

Forces of habit

Economics, Globalization



Name: Course: Lecturer: Date: Forces of Habit Psychoactive revolution refers to the transformation of everyday consciousness of people through potent means, resulting from the discovery and spread of psychoactive resources. It refers to the globalization of these resources, which include alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, opium, cannabis and coca. The substances were initially confined to specific geographical regions, but they soon spread to other areas of the world. Europeans were responsible for the globalization of most of the commodities because of their exploration and expansion.

People had limited and specific uses for the drugs before they spread globally. People in different cultures had different experiences and reactions of the drugs. This determined if the drug caught on in a particular area, and it determined how the people used the drug.

The development of global commerce and the emergence of industrialization beginning from the sixteenth century enhanced the revolution. As people traveled from one region to the other, they introduced the resources to the new markets. As more people became aware of the substances, there was a greater need to develop them and make them more accessible. Europeans were responsible for most of the drug commerce trade globally, seeing that they explored and conquered many regions. By doing this, they were able to cultivate the drugs in their territories. They were selective in the drugs they chose to commercialize. They determined the drugs that would become global commodities based on the product's shelf life and the cultural bias against drug's effects, and they cultivated the drugs based on their usefulness and acceptability (Courtwright 3).

This selective nature has led to the acceptance and legalization of some drugs and the rejection of others. People do not consider the effect of the drugs, since the drugs, whether legal or illicit, have negative consequences. For instance, tobacco though legal, led to people having foul breath, stained teeth, soiled clothing, and streams of spittle and snot (16). Opium, cannabis, and coca were profitable drugs.

However, people did not consume them as much as they did the big three, and this led to their worldwide suppression and rejection (31). The big three drugs managed to become global because of their side availability and acceptability. A significant effect of the revolution was the spread of the substances from their area of origin to other areas, where they were commercialized and cultivated on a large scale. This is significant because it determined the availability of the drug. It is also worth considering because it shows how the spread of the drugs in specific areas did not mean widespread use of the drugs. Such is the case with wine and alcohol in the Asian countries.

Although the wine was available in these areas, many people were reluctant to consume it. The resources were once confined in different geographical locations but they entered global commerce at different times (2). This was possible because of the oceangoing commerce, which introduced different plants, microorganisms and animals to different hemispheres and continents (9).

Different people including sailors, soldiers, tourists, students, diplomats, refugees, and traders brought the drugs with them to the areas where the

drugs did not exist. The Portuguese introduced the drug to West Africa in the early seventeenth or late sixteenth century. They were also responsible for introducing it to Asia, in countries such as Iraq, India, and Japan (15). Earlier, the Spanish had introduced the drug to the Philippines. The Dutch introduced tea to Europe and java, and the british introduced the drug to India and Ceylon (23).

Arab traders introduced opium to China, India, and Iran in the eighth century (32). This was not an accidental process. The motive of globalizing the drugs was to gain profits from the sales.

The commercialization of the resources led to their increase, and this led to their low prices. Another significant effect of the revolution was the change in the use of the drugs, which resulted from different factors. As the drugs moved to different regions, the people there determined the way that they would use the drugs and the method that they would use to alter the drugs. People were not interested in using the drug as it was introduced to them. They experimented with different methods of taking the drugs, until they found a method that suited t their preferences. Some drugs were less potent than they are today. Initially, wine was not as potent as it is today, and people used to dilute it with water before consuming it (14). When the Europeans learnt about tobacco, the people would smoke the leaves rolled in cigars, or they would chew and sniff them (14).

Different factors such as class, gender, and culture determined how the people consumed the drugs (16). Other factors such as technological innovation and industrialization (25) also contributed to the methods in

which the people consumed the drugs. The Europeans considered sugar to be a form of medicine and an exotic spice (28). They later used sugar as a sweetener, especially in sweetening caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, and chocolate, which were bitter. People used opium as a form of medication. Greek and roman physicians prepared opium to treat gastrointestinal infections. Some people used the drug to treat conditions such as insomnia, chronic fatigue, boredom and anxiety (32). The Chinese used cannabis as cooking oil, edible seeds and as animal fodder.

They also made hempen fibers using the drug (35). Indians used the drug in ayurvedic medicine for the treatment of malaria and rheumatism (40). Early uses of coca included chewing the leaves for strength and to cope with hunger pangs and fatigue (46). Work Cited: Courtwright, T. David. Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World.

Harvard University Press, 2009. Print