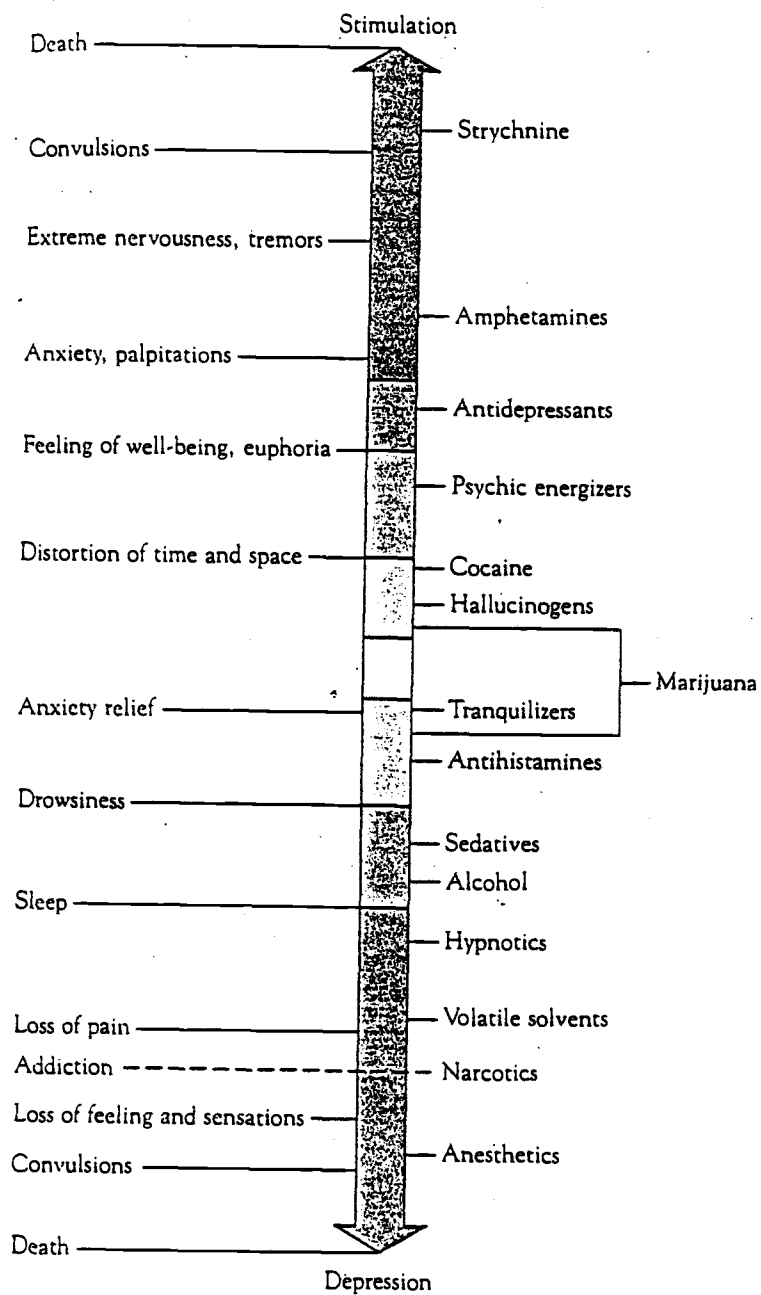
In addition to the above categories, drugs containing plant products of Indian hemp are generally referred to as cannabis.

The dried leaves or flowering tops are often referred to as marijuana... and the resin of the plant is referred to as hashish or "hash".... (Edwards, et al, 1983: 10)

Cannabis preparations have mind-altering (psychotropic) effects similar to those produced by the hallucinogenic category of drugs. Figure 1 shows eight major categories of drugs and their effects.

In a latter part of the study, cannabis preparations will be discussed in more detail and drugs will be classified on the basis of the informants' knowledge and background.

Figure 1: Comparison of drug effects and actions.



Source: Jones-Witters, et al, Drugs & Society, 1983.

Routes of Drug-taking

In order for a drug to produce an effect, it must be taken by some route, deposited into bloodstream, transmitted to the brain, then affecting the cells that produces a specific effect. The most common routes of drug administration are:

A) Oral Ingestion:

One of the most common and convenient methods of drug-taking is by mouth. Before being absorbed into bloodstream, however, the drug passes through the stomach. This is not an effective way because the active ingredients of the drug may be destroyed by the stomach acids, the contents of the stomach may affect the rate of absorption of the drug, the kidney may filter out the water-soluble drugs before they reach their destination in the brain, and the liver may remove the drug from the bloodstream (Duncan, et al, 1982).

B) Inhalation:

A second method is the inhalation of gaseous drugs.

The active ingredients of the drug find their way to the blood stream rather quickly. The effects of drugs taken in this manner are felt very rapidly and the duration of the effects last for a short period of time (Cohen, 1981).

C) Injection:

Probably the most effective way of drug-taking is by injecting the drug in the body. Drugs can be injected in three different ways: injection below the surface of the skin (subcutaneous), injection into a large mass of muscles such as thighs or buttocks (intramuscular), and intravenous injection directly into the bloodstream (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983).

D) Snorting:

A fourth method of taking drugs is by inhaling through the nose. Snorting (sniffing) is primarily used when administering drugs in a powder form such as cocaine and heroin (Duncan, et al, 1982).

E) Suppositories:

Placed in the rectum or the vagina in a suppository form, drugs can be absorbed into bloodstream. Although this method usually has a specific purpose, i.e. vaginal infection treatment, it is used when all the veins used for injection had collapsed (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983).

Finally, some drugs (snuff) are taken by placing them between the teeth and the lips, thus, depositing the active ingredients to the bloodstream through the soft tissues of mouth (Duncan, et al, 1982).

Patterns of Drug-taking

The general patterns of drug-taking described by the National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse are:

A) Experimental drug use:

Influence of peer groups, curiosity, or a desire to experience the unknown are major motivations for the short-term use of drugs. The user may or may not continue such use.

B) Social-recreational drug use:

This pattern of drug-taking occurs within a social setting such as ritual ceremonies and festivals (Inglis, 1975). The desire to share pleasurable euphoria and increased enjoyment of activities are some of the motivations for the recreational use of drugs. The social use of drugs is a group behavior that bonds individuals together.

C) Circumstantial-situational drug use:

This pattern of drug-taking is characterized by its short-term duration. Drugs are taken in order to cope with immediate pressures and distress such as examinations, long distance driving, military combat situations, etc..

D) Intensified drug use:

Intensive use refers to drug-taking on a regular basis and for a long period of time. Although physical and/or psychological dependence on the drug begins to develop, the user is still integrated in society.

E) Compulsive drug use:

When the decrease in intensity (dose) or frequency of drug-taking results in discomfort and/or withdrawal symptoms such as vomiting, loss of appetite, or shivering as a result of giving up the drugs, the pattern of drug-taking is considered to be compulsive. At this stage, physical dependence has developed and social integration begins to diminish. The need to acquire drugs seems to determine social interaction. As a poet put it:

I saw the best minds of my generation
destroyed by madness, starving
hysterical naked, dragging themselves
through the negro streets at dawn
looking for an angry fix.... (Ginsberg,
1984: 176)

An Historical Overview

Since the dawn of humanity, people have used drugs existing in nature. The seeds of drug-plants found in pots and graves, and the drawings of the "plants" in caves and temples speak of the thousands of years of drug usage. The use of drugs was not limited to one region, but to the contrary, was world wide. In the western hemisphere, the earliest record of drug usage is the

snuff and tubes found in a 4500-year-old grave of a South American native (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983).

Over the years, more than 130 drug plants have been used in the Americas with 20 additional plants used in the rest of the world (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983). The followers of Columbus reported on a great variety of drug plants in use in the Caribbean Islands and later in South and North America. Plants such as cohoba, coca, peyote, mushrooms, datura, ololiqui, and tobacco were in common use in the Americas while none of these plants were known to Europe (Inglis, 1975).

Two thousand years ago, the early natives of Central America used psilocybin mushrooms. Statues of large mushrooms dating back to 1000 B.C. have been found in Guatemala. For centuries, the powdered seeds of certain leguminous trees have been used as a snuff. Leaves of the coca shrub were chewed by the natives of Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia. In Peru, coca leaves and pottery showing a chewer were found in a grave site that dates back to 500 A.D. (Inglis, 1975).

In 1492 Columbus reported taking leaves of tobacco from the natives of San Salvador. Stone carving of a smoker were discovered in a Mayan temple reflecting the

old use of tobacco. The seeds of oliloqui (morning glories) were known to, and used by, the ancient Aztecs and Mayans (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983).

As our focus changes eastward, evidence shows that the Greeks knew of the poisonous capacity of the atropa belladonna (deadly nightshade). In Greek mythology, atropa denotes the cutting of the threads of life. Mandrake has been used for centuries as a love brew. Datura (jimsonweed) and a large number of related plants were mentioned in early Chinese writings. The natives of Siberia have long used the fly agaric mushrooms. An Assyrian tablet (600 B.C.) referred to the black mass on grain (ergot fungus) as "noxious pustule in the ear of grain" (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983: 101).

Cannabis, a Greek word for hemp, was known in many parts of the world. The first record of cannabis use is found in the book of drugs written in 2737 B.C. by the Chinese Emperor Shen Nug. Early writings describe the long history of cannabis use in India. In Hindus mythology, the gods produced the hemp plant as a nectar and it was the favorite drink of the king of gods Indra. In 650 B.C., the Assyrians referred to cannabis as azulla (Duncan, et al, 1982; Jones-Witters, et al, 1983).

Hashish, a term that refers not only to numerous

preparations of the hemp plant, but also includes opium, was the most widely used drug in medieval Muslim society. Despite the difficulty of tracing the historical development of hashish use in Muslim societies, the beginning of its use could be traced to the 12th century, and by 1412, it was used openly and publicly (Rosenthal, 1971).

... we come much closer to historical fact with the famous story of the discovery and propagation of the use of hashish by Persian Sufis... [Around the year 1155], Haydar [the founder of the Sufi fraternity] went out in a state of depression... He came across of this hashisha and noticed that its branches were swaying although there was no breeze. He reflected that this must be so because of a secret contained in it. He picked some of it and ate it. When he returned to his companions, he told them that (the plant) contained a secret, and he ordered them to eat it (Rosenthal, 1971: 49-50).

Moreover, Rosenthal (1971) listed more than eighty nicknames for hashish known in medieval Muslim society such as "al-khadra" (the green one) used by the people of Yemen, "bint al-jirab" (daughter of the bag) by the people of Baghdad (Iraq), "asrar" (secrets) by people of Turkey, "uqdah" (node) by the people of Cairo, etc.. This suggests not only the widespread use of hashish, but also reflects the employment of private words as an expression

of hashish users' "solidarity... and their feeling of rebellion against restrictions imposed upon them by society" (Rosenthal, 1971: 41).

Since time immemorial, alcohol has been in intensive use. Six thousand years ago, the Egyptians attributed wine to their god Osiris. Ancient Greeks credited the god Bucchus (Dionuysus) with the introduction of wine to human kind. The Romans were heavy users of wine. According to the Bible, nine generations after the creation of Adam, Noah drank wine (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983). In the pre-Islamic world, including the Arabian Peninsula, wine enjoyed virtues history. Its consumption, Rosenthal (1971: 141) suggests, was a "luxury which the early adherents of the new religion could not afford...."

For thousands of years human beings have cultivated the opium poppy. Five thousand years before the birth of Christ, the opium poppy was mentioned in the language of Sumerians, "A 6000-years-old Sumerian tablet has an ideograph for the poppy shown as 'joy' plus 'plant'" (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983). In 1500 B.C., the Egyptians listed opium along with other medical compounds. A method for extracting juice from the opium poppy was described by the Greeks in the third century

before Christ. Portraits of gods of sleep (Hypnos and Somnus for the Greek and Romans respectively) show the gods carrying a container of opium pods. In 800 A.D. Arab traders introduced opium to China (Duncan, et al, 1982). With the spread of Islam, opium was introduced to India and its use was encouraged because of Islamic sanctions on the use of wine (Simmons, et al, 1974).

Around 900 A.D., the use of coffee was popular in Arabia. An example of this was the expanse of coffee houses in Mecca. Through Turkey, coffee was introduced to Europe (Inglis, 1975). The use of tea is attributed to the founder of Zen Buddhism. In 350 A.D., early Chinese manuscripts described the medical use of tea. The recreational use of tea was mentioned in 780 A.D. with Buddhist monks introducing it to Japan from which the Dutch familiarized Europe with its use in 1610 (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983).

In 1803 and 1832 the active ingredients of opium, morphine, and codeine respectively were extracted. Heroin (1898) was artificially produced from morphine. Toward the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, cocaine was synthesized. Amphetamines were synthetically prepared in 1910, their effect on the nervous system was discovered in 1927, and in 1930 they

were used. LSD (Lysergic Acid diethylamide) was synthesized in 1930. Tranquilizers were introduced during the 1950s, and PCP was developed as an intravenous anesthetic (Duncan, et al, 1982; Jones-Witters, et al, 1983).

Drugs and Society

When considering the use of drugs, it is important to examine the social setting in which the drug is taken, those who take it, those who make it accessible to certain sectors of society and the intention with which they do so.

Throughout history, drugs played an important role in human life. Since the beginning of humanity, drugs have mostly been taken to treat illness or to change mental states:

We use drugs for two main reasons; either to restore ourselves to the condition we regard as normal- to cure infections, and take away pain; or to release us from normality- to enable us feel more lively, or more relaxed; to alter our mood, or our perceptions (Inglis, 1974).

In pre-Colombian times, the Aztecs chewed hallucinogenic mushrooms in the course of religious

ceremonies. The peyote cactus has been used by North American tribes for ages in search of ecstatic visions, a form of access to useful sources of knowledge and communication with the unseen forces of the universe. The peyote cactus was thought of as being extremely helpful in penetrating the realm of the spirits in order to forecast the destiny of the community. Throughout the Americas, drug plants were used by or under the supervision of an expert- the medicine man who was qualified to interpret the visions. Drugs were used for spiritual enlightenment and for the well-being of the entire community (Inglis, 1974). Hence, drugs were used to achieve socially approved ends. That is to say that the ritualized use of drugs often "enhances group goals, contributes to social cohesion, reaffirms belief systems, and performs a host of adaptive functions for the group" (De Rios, et al, 1977).

Rituals in traditional societies provided a mechanism of controlling the use of drugs and served the function of minimizing health and moral hazards to both the individual and the community. Thus, when drugs cease to serve socially approved functions, their use causes negative health and social consequences (De Rios, et al,

1977).

In contemporary Saudi Arabia, Islam is the official religion and the Quran (Holy Book) is the constitution of the state. Fourteen hundred years ago, Islam prohibited the use of alcohol because of its intoxicating capacity. In medieval Muslim society, this prohibition was extended to include the nonmedical use of mind-altering (psychotropic) substances (Rosenthal, 1971). Today, as in the past, such use of drugs does not have any socially approved function and is strongly prohibited. Thus, drug-taking in Saudi Arabia could be considered a social problem that will bear, if it has not already done so, bitter fruits.

In many parts of the world, the illicit use of drugs is considered a pressing social problem. Drug usage has been associated with the economically disadvantaged members of society. In medieval Muslim society, for example:

While its [hashish] use cuts through all layers of the population... hashish eaters were believed to be low-class people either by nature or by being reduced to that state through their habit.... (Rosenthal, 1971: 140)

In the U.S., Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos have been stereotyped as drug users and sellers. This

stigmatization appeared in Britain during the 1960s when the West Indian immigrants were blamed for the increased use of heroin. Moreover, the relationship between crime and drug usage has often been exaggerated. Although data indicate that delinquency often starts before, not after, the use of drugs, blame has consistently fallen upon drug-taking, thereby, implicitly targeting the economically lower stratum of society as a threat to the civil order (Josephson, et al, 1974).

The bulk of drug users and suppliers belonging to the rich and powerful elements of society are most likely to escape detection through whatever form of power they wield in society. For instance, during the 1950s and the 1960s in Japan and the United States respectively, Josephson (1974) argues that unlawful "amphetamine abuse" was introduced to society by affluent entertainers, artists, musicians, writers, and students. It subsequently spread and filtered down to those who are trapped at the bottom of the economic ladder. Those who are most often apprehended and convicted are the most poverty stricken members of society. The manufacturers of misery have successfully utilized the umbrella of wealth and power to remain invisible. Despite Islam's condemnation of alcohol, wine remained a luxury that was

"cherished by the highest strata of society" (Rosenthal 1971: 141).

Drugs have also been used as a political weapon. The Aztecs used drugs to cement alliances with rival states (De Rios, et al, 1977). In the eleventh century, drugs were used to carry out political assassination in Iran.

It is said that Hassan Sabbah and his group of assassins were the first to make not only a weapon, but a fine art of drug-taking (Simmon, et al, 1974: 167).

Moreover, the plant, khat, has been a cure for depression throughout the ages in the Middle East, but it has also been used as a pacifier to avert social upheavals. In the fourteenth century, Sabr Ad-Din, king of Ifat, introduced khat to his recently conquered population in Abyssinia in order to prevent revolutionary tendencies (Gannini, et al, 1986).

During World War II, the French intelligence used opium as a financial source for their counterinsurgency operations in Indochina. Chinese troops also financed their war against Japan by the sale of opium. The U.S. intelligence (C.I.A.) utilized heroin traffic during the Vietnam war to achieve similar ends.

... there can be no doubt that the C.I.A. was mixed up in the traffic [of

heroin] from the mid-sixties until 1968 if not later (Lamour, et al, 1974: 140).

The opium wars between Britain and China in 1839 and 1856 show how the spread of unlawful drugs could serve the financial interests of a government (the ruling class) at the price of massive destruction of the people (Inglis, 1975). In the nineteenth century, the British East India company and many British companies were the primary shippers of opium to China. Fearing the weakening of the vitality of the nation, the Chinese government prohibited the usage and import of opium. In order to protect the rights of the rich to suck the blood of the masses and to insure the continuous flow of profit, which was extracted from the sweat of the Chinese people, the British government, on behalf of the affluent, launched a war to open the ports of China for "free trade" (Jones-Witters, et al, 1983). Indeed, illicit drugs are a lucrative industry.

When the strive for wealth and power is pervasive, illicit drugs not only constitute a profitable business, but also act as an agent of control that can be employed to mollify the oppressed and deflect potential social upheavals.

Conclusion

In addition to background information, the preceding sections presented a few fundamental issues which are summarized below.

Drugs are not inherently dangerous or harmful. Human beings have known and used drugs for thousands of years. Drugs have been taken in various social situations and with different intentions. Social context may vary from the formal and institutionalized- festivals, religious ceremonies and rituals, medical procedures- to merely informal recreational use. That is, different social situations, to a large extent, result in different experiences. The use of morphine during a medical operation, for example, produces a different experience from its use amongst friends.

Drugs have been used as effective weapons to quell social upheavals and to maintain the status quo. They also have been a flourishing short-cut to quick wealth and have constituted an attractive lucrative international industry.

When drugs are no longer a means to achieve socially approved goals, destructive consequences in terms of health, economic status, and moral judgement, to both the

individual and the community, are apt to occur. Such perils have often been exploited to vindicate the legal restrictions on drugs, which in reality do not affect the affluent, and to legitimize the severe punishments most often imposed on the powerless and economically disadvantaged members of society.

At present, as in the past, illicit drug-taking is not confined to the socially and economically disadvantaged, but cuts across all layers of society. Nevertheless, the chances taken are not equal: those who possess power take fewer risks than those who are trapped at the bottom of the economic ladder.

THE SETTING

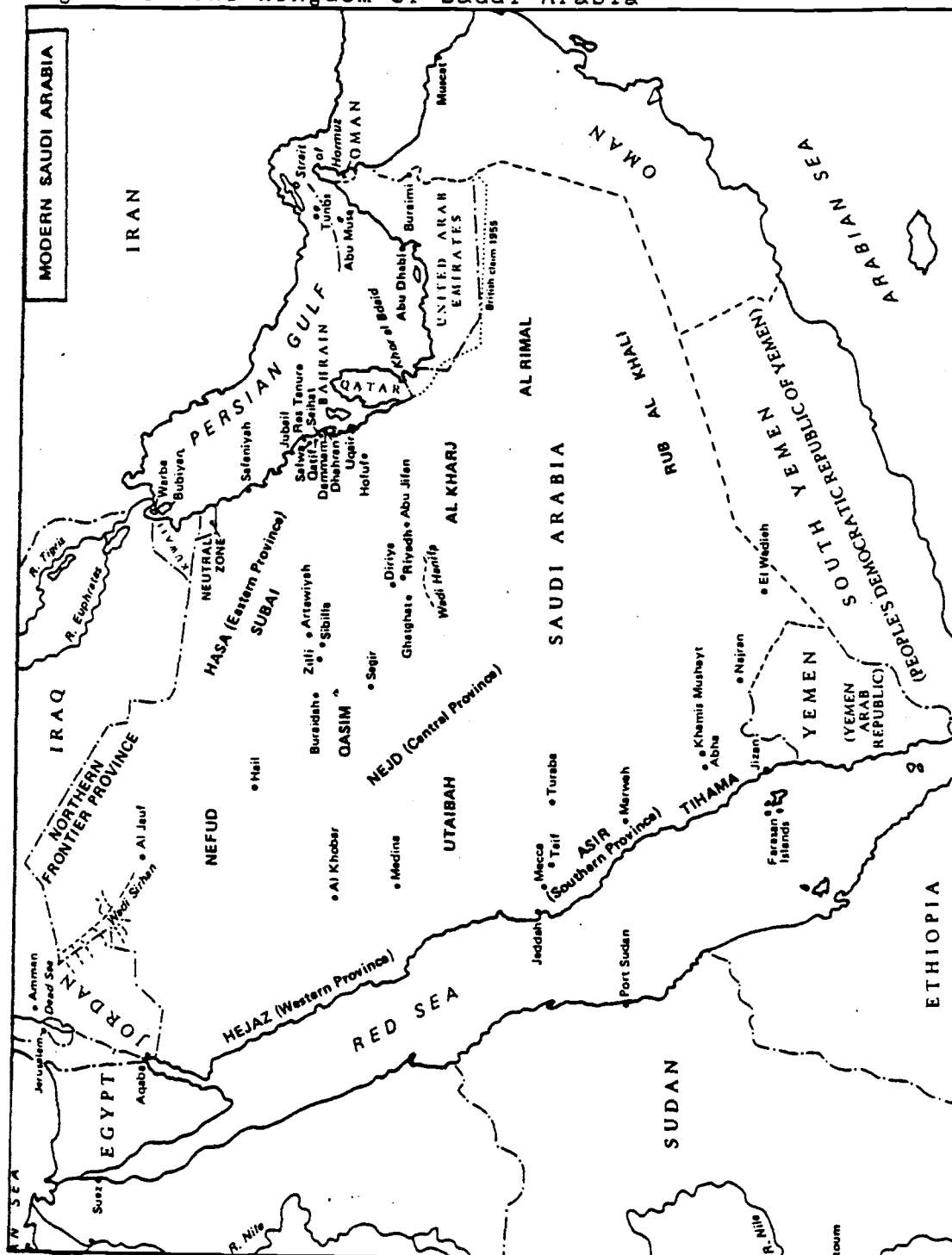
In this chapter, I will briefly present general information about Saudi Arabia. This will be followed by a description of the place and unit of the study. Finally, the techniques employed in, and the limitations of, this study will be discussed.

Location

Saudi Arabia lies in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, which is located in south-western Asia. It is bordered by Kuwait, Iraq, and Jordan to the north; the Arabian Gulf, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman to the east; North and South Yemen to the south, and the Red Sea to west (figure 2) (Nyrop, 1984).

It sprawls over an area of 83,000 square miles. In the west, a coastal plain stretches alongside the Red Sea. A narrow scarp abruptly rises from the plain with altitudes of 3,000 to 10,000 feet in the north and south respectively. Al-Hejaz province constitutes the northern part of the plain and mountains, the southern segment is called Asir. Towards the east, the central province of Najd is surrounded by three deserts. In the south, Rub

Figure 2: The kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Source: Holden, et al, The house of Saud, 1982.

Al-Khali (Empty Quarter) occupies an area of 250,000 square miles of vast trackless sand. Spreading northward and to the east of Najd, a narrow strip of sand (Al-Dahna) separates Najd from the eastern province. In the north, Al-Dahna meets with the desert of Al-Nafoud. The eastern province of Al-Hassa extends along the Arabian Gulf (Long, 1976).

The Formation of the State

The history of the modern Saudi Arabian state can be traced to the early eighteenth century. The Arabian Peninsula was divided into numerous small emirates under the rule of local elements. In theory, these emirates were under the control of the Ottoman government, but in practice they were independent and rival states (Goldberg, 1986).

In 1745, a crucial alliance took place between Mohammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhab, a religious scholar who called for the return to the early practices of Islam, and Mohammad Ibn Saud, the ruler of Dariyya and its vicinity north of Riyadh. Together they began a campaign to spread the teachings of Islam. This alliance between the religious and the temporal authority has been a

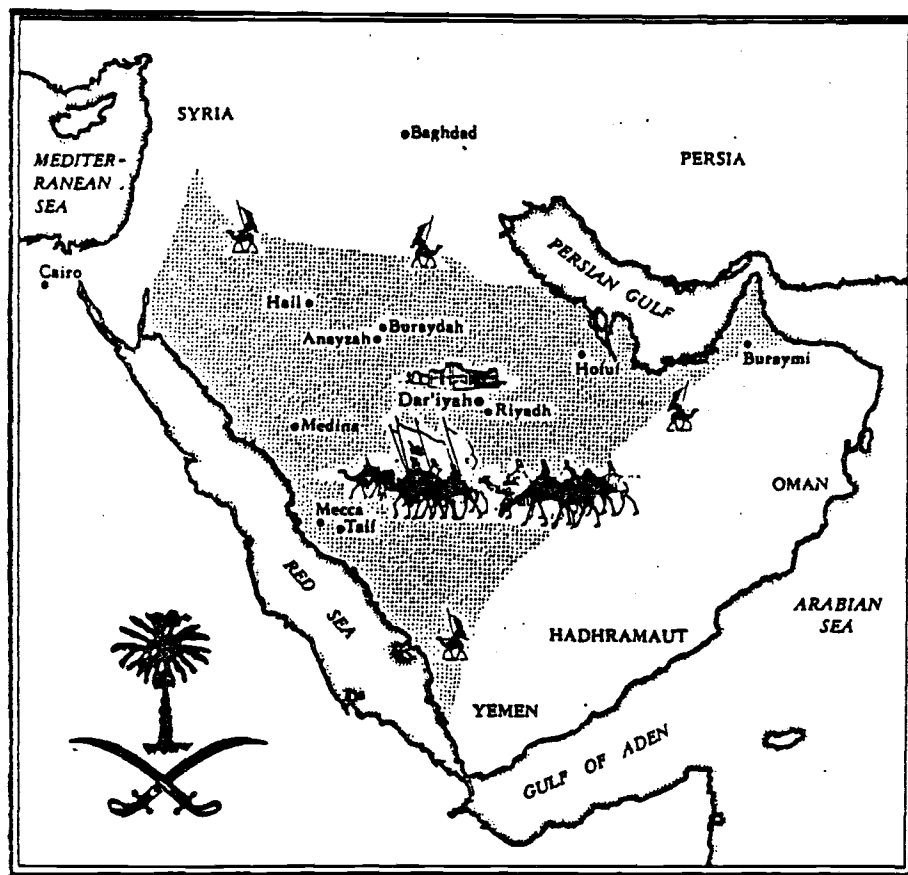
continuing characteristic of Saudi Arabia, where religion has served as the cohesive force of the community. The temporal authority was the tool employed for spreading the religious doctrine (Goldberg, 1986).

In 1765, Najd, the heart of Arabia, was under the authority of Al-Saud, and by the time of Mohammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhab's death (1792), their rule extended as far as Rub Al-Khali (Empty Quarter) desert in the south. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the eastern province of Al-Hassa was conquered (1795). During the opening years of the nineteenth century, the holy cities of Mecca (1801) and Madina (1805) and most of the western province of Al-Hejaz were under the rule of Saudi forces (figure 3) (Goldberg, 1986).

The Ottoman government responded to the capture of the holy cities by ordering its Viceroy in Egypt, Mohammad Ali, to free the cities from Saudi control. In 1811, Mohammad Ali sent an expedition to Arabia under the command of his son, Tusan, forcing the Saudis back to Najd. By the year 1818, the Saudi capital of Dariyya was totally destroyed (Goldberg, 1986).

The Egyptian expedition soon realized that control over central Arabia could not be maintained. In 1819, the

Figure 3: The first Saudi state (1804)



Source: Lacey, The Kingdom, 1981.

expedition withdrew, providing the Saudis with an opportunity to re-establish their rule. During the mid-nineteenth century, the Saudis, under the rule of Faisal Ibn Turki, were able to sustain themselves in Najd and its vicinity. In the latter part of the century, due to internal conflicts in the House of Saud coupled with the Ottoman government's support of the rival power of Al-Rashid of Hail, the Saudis were driven out of Najd and they took refuge in Kuwait (Goldberg, 1986).

From Kuwait, Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al Saud initiated the process of reconstituting the Saudi rule. The alliance with the religious was retained by forming a military force (al-ikhwan) of the bedouin who were inspired by, and believed in, Ibn Abdul-Wahhab's ideas. In 1902, Riyadh was conquered and the territory under Saudi control spread steadily thereafter. By 1926, Abdul-Aziz had integrated under his control most of what is known today as Saudi Arabia (figure 4). The name of the state, then, was "The Kingdom of Hejaz, Najd, and its dependencies". In 1932, the modern name, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was adopted (Niblock, 1982).

Society

In the absence of a census, estimates of the population varies. It was probably about 8 million in 1984, however, some estimates range as high as 12 million of whom 2 million are foreign workers. The annual rate of growth is estimated at 3 percent. Arabic is the official language, the Quran is the constitution, and Islam is the religion of the state (Nyrop, 1984).

The family is the fundamental and essential unit of the Saudi social structure. Economic and political life revolves around the family and its extentions. The family is of an extended type, usually with three generations living in a household: husband and wife, unmarried sons and daughters, and married sons with their children.

The form of the extended family reflects the primacy of patrilineal descent; it is the smallest autonomous social unit, and its membership is based on relationships traced through the male line (Nyrop, 1984).

Lineages and tribes are also major determinants of social relations: status of the individual is partly determined by his membership in a certain lineage. The individual's primary concern is the family and the welfare of the individual is the responsibility of the

family. Within the family, men are dominant: individual members of the family participate in decision making, but the final determination lies in the hands of the father or the head of the family who is generally a man. Generally speaking, women's activities are limited to the home while men's duty involves outside activities and obligations. Enforced segregation on the basis of gender is a characteristic of Saudi society (Knauerhase, 1975).

Today's Saudi society is divided into three major social classes: a small upper class, an emerging middle class, and a lower class.

The highest social standing is accorded to the members of the royal family and its branches. To this group could be added a small number of the Al-Shaikh family, the descendants of Abd al-Wahhab, and a small number of wealthy merchants.... (Knauerhase, 1975: 27)

As a consequence of the transformation from traditional economy based on agriculture, domestic trade, and animal herding, to a new economy based on oil production and export, a middle class is slowly growing. The new economy has required engineers, managers, and technicians. The middle class itself is stratified into an upper stratum consisting of physicians, engineers, university instructors, higher-level government officials, and businessmen, and a lower stratum of school

teachers, and low-level government clerks. The lower class consists of the semiskilled workers employed by the government and the private sector (Knauerhase, 1975).

The Economy

Today, the economy of Saudi Arabia orbits around the production of oil. In 1982, Saudi Arabia was the world's third largest producer of oil. It contains the largest oil reserves in the world (Nyrop, 1984). The first commercially exploitable oil-field was discovered in 1938 and export began in 1939 (Niblock, 1982).

Prior to the discovery of oil, the economy was based on animal herding and subsistence agriculture, which was further limited by the unfavorable climatic conditions and the absence of technology. Cloth and basket weaving, fishing, pearling, and pottery constituted the industry of the kingdom. Trade was simple and based on the interaction between town merchants, sedentary farmers, and nomads. The greatest source of income, to both the government and the western province of Al-Hejaz, was the Muslim annual pilgrimage to the holy cities. The economy was characterized by local consumption and the

fulfillment of basic needs (Walpole, et al, 1969).

The development of the oil industry necessitated the transformation of the old economy: it required the construction of roads, ports, housing, water systems, and power plants. New opportunities were open to businessmen, merchants, and contractors. Consequently, a service sector was created and consumer goods were in demand (Nyrop, 1984). The 1973 rise of oil prices brought increased revenues in the industrial, agricultural, and services sectors (Nyrop, 1984).

Time and Place

The study was carried out during the months of August and September of 1986 in the urban setting of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Jeddah, the bride of the Red sea, is at the gateway of the holy city of Mecca. It is a city built on the shores of the emerald-green waters of the Red Sea. It is situated in the western province of Al-Hejaz, and separated from other cities by a dreary waste of boundless sand: a continuous, monotonous desert that stretches with hardly any shade or shelter.

Jeddah dates from pre-Islamic times. It became an

important commercial center around A.D. 648 when Caliph Uthman made it a harbor city. Unlike the other cities of Arabia, Jeddah has been since early times a point of contact with foreign traders and western sailors. For fourteen centuries it has been the key point of entry for Muslim pilgrims coming from various parts of the world to the holy cities of Mecca and Madina (Katakura, 1977). It was one of the centers of trade between the north (Bilad Al-Sham: Jordan, Syria, and Palestine) and the south (Yemen and Ethiopia).

Modern Jeddah is the city with the second largest population in Saudi Arabia. It is a commercial center located at the cross roads of trade routes between the orient and the west. With air and sea ports bustling with activities, Jeddah has become one of the most important financial capitals of the Middle East.

During the day, the twin evils of heat and humidity make life uncomfortable in Jeddah. The desert air is suffocatingly hot and the domes and glassy surfaces of buildings reflect the blistering sunlight. When the sun sinks in the cool water of the Red Sea and the last rays fade away on the horizon, an enchanting atmosphere befalls the coastal city. The sea breeze cools off the

earth and Jeddah stirs slowly to her feminine charm. Once upon a time, the sand castles glowed with flickering oil lamps at night fall. Now neon lights and electric bulbs crown the modern city- The bride of the Red sea has entered irrevocably into the 20th century.

North of Jeddah are monuments to the influx of wealth that followed the petroleum boom- luxury and opulence are lavishly displayed in eccentric architectural designs. Metal sculptures, marble statues, water fountains, green lawns, and exotic gardens are expressions of nouveaux-riches conspicuous consumption. At night, technology comes to life behind the secret walls of secluded villas. Indoor swimming pools perfumed with precious essence become the meeting place of the indulgent and affluent. Behind closed doors, videos and stereos blast, destroying the serenity of the starlit night. While technology and fashion are imported at great cost from the West, servants are brought from the East; from the impoverished sectors of South East Asia and North Africa. The symbol of status in society revolves around the acquisition of new possessions: technology and servants.

On newly built boulevards, luxurious automobiles parade the excesses of abundance. Shopping centers

glittering with gold attract dark veiled women chauffeured in cadillacs busily conversing over their car phones. Spectators wild with envy watch the enormous wealth of the country circulate within certain hands.

In the old city one feels abruptly the sense of the past. One can hear the echoes of ancient foot steps on this ancient land. Old buildings remain, reminiscent of another time- domes and minarets, archways leading to narrow passages, street lights in the form of traditional oil lamps make one slide back to dead centuries. It is an oasis of peace and serenity, a place where pedestrians mingle and chat amid the rising scent of sandal-wood burnt to perfume the air.

South of Jeddah, an unmasked reality reveals its ugly face. A sprawling favella crammed with that part of the population that is locked in at the very bottom of the economic ladder. Dirt roads smelly with filth are crowded with children, sad and dirty, running barefoot around heaps of broken glass. Hand in hand, side by side, wealth and poverty co-exist. The picture of reality is a contrast of abundance and despair. The haves and have nots cohabit with each other behind the veil of the bride of the Red sea.

City center, Shari Kabil, is the largest and most active commercial and business district in Jeddah. It is a theatre where the irony of life is played out over and over. Beggars carefully select their targets. Customers hopelessly bargain. Victims of depression and boredom converse. Children innocently play, and sex is tirelessly sought.

As the call for prayer ends, shops are closed and crowds rush mechanically to the Mosque, muttering the holy words and bend in prayer to ask for forgiveness and a chance to enter the abode of heaven. Others anxiously wait for life to resume. In the same place and at the same time, thieves and guards, young and old, males and females, rich and poor, the sick and the healthy, believers and atheists, natives and foreigners interact in an apparent but superficial harmony.

This is Jeddah, the city where the study was conducted.

The Unit of Study

The focus of this study is a group of eight single Saudi males between 19 and 27 years of age. The bond that ties them together is one of trust, loyalty, reciprocity,

and the taste of forbidden fruit. Closeness and intimacy are the social glue that makes them a single unit. In other words, they are a group of intimate friends.

The scarcity of social research in Saudi Arabia is due, in addition to other factors, to society's sensitivity to certain issues such as drug usage, alcoholism, prostitution, gambling, etc.. The illegal use of drugs, for instance, does not only incur the risk of legal sanctions, but also sanctions imposed by society's norms.

It is not just the authority I have to worry about. If my family ever finds out that I use them [drugs], my father probably will kill me or have a heart attack. And other people, whom do you think will have any relation with a drug user? If you are thinking of marriage, forget it. Who is the ass that marries his daughter to a corrupt person? One's reputation is very important, once shattered, he is like a camel with a contagious disease.... (an informant)

Protecting the welfare of the group, therefore, extends beyond the use of pseudonyms for the informants. In this study, concealment of the relationship between the researcher and the group is necessary. An explicit statement of how the group was contacted and how rapport was developed will jeopardize the informants' anonymity.

The study demanded a high degree of trust,

confidence, and rapport. The informants were very generous with their time and they put forth every humanly possible effort to help carry out the research. They were cooperative to the utmost degree and patiently submitted to the seemingly trivial and tedious inquiries of a naive investigator.

One member of the group is a manager in a successful company. Two are recent graduates of the local university and currently are seeking employment. Three are presently undergraduate students, and, two are students in a secondary school.

All members of the group come from well-to-do families of upper-middle class positions. The heads of their families are wealthy businessmen. They are members of relatively large families, of five or more brothers and sisters, and enjoy strong familial ties. Their main source of income comes from the family.

In varying degrees, the informants are elegant in appearance with noticeably new clothes and extremely sweet French perfumes. They literally worship etiquette, good manners, and fun. They are generally characterized by a certain amount of "savoir vivre".

In contemporary Saudi Arabian society, deviance in

behavior from certain ethical and legal norms derives its main support from the invasion of values emanating primarily from western societies. The drug user violates ethical, social, and religious norms, thereby, is seen as diseased and an outcast. However, the group of our study sees themselves as non-conformists. They assure an attitude of superiority towards the rest of society. They believe themselves intelligent and educated with a developed sense of awareness and understanding of the external world. They are a group who are seeking new values by which to live. In other words, the group is a trend setter.

Most of them gather on a daily basis. In the past, their activities included week-end picnics in Abhur (North Beach), soccer, playing music (lute), and most importantly playing "belotte"; a popular card game in which two teams, of two persons each, play against each other for an average of 45 minutes for about 4 hours. Killing of time and flirting in the fancy shopping centers are major recreational adventures. Recently, they have added illicit drugs to their activities.

Methods

In the course of this study, I used three main tools of data gathering: observation, casual conversation, and interviews.

I attended a total of 31 group gatherings in which illicit drugs were used, and 7 successful endeavors of drug-purchasing. In the beginning, I did not have the vaguest idea of what to look for. After a few sessions of observation, I became familiar with the vernacular used by the group. Potential avenues of investigation started to emerge. I made a special attempt to internalize the vocabulary and jargon used. Throughout the study, on the spot observation provided the foundation on which elaboration was possible.

The ability to play "belotte" was a significant factor contributing to my integration into and the cementing of my relation with the group. If it was not for "belotte", I would have been a passive observer whose intrusion would most likely have interfered with the flow of events. Towards the end of the research, having consistently been good at the game, I had become an indispensable part of the group. In the company of some informants, I attended weddings and went on picnics.

Killing of time and cruises by the beach were also part of the study. Being a native of the society, I was well accepted and participated in most of the group's activities.

Conversations about a limitless range of issues greatly enhanced and deepened my understanding of the informants. Since most of us were students, we shared many common interests and concerns. Because I studied in the United States, I was frequently approached for advice. All of this knit me closely to the group. Conversations took place in a variety of places and under different conditions; during cruises by the beach, in private homes, or while exploring restaurants.

Topic oriented interviews were conducted with each informant on a regular basis. Informally, informants talked freely about many drug related issues. This was particularly beneficial in complementing observations and in shaping the scope of the study. Informal interviews were, to the best of my ability, kept within the topic of research.

Formal interviews were scheduled in advance. On the basis of the previously obtained information, topics and questions were prepared. All sessions were conducted in

the same place and each lasted approximately one hour and a half. Each informant participated in an average of 8 interviews. To prevent the influence of the informants on each other, interviews were carried out on an individual basis.

Both formal and informal interviews were tape-recorded. In the beginning, the informants were reluctant to be recorded due to fear that the tapes may fall into the wrong hands. However, a workable arrangement was reached: as soon as the tapes were transcribed, the informants had the right to inspect, change, omit, or add to the written content of the tapes. Then the tapes were destroyed by the informants. Although it meant constant work on my part, I felt that the informants were justified in their hesitation. Towards the end of the study, however, this requirement was relaxed.

Moreover, other techniques such as card grouping and ranking were used. The tools mentioned earlier were employed as they seemed relevant and useful.

Consistency of, and conflicts between, informants' statements were primarily resolved by the use of a master-table (see below).

At an early stage of the research, and on the basis

of the data collected through observations and conversations, a list of drugs was constructed (table 1). Each informant was given cards naming various kinds of drugs and was asked to do the following:

- Review the names of drugs and add to them if needed.
- Divide the cards into four groups such that:
 - * The first group contains the drugs which the informant used.
 - * The second group contains the drugs which the informant has seen but did not use.
 - * The third group contains the drugs which the informant only heard of, and
 - * The fourth group contains the drugs which the informant does not know at all.

Table 2 shows the results.

An informant is inconsistent if, for example, he describes the effect of a drug that, according to table 2, he does not know at all. A conflict arises when two informants give contradictory information in relation to the same drug or issue. In this case, the statement of an informant who used the drug is given a higher value over the statement of one who has seen it only, etc..

To ensure that I did not misunderstand the informants and to double check on the information gathered, the group and I collectively reviewed all parts of the study. Modifications, corrections, and additions were expected and, in fact, occurred.

Limitations

The study involved a particular group of individuals with distinct social characteristics, i.e. age, sex, occupation, etc.. Therefore, one can not generalize the findings to the whole of Saudi society. Moreover, the scanty available statistics made it impossible to compare this group to other groups in society. Hence, one can only speculate on the representativeness of the findings.

The study was a risk-taking endeavor due to the penalties of legal and normative sanctions in regard to such issues as drug dealing and usage.

Finally, the research was conducted in Arabic, thus, posing the difficulty of literal translation and correct representation of the informants' views. This is particularly evident in translating proverbs, sayings, and expressions used in their daily life.

ILLICIT DRUG-TAKING: THE INSIDERS' VIEWS

Introduction

As Saudi Arabia grows complex, society finds itself in the face of more and more pressing issues. Illicit drug-taking is such an issue that deserves investigation. The illusion of a "problem free society" needs to be shattered. Otherwise, Saudi society may wake up to the painful reality of a "problem soaked society".

A function of social research, I believe, is the ability to diagnose potential social problems and to provide alternative approaches to understanding, preventing, treating, and coping with them. It is saddening that while numerous volumes have been written about this topic, none, to my knowledge, is about Saudi society.

The following sections constitute the body of this study. However, not all the findings are reported here due to either safety considerations or to the inability to verify the information obtained. It should be noted that the research was carried out in hostile and risky circumstances and it provides a descriptive account of some aspects of a fast growing phenomenon: illicit

drug-taking.

Objective social research is badly needed and ought to be encouraged. Educating people, I am convinced, is the most effective approach to the prevention of social disasters. To treat cancer, one needs not to wait until the pain is felt.

Categorization of Drugs

Based on the information gathered throughout the study, table 1 presents all the drug names reported by the eight informants. However, not all the drugs listed in table 1 were used by all members of the group. Moreover, this list is not exhaustive of all drugs that are available for illicit use; it only contains drugs that the informants were familiar with. Table 2 shows the drugs listed in table 1 and whether they were used, seen, or heard of. For the purposes of this study, an informant is considered to be familiar with a drug if he used, saw, or heard of that drug.

It was previously mentioned that there seems to be no optimal scheme for drug categorization. A category is a set (collection) of things that are considered to be

Table 1: Local names of drugs reported by the informants

| Drug# | Local Name | Comments |
|-------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Zahrat libnan | (Lebanon flower) a kind of hashish |
| 2. | Wayt Brawn | (white brown) a kind of heroin |
| 3. | Brawn Shogar | (brown sugar) a kind of heroin |
| 4. | Arak | Domestic alcohol |
| 5. | Kharsha | Perfume |
| 6. | Banzeen | Gasoline |
| 7. | Mariwana | Marijuana |
| 8. | Gat | Khat |
| 9. | Kokayeen | Cocaine |
| 10. | Sharab kharji | (foreign beverage) Alcohol |
| 11. | Morfeen | Morphine |
| 12. | Bazoka | Seconal ^a |
| 13. | Afuon | Opium |
| 14. | Kongo | Amphetamine |
| 15. | Abu-Malaf | (Captagon ^a) Amphetamine |
| 16. | Zait | (Oil) hashish oil |
| 17. | Ghara | (Glue) Wood glue |
| 18. | Al-soda | (Black) a kind of hashish |
| 19. | Al-shagra | (Blond) a kind of hashish |
| 20. | Al-libnania | (Lebanese) a kind of hashish |

continued

Continued from table 1.

| Drug # | Local Name | Comments |
|--------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <hr/> | | |
| 21. | Al-maghribia (Moroccan) | a kind of hashish |
| 22. | Al-afghania (Afghani) | a kind of hashish |

Table 2: Drugs used, seen, or heard of by the informants.

| Informant | Drug Number (from table 1) | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| One | N | N | H | U | S | S | U | U | U | U | S |
| Two | U | U | U | U | S | S | U | U | U | U | H |
| Three | N | U | U | U | S | S | U | H | U | U | H |
| Four | N | N | U | U | S | S | U | H | U | U | H |
| Five | N | N | H | U | S | S | U | H | H | U | H |
| Six | N | N | H | S | S | H | U | H | H | S | H |
| Seven | N | U | U | U | S | S | U | H | U | U | U |
| Eight | N | N | U | U | S | S | U | H | U | U | H |
| Informant | Drug Number (from table 1) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| One | U | U | U | U | U | S | U | U | U | U | U |
| Two | U | U | U | U | U | S | U | U | U | U | U |
| Three | U | U | U | U | U | S | U | U | U | U | U |
| Four | U | U | U | U | U | S | U | U | U | U | U |
| Five | S | H | H | U | H | S | U | U | H | H | H |
| Six | H | H | H | U | H | H | U | U | U | U | H |
| Seven | U | U | U | U | U | S | U | U | U | U | U |
| Eight | U | U | U | U | U | S | U | U | U | U | U |

U = Used the drug.

S = Saw The drug but did not use it.

H = Heard of the drug only.

N = Does not know anything about the drug.

similar and belong together. Human beings organize their knowledge in order to interpret and facilitate social interaction. That is to say that people have both implicit and explicit representation of their knowledge (Spardley, 1979). Therefore, drugs could be classified along various dimensions to serve different purposes. To categorize drugs from the group's perspective, each informant was given cards naming the drugs he is familiar with (excluding those drugs that he never used, seen, or heard of) and was asked to divide them into as few groups as possible such that each group contains drugs that belong together. No criterion was specified: the informants were not told what factors determine "belonging together". Table 3 shows the initial categorization of drugs.

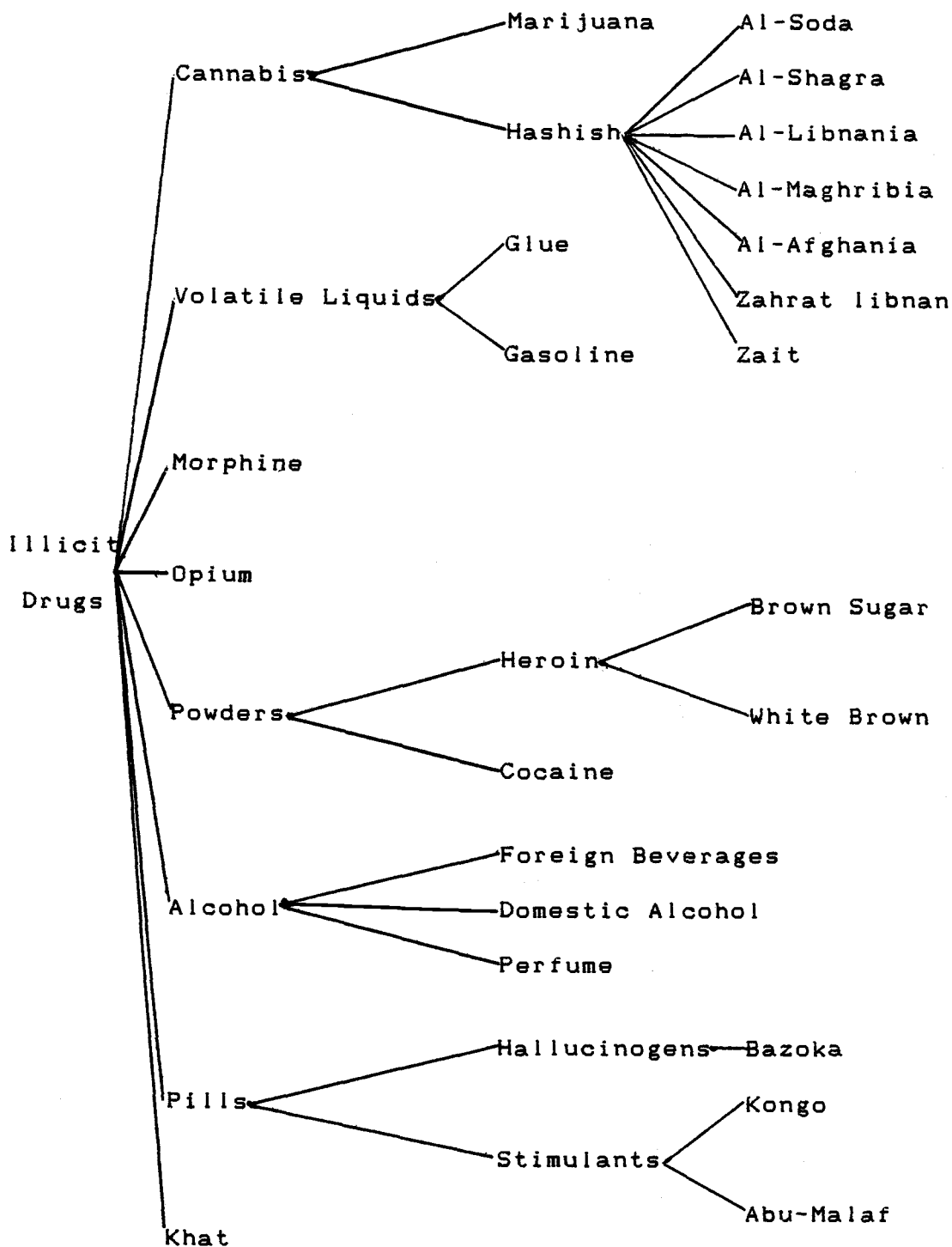
To find subcategories of drugs, if any, for each category in table 3 that contains more than one element (A, B, E, F, and G), each informant was asked to divide the drugs into any number of groups such that each group contains drugs that belong together.

Strict inclusion questions, i.e. X is a kind of Y (for details, see Spardley 1979), affirmed the previous categorization of drugs and provided titles for those categories. Figure 5 shows drug categorization from the

Table 3: Initial categorization of drugs.

| Category | Drug Name |
|----------|--|
| A. | Al-soda, Al-shagra, Al-libnania, Al-maghribia, Al-afghania, Zait, Zahrat libnan, and Mariwana. |
| B. | Ghara and Banzeen. |
| C. | Morfeen. |
| D. | Afuon. |
| E. | Brawn Shogar, Wayt Brawn, and Kokayeen. |
| F. | Sharab kharji, Arak, and Kharsha. |
| G. | Kongo, Abu-malaf, and Bazoka. |
| H. | Gat |

Figure 5: The informants' categorization of drugs



insiders' perspective. The divisions include:

A) Cannabis (al-kanb):

Drugs in this category are produced from the leaves and flowering tops of cannabis plant (al-kanb). The different preparations of cannabis are divided into:

A.1) Hashish:-

For illicit use, hashish is available in many different kinds and forms. The informants have reported the following kinds:

Al-Soda is solid in form, black in color, fine in texture, easy to bend, and has a mild distinctive odor.

Al-Shagra is solid in form, light brown infested with darker spots, rough in texture, difficult to bend (rigid), and has a strong distinctive odor.

Al-Libnania is solid in form, light brown in color, fine in texture, easy to bend, sticky to the touch (oily), and has a strong distinctive odor.

Al-Maghribia is solid in form, shiny brown in color, fine in texture, easy to bend, and has a weak scent.

Al-afghania is solid in form, dark brown from the outside and deep green in the inside, fine in texture, difficult to bend (rigid), and has a weak scent.

Zahrat libnan is white-gray fine powder with a strong distinctive odor.

Zait is thick, smooth, and dark brown liquid with strong distinctive odor.

A.2) Marijuana (mariwana):-

Pressed leaves, flowers, and seeds of cannabis plant. It is of a light green color with a golden shade. It has a sharp fruity odor.

Throughout the year, "al-soda" and "al-shagra" are the most consumed kinds of cannabis despite their reported inferior quality. The softer and stickier (oily) to the touch, the better and more potent is the kind, thereby, "al-libnania" is considered to be the most preferred kind of hashish. The availability of a kind

seems to be the decisive factor for its wide use. Indeed, during the course of the study, the informants have continuously used those two kinds of hashish ("al-soda" and "al-shagra"). Other kinds were purchased with great difficulties just to show the researcher the wide variety of cannabis preparations available in the drug-taking market.

B) Volatile Liquids (Sawayl Tayara):

Ghara (wood glue) and "banzeen" (gasoline) are drugs in this category. Although none of the informants have used volatile liquids, they were knowledgeable about their effects.

I have seen kids inhale "banzeen" [gasoline]... Only tahaweel [junkies] would use them [gasoline and glue]... They are dangerous and cause, I was told, brain damage... We want to have fun, not to become retarded.... (an informant)

The members of the group believe that volatile liquids not only pose health hazards, but also reflect low and impolite manners. The informants have never attempted to experience their effect either as a group or as individuals. Refraining from volatile liquids seems to be rooted in the informants' conception of themselves as

having superior manners and civility to those who are called "tahaweel" (junkies).

C) Morphine (morfeen):

For illicit use, morphine is available in a light brown liquid form. However, it has not been used by any informant. The reason seems to be its method of use (injection), scarcity, and fear of addiction (physical dependence).

D) Opium (afuon):

Opium is solid in form, black in color, fine in texture, easy to bend, and has a bitter taste and a distinctive odor. Although most of the informants used it occasionally, the fear of addiction appears to discourage regularity of its use.

E) Powders (Boudara):

The drugs in this category are of a powder form. They are divided into:

E.1) Heroin:-

There are two kinds of heroin: "brawn shogar" and "wayt brown". The difference lies in their color: "brawn shogar" is grayish-brown while "wayt brown" is white in color.

E.2) Cocaine (kokayeen):-

Kokayeen is an odorless, fine, and white powder.

Drugs in powder form are rarely consumed by the informants:

They [powdered drugs] are not for "mezaj" [good taste and etiquettel. their "high" is excellent, but sniffing is despicable... Burning and bleeding [of the nose] ruin their fun. A friend of mine is addicted to "brawn shogar". He, I heard, sleeps in water in order to be comfortable.... (an informant)

F) Alcohol:

The informants distinguish between three different kinds of alcoholic beverages:

F.1) Foreign Beverages (sharab kharji):-

It includes any alcoholic beverage that is produced abroad, especially in the West, such as whisky.

F.2) Domestic Alcohol (arak):-

Arak is clandestinely and domestically produced. It is colorless, and has a strong distinctive odor similar to kerosene.

F.3) Perfume (kharsha):-

Kharsha denotes any kind of perfume that is consumed for the purpose of getting intoxicated. Normally, it is cheap, available, and sold almost everywhere. "Lemon" perfume, locally called "Mazda", is the most widely used brand.

Alcoholic beverages are occasionally consumed by the informants. Foreign brands are the preferred. Arak (domestic alcohol) is considered to cause stomach aches and is less desirable. Kharsha (perfume) is "extremely dangerous; it causes blindness... Only desperates would drink it...." (an informant)

G) Pills (Hoboob):

Drugs in this category are divided into:

G.1) Hallocinogens (Halwasa):-

These are pills that are capable of inducing euphoria and relaxation such as "bazoka" (Seconal[®]), a large, red capsule that contains a fine, white, and odorless powder. Bazoka is also called "bazak ahmer" (red bazoka) or "fashak" (harmless bullets). It is also known as "discovery" or "one way ticket" because of its effect; "One capsule will send you on a trip that you will not be able to return from for a long time...." (an informant)

G.2) Stimulants (Munashit):-

Drugs in this subcategory are pills that are capable of inducing alertness and are primarily used to combat fatigue. One such is "kongo"- a small, round, and yellow tablet, and "abu-malaf" (amphetamine), a small, round, white tablet. Abu-malaf is also called "al-abiadh" (White). It is used extensively during examination

periods. Kongo is an old fashioned; it is almost extinct.

H) Khat (gat):

Gat is the green leaves of a shrub that is believed to grow in North Yemen and Somalia and is used to induce alertness. Gat is abundant. To feel its effect, one needs to chew a large quantity of leaves. "Chewing in itself is ugly because one needs to spit all the time" (an informant). Besides, a tablet of "abu-malaf" is considered to give better results.

On what basis did the informants classify drugs or stated differently, what factors determine their "belonging together"? The informants' response indicate that factors such as the physical form of a drug, its method (routes) of use, and effect seem to simultaneously interact in distinguishing and classifying drugs. Moreover, the informants' inexperience (lack of knowledge) with a drug appears to contribute to the group's classification of some drugs, i.e. morphine.

At the outer level of figure 5, cannabis (al-kanb), opium, and khat constitute different categories of drugs because they represent different and dissimilar plants, while their methods of use and effects play a secondary

role in such classification. Volatile liquids (Sawayl Tayara) denote a category because of their method of use (inhalation). Although morphine is a derivative of opium, the informants' inexperience with it resulted in their viewing them both (opium and morphine) as two distinct categories of drugs. Furthermore, morphine's method of use (injection) appears to contribute to its differentiation from other drugs. Powders and pills are classified on the basis of their physical form and, to a lesser extent, on the basis of their method of use. Alcoholic beverages seem to be categorized because of their physical form and method of use.

At the second level of figure 5, the subdivision of cannabis into marijuana and hashish seems to rest on the drug's physical form and potency. Hashish derivatives are considered to be stronger (more potent) than marijuana. Although volatile liquids have the same effect and method of use, they denote different categories because of their difference in physical form: gasoline is thin and smooth while glue is thick and pasty. Pills appear to be subcategorized on the basis of effects, stimulants or hallucinogens, in spite of the similarity of their form and method of use. Likewise, powders are divided into two

subgroups because of their different effects while they are identical in their method of use and physical form. Alcoholic beverages are classified on the basis of the informants' conception of good taste. That is to say that despite the fact that they are identical in their physical form, method of use, and effect, alcoholic beverages constitute three different subcategories. Sharab kharji (foreign beverages) is considered to be clean and safe while "arak" is dirty and causes stomach aches. Kharsha is believed to cause blindness, and thereby, poses health hazards.

Drugs in the lower level of figure 5 are viewed as equivalent in spite of the differences, if any, in their physical form or method of use. Hashish preparations are treated as identical because of their capacity to produce similar, if not identical effects. Similarly, "brown sugar" and "white brown" (kinds of heroin) are different in their respective colors only.

From the information gathered, there appears to be no general rule for drug classification. The informants' categorization of drugs appear to result from the simultaneous interaction of the fore mentioned factors. Which factor is decisive in the informants' categorization depends on the drugs under consideration.

Although the data collected does not lend itself to statistical analysis due to the small number of the group members, the informants' knowledge about drugs is anything but trivial. This suggests that illicit drugs are not new visitors in Saudi society. To the contrary, drug-taking appears to be well established if not already matured. However, further research is needed in order to better understand how the knowledge of drugs is organized and represented by drug-takers in Saudi society.

Methods of Drug-taking

In order to produce effects, it was mentioned that drugs must be deposited through any route into the bloodstream then carried to the brain where effects are invoked. This section describes the different methods of illicit drug-taking employed by the informants. The significance of any particular method will be presented from the informants' perspective.

Cannabis preparations (hashish and marijuana) are generally smoked. Due to its strong potency, hashish is usually mixed with tobacco while marijuana, relatively weaker, is consumed as pure as purchased.

On a note book or a similarly flat surface, marijuana is shaken up and down in order to separate the unusable seeds. Then, using zig-zag paper, it is rolled into a cigarette-like shape but without a filter. Although most of the informants were familiar with other methods of use such as small pipes made especially for that purpose, their infrequent use of marijuana and the increased risks arising from possessing such tools seem to confine the informants to simple smoking.

In a deep bowl, tobacco is piled by cutting of cigarette filters, wetting the side of cigarettes by the tongue, and gently dumping tobacco into the fore mentioned bowl. When the desired amount is collected, a piece of hashish is wrapped in foil and heated by a lighter for a few moments until it becomes soft. Sprinkled over and thoroughly mixed with tobacco, hashish is ready for rolling. "A good cigarette must be tightly rolled and without a filter...." (an informant). Hashish in the powder form needs not be heated and two lines of hashish oil are usually drawn on a regular tobacco cigarette.

According to the informants, the process of piling tobacco reflects one's experience of drug-taking or shows his new entrance in the world of illicit drugs. That is,

when one, for instance, breaks up the cigarette without wetting, he certainly will make a mess and is indeed naive. Moreover, the kind of tobacco used reflects one's classiness: cartierR, a French brand, is the most frequently used kind of tobacco.

There are three kinds of hashish, but not marijuana, cigarettes: "cigara" (regular), "sarookh" (rocket), and "sarookh batran" (super rocket). Regular hashish cigarettes are almost of the same length as tobacco cigarettes, but a little thicker. Super rockets are, more or less, of the size of a cigar; the equivalent of three or more regular cigarettes. Rockets are smaller than super rockets but larger than regulars. Rockets and super rockets are often made to celebrate special occasions especially when hashish is plentiful. A piece of hashish (wasla) is usually mixed with 15 tobacco cigarettes to produce 12 regular hashish cigarettes, 7 rockets, or 5 super rockets.

Furthermore, al-kanaka (an Egyptian name for a coffee pot) is a special method of hashish and opium consumption. In a coffee pot, plenty of sugar and Turkish coffee are boiled. When almost ready, hashish or opium is added and left to dissolve on low heat. "One cup is

stronger than a pile of rockets...." (an informant). Al-Kanaka, unlike "super rockets", is used when drugs are lacking. Despite their strong effects, drugs consumed in this manner are believed to cause health hazards. This method of drug-taking, therefore, is less frequently used.

Another method of using cannabis is called "tabwees": a piece of solid hashish is placed in a small jar made of glass and heated until filled with smoke. To cool the smoke, the jar is then placed in cold water and through a hole in the jar lid, a straw is used to inhale the smoke through the mouth. This process is repeated until the piece is totally consumed. This particular method is used when a change is desirable and hashish is plentiful. "Repetition is tedious. Change, once in a while, is reviving...." (an informant).

During weddings where many people are present, a water-pipe, locally called "shisha", is normally used. Hashish is mixed with "jurak"; a thick, pasty, and wet kind of tobacco, placed in the head of the water-pipe, heated with charcoal, and smoked through a flexible long and colorful hose. Sometimes, amongst close friends, when getting high is difficult to attain, "tanfeekh" (blowing) comes to the rescue. An informant puts the lit end of the

cigarette in his tightly closed mouth, blows smoke, and another informant inhales the thick smoke coming out of the end of the cigarette. This is believed to accelerate and prolong the effect.

Although the informants have not used volatile solvents, they were familiar with their use. A piece of cloth is wetted with gasoline and placed on the mouth and nose. The user then inhales and immediately feels its effect. Wood glue is inhaled directly from the can.

Morphine is reported to be injected by the use of a needle. Opium is usually placed under the tongue and sucked over a period of time. Sometimes, opium, similar to hashish, is drunk with coffee. None of the informants reported the eating of either hashish nor opium.

The lines of drugs in powder form are sniffed through the nose. However, some of the informants reported smoking heroin: placed on foil, heated by a lighter, the smoke is inhaled through the mouth by a straw. Moreover, "any powder, I was told, could be injected...." (an informant). At any rate, powdered drugs were rarely consumed by the informants or their friends.

Pills are generally swallowed. However, "bazoka" powder (SeconalR), sometimes is mixed with sugar and

drunk with water or tea. This is the case because the capsule, according to the informants, takes a long time to produce an effect. Finally, khat leaves are reported to be only chewed.

It should be noted that those methods of illicit drug-taking are not monopolized by this particular group. In other words, in the company of some informants, I observed similar or identical methods practiced by other groups of drug users. It appears that those methods are well established among the so called "classy" drug users.

Intensity and Frequency of Drug-taking

By frequency, I mean the number of times a drug is consumed during a definite period of time, i.e. a week. Intensity refers to the amount (quantity) of a drug consumed in that unit of time (a week).

In general, the informants illicitly consume two kinds of drugs: cannabis preparations and stimulant tablets. During the course of the study, "al-soda" and "al-shagra" (kinds of hashish) were the most frequently purchased and, subsequently, consumed drugs. As a unit (group), the informants contributed, in terms of effort and money, to the obtainment of hashish. Occasionally

they experimented with other kinds of drugs such as alcohol and, rarely, with powders. Individually, they purchased and consumed "abu-malaf" (amphetamine). Generally speaking, hashish consumption appears to be a group behavior while the use of "abu-malaf", in addition to other kinds of drugs, seems to be an individual behavior. That is to say that this particular group of drug users is characterized by the "social-recreational" use of hashish preparations and by the "situational" use of "abu-malaf".

In order to explain the reasons for the informants' patterns of drug usage, a few words about Saudi society and the informants is in order.

Saudi society is culturally homogeneous. For fourteen centuries, Islam has provided a uniform system of values for the people of the Arabian Peninsula. Half a century ago, the recently established state of Saudi Arabia explicitly adopted the Quran (Holy Book) as its constitution. Throughout the centuries, Islam has shaped society's conception of origin, destination, reason for existence, social relations, and proper behavior. That is to say that religion has provided not only society's economic and political framework, but it has also defined

social roles and regulated social interaction. Thus, society's conception of proper and deviant behavior is drawn from the well of religion. Illicit drugs, especially alcohol, have been considered to not only pose health hazards, but also to result in the slow, but sure, demoralization and dehumanization of the individual and, subsequently, the disintegration of the entire society. Thus, illicit drug-taking is viewed as a deviant behavior that threatens the moral and civil order, thereby endangering the entire social fabric. The user of drugs is portrayed as an outcast: a delinquent, good for-nothing, derelict individual.

Briefly put, hashish generates low social status and bad moral character... and brings the addict down to the level where almost nothing human remains in him.... in short, a criminal (Rosenthal, 1971: 141)

With such emphasis on morality (found in the Quran and the sayings of the prophet), one's reputation and deeds are one's most valuable assets which if damaged will strain familial relations; social ties such as marriages will be broken, future careers will evaporate, and the painful isolation of the individual is inevitable. Stated differently, "bad" reputation marks the beginning of the end of one's social integration.

The internalization and absorption of society's values has, to a large extent, shaped and colored the informants' conception of pleasure and recreation. They consciously realize the extreme importance of one's reputation and image. Due to their advantageous social position (upper-middle class), the informants were able to travel abroad, mainly to Europe, and to experience new ways of recreation other than those approved by, and available in, their own society. The exposure to new values, coupled with Saudi society's restrictions on pleasure, have necessitated a compromise on the part of the informants: pleasure is viewed as the ability to savor or relish without confronting society. That is to say that one's enjoyment needs not be associated with, or result in, "trouble". The fulfillment of one's desires is believed to be a delicate art of balancing desires with society's norms.

Playing "belotte", music, and soccer are some of the socially approved recreational activities while drug-taking, gambling, and pre-marital sexual relations are socially disapproved and punished by the law. "Since one can not swim against the current, one must bend and let the wind pass", explained an informant. According to the informants, consciously weighing one's behavior

proves to be essential to the well-being and social integration of the individual. From the groups perspective, drug users are divided into two segments: "tahaweel" (junkies) and "classy" users of drugs.

"Tahaweel" (junkies) are those who consume drugs with total disregard of society's reaction, hence, destroying their own reputation and distorting their image. They "use anything, anywhere, and at anytime...." (an informant). They are blinded by the lust for pleasure. This segment includes the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate as long as they are enslaved by the desire, if not the need, to consume drugs.

"Classy" users of illicit drugs are the extreme opposite of "tahaweel" (junkies). In spite of their common desire for pleasure, "classy" users are characterized by their manipulation of society. According to the informants, illicit drugs not only produce desirable effects (joy), but also constitute and enhance social bonds with similar groups of "classy" users. Drug-taking is an "art that requires planning, timing, and the selection of suitable drugs", explained an informant. The informants conceive themselves to be

conscious and tasteful users who are always in control of their actions.

Why hashish in particular? According to the informants, the evils of illicit drugs lie in their addictive (physical dependence) capabilities. Cannabis derivatives are believed to be the only "mind-altering" drugs that are not scientifically proven to produce physical dependence. Coupled with its strong potency, hashish, therefore, makes an ideal drug. Furthermore, the informants differentiate between "hallucination" and "joy". Hallucination is characterized by losing one's awareness of the surrounding world, thus, one may act ridiculously and impolitely. When hallucinating, one is believed to be impulsive, apprehensive, slurring in speech, staggering, and is liable to lose other people's respect. That is considered to be very damaging to the informants' reputation. Joy, by contrast, is the "inner feeling of relaxation and happiness...." (an informant). The informants believe that hashish has the capacity to invoke the precious feelings of joy and dreamness without the loss of one's awareness and the subsequent damage of one's reputation and self-respect. Those who use hashish possess a "poetic sense of pleasure and a realistic view of society...." (an informant). Moreover, hashish,

according to the informants, is the most available drug and its obtainment is the safest. Moreover, the use of hashish does not leave any apparent traces on the user. A drunk (intoxicated), for example, is known by his antisocial, gloomy, and quarrelsome behavior, not to mention "the awful smell of one's breath...." (an informant). But, he who uses hashish is "good-humored, sociable, sensitive, and lovable...." (an informant). Hashish is projected as a "classy" drug for "classy" people. The informants believe that it is the most consumed and wide spread drug in Saudi society.

The consumption of "abu-malaf" (amphetamine) is an individual behavior. It is consumed in order to cope with situations that require a high degree of alertness such as "long distance driving", some social events (marriages and parties), and, above all, during school examination periods. It is preferred to other drugs that produce similar effects such as "gat" (khat) or "kokayeen" (cocaine) because "abu-malaf" is cheaper, always available, and "neater" in its method of use; chewing "gat" or sniffing "kokayeen", for instance, shows one's lack of taste and manners, the informants believe.

In relation to drug-taking, the informants divide

the year into "school" and "vacation" periods: "during school, one is obligated to study; vacation is for relaxation and fun...." (an informant).

The frequency and intensity of illicit drug-taking (hashish in particular) reach their peak during vacation. Hashish, for example, is consumed on a daily basis. "for the past three years, we [during summer vacation] have used it [hashish] on everyday of the week...." (an informant). The amount (quantity) consumed in a week during vacation is reported to be five or more times the amount consumed while attending school. Abu-Malaf is extensively consumed during examination periods. Other drugs, as mentioned earlier, are consumed and experimented with occasionally.

The group's drug-taking behavior (social-recreational and situational patterns) is a consequence of the informants perception of themselves as representatives of the educated and knowledgeable segments of society who are seeking smooth and peaceful transition into the 20th century. Pleasure and success never were in conflict and never should they be. That is to say that pleasure ought not interfere with one's well-being; "there is a time for joy and a time for work....", commented an informant.

Drug Adulteration and Prices

Illicit drugs are rarely consumed in a pure state; they are usually adulterated with other substances. In the United States, for example, heroin is "cut" many times with milk-sugar (lactose) or procaine (a local anesthetic) before it is sold (Jones, et al, 1979).

The group studied differentiates between two types of drug adulteration: "khalt" and "dharb". Khalt (mixing) is the act of mixing a drug with inexpensive (less valuable) substances for the purpose of augmenting the former's quantity. The product is of a larger quantity and weaker effect (potency). Dharb (beating) is the act of mixing a drug with other drug(s) in order to strengthen its effect. Hence, "khalt" augments the quantity while "dharb" compensates for the weakness in the drug's potency that may result from adding less valuable substances.

Both types of drug adulteration, khalt and dharb, are conducted to achieve a single goal: to fulfill the quest for big profits.

In general, hashish in the solid form and an extract of "henna" leaves are mixed in a 1:1 ratio, and a small

quantity of "brawn shogar" (heroin) is added to the mixture. The end product is twice the original quantity of hashish with almost the same effect (potency).

The process of adulteration is achieved by blending hashish and "henna" in water and continuously stirring the mixture until it becomes thick and smooth. While stirring, "brawn shogar" (heroin) is sprinkled over the mixture. After hardening overnight, the mixture is cut into pieces, placed in plastic bags, and buried in the ground for a few days. Then it is ready for sale or consumption. Sometimes, instead of "brawn shogar" (heroin), "banj" (an anesthetic) is used to strengthen the effect of adulterated hashish.

If it [hashish] gets you "high" quickly with a terrible headache, it must have been mixed [dharb] with "banj"... Banj is cheaper than "brawn shogar" and gives the illusion that it [the drug] is strong.... (an informant).

Zait (hashish oil), according to the informants, is adulterated with animal fat. Zahrat libnan (Lebanon flower) is considered to be as pure as hashish could ever be, simply, because it is not for sale to the general public of drug-takers. It exists for the pleasure of the elite and affluent.

Drugs in powder form are often adulterated with

Aspirin[®], baby powder, and glass powder. Itching and burning (inflammation) of the nose normally accompany sniffing "kokayeen", "brawn shogar", or "wayt brown". But, when bleeding occurs, an informant explained, the drug is "certainly 'makhloot' (mixed) with glass powder".

The powder of "bazoka" (Seconal[®]) is sometimes mixed with "brawn shogar" (heroin) to attain a stronger effect. Other drugs (alcohol, opium, khat, and tablets) are believed to be sold in their original state. The informants were not knowledgeable about the adulteration, if any, of those drugs.

Illicit drugs are commodities. They have a use-value; they fulfill a need or desire, and they have an exchange-value reflected in their prices.

In Jeddah, "wasla" (a piece) is the smallest unit of purchasing hashish in the solid form. It is approximately 7 centimeter in length, 1.5 centimeter in width, and 0.5 centimeter thick. A piece costs 500 S.R. (Saudi Riyal); the equivalent of 134 U.S. dollars. The largest unit is a kilo that, on the average, costs about 25000 S.R. (\$6667). Hashish is also sold by fractions of a "kees" (bag), i.e. "rub kees" (quarter of a bag) and "nos kees" (half a bag). A "kees" (a bag) costs 10000 S.R. (\$2667). Four bags is approximately a kilo of hashish. Normally, the

informants purchase hashish by the piece which is considered to be safer to keep and is always available.

Zait (hashish oil) is sold in small bottles of about 2.5 cm² in volume that is called "tola". It costs 2500 S.R. (\$ 667). Zahrat libnan (Lebanon flower) is never sold, claimed an informant, because it is for the pleasure of " 'high' people who bring drugs and use the best".

A bottle (0.75 liter) of "sharab kharji" (foreign beverages) normally costs 300 S.R. (\$ 80), but during times of shortage and scarcity, the price can reach as high as 500 S.R. (\$ 133). A bottle of "arak" (1 liter) is worth 100 S.R. (\$ 27) and "kharsha" costs at most 15 S.R. (\$ 4).

Powdered drugs are sold by the gram. A gram of "brawn shogar" or "wayt brown" costs 1000 S.R. (\$ 267), and of "kokayeen" is worth 700 S.R. (\$ 187).

Pills are purchased by "shad" (pressed pack) that contains ten tablets or capsules. A "shad" of "bazoka" costs 120 S.R. (\$ 32), and 100 S.R. (\$ 27) of "abu-malaf" or "kongo".

The informants neither purchased nor knew of the prices of "gat" (khat), "afuon" (opium), or "morfeen"

(morphine). Volatile liquids are inexpensive and easily accessible.

Illicit drugs constitute an attractively lucrative source of wealth. In Tabuk, a city located at the northern border of the country, a kilo of "al-shagra" (hashish) costs 4000 S.R. (\$ 1067). As is, it is sold for 26000 S.R. (\$ 6934) in Jeddah. When adulterated and sold by the piece it returns more than ten times the original investment.

So far I have presented the prices of drugs as reported by the informants. As a rule of thumb, prices are stable throughout the year. However, availability and quality of drugs seem to produce variations in the quantity purchased, but not in their prices. Stated differently, while the prices of drugs are fixed and stable, the quantity of the unit of purchase varies. For example, during the Muslim annual pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Madina (Al-Hajj), hashish is reported to be more accessible than during the rest of the year. A kilo of hashish costs the same, yet its weight, according to the informants, is greater than a kilo purchased at other times. Although a piece (wasla) costs 500 S.R. (\$133), its size is noticeably larger. Al-libnania, for instance, is considered to be of better quality than

"al-soda" or "al-shagra". Yet, a piece costs as much, but its size is ridiculously small. A gram of "brawn shogar" (heroin) purchased during summer vacation is less in weight than a gram bought during Al-Haj. A "shad" (pressed pack) of "abu-malaf" (amphetamine) normally contains 10 tablets, but during school time, "you are lucky to have 8 tablets in a 'shad'. The price remains the same: 100 S.R. [\$ 27]", commented an informant.

It is evident that the prices of drugs are fixed and stable throughout the year. Variations and fluctuation occur in volume, weight, quantity, or size of the unit of purchase. That is to say that the unit of purchase is an abstract measurement that facilitates interaction. The stabilization of prices seems to simplify illicit drug-purchasing and appears as a direct consequence of the risks associated with such transactions. However, the laws of supply and demand, in addition to quality variation, are still at work: the unit of purchase varies in accordance with these factors. It seems that over a long period of time, and due to the sanctions imposed by law and society's norms, a general acceptance of, if not preference for, stable prices and variable quantities developed within the network of drug distributors

(sellers) and consumers as a measure offering some protection from detection by the authorities. By the standardization of prices and units of purchasing, the necessary time to conclude a purchasing transaction is reduced to a minimum due to the elimination of bargaining (a time consuming process) which, in turn, decreases the chances of being caught by the authorities.

Obtaining Drugs

Illicit drugs are rarely acquired as free gifts. They are usually purchased.

The informants distinguish between sellers and suppliers of drugs. Distributors (sellers) are those individuals from whom the informants purchase drugs. Suppliers are those on whose behalf drugs are smuggled into the country.

Distributors are normally poor. Most of them hold low-paying jobs. I know one of them, married and having many children, who works for 2000 S.R. a month. Income from selling hashish barely keep them alive. You may ask, who collects the filthy profits?.... (an informant).

According to the informants, most illicit drug sellers are foreign workers. Suppliers are believed to be invisible to the naked eye.

Some of the methods of purchasing illicit drugs are dangerous and risky demanding careful planning. Through an informant, I was able to see a purchasing event in action.

It was on a Thursday afternoon, an informant and I went on a cruise by the beach prior to purchasing pills. "This is the most dangerous way of purchasing," my companion warned and continued, "just watch and hope we do not get caught...." As we drove, he seemed to be nervous and so was I. On the highway, despite the coolness of the air conditioner and the sweet sound of music, speeding added to my anxiety and nervousness. Seeing my state of mind, he inquired with a comforting smile, "you can't speed in America?" A few seconds of silence passed. "We must be there before dark. That is when they sell", he explained.

Fifteen minutes later, he pointed at a gas station and said with apparent confidence "the more trucks parked there, the better chances to find them. They [truckers] are the main users of pills...." Darkness was just beginning to creep over the horizon. Turning on the headlights and slowing the car down, he intentionally drove on the shoulder of the road. "Keep looking at your

right", he requested.

A few minutes passed before we spotted flashing lights. Slowly, he drove off the highway into the pathless sand. With the head lights off, we barely made our way on the weak rays of the tail lights. Two pickups were parked parallel to each other; one facing the highway, the other seemed ready to invade the limitless tracks of sand. Keeping the engine running, my companion parked between them and rolled his widow down. "What?" a strong serious voice broke in at once. "Shad" [pressed pack1 of abu-malaf", my companion replied. "A hundred", the voice requested. _____ stretched his hand and delivered a 100 S.R. bill. Then immediately withdrew his hand and at once set to examine its contents. Then, he put it in a pack of cigarettes and shoved it under his seat. "Done?", the same voice inquired. "Done", replied my companion while driving back to the highway.

As soon as the car wheels made contact with the smoothness of the highway, it was racing the winds. "Did you notice the three men around the pickups? They are armed", said he. "Yes, but why?", I inquired. "Some time ago, the authorities attempted to bust them. Three officers, I heard, were shot....", he explained.

The actual purchase lasted a few minutes. All

informants insisted that they do not purchase pills in this manner: it is too much of a risk to take. They just wanted to show me a way of purchasing drugs. Later discussions with the informants indicated that one can not leave before being told that the transaction was "done". "Those are the rules", commented an informant.

Towards the end of the study, I attempted to verify the relation between the presence of trucks and the selling of pills. Without engaging in purchasing, in three endeavors, whenever many trucks were parked by the gas station, the flashing lights warmly invited us to enter the world of pills. Once, there were two trucks and our attempt was in vain; we drove back and forth for half an hour without a trace of success. This suggests that the primary users of pills are long distance drivers.

Purchase through "request" is the most common and preferred method of obtaining illicit drugs. Most of the informants know at least a friend, from other groups of drug users, who is willing to purchase drugs on the informant's behalf. The informant simply requests the drug and advances the payment, the purchaser delivers the drug in a day or two.

Drugs obtained in this manner are "taxed". "Jamraka"

(taxation or customs) is the act of taking a small part of the drug by the purchaser. The informants believe that "Jamraka" is inevitable when drugs are purchased through "request". The amount taken by the purchaser depends on his relation to the "requestor". The better and closer the relationship, the lesser the amount taken. In general, one fourth of the drug is expected to be taken.

"Jamraka" is considered to be, and is justified as, a compensation for the risks involved and undertaken by the purchaser in such transactions. Since favors are socially reciprocated by favors, "Jamraka" tends to relieve the informants from returning such favors. Although "Jamraka" is well established, wide spread, and accepted, the purchaser attempts to conceal any traces that may indicate that the drug was taxed. It appears that because friendship implies the willingness to do favors without the expectation of material rewards, "Jamraka" seems to undermine and to shake up the foundation of the concept of friendship. Among the members of the group, "Jamraka" is nonexistent; they share what they have.

In times of financial difficulty, some of the informants purchased drugs for friends solely to support their desire of hashish consumption. On one occasion, an

informant purchased a piece of "al-soda" for a friend in order to show the researcher the proper way of "Jamraka". A sharp knife, a cigarette lighter, and two glass-ashtrays were the tools needed for the operation. The piece was placed between the flat backs of the ashtrays. While pressing the ashtrays firmly, the piece was heated by the lighter through the inside surface of the lower ashtray. When the piece was flattened (lengthened and widened), it was cut into a rectangular shape. The small pieces resulting from the shaping of the piece constitute the "taxation" which was about one third of the original piece.

Although drugs are more expensive when purchased in this manner, it enhances the safety of the informants. Every seller, the informants believe, is likely to be watched by the "vigilant eye" of the authorities. Avoiding risks is worth the extra cost.

Another, but less frequent, method of purchasing hashish is in the produce market; a large, open-air, and crowded place.

There, "al-soda" is sold publicly to the point that we are scared to purchase it. All one needs to do is to buy any vegetable or fruit, a water melon for example. A 'hammal' [box boy], Indian or Pakistani, will carry it to the car.

Instead of 5 [S.R.], pay him 500. If he appears confused, take the money back. Otherwise, he will disappear. Minutes later, another 'hammal' will throw a piece inside your car. The minimum amount for purchase is 500 S.R... They never stole or cheated us... In business, reputation is very important.... (an informant).

In two purchases I attended, the size of the piece of hashish was almost the same. However, the sellers were different. According to the informants, sellers often change their location in order to avoid the authorities.

The main source of foreign beverages (alcohol) is foreign embassies, claimed the informants, from which local sellers (retailers) purchase it by the carton, a box that contains 10 bottles, and sell it by the bottle. The informants' lack of interest in alcoholic beverages has confined their relation to one or two distributors who were always ready to meet the group's demands. The informants' shyness about alcoholic beverages is explained in another section.

The southern portion of Jeddah is considered to be the primary source of the clandestine production and distribution of "arak". Virtually all kinds of drugs are believed to be abundant in that impoverished part of the city. But, hashish is sparse, according to the informants. Due to its striking poverty, South Jeddah is

viewed as the best soil for trouble to grow: "over there, one could find anything illegal", an informant commented. To the informants, and understandably enough, it is a hostile world inhabited by poor, illiterate, and truculent people.

Illicit drugs are plentiful and easily accessible. From the group's perspective, the degree of risk is the decisive factor in the selection of a method of drug-obtainment. Purchase through "request" is the most practiced and preferred method because of the increased safety associated with it. Purchase from an unknown seller is viewed as taking unnecessary risks. Purchase from South Jeddah is simply out of the question.

Measures of safety, however, extend beyond the selection of a method of drug-purchasing to include when, where, and how the drug is picked up.

The delivery of a drug must occur in public and crowded places. Shopping centers are the perfect locations. Between 7:00 and 9:00 pm. is the best time to conclude such transactions because "most people avoid the heat of daytime and go out around dusk. That is when Jeddah is truly alive...." (an informant).

Under any circumstances, denial of possessing drugs

was strongly recommended.

Even if you are caught red-handed, denial will make things easier... Friends are better able to solve the problem before it grows out of proportions.... (an informant).

While driving, drugs were always stored in a cigarette pack under the driver's seat. The amount carried is no more than what would be consumed. Large quantities were never taken outside the house. Whenever an informant suspected that he might be stopped by the authorities for any reason, drugs were simply thrown out of the car. "Pull over as far as you can", an informant advised.

The informants' concern with safety arises from, and is rooted in, society's conception of illicit drug-usage as immoral and deviant behavior. This conception is partly reflected in the punishment imposed by the law. According to the group, the punishments are:

- Smuggling drugs is punishable by 15 years of imprisonment and a fine of 20000 S.R.;
- Conspiring or participating in drug-smuggling is punishable by 7 years of imprisonment;
- Ten years of imprisonment and a fine of 10000 S.R. for the distribution of drugs (selling or giving away as a gift);
- The possession or use of illicit drugs is punishable

by two years of imprisonment.

In a society that places great emphasis on morality and conformity to social codes as one's most valuable assets, imprisonment is catastrophic; one's social position and relations will be shattered. A convict is an outcast.

The Initial Encounter

In this section, some of the informants narrate their first contact with illicit drugs.

_____ is the most good-humored, sociable, and generous member of the group. Most of the gathering have taken place at his family's luxurious villa located in the wealthiest residential area in North Jeddah.

Suddenly, I started... Since the days of secondary school... At that time, I used to work during the summer vacation and developed excellent relationships with some influential people. Suddenly... I mean, I used to play "belotte" and soccer, but there was nothing else. Suddenly, I found myself mixed with those business people... Everything was different; women and sharab [alcohol]. At first, I was afraid of being caught... but once, twice, and three times, I began to enjoy it. I used to attend and have fun... They brought hashish, drinks [alcohol], pills, etc... but one can not enjoy himself at the expense of others. So, I began to inquire about how and from where to buy

it...The first time I drank [alcohol], I went to sleep... As time passed, I learned to be selective... Now, I only use hashish... For about a year, I did not tell the others because our friendship was different; we played together, went on picnics, and picked up girls, but no drugs at all. It was not until they came back from a visit to Turkey, then, we began to use it together.... (an informant).

Three of the informants were introduced to drugs abroad.

After the first year of college and during that summer vacation, _____, _____, and I decided to go to Turkey. At that time, none of us have used drugs yet... In Istanbul, all we wanted were girls. Because of, and through, them we began to drink [alcohol]... The first time I drank it, I caused too many problems, I was told. On the second day of our arrival in Istanbul, accompanied by three beautiful girls, we went to a fancy restaurant. The place was fabulous, the food was excellent, and the live Eastern music was sensational. I still remember the girls' warnings that "raka" [alcohol] was a strong drink... All I remember is drinking one glass, after which, I lost contact with reality. _____ told me that I drank water thinking that it was Raka... They had to carry me back to the Hotel... While stretched on the bed, I asked for a cigarette, I was told. But, I never smoked in my life... Next morning, rather next afternoon, to my surprise, I found out that I had burned the room the night before. I was lucky to live... Ever since, I never touched alcohol... Each one of us had his day... _____ cried all night every time he drank... During our stay in Turkey [three months], we smoked hashish, sucked "afuon" [opium], sniffed

powders... we tried everything we laid our hands on... Upon returning to Jeddah, we started to look for hashish.... (an informant).

Finally,

Five years ago, we [his family] had a Filipino chauffeur... In his room, situated at the farthest corner of the villa, he used to invite his fellow country men... At times, I stopped by and chatted with them. They smoked "strange" cigarettes which, when I asked, he said that they smoked it back home... Later, I learned that it was "mariwana"... He taught me how to roll it, how to smoke it, and from whom to get it... We became good friends... One day, my father found out about his habit and fired him. He was sent back to his country. I do miss him... Then, I began to purchase it myself... Once, I was cruising with _____ along the beach. It was a humid depressing night... When I started to roll a cigarette [of hashish], he seemed to be puzzled... I explained... No more than ten minutes, he began to talk about outer space and how the 'red tail lights' of the passing cars resembled space ships in their search for the unknown... Then he began to panic... Holding tightly and firmly to the steering wheel, he claimed that the car was flying... When I failed to convince him to stop or to let me drive, I began to panic too... At last, we parked, walked as close to the water as possible, and stared at the mighty waves of the sea... I remember reciting him poetry that night... Later, on that very night, he wanted to try it again. He liked it, you know.... (an informant).

Other informants' experiences were similar to the ones mentioned. All informants indicated that they

concealed their drug-taking habit from each other because of the fear that it might jeopardize their friendship. Together, they enjoyed what was socially approved. Independently, or with other friends, they consumed illicit drugs. More than a year passed before everyone knew that all of them were in the same boat. Then, it became the group's main mode of recreation.

It should be mentioned that none of the informants referred to their partners in their sexual acts as "prostitutes". They always called them "women"; denoting married women, or girls when referring to unmarried women. This probably is part of the "classy" vocabulary.

Incentives and Motivations

In the literature pertaining to drug-taking, many incentives and motivations have been proposed for the illicit use of drugs. To mention a few, curiosity, the search for new experiences, boredom, peer group pressure, and affluence have been suggested to be factors in motivating people to initiate and continue the use of drugs.

In this section, the informants present their

reasons for the continuous use of illicit drugs. However simplistic and subjective their rationale may seem, it provides information on Saudi society and throws some light on the phenomenon of drug-taking within the constraints of social class.

In a society that revolves around Islam, pleasure and leisure are looked upon negatively.

Islam is well known for the strictness of its attitude with respect to what it considers permissible means of amusement and relaxation for the individual... Wine and gambling are expressly interdicted in the Quran.... (Rosenthal, 1971: 1).

The socially approved and appropriate recreational activities are limited to social events, i.e. marriages, and confined to religious holidays. Although card-playing, music, soccer, or picnics are approved activities, they are often considered to be time-wasting and are associated with a specific age group: youthful, exuberant, immature, and unsettled teen-agers. Once married or matured, one's sphere of pleasure is extremely narrowed and confined to the family.

According to the informants, the absence of recreational alternatives, i.e. theaters and clubs, coupled with the prolonged spare-time of idleness, results in boredom, weariness, and depression. Indeed,

boredom was the most frequently given reason for the illicit use of drugs.

Just tell me what is there to do... "belotte", soccer, or the beach... We have been doing that for ages... Repetition is a killer... There are no movies, theaters, clubs, or even good programs on television. Take television for example, day and night, Heaven, Hell, or the same old love story played over and over... It is sickening... Video games have been prohibited because they waste the youth's time and hurt their vision... Possibly, they cause brain damage too... Everybody expect us to work or pray. Nothing else!... On weekends, people go to the beach, drink tea, gaze at the sky, and talk about other people's faults... Even "belotte" loses its excitement because of repetition... In shopping centers, we are always harassed. As you know, singles are suspicious creatures.... (an informant).

In addition to the abundance of the informants' spare time, society's restrictions on enjoyment and the subsequent limited varieties of recreational activities appear to be the primary justification for the informants' usage of illicit drugs. Hashish is believed to blow life into the traditional and outworn leisure activities: "belotte" acquires new dimensions; "it is more enjoyable and satisfying when one is high" (an informant). Music becomes "sweeter, even counting the stars or gazing at the waves becomes a pleasurable

experience...." (an informant). When high, one is believed to be thoughtful, reflective, and imaginative. The ability to watch the parade of colors passing in front of one's eyes, letters and words bouncing between mouths and ears, and to listen to one's heart-beats dancing on the amplified notes of music are some of the experiences that the informants seek through the use of drugs.

Therefore, hashish is taken to defy the deadness and dreariness of the repetitious daily routine. Through hashish preparations, one is believed to be able to temporarily transfer to another plane of reality: a creative, esthetic, and romantic world of reflection and tranquility where stress, tension, anxiety, or depression are nonexistent.

The usage of stimulants (abu-malaf) is strictly practical. The main motivation for their use is the informants' need to cope with situations that require a high degree of alertness such as examination periods. According to the informants, stimulants are hardly considered illicit drugs. "they are similar to Aspirin[®] or sleeping pills: they are not used for fun...." (an informant).

Due to their advantageous social positions, the informants have unlimited access to a crucial factor in obtaining drugs: money which "has never been an object" (an informant). One's self-satisfaction and enjoyment is considered to be worth the expenses incurred. The availability and ease of accessing drugs also contribute to the group's continuous use of illicit drugs. During the past few years, illicit drugs have been more available and accessible. The presence of foreign workers is regarded as the main cause of the accelerated circulation of drugs. "Drugs have always been used, but today, they come in more varieties, larger quantities, and cheaper prices" (an informant). Hence, the informants easy access to both money and drugs is partly responsible for the on-going usage of illicit drugs.

Illicit drugs are also considered an urgent and critical factor in one's sexual relationships. Since pre and extra marital sex are prohibited in Saudi society, great labor is exerted in achieving such pleasures. Illicit drugs are the baits that attract sexual partners who apparently belonged to the informants' social class.

Women, especially Saudis, are fond of drugs. They do not ask for money, but certainly inquire about drugs... They want to have fun too... From experience, hashish is the most desired... Believe

me, it makes it more enjoyable.... (an informant).

As far as peer group pressure is concerned, the informants claim to exert no influence on each other. That is to say that those who wish not to take drugs were not treated differently. During the study, when a member of the group decided to quit the use of drugs, he was able to do so without any apparent loss or strains in his relation to the group: as before, he participated in all the activities. The informants response to his intention of stopping the use of drugs was one of admiration. However, this is not quite the case. Towards the end of the study, he resumed taking drugs. By virtue of being with drug users, "one can not help doing the same" (an informant).

Most importantly, illicit drug-taking seems to create useful and beneficial social relationships. That is to say that the illicit usage of drugs not only knit the informants together, but also helped introduce them to influential and power-holding individuals who have provided valuable services and favors.

Within the group, illicit drug-taking draws the informants together: they virtually meet on a daily basis, share what they have, and help each other in every

avenue of their daily life. To the informants, the use of drugs have made them frank, candid, and sensitive to each other's problems and concerns. "ever since we used them together, our friendship grew stronger...." (an informant).

Outside the group, the informants have attended gatherings with similar groups in which they met influential individuals who have been willing to help in any way they can. By belonging to the same social class and sharing similar views, and, above all, by violating the existing law and society's norms together, illicit drugs seem to create a sense of unity and solidarity among "classy" drug users where one feels obligated to help the others. Through drug-taking, the informants have established social relationships with many people who proved to be profitable and helpful connections: "from airlines reservation to resolving problems with the authorities", an informant explained. The rewards in terms of beneficial and serviceable social relationships appear to out-weigh the risks associated with such use.

Illicit drug-taking not only solidifies and knits the informants together, fulfills the desire for pleasurable experiences and fights boredom, but also paves the informants' path to a comfortable and easy life

where power-holding connections are a fact of life.

Safeguards and Precautions

In Saudi Arabia, illicit drug-taking is regarded as a deviant behavior that not only harms the individual, but also threatens the civil and moral foundation of society. It is denounced by society's norms and punished by law. The informants' concern with safety arises from the destructive consequences of society's reactions: imprisonment and isolation. To avoid such pain, the informants have developed a set of safety measures that is observed by all members of the group. "Common sense", an informant explained, "is what one needs to elude trouble". Based on observations and discussions, this provides the most important measure of safety for the informants.

Paradoxically, although society's values are the major source of trouble to the informants as far as drug-taking is concerned, they provide a protective shield that is fully and efficiently utilized. Segregation on the basis of gender is a characteristic of Saudi society. In all spheres of life, males and females

are separated from each other at a very early age. One is prohibited from being in the company of the opposite sex unless he/she is not marriageable as defined by religion. This means that the iron arm of the authorities cannot reach inside a house full of women. It is impolite, inappropriate, and a violation of customs and religion to invade the seclusion of a house when women are present. "It is out of the question", an informant commented, "no one dares to seize a family house". Hence, safety begins in the place where drugs are consumed: a family residence is ideal. In the unlikely event of a bust, the informants would have more than enough time to get rid of the drugs. By contrast, a bachelor's dwelling is the least desired and worst place to consume drugs. "Bachelors are always regarded as trouble makers and thought of negatively" (an informant). As a rule, a family dwelling is the safest place for almost all illegal activities.

Furthermore, wealth breeds power which, logically enough, gives birth to influential connections that are capable of resolving the most stubborn and obdurate conflicts. Moderately stated, the chances that the dwellings of the wealthy would be searched are "remote and almost nonexistent" (an informant).

Therefore, by using a house of a wealthy family, the

possibility of being red-handedly caught is anything but likely. The group's gatherings usually took place in one of the informants' villas- a huge, secluded, and magnificent piece of architecture located in North Jeddah. Situated in the wealthiest sector of the city, the villa is surrounded by a high marble wall. On the ground floor, the guests' section is safe from outside intrusion (the authorities) and secure from his own family. On the one hand, the location of the villa and its ornate visage seem to reduce the risks of a "bust" dramatically. In addition, being the eldest brother of five sisters, gender segregation eliminates the possibility of intrusion by a predominately female household: when male guests are present, females are prohibited from entering the room. The group's gatherings have always taken place in such an atmosphere of complete impregnability and peace of mind.

According to the informants, drug-purchasing is the most hazardous, precarious, and risky part of drug-taking. Most people are believed to be caught "during the purchase of drugs" (an informant). Illicit drug distributors (sellers) are regarded as potential targets of the authorities. In order to avoid unnecessary

risks, the informants have emphasized that drug sellers ought not be invited to one's house nor be visited. That is to say that the relationship between user and seller should be confined to business and business only. To further enhance safety, the informants prefer to purchase drugs through "request". Although drugs are more expensive when purchased in this manner, the risks of damaging one's reputation is reduced to a minimum. Based on observation, purchasing through request was the most frequently practiced method of drug-obtainment. Due to pure necessity, one may have to purchase drugs himself. In this case, drugs must be picked up around dusk. The ideal locations are crowded public places such as shopping centers.

Moreover, it is extremely important to carry only small quantities of drugs. The amount carried by the informants was usually equivalent to what would be consumed that day. This minimizes the loss of drugs should one be stopped by the authorities. To illustrate, drugs were always stored in cigarette packs under the driver's seat. When requested to stop by the police, drugs are thrown out of the car and the informant stops as far away as possible from that point. "Under any circumstances, never stop before disposing of the

stuff... remember to always deny that it is yours...." (an informant). Since drugs are too valuable to waste, the informants would return to search for what is considered to be lawfully theirs: the thrown off drugs.

Most of the informants have encountered circumstances where they had to quickly react to the authorities. An informant narrates his experience:

One day, I was cruising by the beach. The music was loud, the air conditioner was on, and the stars were flickering very beautifully in the sky... I smoked three cigarettes [of "al-soda"] before I started to feel relaxed. I drove for about an hour then headed for home. While driving slowly, I noticed the police signalling me to pull over. I had a piece [of hashish] with me to smoke later that night. I lowered the music, opened the window, and waited till I could throw out the pack. At a turn, I threw it on the side walk. I continued to drive for about 200 meters before I stopped. An officer asked why I did not stop. I replied that I did not see them. Anyway, he searched the car and requested to see my driving license. When I inquired about what I had done, I was told that I was driving too slowly... Later, I returned to where I threw the pack and after a few minutes I found it.... (an informant).

Eye drops such as Visine[®] are frequently used by the informants to get rid of the redness that accompanies the use of hashish. To remove the smell of alcohol, "mistaka" (a local gum) or cardamom (an Asiatic plant of the ginger

family) is often chewed.

Finally, when drugs are consumed, one should wait till the effects wear off before engaging in any activities such as driving. The informants have emphasized that they would spend the night wherever they consumed drugs, especially "bazoka" and alcoholic beverages. However, during the course of the study, most of the informants violated such common sense rules: they drove, went to shopping centers, and participated in social events such as dinners and birthday parties.

Generally speaking, safety appears to constitute a large portion of the informants' concerns. Most of the time, safeguards are observed. However, it is important to note that the informants feel that they have powerful connections that are able to solve any problem should it occur. That is to say that the actual and real damage that the informants may suffer is confined to their familial ties which, to a certain degree, are believed to be reparable. Those who do not have such connections are the unfortunates in the real sense of the word: not only are they likely to be economically impoverished, they are also more likely to be convicted.

Etiquette and Drug Related Vernacular

Throughout the study, illicit drug-taking, hashish in particular, intermittently occurred during social occasions and in a number of places such as wedding and similar celebrations, cruises by the beach, over-night picnics, or at other friends homes. In general, a gathering may take place at any home belonging to one of the informants. In the group of our study, however, most gatherings occurred in a specific locality. This is the case because, this villa, besides being safe from family intrusion, is located in the wealthiest section of Jeddah. The latter characteristic is extremely significant in providing protection from a sudden bust by the authorities.

The villa, as previously mentioned, is spacious and luxurious conveying the unmistakable impression of opulence and affluence. Between the main edifice and the street gate, there is a large linoleum-paved vicinity that appear to serve no practical function. The entrance to the three-story building is approached through a four-step marble flight followed by a spacious terrace. Towards the left-side of the entrance, a moderately small but impressive door leads to the guests section. This

section, locally referred to as "saloon", is made up of two adjacent large rooms, each is about 8 by 12 meters in size, and connected by a large sliding door. The inside room, supposedly for dining purposes, very often remains unutilized. The room to the outside is the one usually used for the group's gatherings.

The "saloon" (guests vicinity) reflects the convergence of western state-of-the-art technology with traditionally-styled furniture. The walls, from top to bottom and all round the room, are covered with fancy curtains of fine velvet material. Alongside the walls sprawl expensive mattresses and cushions (before the invasion of western couches and sofas, people sat on the floor). The floor is covered with a thick carpet on the center of which lies an expensive hand-made Persian rug. Just above the rug, hanging from the center of the ceiling, is a huge crystal Italian chandelier shedding bright rays through out the room. Next to the door, stands a mahogany book-case covering the entire wall from the corner to the door and from the ceiling to the floor. Ironically, it contains no books or any readable material, but accommodates numerous video tapes, a video machine, a large-screen television set, and a "hi-tech"

stereo system. All those machines are the latest product of the market and, naturally, remote-controlled. Even the curtains and lights are electronically operated. A central air conditioner continuously and vigorously battles the heat. In addition to the numerous antiques and souvenirs that constantly reminds one of the family's frequent vacations in Europe, a small oil painting depicting tents and camels proudly shows the not-too-long ago style of living and the "pure" (bedouin) origin of the family (figure 6).

Once inside the room, one feels completely detached from the outside world. Usually, the evening begins around eight o'clock and ,one by one, the guests arrive. Once there are four people, they immediately begin playing "belotte". The video is often turned on and the room is animated with bright and brilliant light. When the clock strikes ten, everyone is usually present and the door is locked.

On an occasion I observed, a few minutes after ten o'clock, there were the eight informants and an additional four other friends present. Tea was continuously served. While I was playing "belotte", the host whispered to me "enjoy watching...." He reached behind the television, returned with a deep bowl, and

Figure 6: A typical gathering

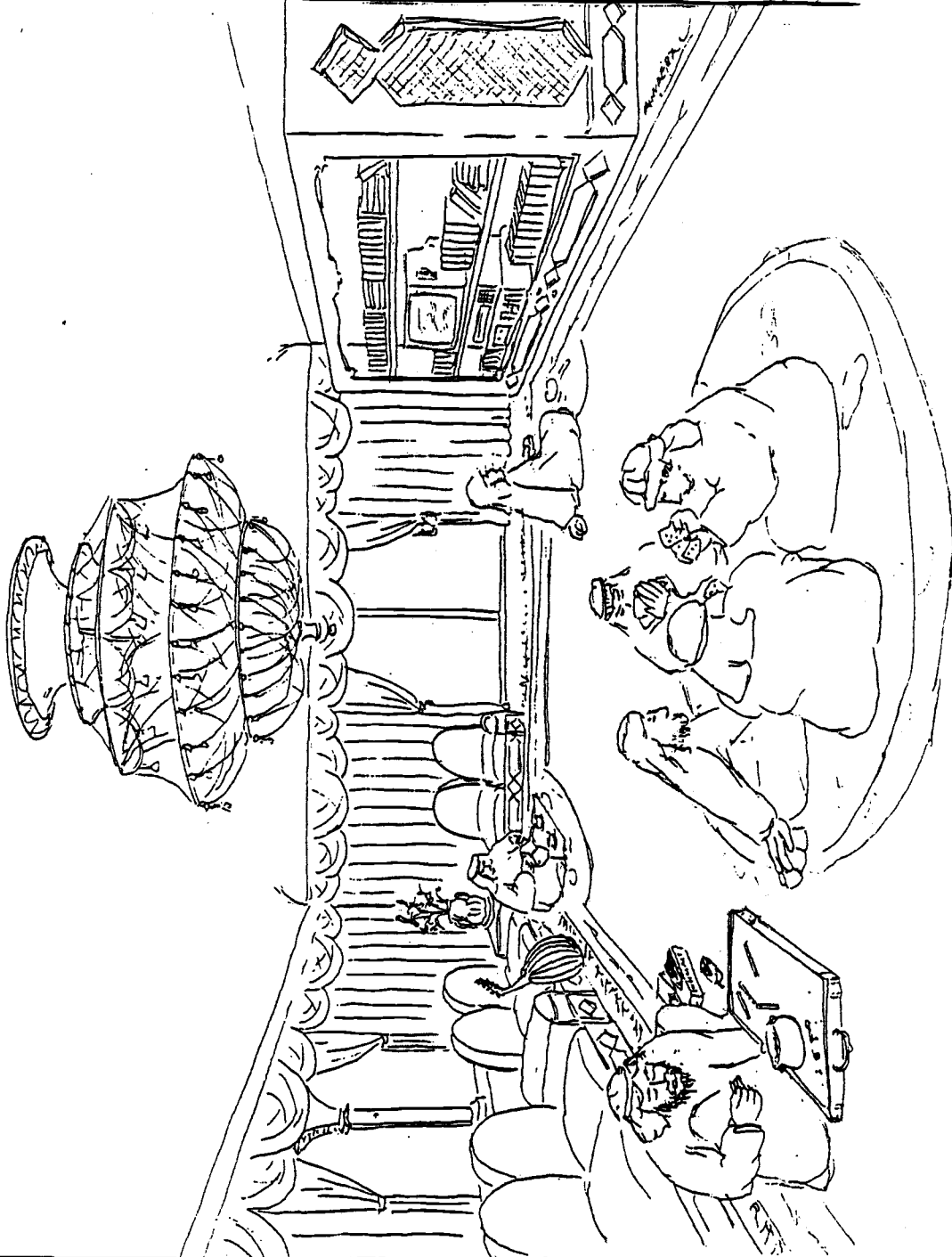


Illustration by Matthias Minde.

sat in front of me so I could see what he was about to do. Presently, he was joined by another informant. He began addressing the group: "next week, the number of fools will increase by one; everyone is invited to wedding. So, the night is in his honor... Congratulations...." Laughter and jokes broke out. When the host asked for cigarettes, a pack of CartierR came flying across the room and landed next to the bowl. As soon as they began breaking the cigarettes and piling tobacco in the bowl, each of the new visitors produced a small piece of "al-soda" and placed it on a sheet of paper which intentionally was next to the bowl.

After tobacco was piled, hashish, piece by piece was wrapped in a foil and burnt for a few seconds. As it became soft, it was readily rubbed over and mixed with the piled tobacco. Addressing the noisy audience, the host said, "it is spring and earth is green; you will have some Super Rockets tonight. You won't forget them, never...."

As soon as five of the so called "super rockets" were rolled and ready for use, he handed the first one to the guest on whose honor the evening was declared. The latter drew three deep puffs and passed it to the person on his right side and approvingly declared, "excellent, I

have never had a stronger one...."

Soon afterwards, another guest was given a cigarette to light. Ten minutes later, all five "super rockets" were lit and circulating. Clouds of thick smoke began to form and the rolling of more cigarettes began. At this point, the host dimmed the light, put on music, and "belotte" commenced. There was roaring laughter, loud conversations, and intense clouds of smoke that inspired an informant to jokingly comment that soon it would rain Rockets instead of water. Laughter grew louder: anything said seemed to be extremely humorous.

The general gay and joyful mood continued till two hours past midnight. An informant suggested that they should listen to some live playing on the lute. Belotte halted, and everyone joined in a circle: playing the lute, drumming, singing, or simply clapping the hands with the music. Three hours later, the guests excused themselves and left. Everyone else spent the night there.

For weddings, the informants normally form a group with other acquaintances. While playing "belotte" they share smoking a water pipe with its tobacco mixed with hashish. Sometimes, two or three informants may go on a drive by the beach, listen to music, and smoke a

cigarette or two. Some may smoke alone, though this is quite rare.

Discussions with the informants suggest that there are some rules of etiquette that are not only observed within the group, but also respected among classy users of illicit drugs. The informants unanimously indicated that when an outsider violates those rules, he is certainly assured that his presence is no longer desirable. Within the group, the informants show a great deal of tolerance even though I have not observed any violations of their etiquette. The most important rules are:

- When one attends a gathering outside his own group, he must contribute, normally, a drug identical to the one used. Money is not acceptable at all and, in fact, is resented and despised: "it only shows lack of manners. No one is in need of his money....", an informant explained.
- In the presence of guests (other than the informants), each guest should light a cigarette before any member of the group does. By the host giving him a cigarette to light, the guest receives a message of approval from the group. That is to say that when a guest, for any reason, is no longer wanted, the host will not give him the privilege of lighting a cigarette. This tells the guest,

very politely, to simply leave. This is referred to as "mosmar" (a nail). In one of the gatherings where an outsider did not contribute to the gathering, the host lit the first, second, and third cigarette before the guest left in apparent anger. Related to this rule, he who is given the privilege of lighting must compliment the host even if the cigarette does not measure up to his own standards. The failure to do so is impolite and reflects terrible manners.

- Circulating the cigarette is extremely crucial. One ought not block its movement for more than a few moments. Two puffs are the average acceptable length of time. Otherwise, one is definitely greedy and selfish- a good enough reason for one's rejection. Moreover, passing the cigarette must be to the right, never otherwise. This, according to the informants, insures that everyone present has an equal chance of hashish consumption- the main purpose of the gatherings.

- It is extremely impolite to reject a circulating cigarette. Instead, if one wishes not to smoke, one should accept it and pass it over. "Rejection is animosity, an old proverb says", an informant commented.

The above mentioned rules were the most emphasized

and agreed upon. Other rules do exist: when alcohol beverages or opium are served, the guests are always served first. CartierR, French cigarettes, are the most preferred tobacco. According to the informants, those rules are not only observed within this particular group, but also are well established among similar users of illicit drugs:

for the past six years, I have attended many gatherings in which I learned how to properly behave. In the beginning, I made some costly mistakes... Once, I smoked half of the cigarette. Ever since, I have not been invited to that group... I lost a very powerful connection... One learns from his mistakes (an informant).

In addition to the development of common rules of etiquette, a small, but growing, vocabulary appears to be shared not only by the members of the group of our study, but also by the general public of drug users in Saudi Arabia. This suggests that within Saudi society a drug subculture has been developing: there are certain concepts and practices that are shared by illicit drug users but not by others. Drug related terminology is one of them. In relation to illicit drug-taking, the informants' lexicon contains two categories: a local and a national vernacular. Local terminology refers to terms that are understood and used by the informants only.

National vernacular denotes those terms that are shared by illicit drug users and sellers not only in Jeddah, but all over the country.

According to the informants, local vernacular has unintentionally been invented: there was no conscious and deliberate effort to create such terms. To the contrary, most of the informants' drug related vocabulary was accidental.

Once I made a strong super rocket for a friend. After the first puff, he began to cough... With a voice loaded with anger, he said "this isibra [a needle]". Ever since, a too strong [hashish] cigarette is called ibra.... (an informant).

Based on observations, the most frequently used local terms are:

- * "Spinacha" (from spinach) refers to hashish preparations. Since society in general, and other drug users in particular know what hashish means, "spinacha" at first served to conceal such a meaning. Then, due to the continuous and habitual use of the word, it replaced and superseded "hashish" which was only mentioned during the formal interviews. "Spinacha", interestingly enough, is borrowed from a popular cartoon:

"Popeye the sailor man". "Wirna" also refers to hashish preparations. However, none of the informants knew of its origin or any other meanings it may have. Generally speaking, "wirna" and other terms such as "khair Allah" (blessings of God) or "Abdul Jaleel" (servant of God) were less frequently used.

- * "Tashlee" describes the state produced by a too strong a drug where the user is no longer in touch with reality. This state, however, was not desirable. From the informants perspective, one must not lose contact with reality under any circumstances. During such a state, one is liable to act foolishly or endanger himself and the others.

- * "Ibra" (a needle) refers to strong hashish cigarettes that may cause sharp pains in the chest, burning of the throat, and coughing.

National vernacular is believed to be wide spread and used by illicit drug users in all parts of the country. Drug names, for example, are the same anywhere in Saudi Arabia: "where ever you go, "al-soda" (a kind of hashish) is the same...." (an informant). The followings are some of the terms that I was able to identify and

observe other drug-takers use:

- * When referring to cannabis preparations (hashish or marijuana), "rafa" (from the verb to lift) was frequently used by almost all the drug users I had contact with. "Tarfee" (high), the effect of a "rafa", describes the euphoric state produced by cannabis preparations. In this state, one feels the effect of the drug but does not lose contact with reality. Contrasted with "tashlee", it is a desirable state.
- * "Tahkeem" (from the verb to govern) describes a state of well-being and relaxation associated with the desire to, and the enjoyment of, work, i.e. car-washing, plant-watering, painting, etc.. In this state, one's creativity is believed to be invoked.
- * "Mobalem" (depressed) reflects a state of quietness, sadness, and gloominess that may result from the use of drugs. However, there were no particular drugs that were known to the informants which consistently produce such an effect. One's state before using drugs is believed to a large extent to determine the effects of drugs.

- * "Niksa" refers to a very small piece of hashish or to a little amount of drugs. When one indicates that he only has a "niksa", he is actually telling others that what he has is barely enough for one person to consume, thus, implicitly and politely declining from sharing.
- * "Talheem" (welding) describes the act of chain-smoking where one smokes continuously.
- * "Al-kanaka", "dharb" (beating), "jamraka" (taxation), "khalt" (mixing), "request", "rockets", "shad" (pressed pack), "super rockets", "tabwees", "tanfeekh" (blowing), "wasla" (piece), etc., were all mentioned in the previous sections of the study.

It should be noted, however, that those terms are not exhaustive. They are the ones that the informants confirmed and, through observation, I was able to verify.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it must be stated that generalization to the whole of Saudi society is at best speculative. Due to the previously discussed limitations, this study presents a partial picture of the illicit drug-taking scene in Saudi Arabia. To provide a comprehensive account of the issue, more research is necessary. Nevertheless, as we approach the end of the study, a few conclusions can be drawn. Again, further inferences and deductions depend on one's background and interest.

It is reasonably safe to say that the recreational use of illicit drugs constitutes a subculture within Saudi society. Although the representativeness of the unit of study to the whole of society is difficult to substantiate primarily because of the absence of statistical data and similar research, there exist some drug related concepts and practices that are shared by some members of society but not by others.

The informants' knowledge about drugs as reflected in their classification not only presents a variety of drugs available for illicit use, but also implies that illicit drugs in general, and hashish preparations in particular, have been used in society for a long period

of time. Within the network of drug users, the standarization of illicit drug prices in the form of abstract units of purchasing, the conventional methods of obtaining drugs, the development of safety measures, the evolution of respected methods of drug-taking and unwritten rules of etiquette, and most importantly, the employment of a private drug-related vernacular suggest that the use of illicit drugs, contrary to the general perception, is well-grounded in society. Since human beings accumulate knowledge and develop patterns of behavior over prolonged periods of time, illicit drug-taking emerges as a not-so-new phenomenon.

Therefore, in spite of the difficulty of tracking its origin and historical development, illicit drug-taking in Saudi Arabia appears to constitute a well-established and rapidly growing subculture.

Moreover, the subculture of illicit drug-taking seems to be divided into two major segments: "classy" and "tahaweel" (junkies) corresponding to a great extent to the social position of drug users. The former denotes the rich and powerful while the latter refers to the economically disadvantaged. However subjective it may seem, this distinction appears to be a direct consequence

of the users' own position in society.

The financial cost of purchasing drugs doubtlessly manifest the profitability of such transactions. Hence, illicit drugs seem to increasingly form an attractively lucrative industry.

The petroleum boom of the 1970s seems to have played a vital role in the increased availability and circulation of illicit drugs in Saudi society. On the one hand, the availability of ample and substantial amounts of money enabled some people to not only purchase drugs, but also to travel abroad where they were introduced to other cultures and subsequently to new values. Illicit drug-taking is one of them. On the other hand, modernizing the country resulted in a massive import of a diverse foreign labor force that further intensified the onslaught of new values on a virtually closed society. The wealth generated during the 1970s seems to have set the stage (objective conditions) for the increased use of illicit drugs while society's restrictions on pleasure and recreational activities seem to have ripened and matured the subjective conditions for such use. Boredom, as already noted, appears as the leading cause for the continuous use of illicit drugs.

Besides medical purposes and procedures, drugs do

not serve or fulfill any functions or goals approved by Saudi society. The illicit use of drugs, therefore, is strongly disapproved by society's norms and severely punished by law. It is portrayed as a deviant behavior threatening the entire fabric of society. However, illicit drug-taking acts as a cohesive social glue within a particular network of users: influential and serviceable social connections are constantly being established and utilized among the so called "classy" users of drugs, thus providing more incentives and motivations for the continuously increasing use of illicit drugs.

Although the group in our study belongs to the socially and economically advantaged segments of society, one may not decisively conclude that illicit drug-taking is exclusively a characteristic of the affluent. However, the high cost of illicit drugs in terms of money, social sanctions, and legal penalties seems to suggest that they most likely were used and introduced to society by those who not only can afford their financial cost, but also possess what it takes to resolve problems arising from their use. At worst, the economically lower stratum of society can not be blamed for, or stigmatized by, the use

of illicit drugs. At best, they may be regarded as victims rather than "victimizers".

On the whole, more objective social research is required in order to diagnose potential social problems and provide alternative approaches and solutions. Ultimately, it would be our goal to further develop our knowledge and understanding of ourselves.

In reference to Saudi Arabia, this study, I hope, has established the need for further investigation of the issue of the illicit use of drugs. To the present point in time, information on the subject has either been inadequate or nonexistent. Specific areas of study, to mention but a few, should include:

- the origin and historical development of illicit drug-taking;
- accounts on other drug using groups, i.e. junkies, sellers, smugglers, etc.;
- patterns of illicit drug-taking;
- the unwritten rules involving illicit drugs;
- the political, economic, and social functions, if any, of illicit drugs.

The purpose, as already noted, would be to develop new insights and understanding of a phenomenon that appears to be unrecognized in Saudi culture.

In my opinion, the most realistic approach to combating social crises is to establish strong educational programs based on thorough and objective research. Denial of the existence of illicit drugs insures that their negative effects will soon surface and erode the structure of society. It is essential, therefore, that taboos on research be cast aside in order that potential problems can be identified, recognized, and, above all, dealt with. Social research, then, becomes the first step in dealing with a multifaceted issue such as the illicit use of drugs.

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