

From Sofia to Brussels – corrupt democratization in the context of European integration

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Abstract:

This paper examines the correlation between corruption, democracy and transformation. It is designed as a study of the quality of the established model of democracy, focusing on the governance capacities of one of the newest EU-member states – *Bulgaria* to effectively counter political corruption. Taking into account the levels of corruption spread in Bulgaria since 1989, I address the following question: *why does Bulgaria fail to effectively counter political corruption, notwithstanding the large scale anticorruption campaign, launched in the course of the democratization and Europeanization processes of the last years?* I suggest that the state failure in anticorruption is tightly connected to the quality of the established (achieved) democratic model. Furthermore, I argue that this state weakness refers to profound institutional shortcomings, which in turn cause the contamination of the exchange of wealth and power. Respectively the study's main goal is to offer an analyse of the influence of the level of attainment of a balanced, liberal democracy over the state capacities to effectively counter political corruption, while taking into account the role played by particular context factors.

Keywords: political corruption, transformation, democratization, Europeanization, Bulgaria, CEE countries

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