

47

Presentation date: May, 2022
Date of acceptance: August, 2022
Publication date: October, 2022

CRIMINAL LIABILITY

FOR CORRUPTION-RELATED CRIME: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

RESPONSABILIDAD PENAL POR DELITOS RELACIONADOS CON LA CORRUPCIÓN: UN ANÁLISIS COMPARATIVO DE LA LEGISLACIÓN DE LA COMUNIDAD DE ESTADOS INDEPENDIENTES

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Suggested citation (APA, seventh edition)

Aslanov, O. R., (2022). Criminal liability for corruption-related crime: a comparative analysis of the legislation of the commonwealth of independent states. *Revista Universidad y Sociedad*, 14(S5), 477-484.

ABSTRACT

Corruption is a widespread phenomenon which is combated in the legislative frameworks of all countries in the world. In this sense, it is noteworthy that most of the former allied republics that became independent states after the collapse of the USSR adopted new penal codes, where in a certain way the fight against corruption was an essential axis. Taking this as background, the objective of this work is to discuss the Azerbaijan legislation related to criminal liability for crimes related to corruption and to compile/compare how it is analyzed in other nations with legal backgrounds similar to the country. It was found that since the independence of the nation, accurate steps have been taken in the fight against this type of crime, which has been greatly influenced by the established legal framework. Similarly, it was established that in the countries of independent states the legislative framework on the subject is very similar which is natural due to its historical past.

Keywords: criminal code, corruption

RESUMEN

La corrupción es un fenómeno generalizado que se combate en los marcos legislativos de todos los países del mundo. En este sentido, llama la atención que la mayoría de las ex-repúblicas aliadas que se convirtieron en estados independientes tras el derrumbe de la URSS adoptaron nuevos códigos penales, donde en cierto modo la lucha contra la corrupción fue un eje esencial. Tomando esto como antecedente, el objetivo de este trabajo es discutir la legislación de Azerbaiyán relacionada con la responsabilidad penal por delitos relacionados con la corrupción y recopilar/comparar cómo se analiza en otras naciones con antecedentes legales similares al país. Se constató que desde la independencia de la nación se han dado pasos precisos en la lucha contra este tipo de delitos, los cuales han sido muy influenciados por el marco legal establecido. De igual forma, se estableció que en los países de estados independientes el marco legislativo en la materia es muy similar lo que es natural debido a su pasado histórico.

Palabras clave: código penal, corrupción

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is understood as the improper and usually unlawful conduct intended to secure a benefit for oneself or another. Its forms include bribery, extortion, and the misuse of inside information. It exists where there is community indifference or a lack of enforcement policies (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). According to Carloni and Cantone (2021) corruption has traditionally been dealt and fought with by criminal law means of repression. Thus, corruption is seen by criminal codes and criminal laws first and foremost as a specific offence: its core, consisting of punishing the action of a person who, receiving an unfair advantage, gives a public official an undue benefit for carrying out his functions, but it has been extended to include further contiguous behaviors. In this sense the conduct of corruption, in its nature, has been sanctioned since antiquity. However, corruption is still rampant in many countries around the globe, from fragile and conflict afflicted countries to middle-income countries and advanced countries. Although there are very large variations in how corruption functions, it exists in every society, in every sector, and at all levels, from local to transnational imposing significant costs on governments, citizens, and businesses (Carloni & Gnaldi, 2021).

As stated by Saragih and Medaline (2018), the criminal law is a public law, so that the ultimate goal of the criminal law is to protect the interests of society as a collectivity of acts that threaten or even harm whether it comes from individuals or groups of people (an organization). An act can be said as a criminal act if such act has been set in legislation. This is in line with the principle of legality, which in principle contains three basic principles: 1) there is no punishment without law; 2) there is no punishment without a crime; 3) there is no crime without prior criminal legislation. Therefore, to find out their criminal acts it must first be defined in the legislation criminal acts that are prohibited and accompanied by sanctions. Then, the nature of any corruption is a violation of the trust placed by the public. This way corruption crimes and the problems associated with their elimination can be encountered in almost every country in the world today but at the same time, differences in people's mentality and level of corruption in different countries have led to different approaches to the criminalization of corruption (Shamsutdinov, 2020).

The first foundations of the strategic course of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the fight against corruption was determined by the decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On measures to strengthen the fight against crime, enforce the rule of law and public order" dated August 9th, 1994, and "On strengthening the fight against corruption in the Republic of Azerbaijan" dated June 8th,

2000. The Decree dated August 9th, 1994, states that "*the wide-scale spread of crimes such as bribery and corruption in society is of particular concern, and a number of citizens, including officials, consider these facts to be commonplace*" (H. Aliyev, 1994). That decree considered the fight against corruption as one of the important directions of state policy.

The Decree dated June 8th, 2000, states that despite the prevention of a number of serious law violations as a result of the implemented measures, it has not yet been possible to completely eliminate corruption, which is a universal social problem. The illegal actions of individual officials create obstacles to the creation of a healthy competitive environment, which is one of the important principles of the market economy, the activities of business people and the flow of foreign investment, and make it difficult to implement reforms (H. Aliyev, 2000). In order to strengthen the fight against corruption, by the Decree dated June 8th, 2000, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan were instructed to create working groups for the preparation of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Combating Corruption" and the corresponding State Program.

Guided by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated June 8th, 2000 "On strengthening the fight against corruption in the Republic of Azerbaijan", on January 13, 2004, it was adopted the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Combating Corruption" consisting of 14 articles (Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Combating Corruption", dated January 13, 2004), and on September 3, 2004, the "State Program on Combating Corruption (2004-2006)".

However, in the fight against this form of illegality, other laws and decrees have been approved over time, highlighting the importance of analyzing the legislation related to the subject from a legal perspective. Therefore, the objective of this work is to discuss the Azerbaijan legislation related to criminal liability for crimes related to corruption and to compile/compare how it is analyzed in other nations with legal backgrounds similar to the country.

To accomplish this comparative analysis was used. Comparative analysis of the legislation of foreign countries, including criminal legislation, is indeed a necessary and important task. In this regard, the French scientist M. Ansel correctly noted that "the study of the jurisprudence of foreign countries helps the lawyer to better know the law of his own country and provides the lawyers with ideas and arguments that he could not have obtained even with a perfect knowledge of the law of his own country" (Ansel,

1981, p. 38). For this reason, the study of the legislation of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States regarding corruption crimes is both a scientific and a practical issue. Thus, in investigations related to corruption crimes, it is of particular importance to conduct comparative studies, to study the legislation of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States, to reveal their valuable aspects and flaws.

DEVELOPMENT

Article 1 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Combating Corruption" defines that "Corruption - is the illegal obtaining of material and other benefits, privileges or concessions by officials using their status, the status of the body (institution) they represent, their official powers or the opportunities arising from those statuses and powers, as well as gaining support of those officials by individuals and legal entities by illegally offering or promising or giving the mentioned material and other benefits, privileges or concessions to officials".

According to the legislation, the following persons are the possible subjects of offenses related to corruption:

- persons elected or appointed to state bodies in the order determined by the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- persons representing state bodies based on special authority;
- civil servants holding administrative positions;
- persons who perform organizational-managerial or administrative-economic functions in the relevant structural units of state bodies, state administrations, enterprises and organizations, as well as in economic organizations having state a controlling shares;
- persons whose candidacy for elected positions in state bodies of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been registered in accordance with the law;
- persons elected to local self-government bodies in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- persons who perform organizational-executive or administrative-economic functions in local self-government bodies;
- heads and employees of institutions, including persons who perform organizational-executive or administrative-economic functions in institutions under special authority;
- persons who perform organizational-executive or administrative-economic functions in non-state bodies

that fulfill the powers of state bodies in cases defined by law;

- persons who, using their power or connections, obtain material and other benefits, privileges or concessions in exchange for illegally influencing the decision of an official;
- natural and legal persons who illegally offer or promise or give material and other favors, privileges or concessions to an official, or persons who have mediated such actions.

In accordance with Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Combating Corruption", all state bodies, local self-government bodies, institutions and officials carry out the fight against corruption within their powers. When the commission of offenses related to corruption creates administrative or criminal liability, the fight against corruption is carried out by law enforcement agencies in accordance with the legislation. The functions of a specialized body in the field of prevention of corruption are carried out by the Anti-Corruption Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The "State Program on Combating Corruption (2004-2006)" adopted for the purpose of improving the normative legal and organizational foundations of the fight against corruption and ensuring the implementation of the general state policy in this field states that corruption in the economic field leads to the violation of fair competition, the development of the shadow economy, income tax evasion, investment, and the development of securities, insurance and financial markets.

Violation of fair competition mainly manifests itself in the creation of monopolies. The existence of monopoly leads to price manipulations in the domestic market by monopolistic business subjects, creates obstacles to the development of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs engaging in those types of activities (I. Aliyev, 2004).

We consider necessary to highlight that the Republic of Azerbaijan adheres to several international documents related to the fight against corruption, including the conventions of Council of Europe "On Criminal Liability in Corruption", "Civil Legal Liability in Corruption" and the convention of the United Nations "Against Transnational Organized Crime" and also signed the "United Nations Convention against Corruption".

Chapter 33 of the current Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan stated "Corruption crimes and other crimes against the interests of service ". In our opinion, the following crimes reflected in that Code can be considered corruption crimes (Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 1999):

- Article 308 of the Criminal Code - Abuse of official powers
- Article 308-1 of the Criminal Code - Failure to use the funds of the state budget, special budget funds or extra-budgetary state funds as intended
- Article 308-2 of the Criminal Code - Spending state funds without conducting procurement procedures or conducting state procurements illegally
- Article 309 of the Criminal Code – Excess of official powers
- Article 310 of the Criminal Code – To use the powers of the official
- Article 311 of the Criminal Code – Receiving bribe (passive bribery)
- Article 312 of the Criminal Code – Offering a bribe (active bribery)
- Article 312-1 of the Criminal Code - Unlawfully influencing the decision of an official (trading in influence)
- Article 313 of the Criminal Code – Service Forgery

Establish the above, let's compare then with the criminal legislation of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States regarding corruption crimes. In this sense it is important to remark that according to H.C.Gutteridge, "Comparative jurisprudence is a method of studying and researching legal phenomena" (Gutteridge, 2015, p. 5). Also, Khanlar Hajiyev rightly points out that "when conducting comparative legal studies, the lawyers of the Republic of Azerbaijan should focus on the legislation of the countries that were previously part of the same state and whose legislation is closer to ours" (Hajiyev, 2002, p. 4). In this way the method can help to:

1. The study of the legal norms that provide responsibility for corruption crimes in the legislation of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States, helping to deepen the knowledge about the studied issue.
2. Create the basis for the adoption of the best legal decisions on the improvement of the norms of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding corruption crimes and the subsequent renewal of the national legislation.

According to Russian scientist Maryina (2010, p. 12) "from the legal point of view, corruption should be considered in a broad and narrow sense". This category means the abuse of public power for private gain (bribery, lobbying, nepotism, parochialism, favoritism, protectionism, official embezzlement, other excess, inaction or abuse of political or economic power with a mercenary motive or other

personal interest in public or private sector). In a narrow legal sense, corruption should be considered as bribery, that is, the receipt by an official or employee of illegal property or non-property benefits in connection with his official position or official activities. The concept of corrupt bribery is associated with the criminological interpretation of corruption as a transaction. In the narrow normative aspect, the legal essence of corruption is reduced to the provision and receipt of various kinds of property and non-property benefits that are exchanged between two parties in corrupt relations.

Ikryannikova (2016, pp. 15–16) states: "Corruption crimes are characterized by the following features: 1) they encroach on managerial relations as the main object 2) are committed by special entities (officials or persons performing managerial functions in a commercial or other organization) with a mercenary motive or by general entities by illegally providing property benefits to these special entities".

Naumov (2014, p. 22) believes that the classification of corruption should be carried out according to four main criteria: according to the characteristics of the subjects of corruption; on objects of corruption, benefits from them; according to the goals of subjects of corruption; and according to the characteristics of the organization of corruption relations.

Maryina (2010, p. 16) believes that the following crimes can be attributed to corruption crimes under the modern Criminal Code of the Russian Federation of June 13th, 1996:

- Article 184- Rendering illegal influence on result of official sports competition or spectacular commercial tender
- Article 204 – Commercial bribery
- Article 289 - Illegal participation in business activity
- Article 290 – Taking of a bribe
- Article 291 - Bribery
- Article 309 - Bribery or coercion to evidence or evasion from evidence or to incorrect translation

In addition to the above-mentioned crimes, Ikryannikova (2016, p. 16) considers the crime of "Mediation in bribery" provided for in Article 291.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation to be corruption crimes.

The list of corruption crimes in the Republic of Belarus was determined by the joint decision of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Belarus, the State Control Committee, the Operative-Analytical Center under the President, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State

Security Committee and the Investigative Committee dated December 27th, 2013. According to that Decision, the following articles of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus dated July 9th, 1999, are corruption crimes (Council of the Republic of Belarus, 1999):

- Article 210 - Embezzlement by abuse of office
- part 2 and part 3 of article 235- Legalization («laundering») of proceeds from crime committed by an official using his official powers
- part 2 and part 3 of article 424 - Abuse of power or official authority out of mercenary motive or other personal interest
- part 2 and part 3 of article 425 - Inaction of an official out of mercenary motive or other personal interest
- part 2 and part 3 of article 426 - Exceeding power or official powers committed out of mercenary motive or other personal interest
- Article 429 - Illegal participation in business activity
- Article 430 – Taking of a bribe
- Article 431 - Bribery
- Article 432- Mediation in bribery
- Article 455 - Abuse of power, excess of power or inaction of power, committed out of mercenary motive or other personal interest

A limiting list of corruption criminal offenses is given in the note to Article 45 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine dated April 5th, 2001, according to which these offenses can be conditionally divided into two groups (Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Ukraine, 2001):

1. criminal offenses that are considered corrupt only if they are committed via abuse of office.

These are criminal offenses under Article 191 (appropriation, embezzlement or possession of property by abuse of official position), Article 262 (theft, embezzlement, extortion or possession of firearms, ammunition, explosives or radioactive materials through fraud or abuse of official position), Article 308 (theft, misappropriation, extortion of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or their analogues or possession of them by fraud or abuse of official position), Article 312 (theft, embezzlement, extortion or fraudulent possession of precursors or abuse of official position), Article 313 (theft, appropriation, extortion of equipment intended for the manufacture of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or their analogues, or taking possession of it by fraud or abuse of official position, as well as other illegal activities with such equipment) Article 320 (violation of the established rules for the circulation of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, their analogues

or precursors), Article 357 (theft, misappropriation, extortion of documents, stamps, seals, possession of them by fraud or abuse of official position or their damage), Article 410 (theft, appropriation, extortion by military personnel of weapons, ammunition, explosive or other military substances, vehicles, military and special equipment or other military property, as well as their possession by fraud or abuse of official position);

2. unconditionally corrupt criminal offenses provided for by specific articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine

These are criminal offenses under Article 210 (misuse of budgetary funds, implementation of budget expenditures or provision of loans from the budget without established budgetary assignments or in excess of them), Article 354 (bribing an employee of an enterprise, institution or organization), 364 (abuse of power or official position), Article 364-1 (abuse of power by an official of a legal entity of private law, regardless of the organizational and legal form), Article 365-2 (Abuse of power by persons who provide public services), Article 366-2 (Declaring false information), Article 366-3 (Non-submission by the subject of declaration of a declaration of a person authorized to perform the functions of the state or local self-government), Article 368 (acceptance of an offer, promise or receipt of an improper advantage by an official), Article 368-3 (bribery of an official of a legal entity of private law, regardless of the organizational and legal form), Article 369 (Offering, promising or giving an improper advantage to an official), Article 369-2 (abuse of power), Article 369-3 (unlawful influence on the results of official sports competitions).

The following 4 articles of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova dated April 18th, 2002 are related to corruption crimes (Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova, 2002):

- Article 333 – Taking of a bribe
- Article 334 – Bribery
- Article 335 – Abuse of official position
- Article 335-1 - Fake accounting documents.

The Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova (Articles 333-335-1) is reflected in Chapter XVI of the said Code called “Corruption crimes in the private sector”.

On the other hand Chapter 15 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated July 3th, 2014 is entitled “Corruption and other criminal offenses against the interests of state service and state administration”. It establish the following crimes described in this chapter are considered corruption crimes (Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2014):

- Article 362- Abuse of official powers
- Article 363 – To use the power of official
- Article 364 -Illegal participation in business activity
- Article 365 - Obstruction of legitimate business activities
- Article 366 - Taking of a bribe
- Article 367 – Bribery
- Article 368 - Mediation in bribery
- Article 369 - Official forgery
- Article 370 - Service inactivity in government service

The following 9 articles of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 22nd, 1994 are about corruption crimes (Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1994):

- Article 205 – Abuse of power or official powers
- Article 206 - Exceeding power or official powers
- Article 208 - Government inaction
- Article 209 - Official forgery
- Article 210 – Acceptance of bribe
- Article 211 – Bribe -giving
- Article 212 –Mediation in bribery
- Article 213 - Bribery of an employee of a state body, an organization with state participation or a self-government body
- Article 214 - Illegal receipt by an employee of a state body, an organization with state participation or a self-government body of citizens of material values or property benefits

These articles of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic dated October 28th, 2021 are related to corruption crimes: 336 (Corruption), 337 (misfeasance in office), 338 (Exceeding authority), 339 (The conclusion of a deliberately unprofitable contract), 340 (Unlawful enrichment), 341 (Participation of an official in entrepreneurial activity), 342 (Taking a bribe), 343 (Extortion), 344 (Intermediation in bribery;), 345 (Bribe giving), 346 (Forgery in office), 347 (Illegal issuance of a passport). As we see 12 articles of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic are about corruption crimes. Crimes reflected in Articles 336-347 of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic are reflected in Chapter 42 of the said Code entitled “Corruption and other crimes against interests of state and municipal service” (Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021).

The following 12 crimes reflected in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan dated May 21st, 1998, are considered corruption crimes (Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan, 1998):

- Article 314 - Misfeasance in office
- Article 315 - inaction of state service
- Article 316 - Exceeding authority
- Article 317 - To use the power of authority
- Article 318 - Illegal participation in entrepreneurial activity
- Article 319 - Receiving a bribe
- Article 320 - Giving a bribe
- Article 321 - Provocation of bribery
- Article 323 - Official forgery
- Article 323 (1) - Illegal issuance of a passport of a citizen of the Republic of Tajikistan, as well as the entry of knowingly false information into documents that are the basis for obtaining citizenship of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Article 324 - Receipt of repayments by means of extortion
- Article 325 - Bribery of an employee of a state body

The following 12 crimes reflected in the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan dated June 12th, 1997 are considered corruption crimes (Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Turkmenistan, 1997):

- Article 181 - Misfeasance in office
- Article 184 - Taking a bribe
- Article 184-1 – Corruption
- Article 185 - Bribe giving
- Article 186 - Mediation in bribery
- Article 187 - Official forgery
- Article 228, part 3, clause «v» - Fraud using one's official position by a public servant or a person equated to him
- Article 229, part 2 – Embezzlement
- Article 242, part 2 - Legalization of funds or other property acquired illegally
- Article 245. Monopolistic actions and restriction of competition
- Article 254. part 2 - Illegal trafficking
- Article 358 - Abuse of power or official authority

As have been seen all societies organize themselves to reflect legal, economic, political and social values. Formal mechanisms of administration have been studied throughout history and there is a continual search to find more responsive, more efficient and more effective forms of delivery. Whether the stakes are high or low, there are opportunities for those in administration to pursue their own interests at the expense of those of the community. Research in public policy explores better ways of developing and implementing desirable goals and objectives. This research has no currency when corruption is present. Where there is a lack of integrity or corruption then public administration is deficient and public value suffers (Graycar, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

Crimes related to corruption constitute a problem that affects all administrations, representing damage not only to the public image but also in considerable economic terms. Due to this, all states combat them through various strategies, and adequate legislation is essential for their eradication. In this work, it was analyzed how in the Republic of Azerbaijan there is a well-defined legal framework to prevent this type of crime, which has allowed its gradual reduction since independence. Likewise, it was verified that such a framework exists in the commonwealth of independent nations, highlighting that they are all very similar to each other.

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