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The dark social capital as an effective way in getting things done: explaining dark sides of social capital in Albania

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Abstract

For almost three decades, social capital has become an important concept (and a variable) that has attracted much attention in the social science literature to explain various social problems and phenomena. In the many debates that have taken place about the role of social capital, conceived at different levels, it should be noted that its value is seen mainly in positive terms, emphasizing the potential benefits that the possession of social capital in itself has for the individual and society as a whole. The negative consequences that "dark" social capital produces on the relationships between people and for the society have been largely ignored in the literature. The focus in this paper will be precisely on the negative societal consequences that the possession of social capital of a certain form, the "dark" one, has on the individuals that make up a particular society. In this study, the role of norms and social structure of society is emphasized as essential for the formation of social capital that individuals within it possess. Social capital understood in this way is seen as reflective of the social structure of society, as it is this structure that generates various forms of social capital. Albania will be the empirical case where the theoretical framework of this study will be applied (in Part III), highlighting the negative impacts that dark social capital has on Albanian society at the expense of breaking its established formal universalistic rules.

Key words: *Dark social capital, norms, social structure, social relations, particularistic norms, corruption, informal networks.*

Introduction and definition of "social capital"

Social capital is undoubtedly one of those controversial concepts in the social science literature, as it has been explained and interpreted in various ways by different authors. Also noted in this literature have been the difficulties or disagreements for its possible measurement to claiming its validity in explaining several social problems. The concept of "social capital" gained much attention principally after the 1990s and beyond by social scientists, policymakers, but also by various international agencies that have tried to operationalize the term based on different dimensions and indicators. The term, although it became famous with the seminal work *"Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy"* by Robert Putnam, this author credits James Coleman as the inventor of the term "social capital". Following the conventional definition made by Putnam, he notes that: "theoretical definition of social capital refers to formal and informal networks and connections among people that can be used for their individual and collective benefit (Putnam, 1996; Cited in Letki, 2009: p. 163). Bourdieu and Wacquant, on the other hand, define social capital as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrues to an individual or group by virtues of possessing a durable network or more or less institutionalized relationships or mutual acquaintance and recognition" (1992: p. 119). Thus, the term is conceived in different ways, being seen as a resource/characteristic that resides in both individuals and groups; which can be used both for individual benefit and for the collective benefit of the group. Although according to Portes, there is a broad consensus "that social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures", there is much debate about such issues as how to evidence social capital, the potential benefits of social capital and which types of types of social capital are most beneficial in what circumstances (Cited in Martikke, 2017; p. 8-9).

In the numerous debates about the role of social capital, conceived whether, at the individual, group, community, or society level, it should be noted that its value is seen mostly in positive terms emphasizing the potential benefits that the possession of social capital in itself it has for the individual, the group or the society by "reducing transaction costs" and by "facilitating the interaction between the members of the society". The dark sides of social capital have been largely overlooked, leaving aside the fact that "the same characteristics of social capital that enables beneficial, productive benefits have the potential to cause negative externalities" (Claridge, 2004).But, as Graeff has pointed out, "in order to understand the forces driving social capital relationships and to get a more complete picture, negative implications of the social processes deserve attention as well… Negative consequences are inherently part of special social bonds" (Graeff, 2009: p. 143).

With social capital we refer in this paper to when people use their social relationships and informal networks to accomplish their personal goals(Graeff, 2009, p. 143).The adjective "dark" that we add to the term social capital is used in this study to indicate the negative results of special social bonds that people have in their relationships or the stock of informal networks that individuals use to achieve their personal goals (or benefits).As Richard Rose has emphasized, in common with other definitions, this emphasizes that (dark) social capital is about recurring relationships between individuals (Rose, 1998; p. 3).As such it is not given, but can be gained and lost by ongoing relationships, exchanges, or even investments that individuals can make in it in view of their future personal goals.

Dark social capital as an aspect generated by the social structure of a society

In the theoretical framework of this paper, the role of norms and social structure of society is emphasized as essential for the formation of social capital that its individuals possess. Social capital understood in this way is seen as reflective of the social structure of society, as it is this structure that generates various forms of social capital (whether these results in the form of positive or negative consequences).To shed light on the relationship that exists between what we have called here "dark social capital" and the breaking of universalistic formal rules established in a given society, we will use James Coleman's approach as a starting point, as it "has the advantage of providing a theoretical basis of both social capital and norms" (Graeff, 2009: p. 144).In his approach to social capital, Coleman describes it as a set of socio-structural resources defining it in situational and instrumental terms. He emphasizes regarding the notion of social capital: "It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspects of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure" (Coleman, 1990: p. 302).The terms "social structure" and "action facilitation" require further clarification of their meaning.

By social structure, we refer in this study to the pattern of typical social relationships that the members of a society have towards each other. As such, these are a relatively orderly and stable set of relationships that members of a society have in their interactions, and which can be best analyzed as *recurrent social practices* (Loyal, 2003: p. 75).Since Coleman defines social capital in situational and instrumental terms, he also implies that it is an endogenous feature of social relations that members of a society have towards each other. Thus, if the social

structure and the pattern of social relations that are embodied in a given society are mainly of a particularistic and clientelist type, one that does not substantially oppose corruption and which is based heavily on materialistic cultural values, this would make it more likely that in that society dark forms of social capital would be produced in the interactions between its members. Likewise, if the social relations pattern typical of the society is of a rule-bound, universalistic type, and based on broad interpersonal trust, then the social capital that would be generated by such a social structure would have positive consequences both for individuals (e.g., facilitating interaction between them towards achieving common goals) and for the society as a whole.

As for the term "action facilitation", as Peter Graeff refers: "the criterion of action facilitation implies that the benefit of social capital lies in its function, namely the achievement of particular aims that would not be attainable otherwise" (2009: p. 144).The value of social capital in this sense lies in the relationships that an individual has with other individuals, as well as in the resources that an individual can access thanks to the presence in networks and particular conjunctures, which can facilitate actions between different actors within the structure for achieving their personal aims/goals.

In this paper, it is argued that the characteristics of particular forms of social capital that appear in a society reflect the typical patterns of social relations between its members.Thus, the structure of social relations of a society in which social capital inheres (as an endogenous feature) has the potential to produce different forms of it, whether positive or negative, as is the case of dark social capital. The dark social capital possessed by certain individuals in society would consist precisely in the use of resources and in their ease of invoking their informal relationships/networks within the social structures of society to achieve their personal goals or benefits. As Alvarez and Romani have stressed, social capital represents exactly a feature of the social structure, an ecologic characteristic whether we look at it from the individual (ego-centered) or collective (socio-centered) point of view (Alvarez & Romani, 2017: p. 58).If in a society dark form of social capital prevail, this is because a good part of its members privileges particularistic norms and values over universalistic ones and tend to justify certain corruptive/clientelist behaviors for their own narrow personal or family benefits. As such norms (and values) have a significant influence on the exchange process in that they open access to actors for exchange as well as ensuring the motivation to engage in such actions (Nahapiet& Ghoshal, 1998).Certain norms that dominate in society make it possible to expand the opportunities among its members to engage in certain behaviors. They also regulate and frame people's expectations regarding these behaviors or the interactions they have with others. To better explain this idea, Bourdieu's concept of habitus can help us, as it sheds light on the influences that the structural characteristics of society have on the norms and patterns of behaviors/relationships of its members, including on the social capital they possess.

> "Habitus is created over time by the interplay of actors' free will and the structural constraints they encounter. Shaped by past events and perceptions it influences current practices and structures, as well as actors' perceptions of these. Habitus is "a socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures" ... that produces certain behavioral patterns and the norms or tendencies underpinning this behavior. These behavioral patterns and norms have thus been shaped by actors' past experiences of the material conditions of existence over many years and, in turn, shape present and future actions. They determine what seems appropriate and normal in any given setting and as such amount to a system of behavioral patterns that transcend individual behavior and "reproduce" the existing social order, rather than questioning it" (Cited in Martikke, 2017: p. 7-8).

Thus, for Bourdieu, behavioral patterns and norms are taught in the context of a cognitive and motivating structure of a given society, internalized by individuals, and determine what is appropriate or expected in the various interactions between them.As such, these norms seem natural to individuals and set expectations on their behaviors in coping with certain everyday situations. Thus, to explain a type of a particularistic relationship as part of "habitual knowledge" between the citizens of a society which is to the detriment of the universalistic rules of a democratic system, Bourdieu takes the example of a clientelist interaction between (political) brokers and clients. Regarding this example, he states:"Problem solving [in such informal network as that between political brokers and citizens] become personalized and part of the habitual knowledge of members of brokers' inner circles. Those who receive things know that they have to go rallies and support their brokers. They are part of a universe in which everyday favors imply some expected return as the rule of the game, a rule understood as a "scheme immanent in practice" (Bourdieu, 1977: p. 38) or as something to be done as a form of reciprocal reward. Relations between problem holders and problem solvers are "practical" insofar as they are routinely "practiced, kept up, and cultivated" through the distribution of things and the granting of the favours (Bourdieu, 1977, 38).In this way, the content of the dark social capital that individuals possess and practice in the interactions between them must be seen in terms of the norms that dominate society and that guide their exchange relationship behaviors.

Dark social capital, we argue here, is a product of particularistic norms and values that dominate in a society, part of the social structure of that society. The

social structure [and its norms to which the members of a society adhere], is that which provides the conditions of opportunity for social action. As Coleman has pointed out, "norms adhere to the social structure; they are not a property or a feature of the actor themselves (Coleman, 1990: p. 243).As such, norms establish "a behavioral framework in advance that involves social ties or obligations" (Graeff, 2009: p. 151) and what is appropriate behavior in a given social setting. Norms, just as they can hinder, so they can facilitate a particular social action (and thus, people in a society can expect their appearance to occur relatively regularly, considering it as "normal").

As a part of the system of society's norms, particularistic norms allow members of society to struggle for their personalistic interests at the expense of formally universalistic rules sanctioned by the state and its agencies. They are dark social capital in the way that facilitate the action of group members at the expense of universal statutes (Graeff, 2009: p. 152-153).In a society where particularistic norms and values dominate, and where a large part of its members would justify to varying degrees corrupt or clientelist behaviors/practices, then individuals within it would be more inclined to break its formal universalistic rules by serving their interests and benefits. E.g. to be employed in a public institution, getting a good grade for a university course, or avoiding lengthy bureaucratic procedures in obtaining a permit from a government agency, it is more likely to achieve them by using strong ties and informal networks (i.e. connections or conjunctures with friends, acquaintances who have status in society or occupy positions of influence, as in the political parties) rather than believing that you can achieve them by adhering to the establishing formal rules. Diego Gambetta states that: "Corruption is parasitic on the existence of trusting relations… the greater the number of trusting relations [the close connections and the informal networks between individuals], the greater is the potential for corruption" (Gambetta, 2002, p. 54).Thus, the network of informal acquaintances and connections of an individual is much more relevant to achieve a personal advantage than the observance of established universalistic rules. Dark social capital in this sense, seen as a product of the dominance of particularistic norms in the context of society, is considered as a mechanism or instrument which facilitates the achievement of personal goals/interests by individuals who possess it.

Moreover, such particularistic behaviors are more likely to be reinforced when an individual would be inclined to believe that even other individuals within a society use the same particularistic strategies to achieve their personal goals at the expense of the established formal universalistic rules of the state. This is an example of what in economics and game theory is called *a strategic complementarily* – whereby if one agent does something it becomes more profitable [and more reasonable] for another agent to do the same thing. Models involving strategic complementarities lead to multiple equilibria – in which the bad equilibrium is the one with the pervasive corruption (Mauro, 2004: p. 2).And in those societies where corruption is prevalent at high levels and accepted as a social fact among its members, the individuals within it will increasingly rely on the forms of dark social capital they possess (in their social relations) to achieve their personal goals and objectives.

Explaining dark social capital in the context of Albanian society

The main point of this article is that it is the social structure of society that generates different forms of social capital (whether the consequences of the latter are positive or negative).From this, we draw the hypothesis of this study: if a society is dominated by particularistic norms and tendencies and where a large part of its members would justify to varying degrees the corrupt behaviors and practices, then the individuals within it would have it easier to invoke their informal networks/relationships to achieve their personal goals to the detriment of established formal universalistic rules.

The social structure and pattern of social relations that are embodied in Albanian society are essentially of a particularistic and clientelist type and are mainly based on materialist (cultural) values and those of survival. Based on the studies of Ronald Inglehart and the studies carried out by Aleksander Kocani on the value profile of post-communist Albania, we conclude that the Albanian society belongs to the system of values of materialistic profile (Kocani, 2013, p. 43-44).In such societies with the value system of materialistic profiles, the main tendency of citizens is to achieve personal interest and benefits regardless of the different forms (e.g., particularistic, instrumentalist one) of how they are reached. In a society like that of Albania, particularistic norms and tendencies dominate the relations between individuals, therefore, a large part of its population tends to justify corrupt behaviors and practices to varying degrees. As such, these norms and values serve to generate dark social capital in the individuals who possess it, who will tend to use it in favor of their personal interests and benefits, even against the public interest or the common good. In a study conducted in 2016 by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation and the National Democratic Institute regarding Political Engagement in Albania, when citizens were asked about the reasons that motivate them to engage in political processes [by which, the main form of influence they saw through voting], 80.9% of respondents in a national survey said they would do it for their personal interests/benefits, while 87.5% said they would be involved in political processes if this would help their family and friends (IDM & NDI, 2016: p. 10, 26).The same study conducted

again by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation in 2020 in Albania, also with a national sample, replicated the same findings of the 2016 study, with even higher results regarding the (particularistic) reasons for the commitment of Albanian citizens to the political process. In the 2020 study, the willingness to engage in the political processes of the Albanian citizens surveyed was 89%, if this would be done for matters of their personal interest/benefit, and the same 89% of respondents said they would engage politically whether this would bring the support of families or their friends (IDM& NDI: 2020).In a general panorama, these results also show the tendency of Albanian citizens to see their engagement in political processes (mainly voting for a political party) primarily through a particularistic and instrumentalist optic [if this can benefit them personally or it can help their family members, relatives or friends] and not in the function of the common good or public interest by voting for the political alternative they consider that is the best. Thus, for them personal interest and family ties are more important to be considered when they face an option in their political engagement in society.

In a society where particularistic norms prevail and where a large part of its members would justify in one way or another the corrupt and clientelist practices, then the tendency of those who possess dark social capital to distort/bend the rule of games or the key institutions of fairness in a society in favor of their benefit would be greater. As Graeff points out in this argument, in a society where "universalistic norms do not prevail over particularistic ones, people cannot be prevented from realizing their private gain at the expense of society as a whole" (Graeff, 2009, p. 152).Once again, in this context, the dark social capital that people possess would make them less reluctant, whether from the moral or legal dictates, to achieve their personal goals.

Justifying at relatively high levels of corrupt norms and practices among the members of society would mean more incentives for them to archive what they want (their personalistic goals/benefits) at the expense of the established formal universalistic rules of the country sanctioned in laws, or statutes. The justification of corrupt practices in Albanian society is demonstrated in this section by referring to the World Values Survey's variable of "Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties". This is a good indicator to show the tendencies of the members of the Albanian society to consider corrupt behaviors and practices as justifiable (including their justification to varying degrees) or as never justifiable. The data for this indicator are presented in a binary scale between the responses of Albanian respondents who believe that taking bribes is never justifiable (value 0) and those who consider that taking bribes is justifiable to varying degrees (from 1 -10).The data are illustrated in the table I below.

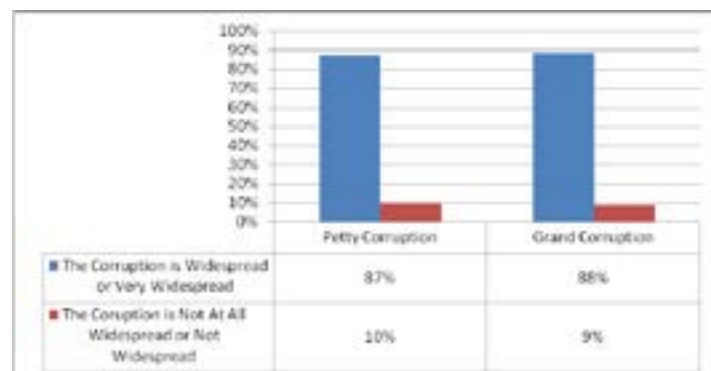**TABLE I:** Justification of Someone Accepting a Bribe in Albania
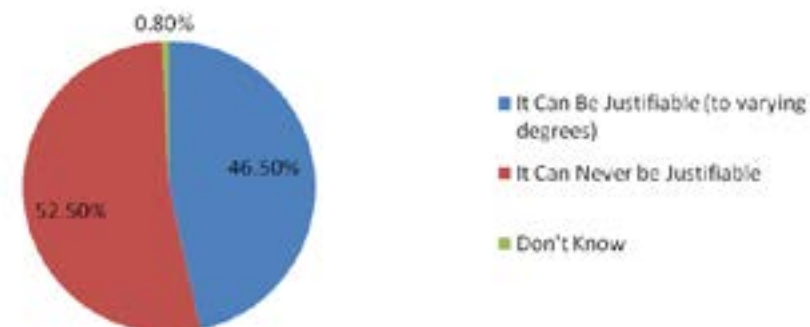
Source: World Values Survey Wave 4: 1999-2004[1]

As can be seen from the data in table I, almost half of Albanian citizens (46.5%), interviewed in the survey by the World Values, tend to justify to varying degrees someone accepting a bribe, which for them means that this corrupt practice is tolerable, in comparison with the other half (52.5%) who assert that bribery is never justifiable. The percentages of those who justify to varying degrees such a practice, although slightly less than half, remain at high levels and show the tendency of the Albanian population to accept corrupt norms and behaviors as legitimate, or at least to consider them as "normal". And as Diego Gambetta has pointed out about the self-fulfilling nature of corruption, "the more widespread is the belief that corruption is rife [among members of a given society] the greater is the incentive to engage in it (Gambetta, 2002: p. 55).

To demonstrate this widespread belief on the prevalence of corruption among members of Albanian society, we rely on a study conducted in 2017 on the *"Trust in Governance"* undertaken by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on a national sample. Thus, the data of this survey show that almost 9 out of 10 respondents consider petty corruption (87%) and grand corruption (88%) as widespread or very widespread in Albanian public institutions (Data shown in Table 2 below). While the same survey on *"Trust in Governance",* conducted again with a national sample in 2020, showed that 31.5% of respondents had a personal confrontation with corruption in central government agencies, while 32.4% of them stated this concerning local government in Albania (IDM & UNDP, 2020: pp. 65-66).

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[1] The data for Albania for this variable (V207) is taken from the fourth wave of the World Values Survey, as this is the last wave where Albania is included. Inglehart, R. & C. Haerpfer& A. Moreno & C. Welzel& K. Kizilova& J. Diez-Medrano & M. Lagos & P. Norris & E. Ponarin& B. Puranen et al. (eds.). (2014). *"World Values Survey: Round Four (2000-2004) - Country-Pooled".*

TABLE 2: Perceptions on the Spread of Petty Corruption and Grand Corruption in Albanian Public Institutions

	Petty Corruption	Grand Corruption
■ The Corruption is Widespread or Very Widespread	87%	88%
■ The Corruption is Not At All Widespread or Not Widespread	10%	9%

Source: Institute for Democracy and Mediation & United Nations Development Programme, (2017), *"Opinion Poll 2017: Trust in Governance 2017"*, p. 35.

Also, quite widespread according to this opinion poll is the confidence of Albanian citizens that cases of grand corruption and petty corruption are not prosecuted in society. Thus, according to the data (presented in Table 3), the majority of Albanian respondents or more than 6 in 10 respondents (62%) either don't have confidence (39%) or don't have confidence at all (23%) in the prosecution of petty corruption cases (IDM & UNDP, 2017: p. 35). While even higher is the percentage (73%) of those who believe that grand corruption (involving political decision-makers and high-level public officials, who exploit their positions to extract bribes or embezzle large amounts of money) is not prosecuted, nor it leads to the sentencing of these officials in Albania.

TABLE 3: Perceptions of Prosecution of Corruption Cases in Albania

	Petty Corruption	Grand Corruption
■ Don't Have Confidence in Prosecution of Corruption Cases	62%	73%
■ Confidence in Prosecution of Corruption Cases	36%	25%
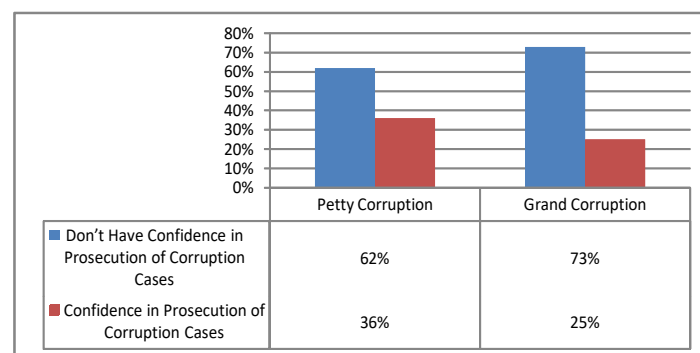
Source: Institute for Democracy and Mediation and United Nations Development Programme, (2017), *"Opinion Poll 2017: Trust in Governance 2017"*, p. 35.

Regarding the structure of social relations embodied in the Albanian society (which are essentially of a particularistic and clientelist type, as we have argued above) from where the dark social capital generates, an explanation of its historical, social, economic context is necessary to be made. Dark social capital generated in the context of the social structure of Albanian society, in the sense of informal networks/relationships that people invoke to achieve their personal goals/gains, has been instrumental as well as functional to fulfill their (survival) needs. Thus, at different periods, faced with numerous economic risks and uncertainties, Albanians have relied on their informal connections/networks (dark social capital) as an efficient way to provide a tangible flow of goods to ensure survival. During the communist period, for example, which was probably the most repressive regime in the entire communist world of Eastern Europe, Albanians had few other alternative ways to ensure their survival and to isolate themselves against an oppressive dictatorship than to rely on informal networks and the close connections they had. Faced with extreme poverty, inefficiencies of a centralized and almost entirely autarkic economic planning system, as well as with intrusive state organizations that penetrated into every aspect of citizens' lives, reliance on "strong and reliable networks of trust and reciprocity, which were the key resource used to cope with everyday life" (Cited in Letki, 2009: p. 166).Ideological mobilization by the party-state drove individuals to seek refuge in private and unofficial networks (Rose, 1998: p. 2).In this way, the (inefficient) centralization of the economy and the ideological mobilization of the totalitarian communist regime, which affected almost every aspect of the organization of public and private life in Albanian society, pushed the citizens to rely more and more on their informal relations / networks to protect themselves from intrusive and exploitative organizations (of the party-state regime and its transmission belts) as well as to guarantee survival in such an environment.

Likewise, also in the period of transition towards democracy (not yet well-functioning and not consolidated in Albania) and the transition to a market economy (somewhat chaotic, where informality remains at high levels and where economic actors do not compete on equal terms), where the state was (and still remains) enough to guarantee the social protection of citizens, and where its bureaucratic organizations are widely inefficient and overly politicized, Albanians again needed to seek to protect themselves and their families under conditions of such insecurities, relying on their reliable networks / informal connections in order to survive or move forward. This was generally done by utilizing their informal networks and connections and by invoking norms of mutual obligation, personal favors, the particularized trust between them; thus, the dark forms of social capital that each individual possessed to achieve their personal goals. As Richard Rose puts it, "informal networks can substitute for the

failure of modern bureaucratic organizations. Additional tactics include trying to personalize relations with impersonal bureaucrats or using connections or bribery in an attempt to get bureaucrats to violate rules" (Rose, 1998: p. 7).

The most used and common concepts in the Albanian society throughout its transition period, and which best describe these tactics and particularistic forms of behavior of its members in their social relations (or their portfolio of dark social capital networks) are those of *"the friend", "the coffee"* and *"the envelope"." The friend"* [in Albanian: *"Miku"*] means if someone has important close connections/conjectures to use them as an intervention to benefit a special personal service or to achieve something that would otherwise be inaccessible to him/her (e.g. earning a passing or good grade from a student in a course he/she is attending in the University, obtaining a legalization permit from state agencies for a dwelling built without permission even though it does not meet the legal criteria to benefit for it, or the inclusion in the lists of beneficiaries of a social program / assistance of a state agency, etc.). *"The Coffee"* [in Albanian: *"Kafja"*] on the other hand in Albanian society means informal meetings using personal connections and those of acquaintance between two (or more) people to see if there are "opportunities" to "solve the problems" or to "finish the job" (e.g. to get "privileged" information on how something can be achieved, what is the best way to get a special service from the public institutions by bending the rules etc.). While the *"envelope"* [in Albanian: *"Zarfi"*], on the other hand, refers along with informal connections/conjectures that someone has, to the addition of giving bribes (in cash) to the official who has performed the service by bending the rules or breaking the law. The use of personalized connections through these particularistic forms, the success of which depends precisely on the dark social capital that individuals possess, is also the most efficient and common way to achieve things in the context of Albanian society.

Beyond the importance that these informal networks and connections have had for surviving in the face of economic scarcities/uncertainties in the Albanian environment, their instrumental and opportunistic use by individuals who possessed such forms of dark social capital has been done to the detriment of established formal universalistic rules and by breaking state laws. As Richard Rose has pointed out, "ignoring rules to do favors for friends or taking a bribe in return for allocating public property are examples of networks mis-allocating goods, that is, breaking the rules governing state and market in a modern society (1998: p. 4). The more prevalent the norms of the particularistic type (along with the materialistic values to which they are oriented) among the members of a society in the social relations/interactions they have toward each other, the more they will tend to invoke the informal connections and networks they have depending on the dark social capital they possess, to achieve their own self-interest at the expense of the common good. In this context, as we have argued

above here, the dark social capital that people possess would make them less reluctant, whether from moral or legal dictates (universalist rules, statutes, or laws in force), to achieve their personal interests.

If we take as an example the case of employment in the Albanian public administration (where among Albanian citizens is very widespread the belief that the employment process is carried out on political grounds and acquaintances (of the *"friend"*) and not on a meritocratic basis respecting the legal procedures and criteria), it also becomes clear to them that what determines someone's *success* in becoming a public employee are the personalized and informal relationships of his network (Do you know the right person?; It is your conjunction strong enough?) in order to achieve his goal. Thus, in a report presented by the Commissioner for the Supervision of the Civil Service in the Albanian Parliament in 2018, it was attested that 30% of the inspected cases of employment in the public administration were illegal, made by "director order" of the public institutions and outside the procedures of law (Erebara, 2018: p. 1). In this context, it is *"who do you know"* and *"how strong is your tie with someone well-positioned in the state or political party hierarchy"* that creates the advantage for someone to get a well-paid job in public administration in Albania, as opposed to what Mark Granovetter (1973) has argued in his famous essay *"The Strength of Weak Ties"*. As Light correctly puts it: "good jobs refer to jobs that, due to job seeker's exclusive and unequal access to networks, pay better than that person's qualification would normally allow" (Light, 2001: p. 5). And this happens because, as Peter Graeff has argued, the existence of this dark social capital entails a special relationship between politics or the employees of the public administration [e.g., the directors or officeholders of public directories/institutions] and the citizens: namely, that formal aspects have become secondary, and that administrative processing depends on the arbitrariness of people who use social capital in their own interest (Graeff, 2009: p. 153). If in such an environment where the vast majority of citizens believe that the particularistic norms (in some cases even clientelist one) dominate the social relations of society as a way of achieving specific goals/interests (e.g., as "success" models), it is unlikely that they will not follow the same "tactics" to achieve their personal goals/interests. Although this is done to the detriment of the formal legal, universalistic rules of the state and society.

Conclusions

The social structure, referred to in this study as the pattern of typical social relations among the members of a society and as recurrent social practices between them, is essential for the formation of the social capital that dominates

in that society. Understood in this way, the different forms of social capital and its different (positive or negative) outcomes it produces are reflective of the social structure of a given society. The structure of social relations of a society in which social capital inheres as an endogenous feature has the potential to produce different forms of it, whether these are positive or negative as is the case of the dark social capital. Thus, for example, if the social structure and pattern of social relations that are embodied (predominantly) in a given society are of a particularistic type and do not substantially oppose corruption, and then it would be more likely that in this society would be produced dark forms of social capital in the interactions and relations between its members. If in a society dark form of social capital prevail, this is because a large part of its members privileges particularistic norms and values over the universalistic ones, and they tend to justify certain corruptive / clientelist behaviors for their own narrow personal or family benefits. In such contexts, individuals would not hesitate to use or invoke their informal relationships/networks (the dark social capital of them) to achieve personal gains and private interest, even against the established formal rules in that society. Albania, as the empirical case where the theoretical framework of this study was applied (Section III), best shows the example of a society where particularistic norms and tendencies dominate and where a substantial part of its members tend to justify them (although to various degrees) the corrupt behaviors and practices, hence individuals within it find it easy to invoke their informal networks / relationships to achieve their personal achievement or goals to the detriment of established universalistic formal rules. In the conditions of today's Albanian society, the social capital that individuals possess within it, depending on their special social bonds and informal networks, is much more likely to be used in their personal interest and to the detriment of the public interest of society and the formal and universalistic rules of the state.

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Focusing on Eye Contact: Interpersonal Communication among Students at Eastern Mediterranean University

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the factors that affect eye contact decoding which gives different meanings to different people. Eye contact is the only common language in the world and feature of non-verbal communication which is a branch of interpersonal communication. It is as old as humanity and common in our everyday lives but is hardly researched in communication studies. Qualitative methodology has been chosen and carried out among the students at the Eastern Mediterranean University in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In this university, approximately 14000 students study. They constitute the population of the study. They come from 60 different countries. Data were collected from three different levels. The first one is semi-structured interviews with students from twenty one to thirty years old. The participants are from different countries like Albania, Turkey, Iran, and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Nigeria and Cameroon. The second method is focus group interviews. Ten people participated in these sessions: Five of them are males and five are females, from nineteen to twenty nine years old and all these students are from different cities of Turkey. The results show that eye contact is an important language of interpersonal communication. It can communicate a variety of attitudes such as anger, love, sadness, happiness as facial expression in different situations. On the whole, from both research that we conducted with students of Eastern Mediterranean University and field notes the researcher kept, how to decode the many