

# The Emergent Generation Gap in Attitudes toward Khat use in Urban Ethiopia

Dr. Nikki L. Rogers<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Jared Embree<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Yigzaw Kebede<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Josephine Wilson<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Mary Huber<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Dennis Moore<sup>1</sup>

1. Substance Abuse Resources & Disability Issues Program, Wright State  
University Boonshoft School of Medicine, Dayton, OH USA

2. Medical College, University of Gondar School of Medicine,  
Gondar, Ethiopia<sup>1</sup>

## Field study, May 09

- Introduced to khat topic by Ethiopian colleague
- 3 weeks of interviews, filming
  - Addis Ababa, Gondar
- Key informants: Physicians, psychiatrist, priest, government representatives, khat sellers, laypersons of various ages, students
- Basic fact finding
  - “We’re here to learn about khat”

# Ethiopian Christians (Addis Ababa, Gondar)

- Traditional social and religious sanctions against khat use, especially for youth
  - Widely accepted among Muslims & Christians in traditional khat chewing regions
- Change
  - Approximately 15-20 years
  - 1993: Literature refers to new khat use pattern among youth
- Two views
  - Age  $30 \leq$  accepts khat use in general
  - Age 50+ strongly opposes khat use by Christians

# Video 1

- “Traditional” family = Christian Orthodox
- Small town life

# Generation Gap

- Intergenerational conflict due to differences in values & norms
- “De-authoritization”: change from parental influence to peer influence
- Increased attention on young people, greater “voice” of the young

# USA 1960s-1970s

- “Baby boomers” – born in the 1940s
- Felt disenfranchised by the traditional “system”
- “Used” for military power by the older generation
- Wholesale change in value structure and priorities
- Fully embraced by “Hippies” and “Flower children” and to varying degrees by others
- American society influenced by this challenge to traditional values



# USA 1960s-1970s

- New pattern of drug use
  - Old: Alcohol
  - New: Marijuana
  - New: Hallucinogens
  - Open use, social settings

# USA: Context of Social Change

## Increased

- National infrastructure (roads, communications)
- Economic growth
- Education and contact among young people
- Modes of personal expression
- Political interest



What is the Ethiopian Context?

# Ethiopian Milestones

- Haile Selassie
  - 1916-1930 Regent
  - 1930-1974 Emperor
- DERG
  - 1974-1991
- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
  - 1991-present
- New Constitution 1994

# Since +/-1994

- National infrastructure (roads, communications)
  - Bahir Dar-Gondar: 6 hours vs. 2.5 hours
  - Computers, internet, cell phones
- Economic growth
  - Exports
  - Tourism
  - Investment by members of Ethiopian diaspora
- Education and contact among young people
  - Great emphasis on higher education, building schools
- Modes of personal expression
  - Computers, internet, cell phones
- Availability of khat



## Video 2

- Growing college enrollment
  - Increased migration, learning from students from khat-growing regions
- University life = freedom

## Video 3

- Many similar points, but:
  - Pressure to perform at University
  - With more people exposed, greater number of vulnerable individuals chance negative consequences of khat, tobacco, and alcohol

# Conclusion

- US/Ethiopian generation gap parallel is not a perfect model, but useful for our purposes of comparison and contrast of contributing historical, economic and societal factors