

Illegal Drug Markets in Practice: The Swedish Cocaine Market

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Abstract:

Despite being a billion dollar market, there are still many unknowns on how illegal drug markets operate. A possibility for this, is the fact that drug market studies have largely come from law, sociology and economic perspectives. This has led to a lack of understanding on how drug markets work in practice. This thesis aims to provide greater understanding of how illegal drug markets work and puts forth recommendations for further research. The study is based on a market practice approach and focuses on the illegal cocaine market in Sweden, using qualitative interview based research as method. The results of which do demonstrate a lack of knowledge on how illegal drug markets work. Furthermore, the results show how actors representations of the market has greatly influenced how the market is shaped and how further research is needed to expand current information on illegal markets. To increase our understanding of illegal drug markets and illegal markets in general, this paper serves as an example of how a market practice study approach can provide greater knowledge on how illegal drug markets operate.

Keywords: cocaine; cocaine market; illegal markets; market practice; illicit markets; drugs; Sweden

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
1.1 Cocaine: Production, Distribution and Consumption.....	4
1.2 Problem definition and purpose.....	11
1.3 Delimitations.....	12
2. Theory.....	13
2.1 Market Practice Theory.....	13
2.2 Purpose and Research Questions.....	17
3. Method.....	18
3.1 Pre-Study.....	18
3.2 Delimitations of Illegal Market Study.....	18
3.3 Data Research.....	19
3.3.1 Ethics and Objectivity.....	19
3.3.2 The Interviewees.....	19
3.3.3 Formulating and Conducting the Interview.....	20
3.4 Validity and Reliability.....	21
4. Results.....	21
4.1 Cocaine in Sweden.....	21
4.1.2 Swedish Drug Policy.....	24
4.2 Interview Findings.....	25
4.2.1 Consumer Side Views	26
4.2.2 Seller Side Views.....	32
5. Analysis.....	37
5.1 Which specific activities are part of the three market practices?.....	37
5.2 Which translations link the presented market practices and how do they tie into one another? ..	42
5.3 Characteristics of the Market?.....	45
6. Discussion and Further Research.....	46
6.1 Discussion.....	46
6.2 Further research.....	49
7. Acknowledgements	49
8. References.....	49
9. Appendices.....	51

1. Introduction

Illegal drug markets pose an interesting dilemma for society, policy makers and law enforcement that view drugs as a threat to society and for drug traffickers that must try to expand their business while trying to keep it underground and out of the eyes of law enforcement. By making drugs illegal, policy makers have made it harder for law enforcement to effectively obtain information on the market they are trying to control. At the same time traffickers and consumers lack access to critical information (ie. Consumer behavior, market segmentation) that would undoubtedly change the way they run their business and purchase drugs. In spite of these market quandaries, much of the study on illegal drug markets has been done from a law perspective aimed at bringing down crime organizations that control the drug trade.¹ Social sciences has tried to understand the root causes of drug use/abuse,² and in academia economics has taken the role in studying illegal drug markets at the macroeconomic level and the effects of prohibition policy.³ There has been an absence of research on the practical workings of illegal markets in general, in particular from marketing which itself has been largely absent from market practice theory. Because of this, there is much work left to be done to understand illegal markets. Furthermore, illegal market research can provide us greater detail on actors behaviors, motivations etc. producing better representations of how these markets work. This could lead to different approaches to not only studying them but how actors act in these markets.

The overall aim of this thesis is to increase understanding on how illegal markets operate, specifically illegal drug markets. To facilitate this, the means chosen to research illegal markets is to focus on the practices that form these markets. As will be presented in the study, marketing has largely been absent from market theory. Instead marketing has relied on other sciences (mainly economics) to provide a conceptualization of markets and how they operate. However, this theory has largely failed to take into account market practices when defining markets, therefore failing to provide an accurate description of how markets actually work. The theory used will be one that looks at the practical workings of markets and draw conclusions from there. The method used is a qualitative case base approach. Interviews were conducted with cocaine users and sellers as well as police officers from the Rikskriminalpolisen

¹ The reports used in this paper from the UNODC, EMCDDA, Europol.

² For example: *Drugs, Society, and Human Behavior* (2008) by Carl Hart, Charles Ksir, and Oakley Ray

³ For reference, see the work of economist Jeffrey Miron who has published a lot of work concerning drug prohibition and its effects on drug consumption. For instance, *Drug War Crimes: The Consequences of Prohibition* (2004)

(National Criminal Police). It is important to note that this thesis was not done as a way to assist policy or law enforcement on how to better handle the illegal market nor to analyze the effectiveness of prohibition policy, but strictly to focus on the workings of illegal markets.

My initial idea for this project was to look at policy influences on illegal drug markets. After discussion with SSE professors, in particular my tutor, Hans Kjellberg, I chose to focus instead on market practices of illegal markets. The subject of cocaine was chosen after meeting with a detective in the Criminal Intelligence Section of the Rikskriminalpolisen (National Criminal Police). He mentioned that police has recently shifted its focus to cocaine because of the lack of knowledge in how the cocaine market works in Sweden. Sweden was chosen because the research method required first hand research and being the country where I currently live, convenience and access to resources led me to focus on the illegal cocaine market in Sweden.

The thesis is structured in the following manner: Chapter 1 includes what cocaine is, a brief look at the state and trends of the cocaine market in the world and more specifically Europe. This is followed by problem definition and purpose, and ends with a look at the delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 will delve into theory followed by the methodology section in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 will start by looking at the cocaine market in Sweden followed by the results of the interviews. Chapter 5 and 6 will include analysis and discussion. The final chapter will include overall conclusions including the applicability of the findings to other illegal markets and/or illegal drug markets as well as suggestions for further research. After the bibliography, the appendices contains a sample interview format.

1.1 Cocaine: Production, Distribution and Consumption

Derived from coca leaf, which is entirely cultivated in South America (mostly Colombia, Bolivia and Peru)⁴, cocaine is a central nervous system stimulant that when taken produces temporary effects of euphoria, hypertension, heart rate acceleration among others.⁵⁶ Long term use of cocaine affect the cardiovascular, respiratory, neurological and gastrointestinal systems; raising the likelihood of heart attacks, respiratory failures, seizures etc.⁷ Cocaine can be produced in two ways: the most common form is hydrochloride salt (powder), the other form is crack (free base⁸). Powder cocaine is mostly snored (though it can be injected, but this is rare) while crack cocaine is inhaled. Though distinctions in

⁴ UNODC (2008) "World Drug Report 2008" p.65

⁵ EMCDDA website: Drug Profiles: Cocaine

⁶ National Institute on Drug Abuse website : Research Report Series - Cocaine Abuse and Addiction

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Free Base is the base form of cocaine, it is a process that solidifies powder cocaine into a smokable substance.

buyers, price and usage suggest that crack and cocaine should be seen as different products,⁹ most EU and Swedish figures put both powder and crack cocaine under one category, cocaine. For this reason, and the fact that powder cocaine is overwhelmingly the most common form of cocaine used in Sweden¹⁰ (and the world), this study will focus on powder cocaine. The negative long term effects of cocaine usage including its relatively high dependency rate (3.7% for powder cocaine, 9% for crack cocaine¹¹), led to cocaine, along with other narcotics, being classified as a Schedule I drug by the United Nations at the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs in 1961, effectively making the drug illegal worldwide.¹² The policy of prohibition, not uncontested¹³, has created an illicit drug market totaling over \$321 billion at the retail level of which cocaine, the world's second most used drug¹⁴ accounts for \$70.5 billion, also at the retail level (2003 figures).¹⁵ Figure 1 gives world drug usage statistics. Figure 2 compares the wholesale drug and cocaine market compared to commodities (export figures were used for commodities).

	Canna- bls	Amphetamine-type stimulants		Cocaine	Opiates	of which is Heroin
		Amphetamines	Ecstasy			
Number of abusers (in millions)	165.6	24.7	9	16	16.5	12.0
in % of global population age 15-64	3.9%	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%

*Annual prevalence is a measure of the number/percentage of people who have consumed an illicit drug at least once in the 12-month period preceding the assessment.

Figure 1: World Cocaine Usage (source: UNODC, World Drug Report 2008)

⁹ EMCDDA website: Cocaine and Crack cocaine, Cocaine use among young users section

¹⁰ National Report 2006: Sweden, p. 53 <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index44987EN.html>

¹¹ The NSDUH report, available at: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k8/newUseDepend/newUseDepend.htm>

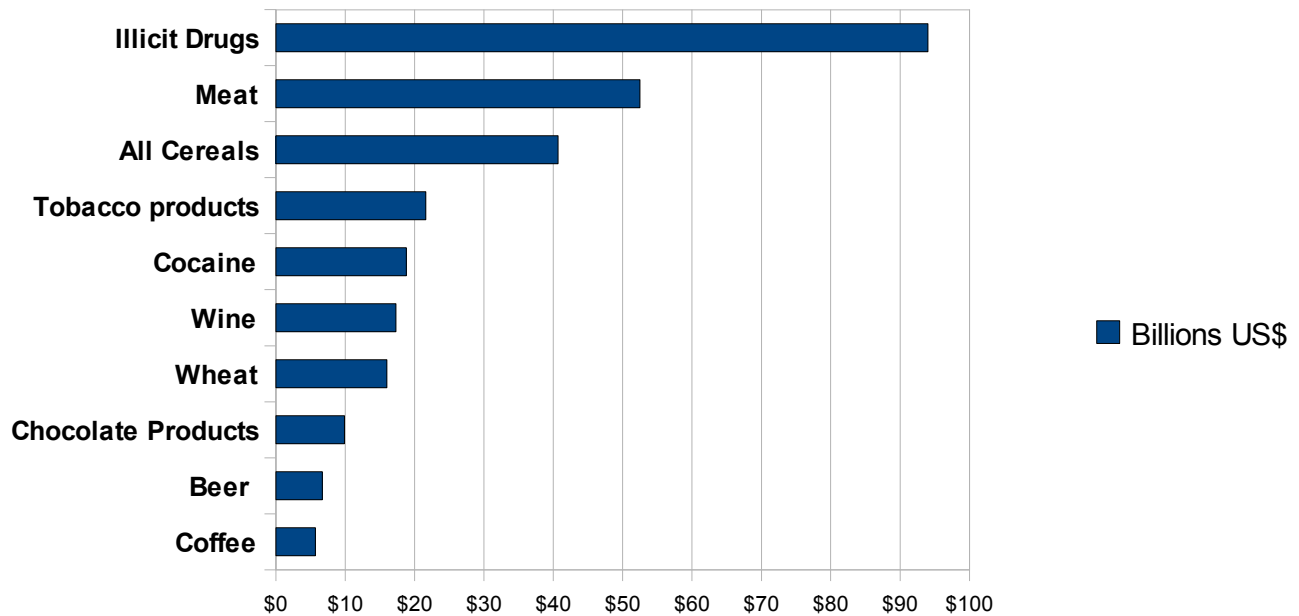
¹² Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961: http://www.incb.org/incb/convention_1961.html

¹³ For more on this refer to the work of economist Jeffrey Miron, such as: Drug War Crimes (2004)

¹⁴ UNODC (2008, p.31)

¹⁵ UNODC "World Drug Report 2005 Vol.1" p. 127

Figure 2 Comparison of Illicit Drug and Cocaine markets vs common commodities



Compared to other drugs, cocaine is in a unique situation when it comes to its production and cultivation. Not only cultivated in the Andean region of South America (Colombia, Peru, Bolivia), but it is also almost entirely produced in the area as well, with the majority of cultivation and production taking place in Colombia.¹⁶ Within the illegal drug market, it can be compared only to heroin and other opiates, in that most cultivation of opium and production primarily takes place in three countries¹⁷. Cocaine is the 2nd most produced (in units measured) and used (*figure 1*) drug in the world after Cannabis. In 2006 cocaine production nearly reached 1000 metric tons, a number which has remained stable the last 5 years.¹⁸ North America is the largest consumer of drugs (cocaine included), followed by Europe. Figure 3 shows consumption rates by continent. In Europe cocaine is the 2nd most prevalent drug with the highest usage rates coming from Spain (3%) and the United Kingdom(2.6)¹⁹. It is important to note that cocaine usage while decreasing in America is increasing throughout Europe.²⁰

¹⁶ UNODC (2008,p.67)

¹⁷ UNODC (2008,p. 7)

¹⁸ UNODC (2008, p.68)

¹⁹ EMCDDA website: Drug Situation: Cocaine

²⁰ UNODC (2008, p. 68)

	No. of users	In % of population 15-64 years
EUROPE	4,008,000	0.73
West & Central Europe	3,895,000	1.22
South-East Europe	67,000	0.08
Eastern Europe	46,000	0.03
AMERICAS	10,196,000	1.74
North America	7,097,000	2.42
South America	3,099,000	1.05
ASIA	335,000	0.01
OCEANIA	301,000	1.37
AFRICA	1,147,000	0.22
GLOBAL	15,987,000	0.37

Above global average ■ Below global average ■

Figure 3: Cocaine consumption by region (source: UNODC World Drug Report 2008)

The main entry port of cocaine into Europe is through Spain followed by Portugal, though entries through France, Italy, and Netherlands also take place. Figure 4 shows cocaine seizures in Europe, this is a good indicator of the countries with the most cocaine traffic (not necessarily the most usage). It is estimated that in 2006, 35% or almost 350 metric tons of cocaine produced in the World (nearly 1000 metric tons) was trafficked to Europe.²¹ The same year, the total amount of cocaine seized in Europe reached 122 mt., up 14% from the previous year. This would indicate that around 35% of drug trafficked to Europe is seized.²² Though these are only estimates, they go in line with UNODC estimates that 42% of all produced cocaine is seized.²³ Page 10 contains a world map showing global cocaine seizure rates and traffic routes. From Spain it is transported into the rest of Europe, usually by ground transport. To Scandinavia it is trafficked mostly through from Netherlands through Denmark.²⁴ The most common way of trafficking to Europe is by sea, mainly through cargo freighters, fast boats and container ships. Aircraft droppings are also used but are less common. Trafficking by sea takes place among three main routes, all originating in South America:

1. Through the Caribbean to the Azores Islands and then to Portugal and Spain.

²¹ UNODC (2008, p.77)

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. p.80

²⁴ Europol Europe Website: "Project Cola: European Union Cocaine Report 2007" p.3

2. Through Cape Verde, Madeira or the Canary Islands to Europe.
3. To Western Africa into Europe (France, Italy and Spain), this route accounts for about 25% of cocaine trafficked into Europe.²⁵

Trafficking also takes place through air travel, couriers²⁶ are used from South America to Spain, French and Dutch territories in the Caribbean, and increasingly from West African countries.²⁷

Cocaine trafficking into Europe is dominated by Colombian organized crime in partnerships with Spanish organized crime, and increasingly by Portuguese organized crime as well. Transit into the rest of Europe is usually taken up by local crime organizations (that is local in terms of country of destination, ie. The UK.) in conjunction with mostly Spanish crime organizations.²⁸ Because of the role being played by organized crime in trafficking cocaine, EU policy has shifted from focusing on stopping drug trafficking specifically (for example by arresting couriers), to targeting criminal organizations involved in various criminal activities, including drug trade, a strategy similar to the one employed by American law enforcement.²⁹ To achieve this, organizations and initiatives like Europol and the EU anti-drug plans (ie. European Drug Strategy³⁰) have been created to improve cooperation and information exchange among EU nations. Though the initiative is fairly new, increase in seizures(both in quantity and percentage seized) have indicated the increased cooperation is working. It is important to mention that EU open borders policy has made it much easier for cocaine to be transported through Europe once it is in. This puts the bulk of the pressure on Spain and Portugal to stop cocaine traffic to Europe.³¹

²⁵ Europol Europe Website: “Project Cola: European Union Cocaine Report 2007” p.4

²⁶ Couriers in this sense are individuals who transport drugs, either by ingesting them or in luggage.

²⁷ Europol Europe Website: “Project Cola: European Union Cocaine Report 2007” p.4

²⁸ Ibid p.6

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ For more on this look at The EU drugs action plan found at <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/index.cfm?nNodeID=10360>

³¹ Interview with Detective from the Criminal Intelligence Section of the Rikskriminalpolisen

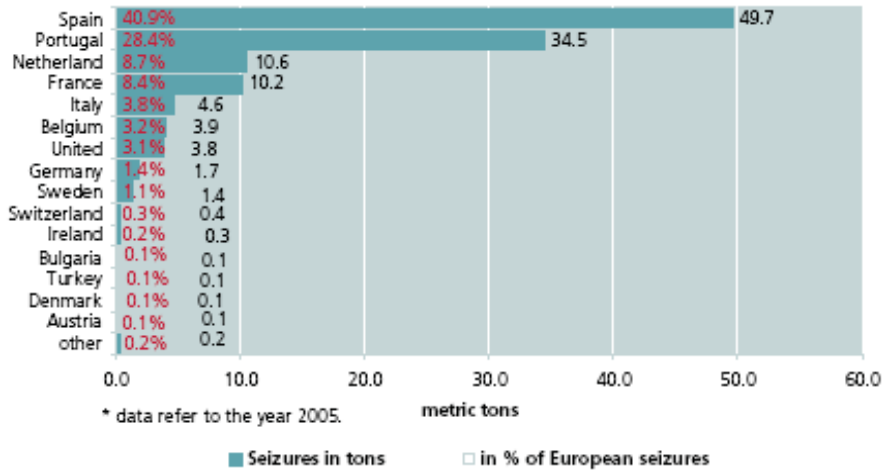


Figure 4: Cocaine seizures in Europe, 2006, source UNODC (2008)

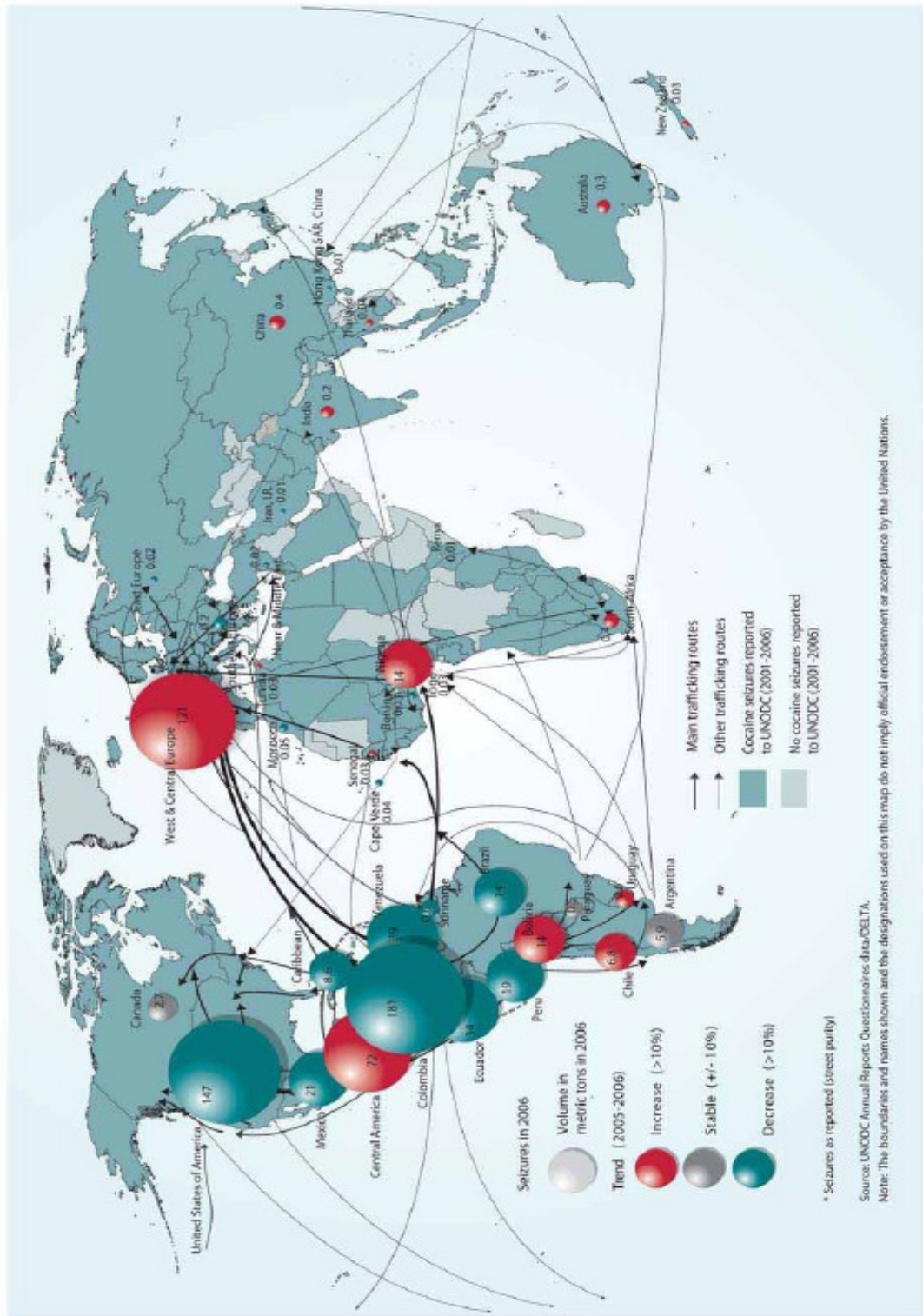


Figure 5: Global cocaine seizure rates and traffic routes (source: UNODC World Drug Report 2008)

1.2 Problem definition and purpose

Most information on illegal markets has come from research done in the fields of law enforcement, social sciences and economics. Marketing has been largely absent from illegal markets research. The majority of illegal market studies have had the purpose of trying to control the drug trade, curb drug use or analyze the effectiveness of prohibition policies. Though these studies have helped our understanding of illegal markets, there still is a lack of knowledge on illegal market practices and how markets are shaped and formed. Specifically in Sweden there is a lack of knowledge on an expanding cocaine market.³² This fact was highlighted in a meeting with a detective inspector in the Criminal Intelligence Section of the Rikskriminalpolisen (National Criminal Police) who pointed out the need for more information on how the cocaine market in Sweden works. Another indicator is the outdated data on cocaine in Sweden (2000).³³ Aside from the value a study on illegal markets could have for law enforcement (not the purpose of this study) and policy makers, there are a number of reasons why academia and in particular marketing would be interested in illegal drug market research. For one, the sheer size of the cocaine and illicit drug market, being bigger than widely used commodity markets makes it an important market to study. Second, the paradox for both law enforcement and traffickers, the first wants to keep the drug market illegal, purposely forcing it underground and cutting off access to valuable information of the market they are trying to control. The latter wants to expand business while trying to maintain a certain amount of secrecy. Third, how actors with virtually no market information are not only able to function, but quite well considering the fast changing environment they work in. It is clear there is still much to learn about illegal market practices, and marketing can have a role in helping understand illegal markets.

The role of marketing in determining what shapes markets and how they are shaped has consisted mostly of standing on the sidelines.³⁴ The task has been left to other fields, even though marketing theory could greatly benefit from trying to solve this 'problem'. Other researchers have argued for the need of theory that looks at direct exchanges in markets to better understand how they work.³⁵ Even though much work has been done on markets by microeconomics, there has been an absence of theory that looks at the intricate working of markets, in other words observing actual market practice in reality not in theory.³⁶ This has left a void to fill, one that Kjellberg and Helgesson argue can be filled by

³² Interview with a Detective from the Criminal Intelligence Section of the Rikskriminalpolisen

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007, p.139)

³⁵ Håkansson, H (1982, p.10-13)

³⁶ For more on this: Håkansson (1982) and Callon (1998)

marketing.³⁷ For this they developed a theory where observation of actual market practices is done to see what and how markets are shaped. They have divided these practices into three categories: normalizing, exchange and representational practices. I took this theory and applied it to the illegal cocaine market.

Therefore the overall purpose of this thesis is to better our understanding on how illicit markets work in particular illegal drug markets. As a means to do this, the study will focus on the practices that contribute to form these markets. Based on this, three specific research questions were developed. These questions will be addressed in the theory section of this paper, Chapter 2.

1.3 Delimitations

This thesis looks at which market practices have greater influence in shaping illegal markets. Being within the limits and scope (time, resources, length etc.) of a master's thesis, it serves as a pre-study for greater exploratory research into the area and point further research in the right direction. The applicability of this study to other illegal markets is somewhat limited. Though some practices, in particular certain normative practices (Section 2) do occur through all illegal markets, there are differences not only in the production chain of cocaine (may be seasonal considering it is only cultivated in one region) but more importantly in regards to, supply, consistency and final seller distribution. The geographical location of the study (Sweden) also might limit the study's applicability to countries with different drug laws, level of enforcement and/or resources for enforcement. Most interviewees were from the same city (Stockholm), except one. There might be unaccounted differences between cocaine markets in the two cities.

The theory used is a fairly recently developed theory in the field of marketing on the practice of markets (Chapter 2). Marketing as a whole has been largely absent from the process of trying to “map” markets, leaving it to other fields such as economics. This being the case and the fact that it is the first time this theory has been applied to illegal drug markets there will inevitably be shortcomings that might have been avoided by using a more established theory. The research employed was qualitative case base approach, therefore there is low absolute reliability and validity. Though secondary data is used, the study relies heavily on the information obtained through interviews. With this in mind the number of interviewees could have been greater. In this case the subject matter made it harder to find subjects (users and sellers) willing to give an interview. This hampered any attempts to focus on certain

³⁷ Kjellberg et al. (2007), (2008)

actors in the market (ie. Sellers) and to rely on what I could get. It's worthy to mention that in dealing with a 'sensitive' subject like cocaine use; it's not unexpected that some interviewees might have lied on certain questions, for a variety of reasons (embarrassment, fear etc.). Another delimitation was language, though all but one interview was conducted in English and all subjects handled the language well it is always possible that they could not express themselves fully when using their non native language. Other limitations are the number of interviewees, regrettably I did not foresee the difficulty in obtaining interviews, which no doubt prevented me from getting more interviews. Another important research tool that I could not use, was direct observation, this would have given me first hand knowledge of market practices involved in the cocaine trade as well as observing how actors reacted to them. However ethical concerns (including legality issues) and to a lesser extent, safety concerns prevented me from engaging in this type of research. Nevertheless, it is also true that given the time frame, getting a contact who would have given me this much access would have been hard to come by. The methodology section will include in greater detail the delimitations of researching illegal markets.

Seeing the difficulty in obtaining interviews, it is possible that other research methods where a lower level of commitment and greater anonymity might have provided a larger pool of information. One research method that comes to mind is anonymous surveys. Also, approaches that focused on just one actor in the market (seller, user, policymakers etc.) might have led to a greater understanding in a specific area. Finally, the statistics used of cocaine usage in Sweden date back to the year 2000, some smaller surveys and studies³⁸ have been conducted, however these aren't enough to make generalizations and assumptions from. In this case it would not be a stretch to assume the data may be outdated.

2. Theory

The theory chosen is a fairly new approach used in marketing to analyze markets. One that looks at markets as constantly changing processes and focuses not only on the influences on actors, but also ideas and preconceived notions that actors have about markets which result in ever changing markets. How market practices are interlinked also plays an important part of this theory. For this reason, my approach is not one that goes in with a predefined notion of how the market is shaped or an attempt to define the market per se. Instead my focus is directed at how actors (and their conception of the market) is shaping the market. The theory was chosen after a discussion with my tutor, on how to best

³⁸Retoix (2006) SWEDEN: New Development, Trends and in-depth information on selected issues.

approach the subject.

2.1 Market Practice Theory

Even though markets are an integral part of marketing theory, if not the most important, marketing has largely been absent from developing market practice theory.³⁹ As Kjellberg and Helgesson state, “there is no developed practice perspective on markets within marketing”⁴⁰. Instead marketing has relied on market definitions and theories from other sciences, in particular economics, to define markets. But even economics has failed to provide market theory where the actual working of markets are taken into account. Callon describes it in the following manner, “economics, in the broad sense of the term performs, shapes and formats the economy rather than observing how it functions”⁴¹. In other words, by trying to blanket the market with a model or theory, economist miss out on looking at the integral workings of a market. With this in mind, the need to study markets differently, by looking at the process of how exchanges take place in the marketplace is needed. Kjellberg and Helgesson point this out by writing, “besides the strong normative tradition, researchers with a network approach to industrial marketing have repeatedly argued for the need to study the practical workings of markets to improve our characterizations of them”⁴². But if the answer is not provided by microeconomic market theory and absent from marketing theory where can it be found? Kjellberg and Helgesson turn to work in the field of sociology, specifically sociology of translation and the work of Callon, Latour, and Law.⁴³ By doing this Kjellberg and Helgesson delve into ontology⁴⁴ taking a relativist position where, “reality is constantly being shaped and reshaped through a recursive process”⁴⁵. This leads to a view of the market where the market is seen as a constantly evolving process where actors and practices are interlinked continuously shaping and redefining the market.⁴⁶

To encompass all these activities that shape a market Kjellberg and Helgesson formed a model where practices are divided in three categories that form and shape markets. *Exchange practices*, *representational practices*, and *normalizing practices*. *Exchange practices*, “refers to the concrete activities related to the consummation of individual economic exchanges”⁴⁷. In other words any activity

³⁹ Kjellberg et al. (2007), (2008)

⁴⁰ Kjellberg et al.(2006, p. 69)

⁴¹ Callon (1998, p.3)

⁴² Kjellberg et al. (2007, p 140)

⁴³ Callon (1986), Latour (1986; 1987) and Law (1986)

⁴⁴ As defined by Webster: “a branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature and relations of being”

⁴⁵ Kjellberg et al.(2006, p. 841)

⁴⁶ Kjellberg et al. (2006; 2007; 2008)

⁴⁷ Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007, p. 142)

that leads to the exchange of a good or service, be it an advertisement or negotiating purchase price. In the cocaine market this could be the call that is placed to a few buyers to 'spread the word' that a seller has obtained a new stash of cocaine. *Representational practices*. “include activities that contribute to depict markets and how they work”.⁴⁸ These are the tools (statistical data, models etc.) actors use to get an image or representation of the market. It could include a firm analyzing the market segmentation of one of its products or defining a market entry strategy based on statistical information. In the cocaine market this could be a street seller not selling cocaine to ethnic Swedes for fear that they might be undercover policemen.(Whatever information he has gathered has made up this image of the market for him.). Note, that actors market perception does not need to be the correct one (assuming that there is one, which is a dangerous assertion to make), what is important is the representation itself, as they will act according to this representation, affecting the other activities. Lastly, *normalizing practices* are, “the activities that contribute to establish guidelines for how a market should be (re)shaped or worked according to some (group of) actor(s)”.⁴⁹ These are the efforts made to set the 'rules of a market', for example, government regulations or agreements set by competitors that new market entrants must follow. In illicit markets an obvious example of normalizing practices are government prohibition laws that make the markets illegal in the first place, dictating how transactions have to be made. Another example is rules placed by crime organizations on geographical territories to sell drugs.

Though encompassing market practices is of value, how they are linked together is what matters most, in other words, how these market practices come together to form markets.⁵⁰ To identify this process of how market practices are linked Kjellberg and Helgesson once again turn to work done in the field of sociology, in particular the work of Michel Callon.⁵¹ The concept of translation⁵² is used to describe not only the manner in which the aforementioned market practices are intertwined, but also how activities within the same practices (ie. exchange practices) are connected.⁵³ An example of how several activities within the same practice would link together is if a company would use different representational practices (surveys, interviews, sales data etc.) to rate one of their products. These activities are then put together to form a representation of the market for their product. Before going on to explain how the three different practices are linked together through translation the following model created by

⁴⁸ Ibid p. 143

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid p. 144

⁵¹ Callon (1986)

⁵² The authors use Latour's (1986) definition of translation: the basic social process through which something – and idea, a rule, a test, a product, a technology, a claim – spreads across time and space” Kjellberg and Heglesson (2007 p.145)

⁵³ Kjellberg et al. (2006, p. 843)

Kjellberg and Helgesson is used to better depict this process.⁵⁴ :

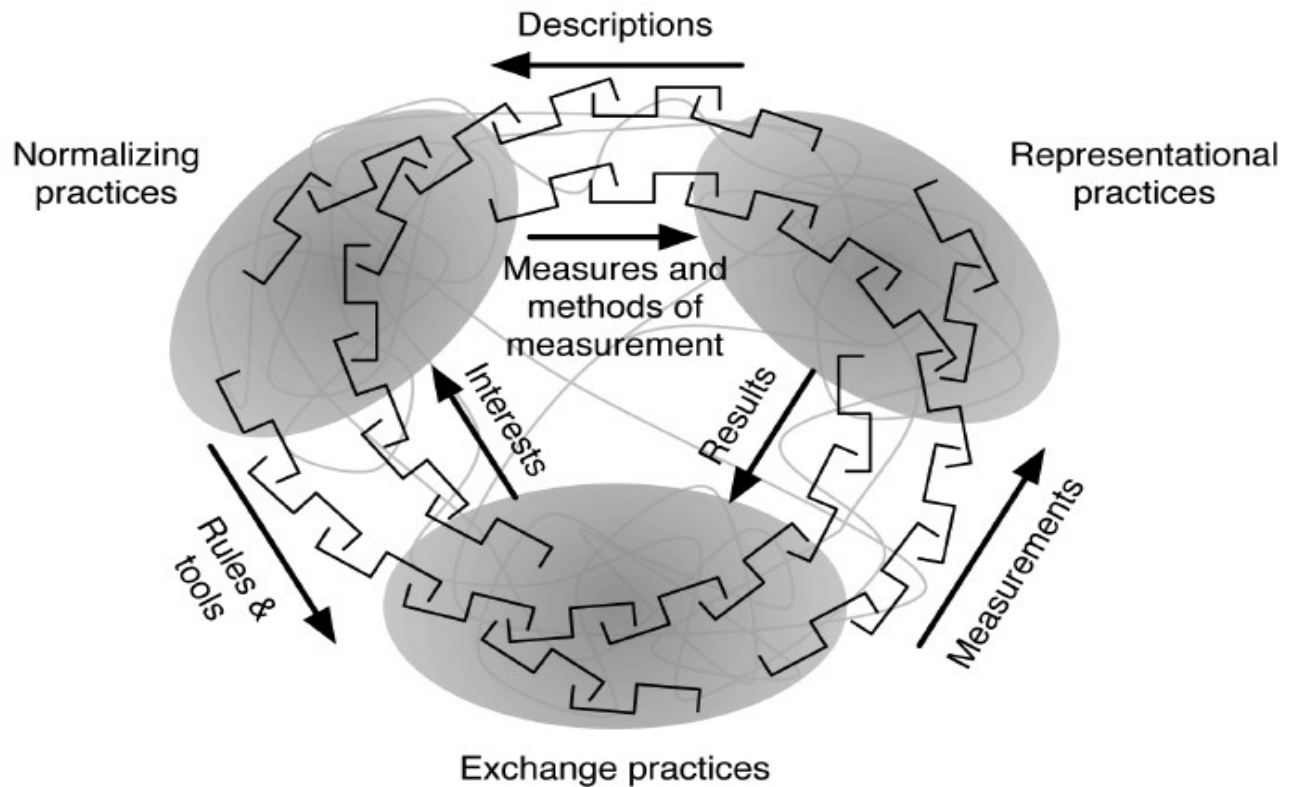


Figure 6: Translation and Intermediaries in Market Practice (source: Kjellberg & Helgesson [2007])

The three practices are constantly being shaped, while being connected by translations. The arrows indicate the link between the categories. For example, normalized practices are translated in the form of rules and tools to exchange practices and in the way of measurements and ways of measurement to representational practices. But how does this look in practice? The following brief examples are given to see how the practices affect each other in the financial industry:

How normalizing practices affect exchange and representational practices?

Normalizing practices such as deregulation would set new rules on how exchange practices are made, at the same time new models (representational practices) might have to be used to try and account for new standards and exchanges.

How exchange practices affect normalizing and representational practices?

⁵⁴ Kjellberg et al (2007)

An example of an exchange practice affecting representational practices would be a company inventing a new way of doing business or new product that leads to new models or theories needing to be developed to represent these changes.

A way exchange practices can affect normalizing practices is through influencing how norms are made. An example of this would be an industry leader in the financial industry lobbying to put favorable conditions when new regulations (normalizing practices) are being formed to regulate the market.

How representational practices affect normalizing and exchange practices?

Representational practices will affect both normalizing and exchange practices in a similar way. As new representations of the markets are formed, actors change both their exchange and normalizing practices, possibly to keep up with the new changes in the market.

To better understand how these practices come together to shape markets, the following simplified example is given of what goes into determining how cocaine is trafficked into a country.

With shipments (exchange practices) of cocaine coming into a country, law enforcement tries to identify where the shipments are coming from. This can be done through a number of ways: surveillance, arrest, interrogations etc. Law enforcement puts these representational practices at work. Once this is done an image (representation) of where the cocaine is coming from is made (this is not a given but for this example it will be assumed). This description is translated in the way of information (coordinates, maps etc.) into normalizing practices and law enforcement devises new ways to try and stop shipment. This can be increased police presence in the area, surveillance etc. These normalizing practices are then translated into exchange practices attempting to affect the way the transactions are made. The traffickers then adjust their exchange practices to cope with these new restrictions. And the process starts all over again.

2.2 Purpose and Research Questions

Having gone over the theory we get back to the purpose of the study and formulate three specific research questions. As stated in chapter 1 the overall purpose of the study is to better understand how illegal markets work. As we have seen, the means to do this will be to focus on how market practices interact to shape and reshape these markets. Therefore the first research question is:

1. *What specific activities are part of the three market practices?*

This first question is self explanatory. We must first identify what activities fall into the specified

market practices.

2. *What translations link the presented market practices and how do they tie into one another?*

In the second question we find the translations that link together practices and when two practices are linked together, what is the result.

3. *What are the characteristics of the market?*

Third question is basically asking what we can conclude from question 1 and 2.

3. Method

3.1 Pre-Study

The selection of methodological approach was straight forward. Considering the theory used is one where observation of market practices takes place the selection of a qualitative methodological approach was a given. The data was going to try and be collected through single-case exploratory interviews, observation and secondary data collection. However, as mentioned in the delimitations section of this study, it was clear from the start that ethical and safety concerns would prevent observation from taking place (In this case observation would have included observations of live transactions). Based on this, a meeting with a Detective Inspector in the Criminal Intelligence Section of the Rikskriminalpolisen was made to see the best course of action. From the advice given and a subsequent meeting with my tutor, it was decided that interviews with cocaine users, sellers or both would try to be arranged by contacting prisons. The following chapter details the research gathering method.

3.2 Delimitations of Illegal Market Study

There are a number of obstacles one will encounter when researching illegal markets through a case base approach method and direct observation. The first is ethical concerns, which eliminated the possibility of direct observation from this research. Any direct observation will put the researcher in a situation where he will most likely be observing a criminal transaction. Though this has been done in previous studies, I believe the legal risk involved with this would be well beyond the scope of a master thesis and not worth it. Direct observation would have also required getting a contact with someone who is active in the cocaine trade and being trusted enough to follow him around. This brings us to the second possible obstacle one faces when studying illegal markets, trust. From my interviews and

attempts to get interviews I believe I can confidently say the topic of drugs, cocaine especially, is taboo in Sweden. This made it harder for people to either trust the interviewer or not feel comfortable discussing the subject. Taking this into consideration it is also possible that the interviewees were embarrassed or afraid to reveal certain details and may have lied or kept certain information from me.

3.3 Data Research

3.3.1 Ethics and Objectivity

Aside from the general ethical dilemma of this type of research, perhaps a more pressing one is how to approach the interview and the subsequent information obtained. Kvale highlights this as one of the main ethical issues when doing an interview based study. He defines it as an issue of analysis, “Ethical issues in analysis involve the question of how deeply and critically the interviews can be analyzed and of whether the subjects should have a say in how their statements are interpreted.”⁵⁵. No better example of this was present in the interview than when the question of, “What do you do if they don't pay?” was asked to dealers. To deal with this and similar issues a balancing act had to be done in the interviews with asking follow up questions but trying not to get too personal and having the interviewee feel threatened. This was necessary to be able to take the information obtained at face value and not having to infer or assume when the interviews were analyzed. In this regard and in line with the market practice approach of the study, most questions avoided relying on the opinion of the interviewees, instead relying on their experiences. Another important ethical issue with making this thesis, especially from the interviewees' perspective, was that of confidentiality. Aside from remaining anonymous (a given with this topic) the interview subjects were given the choice of being recorded and having answers taken 'off the record' if desired (something which fortunately occurred only a handful of times). Similarly, objectivity takes on a bigger role in this thesis. This is because it is easy to get into policy analysis, effectiveness or judgment calls on the actions of the users and/or sellers. This is why the purpose of the study is strictly a view of how the markets operate.

3.3.2 The Interviewees

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the method of getting interviews with users and sellers was to go through prisons and organizations that worked with people formerly involved in the cocaine trade.

⁵⁵ Kvale, S (1996, p.111)

Contact with five prisons⁵⁶ was made with three leading to being able to speak with the authority figure in charge of dealing with interview requests. However, two prisons didn't have inmates involved in the cocaine trade and a third gave a direct, no, answer. The organization KRIS⁵⁷ was contacted and a subsequent staff meeting was attended, unfortunately the answer obtained was that the organization tries to rehabilitate former inmates so, “we don't want to expose them to this[cocaine] again, we are trying to get them away from this[cocaine]”⁵⁸. The same answer was received from CA(Cocaine Anonymous)⁵⁹ after attending two meetings and having my request presented at a staff meeting however, one interviewee came from the two meetings attended. Contact with other organizations like Stockholm Stadmissionen and The Good Templars of Sweden was also made but they never materialized in interviews. With time restrictions in mind a change was made and I resorted to my social network (and in turn their social network) for interviews. This led to eight possible(solid leads, so to speak) interview subjects, unfortunately the inevitable miscommunication that tends to occur with the 'ask your friends' method resulted in two potential interviewees having to be dropped because they had not used cocaine in the market of interest (Sweden). One interviewee dropped out after having committed to an interview because they did not feel comfortable discussing the subject, while two others declined the offer outright. The remaining three were interviewed. It is important to note that none of the interviewees was from the same social circle, which could of course lead to similar experiences had they been from the same social group. The interviews with police officers were made possible through a Detective Inspector at the Rikskriminalpolisen (National Criminal Police) Criminal Intelligence Section. The contact was provided by my tutor, Hans Kjellberg.

3.3.3 Formulating and Conducting the Interview

If the analysis of the interviews is going to categorize the information obtained then a structured interview framework is needed, or at least one where the interviewees will provide a 'definitive' answer.⁶⁰ For this reason a semi-structured interview format was selected. One that structured the interview into consumer behavior and seller behavior (law enforcement as well for the two policemen interviewed) segments, but also allowed for the interviewees to talk more at length, letting them get more comfortable with the interview. This made the interviews be more free flowing and seem like a

⁵⁶ The prisons contacted where: Håga, Hall, Kumla, Norrtälje, and Österåker

⁵⁷ Criminals Return into Society, Sweden: www.kris.a.se

⁵⁸ Quote from staff member at KRIS

⁵⁹ For more information go to www.ca.se

⁶⁰ Kvale, S. (1996, p.130)

normal conversation more than an interview. As Kvale explains this, “promotes a positive interaction... motivating the subjects to talk about their experiences and feelings”.⁶¹ The location of the interviews was left up to the interviewees though face to face interviews were suggested. Two interview subjects chose to do them by phone, and the rest took place in a cafe, acquaintances home and place of work. Before the interview the interviewees were briefed on how the interview would take place and asked if notes could be taken and the interview recorded. In all interviews notes were taken and in all but one (at the request of the interviewee) they were recorded. The interviews lasted from thirty minutes to an hour and twenty minutes. This was due to either information they had or limited time to do the interview.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Falling in line with the method of triangulation⁶², and construct validity test⁶³, different types of data collection were used in this research to ensure reliability. Though it must be noted that triangulation in this case is not used to hope the data gathered would converge⁶⁴ to provide a single 'answer' or image of what is being studied. On the contrary not only is it quite likely that data collected would end up with contradictions and inconsistencies, but triangulation was used because it will provide different images which on some occasions were reproduced differently, as Madison explains “In practice, triangulation as a strategy provides a rich and complex picture of some social phenomenon being studied, but rarely does it provide a clear path to a singular view of what is the case ”⁶⁵. This holds true especially for the market practice theory used, where the number of market practices involved will inevitably result in very different views of the market. The data collection would consist of interviews with police officers, drug users and sellers. Although a greater number of users/sellers would have been desired, the subject being dealt with, cocaine, made it harder for people to commit to interviews. My secondary sources consisted on meetings with police officers for research guidance, phone and email conversation with contacts at the Swedish Crime Statistics Bureau (Brå) and information gathered from various organizations dealing with the cocaine market, such as Europol⁶⁶, EMCDDA⁶⁷, the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime etc. The nature of illegal markets and its replication in other markets being

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Madison, S. (1988)

⁶³ Yin (2003, p. 34)

⁶⁴ Using the definition provided by Madison, S. in “Why Triangulate”: “When data from different sources or collected from different methods agree, the outcome is convergence.”

⁶⁵ Midosn, S. (1988, p.15)

⁶⁶ European Police Office

⁶⁷ European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction

based on laws, extent of use, structure of the market etc. This coupled with the stated purpose of the thesis somewhat limits the external validity⁶⁸ of the study. However similar market structures are out there and can be identified so the study is applicable to other markets, if anything the study structure can be replicated in other markets.

4. Results

4.1 Cocaine in Sweden

Cocaine is trafficked into Sweden primarily through the Skåne region, either by land and sea (Sweden's largest ports are located in this region).⁶⁹ The cocaine trade (and the drug trade in general) in Sweden is, for the most part, managed by local criminal organizations such as “Hells Angels” and “Bandidos”. There are also many smaller non-defined “gangs” that bring in cocaine such as Balkan and West African gangs. The biggest markets are naturally found in the two biggest cities, Stockholm and Gothenburg.⁷⁰ As mentioned earlier, the majority of cocaine into Sweden comes from Netherlands, through Denmark or directly by air or sea (most common).⁷¹ Since its inception in the EU Sweden has had to scale back its border controls in accordance with EU border control policy (ie. Free movement of people), this has made it harder for Sweden to stop trafficking into the country.⁷²

When it comes to consumption Sweden has some of the lowest drug usage rates in Europe, and the same holds true for cocaine.⁷³ Drug usage among the general population and those aged 24 and under is at lower levels than in the 70's and has been in decline the past five years⁷⁴. In Sweden cocaine is the 3rd most used drug (unlike the majority Europe where cocaine is the 2nd most used drug), after cannabis and amphetamines. Figure 7 looks at drug usage in Sweden compared to drug usage rates across Europe.

⁶⁸ Yin (1994) and Kvale (1996)

⁶⁹ National Drug Report Sweden 2002: Available at: <http://www.fhi.se/upload/PDF/2004/English/nationalReport2002.pdf>

⁷⁰ Ibid

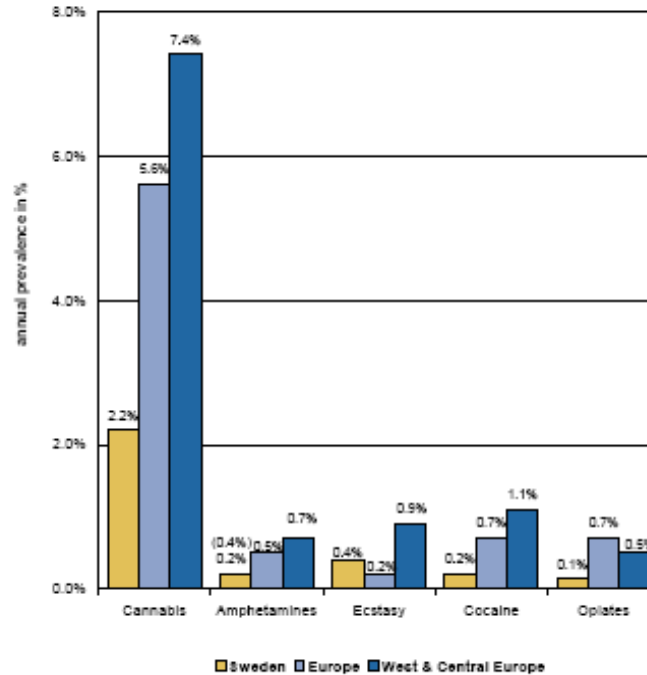
⁷¹ Interview with Detective Inspector.

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ UNODC: Sweden's Successful Drug Policy: A review of the evidence

⁷⁴ Ibid

Annual prevalence of drug use in Sweden as compared to Europe among the population age 15-64, 2004 or latest year available



Source: UNODC, 2006 World Drug Report

Figure 7: Drugs Usage Rates: Sweden vs Europe

Though cocaine use in Sweden is relatively low, perceived access to cocaine (among youths) is around the European average.⁷⁵ Cocaine use in Sweden takes place mostly among the younger population (between 20-24), according to the EMCDDA Sweden report, cocaine use, “is more or less restricted to ‘brats’ (in its Swedish sense of wealthy and ill-mannered young people from the upper classes)” and users are mostly found in clubs, bars and upscale restaurants.⁷⁶ When it comes to price, the average price of a gram of cocaine is \$92, this is just slightly above the European average of \$85.⁷⁷ Although cocaine is more expensive in Sweden, and it might play a role in determining the low usage rates, similar prices in EU countries with relatively high usage indicate that price is not as determinative as one would assume. However there are indications that the price of cocaine has recently been dropping⁷⁸, whether this will lead to a rise in usage is yet to be seen. It is important to note that the

⁷⁵ Council of Europe and Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN), The ESPAD Report 2003

⁷⁶ Retoix (2006)

⁷⁷ UNODC World Report (2007)

⁷⁸ Metro newspaper article, available at: <http://www.metro.se/se/article/2008/11/10/19/2921-45/index.xml>

majority of data on cocaine use in Sweden dates back to 2000, so its validity comes into question, especially when cocaine seizure (both in total amounts and number of seizures) has increased considerably since 1999.⁷⁹ Though cocaine seizures have been increasing whether efficiency has been increasing is hard to tell, as a Detective Inspector with the Rikskriminalpolisen stated, “it's impossible to know [what percentage of cocaine coming in is being seized]”.⁸⁰

4.1.2 Swedish Drug Policy

Swedish drug policy is considered to be one of the most restrictive in the Western world.⁸¹ The official policy is one that aims to have a, “drug free society” and policies are set accordingly.⁸² Unlike some EU countries, where only possession is a crime (in some cases only possession with intent to sell), in Sweden drug use is also considered a crime and police officers may force someone suspected of using to take a drug test.⁸³ Drug offenses are separated into three categories: minor, ordinary and serious.⁸⁴ The severity of the offense is usually determined by intent (as in carrying for personal use or for trafficking) and quantity. Minor offenses are those where a person is found using or carrying an amount deemed for personal use only (for cocaine, up to 0.5 g), the penalties for minor offenses are fines, and up to 6 months in prison. Ordinary offenses are those where possession is between .06 and 50 g, the penalty for this is usually prison time that can last up to 3 years. Serious offenses (possession of 51 g and over) carry a prison sentence of 2 to 10 years.⁸⁵ Another important feature of Swedish drug policy is that the purity of cocaine is not taken into account when looking at what counts as possession, instead its focus is on the total substance. For example if 5 grams of cocaine of 50% purity are seized, it counts as 5 grams of cocaine. Other countries focus on purity and not the total substance amount.

Although Sweden has had a hard drug policy for much of the last 20 years (ie. mandatory sentencing), in 2002 the overall objective of a drug free society was reaffirmed with the introduction of the National Drug Action Plan. The plan was introduced with the following three broad objectives: “1. To reduce the number of persons who engage in illicit drug use; 2. to encourage more drug abusers to give up the habit ; 3. to reduce the supply of drugs.”⁸⁶ With the aforementioned penalties already in place, greater

⁷⁹ Retoix (2006)

⁸⁰ Interview with Detective from the Criminal Intelligence Section of the Rikskriminalpolisen

⁸¹ Lafrenière, G. (2002)

⁸² UNODC (2007) “Sweden's Successful Drug Policy”

⁸³ Ibid p. 16

⁸⁴ Lafrenière, G. (2002)

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ UNODC (2007) “Sweden's Successful Drug Policy”

resources (both in money and manpower) were put in place to fight drug trafficking. (It is important to mention that Sweden has had to scale back its border control when it joined the EU, making it easier for drugs to enter Sweden once they reach the EU). An effort was also made to increase public awareness, especially among youths, to the dangers of using drugs. One of the new initiatives put in place in accordance with the National Drug Plan, was a new surveillance unit introduced by the Rikskriminalpolisen with the task of surveying out nightclubs, bars and any event (ie. concert) where drug use or selling is suspected.⁸⁷ The Stockholm unit, called “Krog Sektionen” (Club Section), works undercover (mostly at night) going into any establishment where drug use is suspected.⁸⁸ The unit has also worked with nightclubs and pubs to train staff (bouncers especially) on identifying drug usage and transactions, as well as trying to make these establishments less 'drug friendly' (such as leaving space in the lower part of restrooms doors to see how many people are in there). If drug consumption or selling is identified there is a special number they can call to alert police.⁸⁹ These types of operations and initiatives helped the plan be deemed a success and in 2005 a second National Drug Plan Action was introduced to continue the efforts achieved with the first plan⁹⁰, sustaining the main goal of a drug-free society.⁹¹

4.2 Interview Findings

To maintain the interviewee's anonymity a pseudonym was given to each one based on the interview findings. The following table contains interviewee information, and is followed by the interview results. The presentation of the findings is done by presenting the interviewees views and experiences in two categories: *Exchange as consumer*, and *exchange as seller*. The categories were chosen as a way to simplify the information obtained. When talking about consumer behavior, it means end consumer behavior. Exchange as seller will include any exchange that takes place to sell the products, including purchases from suppliers.

⁸⁷ Interview: Police Officer in the Surveillance unit

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ First drug action plan, available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/09/88/53/49c4a92e.pdf>

⁹¹ Retoix (2006)

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Position	Age started using/Selling or years on the job	Age Stopped Using/ Selling	Location
Middleman	M	31	Heavy seller and user	17/19	29/29	Stockholm
Full time Seller/part time user	M	24	Full time seller and part time user	15/18	22/22	Falkenberg
LondonGirl	F	23	Introduced to cocaine outside of Sweden	21/21	Currently Using not selling	Stockholm
Undercover Cop	M	26	Part of the “Club Section” surveillance unit	2 ½ years	Still working	Stockholm
PartyGirl	F	25	Knew sellers, social circle used, only used	17,19-20/never	20	Stockholm
Detective	M	40	Has worked in various sections/units of the Rikskriminalpolisen	18 years	Still Working	Stockholm

Table 1: Interviewees

4.2.1 Consumer Side Views

First Use/Introduction into the market and why?

All interviewees were introduced to cocaine by friends at house parties (ages available in table 1).

Middleman and FullTimeSeller both grew up socializing in criminal environment where drugs were common. Both had used other drugs before cocaine. Middleman started with ecstasy and

FullTimeSeller (FTS) had tried, “everything” before he tried cocaine. Middleman was straight forward with why he used cocaine, “I saw it as gangster”. FTS on the other hand didn't particularly like cocaine, he just used it if it was available at parties, if he got it offered at a good price when buying (it is

common for sellers to offer cocaine and other drugs at cheap prices or free, for the first time to try and get people hooked) or when he had some left over after selling. This was different than Middleman who became addicted to cocaine. LondonGirl was introduced to cocaine outside of Sweden (she is Swedish), in London, at a house party. In Stockholm she is afraid to buy cocaine and has only used a couple of times at house parties before going out. LondonGirl only uses cocaine to, “party”.

Undercover cop added that most users he comes in contact with use cocaine because it is seen as a, “classy” drug, this view is supported by previous studies.⁹² PartyGirl tried cocaine for the first time in an after party. She went out partying 5-6 days a week and cocaine was common in her social circle. Though peer pressure might have influenced her, it was more a case of, “everyone's doing it, so why not try”. It is important to mention that out of the four users interviewed only PartyGirl said she was concerned about people knowing she had done drugs and seemed almost ashamed of it.

The first time experiences of the users were mirrored by undercover cop who said, “clubs are a gateway to cocaine for many people[users]”. This is supported by studies showing drug use in clubs and restaurant staff is close to 41%.⁹³ For many of the users he comes in contact with, cocaine is their gateway drug. Detective who made the analogy of cocaine as a, “virus” that affects one in a social network and then 'spreads' to the rest, also said cocaine was the first drug for many cocaine users. In Undercover cop's opinion, if anything could be categorized as a gateway drug or substance to cocaine, it is alcohol, especially considering how many users, “can't do cocaine without alcohol”. As for the average starting age his opinion was that 18 would be the starting age for many users, adding that many who try either like it or not, those who don't most likely will never try it again, those who do will obviously continue using to varying degrees (ie. Every couple of weeks, every time they go out etc.). Detective had a different starting age for users, he put it around 25 but he also said clubs are problem areas for them.

Finding A Seller

For all users, finding a seller was not a problem. Middleman and FullTimeSeller grew up in the environment and already sold drugs before they started using cocaine. FullTimeSeller would buy from different individuals who belonged to the same crime organization. Middleman on the other hand would buy from different sellers and from different criminal organizations (or independent people). LondonGirl, though she has not bought cocaine herself in Sweden says she could get a contact easily

⁹² UNODC: Sweden's successful drug policy: A review of the evidence.

⁹³ Ibid

through one of her friends. For PartyGirl finding a seller was/is also not a problem. She never bought drugs but was surrounded by people that sold and used. She did not buy cocaine or take it with her when offered for fear of starting to use too much and she, “didn't want to get caught with that in my purse”, so law enforcement fear also played a factor. To highlight the importance in having a social network with users to find cocaine, PartyGirl, who now resides in Helsinborg stated she would not know how to find cocaine there because she does not have friends that use there.

Because of where he lives, FTS said he could find cocaine in certain streets where he could go to and get drugs. FTS also added that he met new sellers and users in rehab, and that it was a common place to expand one's network for future transactions. In Stockholm, Middleman said you can find it, “everywhere... in clubs, pubs etc.”. In clubs he said it was really easy because sellers find you, “It takes one to know one[user]”. Undercover Cop made a direct comment to this by referring to a documentary where a girl who was using said you could find cocaine, “everywhere”. He said for people in that scene and whose social circles uses it is easy to find cocaine, yet he added, “if I send my friends to Stureplan to find cocaine in 1 hour, they couldn't do it”. All interviewees agreed that it would be hard for someone not in that scene to find cocaine. For first time users/buyers FTS said going to areas where other drugs are sold (ie. T-Centralen area) and asking, “can you help me with stuff” (Swedish translation “Kan du hjälpa mig?”). This apparently is the proper way to find out if someone is selling, as he mentioned, “You never ask directly for drugs”. Middleman said the best bet would be to go to a club and ask around or try to engage in conversation about drugs or joke about drugs and see how people react, and from there try to find sellers. However, Undercover Cop disagrees with that opinion, believing that it's not that easy to find cocaine in a club, maybe only after asking enough people. He thought someone new to the market would be better off trying to ask dealers in an area like T-Centralen not because there is cocaine there but because they could direct them to a dealer. He added that first time users usually run into a seller in after parties, and are given a try for free by dealers, “because they know tomorrow you could be a client”. Detective also said it is easy for one who is in, “that network” to find a seller but it is unusual for someone to be curious about cocaine and just go out and buy it. All Stockholm residents agreed that there is no specific street or place where one could go get cocaine in the city and each one had different ideas on how someone with no connections could get cocaine.

Making the transaction (where, how, cost)

For Middleman and FTS the transactions could occur anywhere. FTS was not, “into” cocaine much so most of the time he would buy cocaine when he would go buy other drugs and it was offered to him at

a good price. This could be a pre-arranged spot to meet, at a dealer's house, party etc. The way to pre-arrange spots was done through the phone, however FTS would also go to places where he knew they sold drugs (ie. Street corner). Middleman's cocaine use became an addiction which altered the way he purchased cocaine. He would initially arrange to meet his dealers through the phone, he would also purchase in clubs and pubs, as he put it, "In clubs you go outside to make the transaction or inside if you knew the bouncer... in pubs anywhere". Of course, the transaction was made with the discretion the situation called for. Eventually, Middleman had sellers delivering cocaine to his house mailbox. By Middleman's account it is not uncommon for sellers to be delivering to houses throughout the night. PartyGirl never bought cocaine, but she was offered to take some home in clubs and after parties, but never did. LondonGirl has not purchased in Stockholm so she could not comment on this. Undercover Cop mentioned that transactions in clubs were common and relatively open (in line, the bathroom etc.) 10 years ago, but since there has been an effort to increase undercover police presence in nightlife establishment since 2002⁹⁴ the transactions are done mostly outside now.

The standard cost of cocaine was surprisingly the same number given by all interviewees, 800 SEK per gram if it was paid up front. This was surprising for two reasons: First, news reports, studies and even police information suggest that the price of cocaine is dropping.⁹⁵ Second, the interviewees were in different cities and used at different times. However, Detective had something to say regarding these two reasons. For the first he said new players in the market from the Balkans and West Africa are selling cocaine around 400 to 500 SEK. This was something Undercover Cop vehemently disagreed with, saying, "You won't find cocaine for 500 SEK". On the price of cocaine Detective said for all drugs, price is very stable (for example with marijuana the price has stayed the same for 20 years). This was due to the fact that a large part of the price includes the high risk cost of the shipment getting seized and the traffickers arrested so price is inelastic in that sense. He also added that cocaine was more expensive (1500-2000 SEK) 5-10 years ago because it was not a popular drug in Sweden, "Sweden is an amphetamine country". All interviewees agreed discounts were rare, unless it was a seller trying to get a person hooked, it just doesn't happen even when the seller was a friend. Of course, buying larger quantities would garner cheaper prices per gram (ie. 5 gram for 3500 SEK). FTS did mention if discounts were given it was about 100 or 200 SEK less, and that if sellers didn't recognize a customer the price could go up to around 1,300 SEK, taking into account higher risk of selling to an unknown person. Undercover cop also mentioned that the price for paying on credit would go up to

⁹⁴ Interview with Undercover Cop

⁹⁵ Ibid.

1000 SEK. Of course as in any market, shortages and higher quality will reflect in a higher price and the same was the case with higher quality cocaine and when large shipment were seized making cocaine scarce in the country.

Where do they use

As mentioned earlier the most common place for interviewees to use cocaine was house parties. LondonGirl exclusively used at house parties and “pre-parties”. This was mostly the case for FTS as well, aside from also using at home he said he did not use outside these two places. PartyGirl would strictly use in after parties only, as she never wanted to go clubbing when she was high, because she felt more vulnerable and feared getting caught. Middleman was different as he became addicted he began to use, “everywhere... the car, pub etc.”. But he did mention that using in pubs and clubs became more dangerous so he quit using there. This experience is supported by Undercover Cop who said usage in clubs has gone down because of increased police presence creating a new problem for police officers, as many cocaine users have switched to just using at home, making it harder to find the users. Detective said today cocaine use was done everywhere and across all segments of the population, athletes, students etc.

Quality, Availability, Substitutability

The quality of cocaine in Sweden was something all but one interviewees agreed on, “It's bad”. PartyGirl was the lone dissenter, but she did claim she had nothing to compare it to and had only been told that the cocaine she did was, “good” because one of her friends who provided the cocaine had family, “transporting” the drug from Colombia. FTS, Middleman, Detective and Undercover Cop all said that cocaine gets mixed in with other substances [paracetamol, caffeine, lingocaine are some of the common substances used to mix in with cocaine] ⁹⁶ to a purity level of around 50-60%. This is done to get 'more' cocaine hence more profit. Detective said the purity of cocaine has improved in the last years when it comes to Sweden (close to 90% up from 70%) but once its here it still gets mixed in quite a bit. Undercover Cop mentioned seeing almost full bags of cocaine on the floor in clubs, stating, “When you see a full bag of cocaine on the floor you know it's really bad cocaine”.

Availability of cocaine in Sweden could best be described as seasonal, in the sense that the seizure of large shipments or cargo could disrupt the market to where, “You can't find it anywhere”⁹⁷. This was supported by Undercover Cop, both sellers and PartyGirl A possible substitute drug for cocaine that all

⁹⁶ EMCDDA website: Drug Profiles: Cocaine “Typical Purities”

⁹⁷ Middleman quote

but one interviewee mentioned is amphetamine, as it is also a stimulant⁹⁸ and it is cheaper (price of 200 SEK per gram)⁹⁹. PartyGirl also stated ecstasy was used instead of cocaine in her circle when it was not available. However, Middleman and Undercover Cop both said amphetamine does not have the same, “Glamor” to it, so it wasn't an option for most users. As in any market, availability plays a role in determining prices.

Law Enforcement concerns

Because of the nature of the market most activities are dictated by the threat of getting caught, as has been shown in the previous sections of this chapter. However, how high that threat is in the minds of the users is also of importance. LondonGirl was direct about her fear of law enforcement. She had never done cocaine in Sweden because of fear and the less liberal views on drugs in Swedish society. She added that although she has done cocaine in Sweden she does not feel comfortable enough to go and buy cocaine. PartyGirl was somewhat concerned about getting caught using in clubs which is why she never had cocaine on her and never used in clubs because in her view, “there was “a lot of undercover cops”. She did mention an interesting scenario, she said in after parties some people would sometimes be pressured into taking cocaine as, “everyone wanted everyone to use”. This was done to make sure everyone had committed a crime. FTS was never concerned about getting caught using, only when he was selling. For Middleman when it came to using, “I just didn't care” about getting caught. He was well aware of possession laws so he knew he would just face fines and he did the few times he was arrested. This does not mean he was looking to get caught as he admitted to stop using in pubs because of greater police presence as well as taking precautions when meeting dealers (such as driving around the block). Running into undercover cops selling cocaine was not a concern (Detective thought this was the case for most users), as that is not allowed in Sweden for smaller deals and because in places such as clubs and pubs it was easy to identify undercover police officers because, “they just look like cops... stare at you too much etc.”. However, Middleman's continued use of cocaine led to him becoming paranoid about constantly being followed which created the interesting dilemma of a will to, “score” and not caring about getting caught, yet feeling as he was being followed constantly. Undercover Cop and Detective backed some of Middleman's comments, adding that increased focus on stopping drugs, especially addictive drugs such as cocaine and heroin has led to law enforcement increasing its knowledge of cocaine and user behavior. The results of which can be seen in declining use in clubs and bars because of better trained police officers.

⁹⁸ EMCDDA website: Drug-profiles: amphetamine

⁹⁹ Middleman interview

4.2.2 Seller Side Views

Introduction into the market and why?

For both sellers interviewed, the reasons for selling was the fact that they grew up in that environment. FTS commented on his need for income, as he had quit high school and his parents weren't supporting him. Middleman was selling ecstasy by 14 so the transition to selling cocaine was, “natural” and it was a way to make money. Needless to say there are many ways to get into the market. LondonGirl became an occasional seller in London by buying cocaine for acquaintances. As Undercover Cop and Detective mentioned that other ways of becoming a dealer is through getting in debt. Cocaine is an expensive habit and some become so in debt with their dealers that they have to sell to pay off their debt. This of course is due to the addictive nature of the drug. Partygirl added sellers would sometimes try to get users to sell and she would be asked to, “bring in” friends to try cocaine. However, she never did. To this day, she has friends trying to get her to get drugs for them or put them in contact with sellers. However, she has never done it. Detective said most users become sellers in some form, either by acting as middleman for their friends or just trying to get other people to use, so the lines are blurred between supplier and customer. This is why some sellers hold regular jobs while selling a bit on the side.

Finding Suppliers

Once again FTS and Middleman's social circle made it easy for them to find suppliers. FTS was friends with a, “big player”¹⁰⁰ (trafficked tons) in the Skåne region, controlling trade in Halmstad and surrounding cities. According to FTS “big player” was supplied by the *Bandidos* crime organization. Though FTS got his drugs from the same group he was not a member of this gang, and his status as friend most likely changed the relationship with his supplier. It did not however, give him a better price when buying as he would buy 5-10 grams of cocaine for 400 SEK per gram, which seems to be the average cost for dealers. Middleman's experience was similar in that by the time he started selling cocaine he already had a network of contacts to work with. He declined to comment what organization supplied him but mentioned that even though he was independent, he could not buy from other suppliers (gangs). Middleman would buy 100 grams a week at 350 SEK, which Undercover Cop thought was a good deal as he said 400 SEK was the standard for dealers. There were ways of lowering this price, if one would chip in with shipping or transportation cost one would get for cheaper. Undercover Cop described this by saying, “the closer you are to Colombia the better”, meaning the

¹⁰⁰ The use of “big player” is used to protect the interviewees identity.

fewer middlemen you have between the point of production and final destination, the cheaper it would be. Undercover Cop also added that a lot of sellers use before they start selling, by the time they are using they have come in contact with other people that use and sell cocaine so finding a supplier is not that hard.

Finding Consumers, what areas did you sell in, Competition threat

Finding consumers is where we see the first difference between a street seller (FTS) and Middleman who would sell to dealers. FTS depended on users network to get customers, once he came in possession of drugs he would contact, “three or four friends” and within a day, “everyone knew I had drugs”. This is very different than Middleman who had a close network of dealers who he would sell to. They weren't allowed to bring in new people and if a dealer went to jail or fled he rarely brought new people in unless they were recommended and after performing a background check (ie. Looking up his social security number). In clubs sellers and users are able to identify themselves, “It takes one to know one”¹⁰¹. Although PartyGirl didn't sell, she did say she noticed in her own social circles how sellers would identify those who, “like it a lot” and would try to make regular customers out of them.

The areas FTS had where Falkenberg, Varberg and Hyltebruk. He would get most of his drugs from Halmstad but would not sell there as that was another person's area. He was not the only seller in those areas but those were the areas he was allowed to sell. Because of the secrecy needed in the market he did not know what sellers had what city, unless he was friends with them. Middleman did not have an area because he only sold to a small network of dealers (the majority of the time). For clubs there is no territory definition, Middleman did mention that permission was needed to sell in clubs but you would not find one criminal organization in charge of selling in one club. Undercover Cop supported this statement, but did say that 10 years ago some criminal organizations did control doors at clubs but that is no longer the case today. Detective said they have not seen the territory definition among drug distributors at the higher levels.

The threat of rival gangs for both was not a great concern, for a number of reasons: both didn't belong to a particular criminal organization, they had connections that could back them up if trouble arose and most importantly at the lower level of the drug trade, violence is not as common in the Swedish drug market as in other countries. Nevertheless, Middleman did carry guns to protect himself from possible robberies when making his transactions. Undercover Cop did say there is a violent rivalry between gangs but not as bad as in other countries.

¹⁰¹ Middleman quote

Competition wise, Middleman was not concerned with gaining business as he was more interested in not going to jail a long time, so preferred to keep his network closed rather than expand it. FTS on the other hand did try to expand his customer base. He mentioned customers responded to price and service, “How you treated them”. He would treat his customers, “nice” allowing them to pay on tab if they did not have money or offer a slightly cheaper price (700 SEK per gram), something most other sellers wouldn't do. He would also sell to, “anyone” with the exception of older ethnic Swedes for fear that they were undercover police officers, while other sellers would choose who to sell to or only sell to friends, limiting their customer base. Undercover Cop laughed at the “not selling to ethnic Swedes” comment, because he noted there are undercover police of different ethnic backgrounds. It is important to note that both Middleman and FTS indicated that they did notice if a user was becoming addicted or dependent by the fact that they start buying more on the same day (they buy more once the high subsidies). In Middleman's opinion, “anyone can get dependent if you give them enough”

Making the transaction (where, how, cost)

The transaction for FTS was the same as was stated earlier in the consumer section. He would get a call , arrange a meeting place (he decided) and the transaction was made. He would charge between 700 -1000 SEK depending on whether he knew the person or not, and sometimes even more than that if he felt they had more money and weren't familiar with the average street price. With suppliers the transaction would be similar although most of the time he would go to his friend's (Big Player) house to pick up the drugs. Because of the large quantities (100 grams) being purchased by Middleman his transactions were more sophisticated. Once a meeting place was decided, the transaction(most of the time) would be made by car exchanges, he would meet the supplier, park next to each other and exchange cars. Sometimes two more cars were involved to work as lookouts. When selling to the dealers different ways, including the one just mentioned, of doing the exchanges were made depending on how big it was. Detective mentioned transactions happened in selected drop areas, car exchanges, lockers etc., “all kinds of ways”. Transactions in nightlife establishments changed as police efforts to control it tightened up, today transactions most of the time happen outside the clubs.

Profit wise, at the higher levels (those importing the cocaine) the profit is in mixing the drugs to increase volume. Detective mentioned that police were having trouble finding where the profits were for criminal organizations importing it, because prices for 1 kilo imported are similar to street level prices for 1 kilo. Eventually they found out that the 1 kilo being sold on the street was mixed. For

lower level sellers, the drug is mixed already so further mixing would lower the purity dramatically. In the case of both sellers they never mentioned themselves mixing, considering they bought per gram about 50% less than what they sold it for, mixing was not really necessary.

What if they don't pay?

Being an illegal market, settling through the courtroom is not available and other methods of resolving disputes have to be found, most of them involving some degree of violence. FTS said he would usually get paid because they knew he had connections if someone tried to stiff him and he believes the way he treated his customers also helped them be more reliable. However if they did not pay, he would usually resort to hitting them a bit or threatening them. Middleman was a bit more ambiguous with his answer, "We would take care of that". I will not go into speculating as to what that could mean, but he did say that it's not worth it kill anyone over those deals (They're not big enough). Undercover Cop said killings do occur over failure to pay but that happens in bigger deals, where the stakes are higher. However in street level deals not paying could result in beatings or being forced to sell.

Market Information

Market information in a market where, "you don't ask questions"¹⁰² will naturally be very limited. The interviewees in this case were involved in the market at such a young age that they most likely made friends who became big players, allowing them perhaps greater access to some information than other sellers. Despite this, information on what other sellers are doing, the prices they get drugs for (even from the same criminal organization), when shipments are coming etc. are all absent from most actors in the market. This leaves almost everyone in the chain to make decisions 'on the spot'. As Middleman stated, shipments sometimes don't come in and, "you can't find cocaine anywhere", sellers get pinched and you have to adjust etc. FTS added that the chain is vertical, you only know who is above you and that's it.

Law Enforcement concerns

I believe no better statement sums up the concerns sellers have for law enforcement than the following quote from Middleman, "We switch cell phones like we switch underwear". He was referring to one of the things sellers do to protect themselves from police, switch sell phone numbers once a week. Since Middleman was engaged in larger scale operation he resorted to different things to try and stay one step ahead of law enforcement, among the actions he would take were: buying his police record, changing

¹⁰² Quote by FTS and Middleman

plate numbers, occasionally cars as well, keeping an eye on new vehicles in the neighborhood, changing his routes etc. These are the lengths at which some actors in the market have to go to protect themselves. Middleman said he felt he had a sixth sense for spotting police, and that, “It's when you don't see them that you get worried”. His concerns for getting caught were exacerbated by his drug use which only made him more paranoid and would eventually force him out of the market. It is significant to point out that Middleman believes if it weren't for the steps he took to try and stay aware of police presence, and keeping his customer base small that kept him away from jail. FTS had a very different experience than Middleman, though he was on alert, he never went to the same lengths as Middleman . Mostly because he was dealing with smaller quantities. Needless to say, these actions taken to avoid getting arrested, because every interaction in this market is shaped by the fear of getting caught. PartyGirl mentioned that she knows sellers that have been arrested several times but still sell to this day, something experienced by both FTS and Middleman, showing willingness to continue taking risk.

Current Status and Individual impressions

Out of all the interviewees only LondonGirl still uses. FTS developed problems with other drugs and had to go to rehab after which he got out of the drug market. Middleman became addicted to cocaine leading to his growing paranoia and eventual withdrawal from the market. He also was forced to seek medical attention for his addiction. Undercover Cop is currently working for the Club Section of the Police Department. PartyGirl no longer uses but wouldn't rule out using again because she likes it but didn't feel she needs it.

LondonGirl believes cocaine is still taboo in Stockholm compared to London. She herself would not buy in Sweden despite buying in London, and being Swedish. She does however think more people are doing cocaine now in Sweden. PartyGirl thought the same amount of people use today than before and that it is not that common to use, only if one is in the heavy party scene. She was the only interviewee who didn't think, “everyone uses”. She was also the only interviewee who had a moral quarrel with using. As she wanted to, “keep it secret” from friends that didn't use. The others seemed more open about it and didn't see it as such a bad thing to do. FullTimeSeller grew up in a town (Falkenberg) where drugs are a problem so in his view that, “everyone” does it. Middleman had the same impression of cocaine being “everywhere”. He said he's seen a, “boom” in the last 2-3 years. As noted earlier in the chapter Undercover Cop believed those reports were exaggerated and that it's natural for someone in those social circles to believe everyone is using. He does believe cocaine usage stats are outdated and probably more people than reported use, but he thinks law enforcement has made strides the last few

years in combating drug use.

5. Analysis

Having presented the interview findings, they will be analyzed according to the research questions presented in Chapter 2.

5.1 Which specific activities are part of the three market practices?

As was presented in Chapter 2 the three market practices are the following:

1. *Exchange practices* :“refers to the concrete activities related to the consummation of individual economic exchanges”.¹⁰³
2. *Representational practices* :“include activities that contribute to depict markets and how they work”.¹⁰⁴
3. *Normalizing practices* : “the activities that contribute to establish guidelines for how a market should be (re)shaped or worked according to some (group of) actor(s)”.¹⁰⁵

For simplicity some of the activities identified in the interviews will be presented in table 2.

Normalizing and Representational practices are divided by three of the main actors in these markets. Exchange practices are divided into four categories: Contact patterns, which are the attempts by buyers or sellers to come into contact with one another. Making transactions, which refers only to the actual exchange of the product. Terms of trade will refer generally to the price negotiations of buyer and seller but also to other aspects of setting up the exchange. The last category will be product related, meaning activities directly affected by or pertaining to cocaine (such as addiction). Further analysis will be made of each three practices and activities identified within them. There are some activities that fall under more than one practice. These will only be mentioned once and at the same time (eg. if an activity is both an exchange and representational activity, it will be mentioned in only one of the sections as being both, and will not be repeated.)

¹⁰³ Kjellberg et al. (2007, p. 142)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid p. 143

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

Exchange practices	Representational practices	Normalizing practices
<i>Contact Patterns</i>	<i>Government/Law Enforcement</i>	<i>Government/Law Enforcement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguishing characteristics of a user in clubs • offering cocaine for free to try and get customer hooked • networking in rehab • “can you help me with stuff?” • asking dealers of other drugs where to find cocaine • contacting a few users to let them know you are selling, so they spread the word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying the effects of cocaine (ie. addiction rates) • conducting population surveys on cocaine use • specific studies on cocaine use by nightclub staffs • undercover work • interrogating • examining cocaine purity • everyday police work involving cocaine (ie. Surveillance, investigative work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making cocaine illegal to try and stop drug use • instituting mandatory sentences to try and stop drug trafficking • establishing policies and initiatives to combat drug trafficking
<i>Terms of trade (buyer/seller)</i>	<i>Consumers</i>	<i>Consumers</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher cost when selling to someone unknown • buying on credit • performing background checks on potential customers • treating customers well, letting them pay on credit • chipping in for the shipment of cocaine, to get it cheaper • calling to set up transaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using amphetamine as a substitute based on dealers 'recommendation' • paranoia induced from using • not wanting to be seen using because of representation of drugs as bad • seeing “everyone” in a social circle doing cocaine • viewing of cocaine as “gangster or glamorous/high class” • comparing cocaine quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pressuring someone to use, so everyone has committed a crime • gangs defining selling territory to avoid conflicts
<i>Making the Transaction</i>	<i>Sellers</i>	<i>Sellers</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • car exchange when making big drug transactions • looking out for police during transactions • switching cell phones every week, changing cars, plate numbers etc. • selling in clubs • selling in specific streets/corners etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • buying their own police records • socializing within a criminal environment • identifying police in clubs • identifying under cover cops • lookouts • using police scanners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not allowing dealers to buy from other distributors • dealers/sellers not selling to everyone • selling to anyone • having a closed network of dealers to sell to • a dealer trying to get a user in debt to make him a seller • needing permission to sell in a

<i>Product Related</i>		<p>club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selling for higher price when person buys on credit • threat of violence to settle market disputes • requiring a “code” word to acknowledge being a seller • not selling to ethnic swedes because they might be undercover cops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mixing cocaine with other substances to get more • trying to get a customer in debt to make him a seller • getting addicted to cocaine leading to paranoia 		

Table 2: Cocaine market practices

Exchange Practices

Going back to the definition of exchange practices, we see that any practice directly related to the exchange of the good is an exchange practice. With this in mind we look at the first five exchange practices presented under *contact patterns*. These are all activities where the contact (usually) is made between a seller or user, one that will eventually lead to making a transaction. Four to highlight from that category are: distinguishing characteristics of users, networking in rehab, offering cocaine for free to try and get someone hooked and “can you help me with stuff?”. The first, refers back to what Middleman had said, “In clubs, dealers find you... It takes one [user] to know one”. Networking in rehab is interesting because it's one of the norms instituted by a government trying to curb drug use, yet it is a double edge sword as FullTimeSeller mentioned he would come into contact with new sellers and users in rehab. The last two are important because they could be considered normalizing practices as well. “Can you help me with stuff?” is the phrase one must say to find out if someone is a seller or not, a code word so to speak. It comes directly from the normalizing practice of sellers who want to hear a phrase to acknowledge they are selling drugs, since they cannot advertise their possession of drugs. On that last point, giving a “free sample” of cocaine to potential customers is in itself a way of promoting and as PartyGirl had said, it was not uncommon for dealers to give free tries all around at parties, trying to get someone hooked. This is also normalizing as a seller is using cocaine to try and establish a pattern of behavior for the user (when the user might not even be aware of it). *Terms of trade* and *Making the transaction* are the most easy exchange practices to identify as they are activities involved directly in the exchange. From *Terms of trade*, two that stand out are performing background checks on potential customers and treating customers well. In an effort to keep his closed network safe,

Middleman would perform background checks to see if his new customer was not an undercover cop. Though this is an exchange practice it is not one that involves both actors, as the point with the background is to find out who the customer is. However, it still is an exchange practice because it is an activity that if not done, will result in the exchange not taking place (in the case of middleman). Treating customers well (ie. letting them pay on credit) was what FTS said he would do to facilitate the transaction and try to get repeat customers. In *Making the transaction*, we see two activities that are also representational practices. Selling in clubs and streets/corners certainly are not only modes of making the exchange but the mere action of that will lead to a representational image of a club/street being a place to sell, making the activity a representational image. Furthermore, the act of switching cell phones, car plates etc. are all actions taken to allow one to complete the transaction, in other words to not get caught. Finally *Product related activities* in this case are those related directly to cocaine or dependent on its effects. We see these also come up in other practices as well. For example, using cocaine might lead to addiction, which will lead to paranoia from repeated use this will drastically alter all activities, we see this with Middleman who stated that by the time he was addicted he was constantly paranoid of the police but he also didn't care about getting caught to the point where he would use anywhere and accept cocaine deliveries at home. Mixing cocaine in this case is for the seller to get more quantity. This also affects quality and could potentially affect price negotiations.

Representational practices

Perhaps the most influential of the three, representational practices in the cocaine market have had a particular effect on normalizing practices, as will be later shown they in essence shaped policy which created an illicit market and continue to have an effect on all actors in the market, regardless of how accurate the representation is. The place to start with representational practices is the actions taken by government that led to making drugs illegal. Studies and surveys on drugs led to an image of drugs as an ill to society and that its consumption was growing. Aside from studies/surveys which continue to be made, first hand experience/observation from police work (undercover work, arrests, interrogation etc.) leads to a set of representations of the market. Some of these are pointed out in table 2. For example, Undercover Cop through his work in the field has found that, "You don't need permission to sell in clubs", the complete opposite of what Middleman said. Finding more users at home also leads to a representation of the market. Other information includes prices where two policemen had different views of the availability of low price cocaine in Stockholm. This shows how difficult it must be to sort through and find the correct (if there is one) view on the market. This will be further explored in 5.3. In

short, representational images for law enforcement are constantly shaped and reshaped based on experiences and first hand observations of the numerous agents studying and working in the market. For consumers we see a lot of representational practices that may have come from previous representations of the market, creating a “chicken or the egg”¹⁰⁶ dilemma in trying to determine what came first. For example, PartyGirl said she did not want certain friends or people in clubs to see her using, which in itself is a representational practice as it creates the view that drugs are bad, but it most likely came from the view that drug usage is bad, hence the, “chicken or the egg” dilemma. Other representational practices include using cocaine to party which leads to the representation of cocaine as a party drug, also seeing other people in one's social circle using, “everyone is using”(as was the case in the interviews) which then gets represented on a television show (like Undercover Cop saw) leading to the view that cocaine use is increasing dramatically. Finally, as all but one of our interviewees said, cocaine in Sweden is viewed as bad quality. To determine this, law enforcement measures purity levels while users possibly compare cocaine quality to that in other countries (LondonGirl, Middleman) or used on previous occasions. For sellers (or users) the fact that they grow up in a criminal environment, is represented as a way to get into the market so to speak. Although they cannot control that specifically it still produces an image of the market. However as we saw with Middleman, things such as buying police records lets him know what his status is in the view of law enforcement and therefore, gives him a way to establish a strategy based on whatever he finds. As mentioned earlier, the fact that representations are being constantly made by police officers on the job finding new nuances in the market and the normalizing practices of sellers' reactions to representational information on law enforcement, it is safe to assume that at least for normalizing practices, representation plays a big role.

Normalizing practices

Normalizing practices are activities that actors do to try and set guidelines for how markets should work. The first actors looked at are policymakers. The first and most obvious normalizing practice was making cocaine illegal to try to curb drug use. (Today the official policy is to have a drug free society)¹⁰⁷. However since that time other policies such as mandatory prison sentences aimed at stopping drug trade as well as other policies and initiatives (like the 2002 National Drug Action Plan¹⁰⁸) have come into place. For consumers, it seems they are at a 'disadvantage' when it comes to

¹⁰⁶ The phrase is “what came first the chicken or the egg”. It is usually used when trying to identify cause and consequence situations.

¹⁰⁷ National Drug Action Plan 2006

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

establishing rules for how the market should work. This seems to be because they are at the lowest level of the ladder and with dependency/addiction some will have no will to establish objectives. Having said that, one practice by users that was identified was how in parties some might be pressured to be using so everyone has committed a crime, as was stated by PartyGirl. Sellers on the other hand do try and establish norms. One of the first that stands out is territory definition when it comes to selling. This is done with the intention of avoiding conflict and letting everyone share in the profits. Among others is the threat of violence to avoid disputes, not allowing customers to buy from other distributors (this happens at higher levels only, street sellers don't appear to have the power to do that). At the lower levels, responding to code words (ie. "can you help me with stuff") is a normalizing practice by street/club dealers. Selling to many or just a few are both normalizing practices as the dealer is setting his own rules on whom to sell to. This is also the case with not selling to ethnic Swedes because they might be undercover officers. Though these last practices mentioned might not have as great an impact on the market as others, it is still actors trying to set rules for how other actors should act (users in most cases).

5.2 Which translations link the presented market practices and how do they tie into one another?

With this question I attempt to answer how these market practices are linked and what is the outcome. To analyze this we will look at how each of the market practices affect the other two. This will be done by looking at how some of the market activities translated to others. First it must be brought up again, that practices are translated into an idea, policy, action etc. into other practices. For example normalizing practices get translated as norms that set guidelines for the market into exchange practices and so on. To visualize this we resort back to the market practice and translations model presented in chapter 2.

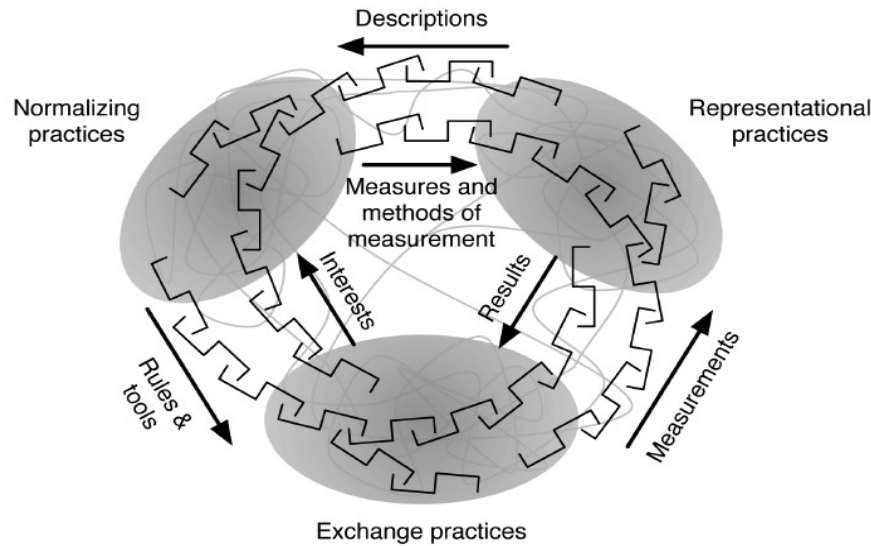


Figure 8: Translation and Intermediaries in Market Practice (source: Kjellberg & Helgesson [2007])

This model will serve as a reference when explaining what may seem as a hectic process.

How do representations affect exchange and normalizing practices?

This section is started with market representations as it is the practice that most likely has the most influence on the market. The first example is the fact that the effects of drugs (cocaine included) were being studied (representational practice) as well as surveys taken to see how many people were using.¹⁰⁹ These practices were then produced as a representation of the drug market. The representation was translated to normalizing practices as a threat to society that had to be at the very least controlled. This image of the market was taken by lawmakers and efforts (normalizing practices) in the form of legislation to prohibit drugs were put in place to stop drug use.¹¹⁰ Of course then the new rules affected exchange practices as new ways of trafficking, trading and using cocaine had to take place and as the model above shows for every action in one direction there is a reaction and so on.

Another example is what FullTimeSeller described when not selling to ethnic Swedes. The information he obtained in the market translated in an image of the market (regardless of how wrong or right it was)

¹⁰⁹ Lafrenière, G. (2002)

¹¹⁰ Ibid

that led him to believe that there was a higher chance of selling to an undercover cop if he sold to ethnic Swedes. This led him to establish a normalizing practice of not selling to them.

A very straightforward example of a representative effect on exchange practice is when a Middleman stated, "You buy your police record". This practice will lead to a representation of how he is viewed by police (an important actor in the market). If he learns his car is recognized by police this will translate into a change of exchange practices, such as changing his car plates or car etc.

How do exchanges affect normalizing and representational practices?

An exchange practice that affects representational practices quite clearly is the mixing of drugs to have a greater amount of cocaine. This is translated in the form of lower quality cocaine and when it is picked up on by actors (police by measuring, users by consuming and comparing) the cocaine market in Sweden is branded as bad, quality wise.

Going back to the example provided previously on selling drugs in clubs. It is difficult to know if the image of cocaine as a party drug led to its consumption and distribution in clubs, if the distribution of it in clubs led to it being branded as a party drug or if the market moved into clubs after it was made illegal. However, the fact remains that exchanges were being made in clubs, this led to police surveillance (representational practice) of clubs and branding it as a drug found in clubs and so on.

Being an illegal market, cocaine transactions are made with secrecy. This means representational practices take on a bigger role because if law enforcement does not know an exchange is going to happen they can do nothing about it. They must then rely on representational practices to find the exchange practices. For this reason, it seems exchange practices don't have as much direct effect on normalizing practices unless of course they are translated to representation practices.

How do norms affect exchange and representational practices?

An example of how norms affect exchange practices is reflected in the pricing and availability of cocaine. The price of cocaine has a risk cost, from shipping point to street level distribution. This is because the tools to enforce normalizing practice is law enforcement looking to arrest traffickers.

Another example is the threat of violence when settling market disputes. If a user or seller (at any level) does not maintain his end of the deal violence may be used. This will undoubtedly alter exchange practices as some might not want to negotiate with a certain gang or might stay on the fringes of the market to try and avoid this.

One curious example of 'reverse' effect is when users get sent to rehab (norm) to try and get them off drugs, as was the case with FullTimeSeller. As he said he used rehab for networking(exchange practice) and met new dealers, customers etc. This could very well be regarded as exchange practices affecting normalizing practices.

Norms determine how information is obtained (representational practices). Their choice of what statistics, surveys, polls etc. are used will affect representational practices and their outcome. A glaring example of this was the two policemen interviewed who contradicted each other concerning the availability of cocaine for the end consumer at 500 SEK. Thought they might not have been obtaining the information themselves, it is safe to assume they received it from police reports or investigations yet both had completely different views.

All Practices Interacting

To end this question I bring to length the numerous translations that can shape a market, by using the fact that cocaine is used and sold in clubs.

A representation of drugs as a party drug translates to exchange practices. Sellers react to this by wanting to sell in clubs(exchange practices). Based on the club, there might be norms to follow and permission might be needed by the clubs. Once inside clubs, dealers start selling and the representation of cocaine as a party drug, if anything is reinforced. Law enforcement reacts by trying to find out if there is a potential cocaine problem (from their perspective) in clubs. From whatever representational practices they employed, it was determined (translated) that cocaine use and selling was a problem in clubs. This representation of the market led to policy makers wanting to stop this so law enforcement created an undercover unit (normalizing practice) to disrupt the trade in clubs. This in turn affected exchange practices in clubs. As users gathered information (representational practice) on this new unit (by seeing friends arrested, noticing the undercover cops in clubs etc.) it gave them a new idea of how the market operates. This in turn led to the normalizing practice of more users staying at home.

Creating a new problem for policemen, as Undercover Cop mentioned, "Its harder to find them[users]". However it is safe to assume law enforcement is trying to depict this new trend and how they can attempt to control it.

5.3 Characteristics of the Market?

Having seen how market practices are linked and how they shape the cocaine market we answer

question three. Can the illicit be identified as a specific form of market. The short answer is no. Perhaps further study could answer this question. However, from this study there are specific characteristics of the cocaine market that can be observed. First and foremost, if the cocaine market was to be compared to regular markets it is without a doubt an inefficient market. Absence of meaningful quality control (through competition or other means), reliable availability, market information, efficient price mechanisms etc. all lead to an unpredictable market. Both users, dealers and high level traffickers do not know if they will have a one month supply of cocaine (though scarcity does occur in legal markets, they are much less frequent) by the same token, police also lack much information about the market and how it is shifting. This makes the actors have to react rapidly to changing market. This reality does make it similar to other markets in that the lower level actors (street side dealers and to some extent consumers) are better able to adapt to the fast paced and ever changing market. Organized crime as a whole will take longer to react and law enforcement/government is probably the slowest of all three to adapt (as is also usually the case in legal markets). An example of this was the contradictory information both police officers had on cocaine price.

As for practices we can see representational practices have the most influential role in the market. Though normalizing practices do lead to various norms that have a great affect on how the market operates (exchanges in particular). Without representational practices these norms could not be realized. If we see the main actors involved in exchanges (buyers and sellers) their operations are intended to be covert and avoid being re-represented. The third main actor, law enforcement must then find ways to first, see what representational practices to use and then how to act on them. Though normalizing practices do play a big role in the market as they translate into norms, these are quite stable in the sense that the 'rules' of the market have already been in place for a long time, not only with law enforcement but with criminal organizations as well. Exchange practices in this market are mostly reactive, though new 'innovations' will get translated into representational practices and eventually get to normalizing practices, it is still mostly reactive.

6. Discussion and Further Research

6.1 Discussion

Getting a glimpse into how the cocaine market is shaped we can see that the market as a whole is still not well 'represented'. We can see this even within law enforcement who is the most interested in fairly

representing this market. There are conflicting views on how the market operates that most likely are not helping their interest. The same could be said for criminal organizations who don't even have the resources law enforcement has, at least in Sweden, to map out the market. Now there are two basic questions to ask: Can these findings be applied to the illegal drug market in Sweden and/or to cocaine and illicit markets out of Sweden? To do this we must mention that it was representational practices that had the most effect in the Swedish cocaine market. Although a study would have to be done there are some observations from this study that things are similar in other countries (at least the EU) and if that is the fact then there will be some applicability to those markets. First we will look at the drug market in Sweden.

For illegal drug markets in Sweden, the obvious advantages are that the same laws affect how exchanges are made. Though there are stricter penalties for “hard drugs” such as cocaine, Sweden across the board has a very strict drug policy. This leads to similar norms being applied throughout the illicit drug market. Sweden's drug policy goal after all is to eradicate drug use. However, though the norms are the same, the representation of the markets most likely are different. Not just because cocaine is considered a harder drug but because cocaine use in Sweden is relatively low, so it might not be paid as much attention as other drug market in Sweden. This was indicated by the police officers I interviewed, as well as being reflected in the fact that the last survey on cocaine use in Sweden was made in 2000. This absence of information might not be the case in other markets. If this were true then it would certainly make applicability a bit more tricky as you will have lawmakers and law enforcement paying more attention (in the form of policies, laws, resources etc.) to those other markets, which most likely change the landscape when compared to the cocaine market. For example, with amphetamine which is the second most used drug in Sweden, it has been viewed as the problem drug in Sweden. This will undoubtedly lead to greater police resources to fighting amphetamine trafficking, affecting exchange practices. While more attention in the form of studies, surveys, polls etc. will also give them a more accurate view of the amphetamine market than the cocaine market. However, other factors that can have an affect are, for one, cocaine itself. Not only because it is viewed as a party drug but the fact that it has higher addiction rates than other drugs will change actor behavior. Furthermore, seeing how cocaine is in unique circumstances when it comes to production and distribution, it changes both law enforcement and traffickers actions. One example is marijuana, which can be and is produced in Sweden. This gives law enforcement a chance to affect cultivation and production directly, unlike cocaine where the best they can do is help coordinate and provide information for those in the 'front

lines'. Users also have access to varying qualities of other drugs which is not really the case with cocaine. Having said that, some truths undoubtedly hold for illicit drug markets in Sweden. Mainly, as already mentioned representational practices most likely play a big role in shaping the market. Second, exchange practices will be very similar (this also because most sellers don't just sell cocaine), third norms will also be fairly stable in other illicit drug markets. With this in mind, I believe this study can be of use for other illegal drug markets in Sweden, however, for other illegal markets such as the illegal alcohol market¹¹¹, I can only assume that similar result will be found in regard to the important practices (ie. representational). Though its safe to say criminal gangs involved in this trade are also involved in the drug trade, difference in control mechanisms and consumers have to be studied to make a more assertive statement. Nevertheless, the framework of this study would be a good way to approach the study.

For illicit drug markets around the world it becomes more difficult. First when it comes to laws, though the majority of the world has banned drugs, economic realities don't permit countries to control it or research it in the same manner. This changes many things in the market, for one, traffickers can operate with relative freedom (such as in countries with lower resources to fight drug trafficking, like Latin America). In that sense we must draw comparisons to countries with 'closer' control policies and resources. Which leaves us with North America and Europe as the closest markets to relate to. As was seen in chapter 1, European nations are increasing collaboration to fight drug markets together. This means laws most likely will also be similar and similar resources (at least for the Western European countries) will be used. However, the views (representations) on drugs and cocaine might not be all that similar both in society and government. The United Kingdom and Spain are two examples of countries where society seems to be more open to drugs and cocaine in particular, though this could also be because more trafficking takes places there (on its way to the rest of Europe), the fact is a wider scope of study would have to answer that question. The Netherlands is one example of a government that does not see drugs in a similar manner to Sweden, this will undoubtedly reflect in the market itself. Having said that, though there are varying degrees of control, consumer and seller behavior, and being in line with the purpose of this thesis, I believe the results provided can be used as a pre-study for other research in illegal drug markets with basic similarities (ie. Most western European markets). Because the results do point out the market practices involved, how they are linked and which are the most influential, this provides a base for expanded research in those markets. It is also important to mention,

¹¹¹ Sweden attempts to control alcohol use and sale are made by having a de facto state monopoly on alcohol sale, for more on this: www.systembolaget.se

that the study structure itself would be beneficial when researching illegal drug markets in other countries. As for illegal markets in general, I think some generalizations can be made, such as the influence of representational practices and effects of normalizing practices. Nonetheless, I think that illegal markets especially when studied from a market practice perspective, will without a doubt provide different conclusions than the ones reached here. Too many constants (policies, public opinion, resources etc.) have to be maintained to compare it to the Swedish drug market. But again, I point out that a market practice method would be beneficial when researching illegal markets.

In conclusion, I believe that I can say this study provides a base for further research in illegal drug markets, particularly those with similar policies and resources to Sweden. It also provides new way for actors, researchers, and all parties interested, to approach drug and illegal markets studies. As demonstrated here, a market practice approach will not only provide a greater insight into how these illegal markets operate but also a different viewpoint than has previously been taken.

6.2 Further research

From this study I believe four very interesting research areas could be explored. First, an expanded research of this paper can provide a more definitive look at the market. Second, this type of research can be conducted for other drugs in Sweden to see how similar the findings are. Third, for the same reason, an obvious choice would be to study the cocaine market in another country. I believe there could be significant implications if the findings could be compared (perhaps with an extended version of this study). Finally, a more focused look at representational practices is surely needed and perhaps with the perspective of just one actor, possibly law enforcement. These I think are four areas that are definitely interesting not just for researchers but policymakers as well.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Interview Questions

Interviewee:

Consumer Views:

What age did you start using cocaine?

How(got it, other drugs before etc.), know where seller would get it from?

After that how did you know where to get, territory definition, always the same guy or same group?

Cost?

Where would you use?

Buyer/seller relationship, price discount. Etc.?

What if buyer pinched?

Quality determined?

Afraid of getting caught buying or using? Afraid of running into under cover cops?

Seller views:

Did you ever sell, when/why?

Where would you sell (street corner etc.), how?

Concerned about getting caught how to look for them?

Selling price (also buying price), where would you get the drugs from? (same person/group)

Customer/territory definition?

What if they don't pay?

Rival Sellers?