

# 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
- Given that this is a complex research problem that needs to be explored with several different aspects, we used two samples:
  1. sample of convicted drug addicts (n = 156 perpetrators of criminal offenses under Articles 190 and 191 of the Criminal Code serving sentences in the Lepoglava and Glina Penitentiaries and in the Prison in Zagreb)
  2. sample of juveniles (N=24) from the Turopolje Educational Institution

## 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.

## DESIGN / METHODOLOGY / APPROACH

- For the sample of convicted drug addicts, a questionnaire from the 2016 research "Drug Market Research in the Republic of Croatia - The role of Second Crime" was used (Jandrić Nišević et al., 2016).

The instrument consists of two parts:

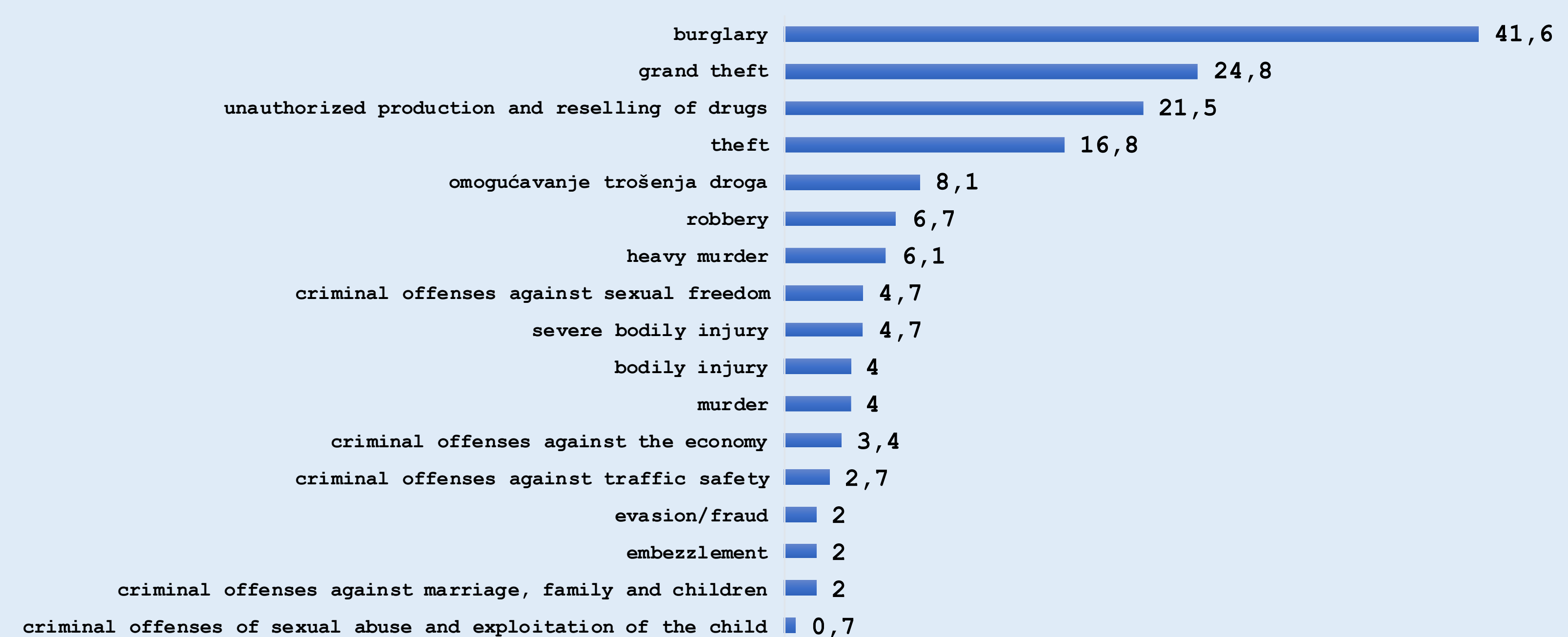
- The first part contains 40 variables, of which 15 refer to the definition of general sociodemographic and criminological variables, while the others are examining the forms of secondary crime and the way the drug market in Croatia operates;
- The second part is intended for qualitative analysis and consists of five questions through which the respondents can describe specifics of the organization of the drug market in Croatia

The instrument used for collecting data from the juveniles consists of 35 variables, eight of which refer to general socio-demographic and criminological data, while the other variables are aimed at obtaining data on the problem of addiction, consumption of certain drugs and participation in the drugs market through various forms of secondary crime.

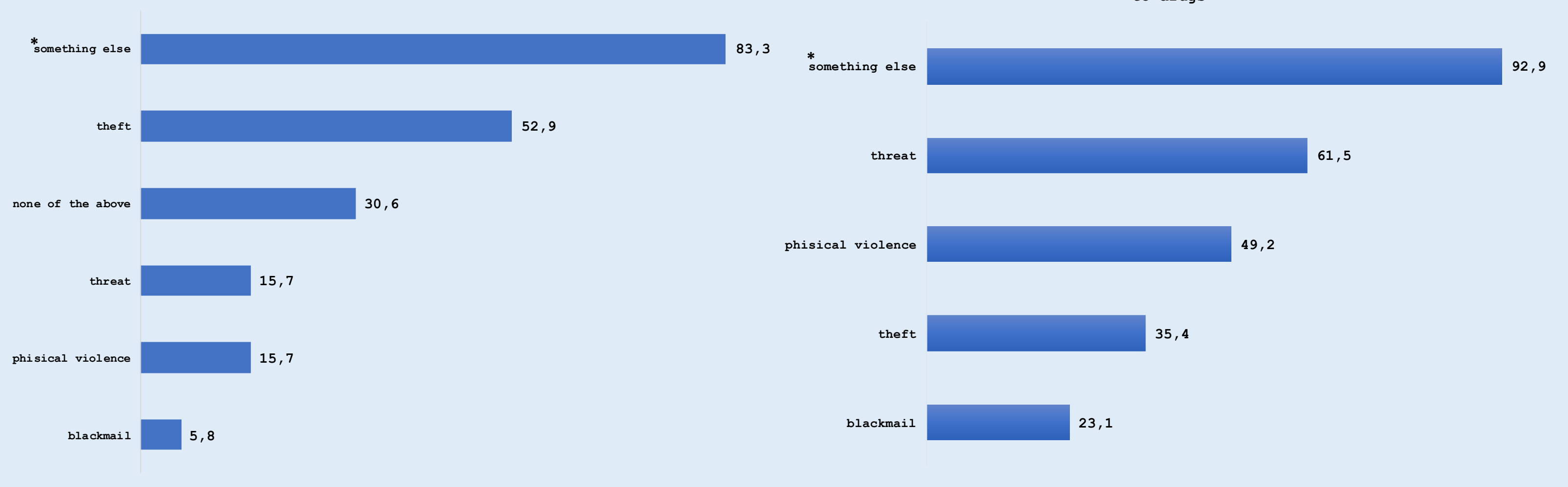
- Results were analyzed by descriptive, qualitative and multivariate statistical methods.

## RESULTS

Committed criminal offense for which you are serving punishment



Have you ever used any of the following to get drugs?

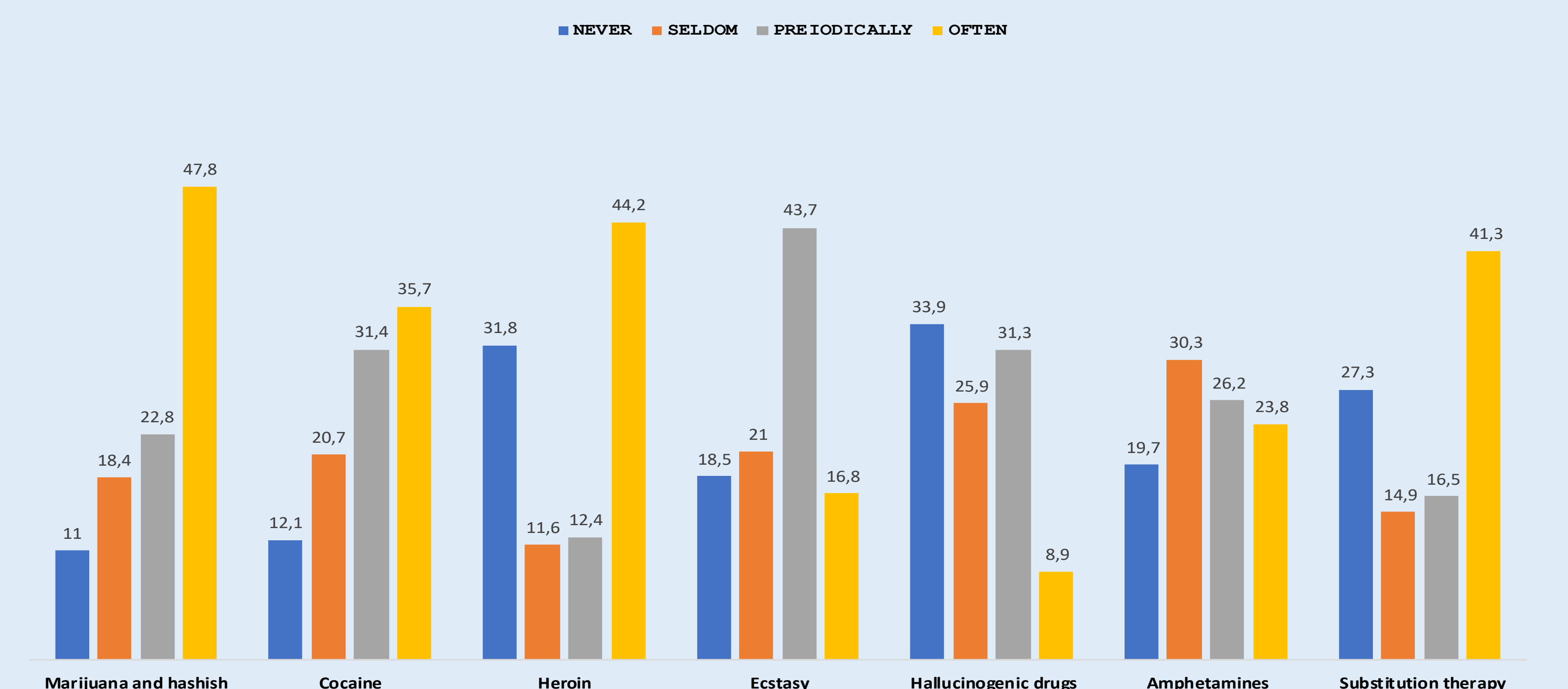


Have you ever used any of the following to drive up debt related to drugs



\* a combination of all possible answers to the question

Frequency of use of certain drugs



## 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 scale 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 recommendation, 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€ 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 police. Frankly, if there were no snitches, the police would seldom arrest anyone. 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 all it takes is 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 approach 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 perpetration 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

## ORIGINALITY / VALUE

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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