

Research of Adverse Social Effects and Prevention Challenges in the Context of Sustainable Societal Development

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ABSTRACT

The sustainable development of society is determined by activities aimed at ensuring the well-being of society, integrated and balanced evolution of the environment and economy, at the same time, without jeopardising the possibilities of meeting the needs of future generations. Improving the quality of life of every member of society by improving economic activities, promoting social cohesion and security are of great importance. In today's society, crime, corruption and other adverse social phenomena have a major impact on the sustainable development of society by reducing investment in the development and implementation of full-fledged growth programmes. During the crisis and post-crisis period, social pathologies are growing and their adverse effects are increasing too. The true indicators of their prevalence and negative impact are objectively sufficiently not known. Adverse social phenomena have a particularly negative impact on the sustainable development of society, which has various and diverse forms of influence. Large financial, material, intellectual and other resources, which could be used in the sustainable development of society, are accumulated in the research of adverse phenomena, assessment of their impact, combating and prevention.

Keywords: development, prevention, research, social effects, social sustainability.

1. Introduction

Today's rapid economic developments, dynamic and highly controversial technological processes that describe the current world environment, make the identification of adverse social phenomena, including the fight against crime, one of the most urgent priorities. Crime develops in a social context and is shaped by individual and external factors: the spiritual world of people, the reality that surrounds people in all its versatility. A criminal behaviour of a person derives from socially determined needs, peculiarities of the social situation, which are determined by the economic situation in the country and level of political development, a person's social status, culture, household, consumption sphere, production and politics. It generally creates the social content of individual desires, which are carried out either in law-abiding or law-breaking behaviour. Adverse social effects (alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution and human trafficking, corruption, crime, etc.) and their adverse consequences are increasing in the crisis and post-crisis period. At the same time their actual prevalence rates have been objectively insufficiently studied. Adverse social effects have a particularly negative impact on the sustainable development of society. They have various and diverse forms of impact. It should be noted that adverse social effects cause direct and intangible losses in the economic and social areas. It is closely linked to sustainable development, where the full

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satisfaction of today's needs does not threaten the opportunities of future generations to meet their own. There are three key dimensions to meeting the needs for sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. For example, in a social context, poverty is not just an evil in itself, it is important in the process of sustainable development of society that the basic needs of all people are fulfilled and the opportunities are given to all to fulfil their desire to live better. Sustainable development is shaped by individual behaviour and government policies that try to meet both basic needs and certain desires that do not conflict with the interests of future generations.

The aim of the study is to identify the diverse forms of adverse social phenomena and social pathologies, by analysing their state, trends and negative impacts that affect the sustainable development of society, to determine strategic directions for their prevention. The broad coverage of adverse social phenomena determines that the study can outline both individual and common strategic directions in their prevention.

2. Materials and Methods

The authors study a complex socio-political, economic and legal multidisciplinary subject-matter. This determines that theoretical and empirical cognitive methods are used in the study. The results of various foreign and national studies and compilations, large databases and statistical information sites are analysed in the article. Descriptive and analytical cognitive methods are mostly used in summaries and discussions. The authors analyse the challenges of the legal framework for tackling adverse social phenomena based on the study of international and national legal acts. Methods of legal interpretation are also used in the study. Based on the theoretical and empirical opinions of experts, the authors model the prospects of sustainable development of the society.

3. Results and Discussion

In the context of sustainable society development, when analysing adverse social phenomena, it is essential to define the nature and content of operational concepts. It should be noted that there are enough forms of adverse social behaviour and their possible definitions within the scope of the study subject.

3.1. Theoretical Aspects of Research of Adverse Social Effects

By their nature, adverse social effects are forms of action or inaction that are contrary to the interests of society and cause harm to them. A term such as socially unacceptable behaviour, which constitutes socio-pathological phenomena, is used in the literature (Hedrichová P., Skopalová, J. 2016). However, it must be acknowledged that socially unacceptable behaviour has a very wide scope for treatment. Its potential content and limits may depend on a wide range of different aspects (gender, age, education, income, place of residence, etc.). In sociology, the term deviant behaviour is used, which, by its very nature, is socially deviant behaviour. Etymologically, "deviation" is formed from the words of Latin origin "de" (in Latin it means "from" and "via" – "path"), i.e. deviation from a path that generally denotes social deviation, socially deviant behaviour. A. Cohen recognizes as socially deviant behaviour such one that is contrary to institutionalised

expectations, i.e. wishes recognised and accepted as legitimate in the social system (Cohen, A.K). Each institutionalised, i.e. a legalised and recognised body (institutions, social groups, organizations, etc.) has its own functions. In socially significant processes, cooperation and interaction are productive, which take place in line with the prosocial functions of the institutions and are directed towards development, but not towards self-destruction. Such a structure as a family, according to the existing legislation (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) is aimed at creating a favourable environment for raising children, their education, and material provision. The opposite actions reflect the adverse families with socially deviant value system and behaviour pattern. U.S. criminologists L. Terite, J. Halsted and M. Bromley acknowledge that socially deviant behaviour includes behaviour that deviates from social norms – the rules governing behaviour in social groups or society (Terite L., Halsted J.B., Bromley M.L, 1995).

If social deviations become significant and they affect the overall state of society and the quality of life, just as in medicine, one can talk about pathological processes. Pathology translated from French (*pathologie*) means suffering, disease (Pathology. <https://www.britannica.com/science/pathology>). Special pathology, in turn, is a change caused by certain determinants (diseases). Social pathology is a change in society caused by various societal deviations. Alfred Grotjahn wrote the first monograph on social pathologies in 1923 (Grotjahn A. S, 1923). It must be admitted that A. Grotjahn's work was more dedicated to social relations and the analysis of hygiene problems. In the legal context, the regulatory and pathological behaviour is a deviation from a legal norm which is law-abusive. Socio-pathological manifestations are possible in public administration (bureaucracy), in the social sphere (crime, prostitution, alcoholism, etc.), in demographic processes (reduction of birth rate, population extinction), in the cultural field (deviations in aesthetic evaluations, fashion). Some studies recognise that negative transformations and unacceptable deviations from the established benchmarks are possible in institutional systems. Deviations from social norms and institutes constitute unacceptable changes in socio-economic structures, which are described as institutional pathologies. Pathologies in the institutional system not only reduce the efficiency of norms and institutes, but also reduce the quality of life of the population and the sustainable development of society. Social pathologies contribute to the formation of mistrust in relation to state authorities, as well as to the state as a whole. On the other hand, mistrust of the state power and the state in general can become a prerequisite for the deformation of the social system. The nature and content of adverse social phenomena, pathologies, in connection with their cognitive process, can be carried out at the following levels:

Firstly, as actions and behaviour of an individual that do not correspond to the formally accepted, generally recognised ideas, norms and stereotypes in a given society under relevant historical circumstances;

Secondly, the non-compliance of the behaviour of certain social groups with the generally accepted social norms (the inadequacy of the behaviour of “legal” thieves, drug addicts, alcoholics, etc., marginal social groups with generally accepted norms and behavioural stereotypes in society);

Thirdly, as a social anti-social phenomenon manifested in sufficiently diverse forms of human activity that do not comply with officially recognised norms (alcoholism, drug addiction, corruption, prostitution, crime, etc.).

3.2 Narcotism and Sustainable Development of Society

The term “drug addiction” has emerged from the Greek term “νάρκη” - numbness, sleep and “μανία” – variable madness, passion. Drug addiction is characterised by a pronounced pathological habit and tendency to use one or more (polydrug) substances that are classified as drugs by the World Health Organization and that have a strong effect on the human central nervous system (Populārā medicīniskā enciklopēdija, 1975). We use the term narcotism, which by its nature and content is broader and comprehensive. This includes drug addiction as a pathological form of behaviour, a disease. However, narcotism also includes the cultivation, manufacture, storage, transportation and logistical operations of narcotic drugs, the activity of organised criminal groups in drug trafficking.

Without a doubt, it should be acknowledged that the problem of drug addiction, toxicomania, and use of psychotropic, severe and other substances is not new. However, it has changed in recent years. This is due to some tension in society, the desire of young people to enjoy something new and unknown and its unusualness, including the new psychoactive substances.

Non-medical use of narcotic and psychotropic substances causes health disorders of their users, formation of inadequate behaviour patterns, deformation of the process of social communication and contact, etc. Manifestations of drug addiction and toxicomania in society can also affect the overall social potential and undermine the system of moral and ethical values.

It is recognised that in society narcotism and toxicomania have a trait of spreading like a malignant tumour, exposing ever new cells in society to their effects, — young people, adolescents, juvenile groups.

Paradoxically, however, in some cases it is recognised that drug addiction is a completely normal phenomenon. The use of narcotic substances gives pleasant euphoric feelings, they allow one to forget the difficult moments of life and allow one to enjoy some bliss. However, behind these perhaps primal euphoric feelings, there is also a later price for forgetting the hardest moments of life. Entangled strands must be untangled, but not avoided or forgotten. The apparent euphoria creates a mild habit and addiction, only exacerbating life’s unsolved issues.

The use and distribution of narcotic substances continues to remain relevant throughout the world. Drugs continue to cross borders and continents, affecting the lives, health, well-being, productivity, social integrity, and overall social stability and security of millions of people. According to UNODC World Drug Report 2021, 275 million people have used drugs worldwide in 2021, while more than 36 million people have suffered from drug use disorders. Narcotic substances are becoming more diverse, new powerful substances continue to emerge on the illicit market, and the illicit market is able to quickly adapt to various changes, continuing to meet the demand for narcotic substances (Ministru kabineta 2022. gada 25.oktobra rīkojums Nr.773 "Par Profilakses pasākumu un veselības aprūpes pakalpojumu uzlabošanas plānu alkoholisko dzērienu un narkotisko vielu lietošanas izplatības mazināšanas jomā 2023.–2025.gadam).

Although the abuse and trafficking of narcotic and psychotropic substances is a long-standing concern, the development of new technologies and communications, particularly the Internet, exacerbate the problem. Illegal drug distribution on the Internet in many ways

is a major concern in some countries and is likely to affect other countries soon. Narcotics and psychotropic substances are openly being traded through Telegram channels. A page offering to buy various types of drugs has been found in Telegram. Clicking on the posted link, there were found dozens of advertisements on selling marijuana, hashish, amphetamines, cocaine, Xanax and “speed”. Payment methods are offered to be discussed in private messages. According to the texts of the advertisements, the bookmark method common in many countries is used for the delivery of goods to the recipient. Those who wish are immediately offered to purchase car-sharing service accounts from European companies – Citybee, Carguru, Bolt, Beast and Fiqsy (Telegram ir kļuvusi par platformu narkotiku tirgotājiem).

Like social media platforms, criminals use many other digital tools such as digital currencies, mobile payments and e-wallet services that facilitate and speed up the international transfer of funds and enable them to hide the origin of illicit funds and increase profits.

Regulation of the online drug market is very complex. Manufacturers, suppliers, website hosting and payment processing facilities are usually located in different countries, which means that highly coordinated international enforcement and cooperation are needed to control the market. In addition, while individual sites can be identified and closed, copy sites appear under different names that are difficult to monitor. Overall, the online drug market is a unique challenge to law enforcement, healthcare providers, and the research community, and knowledge of it is still in its infancy. Increasing funding and resources are being diverted in this area, contributing to a new research base that can lead to better understanding and ultimately regulation of the online drug market.

3.3 Alcohol Use and Sustainable Development of Society

One of the most widespread adverse social effects in the world, as well as in certain regions, is alcohol use. It must be recognised that excessive alcohol consumption is one of the main risk factors in the world, which negatively affects the health of the population and also threatens the health and safety of people around, which has a negative impact on sustainable development of society. In Latvia, more than half (51%) of all deaths can be explained by behavioural risk factors, including alcohol consumption. Nearly one-third of deaths (9,000 deaths) in Latvia in 2017 were due to lifestyle-related risk factors, and alcohol consumption caused approximately 7% of deaths (almost 2,000 deaths) (OECD and World Health Organization).

The amount of alcohol consumed in Latvia is high and still exceeds the average of the European countries. In 2021, absolute alcohol consumption per inhabitant aged 15 years and older, including consumption of alcoholic beverages by foreign tourists, was 12.2 litres (in 2019 – 12.9 litres), while absolute alcohol consumption, excluding consumption of alcoholic beverages by foreign tourists, in 2021 was 12.2 litres (in 2019 – 11.6 litres). According to the OECD “Health at a glance 2022” report on the 27 EU Member States, the average absolute alcohol consumption in the EU27 in 2020 has decreased from 10.4 litres (2010) to 9.8 litres (2020) (Health at a Glance: Europe 2022), while in Latvia absolute alcohol consumption, both including and excluding the amount drunk by tourists, exceeds the average indicator of the EU27 countries, taking the first position (12.1 litres) among the 27 EU Member States in this evaluation.

The use of alcoholic beverages is also still widespread among young people, because according to the data of the 2019 ESPAD (European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs) study, both in 2015 and 2020, 89% of 15-year-olds have tried alcohol at least once. At the same time, the proportion of young people (15-16 years old) who took alcohol in a risky manner (60 or more grams of absolute alcohol at one time) during the last month was 36% in 2019 (SPKC. Reģistrētā alkohola patēriņš Latvijā.). Taking into account the available statistical data for Latvia, it is necessary to introduce a comprehensive policy and develop such regulation that would limit the advertising and marketing of alcoholic beverages, limit the availability of alcohol and provide additional information to consumers about its composition and harmfulness.

3.4 Organised and Violent Crime in the Context of Sustainable Development of Society

Organised crime is a major threat to European citizens, businesses and national institutions and authorities, as well as to the economy as a whole. Today, organised crime is an international entity. As emphasized in the 2021 European Union (EU) Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment, organised crime groups can be found in all Member States. 65% of the criminal groups active in the EU Member States are made up of nationals of different countries (Serious and Organised Threat Assessment Report (EU SOCTA, 2021)). It should be noted that the transport routes of drugs, firearms and counterfeit goods through a global supply chain cover all continents. The form and type of organised crime is hidden from the public eye due to the obscure nature of its activities. Concerning organised property crime mobile organised crime groups move quickly between multiple jurisdictions to commit criminal offences. The assessment reveals the expansion and development of serious and organised crime in the bloc. Serious and organised crime includes various criminal phenomena: illicit drug trafficking, migrant smuggling and human trafficking, economic and financial crimes, corruption and other offences. The UNDP summary shows that up to 25% of government budgets are lost due to corruption (The cost of corruption, 2022). Corruption and other adverse social effects significantly affect sustainable development of society, reducing investments in the development and implementation of full-fledged growth programmes. Illicit proceeds generated in nine main crime markets in the European Union amounted to EUR 139 billion in 2019, corresponding to 1% of the gross domestic product of the Union. It is noted that most criminal groups use legal business. In addition, violence by criminals involved in organised crime is a socially dangerous trend. It is recognised that the EU is facing a growing threat from violent incidents involving the frequent use of firearms or explosives in public places. The ever-increasing transnationalization of organised crime has led to the fact that one country cannot successfully combat this negative phenomenon individually, as joint measures and efforts of several countries are necessary. It is undeniable that the action taken at the EU level to support Member States in the fight against organised crime must continue and be expanded.

Analysis of criminal statistics data shows that there is a large proportion of criminal offences related to violence in the country. Studies have shown that one of the main threats to public health and life in Latvia is the increasing violent manifestations in society. Manifestations of violent behaviour are a violation of a person's right to life, freedom,

dignity and security, as well as physical and emotional integrity, which creates a serious threat to a person's life or health, causing damage to the physical and mental health of the victim. Such criminal offences are characterized by the malignant aggression aimed at infliction of suffering on another or the exploitation of another, at the destruction of the individual at the extreme level (Kipāne, 2015).

Threats in the field of public order are also an important indicator in the field of public safety. Public order is one of the prerequisites for ensuring public safety. One must agree with the opinion that "ensuring public order in a particular administrative area is also a guarantor of public safety, as it prevents threats to the safety of life, health and property of persons" (Kuzņecova, 2012). The danger of hooliganism, for example, is not only a threat to public order, but a very common offence and other serious crimes are often committed on its basis. Moreover, taking into account the specific nature of the motive of hooliganism, the harmfulness and danger of a criminal offence constitute the unpredictability of appropriate actions, because there are no clear reasons or there is an insignificant reason, as well as personal disrespect for an individual and society as a whole (Crime Investigation (Investigative Features of the most Frequently Encountered Crimes), 2003). Based on the assessment of criminologists, hooliganism is recognised as the initial stage of crime, i.e. "primary school", especially in the field of violent and costly-violent crime. Hooliganism is a kind of catalyst for the commission of such crimes – murder, rape, intentional serious bodily injury, as well as mass riots. The results of research into the problem of recidivism have shown that about 30% of violent criminals had hooliganism among their previous criminal convictions. The opinion of the head of the first independent Police School of Latvia, Aleksandrs Ceriņš that intentional disturbance of public safety, order and peace must be dealt with special firmness has not lost its importance today (Ceriņš,1931).

3.5 Crime in the Digital Environment and Sustainable Development of Society

Online crime is also on the rise. The digital space is becoming infinite, given the impact globalisation has on human life, one can highlight cyber threats as an actual and important challenge. Insecurity in cyberspace can affect the reliability of using information and communication technologies and consequently hinder the development of a modern and innovative society (Kiberdrošības stratēģija. 2014-2018).

The vision of the cyber security policy is to create a secure, open, free and reliable cyberspace in Latvia, in which the safe, reliable and continuous reception and provision of services important to the state and society is guaranteed and the human rights of individuals are respected both in the physical and virtual environment. The goal of the Cyber Security Policy of Latvia for the period from 2023 to 2026 is to strengthen the security of cyberspace of Latvia by developing cyber defence capabilities, increasing resilience against cyberattacks and promoting public awareness of threats in cyberspace, defining the following priorities: protection, deterrence and development. Taking into account the priorities set by the European Union and the goals set in national policy planning and other documents, the Strategy sets out five directions of action:

- Improving cyber security management;
- Promoting cyber security and strengthening resilience;
- Public awareness, education and research;

- International cooperation and justice in cyberspace;
- Prevention and combating of cybercrime (Latvijas kibernetikas stratēģija 2023.-2026. gadam).

The limitless breadth of cyberspace and non-existent boundaries make it difficult to monitor it. The digital environment or cyberspace occurs because persons enter into informational relations, transferring data from one automated data processing system (technology) to another (Kīnis, 2015). The data of the Information Technology Security Incident Response Institution (CERT.lv) confirm that the number of cyber threats worldwide has a tendency to increase. Cyber threats originate from the misuse of information and communication technologies, and the use of these technologies can be both an end in itself and a tool that can be used by a wide range of users (Cavelty, 2008). Analysing the year 2022 in cyberspace in Latvia, it was found that the number of registered and processed incidents increased by 40%. In the public administration sector, the search for vulnerabilities in IT systems has increased 7 times, while the total volume of attacks has quadrupled. The year 2022 in Latvian cyberspace can rightly be considered the most challenging and cyberattack intensive period in the entire history of CERT.lv existence since 2011 (2022. gads Latvijas kibertelpā. CERT.LV). Cybercrime can affect everyone's daily activities. For a criminal in cyberspace, borders are not an obstacle; there is no difference between large and small countries. The wide availability of cyberspace makes it easier to harm an individual, group, society or country. Users are at risk anywhere. Cybercrime in the information age is a symbol of insecurity and risk online (Wall, 2007). The results of the study carried out in Latvia on the habits of using mobile devices (phones and tablets) among young children confirm the assumptions about the social gap between generations caused by digitalization. Mobile devices are used by the majority (72%) of children under the age of six, but it is especially significant that almost every second child (44%) uses the devices mostly alone, without the presence of an adult (Dziļuma, 2016). It must be recognised that social networks have had a significant impact on children and young people. The cyberspace is a new communication space. Professor the Oxford University Susan Adele Greenfield points out that virtual contact and obsession with social networks leads to the degradation of personality and brain. Social networks are dangerous because, when using them, people often divide life into two parts: "the real one in the virtual reality" and the "quasi-life" (fake life) reality, where reality becomes foggy" (Greenfield, 2008).

Cyberattacks and cybercrime have become a significant problem in recent years. In 2016 80% of the EU companies experienced at least one cyber incident. In a 2018 survey, 40% of respondents from organizations using robotics or automation indicated that disruption would be the most critical consequence of a cyberattack on their systems (Kibernetika ES un tās dalībvalstīs, 2020). In recent years, the number of cyberattacks, their severity and financial costs continue to increase. It is known that cyberattacks cost the global economy EUR 400 billion every year (Kibernetikas reforma Eiropā). Recent cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure and the space sector highlight the civil and military threats. This calls for more action to protect citizens, armed forces, as well as the EU civilian and military missions and operations against cyber threats. Cybersecurity risk mitigation may be separated into four elements: prevention, detection, response and recovery (Watney,

2022). The EU Policy on Cyber Defence is based on four pillars covering a wide range of initiatives that will help the EU and Member States.

1. Acting together for a stronger EU cyber defence.
2. Securing the EU defence ecosystem.
3. Investments in cyber defence capabilities.
4. Partnerships to address common challenges.

With the new policy on cyber defence, the EU will improve cooperation and increase investment in cyber defence to better protect, detect, deter and defend against the growing number of cyberattacks.

4. Conclusion

The impact of adverse social effects on sustainable development of society is both direct and indirect. Narcotism related to use of narcotic drugs and psychoactive substances, the formation of addiction to these substances, exclusion from the social environment, damage caused to health, medical expenses and also lost lives are a set of indicators, the total amount of which is impossible to calculate. According to UNODC World Drug Report 2021 the report, 5.5% of the global population aged 15 to 64 has used drugs at least once in the previous year, while 36.3 million or 13% of all drug users suffer from drug use disorders or addiction. Similarly, more than 11 million people in the world inject drugs; half of them suffer from hepatitis C. The most common drug addiction is opioid addiction (World Drug Report 2021).

The results of separate compilations show that the highest number of deaths related to the use of drugs is in the United States and Scotland (Baumgartner, J.C, Gumas, E.D., Gunja, E.D, 2022). Similar tendencies are also observed in cases of alcohol use of persons. The negative trend of sustainable development of society is also linked to expenditures related to the medical treatment of addicted persons, rehabilitation, loss of work skills and social support measures. Addicted persons practically do not contribute to sustainable development of society. The question of the amount of material losses caused by criminal offences is important, which is not sufficiently focused at the present time. Inappropriate attention is paid to actions to compensate victims for material damage. Drawing attention to the price of crime, U.S. criminologist H.G. Demmert (Demmert, H.G, 1979) distinguishes three of its most essential elements: (a) damage caused as a result of criminal offences; (b) investments made in the prevention and combating of crime in the state, maintenance of law enforcement and repressive authorities; (c) loss of persons committing criminal offences (time spent in planning, preparing, committing the offence, loss of post-criminal activities, time lost while serving a sentence, resocialization and reintegration process). Criminologist Jacques Bichot (Jacques Bichot, 2012) has concluded that in France, crime causes annual losses of approximately EUR 150 billion, which is 7.5% of the gross domestic product of the country. It is possible that there are similar trends in other countries. Crime causes significant harm for sustainable development of society. Its common role is to improve the quality of life of every member of society by improving economic activities, promoting social cohesion and security. However, the rapid increase in technology and the intellectual workload of humanity has made the 21st century not only an era of stress, but socially more vulnerable – to various manifestations of criminal

behaviour, addictive behaviour, with a higher level of mental pathology, more diverse manifestations of crime, which in general create obstacles to sustainable development of society and the country.

Nowadays, adverse socio-legal effects have a particularly negative impact on sustainable development of society. The negative effects have various types of impact, as well as diverse social and legal consequences. It can be concluded that the consumption of alcohol by the population of Latvia continues to increase.

The authors admit that even social deviations in society increase in the crisis and post-crisis period and their adverse consequences increase. However, their true prevalence and negative impact indicators are objectively insufficiently known. In this context, the issue of conducting comprehensive and in-depth research into adverse social effects in the scope of sustainable development is of importance. Modern science needs to proactively respond to the risks of the global society, which can negatively affect sustainable development of it.

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