I. Drugs, the War on Drugs and Social Problems

A. Three problems

1. Psychoactive drugs use

2. “Drug War”

3. Hypocrisy

a. users

b. labeling: “drugs”

B. Problem one: drug use

1. users

a. 28.4 million illegal drug users

b. 31.2 million legal psychoactive drug users

i. pain killers

ii. mood enhancers

2. personal harm

a. physiological

b. psychological

3. social costs

a. health costs

b. violence

c. family

C. Problem Two: “War on Drugs”

1. Doesn’t work

a. previous “war”

b. this “war”

2. Public relations campaign:

a. Just say no

b. anti-marijuana commercials

i. mj and sexual assault

ii. mj and auto accidents

iii. mj and children drowning

iv. “Mom”

c. drugs and terrorism

3. Creates black market

a. secondary economy

b. huge source of revenue

i. corrupt governments

ii. law enforcement

c. violence

4. health costs

a. impure drugs, dirty needles

b. social costs ($): infectious diseases

5. bureaucracy costs

a. $50 billion per year: state and local

b. prison: + $4 billion per year

c. doesn’t solve the problem

6. racism

a. crack cocaine 5 grams 5 years

b. Blacks only 13% of illegal drug users but

8x more likely to be incarcerated

7. Families

a. broken families

b. juvenile delinquency

c. social services: no food stamps, public housing

8. political disenfranchisement

a. 13% of black males

b. 30% in Florida

E. Problem Three: Hypocrisy

1. you are getting high on alcohol

2. relaxing with your addictive nicotine fix

3. doing mood altering prescription drugs

4. drugging your child; higher scores/social control

a. US: 80% of Ritalin world wide

B. US vs GB: US 5x more likely

F. Labeling

1. addictive vs non-addictive

2. harmful vs non-harmful

3. social costs vs no social costs

4. Pre-1914 and Harrison Act (“dope fiends” paradise)

a. prescription opium

b. over the counter patent medicines: cocaine, marijuana, morphine, opium

c. morphine use: recreational and medicinal

d. cocaine toothache drops

e. marijuana cigarettes for asthma

f. heroin: cure for addiction

G. The power to label

1. politicians

2. moral elites: religious groups

3. mass media: news, entertainment, public service

4. Labeling and minorities

a. Chinese and opium

b. Hispanics and marijuana

c. Irish and alcohol

d. Native Americans and hallucinogens

e. Black Americans and Crack Cocaine

H. The power to avoid the label

1. large drug dealing corporations

2. Means

a. campaign financing and lobbying

b. advertising

c. think tanks, experts, and legal resources

I. Public Health approach

1. label: health care problem

a. save health costs

b. save law enforcement costs/incarceration

2. Distribution: government distributes and regulates

a. gain: revenue and health costs

b. cost: government bureaucracy

3. Resources to health care

a. treatment

b. cost

4. Education (not DARE)

5. No advertisements

6. Re-enfranchise people who lost their right to vote

if there incarceration was “non-violent”