

Addiction and Drug Policy

Our group believes that drugs becoming legalized have ethical advantages and disadvantages. Through legalization controlling illicit drugs will create jobs through manufacturing and farming the substance, as well as reduce states influence on punishing drug crimes. As of right now there is an absurd amount of people incarcerated for drug related crimes that would not be filling our penitentiary if certain drugs became legal. Legalization in the long term reduces abuse of substances because of education of the drug as well as social acceptance in society. Many current legal drugs are posing a greater harm on our well being than illegal narcotics. However legalization could also lead to over use and a false conviction that obsessive use of a substance is safe. Legalization could create a negative market for young adolescences that are uneducated on how the substance will harm them.

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Philosophy

The issue of the nature of drug addiction is both controversial and widespread. It involves personal, moral, and ethical choices. This issue becomes directly connected to the debate on whether or not the government should impose laws permitting drugs to be legal or illegal. This leads to a question of personal choice among individuals to use or abuse drugs. In the book *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Problems*, we have read two articles with conflicting views on the nature of drug addiction. These articles provide insight on topics that relate to drug addiction.

Daniel Shapiro's article, "Addiction and Drug Policy" states that he believes that a person's social and cultural environment and the individuals mind set is what influences

or helps predict whether or not they will abuse drugs. He also argues that the effects that drugs have on the brain and what they are composed of does not directly lead to addiction or abuse.

I agree with Shapiro that the drug, set, and setting, influences the nature of drug addiction. As he describes, “Humans are social or cultural animals, not just products of their biochemistry, and this means in part that social norms or rules play a significant part in influencing behavior” (Mappes, 307). I feel that if a person who is in an environment that accepts drug use, they will be more likely to use drugs. Most likely the person will imitate what they see and what is acceptable or the “norm” in those that are around them. If the people are using in moderation and with limitations, it is most likely that that behavior will carry over in the individual. They recognize what their limits are and know what exceeds those limits. In contrast, I feel that this can have an adverse effect when a person is living a life of shame or guilt. If a person is not satisfied with themselves, their family, or does not have sufficient and meaningful goals, they will be more likely to lapse into abusing drugs.

I disagree with what Shapiro says about biochemistry not being a factor in drug addiction. I feel that it is an important component in why people become addicted to certain drugs. If the drug is strong, addictive, and alters ones senses to their liking, this will inevitably lead to frequent usage or addiction. The drugs components will be what make it harder to get off of it, therefore enabling the individual to continue using to avoid feeling the negative withdrawal effects. The drugs makeup increases the chances of addiction. More people would become addicted to the pain killer oxycontin, rather than Tylenol, because it is stronger.

In Goodin's article "The Ethics of Smoking", he uses arguments to say that paternalistic laws can or should be used to help hinder tobacco use. He feels that smokers are not aware and underestimate the risks that smoking entails. He also feels by doing this, people are going against their own beliefs to not cause harm to oneself or others.

I agree with Goodin when he says that, "people smoke many times without any (immediately perceptible) bad effects....they therefore quite wrongly conclude that smoking is safe for them" (Mappes, 286). In my opinion, this is one of the main reasons adults (especially adolescents) begin and keep on smoking. There are usually no immediate consequences so there is no clear reason to stop. It seem by the time the person fully realizes these effects it is too late, they have formed an addiction. I know many people that originally started smoking to be cool, glamorous, or to fit in. After all, that is what the tobacco companies are advertising. Since they do not show an old wrinkly person on oxygen, the idea of the harmful effects of smoking is out of their awareness. They "rationalize further that their smoking behavior as being not all that dangerous" (Mappes, 287).

I think that addiction amounts to psychological thoughts, physical reactions, and social and cultural environments. I feel that an alteration of any one of these ideas could lead to an addiction. If an improvement is to be made while dealing with an addiction, these things need to be addressed and balanced.

In my opinion, I am in the middle when it comes to drug policies and legalization. However, I do feel that there must be certain restrictions when it comes to different types of drugs. I feel that drugs and alcohol should be made available only to adults. Minors should only be able to use a substance such as alcohol in moderation and under the

digression of their guardians. There should be strict punishments if a minor is caught doing otherwise. I think it is important to try to change the way American youths perceive using alcohol. Perhaps this would cause less abuse and crime. The government should be allowed to step in and put controls on substances such as heroin, some pain killers, and cocaine. Without restrictions, it is likely that people will self-destruct. (As we have seen). I also think it might be helpful for the government and companies to aid in treatment and give support to those that are in need.

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2 page article

“Advantages and Disadvantages of Drugs and Addiction”

Drugs being legalized and addiction being accepted can have a disadvantage and an advantage on society. Legalizing all drugs can have a harmful impact on society, but legalizing certain drugs can be profitable. Also along with these advantages and disadvantages government should also step in and set rules or guidelines for certain drugs. Government should also be able to place longer jail times for more hazardous drugs. Even if people know the consequences of the bodily affects or legal affects that drugs and addiction will play in their life, government should still hold a responsibility to guide these person's.

Disadvantages of drugs being legalized and addiction being accepted are the influences on our younger generation, more rehabilitation centers, and the inability for people to rationally asses risks or make decisions. Addiction is powerful, and it can affect a person's thinking and physical actions. As Goodin explains, “A drug addict uses drugs repeatedly, compulsively, wants to stop or cut back on his use but finds it's difficult to do so: at it's worst, drug addiction dominates or crowds out other activities and concerns. The standard view attempts to explain this compulsive behavior by the drug's effects on the brain. Repeated use of an addictive drug induces cravings.” (Shapiro p. 305) Since drug addicts brains may be manipulated, how

do we know that this person can make rational make decisions to quit or live an everyday life. If drugs were to be legalized and addiction was normal then how may society be able to function in a rational manner? Also our younger generation could pick up on this, and as time goes on children will pick up on these habits.

Advantages of drugs being legalized and addiction being accepted are the respect of a person's autonomy, fewer prisons, and financial benefits for government and all persons. People have a right to be able to make their own personal decisions and government should not step in on a person's personal choice. As Goodin helps explain, it should be left up to that person even, especially when that person knows the facts about that drug. "One is "wishful thinking": smokers believing the practice is safe because they smoke rather than smoking because they believe it to be safe. . . It may still be argued that, as long as people had the facts they can and should be held responsible if they chose not to act upon them when they could have done so. It may be folly for utilitarian policymakers to rely upon people's such imperfect responses to facts for purposes of constructing social welfare functions, and framing public policies around them." (Goodin, p. 286, 287) Also if drugs were to be legalized there would be fewer prisons, and more money for the state. There could also be financial benefits for people who are supplying drugs. Now, these people do not have to worry about the police catching them and putting them in jail, drugs can now help a person put food on their table.

Another responsibility that the government should hold is the ability to restrict certain drugs and the extending of jail time for more harmful drugs. A drug such as marijuana which is not extremely harmful if used for a short amount of time should be legalized. Certain drugs such as cocaine and heroine, which if taken graves amount of at one time, could cause death, should be banned. Jail sentences for these types of dangerous drugs should be extended surmountable longer than a jail time for possession of marijuana. If government extends jail time, it will teach more of society not to use these drugs. If a person goes to jail for 2 months, they have that feeling that they have got away with their crime. But if their jail time was for 5 years

for cocaine or heroine, then more fear will be put in the minds and hearts of that person and others around him.

Drugs being legalized and addiction being accepted can hurt and help everyone. Advantages are the giving of his or her autonomy and the ability to financially improve. Disadvantages are a persons inability to make thoughtful decisions, the influence on up and coming generations, and more money can be exported for drug use then imported, relating to rehabilitation centers. For these reasons government has a duty to ban certain drugs and legalize others, such as the comparison of marijuana and cocaine. Also to be able to enforce a strong sense of government, more jail time should be sentenced for more dangerous drugs to teach a lesson. For all of these comparisons society could be benefited and hurt at the same time.

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DRUGS AND ADDICTION

In “Addiction and Drug Policy” (Daniel Shapiro), the author explained the “standard view” of the addictiveness of drugs through the pharmacology view, “their chemical composition and its effects on the brain are such that, after a while, it’s hard to stop using them.” According to him, “hospital patients who get continuous and massive doses of narcotics rarely gat addicted or crave the drugs after release from the hospital.” I agree with him because the patients were using certain amount of drugs under control of doctors. Shapiro also brought out an example for using alcohol responsibly, “people learn to use alcohol responsibly by observing their parents. They see their parents drink at a ballgame or celebrate special occasion, or with food at a meal, but rarely on an empty stomach; they learn it’s wrong to be drunk at work, to drink and drive; they learn that uncontrolled behavior with alcohol is generally frowned upon; they absorb certain norms and values such as “know your limit”, “don’t drink alone”, “don’t drink in the morning”

and so forth.” I also agree with the author about drinking responsibly by learning from out parents. However, I disagree with him when he used those two examples to defend his point of view about drug users, “Even many heavy cocaine users are able to prevent their use from becoming out of control (or out of control for significant periods of time) by regulating the time and circumstances of use (not during work, never too late at night, limit use on weekdays) using with friends rather than alone, employing fixed rules (paying bills before spending money on cocaine), etc”. I would say that this only happens in dreams. When people are attached to drugs such as cocaine, they would forget everything but the cocaine. Once the craving comes, nobody can hold themselves no matter where they are or whom they were with. The author was talking about cocaine as if he was talking about alcohol. We could think about paying bills first before spending some money for a bottle of whisky but not cocaine. Another point is that if users use drugs with their friends, it wouldn't help but increases chance of having other diseases such as HIV.

Meanwhile, Robert E. Goodin in “The Ethics of Smoking” only pointed out some views about cigarettes and smokers. There is a question, “in the case of smoking, the active cooperation of the smoker really is such as to constitute voluntary acceptance of the consequent risks of illness and death.” According to the author, “the false beliefs would lead to decisions that are “far-reaching, potentially dangerous, and irreversible””. He also brought out some examples: There is one “wishful thinking”: “smokers believing the practice is safe because they smoke rather than smoking because they believe it to be safe” (Pears 1984). Or “there is also evidence that they came to acquire those beliefs, and to “forget” what previously knew about the dangers of smoking, after they took up

the habit (Leventhal, Glynn, and Fleming 1987)”. Or “people smoke many time without any (immediately perceptible) bad effects; and as intuitive Bayensians extrapolating from their own experience, they therefore quite reasonably but quite wrongly conclude that smoking is safe for them”. I agree with the author that false beliefs will lead to wrong decisions. Smoking does not cause any effects in near future which would easily make smokers feel safe. Also, people simply think that trying a cigarette would not harm anything. However, people can take up smoking habit easily and after that, it’s very hard to quit.

Generally, I would support any government restrictions for drug use. In my point of view, alcohol could cause effects but we can still control drinking habit; thus, we should give people warnings about effects from drinking alcohol. However, with cigarettes and other drugs, I would support fully restrictions from the Government. First, smoking cigarettes would cause bad effects on our own health. Besides, the smoke also causes effects on other people who don’t smoke. Using drug not only causes bad effects on the users, it also causes problems for others in our society. Along with drugs will be crimes, diseases. Therefore, for drugs such as cocaine or heroin, the government should put it as major concern.

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Drugs and Addiction

Livings in the United States were blessed with an unlimited amount of freedom. One of these freedoms is the use of illicit drugs and the consequences involved with them. One problem with drug use is the label drug addict applied to many socially responsible users. In Shapiro’s article “Addiction and Drug Policy” he addresses the

problem with the term addict stating that, “we label someone as a drug addict because of their behavior” (Shapiro pg.305), and also the problems with drug policies in the United States.

One of the main problems with drug policies in the United States is legality and government restriction issues associated with certain substances. The standard view of drug addicts in our society believes that the drug addict uses the substance repeatedly, compulsively, and the substance dominates out other activities and concerns of the user. This label addict is given many times to socially responsible users who do use the substance repeatedly, but do not let the substance dominate their social concerns. In order to reduce the amount of people being labeled addicts government should change the restrictions on certain types of substances. One substance that should not be associated with these “harder” drugs, and should also be considered for legality in the United States is Marijuana.

One of the main implications for restricting marijuana is the fear that once it is legal it will lead to a higher number of addicts. However there are a number of examples that Shapiro states that suggest otherwise. In many parts of Europe in the Mediterranean countries alcohol is legal to all people regardless of age. However with the drinking available to all people, the consumption is moderate and controlled and there is no violence-alcohol link. “In cultures where potentially intoxicating drugs such as alcohol are viewed as supplements or accompaniments to life, moderate and controlled use will be the norm – hence even though Mediterranean cultures typically consume large amounts of alcohol, there is little alcoholism” (Shapiro pg. 307) On the other hand countries like the United States ban alcohol from minors under the age of 21, and alcohol

is viewed as a way for one to escape ones problems, creating a higher number of alcoholics. Thus the legalization of Marijuana would follow the same kinds of norms as alcohol has in the Mediterranean. By legalizing marijuana and making it a social norm it will not be abused in our society because it will be seen as an accompaniment to social life. People would use Marijuana with friends in a social setting enjoying music or conversation, just like people do with a glass of wine.

Another reason why the legalization of Marijuana will not create a large number of addicts is because a large number of people regulate the time and circumstances of use. By setting a time when it's not ok to smoke up, like during work, late at night, or on week days, than becoming addicted becomes less of an issue. Another supporting factor for legalization is users who are psychologically healthy are likely to engage in controlled moderate marijuana use. These users will fit marijuana into their lives, rather than let marijuana run their life.

In conclusion Marijuana becoming legalized in the United States would not lead to a higher number of drug users or addicts. It would create a higher number of educated users who understand the responsibilities involved with using the drug as a social accompaniment in American culture.