Drugs Legalization Essay, Research Paper

Should Drugs Be Legalized? For several decades drugs have been one of the major

problems of society. There have been escalating costs spent on the war against

drugs and countless dollars spent on rehabilitation, but the problem still

exists. Not only has the drug problem increased but drug related problems are on

the rise. Drug abuse is a killer in our country. Some are born addicts while

others become users. The result of drug abuse is thousands of addicts in denial.

The good news is the United States had 25,618 total arrests and 81,762 drug

seizures due to drugs in 1989 alone, but the bad news is the numbers of

prisoners have increased by 70 percent which will cost about $30 million

dollars. Despite common wisdom, the U.S isn’t experiencing a drug related crime

wave. Government surveys show between 1980 – 1987 burglary rates fell 27

percent, robbery 21 percent and murders 13 percent, but with new drugs on the

market these numbers are up. One controversial solution is the proposal of

legalizing drugs. Although people feel that legalizing drugs would lessen crime,

drugs should remain illegal in the U.S because there would be an increase of

drug abuse and a rapid increase of diseases such as AIDS. Many believe that

legalizing drugs would lessen crime. They point out that the legalization of

drugs would deter future criminal acts. They also emphasize and contrast

Prohibition. When the public realized that Prohibition could not be enforced the

law was repealed. Drug Legalization. Since the prohibition of marijuana in 1965

there has been sparked a new heated controversy over the legalization and/or

decriminalization of this and other banned substances. Many politicians and

lawmakers as well as philosophers, doctors, students, etc. have weighed the

facts and opinions and have come to a decision on which side of the fence to sit

on. he arguments either for or against the legalization of drugs seem to stem

from two main focuses of thought. These two main ideas are that of

consequentialism and deontology. Consequentialism is defined as the position

that an action is right if it has good consequences and wrong if it has bad

consequences. On the other side, is deontology, the position that believes that

actions are right or wrong in themselves, regardless of their consequence. An

easy way to simplify these definitions is to think about how these two thoughts

would apply to murder. A deontologist would believe that murder is wrong simply

because it is the taking of another?s life, that the intrinsic value of murder

is bad so thus ?murder is bad?. A consequentialist on the other hand would

look deeper at the motive and consequence of the murder, then form an opinion

from there. Looking past the intrinsic value of it, what if the one person that

was murdered, was killed because he had a bomb that was going to kill 300

people? If believing in this channel of thought, one might conclude that this

one sacrifice of life saved 300 others, thus the overall outcome is good, so the

action was right. any classical as well as contemporary philosophers maintain

opinions and ideals that can be classified as either consequentialist or

deontological. Classical philosophers such as John Stuart Mill and John Milton,

along with more modern writers like Milton Friedman and Ethan A. Nadelmann are

all examples of consequentialist thinkers. On the deontological side of the coin

reside such well-known purveyors of classical thought as Aristotle and Edmund

Burke, along with contemporaries like William J. Bennett and James Q. Wilson.

The two main ideas of thought held by the two divisions of these gentlemen have

a great deal to do with their positions on the legalization of drugs. It is

important to keep in mind that while the opinions of Friedman or Bennett, for

example, are known because of their writings and expression of these opinions,

we are only assuming at this point what an older philosopher, like Aristotle for

example, would think about the controversy. The deontologist way of thought

would conclude that the use of illegal substances is a bad thing and should be

banned from usage by authority. Aristotle for example believed that the job of

government was to make people virtuous and good. A consequentialist, on the

other hand, would not shun the drug use itself as bad, rather look past the use

of the drug and place their opinion on the outcome of the usage of the drug. The

consequentialist way of thought, coupled with Mill?s idea of the ?Harm

Principle? makes for a ?deeper? look into the right or wrong of drug use.

Loosely paraphrased, the Harm Principle can be summarized as the rights of an

individual extend as far as his neighbors? face. Meaning that personal rights

are only endowed upon and justly held by the bearer of these rights so as long

that they do not harm nor infringe upon others? rights (Mill). In keeping with

this, a consequentialist would conclude that the use of drugs and the

legalization to further the use of these drugs are not a bad things so as the

consequences were not ill and no one but the user was possibly harmed.

Bibliography

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