In search of a good drink: punches, cocktails, and imperial consumption.

This report examines the relationship between forms of domestic alcohol consumption and the histories of global capitalism—specifically, the shift from punches to cocktails as the most popular form of hard alcohol consumption. It argues that punches served to direct the
products of the periphery into the metropole and that cocktails exist only as a direct result of American engagement with global markets. The availability of new, exotic ingredients from colonial holdings allowed particular kinds of consumption clusters to form in European societies; these newfound tastes then fueled further expansion, as in Sidney Mintz’s analysis of sugar and capitalism. The growing institution of the bar encouraged individual forms of drinking, leading to the downfall of punch and the ascendance of cocktails.

Department
American Studies

Subject
Alcohol
Imperialism
Cultural studies
Food studies
Consumption
Punches
Cocktails
Beverage and capitalism
Alcoholic beverage consumption and capitalism
History of bars
Imperialism and alcoholic beverages
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