

White Collar Crime in Republic of Macedonia in the Period 2008-2017 (From the Prism of Sociological Explanations)

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Abstract

Considering that the Republic of Macedonia in the last fifteen years is governed by a political administration with non-functional democracy where the power for so long stood in the hands of a party coalition (VMRO-DPMNE / DUI), who created obedience to the masses for eternal leaders by embarrassing the state in the corner of liberty and legitimacy, and thus overthrowing the system of democratic values. For this reason, this study will examine crime, corruption and other misconducts in state institutions of the Republic of Macedonia by official persons in the period 2008-2017. The study will be elaborated from a sociological perspective based on sociological paradigms that explain deviance and crime in society, focusing on the narrative methodology through which we will professionally review the cases of crime and corruption by state authorities. Among other things, this paper will also examine the consequences that society suffers from abuses of state leadership by governing for a decade.

Keywords :crime, corruption,misuse of duty, state officials,the consequences.

Introduction

Since criminality in society appears in various forms, one of the most common forms is the so-called "*white collar crime*", a term invented by Edwin Sutherland in 1939 which refers to: *violation of a high social position by authoritarian persons while they are employed*¹. According to his explanations, this kind of crime appears in cases of misuse of duty as an employee and includes: corruption, fraud, counterfeiting, cybercrime, mobbing and mounted cases of violent crime.

White-collar's crime for decades is present in Balkan states and our country - Macedonia is one of the most vulnerable states.

Considering that the Republic of Macedonia is a country that was involved in the transition with the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, even though there were attempts to overcome the barriers of communism, a political structure that will rule the state during 2001 -2017 will bring a lot of stifling to society as far as democratic progress is concerned.

During this period, the state government has been composed by party coalition VMRO-DPMNE (The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) as well as BDI (Democratic Union for Integration) the political party representing the Albanian community in the country.

In this study, we will be based on the period 2008-2017, since during this period the level of crime and corruption in the country has been at higher instances.

As key points that will be referred to in this study include: manipulation of the electoral system, the abuse of the state budget, misuse of funds for unfinished projects, corruption in state institutions, namely theft and violations of law in the

¹ Sutherland, E. (1983)– White collare crime, p.6, USA.

framework of ministerial institutions and secondary state bodies(directories). Then will be addressed the issue of organized crime, that is, mounted criminal cases that will strain interethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians, alluding to the planting of ethnic hatred and fears among citizens. The main cases to be considered are: urban violence against Albanian students, the so-called "Monster" case and the "Kumanovo case".

The whole period of time envisaged in this study is filled with a number of corruptive processes by officials as well as many cases of organized crime, so among other things this study will also highlight the consequences that citizens of this country feel from the cases above mentioned, as the main most felt consequences are: the economic crisis, education crisis, canned media, imprisoning innocent people, fleeing citizens to western countries etc..

Methodology of study

The research path of this study lies in the field of qualitative research and will be based on the appropriate methodology for the type of this research by approaching data deriving from the angle of relevant findings and preliminary studies conducted. This type of study belongs to the narrative methodology and will provide findings that will arise from institutional dimensions, including the personal experience of the authorities involved in the crime as an analysis to investigate and understand the crime committed by the state authority. Drafting of the facts will be made based on the findings recorded in the audit agencies, media diaries and daily newspapers which possess direct information about the events that followed.

In addition to the descriptive and analytical method, for the realization of this study will be used the techniques as traces in scientific literature, journals, written texts, interviews, media reports, which will be expressed in order that the expectations of this study remain with unearthing the types and forms of crime that have affected the state leaders during a ten-year governance.

1.0 The number of cases of active corruption registered at the Agency for prevention of corruption according to annual reports

State institution called as *Agency for prevention of corruption* aims to prevent corruption in the country and therefore in the annual public report brings all the cases presented in all the state sectors which within the year are marked judicial case for review. The table below shows the number of cases of corruption and abuse of office by officials recorded by year:

| Year | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | Total |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| The number of found cases | 767 | 1245 | 1043 | 716 | 6011 | 2815 | 1554 | 137 | 14.227 |

Table 1.

As shown in the table, figures show high levels of corruption at the state level, the highest rate is recorded in those years when there were elections, mainly in 2009 and with presented 1 245 cases, as well as in 2013 when local elections were conducted varies with the highest rate of corruptive cases with about 2,815 registered cases.

It is noteworthy that these abuses have been made in different state sectors as: misuse of sectorial budgets where projects were not realized while the money has been spent ,such cases were recorded in the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Transport and Communications, The Ministry of Culture, then misappropriating bribes for media censorship, bribery and misuse of the municipal budget by the mayors and their associates¹.

Tendencies for manipulating the electoral system

The long rule of a political party is one of the main factors leading to the demolition of the rule of law, and therefore in the Republic of Macedonia came to the disintegration of the rule of law and real democracy dysfunction. The main pillars of

¹State Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, annual reports 2008-2015, www.dksk.org.mk

democracy are free, fair and democratic elections. During the ten-year ruling of VMRO-DPMNE in coalition with its Albanian partner DUI, was also made the manipulation of the electoral procedure, thus setting the final result in favor of the aforementioned parties.

Manipulation of elections came out through the wiretapping which is best described in the publications of Vertetamtes.mk, platform set up by the Foundation "Metamorphosis" which provided the public with an important tool to increase the accountability and responsibility of political parties towards citizens¹.

False elections with false ID cards, fictitious voters, "silence and affirmations with the head" pressure and penalties for companies, intervention at purchasing points, remotely voting of teachers and employees in public enterprises and institutions, but also "purchase" through the distribution of pensions. All of these can be heard through the numerous interceptions widely published, which serve as real evidence of the deep involvement of the state in the manipulation of elections in the interest of a particular party.

The most striking case of manipulating election results was the issuance of fake ID cards prepared for fictitious voters who were supposed to vote in the Commune of Centar (Skopje City), Kicevo Municipality, as well as in the Municipality of Prespa.

For these irregularities with the Special Prosecutor's command in Macedonia was charged and detained on 12 February 2016, the Mayor of Pustec (Municipalities in the Republic of Albania inhabited mainly drawn from the Macedonian minority) Edmond Temelko, which under surveillance was the main suspect for numerous electoral irregularities, with particular emphasis on fictitious voters of Pustec. For the above case, the Special Prosecution of the Republic of Macedonia had opened an investigation procedure with the name "Titanic", where besides Temelko, accused for electoral manipulations are also other senior officials of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, who held high positions in the structures of VMRO-DPMN .

Corruption by government authorities

Although many scholars since Aristotle and Machiavelli have considered corruption as *an act of political destruction and the loss of morality and civic virtue to some people*², Robert Klitgaard rightly claims that *corruption can be determined by some procedures in which the individual will illegally decide his personal interest over the general interests and above the ideals he swore to serve faithfully and unconditionally the state so in this definition the emphasis is on the violation of the law, the betrayal of the public interest and the ethics of public service*³

Combining state money through abuses and transactions by keeping the collar and staying in the office of institutions representing the state is not as invisible as it seems. Studies show *that economic abuse is a hidden and complex issue and occurs in continuity but also represents a form of violence that adversely affects and hurt an individual to become financially independent*⁴. So the struggle to become rich does not quench the thirst of the rulers and politicians who with the money of the state and also of the citizens have a glamorous life dressed in luxury. Money laundering within the ministries, misuse of financial resources, and abuse of workers' salaries are some of the forms of economic violence that have been noted in the Gruevski government in the Republic of Macedonia within the period 2008-2017.

The highest rate of corruption over the years has been noted in the Ministry of Transport and Communications where it has been abused with the budget of projects funded by international funds, even as more specific cases are mentioned:

*Money laundering in the project "Skopje 2014". According to the findings of Transparency International of Macedonia this project is a suspension of the Constitution and laws, the misuse of responsible institutions as well as the criminal conduct of officials with state money for illegal gains*⁵. It was found that over 600 million euros have been spent for this project, while

¹<http://vertetmates.mk/te-gjiite-bisedat-e-perjuara-te-publikuara-nga-opozita-video-audio-transkripto/>

²Mojanoski, C. & Saydovska. M & Nikolovski. M & Krstevska. K (2018) – "Gragjanite za korupcija", f.22, Republic of Macedonia, University „St. Kliment Ohridski”, Bitola.

³Klitgaard, R.(1988) – "Controlling Corruption", f. 7, University of California Press.

⁴Corrie, T. McGuire, M.(2013) – Economic Abuse Searching for Solution, p.9, Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service, USA.

⁵www.transparency.org.mk - Artikull „Скопје 2014” – проект со сите елементи на заробена држава, (Analiza), 25,06,2018, last acces 04.12.2018

the contracting companies have been "DG Beton AD", Shkup, "GD Granit AD", Shkup, "Strabag AG", "Beton" Shtip, "Bauer BG DOO Shkup"¹. This project was foreseen for the construction of historic monuments and sculptures made of marble and bronze materials, the construction of new facilities and the repair of institutions for the central area of the city of Skopje.

Abuse of funds in local and highway roads from where taxpayer money ended in the pockets of official persons, responsible in the sector concerned, in this case in 2008 over 60 employees in the road scoring sector were arrested under the charge of money laundering².

Construction of the Kicevo-Ohrid highway according to the Road Construction Agency results in evidence that this project will cost about 270 million euros, while the VMRO-DPMNE government signed a construction contract with a Chinese firm "Sinohydro" worth 373 million euros. On the Chinese company "Sinohydro" website for a time, it has been reported that the Kicevo-Ohrid highway section will cost about \$ 56 million. After the information obtained in the Macedonian media this data was deleted from the website of the Chinese company. Meanwhile, the subcontractor of this project are Macedonian companies "Granit" and "Transmet" of Sead Koçani. Construction works on the Kicevo-Ohrid highway began in late May 2014³.

According to official data of the State Audit "Post Office Macedonia" was damaged by the 3.6 million only from employee theft and embezzlement. In 2012, more than 1.3m euros were completed in the hands of the robbers and 325.000 euros were captured by the hands of the employees. Last year (2013) thefts increased and the damage increased to 1.6m euros, while employees absorbed 374,000 euros⁴.

The characteristic of all these violations of the code of law results in organized state crime that is carried out by a group of people who are centered in leading positions and apart from making it more difficult to detect these types of crimes are protected by the institutions responsible for detecting, prosecuting or sanctioning the defendants⁵.

The economic abuse from the above-mentioned cases clearly demonstrates the obstacles to the progress and economic development of the Republic of Macedonia, thus justifying the obstacles to the overall social development of the country as this way expands the gap between the poor citizens and the authoritarian minority that is enriched alongside the force state. On the other hand, public expenditures are rising while workers' salaries remain unchanged, thus reducing the ability to improve the quality of life, and this negative impact of corruption in the country also led to a "swing" of youth, which day by day leaves the country targeting the West.

2.0 Mounting cases for sowing of interethnic hatred

The nature of organized crime also refers to processes assembled in various forms for the purpose of planting dictatorships and fears of state authorities to the people. In its context, the promotion of inter-ethnic hatred in the country was undisputed by VMRO's authorities to discriminate Albanians altogether and to implant fear within so they are scared of Macedonian government. Known scholars emphasize that such political regimes determine the situation in which rulers gain power through other means⁶ as: torture, murder, imprisonment, house raids, beatings etc. although it may be about democratic states, but in fact they are non-democratic. Thus the "agents" of the Macedonian secret service to attract the attention of the people stimulated processes that suppressed and tortured the Albanian mass. In this context is known the so-called "MONSTRA" case where on 12 April 2012, five Macedonian youths were killed in Smilkovac's lake (near Skopje) and as a reaction to it by the order of the Minister of Internal Affairs of that time Gordana Jankulovska raided violently Albanian houses, from which six Albanians were arrested for life imprisonment as the main suspect for the killings by recognizing

¹www.skopje2014.prizma.birn.eu.com të dhëna zyrtare

²Daily media center "Deutsche Welle" Article of 12,11,2008, Prediyvicate na Makedonskotot sudstvo <https://www.dw.com/mk>, last acces in 30.11.2018.

³Daily media center "Deutsche Welle" Article of 20.06.2017, <https://www.dw.com/mk>, last acces in 30.11.2018.

⁴Стојанчевска В., - За една деценија, од „Македонска пошта“ биле украдени или проневерени повеќе од пет милиони евра! <https://fokus.mk/arhiva-vo-chii-dhebovi-zavrshile-5-milioni-evra-ukradeni-od-makedonska-poshta/>, last acces 30.11.2018.

⁵Kambovski, V. (2009): Економски криминал во стечајот и во стечајната постапка, Македонска ревија за казнено право и криминологија, Скопје, Здружение за казнено право и криминологија, Vol.1.

⁶Lidén, G. (2014) – Theories of dictatorships: Sub-Types and explanation, STSS (Studies of Transition States and Societes), Vol.6, Issue 1, P.52.

Albanians as "radical Islamists" and "terrorists". Although this case still remains under judicial scrutiny, it is said to be a politically-adapted case for dictatorship of the state in interethnic relations. This case was confirmed as suspected since after the change of power in January 2018 the arrested persons were released at liberty.

Among other things as a process of ethnic segregation is well known the casewhen in 2013 Macedonian bands called "COMITES" appeared in different city centers attacking every citizen who was speaking in Albanian language, without hesitation that verbal provocations were also recorded in the sports halls during football matches. Macedonian hooligans have often reacted by knocking and knocking the Albanian youth in bus stops and in the center of Skopje¹. This process of continuous attacks on the Albanian population would resemble the expression of David Garland " *publik torture lynchings*"²as an extreme form of urban violence and the public threat of Albanian citizens.

One of the most extreme forms of organized crime by the Macedonian government is the so-called "CASE OF KUMANOVA" which occurred on 09.05. 2015 in Kumanovo's "Lagija e Trimave" neighborhood, where eight members of Macedonian military forces and ten members of the Albanian armed group were killed, and also were arrested about forty Albanians suspected of participating in the conflict. For this case, it is suspected that Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski in charge with secret service agent Sasho Mijalkov has paid several million euros for fomenting an armed inter-ethnic conflict. With this process, the "state leaders" hoped to divert the attention of the revolted Macedonian people and to change their nowadays gained status from criminals to heroes and patriots of Macedonia, again smashing the Albanian people as terrorists and criminals.

However, after the last parliamentary elections under the full-fledged monitoring of the international factor, VMRO's political party although it didn't have the power of distortion of the electoral system, tried again to violently pursue the continuation of state administration, causing institutional chaos, whereby on April 27, 2017, the people of this party break through the doors of parliament by bloody attacking MPs and counterparts who won the elections with the aim of bloody violation of newly elected prime minister Zoran Zaev and the assassination of leader of the Alliance for Albanians Ziadin Sela. Although this case is still under judicial review by the intelligence it has been proved that it was carried out by order of state leaders who were in the leading position until that time. This way of institutional crime was an attempt to gain power by the theory of force that resembles the makiaveliste doctrine "*the purpose justifies the means*" according to which the means will always be judged worthy and will be hymned by all, because ordinary people catch the outcome of the action.³

Conditionally said all the cases discussed in this study represent the factual situation of a decade-long rule of a political structure that snatched the ideology of inter-ethnic hatred to the population, wrapping it up with corruptive cases and multiple incriminations which caused the stifling of the state in all social spheres.

2.1 Media in favor of power

Given that the media are the only window where the public is informed about the events and what the media are presenting to the public is served as true. The aforementioned party in power did not pass without usurping the broadcasting system in the country. In this case most of the televisions that had influence in the country reported news that were in favor of government by throwing veils over secret crimes and often giving them inter-ethnic hues for the humiliation of Albanians. A study done for the crime, media and public said: *if we consider the fact that reporting for most crimes in a particular area is inappropriate, it is clear that the population gets a misleading view of the crime in their living area*⁴. Thus in our country the reporting made by Tv Sitel and Tv Kanal 5 regarding the beatings of Albanians in urban centers, the killing of two Albanians in the city of Gostivar, the murders in Smilkovci Lake and a series of other crimes of various kinds accused Albanians of inciting of interethnic tensions. In fact, these televisions at the heart of the news had insults against Albanians by calling

¹Abduli, A. (2012)- Lente sociologjike, p.236, vol. 2.

²Garland, D. (2005) - Penal Excess and Surplus Meaning Public Torture Lynchings in 20 th Century America, Forthcoming in Law & Society Review, vol 39.

³Malnes, R; Midgaard, K. (2008), Filozofia Politike, fq. 87 Feniks, Shkup

⁴Ljubica Bakić-Tomić, Ph. D., Teachers Faculty, University of Zagreb, lbakicto@yahoo.com & Zuzana Hubinkova, Ph.D., The University of Economics Prague (UEP), Faculty of Business Administration, Department of Managerial Psychology and Sociology, Prague, Czech Republic. hubinkova@quick.cz & Anton Vukelić, Ph.D., Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, Department of Sociology, Zagreb, Croatia

them terrorists and accusing them of any homicide. According to these media Albanians were guilty custodian of all the evil that happened in the country.

The only television in the country that reported constantly the VMRO's bouts was TV A1, which was faced with constant pressures that alluded to proprietary and journalist threats, barriers and boycotts of advertising, even to private retaliation against employees of this television. In this case, the government except that ordered the closure of A1, they destroyed the entire capital of the owner of this television, Velia Ramkovski, imprisoning the latter also allegedly for misuse of office and finding many irregularities in his companies.

Conclusion

From the analysis and study of the aforementioned cases, but also the other ones which are unable to include in this study, results that the Republic of Macedonia during this decade was overwhelmed by the crime and abusive abuses of state authorities. The spirit created by the VMRO-DPMNE party over the course of this decade undermined the democracy of this state by creating a totalitarian system of government. Meanwhile, his coalition partner, the DUI party was just a decorative figure of power which did not even have the minimal quantification to oppose power. The political spirit of dictator Gruevski was similar to Hannah Arendt's analysis of the crisis in Europe, which is expressed: *the system of political parties, and the parliamentary government in general, were considered corrupt and oligarchic. Such an environment was a fertile ground for a "mentality of the crowd" in which foreigners - Jews, Roma, Slavs, homosexuals, «cosmopolitan intellectuals», (in this case Albanians from Macedonia) are sacrificed*¹, in which the expression of free speech in the public media will be hampered as vengeance was on the verge of firing, pressure, supervising jobs, different fears and threats from a variety of situations that led to the multidimensional crisis in this country as a crisis in the economic system as a result of manipulation with finances and thefts from workers' salaries for the construction of memorials in the city of Skopje, crisis in the education system due to inadequate programs for the conditions and circumstances of schools, fabrication of Universities with lack of professionalism, unlisted job placement only with party membership, unemployment growth, canned and corrupt courts directly related to power etc. The worst consequences of this criminological structure were suffered by the population, especially the Albanian population, which was constantly persecuted by the authorities, in certain areas, conducting house raids, terrorizing children with automatic weapons, beating and imprisoning individuals by committing crimes or forcing and exploiting them for involvement in crimes for party benefit. For a society filled with resentment Hannah Arendt would say *ripe for manipulation by the propaganda of sensationalist demagogues: what convinces the masses are not facts, not even invented facts, but only the consistency of a system with which they apparently are part. . . Totalitarian propaganda thrives on this escape from the fixed reality. . . and can offend common sense only when healthy feeling has lost its validity. The governance of such a system Arendt would call "Cynicism or malicious plot"*².

It is no coincidence that this state is now in the process of being emptied because of the decline in birthrate, the departure of young people towards the West, which does not deny the case of institutional shortages that in the coming years will threaten Macedonia at potential risk.

Specifically, this coalition of government brought Macedonia into a tremendous regret, which also needs decades to eradicate the crime, to bring about economic stability that will also affect the stability of other areas.

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