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Drug Situation in Modern Society at Russian and World Levels

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The paper gives the sociological analysis of drug threat, describes the main regions of drug production, and defines the common bases for drug situation at both Russian and world levels. Furthermore the author indicates the danger of expansion of synthetic drug production and consumption. As a result there need to foster integration of world society in the course of counteracting illegal turnover of drugs and psychotropic means.

Keywords: drug situation, drug addiction of population, spread of drug addiction, counteracting illegal turnover of drugs and psychotropic means.

Drug business and non-medical use of narcotics continue spread in Russia and world as a whole, despite the efforts of world society and governments to counteract their spread.

According to UN data about 230 million people or 5 % of adult population at least once have tried one of the forbidden drugs. The number of drug addicts recorded officially is approximately 27 million of people, which is 0.6 % of whole adult population¹.

Drugs continue spread and we notice formation of “lesion focus” of drug addiction, location of which is modified by regional, geopolitical, socio-cultural and geographical peculiarities.

A high degree of “movement” is experienced by cocaine traffic. Cocaine is an alkaloid of tropane class, which is traditionally prevalent in

the United States of America, South America, Australia and countries of Western Europe. Approximately 300 tons of cocaine are imported annually into the United States; much of this amount comes through Central America and the Caribbean countries. Western and Southern African region are actively used to smuggle cocaine from South America to North America and Europe.

Cannabinoid drugs, manufactured from hemp (cannabis), are more prevalent in North America, Australia and New Zealand, Western Europe, in which cannabis is used by about 25 million people. On average, 15 % of 15-year old students in the states – members of the European Union consume this drug more than 40 times a year. According to the International Narcotics Control Board, the abuse of cannabis is experienced by

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44 % of school students of the Czech Republic and about quarter of school students in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Slovenia. Also, the use of cannabinoid drugs is common in some countries in North Africa and Asia.

There remains quite an acute problem of the spread of heroin and other semi-synthetic opiate drugs, significant turnover of which is observed in Russia and in the countries of Central and South Asia. Afghanistan plays a special role here as a highly organized production centre of opium poppy, heroin and morphine.

Large quantities of drugs are manufactured illegally for the internal consumption and for sale in Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, where there are over 3 million drug users according to estimations.

Opioid drugs on a fully synthetic base are fairly common in the United States, the states of Central and Northern Europe, Central Asia and Russia. The illicit cultivation of opium poppy and illegal turnover of other opioid drugs in South America are not decreasing. Opiates remain a serious problem in East and Southeast Asia. Reported seizures of large batches of these types of narcotics happen in the majority of countries in the region, including Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, China, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, and Japan.

Amphetamine drugs as powerful stimulants of the central nervous system, with the exception of ecstasy, are more widespread in the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. One of the worrying factors is the recent rapid increase in consumption of these drugs in South Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. A sharp increase in the spread of amphetamine dependence in the UK seems quite symptomatic. This drug is introduced by mainly smuggling from China, and it is illegally manufactured in laboratories in South Africa.

Sufficiently characteristic is the spread of the so-called ecstasy – semi-synthetic psychoactive compound amphetamine, as well as the spread of tranquilizers and sedatives in the developed countries, including the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the states of Eastern and Western Europe (with the exception of France to some extent), the Baltic countries and Russia. In the recent years Balkan drug market is filled by produced in clandestine laboratories local synthetic drugs, which can become a serious alternative to the heroin, delivered by smugglers.

The sociological analysis of modern society can help to specify the basic components of the drug situation in the global society.

1. Consumption of illicit drugs remains generally stable. In the mature markets, including developed countries, there is a clear tendency towards stabilization of the growth of drug use, but in developing countries (in particular, the countries of Africa, South and Central America, South Asia), drug use continues to grow. Heroin, cocaine and other drugs kill annually about 200,000 people, destroying families and bringing disaster to thousands of people. Illicit drugs undermine the socio-economic development and contribute to the growth of crime, instability, insecurity and spread of HIV infections².

2. The most important component is the characteristic functioning of the highly organized world centre of production of heroin and other hard drugs in Afghanistan, which produces up to 93 % of the global amount of opiates. Great cultivation of Afghan drugs leads to significant correlation of scales of their global distribution. For example, in 2011 the world production of opium reached 7,000 tons. It is more than 20 % below the peak level of 2007, but higher than in 2010, when blight destroyed almost half of the crop of opium poppy cultivated in Afghanistan. Each year, the Afghan heroin brings to death

about 100,000 people in the whole world. There is an extremely dangerous tendency of sprawl of heroin narcocalaster in the north of Afghanistan in the direction of “Caspian Five” – Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran³.

3. The share of produced in Afghanistan opium and heroin in the world market is about 76 %, in Russia – 90 %. Currently, the Afghan heroin through Iran and Pakistan goes to black drug markets in Europe and North America. There has been an increase in the scale of spread of drug users in Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The obvious negative pattern is the result of inefficient long-term strategy “Security belt around Afghanistan”, which was initiated by the UN and eventually proved unsuccessful due to the large gaps in the Afghan-Tajik and Turkmen-Afghan boundaries.

4. One of the components of the characteristics of modern drug situation is the increased demand for psychoactive substances derived from the free turnover, illegal tranquillizers and sedatives that have psycholeptic properties. In particular, the total area under coca bush cultivation in the world fell by 18 % from 2007 to 2010 and by 33 % from 2000, however, efforts to reduce the production, trafficking and consumption of the main illicit drugs of plant origin are offset by the growth of production of psycholeptic drugs, including a significant increase in the production and consumption of psychoactive substances, which are not covered by services of international control (for example, caffeine, hallucinogens, tobacco, volatile solvents)⁴.

5. There is support for international monitoring of consumption of illicit drugs on the background of increase in consumption of psychoactive legal substances. For example, the intensive distribution of tobacco covers 25 % of the population older 15 years, which is 10 times

higher than the distribution of illicit drugs and exceeds the alcohol consumption by 8 times. This is due to the effect of the age of deterrence as a person older 30 years is less likely to break the law by consuming drugs. So, respectively, the consumption of licit psychoactive substances, which also include naswar and various psycho-depressants, is much more evenly distributed according to age groups, than the use of illicit drugs⁵.

There has been an increase in the transnational scale of organization of the world drug trafficking. At present, in the global geopolitical area there are a lot of syndicates, cartels and other organized criminal entities that share the regions of drug turnover. The activity of these syndicates and cartels implies a system of specific, well-established criminal acts, such as the organization of planting and cultivation of drug crops, the production of drugs, buying wholesale (procurement), transportation and marketing. This chain is looped over the consumer of narcotics. In modern conditions, cartels and syndicates often appear under the names of various companies, seeking ways to become legalized; they have their own planes, modern weapons, the latest technology. Leaders and members of organized criminal structures and their member groups have set themselves the task and make efforts to hamper the activities of law enforcement agencies to investigate and detect drug offenses. Profiting from the spread of drugs, drug dealers tend not only to increase the volume of them but to legalize, so they enter a new phase of criminal activity – the intertwining of various illegal and legal operations, namely, money laundering, violations of foreign exchange transactions, the organization of prostitution and sale of people, gambling, trade of arms and antiques. There is a tendency to expand the scale of transnational organizations of the world drug trafficking and drug business.

The drug situation in the world and its components obviously affect the drug situation in the Russian Federation. The relationship of international and Russian drug situation appears brighter due to the integration of Russian and international drug trafficking, and in particular the laws of distribution of drug dependence.

Analyzing the development of the drug situation in Russia, it is necessary to note the presence of pessimistic prospects in this field. Specificity of similar situations for both international and Russian markets does not allow comforting public and government that are aware of the detrimental drug epidemic spread.

Currently, the drug business in the Russian Federation is equivalent to 5 billion U.S. dollars, accounting for about 1 % of the world drug market. According to the State Statistics Committee of Russia the population in the country was just over 143 million people at the end of 2012⁶. According to figures released by the Director of Russian Federal Drug Control Service V.P. Ivanov, the actual number of people who use drugs for non-medical purposes in the country is estimated as 8.5 million people, or about 6 % of the population⁷. Moreover, 20 % of the total number of drug addicts in Russia according to statistics

are students, 60 % – young people aged 16-30 years, 20 % – people of older-age⁸. So nearly a fifth of young people, and the number of people in this group is about 31 million people, have had experience of consumption of drugs⁹. According to a survey commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation in 2010, in the age group of 11-24 the proportion of people, who use or have used any drugs, is dangerously high – 25 %¹⁰.

The number of drug users is constantly increasing. Thus, only in 2011 the number of people registered in the medical institutions because of drug use increased by 5 %, and by 3 % there increased the number of people who asked for medical care and who were diagnosed as “drug addicts”.

The number of people put on the register in relation to the consumption of drugs with the harmful consequent effects increased by 7.8 %. But in general, the amount of drug addicts in the country over the past five years has increased by about 3.5 times. Russian drug addicts are characterized mainly by the use of cannabinoid and opioid drugs, heroin and, to a lesser extent – cocaine and drugs of amphetamine type (Fig. 1).

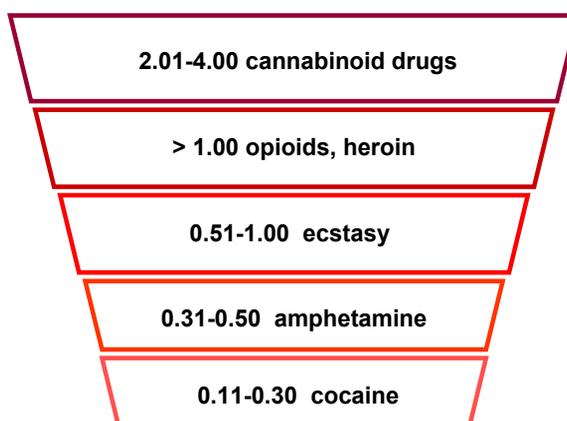


Fig. 1. The intensity level of drugs' consumption in Russia (the percentage of the population aged 15-64 years old)

On average, each year the number of drug addicts increases by 30,000 people, the vast majority of these people suffer from opioid and heroin addiction. Today, Russia is the leading state of the world in the number of heroin addicts (320 people of each 100,000), which is about 500,000 people, if to speak about the whole country. In Western and Central Europe, this ratio is 150 people per each 100,000. The number of heroin abusers in Western and Central Europe amounts to about 1.5 million people, or 0.5 % of the population aged 15-64 years¹¹.

Sociological analysis of Russian drug situation allowed us indicating its components.

1. The drug situation in Russia is conditioned by primarily heroin pressure from Afghanistan. Since 2001, opium production in Afghanistan, according to the UN, has grown more than 40 times. In the immediate vicinity of Russia, in the north of Afghanistan, as well as on the territory of Central Asia there is continuous concentration of abundant reserves of opiates, which are now reaching 12,000 tons. This volume of drugs would be enough for daily use supply during 100 years for the number of drug addicts, equal in number to the population of today's Russia. If we concern the share of the population involved in the abuse of opiates, Russia is ahead of the member states of European Union by 5-8 times on average, and by 20 times – Germany, as an example. This jump has occurred in less than twenty years.

2. Every day in the country 82 people of military age die from heroin addiction, this number each year is 30,000 people¹².

Almost 90 % of drug users in Russia consume Afghan opiates, which come through Tajikistan and the Caucasus (about 65 %, the rest go through Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan).

Every day into the territory of the Russian Federation there trafficked about 200 kilograms of narcotics from Afghanistan, so the problem

of production and supply of heroin from Afghanistan should be seen as a challenge to Russia. It is actually a full-scale heroin plan of drug aggression towards Russia, and also a threat to international peace and security.

3. The demographics of drug addiction is worsening, there also looms rejuvenation trend of drug users and increase in the proportion of women who use drugs. So, about 2 million consumers of all drugs are people under the age of 24 years, while the average age of adolescent drug addicts is 13-14 years. Among the total number of people who use drugs constantly there are about 85,000 women, which is 17 %¹³.

4. There is a process of significant spread of drug addiction in society among all segments of the population. There is also a growing number of consumers of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. So, with the background of deteriorating morality of the population and weakened social immune system to the threat of drug contamination, social environment is less protected from the drug syndrome. As a result, the deviant drug users increasingly involve groups of population with acceptable social indicators, namely of high educational level, presence of significant income, lack of housing problems, having full normal families, etc.

5. The geography of drug abuse in modern Russia covers almost all regions. Moreover, the negative phenomenon of drug addiction is typical not only for urban environment, but also rural areas. This trend confutes existing criminological notion that drug addiction is associated with the migration processes. First, the geographical escalation of drug trafficking no longer reflects the vector of the “movement” of drugs from the south to the north. Secondly, it is interesting that the very local population is actively involved in drug trafficking, because today causes of wide-spread drug use are associated with socio-economic factors of life, with the conservation of poverty

and social differentiation, low living standards, unemployment as a result of the world financial crisis. Also, this is due to the factor of callousness expansion from the center to the outskirts of the country and the active expansion of subculture of drug use.

6. The circle of drugs used is also being expanded; it includes drugs' synthetic analogs and variants, as well as relatively cheap codeine drugs used in the preparation of narcotic substances with extremely damaging impact on the human body, resulting in death after the very first year of their consumption. It must also be noted that there is the increasing spread of synthetic drugs and analogs. V.P. Ivanov, the Director of Russian Federal Drug Control Service, not accidentally pointed out the need to include in the list of prohibited drugs so-called "laughing gas" (nitrogen oxynitride), which is widely used in youth clubs in various cities of Russia. This trend is complicated by the lack of effective methods for determining the narcotic properties of the drug or the substance.

7. Drug addiction creates a specific subculture and is the result of conflict in society, concerning ways to meet the needs. So drug use leads addicts to illusory views about their personal independence. According to Ralf Dahrendorf, "young people have become intolerant, the times of 'delayed satisfaction' of the needs, of accumulation and waiting, and passed out".¹ As a result, the community formed a subculture of drug users, the danger of which lies in its special appeal to the public, in the penetrating anywhere entertainment industry and the cult of the physiological needs of the inclined to reflect even before drug use.

8. There is the splicing process of drug industry and organized crime. Moreover, this is happening against the background of significant corruption in law enforcement agencies, border and customs control services, and state apparatus. Unfortunately, there is the practice of official malfeasances in the field of drug trafficking, covering the connivance of illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and these offenses are highly indulged.

9. There is all the more pronounced ethnic character of organized gangs involved in the propagation of drugs. There are Tajik and Afghan factions in Moscow and other large cities, the Chinese and Korean – in the Far East and in some regions of Siberia, and there are Azeri and Gipsy factions in the west of the country and in the Siberian Federal District.

This sociological analysis of the drug situation conducted both globally and at the level of Russia, demonstrates the importance of the problem and requires greater efforts to integrate the world community in countering illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. This process of counteractions is currently being carried out in two directions: development of an integrated approach to solve the problem and concentration on the preventive work with potential drug users, medical therapy and alternative development of human rights.

Only by conjunct efforts of the international community and the constructive interaction of governments of all states there can be defeated, or at least kept at a socially acceptable level, this drug situation in the world generally and in individual states.

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² URL: http://www.agnuz.info/tl_files/reading_room/narkomaniya.

³ URL: http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Culture/Narkoman/_01.php.

⁴ URL: <http://www.narcom.ru/parents/parents/46.html>.

⁵ A brief review of the UN World Report on drugs – "Antidrug Civic Alliance". URL: http://www.antidrug.health.am/rus/lib_rus/wdr2006_ex_summary_rus.pdf (2011).

⁶ URL: <http://poccrat.pf/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat/rosstatsite/main/population/demography>.

- ⁷ From Speech of the Chairman of the State Anti-Drug Committee, Director of Russian Federal Drug Control Service V.P. Ivanov at a round table on “Legislative support for the establishment and operation of the national system of rehabilitation and re-socialization of drug addicts” (Duma, November 22, 2012). URL:<http://www.pfo.fskn.gov.ru/oficialnye-vystupleniya/22-noyabrya-2012-goda-v-gosudarstvennoy-dume-proshlo-zasedanie-kruglogo>.
- ⁸ RIA Novosti. URL: <http://ria.ru/spravka/20100422/225438645.html>.
- ⁹ URL: <http://pocstar.pf/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat/rosstatsite/main/population/demography>.
- ¹⁰ *Opyt provedeniya testirovaniya molodezhi na nalichie v organizme narkoticheskikh sredstv i psikhotropnykh veshchestv: podgotovleno sotrudnikami Upravleniya Gosudarstvennogo antinarkoticheskogo komiteta po Tsentr'l'nomu federal'nomu okragu* [The experience of testing of young people for the presence of narcotic and psychotropic substances in their bodies. The analytics was prepared by the staff of the Office of State Anti-Drug Committee of the Central Federal District]. URL:<http://www.ucfo-gak.ru/documentation/analytics/327/>
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Наркоситуация в современном социуме на общемировом и российском уровнях

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В статье представлен социологический анализ состояния наркоугрозы, описаны основные регионы производства наркотических средств, сформулированы составляющие, характеризующие наркоситуацию как на общемировом, так и на российском уровнях. Кроме того, подчеркнута опасность расширения производства и потребления синтетических наркотиков. В результате обоснована необходимость активизации усилий по интеграции мирового сообщества в деле противодействия незаконному обороту наркотических средств и психотропных веществ.

Ключевые слова: наркоситуация, наркотизация населения, распространение наркомании, противодействие незаконному обороту наркотических средств и психотропных веществ.
