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DEMOGRAPHY OF CORRUPTION: OVERVIEW OF THE “STATE CAPTURE”



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ДЕМОГРАФИЈА НА КОРУПЦИЈАТА: ПОГЛЕД КОН ЗАРОБЕНАТА ДРЖАВА

Demography of corruption: Overview of the “state capture” Publisher:
Macedonian Center for International Cooperation

For the publisher:

Aleksandar Kržalovski, First Executive Director

Dimče Mitreski, Executive Director

Ana Janevska Deleva, Executive Director, TM

Author:

Misha Popovikj

Design:

Koma

MACEDONIAN CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Contact:

MCIC, address: st. Nikola Parapunov, no.41a

Post. fax: 55, 1060 Skopje;

Tel: +389/2/3065-381; fax: +389/2/3065-298

e-mail: mcms@mcms.mk; web: www.mcms.mk.

Scribd: <http://www.scribd.com/people/documents/2996697>

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The electronic version of this publication is available on www.mcms.mk.

This report was made possible with support from the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through the USAID Anti-corruption program. The contents of this publication are the responsibility of the author Misha Popovikj and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of USAID or the U.S. Government.

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BACKGROUND

The activities to measure the spread of corruption using survey research is the basis for initiation of activities that will be used to assess how successful are the anticorruption activities in the society. Three main areas should be covered by such research: the perception on how spread the corruption is; the practicing of and involvement in corruption; and the attitudes of the people towards this phenomenon.

Having information about these three aspects will enable us to come up to three main conclusions. The level of involvement will help us measure the minimum scope of the corruption in a given society¹. We can therefore provide conservative assessment on how much the citizens were involved in corruption i.e. how spread the corruption is. The perception helps us identify the bigger picture where the respondents say their standpoint on how much they think, or see directly, the institutions are not working in a way they should – towards the public interest. Using the attitudes of the population about particular forms of corruption we can see how much is the corruption considered “normal” as a practice in the society i.e. how much is the corruptive behavior accepted and tolerated.

However, when analyzing research such as this it is very important to do that through the eyes of the demographic categories in order to identify whether different level of corruption impacts different groups in the society differently. By doing so we are able to identify groups with different vulnerability level towards various aspect of the corruption. In the same time it is interesting to note that the corruption impacts different groups in similar manner. In the first case, we could design activities that will improve the situation of specific groups. In the second case, it would mean that we are still on a level where the issues should be addressed using “general moves”.

Basis for this analysis is the corruption survey (research) carried out by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation at the beginning of 2014.² This research was based on the system of corruption monitoring developed by the Center for Study of Democracy from Sofia and was, in turn, the basis for development of the Corruption Assessment Report (Nuredinovska et al., 2014). One of the key benefits of this methodology is the aggregation of the results into corruption indices which makes it easier to analyze the results divided into six different dimensions of the corruption phenomenon.

1 It is minimal because the respondents will never fully and honestly speak about their entire involvement. This is the case because there is always a certain degree of fear but also a wish of the respondents to present themselves in a better light.

2 The survey was carried out by the TIM Institute. It covered a representative sample on national level that included 1,210 respondents. The survey was carried out during January and February 2014. The representation criteria are: gender, age, ethnic background, place of residence and region.

CORRUPTION INDICES

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The indices are essentially summary overview of a number of indicators showing the perceptions, experience and practice of the respondents related to corruption. Such summary overview makes it possible to aggregate the results which are otherwise fragmented throughout different indicators i.e. throughout different questions in the research and they are related to specific dimensions of the corruption.

Therefore, the indices make it possible to have simplified and summary overview of the following dimensions:

1. Identification of corruption
2. Tolerance to corruption
3. Susceptibility to corruption
4. Degree of corruption of the environment
5. Experiences with pressure for corruption
6. Involvement in corruption

IDENTIFICATION OF THE CORRUPTION

The survey results show that 61% of the citizens are highly capable of identifying corruption, 11% of the citizens have low capability and 28% have moderate capability.

The corruption identification index measures how much the respondents are capable of identifying that some specific behavior is, in fact, corruption. The respondents are given 11 situations, all of which are some form of corruption. If most of these situations are identified as corruption the index will be higher and it shows high capability of the respondents to identify that a particular behavior is corruptive behavior.

The survey results show that 61% of the citizens are highly capable of identifying corruption, 11% of the citizens have low capability and 28% have moderate capability.³

This shows that the number of people who will not be able to initially identify the behavior of the civil servants working in the institutions (with which the people are interacting) as corruptive behavior, but will consider such behavior normal, is not insignificant. In other words, in this case we are not talking about accepted and in the same time identified culture of corruptive behavior but we are talking about the lack of awareness that the corruption is actually taking place.

The scope of this problem is not small. The results show that, in the course of the daily interaction with the public services in the society, almost 174 thousand people will have low capability to identify when they are involved in corruption. Additional 442 thousand people will have moderate capability.⁴ In reality this means that significant portion of the annual public services that feature corruption will happen unnoticed by the victims in those transactions.

³ The categorization into “low, moderate and high” capability is done using scores. From a total of 11 corruption examples, the respondents who identified up to 3 examples have low capability, those that have identified between 4 and 7 have moderate capability and those that have identified over 7 examples have high capability.

⁴ The projections are established by using the percentages obtained from the research carried on population age 18 and over in the Republic of Macedonia, according to population estimates for 2013 of the State Statistical Office.

Table 1: Identification of the corruption (categorized)

| | % |
|---|------------------|
| | Low 11 |
| | Moderate 28 |
| Level of awareness about corruptive behaviour | High 61 |
| | Total 100 |

Further demographic analysis show two interesting phenomena when considering the manner in which different social groups deal with the identification of the corruption.

There is a link between the level of education and income and ability to identify corruption practices. Those people with lower level of education (especially those without any education or those that have only elementary education) are less able to identify corruption. In this regard, 50% of the people with low levels of education have high ability to identify corruption, which is significantly less compared to 65% of the people with secondary education and 68% of the people with tertiary of higher education.

In similar way, the people with lower income levels are less able to identify the corruption. The results show that 19% of the respondents that have income of up to 100 euros have low ability level to identify corruptive behavior, this percentage among respondents that have higher income is 13% (those that have between 101 and 200 euros) and up to 5% among respondents with over 700 euros monthly income.

Other demographic categories show no relation with the ability to identify corruption. For example, the age, gender and their social status can be used in order to relevantly predict whether the people will be more able to identify corruption or not. What is peculiar, though, is that the respondents that own companies or manage other people are not more aware about the corruption compared to the rest i.e. there are no significant differences in this regard among these two groups of people.

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TOLERANCE TO CORRUPTION

The highest tolerance level towards corruption exists among people age 40-49 years, where 52% of this age group has developed acceptability, which is significantly different from the total result but also from the generations age 30-39 and 60-69 years

The corruption tolerance index measures how acceptable it is for the respondents who are members of the Parliament or officers working in Ministries or municipalities to accept bribe in several different situation shown. Although corruption or bribery are never mentioned in those situational questions, all examples offered are undoubtedly a form of corruption.

The results show that even 45% of the people are tolerant towards corruption i.e. they deem acceptable at least some of the dimensions related to bribing of officials.⁵ The most common acceptable form (over 30%) is bribery in a form of free lunch in order to get the job done about particular personal problem. This suggests that in Macedonia there is a wide possibility for practicing of corruption, even in situations when it was implicitly identified that corruption exists. This is the case because the citizens accept certain forms of corruption of high state officials and consider it to be a manner of behavior.

Table 2: Tolerance to corruptive practice

| | % |
|--------------|------------|
| No tolerance | 55 |
| Tolerates | 45 |
| Total | 100 |

The highest tolerance level towards corruption exists among people age 40-49 years, where 52% of this age group has developed acceptability, which is significantly different from the total result but also from the generations age 30-39 and 60-69 years – among these age groups we notice less tolerance towards corruption i.e. 39% and 37%, accordingly.

In the same time the groups with average income (between 200-400 and 401-700 euros) show higher level of acceptability of corruption compared to other groups that have less or more income. In the frames of the first group, 46% have developed some level of tolerance and in the second group this it exists among 50%.

⁵ The index features parameters from 0 to 8, where 0 means that none of the examples provided were acceptable for the respondent while 8 means that all corruption examples were acceptable. These are shown in table 2 as categories where, if none of the examples were acceptable, it means the respondent has no tolerance for corruption, while if one of those examples was acceptable the respondent is considered tolerant.

SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CORRUPTION

The corruption susceptibility index measures the degree to which the respondents would behave in corrupted manner if they have a problem and want to resolve it and if they are in power – as public servant.

According to the survey, 33% of the citizens are susceptible to corruption. In other words, if they have some problems they are ready to offer bribe and if they themselves work as public servant they would do some service on someone’s behalf contrary to the public interest. This percentage is the same for citizens that have mixed behavior, meaning that they would either act in corrupted manner if they were to be public servant or they would offer bribe in order to resolve a particular problem they have.

| No answer | % |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Susceptible | 33 |
| Not susceptible | 27 |
| Mixed behavior | 33 |
| Total | 93 |
| Не одговориле | 7 |

Starting with this data we notice that the human capital not susceptible to corruption in Macedonia is a bit more than 426 thousand citizens, if the results are projected on the entire population over 18 years of age. On the other hand we have more than 521 thousand people that would accept bribe in any case and work for private interest, and the same number of people that would either do the former or the latter. In summary, more than 1 million people of Macedonia would be involved in corruption in one way or another.

The additional demographic analysis shows that the gender and age of the respondents corresponds to the susceptibility to corruption.⁶ In other words, men are more susceptible to corruption compared to women. For example, 39% of men would participate in corruption if offered such chance, against 32% of women. Mixed behavior is present among 37% of men against 34% of women. Resistance towards corruption is expressed by 23% of men and 34% of women.

When it comes to age groups, the young generations are more susceptible to corruption. For example, 42% of the respondents up to 29 years of age are susceptible to corruption, 39% of those up to 39 years of age and 42% of those up to 49 years of age are also susceptible to corruption. As the age limit is moved up, the susceptibility is reduced – 31% among people age 50-59 years and 17% among people age 70 and more.

More than 521 thousand people that would accept bribe in any case and work for private interest, and the same number of people that would either do the former or the latter. In summary, more than 1 million people of Macedonia would be involved in corruption in one way or another.

⁶ The following percentages pertain to 93% of the respondents.

DEGREE OF CORRUPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

This index shows the perceptions of the respondents on what are their expectations that, if they request some public service, they will be asked some kind of bribe. Through the expectations we show the perceptions of the respondents on how spread is the corruption.

Seventy seven percent of the people expect the environment to be corrupted i.e. if they enter into interaction with servants or officials it is likely that in some moment they will be requested to pay a bribe or service. On the other hand, 16% deem that the likelihood of being asked to offer bribe is small so they think the environment is mainly not corrupted.

Table 4: Degree of corruption of the environment (categories)

| | % |
|---------------|-----------|
| Corrupted | 77 |
| Not corrupted | 16 |
| Total | 93 |
| No answer | 7 |

Истовремено, групите со средни примања (200-400 и 401-700 евра) покажуваат повисоко ниво на прифатливост на корупцијата во споредба со другите групи со помалку или повеќе приходи. Во рамките на првата група, 46% имаат развиено некакво ниво на толеранција, а кај втората група тоа е распространето кај 50%.

CORRUPTION PRESSURE

The corruption pressure index measures the extent to which the citizens were asked to provide bribe or service when they had interaction with the public services, or were in any way hinted that something like that is expected. This index is, essentially, victimizing index meaning it measures the experience with corruption instead of corruption perception. In this sense it can be used to make projections about the extent of corruption in the country.

The results show that 26% of the citizens have experience with corruption pressure. More than one fourth of all citizens were asked for some form of bribe or counter-service, or were hinted that something like that is expected whenever they had interaction with the administration. This is an indicator of widely spread corruption that pressured more than 400 thousand people in 2013.⁷

If we analyze only the percentage of those that had interaction with the administration, we start to get the real impression. More than half of the people (56%) that had interaction with the public servants are pressured by the corruption. Shown through example: one out of every two persons waiting their turn to receive service (for example: at the counter, doctor, etc.) is requested (explicitly or implicitly) to give bribe.

Table 5: Experience with corruption pressure

| | % | % of those that had interaction |
|--|----|---------------------------------|
| No pressure | 20 | 44 |
| Had experience with the pressure | 26 | 56 |
| Total | 46 | 100 |
| No interaction with the administration | 52 | |
| No answer | 2 | |

The more thorough analysis shows that the corruption pressure is not related to any particular demographic group. This is due to the wide spread of this phenomenon. For example, the differences between the groups when it comes to exposure to corruption pressure are small so we cannot really say there is relation between the exposure to corruption pressure and affiliation to particular group.⁸ In other words, the corruption pressure is widely present that in this moment the research shows it tackles all groups in a similar extent.

⁷ This projection was extrapolated by applying the percentage on the entire population age 18 and over, in accordance with the State Statistical Office.

⁸ In order to confirm whether the differences are significant it is necessary to carry out research using larger sample.

The number of respondents exposed to pressure from particular types of public service does not allow for generalizing with the conclusions. However, from what we can see the data is showing that different types of public servants pressure the people to get involved in corruption in different manners. For example, it was more men than women respondents who said that police officer asked for bribe. The judicial and municipal administration put more pressure on those respondents owning businesses or have management positions, compared to the rest. According to the experience of the respondents the teachers put corruption pressure on those with lowest and highest income.

INVOLVEMENT IN CORRUPTION

The corruption index shows the number of respondents that were involved in a corruptive transaction i.e. who bribed public servant by offering bribe, gift or counter-service. This index is the second victimizing index of this research and it is the most important measure of corruption. It is so because it is not based on perception – it is measure of corruption practice where there is actual involvement in corruption and not only pressure.

The analysis shows widely spread corruption practice. Every fifth person in Macedonia (21%) bribed public servant in one way or another in 2013. If we analyze only the respondents that had interaction with the administration in that year we see that 47% of them gave bribe which is again a significant number – almost every second person had to give bribe in order to get service. If we translate these percentages into numbers, more than 331 thousand people gave bribe in 2013 which means that in 2013 there was equal number of bribery “transactions”.

Every fifth person in Macedonia (21%) bribed public servant in one way or another in 2013.

Table 6: Involvement in corruption

| | % | % of those that had interaction |
|--|----|---------------------------------|
| Did not gave bribe | 24 | 53 |
| Gave bribe | 21 | 47 |
| Total | 45 | 100 |
| No answer | 2 | |
| Had no interaction with the administration | 52 | |

The wide distribution of the corruption shows there is no significant connection between involvement in the corruption and affiliation to some particular demographic group. This means that all demographic groups are victims of the corruption in a similar extent, regardless of the level of education, monthly income, gender or social status of the citizens.

Furthermore, the small number of respondents involved in corruption makes it impossible to generalize on a level of specific groups. Nevertheless, we can still notice among respondents that there is difference between involvement in corruption of the poorest group of respondents - they are more victims of the corruption compared to others.

In addition, this group of respondents also showed least resistance against the corruption pressure. Only 20% of the people belonging to this group were able to resist the pressure when they were asked for bribe. This resistance increases with the increase in the income and it is the highest among the richest group – 33%.⁹ A research that would include greater number of respondents would probably confirm this conclusion i.e. will make it possible to generalize.

When speaking about corruption resistance, the results show that only 22% of those that have been pressured towards corruption and had interaction with the administration¹⁰ were able to resist that pressure. On the other side, 9% of those that were not subject to bribing pressure still decided to bribe.

Table 7: Resistance towards pressure

| | | Experience with corruption pressure | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| | | No experience | Had experience |
| Involvement in corruption | Did not give bribe | 91% | 22% |
| | Have given bribe | 9% | 78% |

⁹ These results were extrapolated from a total of 186 respondents.

¹⁰ These results were extrapolated from a total of 540 respondents.

TOWARDS “STATE CAPTURE”

This data show a worrying picture that only confirms the current political situation. The wire tapped audio recordings published by the opposition political party showed indications of a widely spread network of systematic abuse of the public institution, known in the anticorruption literature as “state capture”. This phenomenon is about high level corruption which “establishes a hidden political regime which is opposed to the constitutional objective of the state institutions” (Karklins, 2005). In that sense, political oligarchy kidnaps the system so the system does not operate for the sake of the public interest but for private interests. In short, “state capture” can be defined as systematic and long-term privatization of the institutions.

In this way, we witness a situation where the universalistic principle on the basis of which we assume the modern society and state (in which all citizens have equal access to the public services) is replaced with particularism. The particularism means unequal access to public services. However, another driving force of this phenomenon is the fact that in such particularistic societies the citizens do not expect equal treatment and the main motive for their actions is to be part of the groups that gain more (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2011).

If we take this theoretical framework as a base, the case of the Republic of Macedonia undoubtedly belongs to this category. The wire tapped audio recordings showed indications that key institutions such as judiciary, ministries and other public institutions and sectors such as media and education are privatized for the interest of the ruling party elites.

It is interesting to see in this regard how the research results fit into this picture. In the same time it is necessary to avoid the danger of understanding the results as cultural base for introduction of the “state capture” system in which Macedonia currently exists. The research measures the perceptions and attitude the people have towards corruption. In such conditions one part of the people’s behavior supports the particularistic system but another part is also a result of learning and life strategy of surviving in such conditions. It is therefore very difficult to make cause-and-effect conclusions and advantage can be taken of such effort to use it as a cover to legitimize the failure (in relative terms) to successfully fight corruption till now.

According to survey results, more than 710 thousand people have certain level of tolerance towards corruption.¹¹ Such tolerance is the basis for

¹¹ The projection was extrapolated by applying the percentage on the estimates of people age 18 years and over for 2013 by the State Statistical Office.

The survey showed that only 27% of the people in Macedonia do not show indications they are susceptible to corruption, while the rest would enter into corruption if they in the respective official position or have some problem they need resolved.

331 thousand people gave bribe in 2013 and the resistance towards the corruption pressure is 22% i.e. one out of five people that have been pressured for corruption managed to resist the demand for briber or counter-service.

having the situation of “state capture” as a highest form of corruption. The tolerance towards corruption makes possible the reproduction of that system. This reproduction is taking place through the wide-spread culture that the public services are allocated in corruptive and particularistic manner, and such rules of the game are accepted (tolerated) – even when the behavior has been identified as corruption.

The tolerance towards corruption is the basis for the opportunities for introduction of a “state capture” system to take roots because such behavior is accepted as a rule. The susceptibility to corruption simply adds on top of this tolerance and the people leave the possibility for the corruptive behavior to become their personal behavior as well, as a strategy for resolution of their problems, or someone else’s problems. The survey showed that only 27% of the people in Macedonia do not show indications they are susceptible to corruption, while the rest would enter into corruption if they in the respective official position or have some problem they need resolved.

The high level of perception that the corruption is spread in the environment showed that this index adds to the previous two indices who altogether describe the “state capture” situation. The acceptability and susceptibility to corruption set the basis on which the people’s expectations are shaped. Assuming that the corrupted practice is the “known established game in the city” the people will approach the institutions with such expectations. In that sense, the corruption level index, as a perception index, also shows the picture the people have about the institutions. This picture is not the implicit question whether corruption will be initiated in the first place, but when – it is a matter of time when they will be asked something additional as a compensation of the job done.

The two most recent indices showed wide spread of the corruption in practice. If compared against the perception on spread of the corruption, the corruption pressure index showed that every second citizen that has interaction with the administration was asked some form of bribery. In the same time the results showed that 331 thousand people gave bribe in 2013 and the resistance towards the corruption pressure is 22% i.e. one out of five people that have been pressured for corruption managed to resist the demand for briber or counter-service.

All results show a situation in which the corruption, which is already spread, is reproducing itself. The scope of the corruption affirms the understanding that it is accepted game and the wide-spread tolerance and the susceptibility to corruption signals that the people, in their life strategy, are focused on transferring towards more privileged groups instead of resisting the corruption practice.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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OF CORRUPTION:
Overview of the
“state capture”

The corruption is a spread phenomenon in the Republic of Macedonia. Even 77% of the people expect that in their interaction with the public institutions they will face corruption. More than one fourth of the people were asked for some form of bribery and one in five people paid bribery or gave some gift or counter-service.

The citizens of Macedonia show high level of tolerance towards the corruption – 45% of them tolerate this practice in some form. Furthermore, only 27% are not susceptible to corruption if they are in position to take advantage of such situation.

Although these are very general observations we can still come up with recommendations relevant for the stakeholders in the fight against corruption.

Considering how spread is this phenomenon, it is necessary to continuously monitor and measure the situation in order to assess whether the corruption is raising or declining. This goes for all corruption indices, especially those showing the involvement, pressure and identification of the corruption.

These are tasks not only for the NGO sector which independently monitors the progress in the fight against corruption, but also for the public institutions which should implement these types of surveys and research in order to identify the areas in which they are successful and the areas in which they need to invest resources for improvement. It is therefore necessary to continuously survey the clients of the public institutions in order to monitor the eventual increase of the pressure and the presence/ inclusion of the corruption when interacting with the institution. This should be part of the integrity system and of the system for quality control of the services delivered.

The spread of the corruption measured in minimum 331 thousand transactions per year points out to the fact that corruption exists not only on the highest level but also at lower levels. Metaphorically speaking, the corruption exists along all “food chains”.

In addition to the proactive detection measures the state must introduce systematic monitoring of the assets of all public servants. This measure will yield results because one part of the bribe money end up in the pockets of the lower administrative servants.

77% of the people expect that in their interaction with the public institutions they will face corruption.

Dealing with high-level corruption cases will initiate reduction of the lower-level corruption and will in the same time demonstrate that the corruptive behavior does not pay off on longer term.

Political will is necessary in order to control the high-level corruption and to dismantle of the “state capture”. However, in the absence of such will it is necessary to have continuous and sustainable pressure from organized civil society that will deal solely with this issue in the future period. The donor community is necessary to address this issue enabling the organizations to adapt their activities in the next two to three years, by developing monitoring mechanisms that will monitor the progress of the reforms but will also ensure systematic early warning and relevant reaction that will also impact the policy.

Dealing with high-level corruption cases will initiate reduction of the lower-level corruption and will in the same time demonstrate that the corruptive behavior does not pay off on longer term. It is one of the several ways on how to change the enrooted beliefs of the people which, in fact, determine the high level of tolerance and susceptibility towards corruption. Having this in mind the public institutions in charge of corruption control will have to “identify” their independence and initiate the investigation of highest-level corruption cases.

The difficulties to identify corruption are clear signal towards the public institutions for developing information context on the various corruption forms that will be easily accessible (physically or online) in the space where there is interaction between the servants/ officers and the clients. This should not be understood only as time-bound campaign but as a long-term education of the servants/ officers and the clients.

These researches are unable to provide the full picture from all aspects when it comes to the manners in which the corruption impacts smaller and specific social groups. The researches such as this one should provide wide framework and detection of the possible specific influence on smaller vulnerable groups. The spread of the corruption makes it difficult to identify the different manners in which the corruption is affecting him. However, in order to investigate these tendencies and in order to be able to generalize them, the civil society organizations should continuously work on adaptation into micro studies which they will use in trying to provide the full picture.

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CIP - Каталогизација во публикација
Национална и универзитетска библиотека «Св. Климент Охридски», Скопје

336.1:343.35(497.7)(047)

336.5:336.146(497.7)(047)

PENEV, Slagjan

Unlawful, irresponsible and irrational spending of citizens's
money presented in the reports of the state audit office
[Електронски извор] / author Slagjan Penev. - Текст во PDF
формат, содржи 18 стр. - Skopje : Macedonian center for
international cooperation, 2015

Начин на пристап (URL): www.mcms.mk. - Наслов преземен од екранот.
- Опис на изворот на ден 25.12.2015. - Фусноти кон текстот

ISBN 978-608-4681-45-8

а) Јавни финансии - Злоупотреба - Македонија - Извештаи б) Државна
потрошувачка - Анализа - Државен завод за статистика - Македонија -
Извештаи

COBISS.MK-ID 100235530

