
HOMICIDE - SUICIDE AT ALBANIANS IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA IN THE PERIOD 2009-2019

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Abstract: This study will present the treatment of domestic crime, respectively homicides and suicides in the Albanian society of the Republic of North Macedonia. The study will be processed based on the sociological approach by researching cases of murder and suicide caused by conflicts and domestic violence, especially cases of homicide-suicide related to the Albanian population in Republic of North Macedonia. The goal of this research is to analyze the scale, trends and motives of homicides- suicides in the period 2009-2019. The study focuses on relevant empirical research and will include a combination of quantitative and qualitative data in terms of crime research with consequent homicide and suicide. The homicide-suicide cases are not a customary or due to a religious law that incites them as it happens in some other Albanian provinces of Albania, but occur mostly for social reasons, moral abuse, family honor, economic problems, impediment to marital decisions and other social sources that include family turmoil, violence between members especially against women and conflicts about the property inheritance. The empirical data we have collected for this study represent statistics about the presence of this phenomenon that has claimed hundreds of life's, categorized as homicide or suicide and discuss the reasoning behind this phenomenon. Our research data show crime levels, especially homicides and suicides registered at the Albanian population living in North Macedonia over a ten-year period (2009-2019). The illustrations of the crime over the years speak of a curved arc of the level of homicides and suicides showing large number of cases in some years, whereas there are yearly periods with no cases recorded. It seems that the highest suicide rate happens because of family conflicts and depression, while the homicides due to property conflicts and family honor are also higher than other causes of crime. Our research of the phenomenon in question, elaborated with a narrative methodology, precede the verification of the hypotheses: According to the data, homicides and suicides are more often in men; suicides have a higher rate compared to homicides and violence of honor and adultery are the main promoting act of murder. In the deductive level, generalizing the research problem, we come to concluding the general hypothesis that: "Persistent family quarrels and emotional problems of the individuals are the main cause of murders and suicides in the Albanian society of North Macedonia." The study also shows that homicide and suicide crime cases can be intensified and reach higher rates in the future, compared to the data of the past years if no action is taken to prevent the causes leading to this type of phenomenon.

Keyword: domestic crime, homicide - suicide, victim, family honor, society

1.INTRODUCTION

Suicides are avoidable, but they require intervention. The World Health Organization defines "suicide as an act of which a person is fully aware and awaiting the fatal outcome, plans and executes it himself" (OECD, 2016). Suicide is a serious and major public health problem, both worldwide and in our country. Every day in the world one person every 40 seconds dies from his own hand (WHO). Suicide is a serious social problem that requires to be researched and treated intensively with the best and fastest measures to prevent it. In our society suicide is kind of forbidden topic, to which not much attention and importance is paid and nobody wants to accept it as such. Hence, there are no professionals that can detect and treat potential persons with suicide symptoms.

The aims of this study are to analyze the scale, trends and motives of homicides- suicides in the period 2009-2019 at the Albanian community in North Macedonia. The homicide-suicide cases occur mostly for social reasons, moral abuse, family honor, economic problems, impediment to marital decisions and other social sources that include family turmoil, violence between members especially against women and conflicts about the property inheritance.

If we try to analyze the details of all the cases that have occurred in the Albanian community in North Macedonia in the last ten years, then the phenomenon takes on the dimensions of generalization, finding that all cases of crime resulting in homicide and suicide have occurred in the context of family conflicts. The inability to solve problems with compromise distorts the personality of the individual and reinforces hatred as the act revenge incites the pressure of this action. According to researchers, actors of crime that perform homicides or suicides often have

problems with power and control over their intimate partners, along with their addictive tendencies and personality traits (Liem & Roberts, 2009).

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on relevant empirical research and will include a combination of quantitative and qualitative data in terms of crime research with consequent homicide and suicide. The quantitative approach is going to display the statistical data of murders and suicides registered in the relevant institutions for the ten-year period, while the qualitative approach will focus on exploring cases to understand the motives and causes of this phenomenon. While the research methods will be based on series of crime cases, respectively homicides and suicides that occurred in the period 2009-2019. The methods used are: deduction, case study, content analysis, comparison and statistical methods.

2.1 HYPOTHESIS

General hypothesis: *"Frequent quarrels in family and emotional problems of individual are the main cause of homicides and suicides among the Albanian population in the Republic of North Macedonia"*

H1 = *"Jealousy and adultery incite murder of women"*

H2 = *"Family property still remains the cause of crime in Albanian society"*

H3 = *"Involvement of men in homicide-suicide crimes is in a higher percentage than women"*

H4 = *"Suicides remain higher than homicides"*

3. FREQUENT FAMILY QUARRELS, SENSITIVE FACTORS OF DEPRESSION AND CRIME IN SOCIETY

3.1 THEORETICAL APPROACH

Given that the family is a small group of only a few members, sometimes it happens that the problems are not resolved by agreement but by a quarrel until the use of weapons that extinguish each other's life. Usually these fatal quarrels occur between spouses, parents and their children, between brothers or other family members. This generalization of the problem that family conflicts are the main tendencies of homicides and suicides also refers to the sociological reflections of this phenomenon, as phrases by the most famous researcher of crime in society Durkheim who in addition to explaining the forms of crime and suicide states that crime is an integral part of any society (Durkheim, 1892)... crimes strike feelings, which in a given system, are found in all healthy consciences (Durkheim, 1983). While according to him suicide is a phenomenon that implies all cases of death that result directly or indirectly from the positive or negative act of the victim, who understands what the outcome of such an act will produce (Durkheim, 1897). According to Palmer, there are groups in society that are structurally closed and members have reciprocal rights, but when their activities are not implemented by rules the highest form of incident is homicide and the lowest is suicide (Palmer, 1995). In the Albanian society of North Macedonia, family incidents usually occur in both forms.

3.2 DATES/META ANALYSIS

During 2009-2019, in total there are 237 homicide cases and 1,282 suicides that were registered in the whole territory of North Macedonia. According to EUROSTAT statistical analysis in North Macedonia published in the annual report in 2018 the statistical data of the last ten years show a homicide rate in averages 1.8% per 100,000 inhabitants and ranks after neighboring countries such as Albania, Greece and Bulgaria. While, regarding the global data show that North Macedonia ranks after Serbia and Albania with about 0.15% per 10,000 inhabitants.

Based on the annual data on homicides and suicides in the country according to the State Statistical Office, we present the annual figures of the victims in the tables 1. for the number of homicide and table 2. for suicides:

Table 1: Number of homicide recorded by year in across the country

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Homicide at Albanian people	8	6	4	9	3	2	7	6	8	5	8	58
Homicide of another nationality	15	16	25	19	17	23	14	11	19	20	16	179
Totally	23	22	29	28	20	25	21	17	27	25	24	237

According to the data in the table, the phenomenon of homicides varies slightly from year to year, although there has been a decrease in the number of victims in recent years.

The highest number of homicides is on 2012, with a total of 28 registered victims, of which 26 cases are intentional homicides and 2 accidental homicides while, the lowest data are recorded on 2016 with a total of 17 cases throughout the territory. So the average homicide at the state level stands at 2.37%. At the level of the Albanian population, the highest rate of homicides was recorded in 2012 with a total of 9 victims, while the lowest in 2014 with only 2 recorded cases, so the average percentage of homicides of the Albanian population in North Macedonia is 0, 58%. According to documents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a total of 168 cases are domestic violence, honor violations and marital obstruction that have been reported in the last ten years, 38 murders have occurred as a result of family disputes, property disputes, depression and 31 cases consequence of momentary homicides, accidental homicides or other motives.

Table 2: Number of suicide recorded by year in across the country

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Suicide at Albanian people	6	5	3	8	6	9	4	7	3	4	9	55
Suicide at other nationality	171	145	137	164	148	133	112	129	118	112	97	1,369
Totally	177	150	140	172	154	142	116	136	121	116	106	1,282

The phenomenon of suicide varies with slight difference between years. The highest number is recorded in 2012 with 172 registered victims, while the lowest is recorded in 2015 and 2018 with 116 victims each year. The annual average of this phenomenon varies around 0.12% at the state level. Meanwhile, among the Albanian population, the phenomenon of suicide is seen to be lower compared to other nationalities. The highest suicide rate was recorded in 2014 with a total of 9 victims, while the lowest in 2010 and 2017 with 3 victims each year. Viewed from the number of victims presented above it is important to investigate in detail the causes that have incited crime in North Macedonia. According to the documents of the Sector for Internal Affairs, in the last ten years, 31 cases of suicide among the Albanian population have been recorded as a result of depressive suffering and mental problems, 4 cases have been marked by violation of family honor accompanied by double murder, respectively homicide and suicide at the same time. Other registered cases are 3 cases for barriers in marital decisions, 12 cases for property reasons and inheritance and 8 cases for other motives (debts, family abandonment ...) (MIA,11.10.2019).

3.4.HOMICIDES-SUICIDES STIMULATED BY MARRIAGE DECISIONS AND VIOLATION OF FAMILY HONOR

Murder of women for moral reasons even today in the 21st century continues to be alarming on a global scale. Despite international human rights conventions, women are still murdered for the sake of the so-called "Honor". This phenomenon is very pronounced in Asian and African countries, mainly: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Turkey, Morocco, etc. However, this phenomenon is not ruled out neither in the United States nor in Europe. In Europe, this phenomenon is present mainly in the areas where the Muslim population lives as they still today treat Honor as part of their belief. UN statistics show that about 50,000 women worldwide were killed by intimate partners or family member because of honor, (U.N Report, 2018). The largest number (20,000) of all women killed worldwide by intimate partners or family members in 2017 was in Asia, followed by Africa (19,000), the Americas (8,000) Europe (3,000) and Oceania (300) (UNDOC, 2018). "Honor" is a deep-rooted traditional concept that evolved through ancient culture of desert tribes in pre-Islamic era. The practice was prevalent in traditional structures that incorporated personal interests of patriarchy and feudalism. They argued that the existing patriarchal structure defined women as men's commodity including the control over women's sexuality (Hussain, 2006).

Some other researchers argue that honor killings are antitheses of Islamic morality and considered it as a cultural and traditional product of their provinces (Ullah, 2010). Also at the Albanian population in North Macedonia, in most cases is dominating the belief that women must and are forced to honor their families. In this society, parents decide about the marriage of their child, especially the father, and in marriage the wife is obliged to her husband. Although in many Albanian settlements this custom has been mandatory in the past, today in modern times, the man acting as a despot over women is a phenomenon to be inspected. According to statistics, about 25% of homicides in the country are caused by adultery or family shame. There are also such acts when homicides occur for the robbery of girls (the girl is forced to escape or escapes without parents permission), especially in cases when a marriage

agreement between the two families cannot be reached. Let us consider the cases of murders and suicides that have been recorded in the country as a result of the honor of women:

Case 1: The event that rocked the country on September 30, 2011 in the Tetovo district (a town in the western part of the Republic of North Macedonia) was the case where forbidden love was the main motive for the murder of the father and uncle of a boy who robbed a girl whose parents were against her marriage decision, injuring two other people inside the family, the mother and wife of one of the victims (the attempt was to kill the boy and the girl, but the bullet passes to the two aforementioned victims). According to sociological analysis, the cause of these homicides comes as a result to maintain the prestige of the family in front of the social neighborhood and to get out from the blows of relatives with slander and gossip.

Case 2: The double homicide also in the district of Tetovo where the father first kills his daughter and then himself with a pistol on March 13, 2013 results as consequences of violating the honor of the family. According to the descriptive documents of the regional police, the event is explained as follows: "The father, who lived for long time in Switzerland, influenced by gossip that his daughter has many extramarital affairs, returns furiously from exile with intention of killing his daughter. When he got home, he took the revolver he was keeping it at home and fired bullets at the daughter's head in the presence of his wife and son. Confused by the action after few minutes, he shot himself with two bullets" (MIA Tetovo, 2013). This action was extremely shocking for the whole opinion in the Republic of North Macedonia. According to patriarchal morality, the honor of family is depending by the purity of the girl (virginity). If "shame" becomes apparent to others then the girl's honor can only be saved by death (Wesemann, 2015).

Case 3: On October 18, 2018, the man killed his wife at her father's house and injured the taxi driver, while he himself escapes. According to the testimonies of the district (neighbors), it is reported that the murder happened due to the betrayal of the woman. This typical case brings another significant aspect of honor killing where perpetrators often don't face negative stigma within the communities because their behavior is seen as justified (Lawmantra 2015).

Conditionally, this phenomenon is really worrying, because even today, at the time of social transformations, modernization and the rise of civilized values we still encounter such acts and justifications in the society. However, in most countries of the world, honor is considered a social "code of behavior" imposed on women with the only goal to strengthen their inferiority and saving the "superiority of men" (Smartt, 2006).

3.5 INHERITANCE AND PROPERTY DIVISIONS, TRAGIC GATEWAY FOR ALBANIAN SOCIETY

Homicides for property reasons are very frequent in Albanian society. Social conflicts, the cause of which is fanatic defense of personal land and property are also frequent events of many tragic acts in our society. Having at the focus of this study the Albanian community in North Macedonia, our empirical research over the last ten years marks only 6 cases, so 3 in 2015, 1 in 2017 and 2 in 2019.

Case 1: The murder of two brothers by their uncle on May 7, 2015 in the district of Skopje (the capital of the Republic of North Macedonia) according to data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs it occurred because of sheep grazing at the property land of uncle.

Case 2: The brother stabbed his brother on August 11, 2015 in the Tetovo district because of conflicts over the inheritance of the house, one day after the death of their mother.

Case 3: The worker kills the boss of a business company (nursery garden) because of personal conflicts, also in Tetovo district in 2019.

Case 4: The murder of a 22-year-old man in Struga (a town in RMV) and the wounding of his father in January 2019 occurred after a quarrel over a plot of land planted with trees.

Sociological analyzes for property homicides mostly refer to economic factors as an attempt to increase capital or defense what they have. According to Meithe, traditional criminological theories have long recognized economic inequality, cultural conflict, and unemployment as social factors that promote property crime (Miethe & McDowall & Hughes, 1990). Another factor is considered to be the explanations of social disorganization theories and by this point of view focused on geographical areas sourced from institutional control over property and community so the risk of victimization is based on community attributes that lead crime. As an argument this disorganization varies from socio-economic status, family disruption, community heterogeneity, etc. (Tseloni, 2002). So, when the social relation is impaired, the individual's sociability is obsessed by the economic crisis, existential troubles, extreme jealousies for enrichment. Weak emotional ties and kinship are some of the motives that lead to spiritual distortions such as the act of murder. Meanwhile, the other side of the sociological explanations for the murders lies in the phenomenon of possession of weapons at home.

Weapons ownership is considered the norm for individuals who use it as a tool of violence and crime is also for self-defense (Yamane, 2017). In fact, when a person knows that he has a weapon, many ideas come to him and he thinks of many options for action. While the individual is conscious that he owns a weapon, it is much easier to justify his

intention. Land, houses and other property historically have been sacred to Albanians, especially when it comes to their heritage, so sometimes divisions between brothers and other clan members have led to violent and fatal conflicts.

4.CONCLUSION

Our research data establish crime levels, especially homicides and suicides registered in a relatively small community such as the Albanian population living in North Macedonia over a ten-year period (2009-2019). The illustrations of the crime over the years speak of a curved arc of the level of homicides and suicides where it results from the highest scale, maximum cases of both phenomena in approach, with a pretext that there are years where no cases of homicides or suicide have been recorded. The data used for this study are evidence based and correspond to the circumstances in which the crime took place. Therefore, our research of the phenomenon in question, elaborated with a narrative methodology, precede the verification of the hypotheses: According to the data, homicides and suicides are more often in men; Suicides vary with the higher rate than homicides and Violation of honor and adultery are promoting the act of murder.

In the deductive level, generalizing the research problem, we come to the confirmation of the general hypothesis that: "Persistent family quarrels and emotional problems of the individuals are the main cause of murders and suicides in the Albanian society of North Macedonia."

Finally, this study shows that the causes of this crime can be intensified and increase the rate of homicides and suicides in this region if preventive measures and social services are not taken into consideration.

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