

DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ILLICIT USE IN COMPLEX SOCIAL CRISES

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ABSTRACT: Drug Trafficking and Illicit use in Complex Social Crises.

Drug trafficking and illicit consumption determine the development of elements generating negative effects on multiple levels, particularly affected being the socio-economic, public health, public order and national security components. In the context of overlapping these effects with the effects of other crisis situations (health, economic crisis, military conflicts, etc.), we find the existence of complex social crises, difficult to manage, which produce immediate but also long-term effects, extensively, on the entire society.

Keywords: *social relations, social conduct, social crises, illicit drug trafficking, illicit drug use.*

Introduction

Known since ancient times, the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs have been present in social reality in various forms and for different purposes, especially being known to be present in connection with recreational, therapeutic or ritual activities. We also encounter their use in times of war or in activities related to deviance, delinquency and crime.

Major differences can be found in the reporting of social conduct and in the normative acts regulating production, trafficking and the consumption of these substances, depending on the geographical area and the historical period to which we refer. Addictive behaviours, accepted as a normal socio-cultural element in some societies, are socially disapproved and legally criminalized in other societies. Social conduct and the vision of legal regulations also know different forms and approaches, from a total ban on the production, trafficking and use of such substances, to differentiations of regulation and sanctions, depending on substances, or even partial decriminalisations (of the so-called “soft drugs”) or even total.

If we refer to the analysis of drug trafficking and illicit consumption in the context of social crises, we distinguish at least three important levels:

- ✦ social crises stemming from socio-economic and public health effects and regarding risks of deviance, delinquency and crime, with illicit drug trafficking and use as their main cause;
- ✦ social crises caused by growing social tensions, through the growing mismatch between prohibitive legal provisions and the socio-cultural expansion of the growing acceptance of illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption;
- ✦ complex social crises, in the structure of which the crisis caused by the social effects of drug trafficking and illicit consumption overlaps with other crises spontaneously occurring and affecting the same population categories (health and economic crises, increasing incidence of terrorist acts, military conflicts, civil wars, etc.).

Given that society is facing complex social crises, beyond their difficult management, there is also a mutual potentiation of their negative effects, with long-term implications on multiple socio-economic levels.

Social relations, social groups, social conduct

As a social being, man builds the particularities of his daily life by transforming his ideals and principles into concrete achievements, by constantly interacting with individuals in society and by integrating into social groups necessary for carrying out his activities, as well as for development and progress, ideals that are highlighted by the mirror of social interaction.

“Social relations ensure cohesion and maintenance of social groups, communities, social systems and subsystems. Society presents itself to us as a whole, as a totality of social relations.”¹ The configuration of the specifics of society depends on the individual essential elements of social conduct, developed through interactions exercised within social groups. The basis of the formation of social conduct is represented by the models of social conduct and the way in which the individual chooses to relate to norms, to

¹ Ioan Mihăilescu, *Sociologie generală: concepte fundamentale și studii de caz (General sociology: fundamental concepts and case studies)*, Bucharest, University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2000, p.136.

the set of rights and obligations resulting from the content of social, legal, moral and religious norms.

“The existence of any individual as a social being entails a series of obligations exercised throughout his life cycle, materialized in a series of norms, some of which complement each other, others appear contradictory to others, being specific to different interest groups. But they do not exclude one another, because the totality of human actions involves a multitude of values, interests and motivations, which create the dynamics of society as a whole.”² The criteria for choosing whether or not to comply with the norms largely depend on the path of education and formation of the value system, catalysed by the influences of the groups to belong.

The complex system of school education aims not only at transmitting information, but also at cultivating a healthy, prosocial value system, essential in decisions on choosing the type of social conduct. “School is not only important for us as human beings, but also because it helps at the progress of the society, by educating its members who bring workforce to the individual through the new information acquired within an educational institution. School increases people’s trust and teaches us to make and maintain friendships, helps us learn how to work together as a team, which is the main foundation of any successful society. Without school, knowledge could not spread as quickly, and our access to new ideas and people could be easily hampered.”³

Individual training and development within the education system becomes both the premise of social relations and the development of prosocial interactions, which determine the development and progress of society on multiple levels. The basis of learned social norms and interaction with patterns of behaviour constitute the basis for the development of socialization. “Socializing means a complex psychological process of internalization of social norms and patterns of behaviour, leading to obtaining the status of becoming a member of a social community by the individual. The socializing process coincides with the development and transformation of the child, the young person, even the adult, until his full integra-

2 Ion Craiovan, *Filosofia dreptului sau dreptul ca filosofie (Philosophy of Law or Law as Philosophy)*, Bucharest, „Universul Juridic” Publishing House, 2010, p.34.

3 Ioan Gheorghe Rotaru, “Current Values of Education and Culture”, *Proceedings of the 23rd International RAIS Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*, August 15-16, 2021, Princeton, NJ, United States of America, 2021, p. 88.

tion in society”⁴. Thus, we find that in the process of development during school instruction, the shaping influence factor is complex, consisting of knowledge, transmission of values, prosocial patterns of behaviour, the imperative of knowledge, understanding and compliance with norms. The efficiency of implementing this formative desideratum in each individual depends on the future configuration of society.

In the decision-making process regarding the relation to norms and compliance with the socio-legal conduct prescribed by them, an important factor is given by the specifics of education and moral-religious formation of the individual. Compliance with prosocial conduct and legal norms may be imperatively determined by the content of moral-religious norms observed by the individual. In such a context, there is a common denominator of the individual’s relation to norms (socio-legal or moral-religious), namely their observance and the cultivation of prosocial behaviour. In such a complex normative construction, the decrease in interest and motivation for complying with one normative category tends to influence the relation to the other categories of norms, through an increasingly frequent violation of them. If in terms of religious norms we talk more and more often about the phenomenon of secularization, there is also a tendency to non-respect them in individual relation to legal norms, especially against the background of the expansion of the influence of other model factors of social conduct, which become “norm” in themselves.

“Secularization is a process by which our society has come to live increasingly devoid of religion. Thus, the profile of secularized people contributes to a clearer understanding of their mentality. Secularized people are harder to deal with about religion because they have a lot of prejudice against any form of religion.”⁵. The path to secularization is also supported by a decrease in interest and motivation to respect moral-religious norms. Refusal to comply with rules in general is often the basis for non-compliance with several categories of rules. Thus, the complex imperative of prosocial conduct, supported by several categories of norms, is increasingly

4 Monica Luminița Alexandru, *Impact of education and freedom of conscience on juvenile delinquency*, Journal for Freedom of Conscience, Editions Iarsic, Vol. 8, No.1/2020, p. 665.

5 Ioan Gheorghe Rotaru, “Aspecte ale secularizării și ale omului secularizat” (“Aspects of secularization and secularized man”), *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai, Theologia Orthodoxa*, L-LI, nr.1/2006, p. 252.

ineffective in shaping the social conduct of the individual. This effect is all the more noticeable in the attitude and social conduct related to drug trafficking and illicit consumption, a phenomenon prevented and effectively combated in the context in which moral-religious, social and legal norms disapprove and even condemn it. In the context in which the relation to religious norms is low (in the context of secularization), and the currents of addictive social cultures promote more and more trafficking and especially illicit drug use, the legal norm (in this context being the only one left to criminalize this phenomenon) is more and more frequently not respected, with more and more social tensions and increasing pressure on the legislator to legalize the trafficking and consumption of such substances.

Drug trafficking and illicit use, social tensions and crises

In the context of all fundamental changes, carried out at a fast pace, in the dynamics of social relations, both at national and international level, the risk of extending and aggravating the effects of antisocial behaviour, deviance, delinquency and cross-border crime is increasingly configured, especially regarding the expansion of the phenomenon of drug trafficking and illicit consumption. The gravity and signs of the continuous expansion of this scourge, at European level, have been signalled since the past decades, through actions of information, awareness and legislating of a normative context for preventing or sanctioning drug trafficking and illicit consumption. In this context, Council Framework Decision 2004/757/JHA of 25 October 2004 laying down minimum provisions on the constituent elements of criminal acts and penalties in the field of illicit drug trafficking, it shows, even in its supporting preamble, the seriousness of the phenomenon which is represented by the implications of illicit drug trafficking, which is *a threat to the health, safety and quality of life of citizens of the European Union, as well as to the legal economy, stability and security of Member States*.⁶ The insufficient prioritization of preventing and combating this continuously expanding scourge was also determined by the anticipation of society's resistance to the challenges of antisocial behaviour, by virtue of classical value systems still very strong, which would dominate, through

⁶ Council Framework Decision 2004/757/JHA of 25 October 2004 laying down minimum provisions on the constituent elements of criminal acts and penalties in the field of illicit drug trafficking.

their influence, social conduct. Or, in the context in which classical social institutions in forming prosocial behaviour (family, school, religious institutions) have lost ground in recent decades in the importance that society still gives them, other factors influencing value systems and social conduct have developed. In the light of the new formative “landmarks”, the trend towards the new challenges of social conduct has taken on a completely different outcome than initially envisaged. Thus, there are social crises that appeared as if “out of the blue”, but they did not appear suddenly, but developed gradually, as the new landmarks of social behaviour expanded, permanently tending to replace the others.

At European Union level, in response to the threats of the international context generating potential complex crises, even the introduction of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 specifies the following: “In a changing geopolitical landscape, the EU has maintained its firm stance as a strong defender of human rights and democracy. The new geopolitical rivalries only underline its role as a reliable and stable partner and champion of the multilateral rules-based order. Overall, the global situation in terms of human rights and democracy has lights and shadows: while there has been significant progress, the repression of the universality and indivisibility of human rights and backsliding on democracy need to be addressed. Technologically, we are moving towards a new paradigm, in which human capabilities are increasingly enhanced through the use of machines. New technologies (in particular artificial intelligence (AI)) are at the forefront, presenting both opportunities and threats.”⁷

The main elements mentioned in the very introduction of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 shows an international context marked by multiple crises (often rooted in geopolitical rivalries). In parallel with the tense international situation, activities related to cross-border crime (especially the increase in illicit drug trafficking) are also generating crises in societies within states. The two components (internal and international crises) have a reciprocal catalyst effect, the context of war creating increased opportunities for illicit drug and arms trafficking, smuggling, etc., but also a society internally marked by crises and tensions being directly linked to fuelling tensions of international conflicts (terror-

7 Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 - JOIN(2020) 5 final.

ist operations being financed from illicit drug trafficking activities, etc.). In such a tense context, marked by multiple crises, the text of this document speaks of “lights and shadows” in respect for human rights and the principles of democracy. Social crises caused by increased crime or wars are in themselves limiting human rights.

Conclusions

Drug trafficking and illicit use is a phenomenon with multiple bio-psycho-social effects, ranging from changes in perception of external reality and social behaviour at individual level, to major changes in wider society. Social policies on managing this phenomenon try to strike a balance between implementing prevention actions and making combat actions more effective, both in terms of drug trafficking and illicit use. At the level of prevention actions, collaboration is required between state institutions (especially health, school and public order institutions), family members of adolescents and young people who pose risks related to trafficking and illicit drug use, religious organizations, non-governmental organizations.

The regulations of the internal normative acts in the field of preventing and combating drug trafficking and illicit consumption relate both to the specifics of the international regulations in the field, as well as the specifics of internal social relations, taking into account studies, surveys, reports and jurisprudence in the field.

Drug trafficking and illicit use generate social crises, both in terms of effects on immediate social behaviour, with risks related to deviance, delinquency and crime, and in plan of profound and long-term effects related to extended socio-economic and public health risks, public order risks, cross-border crime, national safety and security. In the context of aggravation and multiplication of other categories of social crises at global level, activities related to drug trafficking and illicit consumption aggravate their social effects, maintain them and lead to multiple and extensive socio-economic effects.

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