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Corruption in the Public Sector in the Republic of Kosovo – Empirical Analysis of Causes and Factors

While exercising their duty to serve and protect its constituents, public servants are faced with challenges and situations which may end up leading them to misuse the trust that has been bestowed on them by the public. The misuse of authority when in office with the sole purpose of self-gain or the benefit of another in science is defined as corruption. This paper aims at analyzing the main concepts when it comes to defining what the notion of corruption entails in general as well as the legal framework in place cited to help the local institutions in fighting this phenomenon.
The Republic of Kosovo does have a solid and balanced legal framework in preventing and fighting corruption, a framework which consists of laws that are in compliance with the international standards incorporated by a number of international conventions (The United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, etc.). Even though the Republic of Kosovo is not one of the signee countries of either of the abovementioned conventions, the country itself has incorporated its recommendations into its national legislative premises. When it comes to fighting corruption, one of the biggest challenges the Republic of Kosovo is facing is the inefficient and rigid judicial system. The influence of politics in the judicial system represents a great challenge as well, especially in terms of treating high-level cases or even politically related corruption.
The factors influencing the spread of corruption and the lack of proper legal addressing in this country are the socio-economic environment and political situation and slow state building, including international mechanisms and civil society which were powerless against this phenomenon.
The purpose of this research is to analyze the legal basis for preventing and combating corruption in the Republic of Kosovo. From the empirical research which was carried out to evaluate the causes and factors of corruption in Kosovo, we have come to the conclusion that among the citizens there is a perception that the criminal offense and the phenomenon of corruption are widespread in public institutions.

Keywords: Corruption, Legislation, International Conventions, Criminal Offenses, Public Official

Korruption im öffentlichen Sektor der Republik Kosovo – Empirische Analyse der Ursachen und Faktoren

Bei der Ausübung ihrer Pflicht, ihren Bürgern zu dienen und sie zu schützen, sehen sich Beamt:innen mit Herausforderungen und Situationen konfrontiert, die dazu führen können, dass sie das Vertrauen, das ihnen von der Öffentlichkeit entgegengebracht wird, missbrauchen. Der Missbrauch von Amtsgewalt mit dem alleinigen Ziel, sich selbst oder anderen einen Vorteil zu verschaffen, wird als Korruption definiert. Ziel dieses Beitrags ist es, die wichtigsten Konzepte zur Definition des Begriffs „Korruption“ im Allgemeinen sowie den bestehenden Rechtsrahmen zu analysieren, der den lokalen Institutionen bei der Bekämpfung dieses Phänomens helfen soll.
Die Republik Kosovo verfügt über einen soliden und ausgewogenen Rechtsrahmen zur Prävention und Bekämpfung von Korruption, der aus Gesetzen besteht, die den internationalen Standards entsprechen, die in einer Reihe internationaler Übereinkommen (dem Übereinkommen der Vereinten Nationen gegen Korruption und dem Strafrechtsübereinkommen gegen Korruption usw.) verankert sind. Auch

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wenn die Republik Kosovo zu den Unterzeichnerstaaten keiner der oben genannten Übereinkommen gehört, hat das Land deren Empfehlungen in seine nationale Gesetzgebung übernommen. Bei der Korruptionsbekämpfung stellt das ineffiziente und starre Justizsystem eine der größten Herausforderungen für die Republik Kosovo dar. Der Einfluss der Politik auf das Justizsystem stellt ebenfalls eine große Herausforderung dar, insbesondere bei der Behandlung von Fällen auf hoher Ebene oder sogar von politisch motivierter Korruption.
Zu den Faktoren, die die Ausbreitung der Korruption und das Fehlen geeigneter rechtlicher Maßnahmen in diesem Land beeinflussen, zählen das sozioökonomische Umfeld und die politische Lage sowie der langsame Staatsaufbau, einschließlich internationaler Mechanismen und der Zivilgesellschaft, die diesem Phänomen machtlos gegenüberstanden.
Ziel dieser Untersuchung ist es, die rechtlichen Grundlagen zur Prävention und Bekämpfung von Korruption in der Republik Kosovo zu analysieren. Aus der empirischen Untersuchung, die zur Bewertung der Ursachen und Faktoren der Korruption im Kosovo durchgeführt wurde, sind wir zu dem Schluss gekommen, dass unter den Bürgern die Wahrnehmung vorherrscht, dass Straftaten und das Phänomen der Korruption in öffentlichen Institutionen weit verbreitet sind.

Schlagwörter: Korruption; Gesetzgebung; Internationale Übereinkommen; Straftaten; Amtsträger

1. Introduction

Economic crime, including corruption, money laundering, smuggling, tax evasion, human trafficking and other forms of organized crime, remain serious problems for the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. Preventing and fighting these crimes will be a serious indicator of the consolidation of law enforcement institutions and the efficiency of the justice system. Corruption is deemed to be an illegal activity with which countries that are yet to establish themselves in the legal aspect of their statehood are faced with in a consistent basis.
Corruption is a threat to democracy. It weakens the rule of law, generates inequalities and undermines trust in public institutions. (Blanche et al., 2019) Corruption impedes public institutions in providing quality services, undermines the work of institutions and damages the state budget. To effectively prevent and fight this phenomenon, it requires organized state actions, to complete the relevant legislation, then the applicable laws must be consistently implementing measures to detect, obstruct or punish people who violate its legal state rules. These actions require coordination between law enforcement agencies (prosecution and police) and the courts as competent institutions to impose sanctions on corrupted persons. Corruption is widespread in the Western Balkan countries. Robert Austin, in the book “Making and Remaking the Balkans: Nations and States since 1878”, he points out,

> It seems that for most rulers since 1989, money is what matters most, because corruption is the most transparent part of the Balkans. The people in power have amassed vast fortunes. They have trampled on populations that have been in transition for 25 years and have destroyed those who have challenged their power. (Austin, 2019)

Republic of Kosovo has significant problems with high level of corruption that exists at all levels of government. Transparency International, an organization specializing in the Corruption Perceptions Index, annually compiles reports on the level of corruption in 180 countries around the world. Although these statistics are based solely on public perceptions of corruption and do not have the value of court decisions, they still provide a snapshot of the country's perception of the phenomenon of corruption. According to Transparency International, Kosovo's ranking in the last 5 years is this:

Table 1: Corruption Perceptions Index

No.	Year	Rank
1	2020	104
2	2021	87
3	2022	84
4	2023	83
5	2024	73

Source: Transparency International (2026)

The table shows that Kosovo has made progress in the corruption perception index, but this does not mean that in reality this phenomenon has decreased that much being present and harmful to the state and all segments of its functioning, corruption deserves scientific and objective treatment. This paper deals with corruption of public officials with special focus on Republic of Kosovo.

This paper has analyzed scientifical journal articles affiliated published in English which deal with the phenomenon of corruption. The base of the topic coverage has been described through key words which are included in the papers abstract. In the literature review section, there have been included the definitions of three specialized groups:

1. The papers issued by credible authors of the field of study;
2. The treatment of the concepts made by international organizations; and
3. International legal instruments.

In this paper, papers from other renowned authors have been reviewed and taken into account especially when it comes to defining what corruption is and what its forms are. The literature cited is bountiful considering the challenging and complex nature of the phenomenon in hand not just to the fighting aspect of it but also to the scholars who have studied it. This paper cites only some of the existing opinions of the scholars of this field of study. This paper also includes the definitions and the concepts put forward by non-governmental organizations such 'Transparency International', who is specialized in issues dealing with corruption and the index of measuring the perception related to this illegal activity. The paper also includes the definitions and the data derived from a number of international measuring instrument such as: Criminal Law Convention on Corruption and Civil Law Convention on Corruption.

In the other section of the paper, the study deals with the applicable legal framework in the Republic of Kosovo which has been approved after the year 2008.[1] The legal doctrines and dispositions have been briefly analyzed and interpreted as they are in the Criminal and Criminal Code procedure of Kosovo as base laws in the sphere of criminal incrimination and punishment. This paper also analyzes the dispositions of some of the other laws that are in use when it comes to successfully preventing and fighting corruption such as: Law on the Agency for Prevention of Corruption; Law on Declaration, Origin and Control of Property of Senior Public Officials and on Declaration, Origin and Control of Gifts of all Public Officials; Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Discharge of a Public Function.

[1] On February, 17 2008 Kosovo declared its independence from the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Empirical research methodology was also applied in this study, using a quantitative questionnaire for data collection. The data provided have been analyzed and interpreted to identify the causes and factors that influence the emergence and spread of corruption in the public sector in the Republic of Kosovo.

The paper contributes to the scientific literature on corruption and good governance and the rule of law, especially in the context of transition states and Western Balkan countries. The paper also contributes to the normative aspect through the analysis of the national legislation that regulates the prevention and fight against corruption in the Republic of Kosovo, linking it with the international standards and instruments against corruption. Through this comparison, the study evaluates the level of harmonization of the local legal framework with international standards and identifies gaps or challenges in their effective implementation. This study brings original empirical data on the perception and factors that influence the appearance of corruption in the public sector in the Republic of Kosovo, filling the lack of empirical studies in this field.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Corruption

The definition of corruption is very complex and must take into account not only theoretical and doctrinal perspectives, but also definitions provided by international instruments and national legislation.

One of the oldest definitions of the concept of corruption comes from the researcher Joseph S. Nye. Nye provides the following definition:

> Corruption is behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role [office] because of a private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence. (Nye, 1967)

Another old definition is from Carl Joachim Friedrich, who provides the following definition in his book entitled Political Pathology:

> The pattern of corruption can be said to exist whenever a power holder who is charged with doing certain things, i.e., who is a responsible functionary or officeholder, is by monetary or other rewards not legally provided for, induced to take actions which favor whoever provides the rewards and thereby does damage to the public and its interests. (Fridrich, 1966)

According to James C. Scott (1972), political corruption is defined as behavior that deviates from the formal duties of a public role for the purpose of personal, family, or group gain. Scott emphasizes that corruption often functions as an informal means of political influence, especially in the implementation phase of laws and public policies. In environments where interest groups or citizens are unable to influence formal lawmaking processes, corruption becomes a mechanism by which they intervene at the administrative level to change or circumvent the implementation of formal rules in their favor (Scott, 1972). Among contemporary authors, it is worth mentioning Susan Rose-Ackerman, Inge Amundsen, Robert Barrington, Elizabeth Dávid-Barrett, Rebecca Dobson Phillips, Liz Campbell, Stephen D. Morris, Michael Johnston, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Coskun Can Aktan, Piercamillo Davigo, U Myint, Matthew Murray and

Andrew Spalding. Rose-Ackerman emphasizes that corruption is: "Misuse of public power for private or political gain," recognizing that "misuse" must be defined in terms of some standard. Many corrupt activities under this definition are illegal in most countries—for example, paying and receiving bribes, fraud, embezzlement, self-dealing, conflicts of interest, and providing a quid pro quo in return for campaign gifts (Rose-Ackerman, 2004).
Corruption is increasingly understood as a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond the traditional notion of the abuse of public office for private gain. Dobson Phillips, Dávid-Barrett, and Barrington define corruption as: "Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain that harms the public interest, typically breaching laws, regulations, and/or integrity standards." They argue that corruption should be assessed through four cumulative dimensions: entrusted power, abuse, private gain, and harm to the public interest. According to the authors, only when all four elements are present can a practice be properly identified as corruption, thereby providing a more comprehensive and context-sensitive conceptual framework for both academic research and anti-corruption practice (Dobson et al., 2025). In her article "Corruption by organised crime" – a matter of definition?" Liz Campbell links corruption to organised crime not as a necessary defining ingredient, but as a strategic mechanism and deliberate tactic by organised crime groups (OCGs). Through this interaction, where the criminal group acts as the corruptor and the public official or private actor in a position of trust acts as the corruptee, corruption serves as a key "facilitator" that creates illicit transactions to obtain confidential information (such as on state investigations or surveillance), to minimize the risk of detection, to reduce the need for the use of direct violence, and to secure competitive advantage and survival in the marketplace. This operational relationship blurs the traditional boundary between the "legal" and criminal worlds, showing that corruption is used by organised crime to exploit and compromise positions of power and trust in both the public and private sectors (Campbell, 2016). According to Michael Johnston, corruption should not be treated simply as a technical or administrative failure that can be fixed with superficial "top-down" reforms, but as a deep structural phenomenon where abuses of wealth and power go unchallenged by society. Johnston argues that corruption will continue to be the rule, not the exception, until citizens and interest groups have the political means to protect their rights and demand accountability. To achieve sustainable control of corruption, he proposes the concept of "deep democratization"—a dynamic process that involves not only building institutions or formal elections, but also empowering citizens to allow for political contention and social pressure on power elites (Johnston, 2014). Researchers Bo Rothstein and Aiysha Varraich are of the opinion that, corruption should not be defined simply through narrow traditional notions such as "abuse of public office for private gain", as such an approach fails to capture its institutional complexity. Instead, the authors propose that corruption is better understood as a counterbalance or violation of the principle of impartiality in the exercise of public power. Through this perspective, institutional norms are considered corrupt when officials and institutions deviate from the equal and impartial treatment of citizens, giving priority to certain party, family or clientelistic interests. Consequently, the fight against corruption requires the construction of institutions with high quality of governance (Quality of Government), where the universality and impartial application of rules guarantee public trust and equality before the law (Rothstein & Varraich, 2017). In line with Bo Rothstein and Aiysha Varraich is Alina Mungiu-Pippidi. According to researcher Mungiu-Pippidi, corruption should not be treated simply as a deviation or exception from the rules of integrity, but as an integral part of a certain regime of government and a certain way of allocating social resources, known as

particularism. In this context, corruption is defined as a violation or lack of the principle of ethical universalism, where public wealth, state decisions and favors are not distributed impartially and equally to all citizens, but are allocated on the basis of Mexican, clientelistic, tribal or party connections. Consequently, Mungiu-Pippidi argues that effective control of corruption is achieved only when a society reaches an equilibrium where integrity and universalism become the ruling norm, while corruption becomes a rare exception (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015). Can Aktan explains that

> The concept of corruption is generally used to mean all actions and behaviors constituting bribery, embezzlement, favouritism etc. It is important to note that, "corruption" is the name given to the certain types of corruption (mainly; bribery, embezzlement, favouritism), which has political characteristics (Aktan, 2015)

Inge Amundsen, meanwhile, expands the concept of the term corruption and also includes illegal corrupt actions in the private sector:

> Corruption also exists within and between private businesses, within non-governmental organisations, and between individuals in their personal dealings, without any state agency or state official being involved. There is corruption also in the form of bribing, swindling, and mafia-methods within and between private businesses, there are treacherous individuals and disloyal employees also in private firms. This kind of corruption may even have repercussions into the political system as it destroys the public morale, and it may be symptomatic for the general economic and moral development of a society. (Amundsen, 1999)

Corruption presents several special aspects: seriality and pervasiveness. Seriality, because it is a crime with a tendency to repeat itself infinitely many times. A public official who is sold, why would he have to be sold just once? He tends to repeat the same action when given the opportunity, since he has created the belief that he will not be punished. It is pervasive or dispersive, because the phenomenon appears quickly where one corrupt person is followed sooner or later by another, as long as honest people are left aside (Davigo, 2017). Rightly emphasized researcher Myint: The incidence of corruption varies between societies and can be rare, widespread or systemic. When it is rare, it is relatively easy to detect, isolate and punish and prevent the spread of this disease. When corruption is widespread, it is more difficult to control and treat. But the worst-case scenario is when it becomes systemic. When systemic corruption takes hold of a country, the institutions, rules, behaviours and attitudes of people adapt to the corrupt way of doing things and corruption becomes a way of life. Systematic corruption is very difficult to overcome and can have a devastating effect on the economy (Myint, 2000). Authors Matthew Murray and Andrew Spalding argue that corruption violates human rights. They argue that official corruption constitutes a violation of human rights (Murray and Spalding, 2015). In the criminal legal sense, corruption is a criminal offense defined by the Criminal Code and for which criminal sanctions are provided. In fact, the Criminal Code provides for an entire chapter of criminal offenses related to corruption (Çeku, 2023).

Contemporary understandings of corruption extend beyond legal definitions and include broader social, political, and institutional consequences. Transparency International, one of the leading global organizations in anti-corruption research, emphasizes that corruption undermines public trust, weakens democratic institutions, and negatively affects economic and social development (Transparency International, 2023).

International anti-corruption conventions, United Nations Convention against Corruption New York and Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, as the two most popular conventions

do not define the term corruption. First convention, deals with the preventive measures its signee countries should put in place whereas the second, refers to its signee countries the measures needed to be included onto their criminal national law framework by including as criminal offenses the following: Active bribery of domestic public officials; Passive bribery of domestic public officials; Bribery of members of domestic public assemblies; Bribery of foreign public officials; Bribery of members of foreign public assemblies; Active bribery in the private sector; Passive bribery in the private sector; Bribery of officials of international organizations; Bribery of members of international parliamentary assemblies; Bribery of judges and officials of international courts; Trading in influence; Money laundering of proceeds from corruption offences; Account offences (Council of Europe, 1999).
The term Corruption is defined by the Civil Law Convention on Corruption, which has been adopted by the Council of Europe. According to this convention:

> "Corruption" means requesting, offering, giving or accepting, directly or indirectly, a bribe or any other undue advantage or prospect thereof, which distorts the proper performance of any duty or behavior required of the recipient of the bribe, the undue advantage or the prospect thereof". (Council of Europe, 1999)

As the paper is dedicated to corruption of public officials, we find it necessary to propound the definition of this term. Even the United Nations Convention against Corruption makes the term public official:

> (i) any person holding a legislative, executive, administrative or judicial office of a State Party, whether appointed or elected, whether permanent or temporary, whether paid or unpaid, irrespective of that person's seniority; (ii) any other person who performs a public function, including for a public agency or public enterprise, or provides a public service, as defined in the domestic law of the State Party and as applied in the pertinent area of law of that State Party; (iii) any other person defined as a "public official" in the domestic law of a State Party. However, for the purpose of some specific measures contained in chapter II of this Convention, "public official" may mean any person who performs a public function or provides a public service as defined in the domestic law of the State Party and as applied in the pertinent area of law of that State Party. (United Nations, 2004)

The definition of the term public officials is also provided by the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption. According to this Convention:

> a. "public official" shall be understood by reference to the definition of "official", "public officer", "mayor", "minister" or "judge" in the national law of the State in which the person in question performs that function and as applied in its criminal law;
> b. the term "judge" referred to in sub-paragraph a above shall include prosecutors and holders of judicial offices; c. in the case of proceedings involving a public official of another State, the prosecuting State may apply the definition of public official only insofar as that definition is compatible with its national law". (Council of Europe, 1999)

The term is defined by the provisions of the Criminal Code of Republic of Kosovo. According to the Code, official person means:

- a person who performs official work in a state body;
- a person elected or appointed to a State Body, to a local government body or a person who permanently or temporarily carries out duties or official functions in those bodies;
- a person in an institution, enterprise or other entity entrusted with the performance of public authorizations that decides on the rights, obligations or interests of natural or legal persons or for the public interest;

- An official person is also considered a person who is entrusted with the actual performance or certain official duties or works;
- a military person, except, when it comes to the provisions of Chapter XXXIII (Criminal Offenses against official duty) of this Code (Code No. 06/L-074, article 113/2).

So, the definition of the Criminal Code of Kosovo is similar but with the wording of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Criminal Convention against Corruption. With this, Republic of Kosovo has met an international standard in the field of fighting corruption. As noted by the abovementioned passage, any definition of the notion of corruption includes the state, politics and private agents as well as in some cases, governmental organizations. Corruption also includes foreign entities. Because of this reason that it is not an easy task to prevent and successfully fight this criminal activity.

2.2 Analysis of National Anti-Corruption Laws

In Kosovo, exists a complete legislation on preventing and fighting corruption. Since declaring independence in February 2008, local institutions, thanks to the assistance of international accredited organizations such as the OSCE, USAID, and EULEX mission assistance, have adopted international standards laws to fight corruption. Implementation of these laws by competent institutions remains a major challenge.

Table 2: Legislation in Republic of Kosovo on prevention and fight against corruption

No.	Law
1	Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo - Code No. 06/L-074
2	Code of Criminal Procedure - Code No. 08/L-032
3	Law of Extended Power on Confiscation of Assets- Law No. 06/L-087
4	Law on the Agency for Prevention of Corruption - Law No. 08/L-017
5	Law on Declaration, Origin and Control of Assets and Gifts -Law No. 08/L-108
6	Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Discharge of a Public Function – Law No. 06/L-011

Law on the agency for prevention of corruption defines the role, scope and responsibilities of this agency in investigating, preventing and fighting corruption in Kosovo.

> This law foresees the status and competencies of the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, in relation to the imposition of the measures and sanctions, aimed at preventing corruption, strengthening the institutional integrity and transparency in the Republic of Kosovo, as well as monitoring the implementation of the state strategy. Provisions of this law shall apply to public and private persons, in prevention of corruption, conflict of interest, protection of whistleblowers as well as the origin and control of wealth and gifts (Law No. 08/L-017, article 2). In cases of suspected corruption in the competent public prosecution, if no criminal proceedings are conducted in the same case; co-operates with local, foreign and international institutions whose mission is to prevent and fight corruption; in co-operation with the Commission, the Government, other institutions and non-governmental organizations, supervises and prevents cases of conflict of interest and takes measures provided for by a specific law; oversees the assets of senior public officials and other persons, as provided by a separate law; supervises the acceptance of gifts related to the performance of official duties and undertakes the measures provided by law; cooperates with the public authorities responsible for drafting, harmonizing and implementing the legislation in preventing and fighting corruption; provides opinions on conflicts of interest and supervision of gifts related to the discharge of official duties; collaborates with state institutions and civil society to raise public awareness of corruption. (Law No. 08/L-017)

So, the law confers a wide range of advisory and investigative powers, without interfering with the powers of the police and state prosecutor. Its role is seen in issuing professional opinions on conflicts of interest as well as developing the procedure for declaring the assets of public officials.

Law No. 08/L-108 on Declaration, Origin and Control of Assets and Gifts is another law within the legal system of anti-corruption laws. Periodic asset declaration enables public access to the property of public officials in the country. The law sets out the obligations of senior public officials to declare assets, income and backgrounds, the duty of the Anti-Corruption Agency to control the declaration and control of assets, and the obligations of all officials to declare their gifts and backgrounds. This law regulates the procedure of declaration and control of assets, incomes and obligations of senior public officials, family members and sanctions. This law also regulates the procedure for declaring, checking for gifts and their backgrounds accepted by all officials" (Law No. 08/L-108, 1-2). False declaration of property constitutes a separate criminal offense under Article 430 of the Criminal Code of Kosovo.

The Law on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Discharge of Public Function is another very important law which has a primary role in preventing conflict of interest in the discharge of public functions and thereby indirectly affecting the prevention of corruption.

> The purpose of this law is to strengthen the integrity of the public sector as well as guaranty the discharge of public duties in an objective, impartial and transparent manner in service of public interest through identification, prevention, management and resolution of conflict of interests of officials (Law No. 06/L-011). The provisions of this law shall set out the principles, rules and procedures regarding the permitted and prohibited conduct of officials in the performance of their public office and the measures provided for in violation of the provisions set forth in this law. This law also regulates procedures for reporting obligations, measures for preventing and identifying, managing and resolving public and private conflicts of interest of the official during and after the exercise of public office and the duties and responsibilities of the responsible authorities. (Law No. 06/L-011)

2.3 Criminal Offenses against Corruption according to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo

The new Criminal Code entered into force in the second half of April 2019, along with some other changes and additions, has envisaged innovation in the fight against corruption of public officials compared to the previous Code. Criminal offenses of official corruption are listed in Chapter Thirty-Third (XXXIII) "Official Corruption and Offenses against Official Duty". In addition, the Code has also criminalized two offenses related to corruption in the private sector, as required by international acts. These two criminal offenses are listed as offenses against the economy. The table shows that the Criminal Code provides for a wide range of offenses that constitute criminal offenses of corruption committed in the exercise of public office by public officials, and provides for high penalties for perpetrators of these offenses

Table 3: Criminal offenses against corruption of official persons and degree of punishment

Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo – Code No. 06/L-074			
Chapter XXXIII "Official Corruption and Criminal Offenses against Official Duty"			
No.	**Type of penal act**	**Article**	**Sanction/the punishment foreseen**
1	Abusing official position or authority	414	From 1 to 10 years in prison
2	The abuse and the fraud in public procurement	415	With a fine and imprisonment of one (1) to eight (8) years. Prohibition to participate in the procedures for the award of public procurement contracts
3	Misusing official information	416	With a fine and imprisonment of six (6) months to twelve (12) years
4	Conflict of interest	417	With a fine and imprisonment of up to five (5) years
5	Misappropriation in office	418	With a fine and imprisonment of six (6) months to twelve (12) years.
6	Fraud in office	419	With a fine and imprisonment of six (6) months to five (12) years.
7	Unauthorized use of property	420	With a fine or imprisonment of up to three (3) years
8	Accepting bribes	421	With a fine and imprisonment of one (1) to fifteen (15) years.
9	Giving bribes	422	With a fine and imprisonment of up to eight (8) years
10	Giving bribes to foreign public official or foreign official persons	423	With a fine and imprisonment of one (1) to twelve (12) years
11	Trading in influence	424	With a fine and imprisonment of one (1) to twelve (12) years
12	Issuing unlawful judicial decisions	425	With imprisonment of six (6) months to five (5) years
13	Disclosing official secrets	426	With imprisonment of six (6) months to ten (10) years
14	Falsifying official document	427	With imprisonment of six (6) months to five (5) years
15	Unlawful collection and disbursement	428	With fine and imprisonment up to three (3) years
16	Unlawful appropriation of property during a search or execution of a court decision	429	Imprisonment of six (6) months to five (5) years
17	Failure to report or falsely reporting property, revenue/income, gifts, other material benefits, or financial obligations	430	With a fine or up to 5 years of imprisonment
Chapter XXV "Criminal Offenses against the Economy"			
18	Accepting bribes in the private sector	309	With a fine and imprisonment of six (6) months to five (5) years
19	Giving bribes in the private sector	310	With a fine and imprisonment of six (6) months to five (5) years

The peculiarity of these offenses is that the offenders can be sentenced to fines and imprisonment at the same time and confiscated their property acquired through corruption. In this respect the Criminal Code constitutes the most important legal basis against corruption. The Criminal Code has also criminalized the giving or receiving of bribes in the private sector, thus completing the basis for prosecution and punishment of all those who commit corruptive acts. A common characteristic of the criminal offenses grouped under the category of official corruption offenses is that they are committed only intentionally and by official persons. Official persons, by committing such criminal offenses, knowingly and willfully act in an unlawful manner, i.e. they desire the consequence of the criminal offense. (Salihu, 2021) In this group of criminal offenses, the elements that constitute the image of the criminal offense must be distinguished. In this context, the general and specific elements must be distinguished. The group of general elements includes 1.) Illegality; 2.) The action of the subject (illegal action in and during the exercise of public function by public officials); 3.) Such an offense is defined as a criminal offense by the Criminal Code of Kosovo; 4.) Guilt (the criminal offense of official corruption is committed only intentionally). While the group of special elements of these criminal offenses includes: 1.) abuse of official position or duty; 2.) the act of committing the criminal offense is caused by an official person (a subject who exercises state or public authorizations); 3.) the object protected by the incrimination by the Criminal Code as a criminal offense is: property, individual rights and freedoms; abuse of trust in the exercise of official function; 4.) integrity in the exercise of public power; 5.) benefit for oneself or others of the official person; 6.) to cause harm to another person or to seriously violate the rights of another person; 7.) benefit from service or work from the active subject without merit or without fulfilling the conditions. (Çeku, 2023)
All offenses provided for in the chapter on criminal offenses against official duty are committed intentionally, except for the criminal offense provided for in Article 426 "Disclosure of official secrets", where the Code expressly provides (according to the taxing enumeration) that the perpetrator will be punished even when such an offense is committed through negligence. (Code No. 06/L-074, article 426) In principle, the relevant criminal offense in this group of criminal offenses is committed by an official person (a person who is authorized by law or by another act to exercise public functions), but there are cases when the criminal offense categorized in this group can also be committed by a non-official person, e.g. "giving a bribe" (Çeku, 2023). This group of criminal offenses, provided for in Chapter XXXIII of the Criminal Code, meets the international standards provided for in international instruments against corruption. Criminal Law Convention against Corruption (ETS No. 173), in chapter II provides for measures to be taken at the national level and lists the criminal offenses that must be introduced into the national legislation of the signatory countries. In this respect, the Criminal Code of Kosovo provides for most of the criminal offences arising from the Convention. The table below shows the compatibility and differences between the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo and ETS No. 173:

Table 4: Compatibility of criminal offences in the Kosovo Criminal Code with the Convention ETS No. 173

No.	Criminal Law Convention on Corruption ETS. No. 173	Code No. 06/L-074
1	Article 2 – Active bribery of domestic public officials	Article 422 – Giving bribes
2	Article 3 – Passive bribery of domestic public officials	Article 421 – Accepting bribes
3	Article 5 – Bribery of foreign public officials	Article 423 – Giving bribes to foreign public official or foreign official persons
4	Article 12 – Trading in influence	Article 424 – Trading in influence
5	Article 14 – Account offences	Article 419 – Fraud in office Article 284 – Misuse of economic authorizations
6	Article 7 – Active bribery in the private sector	Article 310 – Giving bribes in the private sector
7	Article 8 – Passive bribery in the private sector	Article 309 – Accepting bribes in the private sector

The criminal offences provided for in Chapter III of the Criminal Law Convention against Corruption: Corruption of members of national public assemblies (Article 4); Corruption of members of foreign public assemblies (Article 6); Corruption of officials of international organizations (Article 9); Corruption of members of international parliamentary assemblies (Article 10); Corruption of judges and officials of international courts (Article 11); are not incorporated into the Criminal Code of Kosovo or any special law in Kosovo. It should be borne in mind that the Republic of Kosovo is not a member of many international organizations and mechanisms, such as: the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union, etc. This fact has resulted in the group of criminal offenses related to international officials or international organizations being absent from local legislation. The Criminal Code of Kosovo provides for the criminal offense of "Giving bribes to foreign public official or foreign official persons" and also to criminal offenses "Accepting bribes" from article 421, the criminal offense also includes the taking of bribes by foreign public officials. So, this article expressly defines:

> An official person, foreign official person or foreign public official, who requests or receives, directly or indirectly, any undue gift or advantage, for himself, herself or for another person, or who accepts an offer or promise of such gift or advantage, so that the official person, foreign public official, or foreign public person acts or refrains from acting in accordance with his or her official duties, shall be punished by fine and imprisonment of one (1) to eight (8) years. An official person, foreign official person or foreign public official who requests or receives, directly or indirectly, any undue gift or advantage, for himself or herself or for another person, or accepts an offer or promise of such gift or advantage, so that the official person, foreign official person or foreign public official acts or refrains from acting, in violation of his or her official duties, shall be punished by fine and imprisonment of three (3) to twelve (12) years. When the offense under paragraph 1. Of this Article results in a material benefit exceeding fifteen thousand (15,000) EUR, the perpetrator shall be punished by fine and imprisonment of five (5) to fifteen (15) years. (Code No. 06/L-074, article 421)

This article does not explicitly specify which position of foreign public official is in question, but generally criminalizes the acceptance of bribes by foreign public officials in the Republic of Kosovo.

Regarding the criminal offense "Money laundering of proceeds from corruption offences" from the article 13 the Criminal Law Convention against Corruption ETS No. 173, In the legislation of the Republic of Kosovo, there is a special law that criminalizes the criminal offense of money

laundering – namely Law No. 05/L -096 on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism. Article 56 of this special law provides for the criminal offense of money laundering.
The Criminal Code constitutes the substantive criminal law, which serves to incriminate the criminal offense and the criminal sanction, criminal liability and the element of illegality. Therefore, the Criminal Code consists of the general part and the special part.
For the procedure for imposing criminal sanctions, from the investigation phase to the execution phase of the court decision, the Criminal Procedure Code serves as formal - procedural law. The Code of Criminal Procedure is a legal act that serves the development of proceedings against corruption offenses from the investigation phase, the filing of indictments, the development of litigation and the issuance of convictions for the perpetrators of corruption offenses. The Code of Criminal Procedure provides for the possibility of using covert and technical surveillance measures during the investigation to secure evidence and to identify and trace assets subject to confiscation. Specific investigation techniques include photographic or video surveillance; covert monitoring of conversations; interception of telecommunications; interception of communications via computer network; checking postal deliveries; controlled delivery of postal deliveries; use of location tracking tools; simulated purchase of any item; simulating the offense of corruption; undercover investigation; recording phone calls; and disclosure of financial data (Code No. 08/L-032).
The law on enhanced powers of confiscation of property applies when the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure are insufficient to effect the confiscation of entities that have acquired unlawful property. The law also applies to “offenses against official corruption” and offenses related to official duty as well as “offenses against the economy”. (Law No. 06/L-087, article 2/1.2 and 1.12) The role of this law is seen in the expanded rights that the State Prosecutor has in the investigation of property following the conviction judgment of the court. According to this law:

> After a defendant is found guilty of a criminal offense provided for in Article 2 paragraph 1 of the present law, the State Prosecutor may, upon a separate request to the court which has rendered the judgment, request the verification of the property within a period of five (5) years after the judgment becomes final, as set forth in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo. In the property verification request, the State Prosecutor shall: submit all assets subject to the property verification; clearly identify any property; provide evidence that each part of the property is the property of the defendant. (Law No. 06/L-087, article 4) “The state prosecutor has an important role to play in this process, which must present convincing evidence of the convict's property in order for the court to make a confiscation order. If it is established that the defendant's property was acquired in violation of the law, “The court shall: order the confiscation of the property; determine the monetary value of the property; order that the confiscated property be transferred to the property of the Republic of Kosovo”. (Law No. 06/L-087, article article 6/2.1, 2.2. and 2.3)

3. Data Analysis and Results

3.1 Research Methodology

This study was conducted using an empirical approach and a quantitative research method, with the aim of analyzing the perceptions of respondents regarding the causes and factors that influence the spread of corruption in Kosovo. The survey method was used as the main instrument for collecting empirical data, as this method enables the collection of a relatively large number of responses within a short period of time and allows for statistical analysis of the results. The quantitative approach was chosen because it enables the measurement of the attitudes and perceptions of respondents in a structured and comparable manner. Through this approach, it was possible to identify the main factors that, according to the respondents, influence the emergence and spread of corruption in Kosovar society.

The research sample consisted of 100 respondents, who were selected from various professional and academic groups related to the legal field. Respondents included law students, lawyers, and university professors. The selection of these categories was made with the aim of including in the research individuals who have knowledge and experience in the legal system and in the functioning of public institutions, thus making their responses more relevant for analyzing the phenomenon of corruption. The sample can be considered a purposive sampling, as the respondents were selected due to their professional connection to the research topic.

3.1.1 Research Instrument and Data Collection Procedure

The main instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire, which was designed to collect data on respondents' perceptions of the factors that influence corruption. The questionnaire mainly contained closed questions, which allowed respondents to choose between several alternatives provided. The questionnaire was carried out electronically through the Google Forms platform, which enables the creation, distribution and collection of data efficiently. The structure of the questionnaire was organized in order to cover several important dimensions of the corruption phenomenon, such as institutional - legal factors, political factors, economic factors, socio-cultural factors, media, civil society and denunciation, as well as preventive measures.

Data collection was carried out through an online survey, by distributing the questionnaire link to potential respondents. The link created in Google Forms was distributed through professional and academic networks, aiming to reach individuals related to the legal and academic fields. The data collection process lasted a period of one month, during which respondents had the opportunity to complete the questionnaire voluntarily. During this period, a total of 100 complete responses were collected, which were used for further analysis of the results. The data collected from the questionnaire were processed and analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis methods. The results were presented in tabular form and expressed in percentages, in order to identify the main trends in respondents' perceptions regarding the causes and factors that influence corruption.

Data analysis focused mainly on interpreting the distribution of responses to each question of the questionnaire, enabling conclusions to be drawn on the factors that respondents consider most important in the occurrence of corruption in Kosovo.

3.1.2 Limitations of the Study

Despite the importance of the data collected and the relevance of the respondents included in this study, the research also presents several methodological limitations that must be taken into account when interpreting the results. First, the number of respondents is relatively limited (100 respondents), which may affect the degree of generalizability of the results to the entire population of Kosovo. Although the sample includes individuals with legal and academic knowledge, it does not necessarily represent all categories of society. Secondly, the selection of respondents was done through a purposive and non-probabilistic sample, which may affect the full representation of the views of different social groups. Third, the use of an online survey may have limited participation to individuals who have access to the internet and are willing to participate in such research. Also, respondents' responses are based on their personal perceptions and attitudes, which may be influenced by individual experience or by the institutional and social context in which they operate.

Despite these limitations, the data collected provide important insight into the perceptions of a relevant group of law professionals and students regarding the factors influencing corruption in Kosovo.

3.1.3. Ethical Aspects of Research

During the implementation of this research, the basic ethical principles of scientific research were respected. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary, and respondents were informed about the general purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire. The anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were guaranteed throughout the research process. The questionnaire did not request any personally identifiable information, such as name or other information that could identify respondents individually. The data collected were used for scientific and research purposes only. Furthermore, the research results have been analyzed and presented in an aggregate and statistical manner, ensuring that no individual respondent can be identified from the published data. This approach is in line with general ethical standards of research in the social and legal sciences.

In this study, content validity was ensured by formulating questions in line with existing literature on corruption and the factors that influence its spread in legal and institutional systems. The questions were designed to cover different dimensions of the corruption phenomenon, including institutional, political, legal and socio-economic factors. Also, to increase the clarity and comprehensibility of the questions, the questionnaire is structured in a simple and clear manner, using mainly closed questions with predefined alternatives. This approach helps reduce ambiguities in the interpretation of the questions by respondents and contributes to increasing the comparability of the responses.

Regarding the reliability of the instrument, the use of a standardized questionnaire distributed equally to all respondents enabled data collection under the same methodological conditions. The Google Forms platform enabled accurate and automated recording of responses, reducing the possibility of errors during the data collection and processing process.

Overall, the structure of the questionnaire and the way it was administered contributed to ensuring a satisfactory level of validity and reliability of the data used in this empirical study on the factors affecting corruption in Kosovo. The questionnaire consists of the first part with sociometric - demographic questions and seven parts with professional questions.

3.2 Research results and Data Analysis

This section consists of five categories of questions: age, gender, level of education, professional status and work experience.

Table 5: Socio-demographic questions (through tabular presentation expressed in %)

No.	Question type	Question	%
1	Age	18–25	18 %
		26–35	30 %
		36–45	31 %
		46–55	14 %
		56 and more	7 %
2	Gender (sex)	Male	58 %
		Female	42 %
3	Educational level	Bachelor	27 %
		Master	54 %
		Doctorate	19 %
4	Professional status	Public sector	19 %
		Private sector	49 %
		Academic / researcher	11 %
		Civil society	1 %
		Student	15 %
		Other	5 %
5	Professional experience	Less than 5 years	25 %.
		5 – 10 years	34 %
		11 – 20 years	23 %
		Over 20 years	18 %

The analysis of the socio-demographic data presented in the table above provides an overview of the sample structure of the respondents included in this research. Regarding age, the majority of respondents belong to the age groups 36–45 years (31 %) and 26–35 years (30 %), which together constitute the majority of the sample (61 %). This shows that the study is dominated by middle-aged individuals, who are usually active in professional life. Meanwhile, 18% of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-25 years, while a smaller percentage represents the age groups of 46-55 years (14 %) and 56 years and older (7 %).
In terms of gender, the sample consists of 58 % males and 42 % females, showing a relatively balanced distribution of participants. As for the educational level, most of the respondents have completed their master's studies (54 %), while 27 % have a bachelor's level and 19 % a doctorate, which shows a relatively high level of education of the participants.
Regarding professional status, the majority of respondents are engaged in the private sector (49 %), followed by the public sector (19 %), students (15 %) and academic staff or researchers (11 %), while much smaller percentages represent the civil society sector and other professional categories. As for professional experience, the most represented category is the one with 5-10 years of experience (34 %), followed by respondents with less than 5 years of experience (25 %), 11-20 years of experience (23 %) and over 20 years of experience (18 %). Overall, these data indicate that the sample consists mainly of individuals with higher education and considerable professional experience. The analysis of the results of the second part of the questionnaire presented in the table above, which is related to the perception of the level of corruption, shows a high perception of the respondents about the spread and influence of corruption in institutions and in the functioning of the state.

Table 6: Perception of the level of corruption

No.	Question	Options (Likert scale)	%
1	Corruption is widespread in Kosovo's public institutions	I completely disagree	1 %
		I agree a little	10 %
		Neutral	7 %
		Agree	62 %
		I completely agree	20 %
2	Corruption constitutes a serious violation of the rule of law	I completely disagree	0 %
		I agree a little	0 %
		Neutral	1 %
		Agree	29 %
		I completely agree	70 %
3	Corruption directly affects national security	I completely disagree	0 %
		I agree a little	17 %
		Neutral	12 %
		Agree	45 %
		I completely agree	26 %
4	Corruption undermines citizens' trust in state institutions	I completely disagree	0 %
		I agree a little	2 %
		Neutral	2 %
		Agree	22 %
		I completely agree	74 %

As for the statement that corruption is widespread in Kosovo's public institutions, the majority of respondents agree with this assessment: 62 % agree and 20 % completely agree, while only 11 % disagree or slightly agree. This shows a wide perception that corruption is a phenomenon present in public institutions.

Regarding the statement that corruption poses a serious threat to the rule of law, the result is even more pronounced: 70 % completely agree and 29 % agree, while only 1 % remain neutral. These data show an almost complete consensus that corruption poses a direct threat to the functioning of the rule of law.

As for the impact of corruption on national security, 45 % of respondents agree and 26 % completely agree, showing that the majority of participants associate corruption with the dimension of state security. However, some respondents express reservations, with 17 % slightly agreeing and 12 % neutral, suggesting that this link is perceived less directly than in the case of the rule of law.

Finally, the results show a very high level of agreement with the statement that corruption undermines citizens' trust in state institutions: 74 % completely agree and 22 % agree, while only 4 % do not express clear agreement. This shows that the respondents consider corruption as a key factor that damages the legitimacy and credibility of public institutions. Overall, these results suggest a strong perception among respondents that corruption is a widespread phenomenon that negatively affects the rule of law, institutional trust, and, to a significant extent, national security. The interpretation of the results shown in the table on the institutionalization of corruption and protection mechanisms, shows the respondents' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of institutions and the influence of political practices on corruption.

Table 7: Institutional and Legal Factors

No.	Question	Options (Likert scale)	%
1	The judicial system is not independent of political influences	I completely disagree	7 %
		I agree a little	28 %
		Neutral	22 %
		Agree	35 %
		I completely agree	8 %
2	Penalties for corruption are not sufficiently dissuasive	I completely disagree	3 %
		I agree a little	3 %
		Neutral	7 %
		Agree	42 %
		I completely agree	45 %
3	Institutional accountability mechanisms are ineffective	I completely disagree	2 %
		I agree a little	5 %
		Neutral	8 %
		Agree	50 %
		I completely agree	35 %
4	Political appointments in the administration increase corruption	I completely disagree	3 %
		I agree a little	5 %
		Neutral	3 %
		Agree	17 %
		I completely agree	72 %
5	Lack of institutional transparency fosters corruption	I completely disagree	0 %
		I agree a little	0 %
		Neutral	5 %
		Agree	43 %
		I completely agree	52 %

First, regarding the claim that the judicial system is not independent of political influences, the results show a more balanced distribution: 35 % agree, 8 % strongly agree, while 35 % are neutral or strongly disagree (7 % not at all, 28 % somewhat agree). This shows that a significant part of the respondents perceive political influence on the judiciary, but there is no complete consensus.

Regarding punishments for corruption, most respondents consider their effect insufficient: 42 % agree and 45 % completely agree. This shows a clear perception that the penal system does not provide a sufficient deterrent to corruption.

Regarding the statement that institutional accountability mechanisms are ineffective, the majority of respondents agree with this position: 50 % agree and 35 % completely agree, while only 15 % do not express clear agreement. This suggests that the institutions that are supposed to ensure accountability are not functioning effectively enough.

Regarding political appointments in the administration, the perception is very strong: 72 % strongly agree and 17 % agree that these appointments increase corruption, reflecting a high consensus on the negative impact of political practices on institutional integrity.

Finally, the statement that the lack of institutional transparency promotes corruption has the greatest agreement of respondents: 43 % agree and 52 % strongly agree, indicating that insufficient transparency is considered a key factor in the spread of corruption. In summary, these results suggest that respondents perceive a direct link between political influences, lack of accountability and low transparency with the high level of corruption in Kosovo's public institutions. The existing institutions, according to them, are not effective in preventing and punishing corruption, while political practices worsen the situation.

Table 8: Political factors

No.	Question	Options (Likert scale)	%
1	The influence of political parties in the administration is a main source of corruption	I completely disagree	1 %
		I agree a little	4 %
		Neutral	13 %
		Agree	28 %
		I completely agree	54 %
2	Non-transparent financing of political parties contributes to corruption	I completely disagree	1 %
		I agree a little	3 %
		Neutral	9 %
		Agree	33 %
		I completely agree	54 %
3	Corruption is used as a tool to maintain political power	I completely disagree	1 %
		I agree a little	8 %
		Neutral	6 %
		Agree	30 %
		I completely agree	55 %
4	The phenomenon of "state capture" is present in Kosovo	I completely disagree	2 %
		I agree a little	5 %
		Neutral	12 %
		Agree	48 %
		I completely agree	33 %

The interpretation of the results of *Table 8: Political factors* shows the perception of the respondents on the influence of the politics and practices of the parties on the spread of corruption in Kosovo.
Regarding the statement that the influence of political parties in the administration is the main source of corruption, most respondents agree: 28 % agree and 54 % completely agree, while only 5 % disagree or slightly agree. This shows a strong perception that politics and the involvement of parties in the administration are a key factor in corruption.
Regarding the non-transparent financing of political parties, the result is similar: 33 % agree and 54 % completely agree that this practice contributes to corruption, underlining the role of financial transparency in the stability of institutions and public integrity.
Regarding the statement that corruption is used as a tool to maintain political power, 30 % agree and 55 % strongly agree, showing a high consensus that corruption is used for political purposes and to consolidate the position of power. Finally, regarding the phenomenon of "state capture", the majority of respondents agree: 48 % agree and 33 % completely agree, while only 7 % disagree or slightly agree. This shows that the concept of state capture is perceived as present and visible in Kosovo. The data show that political factors - the influence of parties in the administration, non-transparent funding of parties, the use of corruption to maintain power and state capture - are considered by the respondents as the main elements that

promote and keep widespread corruption in institutions. This perception reflects the close connection between politics and the phenomena of institutional corruption.

Table 9: Economic factors

No.	Question	Options (Likert scale)	%
1	Low salaries in the public sector increase the propensity for corruption	I completely disagree	3 %
		I agree a little	5 %
		Neutral	8 %
		Agree	57 %
		I completely agree	27 %
2	Poverty and unemployment affect the normalization of corruption	I completely disagree	6 %
		I agree a little	11 %
		Neutral	12 %
		Agree	17 %
		I completely agree	54 %
3	Corruption discourages foreign investment	I completely disagree	3 %
		I agree a little	1 %
		Neutral	4 %
		Agree	20 %
		I completely agree	72 %
4	The informal economy creates space for systemic corruption	I completely disagree	2 %
		I agree a little	3 %
		Neutral	11 %
		Agree	37 %
		I completely agree	47 %

The interpretation of the results of *Table 9: Economic factors* shows the perception of the respondents on the impact of economic conditions and financial practices on the spread of corruption.

First, most respondents consider that low salaries in the public sector increase the tendency to corruption: 57 % agree and 27 % completely agree, while only 8 % disagree or slightly agree. This indicates that insufficient compensation is considered a key economic factor that drives corrupt practices.

Regarding poverty and unemployment, 54 % completely agree and 17 % agree that these conditions influence the normalization of corruption, while 29 % are neutral or disagree. This suggests that economic insecurity and lack of job opportunities may increase the tolerance and spread of corruption.

Regarding the statement that corruption discourages foreign investment, most respondents strongly agree: 20 % agree and 72 % strongly agree, showing the perception that corruption has direct consequences on the investment climate and economic development of the country.

Finally, for the statement that the informal economy creates space for systemic corruption, 37 % agree and 47 % completely agree, while only 5 % disagree or slightly agree. This shows that informal economic activity is considered an environment where corruption can flourish and become systemic. The data show that economic factors, including low salaries, unemployment, poverty, the informal economy and the impact on investments, are perceived by respondents as important elements that promote and maintain corruption in Kosovo. These results reflect the direct link between economic conditions and the presence of corrupt phenomena.

Table 10: Socio-cultural factors

No.	Question	Options (Likert scale)	%
1	Corruption is easily accepted and tolerated in Kosovar society	I completely disagree	1 %
		I agree a little	14 %
		Neutral	5 %
		Agree	63 %
		I completely agree	17 %
2	Nepotism and clientelism are perceived as “normal” practices in Kosovar society	I completely disagree	0 %
		I agree a little	9 %
		Neutral	13 %
		Agree	61 %
		I completely agree	17 %
3	Family and social pressure influences involvement in corruption	I completely disagree	5 %
		I agree a little	34 %
		Neutral	30 %
		Agree	26 %
		I completely agree	5 %
4	Lack of civic education influences the failure to denounce corruption	I completely disagree	2 %
		I agree a little	23 %
		Neutral	14 %
		Agree	43 %
		I completely agree	18 %

The interpretation and analysis of the results of *Table 10: Socio-cultural factors* shows the perception of the respondents on the influence of social norms, values and practices on the spread of corruption in Kosovo.

First, most respondents consider that corruption is easily acceptable and tolerable in Kosovar society: 63 % agree and 17 % completely agree, while only 15 % are neutral or disagree. This shows a clear perception that the social culture of the country influences the tolerance of corrupt practices.

Regarding nepotism and clientelism, the results are similar: 61 % agree and 17 % strongly agree that these practices are perceived as “normal”, indicating the presence of an integrated culture of family favoritism and personal ties in public institutions and organizations.

As for family and social pressure, the result shows a more even distribution: 26 % agree and 5 % completely agree, while 39 % are neutral or completely disagree. This suggests that the influence of social pressure exists, but is perceived to be less direct than cultural and normative factors.

Finally, for the statement that the lack of civic education affects the non-reporting of corruption, most respondents agree: 43 % agree and 18 % completely agree, while 39 % are neutral or disagree. This shows that the lack of civic awareness and knowledge is perceived as a barrier for the prevention of corruption.

The analyzed data suggest that socio-cultural factors, including social tolerance to corruption, practices of nepotism and clientelism, social pressure and lack of civic education, contribute to the spread and normalization of corruption in Kosovo. These results underline the importance of civic awareness and changing social norms to reduce corrupt phenomena.

Table 11: Media, civil society and whistleblowing

No.	Question	Options (Likert scale)	%
1	The media plays an important role in uncovering corruption	I completely disagree	0 %
		I agree a little	4 %
		Neutral	5 %
		Agree	31 %
		I completely agree	60 %
2	Investigative journalism faces political and economic pressures	I completely disagree	1 %
		I agree a little	4 %
		Neutral	9 %
		Agree	33 %
		I completely agree	53 %
3	Whistleblower protection is insufficient	I completely disagree	1 %
		I agree a little	20 %
		Neutral	22 %
		Agree	44 %
		I completely agree	13 %
4	Citizens are hesitant to report corruption due to fear	I completely disagree	2 %
		I agree a little	21 %
		Neutral	20 %
		Agree	34 %
		I completely agree	23 %

The interpretation and analysis of the results of *Table 11: Media, civil society and whistleblowing* shows the respondents' perceptions on the role of the media and whistleblower protection mechanisms in the fight against corruption in Kosovo.

First, the majority of respondents believe that the media plays an important role in uncovering corruption: 31 % agree and 60 % completely agree, while only 9 % are neutral or disagree. This shows that the media is perceived as a key instrument for exposing corrupt practices.

Regarding the pressure on investigative journalism, most respondents agree that it faces political and economic pressures: 33 % agree and 53 % strongly agree, indicating the serious challenges investigative journalists face in their mission to uncover corruption.

As for the protection of whistleblowers, 44 % agree and 13 % completely agree that it is insufficient, while 43 % are neutral or completely disagree. This shows that there is a clear perception that the protection mechanisms for individuals who denounce corruption are not sufficient to guarantee safety and protection.

In the end, for the statement that citizens hesitate to report corruption due to fear, most respondents agree: 34 % agree and 23 % completely agree, while 43 % are neutral or completely disagree. This shows that fear is a real barrier to denunciation of corruption and active citizen involvement.

The data analyzed show that the media and civil society are perceived as key actors in uncovering corruption, but investigative journalists and whistleblowers face major challenges. Fear and the lack of effective protection prevent active citizens from reporting corruption, underscoring the need for stronger protection mechanisms and a safer reporting environment.

Table 12: Preventive measures

No.	Question	Options (Likert scale)	%
1	Reform of the justice system is key to fighting corruption	I completely disagree	0 %
		I agree a little	14 %
		Neutral	11 %
		Agree	48 %
		I completely agree	27 %
2	Digitalization of public services reduces corruption	I completely disagree	0 %
		I agree a little	5 %
		Neutral	6 %
		Agree	47 %
		I completely agree	42 %
3	Institutional transparency increases public trust	I completely disagree	1 %
		I agree a little	1 %
		Neutral	1 %
		Agree	39 %
		I completely agree	58 %
4	Punishing high-ranking officials would significantly reduce corruption	I completely disagree	2 %
		I agree a little	1 %
		Neutral	2 %
		Agree	22 %
		I completely agree	73 %

The interpretation and analysis of the results of *Table 12: Preventive measures* shows the perception of the respondents on the effectiveness of the measures that can contribute to the reduction of corruption in Kosovo.

First, most respondents agree that reforming the justice system is key to fighting corruption: 48 % agree and 27 % completely agree, while only 14 % slightly disagree and 11 % are neutral. This underlines the importance of strengthening the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary in preventing corruption.

Regarding the statement that the digitization of public services reduces corruption, most respondents strongly agree: 47 % agree and 42 % strongly agree, indicating that automation and reducing direct contact with officials can reduce opportunities for corrupt practices.

Regarding institutional transparency, 39 % agree and 58 % completely agree that it increases public trust, while only 3 % are neutral or disagree. This shows that the public perceives transparency as a key factor for the credibility of institutions and the prevention of corruption.

In the end, for the statement that punishing high officials would significantly reduce corruption, 22 % agree and 73 % completely agree, reflecting a broad consensus that accountability and punishment of individuals in high positions is an essential measure to prevent corruption.

The analyzed data show that the most effective preventive measures according to the respondents' perception are justice reform, digitalization of services, increased institutional transparency and punishment of high officials. These results underline the importance of an integrated approach, where legal, technological and institutional mechanisms work together to fight corruption

4. Conclusion

The applicable legal basis is modern and in line with international standards against corruption. Domestic legislation in particular the Kosovo Criminal Code has incriminated most of the offenses that are recommended by international conventions such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the European Criminal Convention. Other laws have been enacted to effectively prevent and fight this phenomenon.

Institutionally, institutions have been set up to carry out their duties in accordance with the legislation in force and to fight the rampant corruption that exists in Kosovo. It is vital that independent institutions such as the Police of the Republic of Kosovo, the State Prosecutor's Office and the Judicial System work in accordance with the legislation in force and that the state seriously fights corruption. Institutional co-operation in law enforcement and support with information and reporting from citizens and denunciations by civil society can be crucial in the effective fight against corruption.

From the results of the empirical research we can conclude that: the socio-demographic data show that the participants are mainly middle-aged individuals, with higher education and considerable professional experience, engaged mainly in the private and public sector. Perceptions on corruption show that the majority of respondents consider corruption to be widespread, as a serious threat to the rule of law, and a factor that undermines public trust and affects national security. Political factors, including the influence of parties, non-transparent financing and the use of corruption to maintain power, are perceived as the main sources of corrupt practices, while the phenomenon of “state capture” is seen to be present.

Economic factors, including low wages, poverty, unemployment and the informal economy, also fuel corruption and discourage foreign investment. At the socio-cultural level, tolerance to corruption, nepotism, clientelism and the lack of civic education reinforce the acceptance of corrupt practices.

The role of the media and civil society is important in exposing corruption, but investigative journalists and whistleblowers face serious challenges, while the fear of citizens prevents the denouncing of corrupt practices.

According to the respondents, the most effective preventive measures include justice reform, digitization of services, increased institutional transparency and punishment of high officials, creating an integrated approach to fighting corruption.

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