THE STRUCTURE AND THE DYNAMICS OF THE ILLEGAL DRUG MARKET IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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THE STRUCTURE AND THE DYNAMICS OF THE ILLEGAL DRUG MARKET IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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PURPOSE
- The paper explores the structure and dynamics of the drug market in the Republic of Croatia.
- The aim of the research was to collect data on the functioning of the drug market at all levels in the territory of the Republic of Croatia, with special emphasis on the role of juveniles in the drug market.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS
- Research is limited by the voluntary consent of a very small number of respondents, but we believe that the results obtained are of great importance for understanding the structure and dynamics of the drug market in the Republic of Croatia.

Market organization

"All combinations are possible."
The market is divided, according to the sample of convicted drug addicts, and "so called" hard and light drugs are mostly sold separately. Young people sell grass and amphetamines, older cocaine, and drug addicts sell heroin. It is always known where the money is left and after the drug is picked up in a place known only to buyers. This location changes every month, and the new location is notified to us via messenger.

Wholesale distributors decide who will deal what kind of drugs, according to the sample of juveniles. They also state that the market is organized pyramidally, from the main supplier in Croatia to small street dealers - where the street dealer has everything because everything is being sought. Sales are done in large, medium and small ("up to 5 grams, up to 10 grams, up to 50 grams, up to 100 grams, half a kilo, a kilo, a kilo and more"). Large and medium dealers have long been on the market, secured by mutual interconnection, but also with connections within the police and the army.

"It is known who is the big scale dealer and who’s the small scale, and there is no upward progress. Retail trade is highlighted by the reputation, on the medium scale through recommendations, for a guarantee because the goods are taken up (later payment), and wholesale is the riskiest and it is only done through a very specific kind of connections and guarantees."

Cooperation

"Bigger players have already split up the territory, but are still trying to lower the price and take over the market by higher quality of goods or violence," both juvenile and adult sample agrees. "They all cooperate, sell to each other, exchange goods, information about routes and channels, help protect each other from the police."

"Of course, we cooperate, every month somebody else in the group pays the police inspector, mostly about 7,000,00 for important information. We meet and talk about street traffickers, who earns the biggest money, the weakest link is snitched to the police, so they can do something and leave us alone. The one who snitch the information to the police is sent over the border and it is set to fall to the biggest money, the weakest link is snitched to the police, so they can do something and leave us alone. That’s the reality, we’re always two steps ahead."

Reseller recruitment

The convicted addicts explain how they recruit younger generations who need additional earnings, that is, "they come and ask themselves to want to deal, then get a smaller amount and are observed to see if they are in co-operation with the police" and "sometimes it all takes for someone to smell out the easy money." Still, "for reselling large quantities of drugs a stable, mature people who are financially stable and family-minded are usually recruited."

_Perspective boys, juveniles_ start with "17 years [...] by recommendation, you have to have a ‘pedigree’, a referral from a sound name from the criminal world," and "50% of the market belongs to the police."

While most juveniles decide to engage in the whole job for quick and easy earning or entertainment, older adults choose to opt for financial gain for paying off debts or securing survival.

FINDINGS
- The results indicate that the drug market in the Republic of Croatia is extremely dynamic and can confirm the approaches of drug-related crime approaches supported by the EMCDDA (2007) - psychopharmacological (drug use leads to criminality due to psychopharmacological influence of the consumed drugs), economic model (drug abusers are most often involved in property crimes that provide resources for further consumption) and a "systemic model" that implies the perpetuation of violent offences associated with drug distribution. Furthermore, the findings show different aspects of getting involved in drug crime for juveniles and adults which need to be further understood.

ORIGINALITY / VALUE
- The results indicate that the drug market in the Republic of Croatia is extremely dynamic and can confirm the approaches of drug-related crime approaches supported by the EMCDDA (2007) - psychopharmacological (drug use leads to criminality due to psychopharmacological influence of the consumed drugs), economic model (drug abusers are most often involved in property crimes that provide resources for further consumption) and a "systemic model" that implies the perpetuation of violent offences associated with drug distribution. Furthermore, the findings show different aspects of getting involved in drug crime for juveniles and adults which need to be further understood.

Understanding the drug market is important for (1) legislative and strategic action planning; it is necessary to understand supply directions, price elasticity and natural competition; (2) knowledge of higher levels of the market (production and distribution): of great help in designing prevention activities, sentencing policy and other efforts to enforce laws related to drug abuse; (3) understanding local retail trade operations: great help in designing and assessing damage reduction, treatment, and enforcement and improvements of drug abuse related laws. This research has also set the necessary predispositions for further research of the role of juvenile in the world of drugs.

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