Sociology 1306-14638

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Problems of wellbeing and behavior

Drugs can be described as a substance that when it is consumed, in one way or another, affects the structure or the function of the person’s body. With this definition there are many substances that can be considered drugs such as: coffee, aspirin, morphine, cocaine, or plants that cause these effects. As demonstrated, this can range from everyday concoctions to illicit and illegal material. These distinctions separate the kinds of drugs that are acceptable in social and legal society, but they can be further categorized such as with prescription medications. This categorization does help in understanding the types of drugs even though there doesn’t appear to be a pattern of the effects of a drug with how it is viewed by society and how it is treated under the law.

The types of drugs are separated according to their psychological effects, potency, and number of effects on the body. The common classification includes the categories of depressants, hallucinogens, marijuana, narcotics, and stimulants. Depressants slow down the activity of the nervous system resulting in drowsiness, relaxation, and reducing anxiety and pain. In the depressants classification there are two sub-categories: analgesics, which reduce pain including aspirin, ibuprofen and acetaminophen, and sedatives, which help people relax including alcohol and sleep medications such as Valium. Hallucinogens influence the mind to perceive delusions or hallucinations which include substances like LSD, PCP, ecstasy, and mescaline. Marijuana doesn’t quite fit into any of the other categories, so it receives its own along with its close relative hashish. The effects of this category include distortion of space and time, euphoria, hunger, increased sensory perception, and relaxation. Narcotics, like depressants, slow down the nervous system and are sometimes categorized under them as well, though they are often separated by their potency, and they are all derived from opium. They are very effective at relieving pain, and some are prescribed for relieving extreme pain. Examples include codeine, heroin, methadone, and morphine, all of which induce drowsiness, euphoria, and relaxation. Stimulants are the opposite of depressants and act upon the nervous system by speeding it up instead resulting in increased alertness, energy, producing euphoria, and anxiety. Examples of which include but are not limited to caffeine, cocaine, amphetamines, Ritalin, and tobacco.

The five social patterns of drug use are gender, race and ethnicity, education, region of country, and religiosity. Gender shows a disparaging line between the two, where males are more likely to engage in the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. Race and ethnicity show the different representations that each demographic has depending on the substance that is being used. Whites are far more likely to use alcohol than others, while American Tribesmen are more likely to use tobacco and illegal drugs. Education shows a reversing pattern as a person’s level of education changes, with the more educated being more likely to use alcohol but less likely to use tobacco while showing no difference for illegal drugs. Regions of country show only minor differences in alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use, thought the south and west regions differ the most in alcohol by about 11 percent. Religiosity shows a clear distinction, as people become more religious there is a marked drop in one’s tendency to use drugs, though this doesn’t say which kinds of drugs which can cause complications as some drugs like alcohol are used in religious ceremonies.

There are five strategies that are used in an attempt to reduce crime. The first is a national effort to reduce poverty and improve neighborhood living conditions. This is done as, though most poor people do not commit crimes, street crime is committed far more often by the poor or near poor areas. A second strategy involves changing how parents raise their children. This includes socializing patterns as the child is being raised, theorizing that if this is done it will result in a marked drop in the national crime rate. A third strategy involves expansion of the ECI, early childhood intervention, program. This program seeks to provide social workers, nurses, or other professionals to young, poor mothers shortly after giving birth, as they are often at high risk for later behavioral problems. A fourth strategy calls for a national effort to improve nation’s schools and schooling. The effort involved replacing dilapidated schools with repaired and better equipped ones. The final strategy is a set of minor strategies scattered around improvements to the criminal justice system that should help in reducing recidivism and save money that can be better spend on for other more effective programs like the ECI discussed earlier.

Of the strategies discussed I do believe that they have worked, though not to the same degree as others. Crime tends to happen as a product of one’s environment first and foremost, so I would place the efforts that attempt to give adolescents better schooling, schools, living conditions, support, and conditions to be the most effective as a long-term solution. The strategy to improve the criminal justice system is a combination of both long-term and short-term, more emphasis on the short-term, as though it is more immediate to help the short-term the law is a constantly changing and varying concept that will cause further revisions to the justice system as the nation develops.