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Submission date: 28-May-2021 06:36AM (UTC-0700)

Submission ID: 1596039315

File name: Legalizing_Marijuana.edited.docx (21.89K)

Word count: 2263

Character count: 12476

Legalizing Marijuana

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Abstract

The legalization of marijuana is a hot topic among many and heightens the interests of many nations. For many decades, the topic has been discussed and has brought different world bodies like WHO and CDC. There are moral and ethical, and reasonable arguments regarding the use of cannabis, especially in medicine. The medical industry is one of the biggest promoters of the legalization of marijuana. According to healthcare experts, cannabis or marijuana is a miracle drug that can help alleviate some critical ailments like cancer. Regardless, marijuana remains one of the significant illegal substances worldwide that has a global market reach. The naturally growing plant has a wide range of properties that contribute to the health and recovery of patients, numerous economic opportunities like job creation and income tax generation. However, when abused, the drug can be disastrous and can lead to medical conditions like mental and physical disorders.

Legalizing Marijuana

Prohibition is one social experiment that failed in the 20th century, leading to the transformation of millions of people into criminals by outlawing alcohol consumption in countries like America. Prohibition has created a new class of criminals who were previously involved in the legal production and distribution of legally allowed substances like alcoholic drinks. By the time the United States repealed the prohibition, it had learned its lesson the difficult way. The government would not involve itself in repeating the same mistake. However, the same thing is being witnessed today, where millions are regarded as criminals simply because they smoke marijuana. Consequently, many find themselves in prison as a result of using marijuana. This paper aims to critically analyze relevant evidence and research by looking at both sides of the argument on legalizing marijuana before concluding that marijuana should be legalized.

Legalizing marijuana is a controversial issue in society, with varied opinions regarding the issue. Some individuals believe that legalizing marijuana will create many societal problems among its users and society (Caulkins, 2016). They propose that marijuana should be inhibited to make it hard for potential users to consider using marijuana. Consequently, these individuals hope to limit the consumption of marijuana and contribute to the community's overall well-being. On the other hand, another group argues that the use of marijuana cannot be eradicated via any other restriction or artificial government (Campbell et al., 2017). As long as there is demand for marijuana, people will still smoke the drug. In this regard, there is a fundamental question that must be asked. Under what conditions and in what legal and institutional environment? If marijuana is prohibited, its value will lessen rather than rise. In addition to that, the prohibition of cannabis will result in the emergence of black markets, leading to a well-organized criminal industry dealing with marijuana. One crucial aspect highlighted by researchers is the aspect of

individual liberties. Regardless of country, the society is grounded on the fundamental ideas of individual rights and freedoms. Each person has the right under the constitution to act according to their preferences, provided they do not infringe on the rights of others. Some entities may not share these shared rights and liberties, but that does not give them the authority to enforce their spirit on others. Therefore, marijuana ought to be legalized.

Similarly, legalizing cannabis will increase revenues through the taxation of cannabis products. If cannabis is compared to alcohol, it is clear that alcohol is more dangerous, based on the many cases of accidents and other related ailments arising from alcohol consumption. However, alcohol consumption is legal though it causes addiction among its users. In many countries, alcohol is legal though the taxes imposed on alcoholic drinks are significantly high, earning different countries significant income through taxation. The same strategy can be used to legalize marijuana. For instance, the government can legalize cannabis and introduce taxes on marijuana cigarettes. In this strategy, the government can collect billions in taxes, which can be used to develop the country. Many governments lose this revenue because marijuana use is illegal. A government cannot collect taxes on an illegal product. Despite the reluctance, marijuana is still being planted, imported or exported, and sold to different consumers. The taxation of marijuana and other related marijuana products can earn the state and federal government vast amounts of revenue.

Moreover, in a country like America that is financially and economically strong, there are high unemployment rates. The legalization of cannabis can create a whole new industry, with millions of jobs created. The jobs can vary from transportation, planting, harvesting, processing, and marketing, among others. A workforce is ready to provide the much-needed services should marijuana be legalized because human resources will be needed in the new industry. With the

creation of a new cannabis industry, the unemployment rate will drop. Also, large farms will be established to address the increasing demand for cannabis products from legitimate companies set up to deal with the increasing demand for marijuana products. At the same time, vast amounts of money will be saved. Money currently channeled to fight cannabis users, from the court proceedings and the cost of keeping marijuana users incarcerated. A considerable portion of taxpayer's money is spent on the war with cannabis users because its use is illegal. If the drug is legalized, the number of incarcerated individuals using marijuana will reduce. These entities will contribute to the economic development of a country. The congestion currently witnessed in the prison system will also reduce, hence saving money in the process. Also, the money saved can be channeled into meaningful developments that can improve healthcare, education, and other crucial services. In addition to that, legalizing marijuana will ease the pressure on the criminal justice system. Presently, the criminal justice system is imperfect, hence fashioning a series of repeat criminals due to a prison system that forces incarcerated entities to be more challenging than previously. Prisons are also overcrowded because of minor unnecessary sentences on crimes like the possession of cannabis. In the end, these felons who are using marijuana as a coping mechanism are introduced to the prison system and adapt to the threat and violent ways of surviving in prisons.

Similarly, clinical trials have shown that the use of marijuana can improve a patient's condition and many health experts support its use (Saadeh & Rustem, 2018). The experts argue that prohibiting the use of marijuana can negatively affect the overall system of social relationships and the well-being of many. In this regard, the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes is recommended. This argument is valid because healthcare practitioners should use appropriate interventions they consider relevant in treating patients. According to Saadeh and

Rustem (2018), the abolitions of the restrictions placed on the use of marijuana can allow healthcare practitioners to prescribe medical marijuana to improve the conditions of patients, especially those suffering from chronic illnesses like cancer and diabetes.

At the same time, it is worthy of examining the underlying arguments fashioned against the legalization of cannabis. As suggested by Keyhani et al. (2018), the first dispute is that marijuana should not be legalized because it can increase the number of direct consumers and alter the societal composition of future generations by encouraging them to start using the drug. In addition to that, another argument is that marijuana users are likely to graduate and start using hard drugs like cocaine and heroin. The use of marijuana can also create problems for its users and society in general. Critics also argue that marijuana is addictive, just like alcohol. Once an individual starts using the drug, it is not easy to stop (Caulkins, 2016). Some researchers like Keyhani et al. (2018) have also raised concerns about the addiction to marijuana caused by the alteration of the neurological components of the brain. Also, Caulkins (2016) calls for attention to the negative consequences of marijuana on society. Typically, the use of marijuana is linked to drug abuse, which affects society.

Therefore, any cases of cannabis misuse should be punishable by law to regulate the current societal problems. However, according to Campbell et al. (2017), these arguments are not valid. For instance, legalizing cannabis does not increase its demand. The current demand for marijuana forces supply to increase, and a controlled environment for its ratification is necessary. In this perspective, the only incentive structure that has changed is that of cannabis producers. As the risks increase, the marijuana producers will increase their prices, hence attracting criminals. Thus, the consequences of prohibiting cannabis use are different from the initial goal. According

to Avery (2018), the number of individuals using hard drugs and had earlier used soft drugs is higher. However, the use of soft drugs never automatically lead to use of hard drugs.

Furthermore, it is also possible that some people chose to start using hard drugs from the beginning and not soft drugs. Even if the argument is valid about using soft drugs like marijuana and subsequent adoption of hard drugs, it does not give the government authority to intervene in people's choices. Individual rights cannot be overlooked based on some government bureaucrats who do not believe in societal liberties.

Some authors cited have used ethos, logos, and pathos to persuade readers regarding the use of applicable rhetorical devices or fallacies. Incorporating these rhetorical devices is meant to alter the public opinion of individuals with the view of supporting or opposing the author's position. For instance, Campbell et al. (2017) strongly show the reader that the legalization of cannabis is championed by society. This opening incorporates pathos, a crucial rhetorical scheme, into his piece. Although it is simple, Campbell and the other authors provoke people's curiosity to continue reading the piece. Towards the end of the article, Campbell et al. (2017) include pathos when they say accepting cannabis for its medicinal value was the first stage in the legalization process. The use of this sentence allows the authors to appeal to the emotions of individuals, and the stretch is meant to show people that marijuana should be legalized because of its numerous medicinal values. In this regard, when critics read this sentence, their perception is likely to change if they did not know of the medicinal value of marijuana. In addition, the incorporation of ethos and pathos is witnessed when Keyhani et al. (2018) suggest that no one has ever died because they used cannabis. This argument offers readers solace. Keyhani et al. (2018) also use logos by quoting high authority sites like CDC. By using such statistics, the

author appeals to the logic of the readers. The use of any statistics has numerous benefits because it appeals to readers and helps build credibility and persuade them to change their opinion.

In addition to that, Caulkins (2016) also incorporates rhetorical devices in his arguments on the dangers of marijuana consumption. Jonathan's title is simple but powerful enough to provoke curiosity. The "real dangers of cannabis" persuade readers that there is a significant danger in the use of marijuana that surpasses the general dangers highlighted by different authors. In this manner, Caulkins (2016) creates pathos and uses logos by highlighting the history of the legal status of marijuana and by agreeing with research regarding the negative consequences of cannabis as suggested in various inquiries to give him credibility and authority. In addition to that, Jonathan's incorporation of ethos is felt almost immediately when he says that the arguments against the legalization of marijuana are genuine but miss the fundamental point. He draws the readers' attention to that the rudimentary issue with marijuana is neither death nor organ failure but the use of cannabis as a performance enhancement drug and an alluring product with accustoming inclinations.

To sum it up, cannabis legalization is controversial. Objective scrutiny shows that its legalization is the correct decision that should be embraced. By legalizing marijuana, the interests of everyone will be harmonized. The consumers will access the product at relatively low prices and in good quality. The authorities will be able to regulate the growth, production, and distribution of marijuana products. Sanctioned producers will manage to generate revenue while operating in a legally sanctioned environment devoid of exploitation or fears. The entire population will benefit because tax burdens will be lower, and there will be numerous job opportunities in the marijuana industry. Numerous empirical evidence from various states in the United States and other European countries where marijuana is legalized indicates social benefits

like reducing crime rates and improved health in patients with chronic ailments, among others. In this regard, legalizing cannabis is desirable and practical moving forward because the present mechanism, like the war on drugs, is consuming lots of resources but showing minimal desired outcomes. The current legal norms should be revised, and people's thoughts ought to be respected regarding their choice and individual consumption habits because it is the basis of a free society. Legalizing marijuana is a crucial step towards the full realization of the democratic tenets in the world.

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