

Research Article

1830-1918: An Economic Analysis of the Opium Trade in Asia

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Abstract: This study examines the opium trade between the British Empire and the Chinese Empire between 1830 and 1918, focusing on historical events and trade dynamics. Opium, obtained from the poppy plant, has been used as both medicine and a narcotic for centuries. The study shows how opium became an important trade commodity, especially through the British East India Company, which monopolized production in India and expanded its distribution to China. The increase in opium consumption in China led to government repression; the first repression occurred in 1799 when imports were banned. Despite this, the British continued to trade through independent traders in the hope of protecting their commercial interests. This conflict culminated in the Opium War, in which the Chinese government tried to resist British pressure but was eventually defeated. As a result of the agreements made, China was forced to legalize opium imports and grant trade privileges to the British, thus consolidating British influence in the region. When statistical data obtained from British and Chinese trade records were examined, it was revealed that the war and the ban did not significantly reduce the opium trade. On the contrary, the data suggest that the trade continued to grow even in a period of legal restrictions. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, awareness of opium addiction in both the East and the West led to efforts worldwide to regulate and eventually eliminate trade. Meanwhile, the emergence of heroin, initially seen as a safer alternative, led to increased demand for opium-derived products. This study concludes that opium trade was not only an economic phenomenon, but also a significant factor in the shaping of international trade policies and colonial conflicts, with long-term implications for international drug regulation.

Keywords: Opium Trade, British Empire, China, Asian Trade

1830-1918: Asya Afyon Ticaretinin İncelenmesi

Öz: Bu çalışma, 1830 ile 1918 yılları arasında Britanya İmparatorluğu ile Çin İmparatorluğu arasındaki afyon ticaretini, tarihi olaylara ve ticaret dinamiklerine odaklanarak incelemektedir. Haşhaş bitkisinden elde edilen afyon, yüzyıllardır hem ilaç hem de narkotik olarak kullanılmıştır. Çalışma, afyonun özellikle Hindistan'da üretimi tekeline alan ve dağıtımını Çin'e genişleten Britanya, Doğu Hindistan Şirketi aracılığıyla afyonun nasıl önemli bir ticaret malı haline geldiğini göstermektedir. Çin'deki afyon tüketimindeki artış, hükümet eylemine yol açmış; ilk eylem, ithalatın yasaklandığı 1799'da gerçekleşmiştir. Buna rağmen, İngilizler ticari çıkarlarını koruma umuduyla bağımsız tüccarlar aracılığıyla ticaret yapmaya devam etmişlerdir. Bu çatışma, Çin hükümetinin İngiliz baskısına direnmeye çalıştığı ancak sonunda yenildiği Afyon Savaşı'yla sonuçlanmıştır. Yapılan anlaşmalar sonucunda Çin, afyon ithalatını yasallaştırmak ve İngilizlere ticaret ayrıcalıkları vermek zorunda kalmış ve böylece bölgedeki İngiliz nüfuzunu pekiştirmiştir. İngiliz ve Çin ticaret kayıtlarından elde edilen istatistiksel veriler incelendiğinde, savaşın ve yasağın afyon ticaretini azaltmadığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Aksine, veriler ticaretin yasal kısıtlamalar döneminde bile büyümeye devam ettiğini göstermektedir. 19. yüzyılın sonu ve 20. yüzyılın başında, hem Doğu'da hem de Batı'da afyon bağımlılığına ilişkin farkındalık, dünya çapında ticareti düzenleme ve sonunda ortadan kaldırma çabalarına yol açmıştır. Bu çalışma, afyon ticaretinin yalnızca ekonomik bir olgu olmadığını, aynı zamanda uluslararası ticaret politikalarının ve sömürge çatışmalarının şekillenmesinde önemli bir faktör olduğunu ve uluslararası narkotik bilincinin fark edilmesinde etkili olduğu sonucuna varmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Afyon Ticareti, Britanya İmparatorluğu, Çin, Asya Ticareti

Introduction

This research focus on the opium trade of the British Empire and the Chinese Empire between 1830 and 1918, over historical events and economics. How opium became an important trade commodity, especially through the British East India Company, which monopolized production in India and expanded its distribution to China. Opium trade of the Empire was not only an economic phenomenon, but also a significant factor in the shaping of international trade

policies and colonial conflicts, with long-term implications for international drug regulation.

History and Consumption of Opium

Society, Poppy and Opium

We know that opium from the poppy plant has been used for centuries as a pain reliever and medicine, but the cultivation of this plant has not only been done for the production of narcotics, but the poppy oil also obtained from the seeds of the poppy plant has been used in cooking and other food products. In other words, although poppy products are narcotic and pleasurable, poppy farming has become an important part of daily life for the society in which it is consumed. Opium, which is the subject of the research, is obtained from the capsule of the poppy plant. The poppy product that will be studied historically throughout the research will be opium.

Opium and Western Civilization

So how did the consumption of opium as a narcotic begin? The origin of opium consumption dates to thousands of years. Traditionally, its consumption is carried out through digestion by adding it to meals or by other means. The point where the history of opium intersects with our research is that opium began to be consumed as a tobacco product. For European states (especially the United Kingdom), the consumption of opium through tobacco began with the use of pipes or pipes by the natives of North America. Over time, opium, which is smoked by adding it to tobacco, has become the preferred method for western society.

Opium in Asia

The increase in opium consumption and the focus of trade started in the 17th century with the arrival of opium tobacco products to the Chinese market (opium has been consumed in the Chinese region since the 7th century). This new consumption habit, which spread throughout the geographies under the control of the British Empire, led to a significant expansion of opium production and trade. In the 18th century, the out-of-control opium consumption in the Chinese region increased the interest of the British Empire in the opium trade, this situation led the Chinese administration to take action against the consumption and import of opium, with the law published in 1799, the Chinese administration banned the import of opium and the opium crisis started with the closure of

British warehouses. The opium crisis between Britain and China, with its historical events and facts, will be the center of this research paper.

Opium in the Health Sector

With the adoption of opium by Western civilization in the 18th century, research on the benefits and harms of opium began in the same century. Although opium has been used as a pain reliever or recreational for centuries, it became a part of daily life in the 18th century, opium was not used in the pharmaceutical industry until the 19th century. Between 1803 and 1806, the German pharmacist Friedrich Sertürner, who conducted medical research on opium and chemical products obtained from opium, produced the drug he called "Morphine". (Duarte, Danilo Freire) The Western medical world adopted morphine, an opium product, in a short time and made it the standard treatment method. This naturally increased Europe's consumption of opium and led to an increase in the commercial and strategic value of it.

Opium in East Asia 1600-1800

1600–1800 British Empire Control of India

As the beginning of the British presence in India, we can accept that in 1600, the British merchants who traded in the Bengal region were structured as the "East India Company" by the Imperial Royal Charter. (Britannica) It can be said that the Empire aimed to have influence in the Indian region in the long term with this trade network. The British initially pursued this goal by obtaining land ownership from local authorities, strengthening their presence, and establishing mutually beneficial relationships. They entrusted it to the East India Company, which settled in India by obtaining permission to trade duty-free. (Britannica)

Meanwhile (17th century), the introduction of opiate tobacco products into the Chinese market increased the demand for opium in the East; In 1683, the East India Company increased investments to increase opium production. (Asthana, S. N.) The maturation process, which lasted for nearly a century, bore fruit by 1757, when the East India Company overthrew the existing Bengali administration and introduced a new administration led by the company.

In the following period, as the demand for opium gradually increased and therefore the value of opium production increased, the East India Company transferred opium production to a few local manufacturers and monopolized the market. (Rowntree, Joshua) At this point it will be a subject to return to later in

the research; Warren Hastings, the Bengali ruler of the time, who organized the monopolization of the market, described the importance and limits of opium production as follows: "Opium was not a necessity of life, but only a pernicious luxury, which was not to be permitted except for the purposes of foreign trade, and had to be carefully kept away from domestic consumption by the wisdom of the government." (Rowntree, Joshua)

At the end of half a century of wars and treaties dating back to the middle of the 19th century, actions will be more tangible than the previous century; The Dominion of India grew stronger in its political, economic and military power. Aside of these, the pillars local administration was cracking, idea of corporate ruled country started to fail because of lack of governance and state-discipline. With the Sepoy Rebellion in British India in 1857, it was shown that the East India Company's administration and authority were no longer sufficient to control the region. *With the Government of India Act of 1859*, the administration of India was directly subordinated to the British Government. (Britannica)

Chinese Rule and Opium in the 16th-17th-18th Centuries

Opium reached Chinese civilization centuries before the British, in the 7th century. It has been used as a drug or as a medicine by adding it to food, but no problems such as opium addiction have developed or been reported in Asian societies. (Britannica) In the 17th century, when the British - the East India Company - began to show themselves in the region - opium tobacco products were rapidly adopted in Chinese society and opium consumption increased at the same speed. In 1637, the British Empire entered the territory of China; In 1715, they opened the first trading station in the Canton region. After that, the Western States began to export opium and tobacco from Canton station. (Miron, Jeffrey A., and Chris Feige)

The increasing addictions on opium led to the first action of the Chinese government in 1729, when the importation of opium for smoking purposes was prohibited. However, the import ban was not enough, and opium consumption continued to increase in China. Export of opium became indispensable for Britain in trade with China, because opium was exchanged instead of paying coins for goods imported from China, such as silk, ceramics, and tea. (Britannica) In addition to the increasing dependence on opium, the Chinese administration was also suffering commercially from opium imports. With the new laws promulgated in 1799, 70 years after the first prohibition, while the prohibition on opium imports continued, the sale and consumption of opium was included in serious crimes, and the punishment was made as severe as death or exile. (Miron, Jeffrey A., and Chris Feige) "The opium seized by the state was burned, the ship

containing the opium was confiscated, and the persons in possession of it were sentenced to death." (Rowntree, Joshua)

The Asian Opium Trade and Wars in the 19th Century

Diplomatic War and the Road to the Actual War

The opium crisis, which started to bother the Chinese administration throughout the 18th century, continued to intensify in the 19th century. Prior to the 1799 Chinese opium import ban, pressure was increased from the Chinese government to the Company's management to end opium exports; In fact, the Chinese government threatened the Company with the cessation of the tea trade, which was as important as the opium trade for the British. (Chang, Hsin-Pao) The pressures yielded results, the East India Company stopped exports to China within its own structure, but predictably, the British did not plan to shelve this trade, as a solution, they delivered the opium to be exported to British (Independent) merchants in the Chinese region, and continued the export indirectly, despite the end of direct exports (Miron, Jeffrey A., and Chris Feige)

The Chinese government is aware of the shadow opium trade that is being carried out, but there is nothing they can do but carry out operations against the local merchants with whom British independent traders cooperate. When we look at the operations against narcotics or other illegal trades that are being carried out today, we can observe the same predicament: the problem is not the sellers, who are the capillaries of the trade network, but those who runs the production and distribution of the goods, and the problem needs to be solved at the root, not at the end. The Chinese government also knows the root of the problem, but they have not been able to go beyond trying to prevent the activities of free traders for a period of thirty years. With the inability to prevent trade and pressure on local Chinese rulers from central authorities, tensions between the Company/Independent Traders and the Chinese Authority have reached a peak in the region.

The State of the Market Before the Opium Wars

By 1830, when the pressures on the opium trade were at their peak, the opium market continued to grow. We can say that the maritime developments brought by the new century or the political and economic changes in the region also triggered the increase in these years. In more detail (Chang, Hsin-Pao); "The end of the monopoly of the East India Company and the rapid expansion of British

merchants in the country, the policy of expanding production in India, the introduction of new clipper ships that made faster transportation possible, and the rapid expansion of traffic eastward and northward along the Chinese coast." (Miron, Jeffrey A., and Chris Feige) It explains the growth of trade in the 1830s.

Table 1. Total Opium Exports of British India (In Chests)

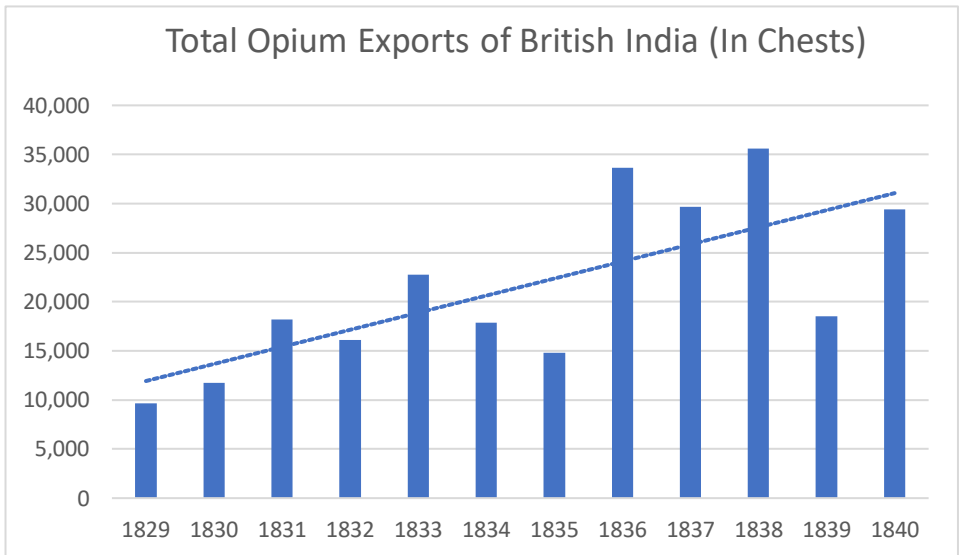


Table 2. Year-kilogram comparison

Year	Chests	Kilogram
1829	9.678	614.553
1830	11.726	744.601
1831	18.186	1.154.811
1832	16.083	1.021.271
1833	22.785	1.446.848
1834	17.862	1.134.237
1835	14.807	940.245
1836	33.616	2.134.616
1837	29.679	1.884.617
1838	35.574	2.258.949
1839	18.510	1.175.385
1840	29.432	1.868.932

(Data: Rowntree, Joshua)

A look at the accounting records kept by the British Raj shows that opium exports to trade ports in China increased nearly sixfold during these years.

The First Opium War – “War on Sanctions”

In 1839, the Chinese government ordered Commissioner Lin to stop the opium trade due to the inability of the authority in the region to prevent smuggling. In his year in office, Commissioner Lin first confiscated and destroyed the goods of British merchants in the Canton/Guangzhou area to end the shadow trade. This situation made the British retaliate and the British increased exports and brought their battleships to the region. Tension in the region; evolved to war when British soldiers who committed crimes in China were not handed over to Chinese authorities for trial. (Chang, Hsin-Pao)

In response, the Chinese administration brought its navy to the region and embargoed the trade ports and stopped the trade by force. In 1840, the British landed an army in the region and went into war readiness. Silence in the region ended in 1841 when Britain attacked the Chinese navy and destroyed the embargo forces, and the war began. In the same year, the Chinese army was defeated by the British, and the city of Canton was occupied. In 1842, with the occupation of the city of Nanjing, the war ended in favor of England. Britain with the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842; By taking a large compensation, the island of Hong Kong, four treaty ports outside the Canton area (it should be noted that one of them is Shanghai), it consolidated its authority in the region and paved the way for larger scale trade. (Miron, Jeffrey A., and Chris Feige)

Second and Third Opium War

Peace in the region lasted until 1856, when the Chinese authorities raided the ship "Arrow", which was anchored in Canton, lowered the British flag, and in response, British ships bombarded the city. (Britannica)

France, citing a murdered missionary, also joined the war against China. In 1858 the British navy and army reached Tianjin and defeated the Chinese army. With the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin signed in the same year, the Western States; The presence of an embassy in Beijing, more commercial settlements, and the acceptance of freedom conditions for Christian missionaries. (Miron, Jeffrey A., and Chris Feige) In the continuation of diplomatic negotiations in the ongoing process, China has made opium imports legal again with an 8% customs duty. (Miron, Jeffrey A., and Chris Feige)

In 1859, when the British and French ambassadors were prevented from going to Beijing, tensions rose again in the region. With the Chinese administration disobeying to the treaty, the Third Opium War (Also counted as a continuation of the second war in many sources) began. The fleet assembled under the British, defeated the Chinese Dagu Navy and reached Beijing,

plundering and setting fire the Emperor's summer gardens. The Chinese administration, which was defeated again, transferred the Kowloon peninsula to the British with the Beijing Accord of 1860 and agreed to implement the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin. (Britannica)

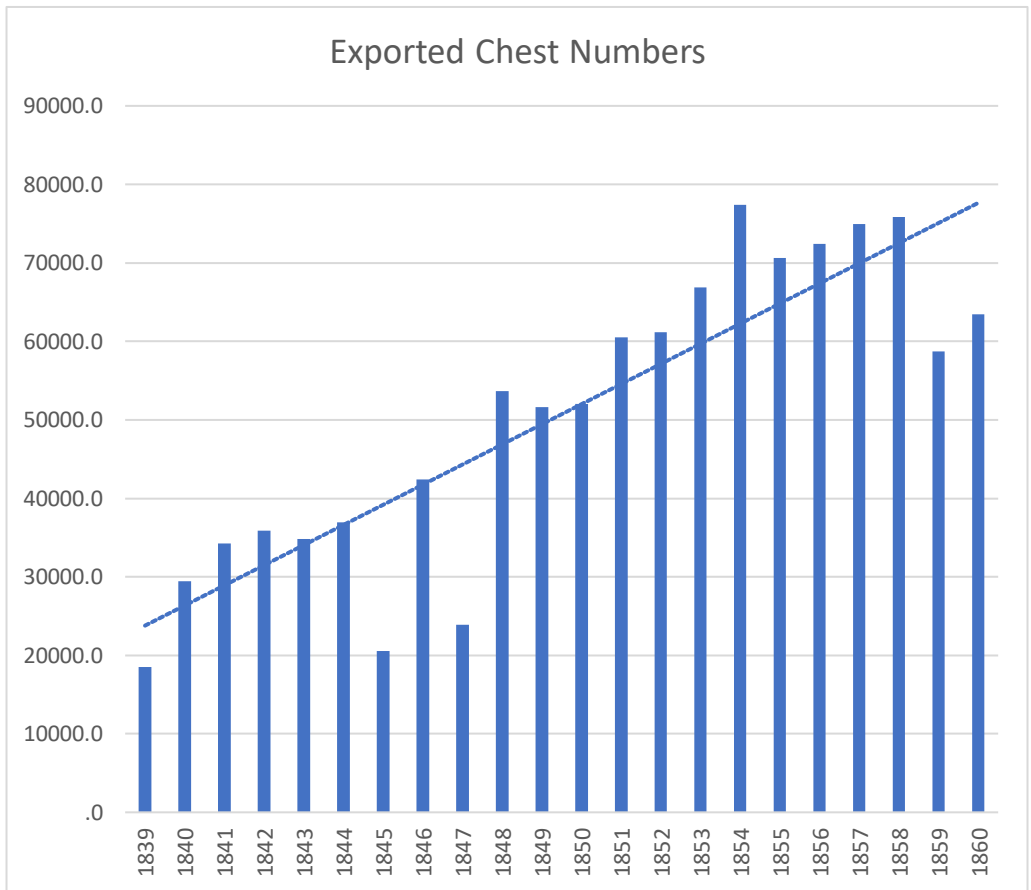
Table 3. Number of Chests Imported to China by the British

Number of Chests Imported to China by the British		
Year	Chest Number	Kilogram
1839	18.510	1.175.385
1840	29.432	1.868.932
1841	34.212	2.172.462
1842	35.887	2.278.825
1843	34.803	2.209.991
1844	36.942	2.345.817
1845	20.553	1.305.116
1846	42.379	2.691.067
1847	23.877	1.516.190
1848	53.679	3.408.617
1849	51.606	3.276.981
1850	52.040	3.304.540
1851	60.474	3.840.099
1852	61.157	3.883.470
1853	66.908	4.248.658
1854	77.379	4.913.567
1855	70.606	4.483.481
1856	72.385	4.596.448
1857	74.966	4.760.341
1858	75.822	4.814.697
1859	58.681	3.726.244
1860	63.464	4.029.964

Opium Trade in Wartime

The Opium Wars lasted a total of seven years, during which the prohibition of opium continued in China. British opium exports, including during the war, continued to increase steadily during this period. Does this show that wars and prohibitions have not harmed trade?

Table 4. Exported Chest Numbers



(Data: Rowntree, Joshua)

The amount of chest exports; Let's try to explain it with the variables of revenue change, import ban and opium war period:

Table 5. Dependent Variable: Change in the number of Exported Chests

Dependent Variable: Change in the number of Exported Chests				
Method: Least Squares				
Sample (adjusted): 1835 1913				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Revenue Change	0.303666	0.094255	3.221.737	0.0019
Import Ban	0.105544	0.055166	1.913.215	0.0595
Opium War	-0.137925	0.113393	-1.216.341	0.2276

(Origin of Data: Rowntree, Joshua)

Since we cannot calculate real revenues (we can't calculate inflation of the area) we are using revenue change ratio rather than total revenues. Both import ban and opium war variables are dummy variables (yes/no variables for ruling year). Import ban years between 1829-1860, opium wars are two different periods as 1840,1841 and 1855-1860.

When statistically examined, there appears to be a negative relationship between the growth of trade and the Opium Wars; with the level of significance is insufficient, it can be said that wars did not impact opium exports of the Raj. Another problem with this analysis is that our data is gathered yearly, near a century but total timespan of wars are barely a decade, this is likely the reason of failing significance.

The main issue to consider is the import ban and trade growth; The relationship between these variables is significant, and even a positive relationship is observed. Unlike the other variable this dummy spans quarter of the sample, making this variable far more trustable.

It should be noted that it would be wrong to conclude from this circumstance that the ban "increases" trade. This increase shows that trade grew more during the prohibited periods than in the period when the bans were lifted. As a complete result, wars and prohibitions could not prevent the increase in opium trade.

The Effect of Opium Bans on Consumption

Jeffrey A., Miron, and C. Feige, who studied the impact of war and prohibition on the opium trade, reached similar conclusions with this research; In their research, the price change of Indian opium was studied to observe the change in the demand of the Chinese people:

"If there was a significant increase in Chinese opium production or opium imported from a third country, exports from India to China would not indicate domestic consumption behavior. But in this case, the shift in demand from Indian opium to Chinese opium should have reduced the export price of Indian opium. Therefore, the study of the quantity and price of opium exports can determine the impact of legalization on Chinese opium consumption." (Britannica)

The article uses data from the same source as our research. Therefore, the results obtained will be explanatory for this research too. According to the conclusion reached by examining the prices:

"The main feature of the data is that there was no increase in opium exports after legalization. (...) If legalization is to be said to have increased consumption, imports must have increased faster after legalization, (...). Therefore, it would be wrong to say that the legalization of the import and use of opium increases consumption, according to the conclusion reached by examining the data." (Miron, Jeffrey A., and Chris Feige)

The Opium Trade in the 20th Century

The appearance of defects of opium

Opium production remained profitable for the British Empire for nearly a century. However, this trade product not only harmed the Chinese people or government, but the consumption of opium products also increased in the Western States throughout the 19th century. The realization of its harms and addictive potential began to be observed in the 1860s; The fact that the majority of deaths occurred was due to the excessive use of opium for pleasure or suicide increased the attention on opium products. The crisis that arose in the West grew to such an extent that in 1874 such societies as the "Anglo-Oriental Society for the Prevention of the Opium Trade" appeared.

Table 6. Exports From British India 1860-1916

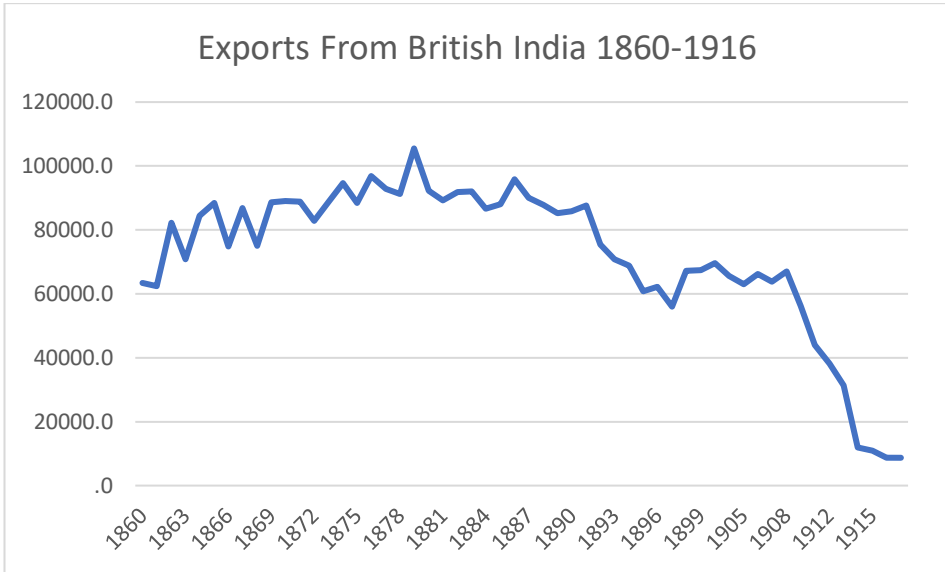


Table 7. Number of opium chests exported by British India between 1860 and 1917.

Year	Chest	Year	Chest	Year	Chest	Year	Chest
1860	63.464	1874	94.745	1888	87.789	1905	62.936
1861	62.362	1875	88.354	1889	85.166	1906	66.274
1862	82.217	1876	96.872	1890	85.753	1907	63.760
1863	70.834	1877	92.820	1891	87.558	1908	66.957
1864	84.491	1878	91.200	1892	75.384	1909	56.191
1865	88.439	1879	105.508	1893	70.841	1910	43.921
1866	74.855	1880	92.192	1894	68.838	1912	38.189
1867	86.930	1881	89.340	1895	60.860	1913	31.374
1868	74.955	1882	91.800	1896	62.258	1914	11.906
1869	88.685	1883	91.964	1897	56.069	1915	10.856
1870	89.074	1884	86.579	1898	67.128	1916	8.786
1871	88.797	1885	87.956	1899	67.350	1917	8.710
1872	82.934	1886	95.839	1900	69.708		
1873	88.724	1887	90.096	1901	65.603		

Data: (Rowntree Joshua) & (Department of Statistics INDIA-CALCUTTA)

When we look at the numbers of opium chest exports by the British Empire through India, we see that the trade peaked in 1879, and the amount gradually decreased in the years that followed. It should be noted that this decrease took place after the lifting of the import ban in China, because the developments that started to manifest themselves in the West in these years and caused the public opinion to turn against opium products were perhaps also experienced in Chinese society.

There is an extensive chapter on this topic in Joshua Rowntree's book. The "Voice of China" section includes an interpretation of the spread of opium in Chinese society from the point of view of the people and the government. In this section, we can see that the reaction against opium that developed in the West also developed in China. Few excerpts from the chapter to support this theory:

While a missionary is preaching her faith in Shaoshing City, an elderly woman from among the people reacts to the missionary, memoir; *"She immediately stood up and came to the missionary; Don't you dare mention that name again! ... I won't hear another word. You foreigners come with opium in one hand and Jesus in the other."*

In the rebellion that broke out in the city of Honan, the settlement belonging to the missionaries was raided by the people, memoir; *"The angry mob, led by the scholars of the city, threw the missionaries out after him, shouting: 'You have burned our palace; you have killed our emperor, you are poisoning our people; and now you have come to teach us virtue.'"*

By adding one of the most detailed memoirs (Dr. Parker), we can support the idea that the Chinese people also developed a reflex against opium; *"As I write these lines (December 10, 1898), the cry of a wife sold by her opium-addicted husband could be heard in the street where our house is. He was one of our closest neighbors and I had known his wife since I came to China, she was very young at the time. When she first started smoking, her mother, who was a widow and had some property, as well as an embroidery teacher in our mission, killed herself by taking opium because she saw no hope in life. Then he sold the houses one by one, then the furniture in the house, then his wife's clothes, then the shrouds that his grandmother had prepared for his funeral, then his own clothes, and now his own wife. Luckily, both of her children died, or he would have sold them too. This is not a single case but can be repeated in every street of every city and town of this vast empire."* (All excerpts: Rowntree, Joshua)

Synthesis of Heroin and Its Effect on Trade

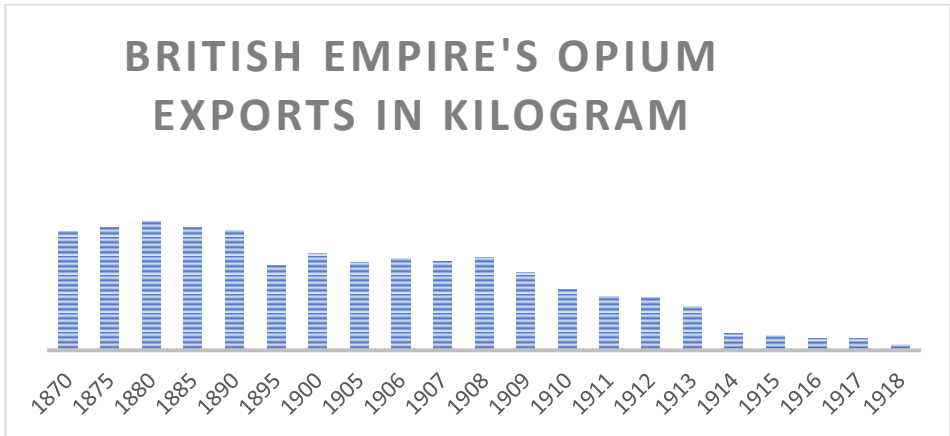
In the period leading to the end of the 19th century, we can say that both Eastern and Western societies began to develop a reflex against opium. This situation not only eroded the opium trade but also caused, the "Miracles of Opium Products" which was going on in Western society, to be shaken. Addictions, which started to show themselves in the middle of the century, and deaths caused by sub-products such as morphine attracted the reaction of society and pushed scientists working in this field to intensify their studies on opium and synthesize cleaner and harmless opium products.

The "Heroin Paradox" of the beginning of the 20th century can be shown as example. It has been claimed that this drug can replace morphine, relieving morphine withdrawal symptoms (...). It took 12 years for heroin to be proven to be one of the most rapidly leading alkaloids to addiction." (Miron, Jeffrey A., and Chris Feige)

"In the last half of the 19th century, several attempts were made to create a safer and less addictive alternative to morphine, and in 1874 heroin was synthesized by the English chemist Alder Wright. In the 1890s, heroin was produced by the German pharmaceutical company Bayer and marketed as a substitute for morphine. In addition to its properties as a powerful pain reliever (...), heroin was also a powerful cough suppressant, and Bayer declared heroin to be a safer alternative to morphine for children suffering from coughs and colds. Unfortunately, (...) heroin turned out to be no less addictive than morphine. By the early 1900s, heroin addiction had become an even bigger problem than morphine addiction in the United States and Western Europe. (Bryson, Ethan O., and Christine E. Boxhorn.)

The advent of heroin and its legal consumption, other medicines and research conducted for years increased the demand for raw opium in both the East and the West. However, this increase lasted shortly.

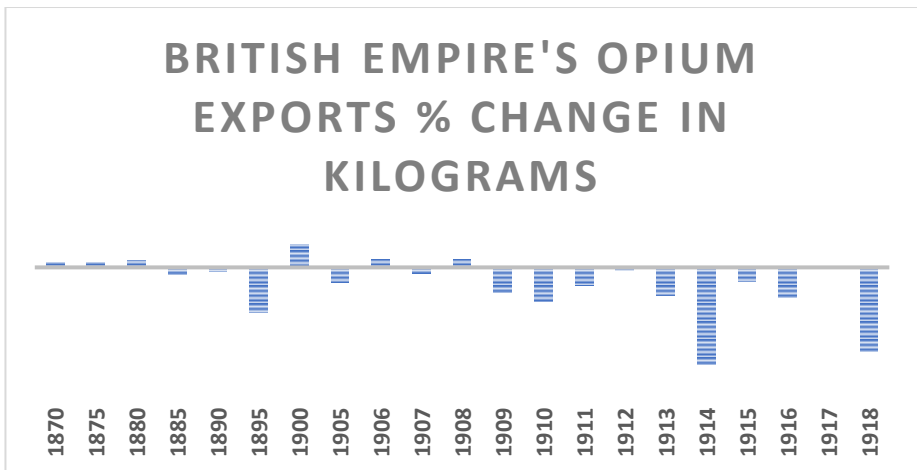
Table 8. British Empire's Opium Exports in Kilogram



Data: (Departments of Statistics, India)

As can be seen from the table, the UK's opium exports were triggered again with the introduction of heroin to the market. (Introduction to the market accepted as ~1890.) It would be difficult to say that this increase is only due to heroin, but it would not be wrong to say that the interest in opium increased again in this period and an important result of this increase in interest was heroin.

Table 9. British Empire's Opium Exports % Change in Kilograms



Data: (Departments of Statistics, India)

We can observe that the opium trade revived at the beginning of the 20th century when we looked at the previous table 9, but when it was visualized again as a percentage change compared to the previous year; We see that the opium trade has been in constant decline since the beginning of the century. We see that opium lost its value in the 20th century and has started to be removed from daily life.

Conclusion

Opium consumption has been in Eastern civilizations since B.C. . However, opium consumption in the Chinese region did not pose a significant problem for the people and the state until the 18th century. This situation changed with the opium tobacco brought by the Westerners, and the new consumption method spread rapidly to China. With the increasing demand, the British made investments to increase opium production and expand the trade infrastructure.

The increasing dependency in China and the fact that opium, which is an unvirtuous commodity whose share in the market is growing, harms the efficiency of trade has led the administration to take action. The Chinese administration, which could not prevent trade with import and consumption bans, tried to stop trade by plundering British warehouses. When the British did not take a step back, a state of war was started, and the Chinese administration was defeated. The treaty concluded after the first war strengthened the commercial infrastructure of the British. The stubbornness of the Chinese administration in its war against opium increased the tension between the two sides again in the following years and the second opium war began. The British emerged victorious from this war and completely removed China's pressure on the opium trade.

When the prohibition and repression period is examined on the axis of trade growth; It has been observed that trade is not affected by these prohibitions and pressures and even grows more during these periods.

Despite the lifting of the prohibitions, the growth of the opium trade could not continue to increase as in previous years, because there was an awareness of opium addiction and its harm in both Eastern and Western societies. Attempts by the chemical industry to synthesize the "clean" products of opium with sub-products such as heroin did not yield results in this period. Thus, opium began to be removed from daily life by societies.

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