



Master's thesis

A Goal-Framing approach to corruption in Bulgaria: examining differences before and after accession into the European Union

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Are there deviations of the Master's thesis from the proposed plan?

☐ No

☒ Yes, please explain below the deviations

The thesis deviated from the plan by introducing GFT as a framework to capture the individual level changes in the behaviour of individuals because of the capitalistic dynamic that came from the entrance of Bulgaria into the EU. This made the thesis not only focus on the macro level changes but also on the micro level motivation. It also aligns better with the social psychology label.

Abstract

Corruption has been a major issue in numerous post-communist countries that is causing economic issues, social inequalities, and institutional illegitimacy. This thesis investigates the psychological mechanisms sustaining corruption in Bulgaria before and after it joined the European Union in 2007. Whereas the related increase in transparency and enforcement of the rule of law was expected to curb corruption, the latest indicators still show high levels of corruption and low levels of institutional trust. I use *Goal-Framing Theory* to explore the behavioural micro foundations linking institutional trust and motivation in a system transitioned into capitalism. I argue that norm following is contingent on the degree of institutional trust. However, since capitalism fosters a stronger gain and hedonic orientation, I expect the effect of institutional trust on normative rule following to decline after Bulgaria joined the EU. A mixed-methods design is used combining interviews with policy experts with a repeated cross-sectional analysis of 9 waves of European Social Survey (ESS) data on Bulgaria, spanning the years 2006 to 2023. As hypothesized, I find that the negative effect of hedonic motivations on norm compliance became stronger after the transition. Unlike predicted, the effect of a strong gain motivation *strengthened* rather than weakened. Implications for theory and transition economies are discussed.

Keywords: systemic corruption, goal-framing theory, institutional trust, rule compliance

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A Goal-Framing approach to corruption in Bulgaria: examining differences before and after accession into the European Union

Bulgaria, as the oldest country in the continent of Europe, has gone through several system transitions each leaving lasting effects on the functionality of the current institutional system, rationality and mindset of the citizens. According to some observers, the transition of Bulgaria to a new democracy played a crucial role in the decline of institutional trust (Pehlivanova, 2009). Bulgaria faced a crisis of confidence in political and civil institutions, underscoring an issue with severe consequences for institutional legitimacy. Corruption has been a persistent issue in Bulgaria, and it continued after the transition, becoming deeply embedded in all areas of governance and resulting in a systemic problem (Iwasaki & Suzuki, 2011; Plaček et al., 2018). The systemic nature of corruption in Bulgaria played an important role in the decline of institutional trust and legitimacy. However, this relationship is not unidirectional - it can be self-reinforcing (Boly & Gillanders, 2022; Kubbe, 2013; Wallace & Latcheva, 2006). The erosion of trust can stimulate people without political or economic power to seek alternative ways to acquire resources. Therefore, trust is essential for building mutual support, unity and collective action (Uslaner, 2002).

Bulgaria's accession to the European Union (EU) introduced a new institutional reality, which many had hoped would decrease corruption, for at least two reasons. First, by joining the EU, Bulgaria became subject to institutional frameworks imposed from outside its national context, introducing stronger oversight and conditions tied to transparency, rule of law, and good governance (Pehlivanova, 2009). Compliance with these standards is incentivized through financial mechanisms, such as access to EU funding. Noncompliance may come with sanctions and withheld payments. Second, the deeper integration into the European market increased

economic freedom and introduced a more capitalistic dynamic, allowing individuals to engage in economic activities with less reliance on state institutions (Peev & Mueller, 2012). This shift may reduce dependence on corruption structures but also potentially weaken the direct link between institutional trust and corrupt behaviours.

Contrary to expectations, recent data from the Corruption Perceptions Index indicates that Bulgaria's situation has deteriorated (TCP, 2025). A recent policy brief by the Centre of Study for Democracy (CSD) revealed that involvement in corruption schemes by individuals peaked in 2023. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of the country's current anti-corruption measures (CSD, 2024). Furthermore, a Eurofound report examining institutional trust in EU countries reveals the persistently low levels of institutional trust in Bulgaria (Eurofound, 2018). In sum, the institutional changes following Bulgaria's accession to the EU failed to temper corruption. The question is: what could explain this failure? The present thesis argues that to answer this question, we need a more fine-grained look at (1) the changing institutional context and (2) how these changes affect individual level beliefs and behaviours.

First, I argue that the impact of Bulgaria's EU accession on corruption was weaker than expected because of its *systemic* nature. Systemic corruption refers to corruption embedded in institutions, involving coordinated actors over time (Pohlmann, 2024). It is marked by durability, institutional embeddedness, coordination among actors, and the participation of multiple agents. Systemic corruption in Bulgaria is not a recent development, it has been a standing feature of its institutional landscape (Ganev, 2013; Iwasaki & Suzuki, 2011; Plaček et al., 2018). Systemic corruption can hinder the progress towards sustainable solutions (TCP, 2025). This is reflected in the amount of voter turnout in Bulgaria over the years, where in 1991 eighty-four percent of the population voted and in 2023 this number declined to forty percent (Addeo et al., 2024).

This persistence of systemic corruption has eroded trust in institutions and undermined people's motivation to comply with rules, especially in a system where compliance is not seen as rewarding. Studies argue that when trust in institutions is low, individuals may feel justified in pursuing self-serving goals through corrupt behaviour (Morris & Klesner, 2010; De Graaf, 2007). Media coverage in Bulgaria frequently highlights corruption involving government officials (*Corruption and anti-corruption narratives*, 2023), further weakening strategic trust based on past institutional performance (Uslaner, 2002). The moral component of trust is also affected, where the frequency of corruption signals a lack of shared moral standards, especially in former communist societies where corruption has become culturally embedded (Clausen et al., 2011; Pellegata & Memoli, 2015; Kubbe, 2013; Wallace & Latcheva, 2006). Institutional trust, which is defined as confidence in entities like government, judiciary, and police (Cole & Cohn, 2016), is shaped by both strategic (experience based) and moralistic (value based) dimensions (Uslaner, 2002). Institutional fairness often centres on outcome expectations, where people assess institutions based on perceived efficiency (Clausen et al. 2011; Cole & Cohn, 2016). In this context, the widespread view that institutions serve elites rather than ordinary people reduces the motivation for rule compliance (Olken & Pande, 2012). Taking into consideration this ongoing institutional context, in 2007 Bulgaria became part of the EU, while policy makers and politicians expected an increase in institutional trust and decrease in corruption, macro indicators years later show a different picture (TCP, 2025; CSD, 2024; Eurofound, 2018).

Research question 1: *What is the institutional context and patterns of corruption before and after Bulgaria's entry into the EU?*

Second, regarding the question how institutional change affected individual beliefs and behaviours, I argue that Bulgaria joining the EU was not merely a political integration into European institutions, it also marked a transition into a capitalistic socio-economic system. This shift did not only expand market opportunities, but it also reshaped societal values, individual motivations, and behavioural expectations. Building on *goal framing theory* (GFT, Lindenberg, 2025) I argue that the move toward a more capitalistic environment increases the salience of gain and hedonic goals, focused on personal advancement and pleasure, while diminishing the importance of normative goals such as collective responsibility and rule compliance. In the context of Bulgaria, the increase in economic freedom (Graeff, 2004) brought new opportunities for private gain, especially when institutional controls were weak (Peev & Mueller, 2012). This erosion of trust can reduce individuals' willingness to follow institutional rules, as they may perceive that compliance does not lead to the desired outcome. As a result, institutional trust may become a less important predictor of rule compliance, because individuals increasingly pursue personal gain or hedonic satisfaction, regardless of institutional legitimacy.

Research question 2: *How can differences in rule following be explained by differences in institutional trust and to what degree is the effect of institutional trust on rule compliance dependent on Bulgaria joining the EU?*

In sum: to understand why Bulgaria continues to experience high levels of corruption and low institutional trust despite joining the EU, it is important to distinguish between macro and micro levels of analysis. The macro indicators mentioned above show that Bulgaria's accession to the EU has not led to significant improvements. These macro level indicators alone cannot

explain the persistence of corruption or the failure of EU accession to deliver the expected outcomes. Therefore, this calls for a shift to micro-level analyses of the motivation of individuals. This allows disentangling how the transition to capitalism may have reshaped people's motivation and therefore addressing the question of why the transition did not have the intended effects.

A mixed-method approach is used to answer the two research questions. First, expert interviews are conducted to explore how systemic corruption has developed in Bulgaria and how changes in the regulatory environment have shaped the institutional context. Second, data from the European Social Survey (ESS) is used to examine, at the individual level, whether changes in the institutional trust over time influence rule compliance, and whether shifts in goal salience following the accession of Bulgaria into the EU play a role.

Theoretical Background: A Goal Framing Approach to Rule Compliance

This study focuses on rule compliance, specifically the extent to which individuals adhere to rules, laws, and social norms. According to Gross and Vostroknutov (2021), several mechanisms relate to rule compliance and one of them is the goals people place salience on. This indicates that self-restriction might be required from the individual to suppress their personal goals for the greater good. Keizer et al. (2008) found that violation of a specific social norms or formal rule increases the likelihood that they also violated other social norms or rules. This suggests that in environments with low institutional trust, normative goals can weaken, and rule compliance may erode.

To disentangle this phenomenon and its underlying assumptions, this study examines how this institutional transformation shaped individual motives, beliefs, and behaviours and how

that could have contributed to the declining institutional trust and persistent corruption. GFT, according to Lindenberg (2008), uses self-regulation as a process to navigate different goal-frames. Goals tend to be flexible and adapt according to contextual cues around them. In this way certain overarching goals might become more salient and push the other. According to GFT, depending on the context and the situation a specific goal becomes salient without individuals being fully aware of the shift, therefore one of the following goal frames emerges: hedonic, gain, and normative goal frames (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007, 2013). The hedonic goal frame refers to the immediate satisfaction an individual is seeking, such as instant gratification of their needs and wants (Lindenberg, 2008). The gain goal frame refers to the long-term improvement of one's resources (money, social status, networks, etc.). The normative goal frame focuses on individuals acting according to the set norms around them, creating a more collective perception of what is good for the collective or for society. According to the GFT only one of the three goal frame dominates and guides the behaviour of individuals at any given moment. From the three goals mentioned above, the normative goal frame is the most sensitive to situational cues from the environment around them (Silitonga et al., 2019).

When economic freedom increases without a corresponding strengthening of institutional integrity, the salience of the hedonic and gain goal frame is likely to increase (Lindenberg, 2025). The imbalance comes when normative concerns like justice, care, and solidarity are pushed aside to prioritize self-interest. Especially in an environment where low institutional trust is present this can be a catalyst to lower rule compliance and further perpetuate corruption acts. Social norms and normative rule following begin to lose their binding force, since both the moralistic and strategic components of trust are damaged by the environment. Because of the transition to a capitalistic system individuals become more prone to short-term gratification and

gain-seeking behaviour (Lindenberg, 2025). In this thesis, this mechanism is used to interpret changes in the relationship between institutional trust and rule compliance over time, before and after Bulgaria's accession into the EU. Hypothesis 1 summarizes:

Hypothesis 1: *“Lower levels of institutional trust are associated with lower levels of normative rule-following.”*

With the increase of economic freedom, capitalism becomes the dominant socio-economic system in which individuals are encouraged and rewarded for their opportunistic behaviour (Etienne & Schnyder, 2014). In a capitalist system where material success is emphasized, individuals are more likely to adopt hedonic and gain oriented goals. Lindenberg (2025), refers to this as a shift in social rationality where people prioritize individual needs over collective pursuit of goals. In a capitalist society where consumption of goods is prioritized to stimulate more production for the market to grow, individuals will be stimulated by this environment to focus on their self-interest. Elster (1991) notes that an ongoing dynamic is present between social norms and individual rationality, which has implications for societal behaviour. Rule compliance and normative goal frame are oftentimes not directly tied to the pursuit of outcomes, making it more difficult to sustain in environments where self-interest is structurally and culturally reinforced.

According to Etienne and Schnyder (2014) capitalism is not enough to shift the focus of goals. However, in combination with institutions and social norms, this shift can be stronger. A value orientation analysis conducted by Garvanova (2017), shows that there was a transformation within the values of Bulgarians ever since the transition, which continued and

was reinforced by the entrance of Bulgaria in the EU. Before joining the EU, group embeddedness was a predominant value of society. This indicates that individuals prioritized group well-being, indicating stronger adherence to social norms and a salient normative goal frame. After 2007, autonomy started becoming a more dominant value in Bulgarian society (Garvanova, 2017). This indicates a shift in perspective, where people move from more collectivistic values to individualistic ones. In combination with low institutional trust and high levels of systemic corruption this can perpetuate and reinforce the hedonic goal frame and normalize self-interest, especially in a society where corruption is normalized. Individuals who live in environments where corruption is a common practice may experience the normalization of corrupt behaviour, especially when this behaviour has been present for numerous years (Bicchieri & Ganegoda, 2017). Therefore, from a goal framing perspective, weakened institutional trust reinforce self-interest, while undermining rule compliance. This is due to capitalism fostering the hedonic goal frame, because in the sphere of consumption it reproduces itself through individuals spending their income, this can be achieved by pushing impulsive spending. This makes individuals more “myopic”, which also impacts the future orientation inherent to goal frame. Hypothesis 2 summarizes:

Hypothesis 2: “The relationship between institutional trust and normative rule following is moderated by Bulgaria’s accession into the EU, such that the effect of institutional trust on rule compliance is weaker after the accession.”

Methodology

An exploratory sequential mixed-method design will be used. The qualitative phase will provide context on the emergence of systemic corruption in Bulgaria and institutional changes linked to regulatory shifts. This context will inform the interpretation of findings from the quantitative phase, which draws on European Social Survey (ESS) data. The quantitative analysis will explore whether changes in institutional trust over time influence rule compliance, particularly in relation to shifts in goal salience following EU accession. A longitudinal approach will be applied to data from 2006-2023, covering Bulgaria's entry into the EU in 2007. The following section outlines the rationale behind the methods, design, procedure, and analysis used to conduct the study.

Study Design

Systemic corruption operates at multiple levels, arising from individual behavior while shaping broader institutional contexts making, mixed-method approach appropriate for the analysis. While corruption in Bulgaria has been widely studied, this research focuses on the institutional transformation following EU accession. Expert interviews provide insight into changes in corruption and institutional scene, offering essential context for interpreting quantitative findings and enhancing ecological validity.

An emergent mixed-method design was adopted (Creswell & Clark, 2011), with methodological decisions evolving throughout to support effective integration of the qualitative and quantitative data. The interviews add narrative depth, grounding the statistical relationship explored (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Despite challenges in combining differing epistemologies, this thesis follows a pragmatic approach focused on the research problem and

practical implications (Creswell, 2003). Though sometimes for philosophical ambiguity, pragmatism is well-suited for addressing complex issues like corruption. For further background on mixed method and their philosophical foundations, see Dawadi et al. (2021), Creswell and Clark (2011), and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004).

Exploratory sequential design will be used for this study, focusing on the quantitative part of the study, while using qualitative findings as context setting. This design begins with qualitative analysis, followed by quantitative analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). It offers a unique perspective by exploring institutional change and corruption patterns before and after EU accession. Rather than relying on pre-existing frameworks, the quantitative part is grounded in real world experiences of experts. This allows observed shifts in the relationship between institutional trust and rule compliance to be interpreted in the actual context.

Qualitative Inquiry

Design

To gain insight into the institutional context with the entrance of Bulgaria into the EU, a face-to-face, semi-structured interview was conducted with experts who work in the field. The semi-structured setting of this interview will ensure the interviewer to ask specific questions about the topic of interest, while considering follow up questions that might occur throughout the interview (Brinkmann, 2020). In conducting the interviews, a flexible yet focused approach was used to guide the conversation toward the study's key themes, including the hypothesis. Rather than maintaining strict neutrality, the interviewer took active role in shaping the discussion, encouraging participants to reflect on and interpret the relationship between institutional changes and systemic corruption (Brinkmann, 2020). This aligns with a constructivist perspective, where

knowledge is co-produced through the interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Roulston, 2010). A detailed interview guide is provided in Appendix A, available in both Bulgarian and English.

Sample

A purposive sampling was used to find experts from organizations, who study the phenomenon of corruption and its consequences in Bulgaria. Interviewing experts who work in the field of studying corruption ensures that they have the knowledge and can adequately provide the contextual background needed to answer the research questions posed. The experts working in this field work with their own independent data, that is not gathered from the government, which heightens the chance that they are independent agents without agenda. The experts who are interviewed work for the Centre of Study of Democracy (CSD) and the Anti-Corruption Foundation (ACF), to keep their anonymity pseudonymization will be used. The organizations were selected because of their independence of the government since they were funded by external sources and not the government.

Procedure

The two interviews were conducted in Bulgaria the organizations were firstly contacted through a phone call and then an email was sent explaining the background of the study. The first interview was conducted in the office of the CSD with a specialist in the field. The expert interviewed was a senior in the organization, which ensures richer information and specifically more contextual information about Bulgaria before and after the entrance into the EU. The second interview was held in the office of ACF, where instead of an individual interview, a

group interview took place. This gave more contextual information about Bulgaria, since the two people had expertise in different areas of corruption.

Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was used to interpret the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2022), capturing both explicit content and underlying meaning related to institutional changes following Bulgaria's EU accession. Interviews were transcribed using denaturalized approach, omitting stutters, pauses, and nonverbal cues to focus on content (Davidson, 2009) (see Appendix D). An inductive process guided the analysis: coding was data-driven, followed by broader categorization and theme development, using ATLAS.ti. This approach helped contextualize systemic corruption and institutional dynamics before and after EU accession. A positionality statement is provided in Appendix B.

Quantitative Inquiry

Design

The quantitative inquiry followed a repeated-cross-sectional correlational design, with institutional trust being the independent variable and normative motivation (as a proxy for rule compliance) as the dependent variable. Multiple rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS) for Bulgaria were utilized to examine both individual and contextual level information. All available years in which Bulgaria participated in the ESS were included in the analysis. This covers the rounds conducted in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2018, 2020, 2023 (ESS ERIC, 2018, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d, 2025). This design is appropriate to address how differences in rule compliance can be explained by differences in institutional trust. This allows the correlation of the constructs

to be observed across several nationally representative samples over time. The time component will give insight into the variation in the relationship between the two variables. In this way it can be observed what effect did the entrance of Bulgaria into the EU have. This allows the exploration of the degree to which there is an effect of institutional trust on rule following dependent on Bulgaria joining the EU. Following the GFT the model will additionally include gain and hedonic goal orientation as psychological predictors. These goals are theorized to influence compliance behaviour by interacting with the capitalist dynamic created by the system. Therefore, allowing to test whether rule following is shaped not only by institutional trust but also by individual motivational frames. Moreover, gain and hedonic motivation will also be included as moderators to examine whether they condition the effect of institutional trust on compliance. This approach will enable the analysis of potential interaction effects, highlighting how the strength or direction of the relationship between institutional trust and rule compliance may vary depending on an individual's goal orientation. Additionally, a few control variables will help examine clearer the relation between institutional trust and rule compliance. Age, socioeconomic status, and region will be added as covariates to account for structural and demographic variation that might influence the relationship. All rounds of the ESS apply appropriate design to ensure representativeness of the population and comparability between the rounds (Lynn et al., 2007).

Sample

The same method of sampling process had been used throughout the years (ESS ERIC, 2018, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d, 2025). The process consisted of firstly, researchers divided Bulgaria into groups based on location and type of place (village, city, province). Following this

they defined some regions as “control regions”. They used the control regions to select a random sample from them using proportional probability to the number of residents aged 15 and above. Secondly, several households were selected from the control region, again using population size. The last stage consisted of selecting one individual per household using “the last birthday method”. The response rate over the years ranged from 64,5% to 81,4%, with the lowest one in 2006 and the highest one in 2010. The combination of all the years leads to a final sample of 13240 observations. The samples throughout the years range from 1400 to 2718. The sample population is divided into cohorts based on the year that the survey took place. Demographics describing the population per year are included in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive variables broken down by ESS round

	ESS 3	ESS 4	ESS 5	ESS 6	ESS 9	ESS 10	ESS 11
	2006	2008	2010	2012	2018	2020	2023
Age	50	51.8	53.4	54	54.6	52.7	52.4
% of women	61	56.1	56.3	57.6	55.6	52.8	52.5
% coming from Big City	33.6	30.2	31.2	31.0	32.4	35.4	35.8
N	1400	2230	2434	2260	2198	2718	2239

Note. The values given are the means except with % of women (which indicates the percentage of women in the sample) and % coming from the Big City (Defined as the top 3 cities in Bulgaria Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv).

Instruments and Procedure

The ESS ensures content validity through expert reviews and piloting. Pilot studies help identify potential issues with the test allowing for refinement, which increases both validity and reliability. The design process and collaboration between scientists ensures clear and relevant questionnaires across countries. Furthermore, full documentation is made publicly available to support transparency. Data was collected using face-to-face interviews. Interviews were conducted in varied settings to have a representative sample. Any potential attrition sources were considered (e.g. noncompliance, dropout), since they can introduce bias and impact generalizability.

Measurements

The main variables will be operationalized through a combination of individual items from the ESS.

Human values. To explore the motivational orientation, human values will be used as a proxy for GFT. The items were developed by S. Schwartz to understand the moral values of participants (*Findings From the Human Values Scale*, 2023). The scale includes 21 items, measured on a 6-point scale, where 1 indicates “Very much like me” and 6 “Not like me at all”. Three subscales were created to reflect normative (e.g. “Important to do what is told and follow rules”), gain (e.g. “Important to be successful and that people recognize achievements”), and hedonic (e.g. “Important to seek fun and things that give pleasure”) goal frames for full list of items see Appendix C. Each subscale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, normative ($\alpha = .8$), gain ($\alpha = .7$), and hedonic ($\alpha = .9$).

Institutional trust. Institutional trust is defined as a combination of four different variables. The four variables are: trust in the legal system, trust in police, trust in politicians, and trust in the country's parliament. Each variable is scored on a scale from 0 (no trust at all) till 10 (complete trust). The new variable of institutional trust is the mean of the four values combined therefore also ranging from 0 to 10. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha=0.9$).

Covariates and Demographics. Age and region will be used as control variables. Age may influence the relationship as older participants have lived through the accession of Bulgaria into the EU firsthand, potentially shaping their perception and attitudes differently compared to younger individuals. Secondly, region might influence the opportunities people get, therefore shaping their morals. The other demographic variable that will describe the sample is gender (see Table 1).

Statistical analysis

The analysis will examine the effect sizes and statistical significance of the relationship between the key variables across the different ESS rounds. Regression models will be employed for each year to assess changes over time, while controlling for age and region. Effect sizes will give insight into the strength of the relationship, while p-values will show the statistical significance. Time series trends will be explored to see whether the observed effects are consistent, increase or decrease over time. Interaction plots will visualize the moderation slopes to interpret the moderation effect.

Results

Qualitative Inquiry

Five core themes were identified that capture the institutional context and pattern of corruption before and after Bulgaria's entry into the EU. The themes are interconnected with each other and contribute to the overall context of Bulgaria. The themes are the following:

Historical and Political context, Culture, Identity and Social Values, Corruption Dynamics and Reform Pathways, Institutional Context and Governance, International and EU influence.

Theme 1: Historical and Political context

The first theme centres around the historical context of Bulgaria which plays a crucial role in the subsequent evolution of the current political environment and corruption dynamics within the country. This theme consists of the following categories: *Historical context, Description of socialist structures left from communist times, Bulgarian current politics, Lack of morally trustworthy successors.*

The interviewee emphasized the deep Russophile affinity that Bulgarians experience because of the belief that they liberated us from the Ottoman empire, however, with the coup d'état on 9th of September which marked the communist rule in Bulgaria. The consequences are reflected in the following excerpt:

Interview 2: “(...) because here the elites, those who were called bourgeois elites, they are slaughtered, slaughtered, destroyed after September 9th, and a large part of the left-wing intelligentsia has died around them.”

As reflected in both interviews, corruption took roots during the communist regime and the transition from planned economy:

Interview 2: “(...) *if you want to buy (...) something there was nowhere to be found (...) you resort to people who are intermediaries (...) and you add some money there (...) the intermediaries profit.*”

Interview 1: “(...) *All enterprises that were state-owned were privatized (...) the same people who had political connections, that is, those who had been strong since the time of communism (...) they received the state-owned enterprises from the privatization, and they continue to have this wealth to this day. Now they may have developed it into a legal or non-legal business, use it for political or economic influence, make investments, (...) But the point is that people are the same, yes, that is, the initially distributed wealth remains in those people who do not have integrity.*”

This, therefore, is reflected in the state of the current politics and the lack of trustworthy successors in the case of political changes in the country:

Interview 2: “(...) *what is happening at the moment, the severe corruption, which is especially at the highest levels of power, and is in total synergy with the large companies created by the cracks in the former State Security (DANS) and the Communist Party (...)*”

Interview 1: “ (...) *we need leaders who have integrity, but they are missing. Meaning, even if those protests overthrow the government, what does it matter who will take the reins.*”

Altogether, the historical legacy starting from the ties with Russia and suppression of the intelligentsia, through the roots of corruption taking place in communist times which transferred through the transition period and continue to be part of the political landscape to this day, have profoundly shaped the systemic corruption found in the country.

Theme 2: Culture, Identity and Social Values

The second theme emerged through both interviews and played an integral part in explaining why corruption is to this extent entrenched in the country. This theme emerged through the following categories: characteristics of Bulgarians, cultural and civic value erosion, and perception of Bulgarians.

As emphasized through both interviews the national psychology of the people plays a profound role:

Interview 1: “(...) *it can start with the national psychology (...) not all people learn from childhood and from their education, that they should not do certain things, and that they must comply with the laws.*”

Interview 2: “(...) *And in the end, everyone becomes vicious, and the conclusion is that there was and is a natural environment and it is in the mentality of people.*”

The second category reflects the public discontent from civic responsibility shaped by disinformation, internalized authoritarian sympathies, while also experiencing a deep loss of solidarity and critical thinking.

Interview 2: “(...) *but the essence is that if we have to make the diagnosis at the moment, it means that the Bulgarian is almost completely amputated by a sense of solidarity.*”

The common perceptions people hold in Bulgaria, additionally, reflects the ingrained distrust they have in the institutions nowadays, this can be seen through the following quote:

Interview 2: “(...) *They feel harmed, artificially kept at the bottom, poor, and because it is a poor country (...) Bulgaria, by the way, is a record holder in terms of money kept under mattresses.*”

Therefore, the characteristics of the cultural identity of the Bulgarian show how the deeply rooted corruption in Bulgaria is reinforced by a national psychology marked by wakened civic values, widespread distrust in institutions, and loss of solidarity and organization all of which contribute to the ongoing normalization of illicit activity.

Theme 3: Corruption Dynamics and Reform Pathways

Throughout both interviews common corruption dynamics and potential reform pathways emerged through a few categories: characteristics of corruption in Bulgaria, economic insecurity important contributor for corruption, examples of corruption schemes, and suggestions for

battling corruption. From both interviews the main characteristics of the corruption in Bulgaria that emerged were historical entrenchment, systemic, endemic, politically protected, structurally self-enforcing, and institutionally embedded. This is shown through the following excerpts:

Interview 2: *“The basis of the corruption pyramid is very different than, for example, in Western Europe (...) big problem is that they do not fully understand it, they simply cannot imagine this endemic corruption.”*

Interview 1: *“(...) We really have only one mayor so far who has been imprisoned, we don't have another high-ranking person. Unlike Romania, where they can form an entire government in prison.”*

While the characteristics describe quite well the entrenched corruption into the system, economic insecurity is seen as a contributing factor for corruption:

Interview 2: *“(...) the year 89-90 comes and we are just moving towards a market economy, although the deficits are decreasing, people are still poor, they are still currently the poorest in the European Union (...) but so, poverty itself is not a vice, but it is, as we are told, it generates vices.”*

To make it more concrete different kinds of corruption are shown even through examples from the interviews:

Interview 1: “(...) *it is easy to bribe in customs, and although there are cameras, they know where the cameras are looking, they just go to some bush in the back, where there are no cameras, you can always quietly avoid the technology.*”

Interview 2: “(...) *These are ours, brother-in-law, that cousin, and that one, not only to find them a job, and so you provide yourself with voters, by putting the aunt of the aunt, these are whole communities that work for you, on some state or municipal job, and they are loyal to the grave.*”

As a suggestion to have some reforms in place the experts underscored the importance of prevention starting from an early age and additionally tools such as risk monitoring and impact indicators.

Interview 1: “(...) *from kindergarten we should start talking about ethics, what is right, what is wrong. When one child takes the toy of the other child to tell him the mother, it is not good to steal.*”

Corruption in Bulgaria was described as embedded and institutionally entrenched where economic insecurity contributing to corrupt practices, while suggested reforms focus on prevention from an early age and systemic monitoring.

Theme 4: Institutional Context and Governance

The fourth theme that emerged through the interviews was the institutional context and governance of Bulgaria. This theme consisted of four categories that describe the context: characteristics of institutional infrastructure, institutional dysfunction, structural barriers to effective anti-corruption, unreliable data coming out of official institutions.

Firstly, the experts through both interviews mentioned some characteristics of the institutional infrastructure, they emphasized that the lack of unified registers, insufficient investigative capacity, and deep public distrust in institutions significantly hinder efforts to uncover and address systemic corruption in Bulgaria.

Interview 1: “(...) *all the registers in Bulgaria need to be merged into one register, which is not the case now. At the moment the bulstat of the register of cars, the register of boats, the agricultural register are separate (...)*”

Interview 2: “(...) *here there is a critically low trust in the authorities, especially in the executive branch a little more towards the president, because he is by definition a majority vote, after all, a choice for one person is not a party.*”

Secondly, they described the institutional dysfunction and dissatisfaction found in the country mainly coming from nepotism and the lack of qualified people to work in public institutions.

Interview 2: “(...) *a person when he encounters any public institution, be it healthcare, police, because you have theft, he faces either ignorance and incompetence because of the negative long-term selection, merit-based people are not put there.*”

Thirdly, the government faces structural barriers to effective anti-corruption measures this is often due to a lack of oversight, punishment and resources put into anti-corruption investigations.

Interview 1: “(...) *we think we can do everything without punishment. And from there, people are starting to see an opportunity to benefit.*”

Interview 2: “(...) *The biggest problem is that the system allows absolutely incompetent and even harmful people to occupy key positions, even if they are not corrupt, they are permeable*”

Lastly, a subcategory that emerged through the second interview mostly, was the unreliable data that is coming out of official sources in Bulgaria. This also includes the lack of predictability in elections because of the amount of bought vote. This can be seen with the following excerpts:

Interview 2: “(...) *Because the government always gives them a powdered version, some reports, some statistics from which they will tell themselves, that it is not so bad.*”

Interview 2: “(...) *because with this bought, manipulated vote, fear, and especially in the periphery of the country, especially the countryside, it is monstrous, you cannot predict anything.*”

Overall, the theme captures the fragmented institutional infrastructure, dysfunctional institutions marked by nepotistic appointments, lack of accountability, and unreliable data, as individuals face daily experiences of incompetence from the very institutions that are meant to serve them.

Theme 5: International and EU Influence

The final theme focuses on the role of international actors and foreign influences in the Bulgarian context. Interviewees highlighted the complex relationship between domestic corruption and external actors, particularly the EU. This theme contains six categories: *differences with other countries, foreign politics play a role in how foreign agents act in Bulgaria, international influences, the approach of the EU towards corruption in Bulgaria, tolerance from EU institutions for corruption, what EU brought to Bulgaria.*

Interviewees emphasized perceived differences in national attitudes and cultural approaches to corruption between Bulgaria and other countries. This theme was also mentioned in the first interview, where it was noted that Bulgaria’s extensive body of anti-corruption legislation stands in contrast to the more concise legal framework found in countries like those in Scandinavia, where such laws may span only a single page. Additionally, there was a concern about strategic foreign influence, especially from authoritarian states like Russia, as it was

mentioned in the first interview that in the last fifteen years there was an increase in state capture.

EU's role emerged as central in both interviews. Initially EU accession brought hope for democracy, prosperity, and the rule of law, however, a wave of disappointment followed by the lack of real systemic change and persistent inequalities. The increased digitalization helped reduce administrative corruption. Despite the EU having tools to sanction corruption, like suspending funds, these are rarely used. Some EU leaders are viewed as either complicit or naïve, with examples cited of former officials joining corrupt or controversial organizations. This perceived hypocrisy weakens the EU's credibility, making it appear unable or unwilling to enforce the rule of law in Bulgaria. This is also reflected in the following quote:

Interview 2: “(...) *Given this background, Europe is associated with corruption, because it has failed to enforce the rule of law in Bulgaria with all its mechanisms.*”

The EU approach to corruption in Bulgaria is viewed as bureaucratic, ineffective, and hypocritical. Although it provides funding and recommendations, it fails to impose real consequences. Interviewees express how EU leaders publicly support or ignore known corruption figures, like Borisov and Peevski. This affiliation with such figures reinforces the perception that EU tolerates or even enables corruption, ultimately damaging its authority in Bulgaria. This is also reflected in the following quote:

Interview 2: “(...) *when the leaders of the European Union come and pat these sanctioned for corruption persons from the world and from our colleagues and journalists, revelations, people say okay EU is corruption, because it tolerates corruption.*”

This theme reveals a disillusionment with international actors who were supposed to offer external help to the ongoing problems. To summarize some insight from the second interview, Table 2 presents words and phrases commonly used to describe the situation in Bulgaria.

Table 2

Typical Bulgarian phrases used during the second interview to describe the context.

Original quote	Literal translation in English	Meaning
"те я свариха жабата през 89"	They boiled the frog бацк ин 89	The failure in the system already comes from the post-communist transition.
"Копейките"	Russophiles	A mocking nickname for the supporters of Russia. Drawing from "kopeyka" smallest coin in Russia.
"И сега сме на някакъв вододел"	And now we are at some watershed	A moment of potential change
"шуробаджанащина"	brother-in-law	Unique culturally specific word used to describe nepotism.
"пари, държани под дюшеци"	Money kept under the mattress	Shows the deep entrenched mistrust.
"привикване и затъпяване и безкритичност на хората"	Habituation, dullness, and uncriticalness of people	Characteristics of Bulgarians
"мародери, крадци, чорбаджии, изедници"	Looters, thieves, rich owners, robbers	Greed, theft and exploitation present.
"ендемична корупция"	Endemic corruption	Characteristic of the corruption
"генезиса"	Genesis	Characteristic of the corruption
"пандемия"	Pandemic	Characteristic of the corruption
"сиво покрито"	Grey and hidden	Characteristic of the communism

Quantitative Inquiry

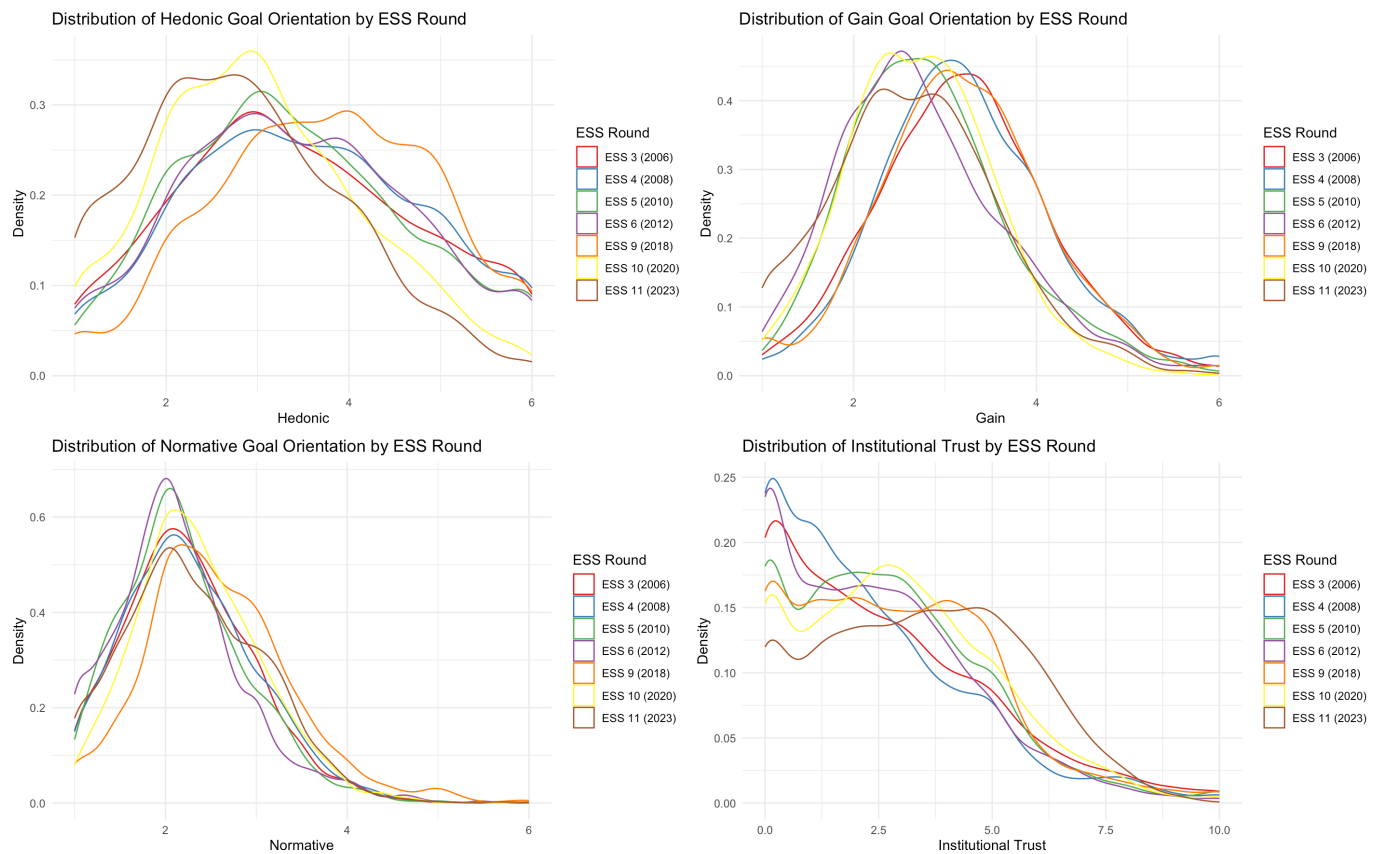
Descriptives of the data.

In this section the results of the quantitative inquiry using data from the ESS rounds available will be presented. Firstly, tables for each round including the descriptive statistics and correlations were computed for the main variables used in the analysis (see Appendix E). The analysis was performed separately for each round as well to capture changes over time. Pearson correlations were computed among the main variables: normative, gain, hedonic, institutional trust, and age. Across all rounds, hedonic and gain values show a strong positive correlation ($r=0.61$ to $r=0.71$, $p<0.01$), suggesting an association. Correlations with the scale for norm compliance are consistently positive and weak to moderate, with gain ($r=0.21$ to $r=0.47$, $p<0.01$), while institutional trust had weak correlations with all the other variables. Age showed moderate positive correlations with hedonic values and gain across the rounds, however, weak or low negative correlations with normative and institutional trust values (see Table 1-7, Appendix E). The correlation between hedonic and gain values supports the theorized overlap of the underlying goal frames, while the weak correlation with institutional trust suggests its distinct role in the model. Missingness per variable was below 3% in most rounds, only in round 9 there were variables that had up to 7.4% missingness, which was treated with listwise deletion. Outliers were not relevant for these variables since they are calculated on a scale and all detected outliers fall within the scale. The only relevant variable to detect outliers was age, where none were detected. A distribution of the density of the main variables through the rounds can be seen in Figure 1. The scores on the variable measuring the salience of the hedonic goal frame show a relatively normal distribution, generally centred between 3 and 4 across rounds, some of the curves differ in skewness and highness especially round 9-11. The scores measuring gain show a

consistently unidimensional distribution, with peaks around 2 and 3 across rounds. The variable for normative orientation is more skewed to the right, with the peaks clustering around 2, indicating that most respondents score low on this dimension. Trust in institution scores show variation and irregularity. This suggests greater individual inter-individual variability in institutional trust.

Figure 1

Density plots for main variables used for analysis



Note. Density plots illustrate the estimates of scale scores across rounds. Higher scores indicate stronger endorsement of the respective values.

Figure 2 shows institutional trust scores over the different rounds of the ESS. The overall trend is an increase by one point from 2006 to 2023, which suggests some improvement after joining the EU, however, in absolute terms the score of 3.5/10 in 2023 remains very low.

Figure 2

Institutional trust over the years for each ESS round.

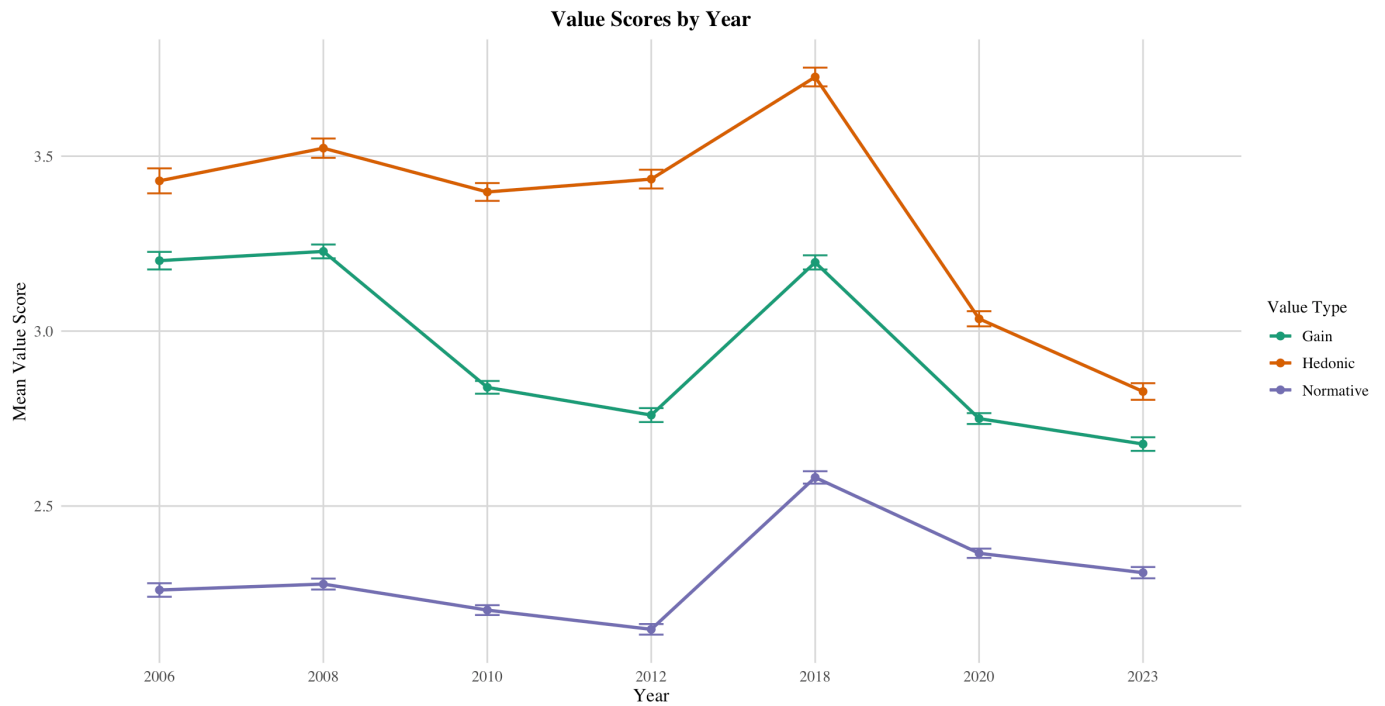


Note. Confidence intervals are displayed for each year.

Figure 3 shows the variables for gain, hedonic, and normative orientation over the different rounds, with normative being the lowest in all rounds and hedonic being the highest. Compared to 2006, norm compliance went up, however hedonic and gain decreased. It can be observed that before the transition gain and hedonic values were already high, however after 2006 the distance between the three goal frames decreased.

Figure 3

Gain, Hedonic, and Normative values over the ESS rounds.



Note. Confidence intervals are displayed for each year.

Assumption checks.

Before testing the hypothesis, several assumptions were checked. The key assumptions examined for each model were linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and independence of errors. Multicollinearity was examined as well because of the high correlation between some of the variables. The figures used to examine the assumptions were comparable with each other for

every round. Overall, most of the assumptions seem to be met in the models. A pattern that appears is a slight funnel shape in the scatter plot for fitted values versus standardized residuals, this indicates a slight violation of the heteroscedasticity assumption, however keeping in mind that we have a large sample size. The assumption of normality seems too also be slightly violated in the edges of the Q-Q plot. Even though variable were correlated, after centring then multicollinearity seems to not be an issue with $VIF < 2.5$ for all variables in all models. With some precaution about the homoscedasticity assumption, we can continue the analysis.

Hypothesis testing

For each round of the ESS a linear regression model was constructed predicting normative motivation from the centred variables of institutional trust, gain, and hedonic, including two interaction terms (trust x hedonic and trust x gain), while controlling for age and region. Table 8 (see Appendix E) shows the standardized regression coefficients and zero-order correlation for the predictors, interactions, and covariates across the seven waves of the ESS. The gain value showed a moderate positive effect on normative motivation across all rounds, with *beta* coefficients ranging from [0.31, 0.54] and ($p < 0.01$). Hedonic motivation and institutional trust had more variability and weaker effects in the results. Hedonic motivation did show a negative statistically significant influence on normative motivation in the later rounds (9-10). While institutional trust showed a negative correlation (*beta* = -0.09, $r = -0.11$, $p < 0.01$) with the normative scale in round 10. Interaction effects between institutional trust and gain were mostly negative and significant from round 4 onwards, with *beta* values ranging between [-0.05, -0.09] with ($p < 0.01$), indicating that gain increasingly moderated the effect of institutional trust over time. Meanwhile the interaction between institutional trust and hedonic, also negative, became

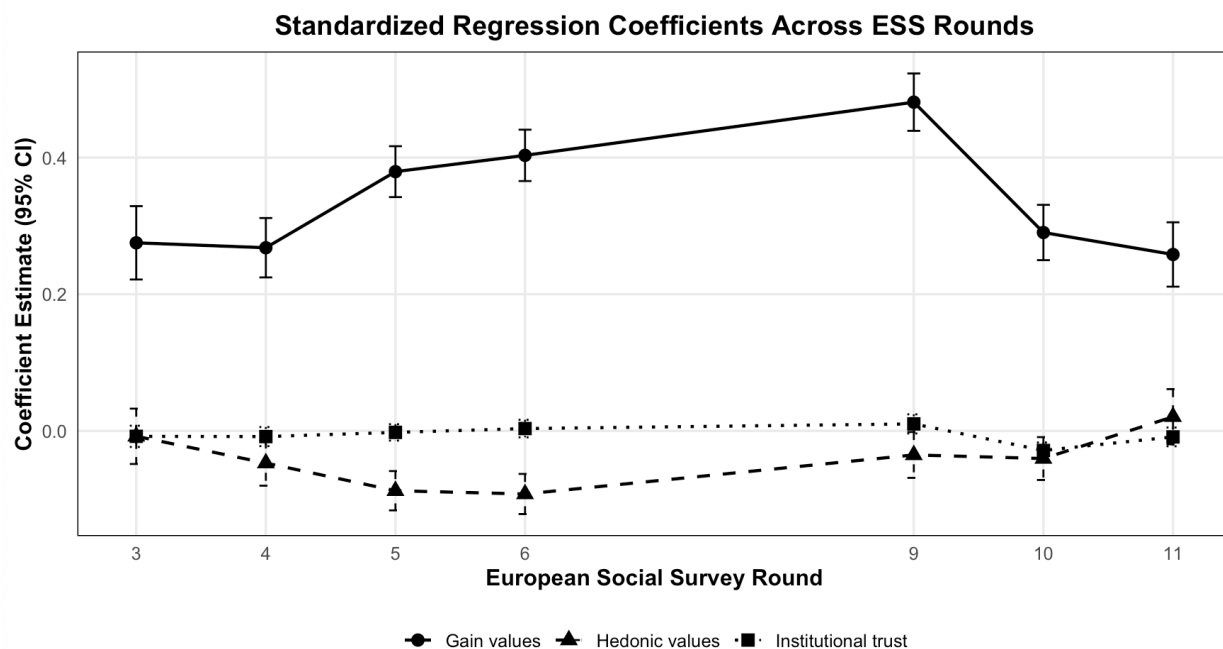
more pronounced and statistically significant in later rounds, particularly in round 10 ($\beta = -0.07$, $r = -0.09$, $p < 0.01$) and 11 ($\beta = -0.26$, $r = -0.18$, $p < 0.01$).

Age consistently shows significant negative correlation with normative motivation, while regional effects varied across time. This suggests that older individuals tend to report lower levels of normative goal salience. The direction of the relationship between region and normative motivation varies by round, therefore there is no stable influence on normative goal salience when controlling for region.

Figure 4 summarizes the results for the regression coefficients across ESS rounds, showing the continuous positive coefficients of gain, the negative ones for hedonic and the small negative effect institutional trust has on the normative scale for round 10.

Figure 4

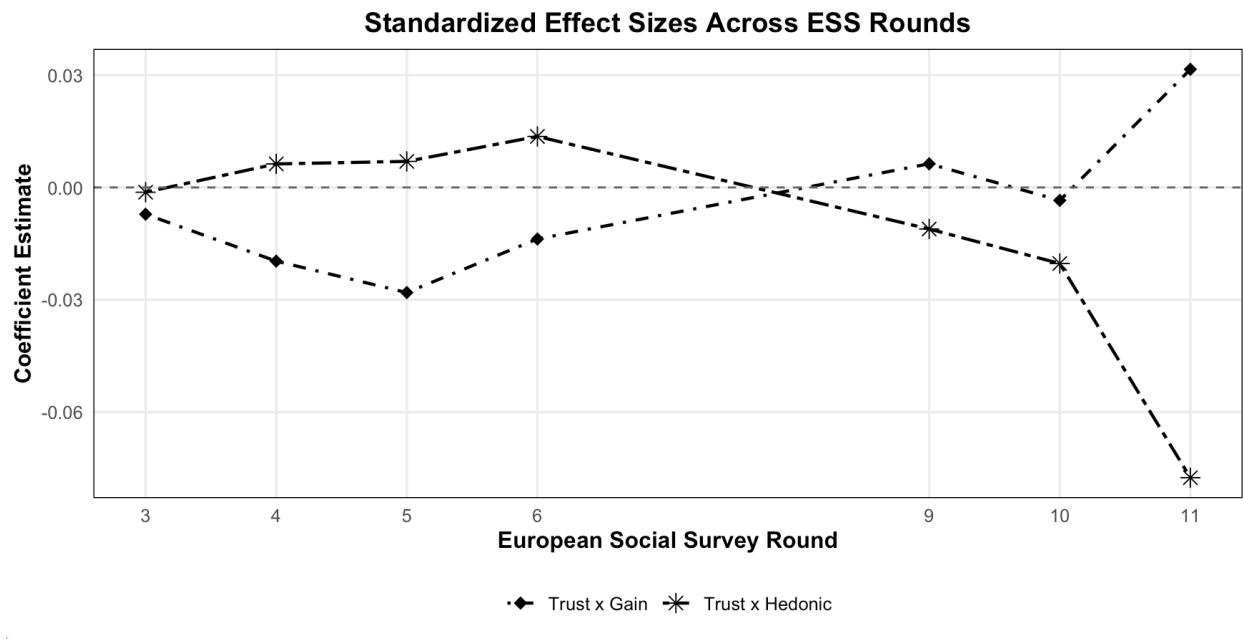
Standardized Regression Coefficients for main predictors of norm compliance



For the interaction it can be seen from the coefficients that for rounds 3-6 trust x hedonic has a positive effect on the normative scale, while for round 9-11 it has a negative effect. The opposite is observed for institutional trust x gain, while for rounds 3-6 it is negative, the coefficient becomes positive for rounds 9 and 11 (see Figure 5). Additionally, the predicted effect of joining the EU can be observed, namely that the gain and hedonic orientation play a more effective role in later rounds, but as the figure shows there are nuances to this relationship the two have the opposite effects from positive becoming negative for trust x hedonic, and vice versa for trust x gain.

Figure 5

Standardized Regression Coefficients for interaction effect

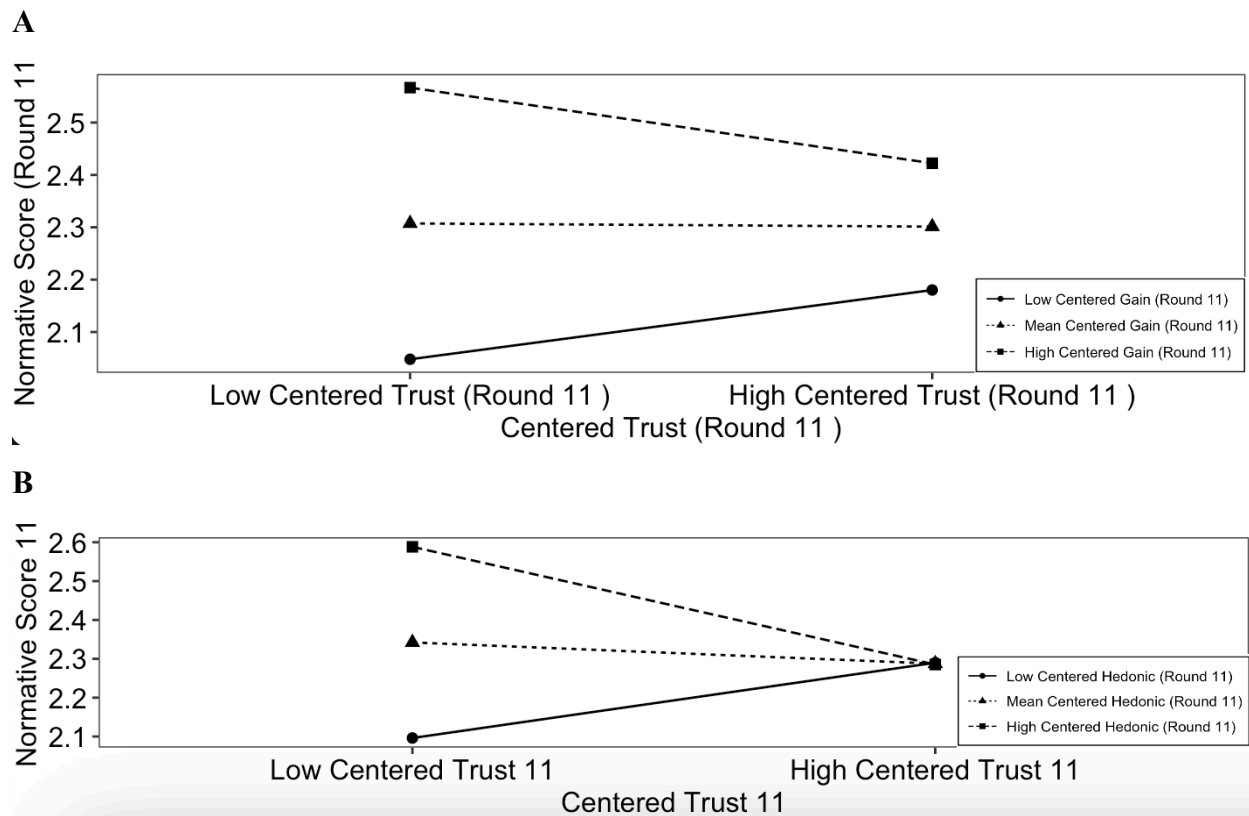


To further examine the moderation effects, interaction plots were created for better interpretation. In Figure 6 interaction effects are displayed for the moderation effect of hedonic and gain. The interaction shows that when gain is high and institutional trust is low, normative

orientation is high. In contrast, when gain is high and institutional trust is high, normative orientation is lower. For low gain, normative orientation is lower when institutional trust is low and increase slightly when institutional trust is high (see Figure 6A). The interaction pattern for hedonic mirrors this with steeper slopes (see Figure 6B). The interaction patterns are consistent across most rounds, apart from Rounds 6 and 9, where the slopes for high gain and high hedonic values are reversed. The main variation across rounds lies in the steepness of the slopes, with later rounds (10 and 11) showing steeper interactions compared to earlier rounds (3 and 4).

Figure 6

Interaction effects for Round 11 (A) Gain x Trust (B) Gain x Hedonic



Note. Low centred hedonic shows the -1SD from the mean for the centred variable of hedonic.

High centred hedonic represents +1SD from the mean for the centred variable of hedonic. Low trust represents -1SD from the mean, while high trust represents +1SD from the mean.

These results provide some insights about the hypotheses. The first hypothesis, which predicted lower levels of institutional trust to be associated with lower levels of normative goal orientation is not supported by the data. Taken over the whole period, there seems to be no relationship between trust and norm compliance. Instead, the only negative significant relationship found was in Round 10. This contradicts the direction of the hypothesis, which suggests that higher trust is associated with lower normative values. The second hypothesis about the moderation of Bulgaria's accession into the EU between institutional trust and normative motivation, is partially supported. There is a moderating effect of the gain goal orientation after Round 4 (2008) that weakens the relationship between institutional trust and normative values. For the last two Rounds of the ESS the same holds also for the moderating effect of the hedonic goal on relationship between institutional trust and normative values, hedonic values weaken this relationship.

Discussion

This thesis was set to explore the persistent trend of high levels of corruption and low levels of institutional trust in Bulgaria despite the accession into the EU, which was expected to bring stricter applied rule of law and transparency. For this purpose, a micro level approach was undertaken to capture the nuances of individuals in a system change of a country which has experienced endemic corruption through the years. Goal Framing Theory (GFT) was used as a framework to examine the change to a more capitalistic dynamic, which the EU brought with the increased economic freedom. As the results of the first qualitative analysis show, Bulgaria has deeply rooted historical and political roots where corruption has grown into an endemic issue and despite outside interventions, current situation shows no improvement. When analysed within

this context, the quantitative analysis becomes more nuanced, as it allows for the examination of how systemic corruption and institutional mistrust shape individual level motivations and behaviours over time. The first hypothesis of this study was not supported by the data, however, the second one was supported with some interesting nuances.

Theoretical Implications

GFT suggests that a normative orientation or goal frame, which drives individuals to act in accordance with social and moral norms, can be influenced by institutional legitimacy (Etienne, 2011). This thesis hypothesized that in the context of Bulgaria low levels of institutional trust will predict low levels of normative goal orientation. Normative goal orientation in this context was used as a proxy for rule compliance, which relates to corruption behaviour. Firstly, drawing some insights from the qualitative data can help contextualize the results found in the quantitative analysis. As described by experts in Bulgaria there is a fragmented institutional infrastructure, which is characterized by disjoint public registers, poor investigative capacity, nepotism, and deep public mistrust. These experiences point to a lack of institutional coherence and reliability. This can cause individuals to believe that compliance with the rules will not serve a common goal. This is also reflected in the quantitative analysis where normative goal orientation is on average the lowest from the three over the years. Contrary to the first hypothesis, the quantitative results did not show positive association between institutional trust and normative goal orientation. In Round 10 (2020) the relationship between the variables even indicated that higher trust correlated with weaker normative orientation. Considering the context, in a setting where corruption is perceived as endemic individuals might sever the concept of trust in institutions and moral obligations. As Jha et al. (2023) explain there is a

“legitimacy trap”, where systemic corruption erodes both institutional legitimacy and the effectiveness of compliance efforts. Therefore, even when some trust is reported it might not reflect genuine confidence in legitimacy or fairness. In this way trust can be superficial and fail to activate the normative goal orientation. In the absence of the normative goal orientation, other motivations such as gain and hedonic might become more dominant.

Gain goal orientation in the model did prove to be a significant predictor for normative motivation. This means that individuals with a stronger gain orientation tend to be more likely to comply to norms. As described by the experts in the qualitative analysis, there is a lack of solidarity in Bulgarians, this can point to people believing that they can only rely on themselves. When the gain orientation is dominant in such a context, people might take a more pragmatic approach and believe that systemic rule-breaking is not sustainable for realizing their long-term personal goals. With the entrance of Bulgaria in the EU more economic opportunities have presented themselves, where individuals can seek economic liberty and advancement without being dependent on the government that they do not trust. On the other hand, the consistent negative relationship observed between hedonic orientation and normative orientation, signals that individuals who seek immediate pleasure are not motivated by normative concerns, which would lead to lower rule compliance. In the Bulgarian context as highlighted by experts the widespread mistrust and years of long-standing poverty and institutional neglect can be interpreted not only as a moral vice but as an adaptive response to the new system. According to Lindenberg (2025) this shift to a more capitalistic dynamic fosters a change in social rationality, from a normative-based collective orientation to one that is centred around individual outcomes. Additionally, as observed in Figure 3, the mean values for gain and hedonic orientation have declined from 2006 to 2023. This can indicate that gain and hedonic were already strong before

the accession into the EU, possibly due to the systemic corruption that was present in the country even before that, citizens may have been forced on making ends meet and realizing their immediate needs. When stronger capitalistic cues came, it pushed the three goal frames closer to each other, implying that changes in contextual and situational cues may have much stronger effect to effectuate frame switch.

The accession into the EU was seen by many Bulgarians as a turning point, a promise of institutional transparency, economic opportunity, and stricter rule of law. However, qualitative findings suggest that this gradually turned into disillusionment, because they failed to dismantle the entrenched corruption. Tools, which help this reinforcement of the promise such as sanctions and withholding funds, are rarely used. There is an observed difference in the significance of the moderation of gain and hedonic values from the first rounds of the ESS especially in the last two rounds of the ESS, therefore the second hypothesis is partially supported, although interpretation is more nuanced than expected. The disillusionment can help explain the results of the quantitative data, as seen by the interaction effect when gain motivation is high but institutional trust is low individuals show higher normative motivation, possibly as a safeguard. In environments where institutions are not trusted to act fairly, people may comply with rules not out of trust, but out of self-protection. Similar pattern holds for the hedonic variable. This might be due to a third unaccounted variation coming from a variable such as socioeconomic status. Individuals with lower socioeconomic status may perceive greater personal risk in institutional failure, which can be reinforced by stricter rule compliance. Additionally, the way the hedonic items were asked in the questionnaire (see Appendix C) might reflect future orientation, which will be interpreted differently depending on life circumstances. What can also be observed from

the interaction effect is that trust tempers the effect of hedonic and gain orientation, therefore institutional trust reduces the effect these orientations have on the normative orientation.

The first research question can be answered from the qualitative analysis, which shows the historical roots of the systemic corruption and capture the specific characteristics of Bulgarians such as national psychology, culture, and lack of solidarity as a reason for the perpetuation of corruption. This is mixed with institutional facilities who hire people not based on merit but nepotism and lack of investigative power and capacity from the state. The political scene, which has been the consisting of similar actors for years, describes the institutional context before and after the entrance of Bulgaria in the EU. This and the quantitative analysis contribute with answering the second research question. The influence of institutional trust on rule compliance, proxied by normative goal orientation, is to some extent dependent on the post-accession into the EU. Although more nuanced than expected, in later rounds the moderating factors of gain and hedonic did show to be significant.

Policy Implications

As indicated in the qualitative results by experts the entrenched corruption found in institutions, lack of ethical behaviour from an early age, and solidarity among people contributes to the low morale in the country. This is also shown in the low normative goal orientation found through the years in the quantitative analysis. This calls for policies to shift their focus and not only include macro-centred preventions but also take into consideration individual level variables. As reported by Collier (2000), raising moral norms is an important part of having effective anti-corruption strategies. This is also supported by the low salience of the normative goal frame in Bulgaria. As indicated by Lindenberg and Steg (2007), when this frame is weak

people might not be concerned with following social expectations and complying to rules. This suggests that rising moral and changing the norm in the country is equally important as including risk monitoring interventions and policies.

Limitations

A few limitations are worth acknowledging. Firstly, the data used from the ESS does not include multiple years before joining the EU. This limits the ability to make clear predictions about the specific effects that joining the EU had on institutional trust and rule compliance. Especially, when it comes to observing effects for the variables included in the GFT, as it is unclear whether the found effect was present in the years before 2007. Without a longer pre-accession baseline it's hard to assess the true magnitude that EU had on rule compliance in Bulgaria, as other social or political developments might also play a role in the relationship. Secondly, using normative goal frame as a proxy for rule compliance and corruption behaviour presents some challenges, as it captures individual's motivation to follow social norms rather than direct measures of corruption or rule-breaking. This might also be seen as a strength of the study because corruption is inherently a hidden act, therefore direct observation might be difficult. However, normative orientation might not fully reflect real world behaviours, influenced by opportunities or external pressure. Thirdly, while the thesis integrates qualitative findings the number of expert interviews is limited, and their perspective may not capture the full range of experiences across different groups. As already observed the different experts focused on different aspects of the context in Bulgaria, therefore more interviews will enrich the context.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies applying the same framework in similar context should consider theoretical refinement of the GFT, to better fit transitional economies. It becomes clear that the straightforward application of GFT that was used does not hold in the expected way. One possible reinterpretation is that the experience of scarcity and systemic unreliability during the socialist period may have fostered a short-term orientation driven by the need to secure both basic and non-basic consumption goods. This is also seen in the former German Democratic Republic, where access to consumer goods often depended on weak social ties that enabled participation in black market exchanges (Völker & Flap, 2001). Similar patterns were also described in the Bulgarian context by experts during the interviews. This points to interesting interpretations regarding the interaction between social values and market dynamics. A recent study by Harris et al. (2022) found a humanizing effect of market interaction, contrary to expectations. This calls for a more nuanced approach of market transitions and interactions between human values and rule compliance.

Conclusion

Taking everything into consideration, the persistent systemic corruption in Bulgaria has left long lasting effects on the country. While Bulgaria's EU accession initially raised hope for stronger institutions and stricter rule of law, current statistics show the persistent nature of corruption in Bulgaria and the failure to implement these measures. In this setting, the thesis set out to examine how lowered institutional trust interacts with goal framing processes, using the salience of a normative orientation as a proxy for rule compliance. Normative motivation was generally low and did not consistently covary with institutional trust. In one of the seven

measurement waves, higher trust was even associated with lower normative orientation. This could have been due to “legitimacy trap” rather than genuine rule compliance. Gain orientation was positively associated with normative motivation indicating that self-protective rule compliance might be a pragmatic strategy in a corrupt system, given the context of Bulgaria revealed by experts. Revealing the deeply entrenched mistrust in institutions and long-lasting endemic corruption ruled by nepotism and lack of punishment. Hedonic orientation consistently predicted lower normative orientation, aligning with the idea that short term gratification undermines norm motivation, especially in settings with weak institutions. Although a significant moderation effect was found after the accession into the EU, a detailed inspection of the interaction plots shows a mixed picture that is partially consistent with the predicted effects and partially contradicts them. Taken together, the findings show that in the context of endemic corruption, normative goal orientation is shaped less by institutional legitimacy and more by pragmatic and strategic concerns like self-protection and gain. This calls for a more nuanced understanding of rule compliance in endemically corrupt settings.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

1. Introduction:
 - a. Introducing myself and my background.
 - b. Introducing the purpose of the study and the main research problem I am interested in and why I am interested in studying corruption.
 - c. Ensure they understand that their data will be protected and anonymized.
 - d. Ask about the background of the participant, what is their specific expertise (How did he get into this kind of field...etc)
2. Context Exploration:
 - a. Can you describe the context in Bulgaria and why is this an environment where corruption has become so prevalent?
 - b. Would you describe the corruption in Bulgaria as a systemic issue?
 - c. Can you describe the current efforts of the government to tackle corruption?
 - d. How does the political instability in recent years affected the perceptions of corruption?
3. Evolution of Corruption:
 - a. How has corruption evolved since Bulgaria's post-communist transition?
 - b. What are the primary factors that embed corruption within public institutions?
 - c. Has corruption changed before and after the entence of Bulgaria in the EU?
 - i. If yes, what are the differences that you observed before and after?
4. Impact of EU:
 - a. In what ways did economic freedom and integration into the EU market alter opportunities for corruption?
 - b. In what ways did the acessoin of Bulgaria into the EU influence corruptionin dynamics?
 - c. Have anti-corruption measures increased perceived uncertainty for those involved in corrupt practices?
5. Conectioin between corruption and trust:
 - a. How is corruption coonected to the low institutioonal trust in Bulgaria?
 - b. Are there specific cases or events that have significantly damaged or improved trust?
 - c. In your experience, what do you think is the link between corruption and institutional trust?
6. Measuring Corruption:
 - a. What are the main challenges in measuring corruption?
 - b. Do you think that there is reliable data that depicts the current state of corruption in the country?
 - c. Do you think that research such as the one I am conducting contributes to the realistic depiction of corruption in Bulgaria?
7. Recommendations:
 - a. What policy or institutional change would you recommend to reduce corruption in Bulgaria?
8. Closure:
 - a. Ensure that the interviewee can receive a transcript on request.

- b. Thank them for the participation and time invested.
- 9. Evaluative Questions (for the resercher after the interview)
 - a. Did the interviewee's responses require any changes in the way the questions were phrased during the interview?
 - b. Where there any prior assumptions that limited the flow of the conversation?

Bulgarian Version:

Ръководство за интервю:

1. Въведение:
 - a. Представяне на себе си и на моя произход.
 - b. Представяне на целта на изследването и основния изследователски проблем, който ме интересува, както и защо се интересувам от изучаването на корупцията.
 - c. Уверете се, че те разбират, че техните данни ще бъдат защитени и анонимизирани.
 - d. Попитайте за биографията на участника, какъв е неговият специфичен опит (Как е попаднал в този вид област... и т.н.)
2. Проучване на контекста:
 - a. Според вас кои морални нагласи на хората допринасят за това корупцията да се възприема като „нормална“ или „оправдана“ в дадени ситуации?
 - b. Виждате ли корупцията в България като системен проблем?
 - c. Можете ли да опишете настоящите усилия на правителството за справяне с корупцията?
 - d. Как политическата нестабилност през последните години се отрази на възприемането на корупцията?
3. Еволюция на корупцията:
 - a. Как еволюира корупцията след посткомунистическия преход в България?
 - b. Кои са основните фактори, които вкореняват корупцията в публичните институции?
 - c. Променила ли се корупцията преди и след влизането на България в ЕС?
 - i. Ако да, какви са разликите, които наблюдавате преди и след това?
4. Въздействие на ЕС:
 - a. По какъв начин икономическата свобода и интеграцията в пазара на ЕС промениха възможностите за корупция?
 - b. По какъв начин присъединяването на България към ЕС повлия на динамиката на корупцията?
 - c. Дали антикорупционните мерки са увеличили възприеманата несигурност за лицата, участващи в корупционни практики?
5. Връзка между корупцията и доверието:
 - a. Какви стратегии хората използват, за да оправдаят участието си в корупционни действия според вас?
 - b. Виждате ли различия в моралните нагласи между поколенията или различни професионални групи спрямо корупционни практики?
6. Измерване на корупцията:
 - a. Каква е ролята на груповата идентичност и социалния натиск в нормализирането на корупцията според вас?

- b. Смятате ли, че има надеждни данни, които представят настоящото състояние на корупцията в страната?
 - c. Смятате ли, че изследвания като това, което провеждам, допринасят за реалистичното представяне на корупцията в България?
- 7. Препоръки:
 - a. Каква политическа или институционална промяна бихте препоръчали, за да се намали корупцията в България?
- 8. Закриване:
 - a. Уверете се, че интервюираният може да получи стенограма при поискване.
 - b. Благодарете му за участието и отделеното време.
- 9. Въпроси за оценка (за респонденти след интервюто)
 - a. Отговорите на интервюирания наложиха ли някакви промени в начина, по който бяха формулирани въпросите по време на интервюто?
 - b. Имаше ли предварителни предположения, които ограничаваха хода на разговора?

Appendix B

Positionality statement:

My positionality as a researcher is worth being noted, as this can influence the interpretation of the results. It's important to note that while I was born in Bulgaria and lived there for the first ten years of my life, I moved to Cyprus afterwards. Another transition occurred when I was 19 and moved to the Netherlands. It was during my Master studies that my academic interest in corruption in Bulgaria began to take shape. These transitional experiences have shaped my perspective, adding both a degree of distance from the topic and personal connection to the subject matter. I want to acknowledge that I am in the advantageous position that my family in Bulgaria, through their network helped me find relevant information for the topic. My exposure to different cultures and more liberal political inclinations may also influence how I interpret the topic and engage with the findings. My encounters with different Bulgarian scholars and experts who worked in the field as well as personal experiences through my network, additionally influenced the interpretation of the findings, especially in the last month of writing this thesis, as I moved back to Bulgaria and have daily encounters with the culture.

Appendix C

Value Dimension	Item Description
Hedonic	Important to have a good time
	Important to seek adventures and have an exciting life
	Important to seek fun and things that give pleasure
	Important to try new and different things in life
Gain	Important to be rich, have money and expensive things
	Important to get respect from others
	Important to show abilities and be admired
	Important to be successful and that people recognize achievements
	Important to make own decisions and be free
Normative	Important that people are treated equally and have equal opportunities
	Important to do what is told and follow rules
	Important to help people and care for others' well-being
	Important to be loyal to friends and devote to people close
	Important to be humble and modest, not draw attention
	Important to follow traditions and customs
	Important to behave properly
	Important to care for nature and environment
	Important to live in secure and safe surroundings
	Important to think new ideas and be creative
	Important that government is strong and ensures safety
	Important to understand different people

Appendix D

Transcription of Interview 1 in Bulgarian:

(0:00) Interviewer: Така, ами да аз всъщност се представих вече, Цвета Ботева се казвам втора година студент съм в програмата за изследване в университет в Гронинген, и по принцип съм живял и в Кипър и не съм живяла много в България всъщност. От там дойде интереса да правят такива изследователски проучвания за България и за корупцията. Като цяло темата е за корупцията всъщност как тя се променя след влизането на България в Европейския съюз. Искам да видя какво влияние има на доверието в хората към институциите.

(0:52) Interviewee: Всъщност членството на ЕС?

(0:54) Interviewer: Да членство на Европейския съюз и всъщност използвам икономическа свобода като вериъбъл за да опиша влизането в Европейския съюз има изследователски статии, извадени, че в други държави повече икономическа свобода означава по малко корупция, защото имаш нали повече опции всъщност да правиш бизнес. А в България може би е обратното, защото да институциите на регулират достатъчно бизнесите и всъщност се получава точно обратното.

(1:45) Interviewee: Да.

(1:46) Interviewer: Като цяло първият ми въпрос е защо средата в България разполага корупцията и нейното разпространение?

(1:53) Interviewee: То не е само в България. Това е много общ въпрос, защото причини много, а може да се започне от народопсихологията и още от това, че не на всички още от деца, от образованието им е вкоренено че не трябва да правят, нали че трябва да спазват законите. И може би след като се е премахнала плановата икономика и комунизма нали хората са имали нужда от една такава голяма свобода. Която свободата израства малко в анархия. В началото на демокрацията имаше много нали борчета, мафия. Освен това всички се предприятия. Това е много важно. Всички предприятия, които бяха държавни, се приватизираха. При приватизацията обаче като се приватизираха тези предприятия ги даваха по точно на големците, които бяха с политически връзки, тоест тези, които са си били силни от времето на комунизма, те си останаха същите хора силни и по време на демокрацията. Защото те получиха държавните предприятия от приватизацията, и те до ден днешен продължават да разполагат с това богатство. Сега те може да са го развили в законен или не законен бизнес, да го използват за политическо или икономическо влияние, да правят инвестиции каквото там правят. Но въпросът е че хората са същите, да тоест изначално богатството остава в тези хора които нямат интегритет. Това е много важно, че от приватизацията идва, се започва и това, че нали досега си бил в комунизъм и изведнъж имаш много голяма свобода. Всички си казват, ами аз няма да ходя на училище, мога да

си платя просто за дипломната работа или да си платя от реферат.бг да си сваля готов реферат и да го подам срещу заплащане няма нужда да уча. И просто може би малко... не казвам че комунизмът е добър сега.

(4:11) Interviewer: Да, да, да разбира се.

(4:12) Interviewee: Просто се е получила една такава криворазбрана цивилизация че можем да правим всичко без наказано. А и от там вече нали хората почват да виждат възможност се облагодетелстват.

(4:32) Interviewer: Да.

(4:33) Interviewee: Тоест факторите, за да има корупция са много. Сега не можем да кажем, че само и единствено липсата на oversight, липсата на наблюдение какво се случва, не тоест не може един полицаи да тича постоянно след всички политици. Нали това да има високи санкции, да се вкарват високопоставени личности които са злоупотребили с пари в затвора, това е важно. Ние наистина една кметница досега имаме само вкарана в затвора, нали друг високопоставен човек нямаме. За разлика от Румъния, които едно цяло правителство може да си направят в затвора, вече вкарано. А та важно е да има санкции. Обаче, това не в водещото, защото едни санкции няма да те спрат, ти решил ли си да откраднеш нещо. Да, важното е има превенция и risk monitoring, и да превенцията идва още от детската градина и от училището и в университетите, между другото, в много държави имат в техният curriculum уроци такива, които са по интегритет, анти-корупция. Сега може да не са задължителни. Може да са там за някакви допълнителни точки нали, но, по етика примерно може да са задължителен предмет етиката.

(5:58) Interviewer: При нас е задължителен.

(6:00) Interviewee: Да ето, така че много е важно още от образованието да има превенция, и другият елементи на превенцията вече след като са завършили хората и почнат да работят. Това е да имам по добър risk assessment, и как може да има по добър risk assessment, ами като примерно всичките регистри в България да се обединят в един регистър, това в момента не е. В момента булстатът е отделен, регистър на жилища и имоти е отделно, това кой за кого е женен не знам как се казва този регистър, а отделно регистъра на автомобилите, регистъра на лодките, земеделският регистър. А отделно нали какви земи притежаваш, а фирмения регистър е отделно. Всичко е отделно. И ако някой иска да направи инвестиция, нали са получили информация, че еди кой си политик или държавен служител, живее много охолно пък не съответстват на неговата или нейната заплата, то много е трудно да отидеш във всички регистри да провериш какво първо е записано в тези регистри, второ е трудно да провериш дали няма нещо записано на жена му братовчед му, най-добрият му приятел или еди какво си, въобще пък няма как да провериш в чужбина. Между другото са в момента има една инициатива за exchange of information, cross-border exchange of asset declaration verification, тя е Албания, Сърбия,

Македония, Босна и Херцеговина тези държави от Западните Балкани я правят. Трябва да има такава инициатива и на европейско ниво нали. То има нали има moneyeval има нали егмонт груп, които се занимават с money laundering нали има такива европейски инициативи, но те се занимават с по-големи казуси, сега няма да се занимават с някаква по-малка сума пари която за България е голяма, но за тях е малка. Те нямат капацитет да разследват всичко, всички хора. Така че исках да кажа че примерно, ако всички тези регистри са обвързани в един единствен регистър ще е много по-лесно, може би с AI с някакви алгоритми там просто да се видят кой какви assets притежава, къде ги е скрил, и да се направи така нареченият лайфстайл audit и ако не му съответства неговия лайфстайл на доходите, вече прокуратурата да проведе обстойно изследване, или комисията против корупция, или пък НАП също.

(9:14) Interviewer: Тоест има много институции, които могат всъщност да проведат инвестиция.

(9:18) Interviewee: Да просто нямаме информация. Тоест много малка е информацията чрез която може да се направи investigation, и то е много трудно. Трябва разследващите журналисти наистина трябва да... Те правят примерно снимки през Google earth и гледат преди 5 години как е изглеждал даден терен и сега как изглежда и примерно ако изникнат някои дворец за 5 години проверяват откъде е дошло, на кого е и така нататък.

(9:53) Interviewer: Уоу, трябва да използват такива тактики, които да...

(9:55) Interviewee: Имат много, много други такива risk assessment, имат примерно corruption proofing of legislation, това не е задължително но се прави, смисъл много държавни институции го правят и им е в мандата и в задължението да го правят има много съвети към държавни институции. Когато има нов законопроект, който е в тяхната компетентност, нали те са включени в работната група, че тези проектозаконали казват тука и тука на този член и тази точка има риск да се заобиколи да се използва за корупция и промените закона. Но това може да се прави от неправителствени организации, така че е важно да се прави такъв corruption proofing of legislation. Като се види че сега, законът е променен само за да може Златен Век да си построи небостъргач, да се промени закона така че да не е в полза на частния интерес.

(10:56) Interviewer: Да, а вие казвате, че в Румъния има повече хора, които са в затвора в България, защо?

(11:02) Interviewee: Еми нали Laura Kovesi за това стана Европейски прокурор точно защото беше преди това румънски. Ами защото се е намерила Laura Kovesi един индивидуален лидер със смелостта да направи, нали не е сама тя нали има и много други дори в Румъния, които са допринесли, просто са имали смелостта да осъдят високопоставени членове на министерството. А в България смелият човек го няма. Нека да минем към вторият въпрос имам някакви срещи.

(11:51) Interviewer: Ами всъщност да. Фундаментален въпрос е как се е променила корупцията преди, всъщност как е била корупцията преди влизането в Европейския съюз и как се е променила след Европейския съюз след влизането в Европейския съюз? Има ли някой характеристики, които са?

(12:10) Interviewee: Да основното, което ама то не е точно свързано с. Не мисля, че с влизането в Европейския съюз е повлияло по такъв директен начин, по който е зададен този въпрос. По скоро по друг начин ще отговоря, през последните да кажем 15 години, но не казвам, че във връзка с приемането на България в ЕС. За последните 15 и повече години тази административна корупция, която я имаше в началото и я наблюдавахме с нашето corruption monitoring surveys в интерес на CSD. Тази висока административна корупция рязко намалява, можеш да видиш от данните там от фигурата. Това какво значи, че административната корупция намалява, ами сложили са всичко да е на едно гише да не ходиш на десет гишета, а вече няма нужда на хартия да подаваш някакви формуляри в НАП и във ПИК имаш в НАП и НОЙ и други институции можеш да си изкараш с електронен подпис и с там ПИК да си подадеш някаква декларация и по бързото да ти обработят заявление за нещо. За строеж, регистриране на фирма, за издаване на някакъв лиценз, нали като стане електронно. Освен това дали, ей тука има вече връзка с Европейския съюз, нали директивите и регулациите на Европейския съюз като почнат да се прилагат в България, е, че тази бюрокрация намалява, защото има някаква стандартизация и електронизация на процесите. И нямаш толкова достъп човек с човек с администрацията, и административната корупция намалява. Обаче най големият проблем, който е през последните 15 и повече години, който изниква е, намалява административната корупция, ама се качва state capture, завладяването на държавата. Тоест все повече бизнес кръговете се обвързват с политическите кръгове. Те са едни и същи хора, сега може да е забранено или според там конфликта на интереси, нали един политик да има и фирма. Обаче, неговият приятел като има фирмата, а да това едното е завладяването на държавата, където вече частните интереси казват ами променете тука закона за да може да си построена небостъргачът, така че да не плащат данъци. Те могат да махнат дюните на морето, да си построят нещо и така. Това е единият проблем state capture, вторият проблем, който ние казваме corrosive capital или sit financial flaws/strategic corruption това е strategic corruption ние разбираме всъщност authoritarian influence on our countries. Тоест нали държави като Русия, Китай, и други Турция донякъде. А те по всякакъв начин използват влияние за да променят нещо в нашите държави, примерно искат да инвестират в някакъв powerplant или магистрала нещо да построят. Китайците строят мисля че магистрала от Гърция нагоре, доста на север до някъде през Черна гора ли къде минава, и съответно Черна гора е взела не знам си колко милиона дълг за да плати на китайците да строят магистрала. До Сърбия до Белград построихме магистрала, не помня кой я строеше, може би пак трябва, сега да не излъжа фактите. Но сключват се зад затворени врати такива bilateral agreements за инвестиции или за някаква голям инфраструктурен проект, нали както казахме още някаква електроцентра, магистрала, завод, рафинерия, нещо нали. И

всъщност като са зад затворени врати може да няма cost-benefit analysis да се пропусне environment assessment, нали да не наруши природата. Няма cost-benefit analyses, нямаш гаранция дали тази инвестиция, ще създаде работни места за местното население, а не знаеш след 5 години или след 50 години тя ще дойде на печалба може да трябва 50 години, нали внуците ти да изплащат, а това задължение, в което си навлязъл просто защото едни хора там в другата държава искат да се облагодетелстват, те са платили някакви там хонорари или подкупи на тези, които са се съгласили от българска страна да сключат договора и после всъщност хората плащат. Това е икономически, но те чрез медиите нали пак се пуска всякакъв вид пропаганда, така че да се засилим пак нечие политическо влияние. Всякаква пропаганда има, жените могат да са политици, ваксините не знам си какво ви вредят, всякакви нали наративи се пускат в медиите.

(17:55) Interviewer: А всъщност защото доколкото знам, повечето хора знаят за всички тези неща, които се случват смисъл не е като да не знаят.

(18:02) Interviewee: Ами то това е хубавото че България е малка, защото всички сме си братовчеди. Виж сега в Америка трудно да разбереш точно в България, понеже е малка държава организираната престъпност и не много организирана защото, нали няма six degrees of separation има one degree of separation тоест веднага знаеш кой на кого е приятел, кой на кого е братовчед така че ако тръгне да се разследва дадено престъпление лесно може да се стигне до истината въпроса дали действат тези механизми. То законите в България са много нали хармонизирани с европейските. Може би самите разследващи органи нямат тази компетенция точно какъв вид доказателства да събират как ги представят в съда. Съдиите пък те са някои най-обикновени хора те не знаят какво са block chain technology или криптовалюти, те разчитат на някакъв външен експерт да им каже, примерно има ли престъпление или няма защото самият съдия не е експерт по всичко, при един съдия идват дела идват дела свързани с най-различни неща строеж на сграда, укриване на данъци, обществени поръчки, енергетика, технологични фирми, всякакви неща то един съдия не може да е експерт по всичко. А и се отклоних и забравих, какъв беше въпроса?

(19:01) Interviewer: Ами всъщност аз по скоро се интересувам, защото като ми показахте тази графика, че само 227 хора всъщност са prosecuted от всичките тези..

(19:09) Interviewee: Да само да видя как са.. convicted and sanctioned by final judgment act 2022 година защото като сме писали този brief нямало е по нов annual report вече може да видиш на сайта на прокуратурата може да има по-нов репорт, вече да са 300 не 227.

(19:15) Interviewer: Всъщност какви са какви са механизмите? Защо няма повече prosecuted хора?

(19:20) Interviewee: Или нямат знанието, капацитета какви доказателства да се събират и как или просто не искат това са двата отговора, наистина става по сложно. Нали си

представяш, че в момента като се плаща за наркотици или за някакви сделки през криптовалута как точно нашите български така criminal investigators, които са държавни служители на държавна заплата. Как точно да ги открият при положение, че не винаги имат възможността да са в час с последните технологии. Сега да не ги обиждам може да има някои, които наистина са си добри експерти в областта.

(22:05) Interviewer: Но като се развива по такъв начин смисъл самата технология. Не трябва ли и органите на реда да се развиват по същия начин, за да могат да предотвратят?

(22:10) Interviewee: Има и друго, просто в митниците, нали за да подкупиш в митниците то е лесно и макар да има камери те знаят на къде гледат камерите те просто отиват в някой храст отзад, където няма камери, то винаги можеш да избегнеш тихо технологията. Ако искаш ще пуснеш писмо по пощата и ще избегнеш високите технологии. Няма как да ти хванат имейла винаги ще отидеш някъде където няма камера знаеш че няма камера. Така че който иска винаги ще намери начин да направи нещо без да го хванат. И е трудно, пък заплатите не са им толкова големи. Аз доколкото знам примерно има така наречения e-audit, някакъв електронен одит има нужда от сметната палата от повече така знание за разкриване на различни видове престъпления, те правят обучение и като направят обучения тези хора напускат, отиват да работят в банки в инвестиционни дружества в частния сектор, защото заплатите са по големи, така че си го има и всичко. Има го и това че ако шефът ти е политически ангажиран и ти каже този няма да го наказваме, не го наказваш. Има това, че са малки заплатите, има това, че трябва някакво ново знание, което се развива с новите технологии постоянно да има обучение за тези разследващи органи. А в момента нали се раздели анти-корупционната комисия на две и те трябва да имат оперативни и разследващи функции тези хора, обаче то всъщност щата още не е запълнен, защото откъде ще си вземеш такива разследващи органи. Можеш да ги вземеш или от ДАНС или от някаква финансова полиция, но трябва да ги дръпнеш от друга институция са да отидат в анти-корупционната комисия, тоест в двете нови комисии.

(24:04) Interviewer: Хора няма а и те може би не искат да се занимават с това.

(24:07) Interviewee: Ами те ако знаят, че тъй-тъй ако шефът им каже недей да правиш един какво си или направи това и те трябва да се съобразят с това което шефът им нареди и го смятат че това не е редно, може би просто не искат. Като знаят, че системата не работи ефективно. Но има и нещо друго, примерно в Албания направиха така нали наречения vetting на съдиите. То хубаво уволниш си половината или почти всички съдии, обаче откъде намиращ нови съдии? Можеш да вземеш от тези, които са току що завършили от университетите, но те са още млади, нали нямат опит. Така че има го и този момент нали уволняваш всички и после трябва да намериш нови които са надяваш че не са корумпирани. Те в Македония щяха нещо сходно да правят, но не съм проследила дали са го направили.

(24:55) Interviewer: Как корупцията е свързана с ниското институционно доверие в България, че хората всъщност не вярват в институциите?

(24:58) Interviewee: Ами абсолютно директно, смисъл направо пропорционална корелация.

(25:03) Interviewer: Да, защото може и да е и да е, в другата посока, че всъщност нали? Защото няма от доста време нали търси всички те всичко това, което е минало приватизация и това, че не е имало много информация за тези неща от тогава да е спаднало доверието. Смисъл не съм сигурна кой кое от това идва първо корупцията или ниското институционно доверие. Всъщност това ми е въпросът.

(26:01) Interviewee: Тоест хипотезата ти е че като има ниско доверие в институциите самите хора в институциите се обезкуражават, че хората им нямат доверие, затова стават корумпирани ли?

(26:15) Interviewer: Не, не, не ми е това хипотезата, а по скоро защото нали като са минали всички, през всички тези неща. България, когато е минала и хората губят някакво, някаква вяра в тези институции и всъщност са по склонни да вършат нелегални неща.

(26:30) Interviewee: А смисъл че корупцията в институциите води до корупция сред хората, бизнеса, гражданите, ами да то си е то си е цялостно подхранват се едно от друго. Да смисъл ти казваше ми всички го правят значи и аз ще го правя или ето министерството го прави значи и аз ще го правя, той е цялостният environment нормално.

(27:01) Interviewer: А според вас как може да се излезем от този омагьосан кръг на?

(27:03) Interviewee: Трябва нобелова награда за да ти отговори човек на този въпрос. Класическият пример скандинавските държави, те просто си имат такава народопсихология още от малки от деца или от векове наред, нали че не е добре да си корумпиран и просто като цялата държава гледа с лошо око на корупцията. Нали тези които са корумпирани, нали не могат да пародират и да кажат ей тоя герои тука с ланците. Просто скандинавските държави, които още от векове си го има това нещо те просто нямат корупция и в Япония примерно. Те за това в скандинавската държава имат много къси закони, една страница закон, защото нямаш нужда от хиляди параграфи и членове в закона, за да описваш хиляди възможни ситуации как някак, някой нещо ще излъже то, нямаш нужда от законите дето се вика. Така че не знам аз бих казала от училище, от детската градина трябва да се започне да се говори за етика кое е правилно, кое не е правилно. Едното детенце като вземе играчката на другото детенце да му каже майката не е хубаво да крадеш.

(30:02) Interviewer: А сега това не се случва според вас в България?

(30:04) Interviewee: Еми не знам, минаваме на индивидуално ниво. Може би просто трябва да се промени някак си менталитетът още от много ранна детска възраст аз така си мисля. Е сега няма да е лошо и да се засилят това, което казах risk assessment така че да се види

къде отива незаконното богатство, в кого отива нали да се разкриват повече конфликти на интереси, като тук може да се поощрява това гражданите да подават повече сигнали. Но за да подават сигнали, те пък трябва да имат доверие в институциите, които подават сигнали. Защо да подават сигнали ако знаят, че нищо няма да се случи ако институциите почнат да работят, те и хората ако видят, че работят ще почнат да продават повече сигнали. Ще се завишат нещата, някакво гражданско съзнание. Между другото все повече има такива граждански инициативи, които са организират онлайн, те са си някакви онлайн communities. Те се борят предимно за някакви екологични цели или социални цели, да изчистим града, или да спре замърсяването еди къде си, или да има велоалеи или нещо друго, което е хубаво, че по този начин, особено младите хора, все повече има някакви такива онлайн communities.

(33:04) Interviewer: Ако има нещо такова и за антикорупция?

(33:06) Interviewee: Да те винаги студентите са били driving force срещу корупцията. Всички протести в Сърбия, Македония, и в Гърция също там един влак знам. Това е само повод нали, то тия протести са си изцяло против корупцията не е само този един нали, те са си много трагични инциденти, но не това е единственото, срещу което протестират хората. Просто това е поредната, като когато е преляла чашата.

(33:50) Interviewer: Ами знам, че през годините също е имало и такива протести в България, но като гледам статистиката не е проработило.

(33:52) Interviewee: А всъщност те протестите какво целуват, ти казваш айде оставка за този който сега е на власт, нали за това протестираме а той като подаде оставка, ти нямаш алтернатива, кой ще застане, коя ще е новата политическа партия която няма да е корумпирана и ще се ръководи държавата. Нали то, че трябва лидери, които имат интегритет, пък нещо ги няма. Смисъл тези протести и да свалят правителството какво от това кой ще е поема юздите.

(34:02) Interviewer: А според вас защо Европейският съюз не налага повече, то не е санкции, а повече строг контрол? Защото сега всички знаят в България какво става, обаче никой нищо не прави.

(34:15) Interviewee: Защото наистина може, можеше през последните 10, 15, 20 години Европейският съюз, да има много по силна позиция. Значи имаме article 7 за voting rights на Унгария можеше да се спрат много по-рано. Има нали да не дават вето на всяко нещо, което предложи. Освен това защо трябва една държава Унгария или която и да е тя, да налага вето и целия Европейски съюз да не може да приеме някаква директива, регулация, закон или каквато и да е дейност може да се промени цялата процедурата е примерно 2/3 мнозинство. Тогава Унгария няма да имат думата и да прави такива щети, прост процедурата може да се промени. А спирането на парите действат до някъде, обаче много рядко го ползва Европейския съюз. То и на България са спирали парите не само на

Унгария. Може при много по-малки провинения веднага се спират парите. Много рядко се ползва това нещо. И просто не знам малко е страх ли ги е няма ли смелостта да направят нещо повече. То проблемът е, че целият подход на Европейския съюз е малко бюрократичен. Всички казват, нали вече стана известно, *checking the boxes*. Ще дам пример, нали те в техният, там *enlargement package* докладите за всяка година със страните членки колко са напреднали, както и другите там доклади за България и Румъния, нали казват какъв закон е приет, каква институция е създадено но какво от това? Те няма *enforcement on the ground*. Това, че са създадени закони в институция не значи, се прилагат и че правят нещо ефективно, което да подобри състоянието те просто трябва във всичките си доклади и там оценките, да имат така наречените *impact indicators*. *Impact* значи, примерно нивото на корупция е намаляло, от миналата година, до сега от толкова процента на толкова. И да има някакъв *target* на колко трябва да намалее или пък ефективните присъди срещу *high level corruption*. От всички там повдигнати обвинения. Сега може да има държава в която няма корупция сред високо поставените, въпросът е от повдигнатите обвинения примерно едни какъв си процент трябва да достигнат до ефективни присъди. И да има такива *impact indicators*, които да мерят нещо реално, което се е случило или пък от едни колко си доказано незаконно богатство, какъв процент да бъде конфискувано. Сега наскоро излезе един доклад може да го цитираш той е за Европейския съюз, не знам за България колко е засегната. ОСТА *organized crime assessment report* там ако не се лъжа се казваше, че само 6%, 4% или 6% не знам виж го да не те излъжа. Само 6% са конфискуваните *assets, criminal assets*, тези които са доказани че са *criminal*, ами защо само 6% са там? Явно няма такива правни инструменти по които да са конфискувани, или не може да се докаже вината, или каква е причината.

(38:19) Interviewer: Не знам вие нали работите с някого. Доколкото видях в сайта ви имате общи интереси с Европейският Съюз.

(38:21) Interviewee: Европейският Съюз ни финансира, но и ние тези препоръки ги даваме всеки път, но не са довели до това да има по строги санкции.

(38:25) Interviewer: Всъщност вие това което издавате не променя много нещата?

(38:30) Interviewee: Не винаги има представител на Европейския съюз или най малкото на делегацията във всички тези събития. Явно трябва на по високо ниво.

(38:50) Interviewer: Ами не искам ви задържа прекалено много... Защото въпросите така както съм ги написала, разбирам, че са малко по не наивни, защото съм чела и по *foreign literature*, който не е имам чувството, че понякога в България ситуацията е малко по различна, отколкото всъщност пишат за нея. Защото говорих и с един професор в УНСС. Той каза, че нали мога да пиша колкото искам за корупцията в България, но всъщност каква е картинката от данните е много по различна от каква е всъщност картинката в реалния живот в реалността?

(39:02) Interviewee: Еми да то това е нещо което е скрито корупцията данните не го хващат точно.

(39:04) Interviewer: И аз за това исках да направя тези интервюта, за да дам малко по реалистична картина, нали как стоят нещата да. А финалният въпроса е, какво бихте ли ми казали за това за по реалистична картина в България като се. Като източник на информация?

(39:15) Interviewee: Ама кой аспект на корупцията? Самите.

(39:18) Interviewer: Самите схеми, които се провеждат смисъл, които защото съм говорила и с един investigating journalist и той е казвал различни схеми.

(39:25) Interviewee: Да тези Bird, Бивол, анти-корупционният фонд. Ми тези трите да, те са си investigative journalists. Капитал е малко също. Нали анти-корупционният фонд си е NGO, но в самите доклади има казуси който са си всъщност investigative journalism. В тях трябва да се гледат.

(40:20) Interviewer: Да ама и имате ли нещо друго да добавите, ако което мисля, че съм пропуснала като въпрос?

(40:25) Interviewee: Ами не то и в нашите доклади има множество боксове който са като практиката но те общо взето са взети от медиите, така че първоизточника е някоя медия обикновено така че по е коректно да се цитира самата медия, която е направила самото разследване.

(41:02) Interviewer: Благодаря ви много за отделеното време, ще спра записа тук.

Translation of transcript for interview 1 in English:

(0:00) Interviewer: So, well, yes, I have already introduced myself, my name is Tsveta Boteva, I am a second-year student in the research program at the University of Groningen. In principle I have lived in Cyprus and I have not lived much in Bulgaria in fact, this is where the interest to do such research on Bulgaria and corruption has come. In general, the topic is about corruption, in fact, how it has changed since Bulgaria's entry into the European Union. I want to see what impact it has on people's trust in institutions.

(0:52) Interviewee: The EU membership itself?

(0:54) Interviewer: Yes, the membership of the European Union and in fact I use economic freedom as a variable to describe the entry into the European Union, there are research articles, that have been published, that show in other countries more economic freedom means less corruption, because you have more options to actually do business. And in Bulgaria it may be the other way around, because yes, the institutions don't regulate businesses enough and in fact it turns out exactly the opposite.

(1:45) Interviewee: Yes.

(1:46) Interviewer: In general, my first question is why the environment in Bulgaria is conducive to corruption and its spread?

(1:53) Interviewee: It is not only in Bulgaria. This is a very general question, because there are a lot of causes, and it can start with the national psychology and also from the fact that not all people learn from childhood and from their education, that they should not do certain things, and that they must comply with the laws. And perhaps, after the abolition of the planned economy and communism, people needed such a great freedom. Which freedom grows a little into anarchy. At the beginning of democracy, there were a lot of fighters, mafia. In addition, all enterprises. This is very important. All enterprises that were state-owned were privatized. During the privatization, however, when these enterprises were privatized, they were given more precisely to the same people who had political connections, that is, those who had been strong since the time of communism, they remained the same strong people during the democracy. Because they received the state-owned enterprises from the privatization, and they continue to have this wealth to this day. Now they may have developed it into a legal or non-legal business, use it for political or economic influence, make investments, and whatever they do. But the point is that people are the same, yes, that is, the initially distributed wealth remains in those people who do not have integrity. It is very important that it comes from privatization and starts with the fact that you have been in communism until now and suddenly you have a lot of freedom. Everyone says, well, I won't go to school, I can just pay for my thesis or pay from referat.bg to download a ready-made essay and submit it for a fee, there is no need to study. And just maybe a little... I'm not saying that communism is good now.

(4:11) Interviewer: Yes, yes, of course.

(4:12) Interviewee: It's just that, a misunderstood civilization emerged, that we think we can do everything without punishment. And from there, people are starting to see an opportunity to benefit.

(4:32) Interviewer: Yes.

(4:33) Interviewee: That is, there are many factors for corruption. Now we cannot say that only the lack of oversight, the lack of observation of what is happening is responsible. One policeman cannot constantly run after all the politicians. It is important to have high sanctions, to put high-ranking personalities who have abused money, in prison, this is important. We really have only one mayor so far who has been imprisoned, we don't have another high-ranking person. Unlike Romania, where they can form an entire government in prison, has been already imprisoned. And it is important to have sanctions. However, this is not in the lead, because sanctions will not stop you if you have decided to steal something. Yes, the important thing is to have prevention and risk monitoring, and yes, prevention comes from kindergarten and from school and universities, by the way, in many countries they have in their curriculum lessons that are about anti-corruption and integrity. Now they may not be mandatory. They may be there for some additional points, but, for example, ethics may be a mandatory subject.

(5:58) Interviewer: With us it is mandatory.

(6:00) Interviewee: Yes, so it is very important to have prevention starting from education, and the other elements of prevention comes after people have graduated and started working. That is to have a better risk assessment, and how can there be a better risk assessment, but like, for example, all the registers in Bulgaria to be merged into one register, which is not the case at the moment. At the moment the bulstat of the register of cars, the register of boats, the agricultural register are separate. Also what kind of land you own, and the company register are separate. Everything is separate. And if someone wants to make an investigation, and they have received information that such a politician or a civil servant lives very lavishly and this does not correspond to his or her salary, then it is very difficult to go to all the registers to check what is recorded in these registers on their name firstly, secondly it is difficult to check if there is something recorded on the name of his wife, his cousin, his best friend and so on, additionally you can't check abroad at all. By the way, there is currently an initiative for the exchange of information, cross-border exchange of asset declaration verification, it includes Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the countries from the Western Balkans are doing it. There should be such an initiative at the European level, right ? There is Moneyval and there is Egmont Group, they deal with money laundering, there are such European initiatives, but they deal with bigger cases, now they will not deal with a smaller amount of money, which is big for Bulgaria, but small for them. They do not have the capacity to investigate everything, all people. So I wanted to say that, for example, if all these registers are tied in a single register, it will be much easier, maybe with AI with some algorithms there, just to see who owns what assets, where

they hid them, and to do the so-called lifestyle audit and if it does not correspond to his lifestyle of income, now the prosecutor's office should conduct a thorough investigation, or the anti-corruption commission, or the NRA as well.

(9:14) Interviewer: That is, there are many institutions that can actually conduct an investigation.

(9:18) Interviewee: Yes, we just don't have information. That is, there is very little information through which an investigation can be made, and it is very difficult. Investigative journalists usually... They take pictures through Google earth and look 5 years ago at what a certain terrain looked like and now what it looks like and, for example, if a palace emerged within 5 years, they check where it came from, who owns it and so on.

(9:53) Interviewer: Wow, they have to use tactics that...

(9:55) Interviewee: They have many, many others such as risk assessments, they have, for example, corruption proofing of legislation, this is not mandatory, but it is done, meaning many state institutions do it and it is in their mandate and their obligation to do so, there are many councils to state institutions. When there is a new bill that is within their competence, they are included in the working group, that these draft laws say here and here to this article and this point there is a risk of being circumvented to be used for corruption and change the law. But this can be done by non-governmental organizations, so it is important to do such corruption proofing of legislation. If it is seen that now, the law has been changed only so that the Golden Age can build a skyscraper, they need to change the law so that it is not in favor of the private interest.

(10:56) Interviewer: Yes, and you say that there are more people in Romania who are in prison in Bulgaria, why?

(11:02) Interviewee: Well, Laura Kovesi became a European Prosecutor for this precisely, because she was previously a Romanian prosecutor. Well, because Laura Kovesi has found herself an individual leader with the courage to do so, she isn't alone, there are many others even in Romania who have contributed, they just had the courage to condemn high-ranking members of the ministry. And in Bulgaria, the brave man is gone. Let's move on to the second question, I have some meetings.

(11:51) Interviewer: Well, actually, yes. A fundamental question is how corruption has changed before, in fact, how was corruption before joining the European Union and how has it changed after the European Union, after joining the European Union? Are there any specific characteristics that are prevalent?

(12:10) Interviewee: Yes, the main thing, but it is not exactly related. I don't think that with the entry into the European Union, the influence is in such a direct way that this question is asked. I will rather answer in a different way, in the last let's say 15 years, but I am not saying that is in connection with Bulgaria's accession to the EU. For the last 15 years and more, this administrative corruption that existed at the beginning, and we have monitored it with our

corruption monitoring surveys in the interests of CSD. This high administrative corruption is sharply decreasing, you can see from the data there from the figure. What this practically means, is yes administrative corruption is decreasing, however they have put everything to be in one counter, so you don't have to go to ten counters, and there is no longer a need for documents to be submitted through paper forms in the NRA, NAP, NOI and other institutions you can enter a declaration with an electronic signature and with the PIK to submit some kind of declaration and the process for an application is quicker. For construction, registration of a company, for the issuance of some kind of license, it become electronic. In addition, here there is already a connection with the European Union, after all, the directives and regulations of the European Union, when they begin to be applied in Bulgaria, is that this bureaucracy is decreasing because there is some standardization and electronization of the processes. And you don't have so much access person-to-person with the administration, and administrative corruption is decreasing. However, the biggest issue that has arisen in the last 15 years and more is that administrative corruption is decreasing, but state capture, the capture of the state, is on the rise. That is, more and more business circles are tied to political circles. They are the same people, now it may be prohibited or according to the conflict of interest, after all, a politician to have a company. However, his friend has the company, and yes, this is one of the conquests of the state, where private interests are already saying, well, change the law here so that the skyscraper can be built so that they do not pay taxes. They can remove the dunes of the sea, build something for themselves, and so on. This is one problem state capture, the second problem that we call corrosive capital or sit financial flaws/strategic corruption is strategic corruption we understand in fact authoritarian influence on our countries. That is, countries like Russia, China, and others Turkey to some extent. And they use their influence in every way to change something in our countries, for example, they want to invest in some kind of power plant or highway to build something. The Chinese are building, I think, a highway from Greece upwards, quite far north to somewhere through Montenegro, where it passes, and accordingly Montenegro has taken I don't know how many millions of debt to pay the Chinese to build a highway. We built a highway to Serbia to Belgrade, I don't remember who built it, maybe I should check again, now not to distort the facts. But behind closed doors, such bilateral agreements are concluded for investments or for some large infrastructure project, you know, as we said, some other power plant, highway, plant, refinery, whatever. And in fact, when they are behind closed doors, there may be no cost-benefit analysis or environmental assessment, so as not to disturb nature. There is no cost-benefit analyses, you have no guarantee whether this investment will create jobs for the local population, and you don't know in 5 years or in 50 years if it will come to profit, maybe it will take 50 years, your grandchildren will have to pay for this obligation that you have entered simply because some people in another country want to benefit. They have paid some fees or bribes to those who have agreed on the Bulgarian side to conclude the contract and then the people actually end up paying. This is economic, but then through the media all kinds of propaganda are being released again, so that it strengthens someone's political influence once again. There is all kinds of

propaganda, women can be politicians, vaccines I don't know what harm you, all sorts of narratives are released in the media.

(17:55) Interviewer: And actually, because as far as I know, most people know about all these things that are happening, it's not like they don't know.

(18:02) Interviewee: Well, that's the good thing about Bulgaria being small, because we are all cousins. Look now in America it is difficult to understand, but in Bulgaria it's easier because it is a small country, organized crime and not very organized, because, you know, there are no six degrees of separation, there is one degree of separation, that is, you immediately know who is a friend of whom, who is a cousin of whom, so if a crime is investigated, it is easy to get to the truth: the question is whether these mechanisms work. The laws in Bulgaria are very harmonized with the European ones. Perhaps the investigative bodies themselves do not have the competence to collect the right evidence and present them in court. The judges, on the other hand, are ordinary people, they do not know what block chain technology or cryptocurrencies are, they rely on some external expert to tell them, whether there is a crime or not, because the judge himself is not an expert in everything, a judge comes to lawsuit cases related to a variety of things: building construction, tax evasion, public procurement, energy, technology companies, all sorts of things, then one judge cannot be an expert on everything. And I wandered away and forgot, what was the question?

(19:01) Interviewer: Well, actually, I'm rather interested, because when you showed me this graph, only 227 people are actually prosecuted out of all of these.

(19:09) Interviewee: Yes, just to see how they are.. Convicted and sanctioned by the final judgment act 2022 because as we wrote this brief, there was no new annual report, you can already see on the website of the Prosecutor's Office, there may be a newer report, it can already be 300, not 227.

(19:15) Interviewer: Actually, what are the mechanisms? Why are there no more prosecuted people?

(19:20) Interviewee: Either they don't have the knowledge, the capacity of what evidence to collect and how, or they just don't want to these are the two answers, it really gets more complicated. You can imagine that at this moment, when paying for drugs or for some transactions through cryptocurrencies, how exactly are our Bulgarian criminal investigators, who are state employees on a state salary. How exactly to find them, given that they do not always have the opportunity to keep up with the latest technologies? Now, not to insult them, there may be some who are really good experts in the field.

(22:05) Interviewer: But if technology is developing in such a way. Shouldn't law enforcement agencies develop in the same way in order to be able to prevent?

(22:10) Interviewee: There is another point, example in customs, it is easy to bribe in customs, and although there are cameras, they know where the cameras are looking, they just go to some bush in the back, where there are no cameras, you can always quietly avoid the technology. If you want, you will send a letter in the mail and avoid high technology. You can't get your email caught, you can always go somewhere where you know there's no camera. So whoever wants to, will always find a way to do something without getting caught. And it is difficult, and their salaries are not so big. As far as I know, for example, there is a so-called e-audit, some kind of electronic audit, the National Audit Office needs more knowledge to detect different types of crimes, they do training and when they do training, these people leave, go to work in banks, in investment companies in the private sector, because the salaries are higher, so that's it. There is also the fact that if your boss is politically engaged and tells you this one we will not punish him, you do not punish him. There is the fact that salaries are low, there is that some new knowledge that is being developed with new technologies is needed, there must be constant training for these investigative bodies. And at the moment, the Anti-Corruption Commission has been divided into two and they should have operational and investigative functions for these people, but in fact the staff is not yet filled, because where will you get such investigative experts. You can take them either from the State Agency for National Security or from some financial police, but you have to pull them from another institution to go to the anti-corruption commission, that is, to the two new commissions.

(24:04) Interviewer: There are no people, and maybe they don't want to deal with it.

(24:07) Interviewee: Well, if they know that if their boss tells them don't do this or do this and they have to comply with what their boss orders them to do and they think it's not right, maybe they just don't want to. Knowing that the system does not work effectively. But there is something else, for example in Albania they made the so-called vetting of the judges. You dismiss half or almost all of the judges, but where do you find new judges? You can take from those who have just graduated from universities, but they are still young, they have no experience. So there is this moment, you fire everyone and then you have to find new ones who, you hope, are not corrupt. They were thinking of doing something similar in Macedonia, but I have not tracked whether they did it.

(24:55) Interviewer: How is corruption related to the low institutional trust in Bulgaria, do people actually believe in institutions?

(24:58) Interviewee: Well, absolutely directly, meaning directly proportional correlation.

(25:03) Interviewer: Yes, because it could be in the other direction, right? Because for a long time they have been looking at everything the privatization process and the fact that there has not been much information about these things since then the trust has fallen. Meaning, I'm not sure which of this comes first: corruption or low institutional trust. Actually, this is my question.

(26:01) Interviewee: So your hypothesis is that when there is low trust in the institutions, the people in the institutions themselves are discouraged, that people do not trust them, so that is why they become corrupted?

(26:15) Interviewer: No, no, this is not my hypothesis, but rather because everyone has gone through all these things. When Bulgaria has passed through so many things and people lose some, some faith in these institutions and in fact they are more inclined to do illegal things.

(26:30) Interviewee: So the meaning that corruption in institutions leads to corruption among people, business, citizens, well, yes, it is completely nourished by each other. Yes meaning, you told me everyone is doing it, so I will do it too, or here the ministry is doing it, so I will do it too, it is the overall environment that normalizes it.

(27:01) Interviewer: And in your opinion, how can we get out of this vicious circle?

(27:03) Interviewee: You need a Nobel Prize to answer this question. The classic example is the Scandinavian countries, they just have such a national psychology since childhood or for centuries, that it is not good to be corrupt and the whole country looks with a bad eye at corruption. After all, those who are corrupt, can't parade and say this hero here with the chains. It's just that the Scandinavian countries, which have had this thing for centuries, they simply do not have corruption and in Japan too, for example. That's why in the Scandinavian country they have very short laws, one page of law, because you don't need thousands of paragraphs and articles in the law to describe thousands of possible situations how somehow, someone will lie to you, you don't need the laws that are called. So I don't know, I would say from school, from kindergarten we should start talking about ethics, what is right, what is wrong. When one child takes the toy of the other child to tell him the mother, it is not good to steal.

(30:02) Interviewer: And now, in your opinion, this is not happening in Bulgaria?

(30:04) Interviewee: Well, I don't know, we go to the individual level. Maybe the mentality should be changed somehow from a very early age, I think. Well, now it would not be bad to strengthen what I said risk assessment so that we can see where the illicit wealth goes, to whom it goes, to reveal more conflicts of interest, and here citizens can be encouraged to submit more signals. But in order to submit signals, they must have confidence in the institutions that submit signals. Why should they report if they know that nothing will happen if the institutions start working, and the people, if they see that they are working, will start selling more signals. Things will increase, some civic consciousness. By the way, there are more and more such civic initiatives that are organized online, they are some kind of online communities. They are fighting mainly for some environmental or social goals, to clean up the city, or to stop pollution here and there, or to have bike lanes or something else, which is good that in this way, especially young people, there are more and more such online communities.

(33:04) Interviewer: If there is something like that about anti-corruption?

(33:06) Interviewee: Yes, university students have always been a driving force against corruption. All the protests in Serbia, Macedonia, and Greece also the incident with that one train. This is just an occasion, isn't it, these protests are completely against corruption, not only for one specific case, they are very tragic incidents, but this is not the only thing that people are protesting against. It's just another situation, and then the glass overflows.

(33:50) Interviewer: Well, I know that over the years there have also been such protests in Bulgaria, but looking at the statistics, it has not worked.

(33:52) Interviewee: And in fact, what are the aims of the protests, you say let's make the one who is in power resign, isn't that why we are protesting, and when he resigns, you have no alternative, who will stand, which will be the new political party that will not be corrupt and the state will be led. After all, we need leaders who have integrity, but they are missing. Meaning, even if those protests overthrow the government, what does it matter who will take the reins.

(34:02) Interviewer: And in your opinion, why does the European Union not impose more, it is not sanctions, but more strict control? Because now everyone in Bulgaria knows what is going on, but no one is doing anything.

(34:15) Interviewee: Because it really could in the last 10, 15, 20 years, the European Union have a much stronger position. So we have Article 7 on voting rights of Hungary could have been stopped much earlier. They should not veto everything he proposes. In addition, why should a country, Hungary or any of it, veto and the entire European Union cannot adopt any directive, regulation, law or any activity, the whole procedure can be changed, for example, a 2/3 majority. Then Hungary will not have a say in doing such damage, a simple procedure can be changed. And the suspension of money works to some extent, but the European Union very rarely uses it. It has also stopped Bulgaria's money not only Hungary's. Maybe in case of much smaller offenses, the money is immediately stopped. This thing is very rarely used. And I just don't know if it's a little scary, if they don't have the courage to do something more. The problem is that the whole approach of the European Union is a bit bureaucratic. Everyone says, you know, checking the boxes. I will give an example, don't they in their, enlargement package reports for each year with the member states, mention how advanced they are, as well as the other reports on Bulgaria and Romania, don't they say what law has been adopted, what institution has been created, but so what? They do not have enforcement on the ground. The fact that laws have been created in an institution does not mean that they are being implemented and that they are doing something effective to improve the situation, they just need to have the so-called impact indicators in all their reports and assessments. Impact means, for example, the level of corruption has decreased, from last year, until now from such a percentage to another percentage. And there should be some target on how much it should be reduced or the effective sentences against high level corruption. Of all the charges brought there. Now there may be a country where there is no corruption among the high-ranking ones, the question is that of the charges brought for example a certain percentage should reach effective sentences. And there should be such impact indicators

to measure something real that has happened or out of so much proven illegal wealth, what percentage should be confiscated. Now recently a report has been released, you can quote it, it is about the European Union, I do not know about Bulgaria how much it is affected. OCTA organized crime assessment report there, if I'm not mistaken, it was said that only 6%, 4% or 6% I don't know, see if I don't lie to you. Only 6% are confiscated assets, criminal assets, those that are proven to be criminal, so why are only 6% there? Apparently there are no such legal instruments by which they have been confiscated, or the guilt cannot be proven, or what is the reason.

(38:19) Interviewer: I don't know, you work with someone, don't you? As far as I saw on your website, you have common interests with the European Union.

(38:21) Interviewee: The European Union finances us, but we also give these recommendations every time, but they have not led to stricter sanctions.

(38:25) Interviewer: Actually, what you publish doesn't change things much?

(38:30) Interviewee: There is not always a representative of the European Union or at least of the delegation in all these events. Obviously, it should be at a higher level.

(38:50) Interviewer: Well, I don't want to keep you too long... Because the questions as I have written them, I understand that they are a little less naïve, because I have also read foreign literature, which is not, I have the feeling that sometimes in Bulgaria the situation is a little different than they actually write about it. Because I also spoke with a professor at the UNWE. He said that I can write as much as I want about corruption in Bulgaria, but in fact what is the picture of the data is very different from what is actually the picture in real life in reality?

(39:02) Interviewee: Well, yes, this is something that is hidden, corruption, the data does not catch it exactly.

(39:04) Interviewer: And that's why I wanted to do these interviews, to give a little more realistic picture, right, how things are, yes. And the final question is, what would you tell me about this for a more realistic picture in Bulgaria as such. As a source of information?

(39:15) Interviewee: But what aspect of corruption? Themselves.

(39:18) Interviewer: The very schemes that are being carried out mean, because I have also spoken to an investigating journalist and he has said different schemes.

(39:25) Interviewee: Yes, those Bird, Bivol, the anti-corruption fund. These three yes, they are investigative journalists. Capital is a little bit too. After all, the anti-corruption fund is an NGO, but in the reports themselves there are cases that are actually investigative journalism. They need to be looked at.

(40:20) Interviewer: Yes, but do you have anything else to add, if anything I think I missed as a question?

(40:25) Interviewee: Well, no, and in our reports there are many boxes that are like practice, but they are generally taken from the media, so the source is a media outlet, usually, so it is more correct to quote the media itself, which did the investigation itself.

(41:02) Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time, I will stop recording here.

Transcription of interview 2 in Bulgarian:

(0:00) Interviewer: Можем да започнем всъщност, нали от трансформацията от комунизъм към демокрация всъщност тя как е допринесла до това как са сега нещата?

(0:22) Interviewee 1: Всеки един случай трябва да се каже преди да стигнем до точката на трансформация, че корупцията в България си има много дълбоки корени. Разбира се в някакъв, много по различен от сега вид. Съществуваше сега, и по време на целият период, който те тогава наричаха зряло социалистическо общество. Като имаше две основни причини затова да има някаква корупция. Първата причина беше че поради самата специфика на плановата икономика където всичко е държавно предопределено и регулирано, имаше едно изравняване на доходите на всички, без значение това кой колко работи, кой колко е съвестен, старателен или обратното мързелив или безполезен. Хора който искаха да живеят по-добре започнаха, нали аз тогава бях още дете когато разбрах това, нали се изкушават да генерират някакви доходи по друг начин. Втората причина е, че в условията на това антипазарно стопанство имаше тежки дефицити за всичко, което хората искаха да имат. Мога да дам пример. Например, поради идеологически това е единият кръг причини, поради идеологически причини примерно ти ако искаш да си купиш да речем грамофонни плочи с някаква музика или магнетофонни ленти със записи или нещо няма от къде. И прибягваш до хора посредници, които нали намират вкарват контрабандно или по някакъв начин, и ти там добаваш някакви пари, и по този начин получаваш тез работи. Особено за облекло дамско, мъжко облекло, нали дънки нямаше. Обувки например, особено дамски нямаше, много трудно всичкото това създаваше една среда, в която ролята на тези посредници ставаше все по-голяма. Аз самият съм го правел това, само че съм се занимавал с две неща, доставки на музика или видео на различни носители, абсолютно противозаконно. А и другото, което е дефицитни части за коли и то забележи на коли социалистическо производство, те други в България не се внасяха и въпреки че са нали от други социалистически страни нали съветски там москвичи, Жигули, ладии, чешки шкоди и така нататък и от ГДР, трабанти нямаше. И аз съм имал случаи когато едно нещо нали което примерно струва, ако го има в магазина ама го няма в магазина, примерно струва 30-40 лева, аз го намирам и мога да го продам веднага за 200. Основата на корупцията тя е именно в тези далечни времена, когато някак си хората по необходимост, нали приеха че няма друг начин освен този и смея да твърдя, че огромната част от Българско население тогава се е възползвало от тези схеми за набавяне на нещо. От това разбира се печелят посредниците печелят. Така че като идва 89-90 година и се минава тепърва към пазарна икономика, въпреки че дефицитите намаляват, хората все още са бедни те и в момента са най-бедни в Европейският Съюз. Това нещо било по инерция, било поради не възможност, поради друг начин нещо да се постави, и аз говоря това е битово мислене, нищо лошо няма в него, но значи сама по-себе си бедността не е порок, но тя е както ти разказва генерира пороци. И в края на краищата всички стават порочни, и

извода е че имаше и има естествена среда и тя е в менталитета на хората. Това е такъв народопсихологически индикатор изобщо да не бъдат критични към такива неща. Има, разбира се, особено в последните години има едни такива пикове на събуждане и на недоволство но те са свързани обикновено с някакви такива драматични събития, нали загинало дете на пътя, умрял някой в болница, особено деца. Както в момента сме в един такъв пик но той е спорадичен и няма да доведе до промяна на симптоматиката, мислейки, анализирайки корупционната среда. В България основата на корупционната пирамида е много по различна отколкото примерно в Западна Европа. Защото там всичко това, което се е случвало и се случва, както и в други по индустриално развити страни в които не е имало 100% владение на собствеността и на средствата за производство от държавата, винаги е имало частна собственост. Нали непримено в Гърция, Турция, дори в Югославия, бивша Югославия в част от социалистическите страни също нямаше пълна национализация, примерно Полша не национализираха земята, земята си остана на хората.

(09:22) Interviewee 1: Тука практически оневинявам народа в известна степен, защото той по принуда и по необходимост е живял този живот и за това гледа безкритичното. Практично това което се случва в момента, тежката корупция която е особено по високите етажи на властта, и е в тотална синергия със създадения от процепите на бившата държавна сигурност (ДАНС) и комунистическа партия големи компании, които превзеха всички структурно определящи сектори на икономиката, в тази синергия е проблемът. Това, което е практически неразрешимо, колкото и нали ако има дори възможност на висок глас да се говори какво става, да се сочат виновните и така нататък, нищо не се променя, ние не ставаме по-добре всяка следваща година. Тук ако говорим за СОЦИОМА се случва, продължава едно привикване и затъпяване и безкритичност на хората, които не могат да вържат, че всичко, което по този престъпен начин се е взело или се краде, то от един и същи джоб излиза, от техният джоб, няма от къде другаде да излиза. Човека който уж по демократичен начин избира кой да го управлява, очевидно, не може да разбере, че целият ресурс обществения, нали финансов пак идва от него и то много лесно може да се изчисли, правят умни хора и се публикува, нали горе долу всяка една прослойка от обществото, в зависимост от това ангажираност, заплащане, възрастова група, осигуряване, и така нататък. Горе долу на всеки един субект колко му се взимат, нали за да влезнат в хазната и от там да се харчат. И вече порокът е в това харчене, защото примерно магистрала излизат три пъти по-скъпо, отколкото излизат да речем в Германия или в Австрия, всичко е по-скъпо. Чисто психологически това е най-големият проблем, че сега много хора казват, те я свариха жабата. Жабата си беше сварена още 89-та година. Българина поради това че като изключим че там чорапите му и четката му за зъби, нали са му лична собственост, в България всичко беше собственост на държавата. Тук нямаше абсолютно никакъв частен бизнес, изключвам там последните 2 години, когато старата номенклатура си измисли този указ 56 за да може те първи да си направят фирми, да го регистрират и вече, постепенно да напълнят и да превземат цялата икономика, което така се случи. Това не е само на бившата

комунистическа партия, която после стана социалистическа грях. Това е известна степен в годините, особено 90-те, края на 2000-ната година идването на царя. Това ако погледнем цялото това поле на действие където се развива всичките тези неща, те успяха да си произведат деривати, защото осъзнаха, че ако всичко продължава да е концентрирано в една партия и която е тяхната и те я хранят, независимо от това как се казва, нали ще бъде таргетирана от хората и в един момент много лесно те да кажат: тези са мародери, крадци, чорбаджии, изедници и така нататък, и фактически започнаха да си създават proxies под формата на националистически партии, либерални, и така нататък и те в момента са навсякъде. Интересното е, че толкова перфектно са си изработили сценария че така наречените назначени едно време капиталисти успяха и успяват да си създава проксите и в момента има на класа, тя е класа, не се срамувам да го нарека така. Която е създадена от създадените и продължава да си работи и фактически като дойде времето на избори, този вид средно и високо чиновничество в държавни и в общинските структури, то се самозащитава. И дори да приемем, че в момента махнат Бойко Борисов автоматически примерно застрелят или Делян Пеевски или Румен Радев или всичките така по-първи там, това нещо ще продължи и тук е големият проблем. Ако се опитаме да сме визионери и да разсъждаваме стратегически, защото тази страта тя продължава да се самозащитава и възпроизвежда и в много голяма степен, всички корупционни схеми не идват точно от най-отгоре от високо има такива, нали но там просто се разкешва и ги хранят. Тя е жив организъм.

(12:12) Interviewer: Който еволюира през времето...

(12:13) Interviewee 1: И няма как да бъде спряна освен нали със стриктно прилагане на закона което, както ние всички знаем не се случва, защото политическата класа, изкуствено създадени индустриалци и финансисти и така нататък, те са намерили начин, и са направили по свой образ и подобие съдебната система особено прокуратурата която ги обслужва там. Никога никой не посяга на тези, които така да се каже са създали хранителна среда и предпоставки да съществуват такива хора. Това разбира се бедният български народ, нали говоря вече за средностатистически значимият човек не може да го обхване.

(13:01) Interviewer: А защо мислите, че не може да го обхване?

(13:03) Interviewee 1: Защото не беше извършена по начина, по който трябваше да бъде извършена приватизацията. Не беше извършена реформа в образователната система. Защото, две групи абсолютно вредни хората бяха набутани в политическите елити, бивши ченгета или такива внедрени. Или без да са ченгета или внедрени просто глупаци, кариеристи които се набутаха в едно всемощното СДС, и после вече във всякакви други, и разбраха че там е топличко на завет и това им носи някакви блага, това се отнася практически за са всички съществуващи що-годе значими политически субекти в България. Но да речем ако трябва с едно изречение да кажа кой е най-големият проблем.

Най-големият проблем е че системата допуска абсолютно некадърни и даже вредни хора да заемат ключови позиции, дори да не са корумпирани те са пропускливи. Много любим пример ми е мълчанието на, значи не всички магистрати са развратни и корумпирани, мълчанието на тази част която би трябвало да е нали от гледа точка на закона невинна, ами те защо мълчат, и там е един от големите проблеми, за хора като нея нали аз не съм юрист. Да се разбере какво е съотношението тези които активно нали смучат и дерат кожи, защото те генерират месечното доходи в пъти по-големи, отколкото са им големите заплати и останалите. И ако аз бях психолог щях да се опитам да направя един research за да разбере защо мълчат другите? Защото то няма друг ресурс дори ако се започне по много интелигентен смел начин реформа на съдебната система от къде ще се намерят такива хора, нали те не се въргалият под път и над път хора, завършили право особено хора който се предполага освен че са им дали някаква диплома в Юго-Западния университет ми горе-долу могат и да мислят, защото най-важното е да можеш да мислиш.

(15:55) Interviewer: А мислите ли, че това идва от идеята поне аз сега докато го мисля си представям, че те мълчат, за да се задържат позицията там?

(16:06) Interviewee 1: Да от страх мълчат, те мълчат точно така от страх както едно време хората които нали на които им казваха не-мислещи и по време на комунизма, те всичко виждаха и разбираха, не се докосваха до нищо забранено не се облагодетелстваха, но мълчаха защото ако си отворят устата ще им вземат и малкото което имат. Вече има и други фактори, а да речем външният фактор. Опростявам абсолютно нещата, нали, защо европейските политически семейства припознаха да речем ГЕРБ и ги вкараха във формата европейска народна партия като ако трябва дори приблизително, но то е и доказуемо може и без да е приблизително, сметнали най-големите корупционни схеми и най-голямото източване на фиска е по времето на управлението на ГЕРБ, тук таме със сътрудничеството на ДПС, които ту играеха с тях неофициално, ту официално и така. По времето на царя също, то слава богу не продължи толкова дълго. Чисто политически аз давам и вчера тука също говорихме с Шведската посланичка, въпросът: Защо ГЕРБ е във формата европейска народна партия, като се знае че Бойко Борисов е криминален престъпник и че много хора, така да се каже при основаването на ГЕРБ, при първата му вълна, втората, третата, защото там нали кадрови размествания се извършиха, някои напуснаха други изхвърлиха защо са там? И другото от къде на къде партията създадена от българските ченгета, ДПС беше нали припозната там от либералния интернационал в Алди? Те там много години спекулираха с това и нали казваха ние сме европейци, ние сме атлантици и така нататък, особено те пък те който разсипаха земеделието и животновъдството в България и окрадоха абсолютно всичко. И понеже никой не иска да отговори на тези въпроси най-вероятно нали има две хипотези че или са тъпи европейските политици чиновници, които допуснаха това нещо, или че част от тях са влезли в сериозни корупционни схеми, каквито нали ние знаем с бившия chancellor на Германия, Gerhard Schröder. Който отиде и стана руски служител, директор или с Günter Verheugen и така примери има..

(18:48) Interviewee 2: Само да поясня че Schröder става член на борда на Газпром в клона в Германия с около 5 милиона евро годишна заплата. А Günter Verheugen аналогично стана член на борда на най-големият сега строител в България „Главболгарстрой“ който е замесен в редица корупционни скандали и традиционно е натрупал опит, като е построил големи държавни инфраструктурни строителни обекти и така като имаш track record, много лесно печелиш вече.

(19:18) Interviewee 1: Ми командващия войските на НАТО в Европа, генерал Wesley Clark, той отдавна е пенсионер, той се включи в партията на Бареков и му стана гуру и tutor. Тоест не го казвам това за да оневиня българският народ, който че е заспал, и задръстен, и уплашен, и притеснен е истина, но не е още критично това още има някакво мърдащо там гражданско общество, за да подчертая и за да изтъкна и съм много ядосан че външният фактор, нали на хората който трябваше да ни образоват и да ни правят по-цивилизовани също е много важен.

(20:05) Interviewer: А то всъщност това, което се случи при влизането на в Европейския съюз, стана още по зле и се промениха нещата за...

(20:17) Interviewee 1: То с просто око се вижда нали като ходиш по Европа, във формата докато беше и Великобритания в Европейския съюз, и след това и нали навсякъде беше пълно с руски и с всякакви други комунистически олигарси който просто защото ходят с парите напред, като в Кипър, и си правят каквото си искат. И сега в Америка това което Тръмп прави, там където за 5 милиона долара ще им дава златни карти, ами то сигурно Делян Пеевски вече е кандидатствал за такава златна карта. Не оневинявам нито поведението тук на Социума като цяло, нито напълно на тези който трябва да се спазва закона, защото има и честни магистрати, но те са самотни, едните са изградили престъпни мрежи, едни който са в нашите разследвания много добре извадени на бял свят като там нали Петьо Еврото, Мартин Божанов – Нотариуса и други. А другите нямат не престъпни мрежи а трябва някаква, как да кажа, коалиция на непорочните магистрати, но да не са страхливци. Кое то не се прави само с ходене на протести с викане нищо няма да стане. Аз съм свидетел на всичките възходи и падения на първото СДС, второто СДС, отлюспването на сини люспи, разделянето на това което беше СДС на три, братоубийствена война нали между едни който искаха да са по-десни, а другите казаха пък не, не пътят на социалдемократия на истинска демокрация, социалдемократия. И виждам, че има един дефект в менталитета на българина, който е описвано между-другото не само от социолози и социални психолози, ами то е описан дори от голяма част от старите български писатели. Между-другото ако отвориш и прочетеш от гледна точка на профили от главни действащи лица в под-игото, ще видиш че там практически няма нито един който да е идеален, съвършен и така нататък. Дори светлите образи имат страшно много кусури като предоверчивост, наивност, прекален идеализъм и така нататък. Но по-голямата част са или такива мълчаливи подлещи или активни подлещи, като кирак Стефчо. Това го има в Алеко Константинов, и Стоян Михайловски, Константин Константинов всички ни големи

автори. Нито един голям Български писател не хвали това, което ние бихме искали да е така, нали най-отгоре, да е гордостта на нашето племе, българската интелигенция. Сега разбира се понеже по-много ефективен начин след 9-ти септември е избита огромната част от българската интелигенция, друга малка част е млъкнала, трета малка част е била в някакви симбиотични отношения, четвърта малка част е избягала, ние там сме просто кастрирани. И аз мисля, че това е важно, защото всичко което се случва то е причинно следствено свързано с всичко предишно. Аз например, тук забелязвам и съм сигурен, че е така вече една много тревожна тенденция, включително дипломатически и висши политически служители в посолствата на развитите демокрации да влизат в такива, как да кажа тук трябва да внимавам, някакви симбиотични връзки или най малкото, такова безмълвно съгласие, за да не си развалят кефа и в неправителствения сектор го има това. И сега особено след спирането на кранчетата ще стигне в епидемиологични размери това съглашателство и мълчание. И е лошо, а от друга страна може би е хубаво защото все пак трябва в един момент да одарим дъното че да се събудят някаква критична маса хора.

(24:55) Interviewer: А този момент идва ли, според вас?

(25:00) Interviewee 1: Еми на мене ми се иска, ама няма как, аз няма как да измеря достатъчно прецизно процеси. Аз например не вярвам на нито една социологическа агенция в България, защото и аз съм магистър по социология, работил съм, много отдавна още по време на СОЦА, такива нали по разни изследвания ходих, и още от тогава те са същите хора, които са нали еманация на предишните, които са започнали нещо там да правят с тази наука или дори са непосредствени участници, особено моето поколение. Те са, как да кажа, склонни към конформизъм най-малкото да не кажа че са и развалени хора и понеже трябва да преживяват.

(25:52) Interviewer: Гледат да мълчат.

(25:55) Interviewee 1: Хайде да го наречем с най-невинният термин, малко са пропускливи, е не са еднакви естествено. Използват методики, които реално не прилагат, пишат горе как, какво, стохастично, репрезентативно, национално представително, обаче не е така, в зависимост от поръката, защото нали и те душа носят, трябва да ядът нещо. На тях им се услади, че са без контролни, от една стана някой извика нали, особено като се получи след изборите разминаване между прогнози и резултати. Но и там е много трудно да обвиниш някой, защото при този купен, манипулиран вот, страх и особено при периферията на страната, особено на който някой им викат провинцията то е чудовищно, нищо не можеш да предвидиш. Аз нали, за много милиони да ни дадът да си събера истински екип, абсолютно цялата система с която работя да е перфектна от честни, неподкупни хора, няма да направя истинска прогноза, защото от къде да знам след един месец кой, къде какви пари ще изплющи и къде ще го бият за гласуват или да не гласуват. Ние имаме такива изследвания, преди 2-3 години, където се вижда например че има секции, в който на едните избори гласуват да речем, давам буквално пример, 70 и нещо процента за

патриотите там ВМРО, Валери Симеонов, АТАКА и прочие, след няколко месеца или след една година гласуват 80% за ДПС, това са същите хора същата секция. Накъде да продължим?

(27:58) Interviewer: Има толкова много неща, които да се.

(28:01) Interviewee 1: Еми гадно е, аз нищо не мога да обещаая, не мога и на собствените си деца, но по лошото е че не мога да направя прогноза.

(28:25) Interviewer: А вие сам защо се реши да останете в България?

(28:30) Interviewee 1: Защото вярвах че много бързо ще се оправи всичко. Имах предложение да остана да си оправа английския да поуча малко, всичко ми беше платено мой много състоятелни и влиятелни приятели или в университета в Денвър, Колорадо или в Калифорнийският такива имах предложение да, остана да работя тогава беше вторият по големина телевизионен канал, лично от собственик и нищо от това не направих. Струваше ми се че, нали все пак ще настъпи един момент, в който ще има прозрачност, свобода на словото, ще можеш да живееш достойно, няма да си беден и да си мислиш за ядене, парно и къде да ти учат децата, и така, и от тази гледна точка съм направил грешка, от друга страна нали никога не ми е било скучно. И сега вече съм прекалено възрастен за да ме е страх, което облекчава нещата.

(29:43) Interviewer: А има ли причини да ви е страх?

(29:45) Interviewee 1: Еми има, ние сме едно на течението. И най неприяното е, че хората които ние сме вярвали даже са били известно време така да се каже наша упора, традиционни съюзници, последно време усещаме, че са разколебани.

(30:02) Interviewer: Защото и тях ги е страх или?

(30:04) Interviewee 1: Даваме елементарен пример, нали ние общо взето се финансираме от фондация Америка за България и тука традиционно тази и други подобни организации са ги подкрепяли от там, след като си замина по предишният посланик, госпожа Херо Мустафа ние имаме, аз съм имал няколко срещи, част от колегите също. Дойде посланика Мерте, никой от нас ей така с пръст не се е докосвал до него, не сме имали никаква покана за контакти и разговори, нищо. Това е симптом, тоест Тръмпизма е започнал от преди.

(30:47) Interviewee 2: Само да добавя че Херо Мустафа дойде с две заявки в мандата си, анти-корупция и енергетика, а господин Мерте аз не кажа нищо срещу него.

(30:58) Interviewee 1: Господин Мерте на изслушването на председателската комисия, за да бъде утвърден за ambassador в България изобщо, не спомена нито една от тези думи.

(31:08) Interviewee 2: Нито в словото си.

(31:09) Interviewee 1: В нищо, може да бъде много лесно намерено.

(31:10) Interviewee 2: Някак си успя през целия си мандат, който се оказа предсрочно прекратен.

(31:18) Interviewee 1: Да, той беше прекратен за по-малко от 24 часа.

(31:20) Interviewee 2: Безпрецедентно, но той си беше, никъде не каза тези две думи, който бяха ключови за предходния.

(31:32) Interviewee 1: Същото време, сега, може би това така ще те зарадва, реално от последните два мандата на посланиците на кралство Нидерландия и сегашния, бай Симо му викам аз, перфектно готин човек всичко разбира, интересува се, вика ни прием бири, преди него беше една дама много готина, очарователна, беше абсолютно сладурче, интелигентно, смела и така. В това отношение на другия край, на така на скалата са немските посланици, последно. Като имаш предвид, че предишният беше от ХДС нали, епохата Меркел. След това дойде една мадама която е така тя е социалдемократата, пак нищо, нула. Активизират се тези във нордик вариант на скандинавския посланици. Значи Шри ланските, сегашната супер сладка и предишната много бяха готини. Доста голяма степен на Дания. Шведската посланичка която вчера беше тук, те всичките идват, но нищо. Искат да помагат нали нещо там ни бутат ама нали тя ще ти каже после общо взето за какво дават. Общо взето за какво дават. В същото време нашият партньор организацията Америка за България, и кой ли не ни натискат непрекъснато, а за да не обвинява, полагайте усилия, търсете си финансиране, трябва да се диверсифицира финансирането на антикорупционния фонд и така и сме под натиск. Те много добре разбират, че ти като имаш Америка за България като донор където ти дава пари, кой друг ще ти даде, те си викат ти си имаш донор, но от друга страна дори не са положили усилия да проверят, че и до сега, настоящия момент, а вероятно и в бъдеще, никой в Европа не дава пари за разследвания, за други работи дават. И накъде те тикат civic education, да хващаме да обучаваме някакви хора да им говорим на глупости за корупцията както и в момента си говорим. Аз какво като им го разкажа това на някакви деца, ученици или студенти или няма значение. Те не искат да слушат, защото ги е страх. Да сме обучавали хората как да са в противодействие на корупцията. Ти не може да противодействаш, защото нямаше инструментариум за набиране на информация ти не знаеш нищо. Всичко е черни кутии и всички сделки, както нали любимия ми пример, оня дето да го хванаха с 50 и колко милиона кеш за магистрала Хемус, това са черни кутии. Въпреки че някои е хванат или някъде тук таме се измъква информация, нищо не се случва, защото нямам прокурор, който да образува производство, нищо. Ние в този смисъл сме една леко безсмислена организация вече, защото чешем на нали егото и се радват, ама един много ограничен сегмент от живо мърдащите хора в България. Ако говорим за цифри за числа има. Всичко това се свържат нали до една консумация на информация и изливане на негодувание и гняв в социалните мрежи и дотам.

(35:20) Interviewer: А какви мерки предприемате всъщност това да се промени по някакъв начин?

(35:25) Interviewee 1: Е какво да промени ние сме 10 души, какво да промени ние си гледаме работата, нали вадим фактология всичко се проверява по 1000 и един пъти за да не може да ни заведат дела да ни осъдят. Да, ако нещо е недоизпитано, не е вярно.

(35:42) Interviewer: Да видях, че повечето ви екип са юристи.

(35:45) Interviewee 1: Ами между другото за такава организация, горе долу така трябва да е, защото при нас нападението е и защита. Аз съм общо взето тук в тази организация най-безсмисленият човек, защото не съм юрист, просто ме е яд, нищо друго. Те са много сплотени като хора, много креативни. Но, ефекта ще намалява освен ако не постъпи по някаква причина или поредица от причини някакъв социален взрив, но това което до момента се случва не е достатъчно.

(36:48) Interviewer: А по-какъв начин си добавяте информация за корупционни схеми?

(36:53) Interviewee 2: Ще отговоря на въпроса, ще кажа няколко изречения по-предходната тема за контекст. Ние сме на седем години организация, той е живата история на прехода и преди прехода, той буквално е видял неща които ние не сме видели или сме били невръстни деца. И този контекст е много важно да се разбере, първо този контекст не се разбира от западните ни партньори, а пък сме в едно голямо европейско семейство с едни общи цели. И големият проблем е, че те не го разбират докрай, те просто не могат да си представят тази ендемична корупция, а те знаят какво е корупция има в техните общества тия феномени, но причините, генезиса и начина, тази пандемия те не могат да я осмислят, това ни е един от основните изводи от последните седем години, защото редовно си комуникираме с дипломатическия корпус, буквално защото тези пишат доклади, и ни обикалят не че ние толкова искаме, но свикнахме, защото те ни търсят за достоверна информация. Защото правителството винаги им дава една напудрена версия едни доклади, една статистики от който ще си каже, а бе то не е чак толкова зле. Но като извадиш истинските схеми с доказателство вече нещата не изглеждат така. И ще тръгна от далече, но по бързо и ще стигна до днес и ще отговоря на въпросът ти. Значи, комунизъм, недоволство, всички сме безкрайно бедни, липсва информация нарочно, държим са бедни и в неведение да не знам колко е хубаво на запад и колко са богати, каква е ножицата. Всеки има някакъв проблясък, пътувал е по някакъв начин навън, обаче или негов приятел и всички знаем, че навън е по добре икономически и няма тези глупости, които нали лошите империалисти крадат деца, превръщат всички в гейове и така нататък, и в един момент идват промените при нация, която е дълбоко русофилска, заради мантрите че те са ни освободили, щото са много добри. С тази русофилска лъжа на обществото в неведение и това, което вече доста пространно бе обрисувано като народопсихология, идват промените, и ние виждаме най-мощните протести в България, по ред причини Interviewee 1, много пъти го е казал като добър психолог съм съгласна с него, ние просто

не можем да си организираме. Виждаш какво става в Белград в момента. Това е друга русофилска, инфилтрирана от руско влияние не е европейска държава. Там проблемът е, че няма кой да оглави опозицията, защото тя е разпръсната и необединена. Но те могат, те имат лидери, имат воля, имат обединение при нас това много по рядко, но идват милионите протести, създава се СДС и хората, първи прилив надежда. Ще ставаме като запада. Ще има демокрация, ще има rule of law, ще има права на човека, частна собственост всеки според заслугите си, а не всички еднакво бедни и тези които малко по напредничаво надолу главата. И се стремим, какво към Европейският съюз и НАТО, и влизаме най накрая в европейския. Изживяваме мутренските години деветдесетте, реида на цялата икономика от бившите служби мутрите, които се появяват като силоващи, за да осигурят да не би нещо да се обърка, разграбването. И това е първа вълна разочарования а бе ние имаме демокрация, нямаме механизми и знания как да си управляваме съдбата, щото не зависи от човека, той е свободен, ама като го рекетират не звучи много готино. И от там някакви първи вълни от носталгия по комунизма, където всичко е сиво покрито, не знаем за изнасилване, не знаем за убийствата, то такива има ама никой нищо не знае, защото контролираме информация. Додропваме до 2007, влизаме в Европейския съюз и защото това беше втора вълна на надежда, защото хората освен икономическата полза от този съюз и голям пазар, по икономически причини ще ставаме по богати когато съм в клуба на богатите а не в клуба на бедните. Ами rule of law, с цялата палитра антикорупция, еднакви права, еднакви закони, еднакво прилагани. И в крайна сметка ние имаме, ние сме една вълна на разширяване, която е компромисна, стратегическа за европейските страни, които не са готови защото те не отговорят на критериите, но аз тук съм съгласна с тактиката на ес. Защото по добре си вътре и да те дооправят, отколкото и да си в орбитата на Русия и Китай, които са автокрации, за никого не са добре, нито за нашето общество, нито за Европейския съюз, който ще има много по голямо население в тези авторитарни региони и групи. Така че ние влизаме в ес с очаквания на хората, те да забогатяват и да има rule of law. И забогатяването, впрочем се случи ние тръгнахме от 30%, някои анализатори, икономисти аз няма да ги оспорвам, дават едни проценти 70 и 80 от състоянието сега на ес със средно. Тоест ние от 30% европейски доход сме стигнали в момента, за не чак толкова дълъг период от време и големи неравенства като baseline, до едно много добро ниво. Но това е защото са изливани средства тука, отварят се пазари.

(42:57) Interviewer: Искам да питам нещо, това важи за София или за цяла България?

(43:00) Interviewee 2: Естествено че важи предимно за София, но и разни хъбове, големи индустриални зони, Стара Загора, Гълъбово, които са европейски гиганти, Бургас и Варна пристанище все пак, Пловдив но разбира се, има и маргинализирани общности, където нито има права, нито икономика и те са буквално свиват. Те са hub на корупцията, защото каквото е останало е държавно и общинско, и крадене и корупция. Дори да искаш да правиш завод, първо няма хора и никой не прави, те си загиват по естествен път. А второ ще ти искат подкупи, за да го направиш и никой няма инициативността. И всъщност това

голямо разочарование, защото окей, икономически ръст обаче засилена миграция ходене в чужбина, а там пък не те приемат с отворени обятия, защото си Българин и си европеец, там искат работа. Докато явно някаква илюзия си имали някой от нашите граждани, и той най изненадващо за хора като мен е, ти се възползваш от свободата на движение, и на труд и взимаш някаква не лоша заплата в Холандия и в същото време гласуваш за хора, които искат да излизаш от ЕС. Той всъщност се обяснява с няколко причини, първо нашето русофилско общество, което е индоктринирано до безвъзвратност, това, че Русия е освободителка и на нея дължим за вечни времена свободата си, което реално не е така и това е доказано отдавна от историците, откакто се отвориха архивите. И всъщност Русия води една своя кампания за разширение на юг, и така реално асимилира то и нашето освобождение, не е освобождение имаме две години руско управление и сме се били за тази свобода, така че дори не този дълг индоктриниран в съзнанието, очевидно скоро няма да бъде изкоренено на този фон Европа се свързва с корупция, защото тя не е успяла да enforce rule of law в България с всичките си механизми. Колкото доклади сме принасяли за върховенство на правото, до преди няколко години беше monitoring CVS механизъм за кооперация и верификация. Той беше не усетено заменен от доклад за върховенство на правото, който до някъде сработва единствено с Унгария, които са толкова зле. Троянският кон на Русия в ЕС, че сега им спряха еврофондовете и те пак си правят каквото си искат и спират евро политики, защото се изисква 100% съгласие не мнозинство, и те като ветират всичко край. И реално това е много разочарование, че всъщност хора като Ursula Von Den Lein, преди това Меркел идваха в България и потупва хора като Бойко Борисов, олицетворение на корупция, потопа на Магнитски, 27 посолства на предизборна среща с ДПС-Пеевски, които го потупват и казват ами ние обсъждахме някои неща, щото той е парламентарна партия. А в същото време хората изпадат в когнитивен дисонанс, защото ти потупваш по гърба санкционирани за корупция от водещи демокрации като Британия и САЩ, без данни без разкриване, но те имат много висок праг, не разкриват защо, но когато те казват, че това са деца които са корумпирани и вредят на интересите на техните държави и на света, ние нямаме повод да се съмнявам, да не говорим че и нашите разследвания водят в тази посока и го доказват. А и в този смисъл като дойдат лидерите на Европейския съюз и потупат тези санкционирани за корупция лица от света и от наши колеги и журналисти, разкрития хората си казват окей ЕС е корупция, защото толерира корупцията от Gerhard Schröder, Günter Verheugen са едни от примерите. Ами значи щом те толерират корупцията и това е запада и разни наративи като крадат ни децата, правят ни гейове, които хващат корен, ами значи ние търсим друга алтернатива и тя е лансирано от псевдо националистически партии като Възраждане, Величие и тем подобни, които идват и си отиват, които искат излизане от Европейския съюз и присъединяване към руско евразийски съюз, защото имаме общо минало освободили ни, те са антикорупцията. Наратива за антикорупция се води от хора като Възраждане от партии като Възраждане, които са абсурдни от демократична гледна точка обаче хващат електорат. И сега сме на някакъв вододел и за съжаление избирането на Тръмп не помага, защото засилва

авторитаризма и Европейския съюз не успява да противодейства нито реално на проблемите с rule of law, за които се борим и нито на сигурността. Защото ние сме заплаха за сигурността си, собствената и на Европейския съюз, и въпреки това ес не намира сили да противодейства дори на това. Единствените, които се вълнуват, но на ниво загриженост, а не реални и сериозни действия да тропнат в Европа са скандинавските държави, Нидерландия, Ирландия и Великобритания.

(48:21) Interviewee 1: Значи ако погледнем структурата на Европа, особено така по числови стойности по брой население, всъщност, не е икономическите гиганти, не е фрагментите на демократичните ценности.. А периферията на Европа се събужда по бързо, отколкото, нали страни, които са по 5, 6, 8, 10 милиона души, като Дания, Швеция, Финландия, Норвегия. Спасението вероятно е да се разработи нова икономическа стратегия на Европа, за да бъде силна, защитена и богата. Коемо могат да направят Франция, и Великобритания, и Германия. Аз даже не изключвам защото следя нещата доста отблизо, и има такива вече много силни настроения самата Великобритания. Разни, нали, че Брекзитът е грешка, по някакъв начин да се реинтегрират, и то се вижда от цялостното поведение и на левите, и на десните, и на центристите, и в това отношение те имат консенсус, слава богу, какво ще стане, и ние не знаем. Има много, много примери в историята на Европа, те показват, че в такива критични моменти те са имали грешна политика и са правили груби грешки. Пример на последните 5–6 години преди началото на Втората световна война. Ей така са жертвали Полша, Чехия. Там уж заради студентите глупости, като го отвориш, какво е говорил британският председател преди, през трийсетте години глупост до глупост. Франция по същия начин пада просто като узряла круша тупва. Те са съвършено безпомощни да вникнат дори не стратегически, а в бъдещето, там 2–3 години. Като чета мемоари на известни политици, нали, то се вижда с просто око. Аз откъде-накъде е да вярвам, че пак няма да сбъркат? От друга страна, нали, това... как да кажа... коя е точната дума... Искам да кажа, че отварянето на Европа към огромни вълни и... но такива имигрантски потоци всъщност до известна степен беше глупаво направено, и грешка. Ти не можеш да пуснеш всички. А тук основният въпрос е: кое ти дава увереност, че ти, нали, постъпваш чисто хуманно е, ги пускаш че те ще се интегрират и те няма да започнат да подменят същината на европейските ценности? На мен, чисто поради възрастовите ми параметри, и повечето ми познати в Европа и в Америка са на моите години нали, съученици, от казармата, състуденти и други те повече са с антиимигрантски настроения. То това не е по-хубаво, отколкото обратното. Но имат страх, че ще им бъде подменен животът и ще ги... и те ги влачат на гърба си нали, семейства с някакви забулени жени с шалвари, които раждат по 10 деца, и те, вярно, ги хранят. И насреща какво се получава? В това отношение ние все още и няма да се случи точно това не сме застрашени поради българската подозрителност и непоносимост към чуждото. И поради това, че сме клани от мюсюлмани и ни е прекъснато естествено историческото развитие. И в това отношение това не са тези псевдопатриотични нагласи на „Атака“, „Възраждане“ и така нататък. Защото те самите, между другото, ако утре дойде тук Путин както всички те са

пропутински настроени, те самите ще ритнат и ще започнат да водят борба. Защото както на всички други, и на тях ще им бъде отнето суверенното право да съществуват, да си решават живота, да правят бизнес, да стават полека-лека все по-заможни. Те самите ще се обърнат. Собствените им поддръжници, гласоподаватели няма да имат милост. Като дойдат руснаците, те няма да направят разлика между мене и Копейките. Ще карат наред, което се е случило и след 9-ти Септември, защото, тука елитите тези, които са наричали буржоазни елити, те са изтрепани изклани, унищожени след 9-ти Септември и покрай тях е заминала голяма част от лявата интелигенция. Включително има нали репресия, на тези, които са вярвали, че комунизма е много светла идея, че той е приложим. И те са заминали на кино, затова мога отделно да седна и 5-6 часа да ти говоря със примери за хора, които са били много високо в комунизма, и в комунистическата йерархия. Такива кадри да речем на високо образовани, идеалисти, и ги правят на нищо просто, изчезват.

(54:23) Interviewer: Ама на тях не им трябват такива хора.

(54:25) Interviewee 1: Не на тях по принцип значи като дойде диктатурата изобщо не им трябват независими и мислещи хора, няма значение. Там демократ ли си либерал ли си какъв си? Наред.

(54:38) Interviewee 2: Затова сега е много притеснително, че въвеждат църковно учение то. Няма нищо лошо

(54:45) Interviewer: Това го видях тази сутрин.

(54:48) Interviewee 2: А нашата православна църква, е като поклон на руската православна църква, пазители на идеалите и семейството, а всъщност на практика, никакъв пазител не е.

(54:57) Interviewee 1: Да, особено значи, синодалните елити, са такива, да речем, надолу ако караме, сред примерно свещеничество, не е чак така, но е тревожно. А е само по себе си странно, защото, аз съм дълбоко убеден, че огромната част от българския народ е атеистичен. Значи тук черквата, господ да ти помага, воденето на Коледа на Великден, това са такива битови традиции, и практики, които нямат нищо общо с вярата, или айде до някъде да имат. Защото всеки човек има нужда да се уповава в нещо, но абсолютно нищо общо нямат, пък особено институциите и църквата. Тя в момента е вредна и ненужна. Аз ако искам да си говоря да допуснем че съм много вярващ, и си говоря с моят поп нямам нужда от посредник. За какво ми е този посредник? В този смисъл съм по скоро будист.

(56:18) Interviewee 2: Ако искаш дай някакви насочващи въпроси да сме по да целенасочени. И като цяло да отговоря на въпроса ти че ние получаваме информация от whistleblowers and media-monitoring, and self-investigation.

(56:36) Interviewer: Значи повече от investigative journalist.

(56:39) Interviewee 2: Да само това правим, ние reporting news не правим.

(56:44) Interviewer: Ами като цяло един друг variable в моята хипотеза е ниското доверие в институциите и като цяло, че нали тази систематична корупция, която вие описахте много добре, е довела всъщност народът да не вярва в институциите като цяло, и че това те ще ги защитят по някакъв начин или ще вземат нещо от тях и ще му помогнат по какъвто и да е начин. И всъщност това допринася на индивидуално ниво за, хората са да се разпръснат и да стават, много по индивидуално мислещи и търсещи ресурси за себе си и за тяхното семейство, как да се изхранват те, отколкото да мислят за благо на обществото и да допринасят и помага по някакъв начин на обществото.

(57:52) Interviewee 2: Значи то първо е личен опит, човек като се сблъсква с каквато и да е обществена институция, било здравеопазване, полиция, защото имаш кражба, той се сблъсква с или невежество и некомпетентност заради отрицателния дълго-годишен подбор там не се слагат merit-based people, то не е за заслуги и качества. Това са наши, шуробаджанащина, онят братовчед, пък оня, не само за да им намериш работа, и така си осигуряваш повече гласоподаватели, като сложиш на стринката, стринката, това са цели общности, които работят за теб, на някаква държавна или общинска работа, и те са лоялни и го гроб. Това е част от електората на ГЕРБ и ДПС, това се години и десетилетия инфилтрирани хора.

(58:39) Interviewee 1: Ми това е сделка, навремето така влизаха хора, които на персонала работата им беше, че дали има или няма комунизъм. Отиваха даже плащаха си, имаше такъв вид разврат да си плащаш да си създадеш връзки с партийните елити. И да те вкарат в партията. Защото като си част от партията кариерно вървиш по добре. Освен това ти дават примерно бележка да си купиш жилище, не ти го подаряват. Проблем беше дори да имаш пари, няма да си купиш кола дори без да чакаш. И вече надолу, нафтови печки, нямаше нафтови печки. Аз съм давал например лв.50. За да може след 3-4 месеца да пробвам да купя нафтова печка. Всичко така беше, но същината нали ако трябва да поставяме диагнозата в момента, значи българина е почти напълно ампутирани от чувство за солидарност, спрямо дори други семе подобни, които вижда, че имат проблеми и страдат. Няма емпатия, той го констатира, и си остава констатирано, и всеки път си казва а тази беда да не ми идва до главата. Второто нещо е, дори когато една общност е достатъчно добре информирана и прогледне за това какви са причините, за тоз, маймунлък, тя не може да се самоорганизира, ние имаме тежък дефицит, ние не можем да се самоорганизираме. И като не можеш ти сам да се организираш на какво се уповаваш, чакаш някой да дойде тоест като вярваш, че някой е твоят лидер. Че той е изразител на твоите надежди, мечти, че той ще прожектира, там и съответно неговата силна политическа, или някаква организация и ти чакаш. Те не са състрадателни, или ако са състрадателни са пасивно състрадателни. Не могат да се самоорганизират. Това е включително на ниво етажна собственост. Аз имам такива и там където живея хора които трябва да си сменят топломерите, да направят ремонт на тръби или покривът тече, каквото ще да е, не могат да се самоорганизират, да седнат и да стигнат до едно решение, в което

да кажат оттук нататък трябва да се направи второ, трето, четвърто трябва да се финансира цялата тази работа, защото няма кой друг, дайте по лв.100 примерно и решаваме проблема.

(1:01:17) Interviewee 2: Аз да добавя, че дори да се случи този феномен да се самоорганизируют и да го припознаят като общ интерес. После лично в моята етажна собственост, ето тук личните примери. После започва едно недоверие към касиера, едва ли не е изхарчил част от парите за себе си. Тоест те нямат доказателство, а базисно съмнение, че този който е взел да управлява парите, не стига дето се е нагърбил безплатно да отделя от времето си, организацията за общото благо е достатъчно неблагодарна работа тук и няма благодарност, има подозрения тоест към този човек, че е така. И излезе едно много интересно социологическо проучване на Alpha research който все пак са едни от добрите агенции в България. Извиняваме съмнението тука, то беше измерител на кого вярва българина всъщност има критично ниско доверие към властите, то най вече към изпълнителна малко повече към президента, защото той по дефиниция е мажоритарен вот нали избор за един човек не е партия. И критично малко NPO on the rise, защото филантропски организации като там беше, подкрепа за Украйна имаше за ковид имаше помощ. Някак си леко се организирахме в такива големи кризи. Имаше appreciation от обществото, че дори БЧК има някаква добронамереност и хората даваха за да помогнат на майките от Украйна, на ковид пострадали хора останали сами. Тоест малко по голямо доверие, но и на нашата организация беше цитирана, защото са тези джуджета който разкриват всъщност, ако не си го гледала, го препоръчвам, които разкриват как се случва корупцията и покриването в съдебната система. Така че доверието към нас е бавно, но расте, бавно заради наративи, че ние сме чужди агенти и така нататък, по дефиниция чуждо финансирани. Но Българина се оказа в това интересно разследване че вярва само на близкия си кръг и семейство и много близки приятели на другите не вярва, първо защото се е сблъсквал с това, второ защото той самият е участвал в корупция. Нали и той е дал рушвет на пътя и вместо да плати там лв.400 глоба, казва дай на тебе 100 и всички са доволни, полиция е със 100 лева повече този от нашия човек е участвала в корупционна сделка и е спечелил от нея. Само 100 лева, иначе 400. Така че фона на това, че то е заложено използват това, как да имаш доверие, че всичките ти братовчеди са нагласени на работа, защо да имаш доверие че в София, нещата са станали базирани на умения на служителите и като отидеш в болница си сам, то е един хаос. Постоянно има разследвания как са източвали касата има. Ти пък contribute със здравните си вноски, за да получиш качествена здравна грижа и накрая защо ги давам? То ако на хората им дадат избор да си остават и лв.800 не по фондовете и данъци, за да могат да си ги акумулират и си ги изхарчат на тезгяха на доктора та поне да получат директна качествена грижа, аз съм сигурна, че 99% ще кажат, дайте си ми 800-те няма фондове, аз ще си ги ползвам доплащат.

(1:05:03) Interviewer: Със сигурност. Познавам, моите близки са така.

(1:05:09) Interviewee 2: Когато получаваш разочарование, или нямаш силни лидери, или злото е организирано пък доброто е слабо и лидерите му са по слаби, и получаваш от европейските лидери, на които разчиташ откън да ни извадят от блатото. Лаура Къовеши, европейската комисия, партньори и те потупват корупционнерите по гърба. И ти нямаш котва за която да се хванеш.

(1:05:32) Interviewee 1: Не, проблемът е във дефицитът на ценности. Нали, аз съм гледал, и все още гледам, всякакви изследвания. Примерно погледнеш, кои са най-гледания, гледаните предавания по телевизиите и ще разбереш колко е осакатена ценностната система в България.

(1:05:46) Interviewee 2: Ергенът ли аз само съм го чувала. Не съм го гледала.

(1:05:48) Interviewee 1: Чалга, и такива някакви шоуа, включително в тях тежко дискриминационни, където жената е стока. Второто нещо е анализ на книжния пазар. Какво се продава? И колко? Третото нещо е от гледна точка на как функционира банковата система и какво става с тези, нали savings на хората. България между другото е рекордьор по пари, държани под дюшеци, и примерно такива начини. Всичко това издава тежка ценностна криза, и недоверие. Българина разчита, че той си е той, неговите интереси са си неговите, той не се припознава с държавата, и нали непрекъснато каквото и да се случва, той се стреми да вземе мерки, да бъде защитен, от държавата. Значи за българина държавата не е неговата държава. Не казвам, че всички са така, но прекалено голяма част, и понеже не може да се самоорганизира. Нали да извика Пешо, Иван, Гошо, да седнат и да кажат ние, нали поне едно хайдушко движение тук да измислим, да организираме, нищо не се случва. А понеже е недоверчив и завистлив, не може да бъде организиран и външно, защото той не вярва на лидерите, поради това че има завист, хейтърство, и тази, особено след хората, които имат частично, или не напълно нереализирани лични проекти. Те се чувстват оцетени, изкуствено държани на дъното, бедни, и понеже е една бедна държава. Това все пак бих казал е една прекалено голяма част от социума, и ще е така, докато е бедна, а няма да стане богата докато е така. Ако успеят например да им вземат парите и да ги извадят от под дюшеците, ще е позитивно, леко ще се усети. Ако по някакъв начин се пробуди някаква еманация, на това то няма да е много добре, но ще е по-добре, отколкото нищо. Но това, което повечето хора си мислят включително тези които завиждат хейстерстват, да създадат те един елит политически и да кажат ето това е новият Кирил Петков, това е новият Бойко Борисов, нещо такова. Пак нищо няма да стане, защото той няма, на него му е вродено, това е дефект, да делегира правото на другият който вместо него, защото той е прост, неспособен и некадърен и той, и жена му, и брат му, и всичките му там, с които пият и гледат мачове, да делегира това право и те да решават. И понеже в момента няма нито една, от комуникационна гледна точка, добре оперираща политическа сила или каквато и да е организация, не се случва. Нали дефектите които направиха, ПП и ДБ. Те не успяха така да си преформатират езика, през който си излъчват посланията, така че да ги разберат поне два пъти повече хора. То не става само с упование и надежда,

защото примерите, как вярват хората че айде, ще се махне Борисов, когато Славчо изкара най големи проценти и ИТН. Това на какво се дължи? Значи, не че те са направили някакъв много фин анализ на Славчовите качества и на хората около него, просто са се молили да се махнат онези и да дойдат някакви други. Същото стана с него също стана с ПП. И така както стана после какво се случи? Те не могат, хора, включително които аз уважавам, харесвам от политическите горе лица не могат да говорят на езика, който да е разбираем и достъпен на достатъчно много хора. Те стоят външни на системата, външни не проблемите, чужди, назидателни, или пък прекалено усукано и сложно. Очевидно е, че има в цял свят политици които не само Харвард, а 5 Харварда са завършили, обаче умеят да говорят така, че другите да се заслушват. Това тук го няма. И частично този проблем е психологически, те изобщо не си правят труда да разберат нали това, което се излъчва мултиплицирано в пространството докъде стига и как стига. Има препоръчвам има един психолог, професор Пламен Димитров, той е много известен, на моите години. Той започна преди може би 3 години да прави едно голямо психологическо изследване, което обхваща само не гласуващите. И там е ключа от чекмеджето и се оказва нещо много интересно, далеч не е вярно, че това са хора с ниска образователна ценност, че са бедни или полу-бедни. Значи имат имущество, това са всякакви хора. Това са 2/3 примерно от всички живи хора имащи право на глас. И там трябва да се хвърлят усилията за да се направи една програма, основно казано някакъв проект за излъчване, чуване, разбиране, активиране, и действие.

(1:11:30) Interviewer: Но определено тази информация според мен трябва да стигне до, не знам всички хора, а не само до една общност, която се занимава с това и също.

(1:11:52) Interviewee 1: Не може на човек, който не е прочел нищо през последните 20 години, нито една книга, и примерно е гледал 500 мача, и е вечен познавач на всички видове чалга да му говориш по този начин, и когато той разбира, че не разбира започва да те хейти. Това нали в такива микро мащаби може да се анализира. Примерно в университетските среди, където има преподаватели, където студентите ги слушат с отворена уста, защото той умее да им говори. Дори, които общо взето са с неутрално отношение и които и такива, които просто едвам ги издържат, защото нищо не чуват, а и да чуват не могат да разберат. Аз това нещо го усетих когато аз бях студент в Софийския университет, защото все още тогава може би около половината от моите преподаватели в Софийския университет, философски факултет, бяха хора завършили преди деветдесетте, друга система, всичко беше различно, друга култура и от време на време пускаха едни изследвания. От института за изследване на младежта. В по големите висши учебни заведения, в България, и аз като анкетьор, защото давах някакви пари и нали щях да ставам социолог и участвах. И накрая всичките ги засекретиха, защото изводите от научно направени, преди още много, преди да бъдат разпечатани и публикувани, показваха от гледна точка на студентите. Даже такива деца на активни борци, консулски активисти, избрани комунисти партийци, натегачи дори и те разбираха, че оня от старата школа,

говори по по-подобаващ и подходящ начин. Имаше примерно голямо национално изследване, което беше за нагласите на младостта и как те виждат себе си, в бъдещето си. И то беше със катастрофални резултати, защото, първо показва, че общо взето почти всички избрали, които са имали право на избор, специалност за която са си мислили, че ще им гарантира на първо място, доходи и просперитет. Това нали, че аз много харесвам биологията или че искам да броя звездите да стана астроном, беше трагично. Друг извод, много страшен беше, че още 78-ма година, една година преди да завърша, че около 86% от младежта в България ако има възможност ще се махнат от България, още от тогава. А третото беше едно национално изследване за функционалната грамотност и изобщо за грамотността на българския народ така да се каже. Там се оказа, че още 78-ма година 66 или 60 и нещо процента се оказаха, че са функционално неграмотни, че те виждат, буква по буква, дума по дума, обаче не може да вникне в това, което е прочел, а да пише абсурд. И те го бяха направили много хитро, имаше един секретар на комитета, Стоян Михайлов, професор по социология. Беше приложил много хитър инструментариум, за да не ги стресират, защото никой не вярва, че е анонимно и ги карат да си пишат биографиите, резултатът беше потресаващ. Като най-запращаващото беше че без дори да е комсомолски активист, партиен член, и какво място заема в съответните йерархии, че горе долу равномерно разпределена функционалната неграмотност. Кое то показва, че хора са израснали, не поради качествата си, а поради такива идеологически причини, че са ги бутали, те така ги внедряваха и за това катастрофира икономиката тогава, защото правят някой, който са му подарили диплома за агроном. Правят го шеф на ТКЗС, или на АПК а той е глупак, некадърник в цялата индустрия. Те във всичките бивши подобни предприятия, Кремиковци, Радомир, каквото се сетиш те поради това се сринаха. Слагаха хора които са подбирани по чисто такъв принцип, лоялност към партията, каквото и да значи това. Като погледнеш самият Тодор Живков е един уникален простак. Обаче как е управлявал толкова години?

(1:17:45) Interviewee 2: Оставихме ли въпрос не отговорен от социологическа и психологическа гледна точка?

(1:17:48) Interviewer: Не, благодаря много за интервюто.

Translation of second interview in English:

(0:00) Interviewer: We can actually start, right, from the transformation from communism to democracy, in fact, how did it contribute to how things are now?

(0:22) Interviewee 1: In this case there is something that should be said before we reach the point of transformation, that corruption in Bulgaria has very deep roots. Of course, nowadays it looks completely different. It existed back then and during the whole period that they then called a mature socialist society. There were two main reasons why there was some corruption. The first reason was that due to the very specifics of the planned economy, where everything is state-determined and regulated, there was an equalization of the income of everyone, no matter who works how much, who is conscientious, diligent or, conversely, lazy or useless. People who wanted to live better started, I was still a child when I realized this, they were tempted to generate some income in another way. The second reason is that in the conditions of this anti-market economy there were severe deficits for everything that people wanted to have. I can give an example. For example, for ideological reasons, this is one of the reasons, for example, if you want to buy, let's say, record plates with some music or tapes with recordings or something there were nowhere to be found. And you resort to people who are intermediaries, who find smuggling or in some way, and you add some money there, and in this way you get these things. Especially for women's clothing, men's clothing, there were no jeans. For example, there were no shoes, especially for women, it was very difficult, all this created an environment in which the role of these intermediaries was becoming bigger and bigger. I have done this myself, but I have been engaged in two things, the supply of music or video on different media, absolutely illegal. And the other thing, which is scarce parts for cars and it was noticed on cars of socialist production, they were not imported into Bulgaria and although they are from other socialist countries, after all, Soviet Muscovites, Zhiguli, Lada, Czech Skodas and so on and from the GDR, there were no Trabants. And I have had cases when something that costs for example, if it is in the store but you can very hardly find it, for example, it costs 30-40 leva, I find it and I can sell it immediately for 200. The basis of corruption is precisely in those distant times, when somehow the people, out of necessity, they accepted that there was no other way but this, and I dare say that the vast majority of the Bulgarian population then took advantage of these schemes to obtain something. From this, of course, the intermediaries profit. So when the year 89-90 comes and we are just moving towards a market economy, although the deficits are decreasing, people are still poor, they are still currently the poorest in the European Union. This thing was either by inertia, or because of the impossibility, because of another way to get something, and I say this is the everyday thinking, there is nothing wrong with it, but so poverty itself is not a vice, but it is, as we are told, it generates vices. And in the end, everyone becomes vicious, and the conclusion is that there was and is a natural environment and it is in the mentality of people. This is such a national psychological indicator, not to be critical of such things at all. There are, of course, especially in recent years there are such peaks of awakening and discontent, but they are usually related to some dramatic event, a child who died on the road, someone died in a hospital,

especially children. As we are currently in such a peak, but this is sporadic and will not lead to a change in the symptoms, thinking, analyzing the corruption environment. In Bulgaria, the basis of the corruption pyramid is very different than, for example, in Western Europe. Because there, everything that has happened and is happening, as well as, in other more industrialized countries, where there was not 100% ownership of property and means of production by the state, there has always been private property. For example, in Greece, Turkey, even in Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslavia, in some of the socialist countries there was also no full nationalization, for example, Poland was not nationalized, the land remained with the people.

Interviewee 1: Here I practically exonerate the people to a certain extent, because they have lived this life under compulsion and necessity and for this they look at it not from a critical way. Practically, what is happening at the moment, the severe corruption, which is especially at the highest levels of power, and is in total synergy with the large companies created by the cracks in the former State Security (DANS) and the Communist Party, which have taken over all structurally determining sectors of the economy, the problem is in this synergy. This is practically unsolvable, no matter how much you know, even if there is an opportunity to speak out loud about what is going on, to point out the guilty, and so on, nothing changes, we do not get better every next year. Here, if we talk about SOCIOMA when it was happening, this continues habituation, dullness, and uncriticalness of people who cannot tie that everything that has been taken or stolen in this criminal way, it comes out of the same pocket, out of their pocket, there is nowhere else it can come from. The person who supposedly democratically chooses who will govern him, obviously, cannot understand that all the resources and public funds, comes from him and it can be very easily calculated, some calculations are made by smart people and published, more or less for every stratum of society, depending on this commitment, salary, age group, insurance, and so on. More or less how much is taken from each person, right, in order to enter the treasury and from there to be spent. And the vice is already in this spending, because, for example, highways are three times more expensive than, say, Germany or Austria, everything is more expensive. Purely psychologically, this is the biggest problem, that now many people say, they boiled the frog. The frog was already boiled back in 89. The Bulgarian because, if we except that his socks and toothbrush are his personal belongings, everything in Bulgaria was owned by the state. There was absolutely no private business here, I exclude the last 2 years, when the old nomenclature came up with this decree 56 so that they could be the first to set up companies, register it and now, gradually bud and take over the entire economy, which is what happened. This is not only sin of the former Communist Party, which later became a socialist one. This is a certain degree in the years, especially in the 90s, the end of the year 2000 the coming of the king. If we look at this whole field of action where all these things that are developing, they managed to produce derivatives because they realized that if everything continues to be concentrated in one party, which is theirs and they feed it, regardless of what it is called, it will be targeted by people and at some point it will be very easy for them to say: These are looters, thieves, rich owners, robbers and so on, and in fact they have begun to create proxies in the form of nationalist parties, liberal parties, and so on, and they are now everywhere. The

interesting thing is that they have worked out their scenario so perfectly that the so-called capitalists appointed at one time have succeeded and manage to create proxies and now they have formed a class, it is a class, I am not ashamed to call it that. Which was created by the creators and continues to work and in fact, when the time comes for elections, this kind of middle and high officials appointed in state and municipal structures, this structure defends itself. And even if we assume that at the moment they remove Boyko Borisov automatically, for example, shoot either Delyan Peevski or Rumen Radev or all the others there, this thing will continue and here is the big problem. If we try to be visionaries and think strategically, because this suffering, because this stratum it continues to defend itself and reproduce itself to a very large extent, all corruption schemes do not come exactly from the top, there are such, right, but there is just cash out and they are fed. It is a living organism.

Interviewer: Which evolves over time...

Interviewee 1: And there is no way to stop it, except with strict application of the law, which, as we all know, does not happen, because the political class, artificially created industrialists and financiers and so on, they have found a way and have made in their own image and likeness the judicial system, especially the prosecutor's office, which serves them. No one ever enroaches on those who, so to speak, have created a breeding ground and prerequisites for the existence of such people. This, of course, the poor Bulgarian people, I am already talking about the average significant person, cannot cover it.

Interviewer: And why do you think it can't cover it?

Interviewee 1: Because it was not done in the way the privatization should have been done. There was no reform in the education system. Because, two groups of absolutely harmful people were pushed into the political elites, former cops or infiltrators. Even if they weren't cops or infiltrators they were just fools, careerists who pushed themselves into the all-powerful UDF, and then into all the others, and realized that this is a warm cover and it brings them some benefits, this applies to practically all existing significant political individuals in Bulgaria. But let's say, if I have to say in one sentence what is the biggest problem. The biggest problem is that the system allows absolutely incompetent and even harmful people to occupy key positions, even if they are not corrupt, they are permeable. A very favorite example of mine is the silence of the magistrates, so not all magistrates are reprobate and corrupt, the silence of the part that should be innocent from the point of view of the law, well, why are they silent, and that is one of the big problems, for people like her, I am not a lawyer. To understand what is the ratio of those who actively suck and tear skins, because they generate a monthly income many times higher than their already big salaries than the rest. And if I were a psychologist, I would try to do a study to understand why others are silent? Because there are no other resources, even if we start in a very intelligent, bold way, a reform of the judicial system, where would we find such people right, they are very scarce, people who have graduated in law, especially people who, presumably, in

addition to giving them some diploma at the South-West University, can more or less think. Because the most important thing is to be able to think.

(15:55) Interviewer: And do you think this comes from the idea, at least now when I think about it, I imagine that they are silent in order to keep their position there?

(16:06) Interviewee 1: Yes, they are silent out of fear, they are silent just like the people who were once called non-thinkers even during communism, they saw and understood everything, they did not touch anything forbidden, they did not benefit, but they were silent, because if they open their mouths, the power will take away even the little they have. There are already other factors, and let's say the external factor. I am simplifying things absolutely, right, why did the European political families recognize, say, GERB and put them in the formation of the European People's Party, if necessary, even approximately, but it is also provable, maybe without being approximate, they are considered part of the biggest corruption schemes and the biggest drain of fisc is during the rule of GERB, here and there with the cooperation of the UDF, who played with them unofficially, sometimes officially, and so on. During the time of the king too, thank god it did not last so long. Purely politically, I give and yesterday we also talked here with the Swedish ambassador, the question: Why is GERB in the formation of a European People's Party, knowing that Boyko Borisov is a criminal and that many people, so to speak, at the creation of GERB, during its first wave, the second, the third, because there were personnel changes there, some left, others were thrown out: Why are they there? And the other thing, where did the party created by the Bulgarian cops, URF, was recognized there by the liberal international in Aldi, wasn't it? They speculated about this there for many years and they said we are Europeans, we are Atlanticists and so on, especially those who ruined the agricultural sector and animal husbandry in Bulgaria and stole absolutely everything. And because no one wants to answer these questions, most likely there are two hypotheses: either the European politicians and officials who allowed this thing are stupid, or that some of them have entered into serious corruption schemes, as we know with the former chancellor of Germany, Gerhard Schröder. Who went and became a Russian employee, director of Gazprom or with Günter Verheugen, they are examples.

(18:48) Interviewee 2: Just to clarify that Schröder becomes a member of the board of Gazprom in the branch in Germany with a salary of about 5 million euros per year. And Günter Verheugen similarly became a member of the board of the largest builder in Bulgaria "Glavbolgarstroy", which is involved in a number of corruption scandals and has traditionally gained experience by building large, state-owned infrastructure construction, projects, and so when you have a track record, it's very easy to earn.

(19:18) Interviewee 1: A commander of NATO forces in Europe, General Wesley Clark, he has been retired for a long time now, he joined Barekov's party and became his guru and tutor. That is, I am not saying this to exonerate the Bulgarian people, who are asleep, and congested, and frightened, and worried, it is true. But it is not yet critical, there is still some civil society

movement, I want to emphasize and to point out that I am very angry at the external forces, of the people who were supposed to educate us and make us more civilized, that is also very important.

(20:05) Interviewer: And in fact, what happened when the EU entered the European Union became even worse and things changed for...

(20:17) Interviewee 1: You can see it with the naked eye, you know, when you walk around Europe, in Britain, in the European Union, and everywhere it was full of Russians and all sorts of other communist oligarchs who just because they go with the money forward, like in Cyprus, and do whatever they want. And now in America, what Trump is doing, where for \$5 million he will give them gold cards, well, Delyan Peevski must have already applied for such a golden card. I do not exonerate either the behavior here of the society as a whole, nor of those who have to comply with the law, because there are also honest magistrates, but they are lonely, some have built criminal networks, some of which are very well brought to light in our investigations, such as Petyo the Euro, Martin Bozhanov – the Notary and others. And the others do not have criminal networks, but they need some, how to say, coalition of the immaculate magistrates, but they should not be cowards. Which is not done only by going to protests and shouting, nothing will happen. I am a witness to all the ups and downs of the first UDF, the second UDF, the peeling off of blue scales, the division of what was the UDF into three, a fratricidal war, right, between some who wanted to be more right-wing, and others said no, the path is social democracy, real democracy is social democracy. And I see that there is a defect in the mentality of the Bulgarians, which is described, by the way, not only by sociologists and social psychologists, but it is even described by a large part of the old Bulgarian writers. By the way, if you open and read from the point of view of profiles of the main characters in the Under the Yoke, you will see that there is practically no one there who is perfect, impeccable, and so on. Even bright images have an awful lot of quirks such as gullability, naivety, excessive idealism and so on. But the majority are either such silent scoundrels or active scoundrels, like Kirak Stefcho. This is in Aleko Konstantinov, and Stoyan Mihaylovski, Konstantin Konstantinov, all our great authors. Not a single great Bulgarian writer praises what we would like to be so, isn't it, at the top, to be the pride of our tribe, the Bulgarian intelligentsia. Now, of course, because in a more effective way after September 9th, the huge part of the Bulgarian intelligentsia was killed, another small part was silenced, a third small part was in some kind of symbiotic relationship, a fourth small part fled, we are simply castrated there. And I think this is important, because everything that happens is causally related to everything before. For example, here I notice and I am sure that there is already a very worrying trend, including diplomatic and senior political officials in the embassies of developed democracies, to enter such, how can I say here I have to be careful, some symbiotic ties or at least, such a tacit agreement, so that they do not spoil their fun and in the non-governmental sector there is this. And now, especially after the shutdown of the taps, this collusion and silence will reach epidemiological proportions. And it is bad, and on

the other hand, maybe it is good, because at some point we have to hit the bottom so that some critical mass of people wake up.

(24:55) Interviewer: And is this moment coming, in your opinion?

(25:00) Interviewee 1: Well, I want to, but there is no way, I can't measure processes accurately enough. For example, I do not trust any sociological agency in Bulgaria, because I also have a master's degree in sociology, I have worked a long time ago during the SOC, I went to various studies, and since then they are the same people who are an emanation of the previous ones, who have started to do something there with this science or are even direct participants, especially my generation. They are, how can I say, prone to conformism, at least not to say that they are also spoiled people and they do it because they have to survive.

(25:52) Interviewer: They try to keep quiet.

(25:55) Interviewee 1: Let's call it by the most innocent term, they are a little permeable, well, they are not the same, of course. They use methods that they do not really apply, they write above how, what, stochastic, representative, nationally representative, but this is not the case, depending on the message, because they also carry a soul, they have to eat something. They enjoyed the fact that they were without control, sometimes someone shouted, especially when there was a discrepancy between forecasts and results after the elections. But even there it is very difficult to blame anyone, because with this bought, manipulated vote, fear, and especially in the periphery of the country, especially the countryside, it is monstrous, you cannot predict anything. I don't know, if they give us millions to assemble a real team, absolutely the entire system I work with to be perfect and honest, incorruptible people, I can not make a real forecast, because how do I know in a month who, where, and what money will be spit out and where they will be beaten to be told who to vote or not to vote for. We have such studies, 2-3 years ago, where it is seen, for example, that there are polling stations in which in one election they vote, say, I give a literal example, 70 percent vote for the patriots like VMRO, Valeri Simeonov, ATAKA and so on, in a few months or in a year 80% vote for UDF, these are the same people in the same section. Where to proceed?

(27:58) Interviewer: There are so many things to do.

(28:01) Interviewee 1: Well, it sucks, I can't promise anything, I can't promise my own children, but the worse is that I can't make a prediction.

(28:25) Interviewer: And why did you decide to stay in Bulgaria?

(28:30) Interviewee 1: Because I believed that everything would get better very quickly. I had an offer to stay to improve my English to learn a little, everything was paid to me by my very wealthy and influential friends either at the University of Denver, Colorado or at the University of California, I had an offer yes, I stayed to work then was the second largest TV channel, personally from the owner and I did none of this. It seemed to me that, after all, there would

come a moment when there would be transparency, freedom of speech, you would be able to live with dignity, you would not be poor and think about food, heating and where your children should be educated, and so, and from this point of view I made a mistake, on the other hand, I have never been bored. And now I'm too old to be afraid, which makes things easier.

(29:43) Interviewer: Are there any reasons to be afraid?

(29:45) Interviewee 1: Well, there is, we are one with the flow. And the most unpleasant thing is that the people we have believed have even been for a while, so to speak, our stubbornness, traditional allies, lately we feel that they are hesitant.

(30:02) Interviewer: Because they are also afraid or?

(30:04) Interviewee 1: We give an elementary example, we are generally funded by the America for Bulgaria Foundation and traditionally this and other similar organizations have supported them from there, after the departure of the previous ambassador, Mrs. Hero Mustafa, we had, I have had several meetings, some of my colleagues too. Ambassador Merte came, none of us could get in touch with him, we did not have any invitation for contacts and conversations, nothing. This is a symptom, that is, Trumpism began before.

(30:47) Interviewee 2: Just to add that Herro Mustafa came with two statements in his mandate, anti-corruption and energy, and Mr. Merte I do not say anything against him.

(30:58) Interviewee 1: Mr. Merte did not mention any of these words at the hearing of the chairman's committee where he was confirmed as ambassador for Bulgaria.

(31:08) Interviewee 2: Not in his speech.

(31:09) Interviewee 1: In nothing, it can be very easily found.

(31:10) Interviewee 2: Somehow he succeeded throughout his term, which turned out to be terminated ahead of schedule.

(31:18) Interviewee 1: Yes, it was terminated in less than 24 hours.

(31:20) Interviewee 2: Unprecedented, but he was, nowhere did he say those two words, which were key components to the previous one.

(31:32) Interviewee 1: Same time, now, maybe this will make you so happy, in fact, from the last two mandates of the ambassadors of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the current one, Uncle Simo I call him, perfectly cool man understands everything, he is interested, calls us to drink beers, before him there was a lady very cool, charming, she was absolutely cute, intelligent, brave and so on. In this respect, at the other end, on the rock, are the German ambassadors. Considering that the previous one was from the CDU, right, the Merkel era. Then came a lady who is like that, she is a social democrat, again nothing, zero. Those in the Nordic version of the Scandinavian ambassadors are activated. So the Sri Lankans, the current super cute and the

previous one were very cool. Quite a large degree of Denmark. The Swedish ambassador who was here yesterday, they are all coming, but nothing. They want to help, they are pushing us there, but she will tell you later, in general, what they are giving for. In general, what do they give for. At the same time, our partner the organization America for Bulgaria, and whoever there is constantly pressuring us, and in order not to be blamed, make efforts, look for funding, the financing of the anti-corruption fund must be diversified and so we are under pressure. They understand very well that when you have America for Bulgaria as a donor, where they give you money, who else will give you, they say you have a donor, but on the other hand, they have not even made an effort to check that until now, at the present moment, and probably in the future, no one in Europe gives money for investigations, they give for other things. They are pushing us to do civic education, to catch and to train some people, to talk nonsense to them about corruption, as we are talking about it now. And even if I tell this to some children, pupils or students, or it doesn't matter. They don't want to listen because they're afraid. They want us to train people how to counteract corruption. You can't counteract because there were no tools for gathering information, you don't know anything. Everything is black boxes and all deals, like my favorite example, the one where they caught someone with 50 and how many millions in cash for the Hemus highway, these are black boxes. Although some have been caught or information is leaked somewhere, nothing happens, because we not have a prosecutor to initiate proceedings, nothing. In this sense, we are a slightly meaningless organization at this point, because we scratch the egos and rejoice, but to a very limited segment of the living moving people in Bulgaria. If we talk about numbers, there are numbers. All this is connected to a consumption of information and an outpouring of resentment and anger in social media and so on.

(35:20) Interviewer: And what measures are you actually taking to change this in some way?

(35:25) Interviewee 1: Well, what to change, we are 10 people, what to change, we mind our own business, we take out facts, everything is checked 1000 and one times so that we cannot be sued, convicted. Yes, and if something is unfinished, it is not true.

(35:42) Interviewer: Yes, I saw that most of your team are lawyers.

(35:45) Interviewee 1: Well, by the way, for such an organization, it should be more or less like that, because in our country the attack is also a defense. I am generally the most useless person here in this organization, because I am not a lawyer, I am just angry, nothing else. They are very united as people, very creative. But, the effect will decrease unless for some reason or a series of reasons some social explosion occurs, but what has happened so far is not enough.

(36:48) Interviewer: And in what way do you add information about corruption schemes?

(36:53) Interviewee 2: I will answer the question, I will say a few sentences above the previous topic for context. We are seven years old, he is the living history of the transition and before the transition, he literally saw things that we did not see or were young children. And this context is very important to understand, first of all, this context is not understood by our Western partners,

but we are in one big European family with common goals. And the big problem is that they do not fully understand it, they simply cannot imagine this endemic corruption, and they know what corruption is, there are these phenomena in their societies, but the causes, the genesis and the way, this pandemic they cannot comprehend, this is one of our main conclusions from the last seven years. Because we regularly communicate with the diplomatic corps, literally because they write reports, and they go around us, not that we want so much, but we are used to it, because they are looking for reliable information from us. Because the government always gives them a powdered version, some reports, some statistics from which they will tell themselves, that it is not so bad. But when you take out the real schemes with proof, things don't look like that anymore. And I will go from afar, but faster, and I will get to today and answer your question. So, communism, discontent, we are all infinitely poor, there is a lack of information on purpose, we keep them poor and in ignorance not to know how good it is in the West and how rich they are, what is the scissor. Everyone has some enlightenment, they have traveled abroad in some way, however, or a friend of his, and we all know that it is better off economically outside and there is no such nonsense that the bad imperialists steal children, turn everyone into gays and so on, and at some point the changes come to a nation that is deeply Russophile, because of the mantras that they have liberated us, because they are very good. With this Russophile lie of the society in ignorance and what has already been depicted quite extensively as national psychology, the changes come, and we see the largest protests in Bulgaria, for a number of reasons Interviewee 1 has said it many times as a good psychologist I agree with him, we simply cannot organize. You see what is happening in Belgrade at the moment. This is another Russophile, infiltrated by Russian influence is not a European country. The problem there is that there is no one to lead the opposition, because it is scattered and ununited. But they can, they have leaders, they have will, they have unity, this is much rarer in our country, but the millions of protests come, the UDF and the people are created, the first surge of hope. We will become like the West. There will be democracy, there will be rule of law, there will be human rights, private property each according to our own merits, and not all equally poor and those who are a little more progressive with the head down. And we are striving, towards the European Union and NATO, and we are finally entering the European Union. We lived through the thug years of the nineties, the raid of the entire economy by the former services, the thugs, who appeared strong to ensure that something did not go wrong, the looting. And this is the first wave of disappointments, and we have democracy, we have no mechanisms and knowledge of how to manage our destiny, because it does not depend on the person, he is free, but when he is racketeered it does not sound very cool. And from there come the first waves of nostalgia for communism, where everything is covered in grey, we don't know about rape, we don't know about murders, then there are such, but no one knows anything, because we control the information. We are dragging ourselves to 2007, we are entering the European Union also because it was a second wave of hope, because people, in addition to the economic benefit of this union and a big market, for economic reasons we will become richer when I am in the club of the rich and not in the club of the poor. Well, the rule of law, with the whole palette of anti-

corruption, the same rights, the same laws, equally applied. And in the end, we have, we are a wave of enlargement, which is a compromise, strategic for European countries that are not ready because they do not meet the criteria, but here I agree with the tactics of the EU. Because it is better to be inside and get better, than to be in the orbit of Russia and China, which are autocracies, are not good for anyone, neither for our society, nor for the European Union, which will have a much larger population in these authoritarian regions and groups. So we enter the EU with people's expectations that they get rich and there will be a rule of law. And the enrichment, by the way, we started from 30%, some analysts, economists, I will not dispute them, give some 70 and 80 percent of the current state of the EU with an average. That is, we have reached a very good level starting from 30% European income, for a not so long period of time and large inequalities like the baseline, to a very good level at the moment. But this is because funds have been poured here, markets are opening.

(42:57) Interviewer: I want to ask something, does this apply to Sofia or to the whole of Bulgaria?

(43:00) Interviewee 2: Of course, it applies mainly to Sofia, but also various hubs, large industrial zones, Stara Zagora, Galabovo, which are European giants, Burgas and Varna port after all, Plovdiv, but of course, there are also marginalized communities where there are neither rights nor economy and they are literally collapsing. They are the hub of corruption, because what is left is state and municipal, and theft and corruption. Even if you want to build a factory, first there are no people and no one does, they die naturally. And secondly, they will ask you for bribes to do it and no one has the initiative. And in fact, this is a big disappointment, because okay, economic growth, but increased migration, going abroad, and there you are not accepted with open arms, because you are Bulgarian and you are European, they want a job there. While apparently some of our citizens had some illusion, and he is the most surprising for people like me, you take advantage of the freedom of movement and work and take some good salary in the Netherlands and at the same time vote for people who want you to leave the EU. It is actually explained by several reasons, firstly, our Russophile society, which is indoctrinated to the point of irrevocability, the fact that Russia is a liberator and to it we owe our freedom forever, which is not really the case and this has been proven long ago by historians since the archives were opened. And in fact, Russia is leading one of its own campaigns for expansion to the south, and so it actually assimilates it and our liberation, it is not liberation, we have two years of Russian rule and we have fought for this freedom, so not even this duty indoctrinated in the mind, obviously it will not be eradicated soon. Given this background, Europe is associated with corruption, because it has failed to enforce the rule of law in Bulgaria with all its mechanisms. How many reports we have submitted about the rule of law, until a few years ago there was a monitoring CVS mechanism for cooperation and verification. It was not perceptibly replaced by a rule of law report, which to some extent works only with Hungary, which is so bad. Russia's Trojan horse in the EU is that now they have stopped their EU funds and they are still doing what they want and stopping Euro policies, because 100% consent is required, not a majority, and they

veto everything. And in reality, it is a very disappointing fact that people like Ursula Von Den Lein, before that Merkel came to Bulgaria and patted people like Boyko Borisov, the personification of corruption, the Magnitsky political crisis flood, 27 embassies at a pre-election meeting with MRF-Peevski, who pat him and say well, we discussed some things, because he is a parliamentary party. And at the same time, people fall into cognitive dissonance because you pat on the back sanctioned for corruption by leading democracies like Britain and the United States, without data, without disclosure, but they have a very high threshold, they don't disclose why, but when they say that these are children who are corrupt and harm the interests of their countries and the world, we have no reason to doubt, not to mention that our investigations lead in this direction and prove it. And in this sense, when the leaders of the European Union come and pat these sanctioned for corruption persons from the world and from our colleagues and journalists, revelations, people say okay EU is corruption, because it tolerates corruption by Gerhard Schröder, Günter Verheugen are some of the examples. Well, if they tolerate corruption and this is the West and various narratives such as stealing our children, making us gays, those narratives that take roots, well, then we are looking for another alternative and it is launched by pseudo-nationalist parties such as Renaissance, Greatness and the like, who come and go, who want to leave the European Union and join the Russian-Eurasian Union, because we have a common past, they liberated us, they are anti-corruption. The narrative of anti-corruption is led by people like Renaissance, from parties like Renaissance, which are absurd from a democratic point of view, but they catch the electorate. And now we are at some watershed and unfortunately the election of Trump does not help, because it strengthens authoritarianism and the European Union fails to counteract either the problems with the rule of law for which we are fighting or security. Because we are a threat to our security, our own and the European Union's, and yet the EU does not find the strength to counteract even that. The only ones who are excited, but at the level of concern, and not real and serious actions to knock in Europe, are the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Ireland and Great Britain.

(48:21) Interviewee 1: So if we look at the structure of Europe, especially in terms of population numbers, it's not actually the economic giants, it's not the fragments of democratic values. And the periphery of Europe is waking up faster than, you know, countries that are 5, 6, 8, 10 million people, such as Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway. The salvation is likely to be to develop a new economic strategy for Europe to be strong, protected and rich. Which can be done by France, Great Britain, and Germany. I don't even rule it out because I follow things quite closely, and there are already very strong moods in the UK itself. That Brexit is a mistake to somehow reintegrate, and this is evident from the overall behavior of the left, the right, and the centrists, and in this respect they have a consensus, thank God, what will happen, and we do not know. There are many, many examples in the history of Europe, they show that at such critical moments they had the wrong policy and made gross mistakes. An example of the last 5-6 years before the start of World War II. That's how they sacrificed Poland, the Czech Republic. There, supposedly because of the Cold War nonsense, when you open it, what the British president said before, during the thirty years of total nonsense and stupidity. France, in the same way, falls

just like a ripe pear. They are completely helpless to understand not even strategically, but into the future, there for 2-3 years. When I read memoirs of famous politicians, right, it is visible to the naked eye. How can I believe that they will not make a mistake again? On the other hand, isn't it... How can I say... What is the right word... I mean, opening Europe to huge waves and... But such immigrant flows were actually to some extent foolishly done, and a mistake. You can't let everyone go. And here the main question is: what gives you confidence that you, right, are acting purely humanely, letting them in, that they will integrate and they will not begin to replace the essence of European values? For me, purely because of my age parameters, most of my acquaintances in Europe and America are my age, right, classmates, from the mandatory military service, fellow students and others, they are more anti-immigrant. This is no better than the other way around. But they are afraid that their lives will be changed and they will be ... And they drag them on their backs, don't they, families with some veiled women with shalwars, who give birth to 10 children, and they, true, feed them. And what happens? In this respect, we are still and will not happen, exactly this is not threatened because of the Bulgarian suspicion and intolerance to the foreign. And because we are slaughtered by Muslims and our historical development has been interrupted naturally. And in this regard, these are not these pseudo-patriotic attitudes of "Ataka", "Renaissance" and so on. Because they themselves, by the way, if Putin comes here tomorrow, as they are all pro-Putin, they themselves will kick and start fighting. Because like everyone else, they will be deprived of the sovereign right to exist, to decide their lives, to do business, to become more and more wealthy. They will turn around themselves. Their own supporters, voters, will have no mercy. When the Russians come, they will not distinguish between me and the Russophiles. They will drive along the same as happened after September 9th, because here the elites, those who were called bourgeois elites, they are slaughtered, slaughtered, destroyed after September 9th, and a large part of the left-wing intellectuals has died around them. Including repression, of those who believed that communism was a very bright idea, that it was applicable. And they went down the drain, so I can sit down separately and talk to you for 5-6 hours with examples of people who were very high in communism and in the communist hierarchy. Such cadres, let's say, of highly educated, idealists, and they just disappear.

(54:23) Interviewer: But they don't need people like that.

(54:25) Interviewee 1: No, in principle, so when the dictatorship comes, they don't need independent and thinking people at all, it doesn't matter. Are you a democrat there, are you a liberal, what are you? Wrong.

(54:38) Interviewee 2: So now it is very worrying that they are introducing church teaching it. There is nothing wrong

(54:45) Interviewer: That's what I saw this morning.

(54:48) Interviewee 2: And our Orthodox Church bows down to the Russian Orthodox Church, guardians of ideals and family, but in fact, it is practically no guardian at all.

(54:57) Interviewee 1: Yes, especially so the synodal elites, so they are like that, let's say, if we go down the hierarchy, among an example priesthood, it's not like that, but it's alarming. And this is strange in itself, because I am deeply convinced that the vast majority of the Bulgarian people are atheistic. So here is the church, may God help you, celebrating Christmas, Easter, these are such household traditions, and practices that have nothing to do with faith, or let's say just a bit. Because every person needs to trust in something, but they have absolutely nothing in common, especially the institutions and the church. It is currently harmful and unnecessary. If I want to talk to each other, let's assume that I am a believer, and I talk to my priest, I do not need an intermediary. What do I need this intermediary for? In this sense, I am more of a Buddhist.

(56:18) Interviewee 2: If you want, give us some guiding questions to be more purposeful. And in general, to answer your question that we receive information from whistleblowers and media-monitoring, and self-investigation.

(56:36) Interviewer: So more than an investigative journalist.

(56:39) Interviewee 2: Yes, that's all we do, we don't report news.

(56:44) Interviewer: Well, in general, another variable in my hypothesis is the low trust in the institutions and in general, that this systematic corruption, which you described very well, has actually led the people not to believe in the institutions as a whole, and that they will protect them in some way or they will take something from them and help them in any way. And in fact, this contributes on an individual level to, people are to disperse and become, much more individually thinking and looking for resources for themselves and for their family, how to feed themselves, than to think about the good of society and to contribute and help society in some way.

(57:52) Interviewee 2: So first of all, it is a personal experience, a person when he encounters any public institution, be it healthcare, police, because you have theft, he faces either ignorance and incompetence because of the negative long-term selection, merit-based people are not put there, it is not about merit and qualities. These are ours, brother-in-law, that cousin, and that one, not only to find them a job, and so you provide yourself with voters, by putting the aunt of the aunt, these are whole communities that work for you, on some state or municipal job, and they are loyal and grave. This is part of the electorate of GERB and MRF, these are people who have been infiltrated for years and decades.

(58:39) Interviewee 1: Well, this is a deal, in the old days, this is how people came in, whose job it was on the staff that whether there was communism or not. They even paid, there was this kind of debauchery to pay to create connections with the party elites. And to get you into the party. Because when you are part of the party, you do better in your career. In addition, for example, they give you a note to buy a home, they do not gift it to you. It was a problem even to have money, you won't buy a car even without waiting. And already down, oil stoves, there were no oil stoves. I have given, for example, BGN 50, so that in 3-4 months I can try to buy an oil stove.

Everything was like that, but the essence is that if we have to make the diagnosis at the moment, it means that the Bulgarian is almost completely amputated by a sense of solidarity, towards even other similar ones, who see that they have problems and suffer. There is no empathy, he ascertains it, and it remains ascertained, and every time he tells himself I don't need this trouble on my plate. The second thing is that even when a community is sufficiently well informed and sees what the reasons are, for this monkey business, it cannot organize itself, we have a severe deficit, we cannot organize ourselves. And when you can't organize yourself, what you rely on, you wait for someone to come, that is, by believing that someone is your leader. That he is an expression of your hopes, dreams, that he will project, there and respectively his strong political or some kind of organization and you are waiting. They are not compassionate, or if they are compassionate, they are passively compassionate. They cannot organize themselves. This is including at the condominium level. I have such people and where I live people who have to change their heat meters, repair pipes or the roof leaks, whatever it is, cannot organize themselves, sit down and come to a decision in which to say from now on second, third, fourth all this work must be financed, because there is no one else, give BGN 100 for example and we solve the problem.

(1:01:17) Interviewee 2: I would like to add that even if this phenomenon happens, they will self-organize and recognize it as a common interest. Then personally in my condominium, here are the personal examples. Then begins a distrust of the cashier, like he almost spent part of the money on himself. That is, they have no proof, but a basic suspicion that the one who has taken it upon himself to manage the money, given the fact that he took it upon himself to spend some of his time out of charge, the organization for the common good is an ungrateful enough job here and there is no gratitude, there are suspicions, that is, to this person, that it is so. And a very interesting sociological survey by Alpha research came out, which after all are one of the best agencies in Bulgaria. We exclude the doubt here, it was a measure of who the Bulgarian trusts, in fact, there is a critically low trust in the authorities, especially in the executive a little more towards the president, because he is by definition a majority vote, after all, a choice for one person is not a party. And critically little NPO on the rise, because philanthropic organizations like there was, there was support for Ukraine for covid there was help. Somehow we quickly organized ourselves in such big crises. There was appreciation from society that even the Bulgarian Red Cross has some goodwill and people gave to help mothers from Ukraine, covid-affected people left alone. That is, a little more trust, but also of our organization was quoted, because these are the dwarfs who actually reveal, if you haven't seen it, I recommend it, who reveal how corruption and cover-up happens in the judicial system. So trust in us is slow but growing, slowly because of narratives that we are foreign agents and so on, by definition foreign-funded. But the Bulgarian turned out to be in this interesting investigation that he trusts only his close circle and family and very close friends but not others, firstly because he has encountered this, secondly because he himself has been involved in corruption. After all, he also gave a bribe on the road and instead of paying a fine of BGN 400 there, he says give you 100 and everyone is happy, the policeman is BGN 100 more, the one from our man participated in a corruption deal

and won from it. Only 100 leva, otherwise 400. So given this background of the fact that it is at stake, they use this, how to trust that all your cousins are set up for work, why trust that in Sofia, that things have become based on the skills of the employees and when you go to the hospital alone, it is chaos. There are constantly investigations into how they drained the cash register. You, on the other hand, contribute with your health installments to receive quality health care and in the end, why do I give them? So if people are given a choice to keep BGN 800 not in the funds and taxes, so that they can accumulate them and spend them on the doctor's counter so that at least they can receive direct quality care, I am sure that 99% will say, give me the 800 no funds, I will use them and pay extra.

(1:05:03) Interviewer: For sure. I know, my relatives are like that.

(1:05:09) Interviewee 2: When you get disappointment, you either don't have strong leaders, or the evil is organized, and the good is weak and its leaders are weaker, and you get from the European leaders, who you rely on from the outside to pull us out of the swamp. Laura Kovesi, the European Commission, partners and they pat the corrupt officials on the back. And you don't have an anchor to hold onto.

(1:05:32) Interviewee 1: No, the problem is the deficit of values. Like, I have looked, and still look, all kinds of research. For example, you look at the most watched shows on TV and you will understand how crippled the value system in Bulgaria is.

(1:05:46) Interviewee 2: The Bachelor? I've only heard of it? I haven't watched it.

(1:05:48) Interviewee 1: Chalga, and some shows like that, including those that are severely discriminatory, where the woman is a commodity. The second thing is an analysis of the book market. What is for sale? And how much? The third thing is from the point of view of how the banking system functions and what happens to those, right, people's savings. Bulgaria, by the way, is a record holder in terms of money kept under mattresses, and something like that. All this shows a severe crisis of values, and distrust. The Bulgarian relies on the fact that he is himself, his interests are his, he does not recognize himself with the state, and no matter what happens, he constantly strives to take measures, to be protected, by the state. So, for the Bulgarian, the state is not his state. I'm not saying that everyone is like that, but the bigger part is, and because they can't organize themselves. Right, to call Pesho, Ivan, Gosho, to sit down and say we, right, at least one rebel movement here to create, to organize, nothing happens. And because he is distrustful and envious, he cannot be organized externally, because he does not trust the leaders, because he has envy, hate, and that, especially after the people who have partially or not completely unrealized personal projects. They feel harmed, artificially kept at the bottom, poor, and because it is a poor country. This, after all, I would say is too large a part of society, and it will be so as long as it is poor, and it will not become rich while it is like that. If they manage, for example, to take their money and take it out from under the mattresses, it will be positive, it will be slightly felt. If in some way some emanation is awakened, it will not be very good, but it will be better than nothing. But what most people think, including those who envy, that hate, to create

themselves a political elite and say: this is the new Kiril Petkov, this is the new Boyko Borisov, something like that. Again, nothing will happen, because he does not have, it is innate, this is a defect, to delegate the right to the other who instead of him, because he is simple, incapable and incompetent, and he, and his wife, and his brother, and all those around, with whom they drink and watch matches, to delegate this right and they can decide. And because at the moment there is not a single well-functioning political force or any organization, from a communication point of view, it is not happening. Like the defects PP and DB made. They failed to reformat the language through which they broadcast their messages so that at least twice as many people understand them. It does not happen only with hope and hope, because the examples of how people believe that Borisov will be removed when Slavcho wins the highest percentages and ITN. What is this due to? It means that they did not make a very extensive analysis of Slavchov's qualities and the people around him, they just prayed for those to be removed and for some others to come. The same thing happened with him also happened with the PP. And so what happened afterwards? They cannot, people, including whom I respect, like from the political above, cannot speak in a language that is understandable and accessible to enough people. They are external to the system, external to the problems, alien, edifying, or too twisted and complicated. It is obvious that there are politicians all over the world who have not only graduated from Harvard, but 5 Harvards, but who are able to speak in such a way that others can listen. This is not here. And partly this problem is psychological, they do not bother to understand at all what is multiplied in space how far it reaches and how it goes. I recommend there is a psychologist, Professor Plamen Dimitrov, he is very famous, at my age. He started maybe 3 years ago to do a big psychological study, which covers only non-voters. And there is the key to the drawer and it turns out to be something very interesting, it is far from true that these are people with low educational value, that they are poor or semi-poor. So they have property, these are all kinds of people. This is about 2/3 of all living people who have the right to vote. And there should be an effort to make a program, basically speaking some kind of project for broadcasting, hearing, understanding, activating, and initiative.

(1:11:30) Interviewer: But definitely, I think, this information should go to, I don't know all people, and not just one community that deals with this and that.

(1:11:52) Interviewee 1: You can't talk to a person who hasn't read anything in the last 20 years, not a single book, and for example has watched 500 matches, and is an eternal connoisseur of all kinds of chalga, to talk to him in this way, and when he realizes that he doesn't understand, he starts hating you. This can be analyzed on such a micro scale. For example, in university circles, where there are lecturers, where students listen to them with their mouths open, because he knows how to talk to them. Even those who are generally neutral and those who just can barely stand them, because they can't hear anything, and they can't even hear it. I felt this thing when I was a student at Sofia University, because even then, maybe about half of my professors at Sofia University, the Faculty of Philosophy, were people who graduated before the nineties, a different system, everything was different, a different culture, and from time to time they released some

research. From the Institute for Youth Studies. In the larger higher education institutions, in Bulgaria, and I as a participant, because they gave some money and I was going to become a sociologist and participated. And in the end, they were all classified, because the conclusions from scientifically made many years ago, before they were printed and published, were shown from the point of view of the students. Even such children of active fighters, consular activists, elected communist party members, pushover, even they understood that the one from the old school spoke in a more fitting and appropriate way. There was an example of a large national survey that was about the attitudes of youth and how they see themselves in their future. And it had disastrous results, because, firstly, it shows that, in general, almost all those who chose had the right to choose, a specialty that they thought would guarantee them income and prosperity in the first place. The fact that I really like biology or that I want to count the stars to become an astronomer was tragic. Another conclusion, very scary, was that as early as 1978, a year before I graduated, about 86% of the youth in Bulgaria, if possible, would leave Bulgaria, even then. And the third was a national study on functional literacy and on the literacy of the Bulgarian people in general, so to speak. There it turned out that as early as 1978, 66 or 60 percent turned out to be functionally illiterate, that they could see, letter by letter, word by word, but he could not understand what he had read, even more absurd was the situation when it comes to writing. And they had done it very cleverly, there was a secretary of the committee, Stoyan Mihaylov, a professor of sociology. He had applied a very clever toolkit so as not to stress them, because no one believes that it is anonymous and they make them write their biographies, the result was shocking. The most threatening thing was that he was not even a Komsomol activist, a party member, and what place he occupied in the respective hierarchies, that functional illiteracy was more or less evenly distributed. Which shows that people have grown up, not because of their qualities, but because of such ideological reasons that they pushed them, they implemented them in this way and that is why the economy crashed then, because they made someone who gave him a diploma for an agronomist. They make him the head of the TCZS, or the APC, and he is a fool, an incompetent person in the entire industry. In all the former similar enterprises, Kremikovtzi, Radomir, you name it, they collapsed because of this. They put people who were selected on such a principle, loyalty to the party, whatever that means. When you look at Todor Zhivkov himself, he is a unique simpleton. But how did he rule for so many years?

(1:17:45) Interviewee 2: Did we leave a question from a sociological or psychological point of view unanswered?

(1:17:48) Interviewer: I don't think so, thank you very much for the interview.

Appendix E

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for ESS round 3

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Normative	2.26	0.71				
2. Institutional Trust	2.61	2.34	-.01 [-.07, .04]			
3. Hedonic	3.43	1.31	.08** [.03, .13]	.12** [.06, .17]		
4. Gain	3.20	0.92	.23** [.18, .28]	.10** [.05, .16]	.69** [.66, .71]	
5. Age	49.73	17.62	-.18** [-.23, -.13]	.05 [-.01, .10]	.48** [.44, .52]	.34** [.29, .38]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 2

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for ESS round 4

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Normative	2.28	0.73				
2. Institutional Trust	2.27	2.12	-.01 [-.06, .03]			
3. Hedonic	3.51	1.29	.04 [-.00, .08]	.09** [.05, .14]		
4. Gain	3.21	0.91	.21** [.16, .25]	.08** [.03, .12]	.68** [.65, .70]	
5. Age	51.75	17.52	-.14** [-.18, -.10]	.03 [-.01, .07]	.48** [.45, .51]	.34** [.30, .37]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for ESS round 5

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Normative	2.19	0.68				
2. Institutional Trust	2.69	2.11	-.03 [-.07, .01]			
3. Hedonic	3.39	1.25	.06** [.02, .10]	-.05* [-.09, -.01]		
4. Gain	2.83	0.89	.33** [.30, .37]	-.09** [-.13, -.05]	.65** [.63, .67]	
5. Age	53.45	17.79	-.13** [-.17, -.09]	-.01 [-.05, .03]	.49** [.46, .52]	.31** [.27, .34]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 4

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for ESS round 6

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Normative	2.14	0.71				
2. Institutional Trust	2.40	2.04	-.01 [-.05, .03]			
3. Hedonic	3.43	1.25	.09** [.04, .13]	.03 [-.01, .07]		
4. Gain	2.75	0.92	.37** [.34, .41]	-.01 [-.05, .03]	.64** [.61, .66]	
5. Age	54.12	16.81	-.14** [-.18, -.10]	.02 [-.02, .06]	.43** [.40, .47]	.26** [.22, .30]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 5

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for ESS round 9

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Normative	2.60	0.80				
2. Institutional Trust	2.93	2.16	.06* [.01, .10]			
3. Hedonic	3.73	1.20	.20** [.15, .24]	.02 [-.03, .06]		
4. Gain	3.20	0.90	.47** [.43, .50]	.04* [.00, .09]	.61** [.58, .63]	
5. Age	54.15	17.90	-.09** [-.14, -.05]	-.03 [-.07, .01]	.41** [.38, .45]	.23** [.18, .27]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 6

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for ESS round 10

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Normative	2.37	0.69				
2. Institutional Trust	2.96	2.11	-.11** [-.15, -.08]			
3. Hedonic	3.03	1.12	.07** [.03, .11]	.01 [-.03, .04]		
4. Gain	2.75	0.81	.25** [.22, .29]	-.08** [-.11, -.04]	.65** [.63, .67]	
5. Age	52.66	18.22	-.11** [-.14, -.07]	.03 [-.01, .06]	.50** [.47, .53]	.34** [.31, .37]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 7

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for ESS round 11

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Normative	2.31	0.76				
2. Institutional Trust	3.42	2.20	-.03 [-.07, .01]			
3. Hedonic	2.83	1.12	.16** [.12, .20]	.04 [-.01, .08]		
4. Gain	2.68	0.92	.24** [.20, .28]	-.09** [-.14, -.05]	.71** [.69, .73]	
5. Age	52.35	18.85	-.10** [-.14, -.05]	-.05* [-.09, -.01]	.45** [.42, .48]	.37** [.33, .40]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .05$

Table 8*Effect size and p-values for each round of the ESS*

	ESS 3		ESS 4		ESS 5		ESS 6		ESS 9		ESS 10		ESS 11	
	(2006)		(2008)		(2010)		(2012)		(2018)		(2020)		(2023)	
	<i>beta</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>p</i>
Institutional														
Trust	-0.03	-.01	-0.02	-.01	-0.01	-.03	0.01	-.01	0.03	.06*	-0.09	-.11**	-0.03	-.03
Gain	0.36	.23**	0.34	.21**	0.49	.33**	0.52	.37**	0.54	.47**	0.34	.25**	0.31	.24**
Hedonic	-0.01	.08**	-0.08	.04	-0.16	.06**	-0.16	.09**	-0.05	.20**	-0.07	.07**	0.03	.16**
Trust x Gain	-0.02	-.02	-0.05	-.06**	-0.08	-.09**	-0.04	-.06**	0.02	-.01	-0.01	-.07**	0.09	-.08**
Trust x														
Hedonic	-0.01	-.03	0.02	-.03	0.03	-.03	0.05	.02	-0.04	-.01	-0.07	-.09**	-0.26	-.18**
Age	-0.28	-.18**	-0.21	-.14**	-0.20	-.13**	-0.20	-.14**	-0.19	-.09**	-0.19	-.11**	-0.21	-.10**
Region	-0.12	-.09**	0.03	.01	0.01	.02	-0.11	-.15**	-0.02	.02	0.08	.10**	-0.07	-.04*

Note. *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights. *p* represents the zero-order correlation. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.