

Drug trafficking a
global issue
economics essay



A corrupt institution has materialized through the world, affecting everyone's daily life. Drug trafficking is defined as the possession of an illegal drug in a fixed quantity that constitutes that the drug is going to be sold (Merriam-Webster). Currently, the toll of drug trafficking can be seen in the drug war the U. S. and Mexican governments are waging against drug cartels in their respective territories. The illicit industry of drug trafficking has become so prevalent in the world that it carries a huge impact on the world. Drug trafficking has become such a widespread issue that it now inflicts various countries from a political, economic, and socio-cultural viewpoint.

Seeing as many futile efforts to control this institution have taken place, drug trafficking has spread like wildfire to nearly every corner of the world. In fact, new routes of trade are developing in places that lack the enforcement, and the infrastructure that is needed to detect the possibility of trafficking. Given the new state of the world economy, a dramatic increase in trafficking is seen and is proven to have occurred. For example, in Afghanistan the opium production has increased a remarkable 15 times since 1979 (Global Illicit Drug Trends). More than seventy-five percent of the heroin being sold and sent to Europe (and one hundred percent of the heroin sold in Russia) originates from Afghanistan (Global Illicit Drug Trends). Across the globe it is countries like Columbia, Peru, and Bolivia that produce about one thousand tons of cocaine annually (World Drug Report). The mass production of this drug begins to send a negative impulse through South America's entirety (World Drug Report). This Latin American cocaine is shipped to an estimated ten million users in the United States, as well as Europe, via other Latin American countries (Global Illicit Drug Trends). These few, yet dominant,

drug producing countries have a negative backlash that affect the world as a whole.

As drug trafficking is allowed to ferment and further grow in a select country, it begins to leave it's mar on the country's political system. The corruption preset in most drug trafficking areas threatens fragile political stability. This is an eminent threat mainly because narcotic producing countries are (more often than not) undeveloped nations, or ones in the process of development. Being undeveloped and unprepared for the obstacles presented before them by the illicit activities, these young governments crumble to the ground. On another note, the high-level of corruption evident in government seriously undermines public confidence in democracy. Soon following a dramatic loss of morale, violent rebellions and revolts occur that inevitably lead to more strict corrupt forms of government; for example, communism, fascism, anarchism, authoritarianism, etc... Political office holders, well known for taking part in drug trafficking activities, accept payments in form of bribes in order to turn the other cheek. When illicit operations, such as drug trafficking, have powerful connections holding high governmental positions, they tend to break out and further spread -not leaving any warrants, any accusations, or any form of stopping them to be successful.

Aside from a negative political impact, heavy trafficking cause drastic changes from an economic stand point. Most traffickers, having coming from impoverished areas, are enticed into the industry by its large (potential) profit. Large organizations in the industry of drug trafficking collectively make hundreds - even millions - of dollars per year (World Drug Report). Economies are rapidly undermining as money laundering begins to become

<https://assignbuster.com/drug-trafficking-a-global-issue-economics-essay/>

prominent in the area. Money laundering causes errors in economic policy as a result from artificially inflated and stimulated financial sectors, this in turn creates a false demand in a certain area of the economy; when this process reaches a breaking point the finances will suddenly disappear causing the sector to fall apart (The Effects of Money Laundering). On a local scale, money-laundering causes issues for legitimate private business owners who will have to make up the loss in tax revenue, laundered money being tax free (World Drug Report). Not only are governments losing income through a lack of tax revenue but also they have to focus high percentages of money to combating its further spread. Many countries focus anywhere from five to twenty percent of their GDP to fighting drugs; for example, El Salvador uses 11.5% of its GDP while Guatemala uses 7.3% (World Drug Report). When viewed as a whole the economy of such countries is visible in their current, horrible condition.

From a socio-cultural end of the spectrum, drug trafficking further destabilizes civil society. Many countries that have felt the effects of drug trafficking have also experienced the eroding of their social capital and community cohesion. Social capital is defined as a communities the approach and eagerness to take a part in collective, civic activities (A Pragmatic Definition of Social Capital). These aspects of society are important for growing and strengthening an area over a period. However, when drug trafficking is present street gangs begin to flourish and ultimately create a divide amongst the members of a community. Along with this divide, gang violence (as well as gun related crime) skyrockets to all new highs, placing a tremendous amount of pressure on society causing it to

further dismantle. A compromised rule of law, or a lack of enforcement and respect of the law, also adds to the socio-cultural backlash of trafficking. Until recently, many international drug traffickers were seldom sentenced a punishment despite attainment. Losing faith in their justice system as a means of protecting a community under trafficker's hands further splits apart. In the end, it is difficult for local police officers and other authorities to compete with organizations gaining power and local support through foot soldiers and dealers. An ever so eroding social infrastructure, the trust and will to interact amongst other members of a community, is all that remains as drug trafficking is allowed to work with no restrictions.

The United States has officially waged a " War against Drugs" and, in fact, endorses aggressive tactics to deter drug trafficking around the globe (Drug Trafficking & Interdiction). . The endorsed government's tactics attempt to interdict, or prohibit by court order, and eradicate operations found in transport areas and source countries, as well as push for other countries to adopt similar policies (Drug Trafficking & Interdiction). Mexico, having adopted similar policies as well as waging its own " War on Drugs", is attempting to close and eradicate the major trade routes that go through the country and eventually cross the border into the United States. An estimated fifteen thousand people have been reported dead amidst the feuding cartels since troops were sent in late 2006 (Mexico mourns drug victims on Day of the Dead). Drug related crime and that violence that it fuels in Central America and Mexico are a threat to public safety and an impediment to development: which worries foreign investors and keeps them from further investing in the country's economy (World Drug Report). When taken as a

whole Latin America represents the zone with the highest criminal violence rate in the world today (World Drug Report).

The act of producing, transporting, and selling drugs continues to be on the rise and poses today as a severe global issue. New organizations are now beginning to take part in the industry, becoming more organized and even more detrimental to the global community. Drug trafficking is no miniscule matter, in reality it causes many negative side effects to countries that are unwillingly dragged into being a part of the industry. The drug trafficking institution holds with it the power to dismantle political systems and governments, to weaken and destroy economies, and to divide and conquer entire societies. Although many of these powers are limited to certain, undeveloped countries, they still maintain the potential to impact countries on a grander scale across the globe.

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/global/drugtraffick/>