

Sociological study of deviant behavior of homeless people in Russia

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Abstract — One of the major problems of modern society is the deformation of the social structure. Social movement in terms of marginal situations ‘transitional’ creates marginal transitional status (positions), which are the determining factors of the marginal state, consciousness, and the behaviors of individuals and groups experiencing them. At the moment, and precisely individuals that have no fixed place of residence and employment, occupy marginalized position in society which, in return, leads to the degradation of the individuals. Currently there is no accurate nor a reliable statistic of the number of homeless people, due to the specific lifestyle, this category of people cannot be counted. This problem is undoubtedly relevant, since individuals with no fixed place of residence or employment, developed into a particular social group. This group is potentially criminal and socially dangerous. The purpose of this work - is to reveal the social portrait of individuals with no fixed place of residence and employment. The study revealed the main features of homeless people, the sources of its replenishment and the forms and methods of self-organization. The study has revealed the specifics of the recruitment of new members to this social community at the expense of old people remarried without legal registration. The main reason for people getting into this social group is alcoholism and its relation with family problems.

Keywords — *socio-psychological portrait, marginality, deviant behavior, homeless*

I. INTRODUCTION

Problem of increase in marginal part of the population, namely homeless, has interdisciplinary nature and has been the subject of research by such social sciences as sociology, psychology, conflictology, etc. The concept of social marginality is the most developed in the foreign literature. Representatives of this approach [1], primarily understands a marginal individual as a man rejected by society, who is at an interim, outskirts position in the social structure. The concept of social marginality is seen mainly in the

sociological blueprint, as a result of poverty, unemployment and social crisis.

Janet Mancini Billson, the American sociologist, synthesizes theoretical approaches and positions, thus highlighting the cultural, structural marginality and marginal social role. In addition, Janet Mancini has developed a system of measuring instruments for marginality [2].

In Russian sociological literature the problem of marginality was studied in connection with the problems of adaptation, socialization, the reference group, the status and role. Known researcher [3] made a big contribution to the development of the theory of marginality – he stated that society is initially marginalized. Today there are two basic approaches to the study of marginal phenomena in Russian research literature. The first approach is based on the fact that marginality is a cultural phenomenon. The founders of this approach are [4] and others. Second, sociological approach to marginal consideration offered by [5].

This approach to the theory of marginality mentions a problem of the loss of the former identity and uncertainty of social status, including the problem of homeless people without certain occupation. Social, socio-economic, legal, medical and ethical aspects of life of homeless people remains unexplored. These circumstances largely determine range of questions covered in this article, its structure, features, object and subject, and the goals and objectives of the study. Subject of research - the life of the homeless; the degree of marginalization of groups, which is considered depending on the level of adaptation to the conditions of life at the social bottom. The purpose of the article is to reveal the complex social factors determining the growth of the number of homeless, explore the conditions and way of their life; to develop recommendations on the provision of socio-psychological assistance for homeless people [6]. Theoretical and methodological analysis of the issues presented in the article allows a deeper understanding of the nature of marginality, the sources and patterns of its

occurrence and development, and therefore may contribute to further scientific understanding of the theory of marginality. Empirical evidence obtained as a result of sociological research, and included into scientific circulation, can serve as a starting point for subsequent phases of the sociological monitoring of the dynamics of marginalization.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS (MODEL)

The theoretical basis of this research is made up using the fundamental works of a number of native and foreign scientists reflecting conceptual bases of the theory and practice of sociology of religion, the discursive analysis, socialization, process of identification. The study was conducted between August and October 2018 in the cities of Penza, Ivanovo and Saratov. The study used the following methods: mass (n = 180) and expert (n = 5) surveys; in-depth interviews (n = 25); surveillance; analysis of statistical information and personal data of homeless house night stay in Penza, a test method for describing the psychological properties of the individual, which contribute to either the complete degradation of these persons, or the opportunity to get out of the social bottom. The objectives of the test included: 1) identification of the level of logical intelligence, style of thinking, self-confidence (test GE Leevik); 2) determination of mental performance and fatigue (test E. Krepelin).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Complex transformation of socio-economic structure of our society expressed in the blurring of public purposes, disorientation of social, group and individual consciousness, which leads to a complication of the problems of the individual. The market economy and its competition, high unemployment, polarization of income accelerates upward and downward mobility, but the latter acquires a "a landslide" in nature. Number of marginal increases, and they form a new lumpenized class. At the moment, a homeless person has a marginal position in society and in relation to it.

One of the most complex theoretical issues is the question of the criteria for marginalized groups [7]. The main criterion for determining the status of the individual or group as a marginal is a condition associated with a period of transition, represented as a crisis. It should be noted that the significance of the situation of transition, change in social status of the person or group can be classified by the amount of time that it takes, as well as by the depth of transformation of the social environment. So, if the period of identity crisis relatively continuous, it tends to turn into a marginal type personality. Delving into the problem, we can distinguish the so-called "at risk", typical for Russian society: groups of the population that are most exposed to the process of labor "release", but with no prospects of a job according to their specialty and qualification, and conversion which is always linked with the loss of skill level.

Another basic criterion - the uncertainty of social status, involvement in social structures or groups. A typical example is the small and medium enterprises, representatives of the "new" professions ("new Russian"), who regard their way as the social climbing, and at the same

time, the situation of social groups to which they identify themselves, cannot be called stable, fully legitimized.

An important operational element in the study is the degree of marginality, which is determined primarily by the characteristics and importance of the individual situation (whether this situation is constant or the central part of its life), and its degree of adaptation.

According to the author, social structure of Russian society is dominated by the following "evaluation" of marginal types:

Positive - defined as for the general direction of the trend, which leads to the formation of the elements that form the basis of the alleged "middle class." This type may include a variety of "economically independent": entrepreneurs, farmers, small and medium enterprises, etc.

The negative - it is based on the most massive and the heterogeneous composition of those who do not fit, for whatever reasons, in dictated by the "transition period" economic relations, who became the so-called "new poor" (the unemployed and other categories of the population, including the number of working who have appeared at the poverty line). Primarily people from this category rapidly replenish the growing amount of "system marginal", including homeless.

One more socially dangerous trend of structural marginalization in Russia is the numerical growth of the "outlying", "traditionally marginalized" groups, social outsiders: deviants, homeless and vagrants, criminals, alcoholics, drug addicts, prostitutes, forming a "social bottom". Its main characteristic is the isolation from the social institutions of a "large" society, offset by involvement in particular criminal and semi-criminal institutions. Hence the seclusion from social relations predominantly in the framework of oneself, the loss of skills legitimate public life [8].

In this study we put our focus on homeless people. Particular attention is paid to the homeless as a marginal group. Left without shelter, a person gets to an uncertain position, not yet cut off from society, but gradually "rolls" down from their social positions, which lead to the transformation of its basic status.

Homeless have different ability to adaptation, same as the other people do.

Following are the factors determining this ability to adapt to a social condition: changes in the social environment, lifestyle changes, purchasing behavior, typical for this group. Length of stay in marginal condition causes addiction to the situation at the "bottom" (they adapt), the loss of social expectations, full declassing (lumpenization), apathy and crime. Such persons form a stable roles and behaviors that lead to the emergence of marginal subcultures. This category of homeless people is characterized by voluntary and conscious nature of marginality [9].

However, there are some homeless, which cannot adapt to anti-social conditions of their existence. This category of people can be characterized by the loss of social identity, they still feel themselves as a part of society and hope to get

back in it, thus they form marginal group in marginal environment.

This social phenomenon requires a multifaceted intervention of both the state and social security authorities, since this group is the most discriminated because of legal system with no respect to homeless persons [10]. At the moment, there are the following violations of human rights in case of homeless person:

- the availability of sources of livelihood;
- difficulties in the implementation of housing rights;
- the limitations in health care and health services;
- difficulty of access to education.

This category is virtually outside the law and norms of the Constitution, contacts with the public are held mainly only through law enforcement [10]. Despite the efforts of individual ministries and number of public organizations, the problem of homeless persons is one of the sharpest, and whole complexes of not only social, but also organizational and technological issues should be resolved.

Sociological studies of homeless people reveal that they are united in the local communities with its hierarchy and division of labor. Places of compact residence for homeless people are market areas, areas near malls and catering. Information about the peculiarities of living and contacts among the homeless is presented in figures 1 and 2.

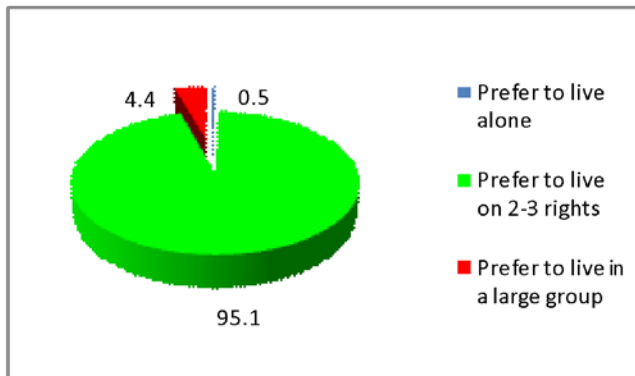


Fig. 1. Features of living homeless

According to statistics, among the homeless people 62,5% constitute a “tramp”, do not want to maintain links with the community and adapt to its environment, and 37.5% of homeless people who are willing liaise with the community and minimal adapt.

46.3% of homeless have families and 20.7% maintain relationships with them. According to the respondents, communications broken because of their alcoholism, antisocial behavior and imprisonment.

Studies have identified the following socio-psychological types of homeless:

1. Typical homeless, characterized by a high degree of marginality and extremely low level of adaptation to the life of normal society, and a high level of adaptation to the life of marginal communities (return from places of detention, or antisocial behavior (alcoholism, drug addiction), and

persons wishing to live freely). Their number reaches 45.8%.

2. Adaptable homeless person wishing to break with its marginal position and become ordinary people. They characterized by a low degree of adaptation to life in marginalized communities. According to studies over 7% of them can adapt to normal life.

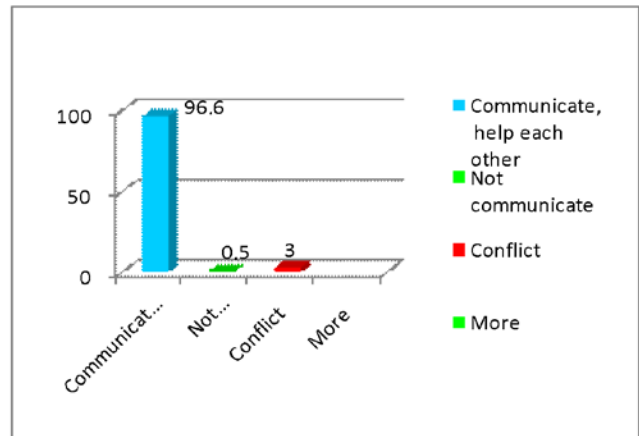


Fig. 2. Features of contacts among the homeless

3. Atypical homeless without shelter, suitable for residence, but having a job, earning money, having minimum set of kinship and social ties. Their share in this social group is 47.2%.

In the course of the study period, how many years are homeless way of life, presented in figure 3.

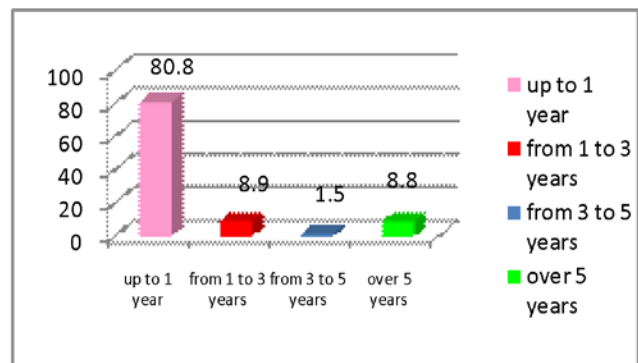


Fig. 3. Number of years of homeless life by year

As can be seen from the chart, the vast majority are homeless up to one year. It is obvious that they are less adapted to the homeless lifestyle, have a desire to return to a normal situation, and are more amenable to accounting, in addition, long stay on the street leads to disease and death of this category of persons, which explains the small percentage over a year.

With regard to the level of education, the majority of the homeless have primary (82.8 percent) and secondary (13.8 percent) education. Only 3, 4% of respondents have higher education.

In figure 4 presents an analysis of the main occupations of the homeless. As can be seen from the graph, the vast

majority of people in this category do not possess qualified professions and working professions. Thus, the scope of application of these persons in the labor market is significantly limited, and thus the possibility of adaptation of the homeless in normal social conditions of life is reduced.

In the category of persons left without work and a certain place of residence, mainly fall people with a low level of logical thinking and poorly developed cognitive interests, which, in addition, is characterized by low self-confidence, a high level of anxiety and, in addition, in 90% of cases, diagnosed by experts-doctors of oligophrenia.

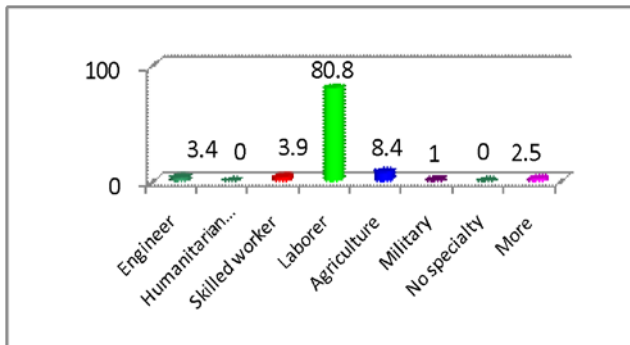


Fig. 4. The main specialties that are owned by the homeless.

76.4% of the homeless are immigrants and dysfunctional families, from orphanages. The main psychological features and psychiatric deviations of this category of persons are loss of orientation with social and geographical space, sharp mood swings, depression, aggressiveness, falsehood. Often, to get an answer to important questions you have to rephrase it several times, ask in other forms. Very often, after the first conversation, the homeless refuse to provide information. Only at the second or third contact it is possible to obtain more or less adequate information.

Among the homeless 76.6% of men and 23.4% women - are represented by different age categories. Marital status of homeless has gender characteristics, namely: the majority of men never was married (46.8%), whereas a significant proportion of women is divorced (55.4%). Apparently, disorder in family life promotes the transition into the category of homeless people.

An important factor in the loss of housing, according to research are family conflict and abandonment of family, alcoholism, return from prison. Family conflicts and alcoholism are associated with each other, dominant motive is alcoholism, which causes conflicts and criminal record. In studies conducted in 2018 year, imprisonment was at the first place (Figure 5).

This largely determines the fate of this category, forming a vicious circle of the loss of housing, residence during the sentence and the inability to find a job as a result.

An important reason for the loss of social ties and further marginalization is the detention. According to studies, the majority of homeless people served short prison terms, and the number of convicted and actually served a sentence is quite small. Replenishment of this category of persons is currently at the expense of persons dependent on alcohol and drugs.

The second most important factor is alcohol abuse, conflicts in the family, leaving the family. These factors are equally important for both men and women.

It largely determines the fate of this category, constitutes vicious circle of loss of housing and residence during the imprisonment, and therefore it is impossible to find a job.

According to studies, most homeless people passed short term of imprisonment, and the number of convicted are relatively small (12%). Replenishment of this category of persons is currently due to persons addicted to alcohol and drugs.

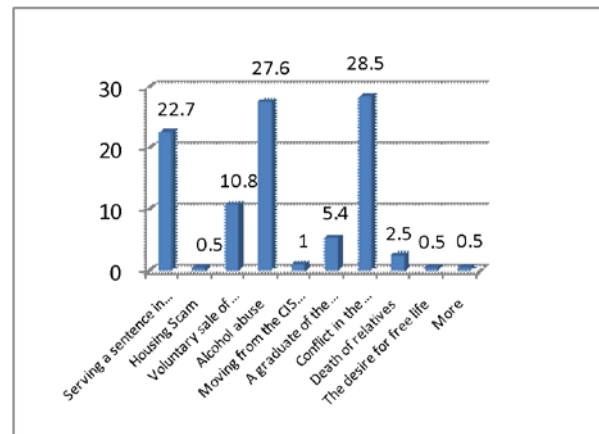


Fig. 5. Causes of housing loss.

Experts have identified a new unusual cause of loss of housing and the transformation of ordinary citizens in this category of persons:

1. Officially unregistered family relationships, especially in the elderly. Death of a spouse, the entry into the inheritance of children from previous marriages, leads to the fact that those citizens forcibly expelled from premises on which they have no actual legal rights, but in which they had previously lived [11].
2. Improperly formalized inheritance rights.
3. Imperfection of housing legislation [12].

As noted above, the main cause of homelessness and vagrancy for this category of persons is unhealthy habits (alcoholism and drug addiction). Most homeless people abuse alcohol (30.5%). 21.8% of respondents had received alcoholism treatment. Spread of the drug abuse among them is insignificant, usually among young people (under 30 years). Among the respondents the number of addicts was only 1%. In addition, the low percentage of drug addiction can be explained by the inaccessibility of drugs for people of this category (high cost, inability to find distribution channels). Analysis of the information shows that in the total sample, 50.8% of respondents tried to find a regular job, 49.2% did not take such attempts.

The basic needs of homeless people in the help of society: sanitary processing, temporary shelter, food, medical care, legal consultations on the restoration of documents, employment, clothing and shoes. It is obvious that there is an element of certain bravado, as 36.4% in this category say such a motive of loss of residence as "I want a free life."

With the increase of “experience” to 5 years, when any earnings (20% sold apartments) passed out and they tired of homelessness, one becomes aware of the need to work, and persons in the age group 31-35 years, 41-45 years, mostly with the average special and incomplete higher education, trying to find a job. And finally, after 50 years all hope for employment is lost. Mostly this applies to persons with primary and incomplete secondary education who had returned from prison.

Significant portion of the respondents (66.2%), regardless of socio-demographic characteristics and reasons for the transition to the homeless people periodically performs odd jobs. Special group of persons, who are professionally engaged in begging, standing at large temples and monasteries ROC, at shopping centers, markets, begging at busy intersections of public transport. 1/3 - a homeless person, 2 / 3 persons with housing and begging as their main employment and earnings [13].

Studies have revealed the emerging shadow labor market, where demand for this kind of people. These are companies associated with the organization of moving, cleaning, cargo handling works, earthworks. Heads of such companies hire homeless people without proper employment. According to experts and leaders of such companies, full employment, according to the LC RF is not possible, referring to the extremely low labor discipline and drunkenness and alcoholism of this category of citizens. There is unconditional discrimination in salary of homeless people: employers pay very low wages by the day or pay with food and alcoholic beverages.

The majority of homeless people (60%) characterized by low labor productivity, exhaustion of attention and decreased performance even for small workloads. Similar manifestations are registered in hospitals in patients with organic brain disorders (trauma, vascular disease, inflammatory processes, tumors). Significant group (30%) among the homeless are people showing sufficient productivity in the work, but with a tendency to exhaustion, as evidenced by uneven pace of the job.

With high probability we can assume that the low productivity and high fatigue of this category of persons are the result of organic disorders of the brain and nerve diseases, received because of certain lifestyle (drinking, fighting, lack of food, stay in places imprisonment, etc.) which led to the loss of jobs and housing, or acquired due to stay in the position of homeless people.

Described features of the psychological characteristics of homeless people are largely determined by their inability to perform most types of work, which, together with the absence of registration and other circumstances leaves them “outside life.”

The research results were discussed at meetings of the board of experts of the Institute of Regional Development under the Government of the Penza Region and the Standing Committee on Social Policy of the Legislative Assembly of the Penza region and were taken into account on the basis of the discussions in the legislative plans of the regional government.

IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, the studies do not allow optimistic conclusions about the possibility of adapting this category of persons in the living conditions of normal society. Government and civil society should be ready for the elaboration of complementary programs of passive social care, such as overnight accommodation, mobile feeding centers and medical care.

The study revealed the specificity of recruitment of new members of the social community at the expense of the elderly, remarried without proper legal registration. The main reason of moving in this social group is alcoholism and family problems caused by it.

Analysis of publications relating to the sociological characteristics of homeless, has shown that this category of people is not new to Russian society.

An example of this historically existed in Russia as wandering, vagrancy, begging. The situation is similar in all foreign countries. The same are social causes that led people to the status of the homeless (unemployment, family problems, long stay in prison). The objective reasons, acting on the subjective quality of human personality, become the source and origin of many psychological barriers, separating the homeless from the participation in society, which strengthens their marginalization.

The main feature of a marginal man is a break of his previous social relationships, departure from existing lifestyle, breaking of economic, social and spiritual ties with immediate social environment. In fact, marginalization means declassing, not in the political, but in socio-psychological sense it is based on not only economic factors, but also at the whole complex of social and cultural circumstances.

There are still lot prejudices of mass consciousness and negative attitudes, which can result in the segregation of this category of people. The study also illuminated some social and psychological aspects of the status of homeless people, among them, the complex relationships, low self-esteem and some depression - all this raises questions about the need of psycho correctional and socializing influence. Creation of comfortable living conditions, health care, restoration of pension to homeless, registration of identity documents, restoring labor skills and providing employment - all this has a beneficial social and adapting effect on homeless people. The process of social adaptation of homeless people provided by different social technologies, that contribute to the optimization-based adaptation and taking into account individual and personal qualities, interests and needs. It is important to create such specific and individual conditions that provide the opportunity to reintegrate into society in cooperation and alliance with others, for its active participation in all spheres of activity - only under these conditions full integration into society can be carried out.

Thereby, homeless people, who lost the skills of socially conventional behavior, purposeful work and socially useful activity, citizens, whose identity is deformed, and interpersonal relationships are lost or destructed, need the restoring of their personal status, social activity and reintegration into society. Activity of social assistance to homeless citizens is one of the most important ways to

achieve these objectives in relation to this category of citizens.

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