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Researches versus Organised Crime

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Abstract

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Post-modern society is characterized by unpredictable and explicitly contradictory economic, political and social developments. Capitalist society today is characterized by economic and political globalization, which is supported by the grey economy and tax evasion. One of its effects is the appearance of new and complex forms of extremely intensive and far-reaching threats to individual and collective security. Organised crime in all forms is one of the new complex threats to individual and collective security and is the subject of researches. These discourses therefore highlight issues of security with regard to elites and their members and challenges to security through 'internal' and 'external' threats which are widely held to be rooted in culturally, economically and socially deprived environments especially in countries in transition.

In the context of security policy, crime – particularly in its most dangerous forms, including organised crime - is not being presented properly and researchers were not part of decision makers in society. Phenomena such as organized crime, capable of influencing the political process, are rooted in an unjust social order, an extremely unbalanced distribution of material sources and goods, exploitation, isolation (for example by means of an 'efficient' immigration policy), poverty, unjustified deprivation (for example, to deny such basic rights as the right of a nation to independence), discrimination and marginalization.

In the last years researchers examines attempts and dilemmas connected with the measurement of organized crime. Most of researches present an overview of police data

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relating to organized crime, some of them include also victimization surveys and only few include self-reported and deviance studies. We saw that quantitative analyses should be overcome by qualitative researches. We discover that measurement of organized crime is still predominately arbitrary, the reason for that lies in the fact that the phenomenon of organized crime is hard to grasp and define, so only approximate assessments of the extent and characteristics of such criminal acts are known. We believe that it is difficult to obtain reliable data related to organized crime due to its characteristics, definitions, effectiveness of the formal social control, and procedures of classifying specific criminal activities as organized crime. Criminal activities that can be considered as indicators of organized crime are:

- criminal offences against financial interests of the state (frauds, evasions, smuggling),
- corruption and money laundering, which are consequences of organized crime or economic crime,
- extreme acts of violence: explosions, murders, blackmail, terrorism, trade in arms,
- forgery of money and other securities,
- trafficking and smuggling of human beings,
- illegal trade with illicit drugs.

A great deal of caution is required with their explanation, however, especially due to their nature and potential threat to the national security. Contemporary theories of organized crime, originate from economic analyses of organized crime comprehension, for which, in the authors' opinion both the legal and the illegal markets need to be thoroughly examined. The most crucial result with attempts of understanding and analyzing organized crime is achieved with the economic-entrepreneurial view on assessing markets. Some attempts' were made by researchers which deal with future development of criminality and they present the tools for measurement of organized crime, which are based on risk theories.

Researchers should develop new tolls for future researches in the field of organized crime, according to which they can present reliable information for decision makers

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and politicians. One of tools could be qualitative researches in which through in depth interviews' with police officers, prosecutors judges and others, weak points for curbing organized crime will be discovered. Other method is analyzing data (text analyses) for which we have now better tools and modern support.

Example of qualitative method was done by author who analysed informal networks which use corruption for influencing on rule of law. The preliminary structured interview had been previously tested on a sample of representatives of social, political and economic elite representatives[i] in Slovenia prior to the creation of the final version of the in-depth-interview. The in-depth-interview (IDI) was used in this study and consisted of questions regarding general views on the rule of law, the use of contacts, informal networks, and personal exposure to and use of contacts and informal networks. In addition to eight groups of social, political and economic elites, a group of EU institutions in Slovenia and state officials who are engaged in the field of control and prevention of corruption were selected.

In-depth-interviews[ii] were conducted by trained interviewers, and took place at respondents' homes, offices and public places proposed by the interviewees (restaurants, libraries etc.). Each interview took about one hour and was recorded and subsequently analyzed. One hundred eight interviews were conducted but 20 interviews were not valid for further analysis because of ignorance regarding the topic or defense mechanisms emerging in respondents.

Previous studies of corruption based on samples of general public showed no significant findings related to corruptive networks in Slovenia. Therefore, it was assumed that members of the most influential networks are representatives of higher social strata. It is assumed that respondents belong to different competitive networks and are more critical about other networks than their own. It is also assumed that some respondents have been victims of unfair public procurement procedures. Therefore, they are expected to reveal valid information on their perception of the studied problem. The studied respondents have been chosen upon assumption that they have

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some knowledge on informal networks and have experienced the impact of the networks in everyday life.

Such method is now used for analysing problems of investigating art crime. According to our previous research, it has been noted that museum security guards form the least effective line of defense in the protection of art from theft and vandalism. Museums rely increasingly on high-tech, alarm-based security, which has failed to work, or failed to provoke an effective response, in a number of high-profile occasions. Museum security guards around the world were interviewed about their own roles, their training, and their perception of museum security. The results were processed, and trends were found that suggest a prevalent passivity and resulting ineffectuality on the part of guards in general. Guards from museums with untraditional security directors, who advocate a more active participation from their staff while on duty, felt better prepared to respond to security threats, and felt that they diffused potential security threats by identifying suspicious persons in advance and approaching them in an appropriate manner.

Other research on art crime made by author used another research technique. Research focus on analysis of all the publically available art crime reports for one year, 2005, chosen as a case study. The authors accumulated and analyzed archives from sources available to scholars. The primary sources of our art crime archive for the year 2005 are the accumulated press releases and reports published by the Museum Security Network, supplemented by information from the FBI, Scotland Yard, the Carabinieri, and Interpol, as well as data accumulated through interviews and journalistic sources. The accumulated information was entered into SPSS for the extrapolation of statistics and graphs and to facilitate searches. The accumulation and analysis of this data is meant to illustrate the current difficulties in accessing information for the purpose of study in the field of art crime, and the lengths to which scholars need to go in order to approach this under-studied field. But it is likewise meant to contrast this difficulty in accessing the quality information which academics require with the universal acknowledgement of the severity of art crime as a contemporary and historical phenomenon. Our conclusion is that organised crime needs extensive further study, but

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requires the cooperation of all institutions in society and in making data available to qualified researchers before such a study may be undertaken. For that we need political support first.

More about researches in author's articles available on internet or: bojan.dobovsek@fvv.uni-mb.si

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[i] (1) Elected representative of the largest political party in Slovenia, (2) high ranking public procurement official, (3) a judge of the Supreme Court, (4) a director of the largest national retail company, (5) a director of an international retail company, (6) a member of parliament, (7) a representative of the national media, and (8) a representative of NGO dealing with corruption.

[ii] In the beginning of every IDI a respondent was presented the following vignette and asked a question abut the existence of similar matters in Slovenia: „In many countries people sharing the same educational background or people who have worked together in the same branch, etc. often share the same interests and keep in contact with each other to promote these interests and to support each other whenever necessary. In Scandinavia people talk about "the old boys network", which is composed of often older men holding high positions in business and politics. In Korea people talk about "university networks" – people who have studied at the same university feel obliged to help other people who also studied at that university to promote business, to get a job, etc. In Russia people who held high positions in the Komsomol (Communist Party Youth Organisation), for instance, represent one such network of people keeping in close contact and helping each other whenever necessary. They form what we call an "informal network". Do you think such networks exist in Slovenia?"