Falling from Grace
Corruption, Revolution and the 2016 Macedonian Elections

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Abstract

To what extent are social movements capable of steering voters’ choices in corrupt societies? Through the exploration of North Macedonia’s 2016 Colourful Revolution street protests, this study introduces an original dataset of 1,066 survey responses from members of the Macedonian electorate and engages in a 65-week-long cumulative tracking of corruption-related news stories in an attempt to shed light upon the effects of anti-corruption movements (ACMs) on the electoral punishment of corrupt incumbents. Building upon the framework of sociotropic corruption voting and highlighting the role of the media as an important awareness-raiser, this study finds strong proofs of corruption acting as a deterrent against the re-election of corrupt incumbents, helping to explain a governing party’s loss of support at the polls. However, it finds no robust correlation between the Colourful Revolutions’s emergence and actions per se and higher media coverage of corruption.

Keywords: corruption, elections, North Macedonia, social movements, voting behaviour.

Word count: 21,938.
To Sweden. To the good, the bad and the ugly.
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Abbreviations

AA                  Alliance for Albanians
ACM                 Anti-corruption movement
DPA                 Democratic Party of Albanians
DUI                 Democratic Union for Integration
EU                  European Union
GROM                Citizen Option for Macedonia
NATO                North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO                 Non-Governmental Organization
RDK/NDP             National Democratic Revival
SDSM                Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
SEC                 State Election Commission of North Macedonia
SPO                 Special Public Prosecutor’s Office of North Macedonia
VMRO–DPMNE          Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization
                     – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity
1
Introduction

Corruption and its effects on political, economic and social developments have become a major subject of contemporary academic research within the fields of politics and international relations. Poverty levels, migration and economic decline can all be explained against backdrops of entrenched corruption (see, f. ex., Del Monte and Papagni, 2001 and Poprawe, 2015) to larger or lesser extents. Many studies have also drawn attention to the destabilizing role of corruption in citizen political activity, namely aspects of voting behaviour such as turnout (Carreras and Vera, 2018).

The concept of electoral accountability –the process through which voters ponder their choice at the polls according to the incumbent’s level of corruption, leading to electoral punishment of the incumbent– has helped to bridge the gap between political corruption and voting behaviour (Ashworth, 2012). It explains how political corruption can be protested and countered by an electorate. Economic events, public perception of corruption and ideology, for instance, are elements that shape and condition electoral accountability to different degrees. A largely neglected aspect within the study of electoral accountability is the role played by social movements, and more specifically, by anti-corruption movements (ACMs). Many new social platforms have become aware of the fight against corruption and have adopted it as an ideology of their own, yet it is a strand of research that has not been sufficiently explored.

Research aim and question

In the light of this research gap, this paper’s purpose is to shed light upon the potential effects of ACMs (independent variable) on electoral accountability (dependent variable). It will attempt to show to what extent social movements can steer voting behaviour leading to electoral punishment of corrupt leaders. To this end, the study is framed within the premises of sociotropic corruption voting theory (Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause, 2014), which envisages the primary role of anti-corruption platforms in increasing the
salience of corruption as a political issue. According to this theory, when the salience of corruption is high, the coverage of corruption in the media will rise. Ultimately, it is the increasing media coverage of corruption-related cases what leads to a growing voter tendency towards punishing corrupt leaders at the polls, thus attaining electoral accountability as an expression of voting behaviour. This study's hypothesis is, accordingly, articulated along the assumptions of sociotropic corruption voting theory inasmuch as it tackles the gap this paper is seeking to bridge.

The research focus adheres to Yin’s (2003) premises of single-case-based research. The selected case is North Macedonia and the emergence in 2016 of the Colourful Revolution, a series of anti-corruption protests which were believed to play a critical role in the portrayal of political corruption and, ultimately, in the 2016 electoral ousting of incumbent party Vnatrešna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija – Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity; hereinafter, VMRO-DPMNE) after a decade in power (Reef, 2017). North Macedonia provides a thrilling example of entrenched political and institutional corruption as a basis upon which electoral accountability was able to flourish. Thus, given its paradigmatic nature in attaining electoral accountability from a corruption-infested backdrop and owing to its current relevance as a regional frontrunner, North Macedonia has been selected as this study's single framework of analysis for hypothesis-testing. In this light, the paper’s research question reads as follows: “To what extent did the 2016 anti-corruption protests in North Macedonia influence electoral accountability in the December 2016 elections?”

In methodological terms, this paper is product of a two-stage data collection process. It firstly entails the tracking of 65 weeks of politics- and corruption-related news stories on Macedonian online media, between September 14th 2015 and December 11th 2016. Secondly, it involves the development and launching of an online survey on corruption, political parties and media attitudes, distributed across the Macedonian electorate and yielding 1,066 responses.

The potential reach of this study is threefold: firstly, it will shed light upon the effect of ACMs in voter’s attitudes and thus advance in the study of electoral behaviour and global politics, offering a novel and underresearched independent variable whose relevance is worth paying further attention to. Secondly, its utility can make it a highly referred-to study by a large deal of stakeholders when trying to understand electoral dynamics in politically corrupt
societies, such as Western Balkan countries. Thirdly, it provides an answer to whether and to what extent the emergence and actions of the Colourful Revolution played a role in incumbent VMRO–DPMNE’s defeat in the December 2016 elections.

**Chapter outline**

This paper is structured as follows: after devoting Chapter 1 for brief introductory remarks, Chapter 2 will engage in an in-depth exploration of the scholarly literature in order to critically examine the most relevant theoretical and empirical developments in the fields of corruption, voting behaviour and ACMs, attempting to explain where, how and why these three subjects of study intersect and interact. I will introduce the theory of sociotropic corruption voting in Chapter 3, upon which this study builds. Chapter 4 will delve into the most technical, namely methodological, aspects of the paper, outlining the case choice, variables, hypothesis and research design. I will present and analyse my findings in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 will consist of my conclusions and a short discussion on the contribution of this study to the field of global politics.
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Literature review

The academic discussions around the fields of voting behaviour and ACMs have historically fed from a wide array of schools, authors and disciplines. Besides the accounts provided within the realms of politics and international relations, several other fields –such as sociology, psychology or economics– have successfully managed to explore these themes through their own normative and analytical lenses. In general terms, however, these two areas of study have been traditionally tackled in a discrete way, independently from one another. Their history of scarce interactions, to the extent that this paper is concerned, is due to the relative difficulty of finding evidence for social movements’, let alone ACMs’, actual political influence (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1988; Zimmermann, 2015).

The rather modest amount of academic contributions to the very specific field of knowledge where voting behaviour and ACMs overlap does not mean, in any case, that research carried out on these subjects is non-existent. Quite oppositely, the available literature covering corruption, social movements and electoral behaviour as three separate objects of study is abundant and indeed contributes to making sense of various political phenomena. Since the focus of this paper, though, lies on outlining the space of convergence of these themes, the literature referred to has been meticulously selected to this end. This section is therefore not a mere compilation of content, but a carefully thought-out stream of scholarly knowledge aimed at picturing how, where and why corruption, social movements and voting behaviour intertwine.

This review will attempt to critically examine the most relevant academic developments, both theoretical and empirical, within the fields of voting behaviour and ACMs. Firstly, a thorough introduction to the phenomenon of corruption and its implications will provide the framework for the second section, namely an in-depth analysis of the most pertinent accounts on voting behaviour. Here I will fundamentally delve into the sub-topics of electoral accountability and corruption voting –and, particularly, into what variables condition them–, crucial for the theoretical understanding of this paper. I will then go on to present a comprehensive view of ACMs as contentious agents of political change identifying their emergence, activities and common traits. Finally, and despite its scarcity, I
will address the literature that explicitly tackles ACMs and their effects on voting behaviour. A short discussion on the review’s main conclusions will proceed thereafter.

**Unravelling corruption**

Corruption has become a main axis of political research activity. The fields of administration, policy and government have paid particular attention to this ever-growing concept inasmuch as it offers a solid basis upon which plausible theoretical assumptions can be articulated. Some of its outcomes, namely the consequences corruption arguably accounts for, will be looked into in this section. I will also delve into the top-down and bottom-up mechanisms and attempts that have been traditionally deployed to counter corruption.

When addressing corruption in political terms, the definition of this abstract notion is a topic of discussion *per se* (Kurer, 2015; Philp, 2006). A vast majority of scholars tend to rely on its most widespread normative outlining, “the misuse of public office for private gain” (see, f. ex., Jiménez and García, 2008; Kurer, 2005; Riera et al., 2013). Corrupt practices are usually characterized by double-party exchange relationships in either horizontal or vertical directions (Carvajal, 1999) and include such activities as bribery, nepotism, clientelism, misappropriation and misuse of public party funding, among others (De Vries and Solaz, 2017; Nye, 1967). Other slightly deviating accounts on what can be contemplated as corruption have also been articulated for more specific purposes. Philp’s (2006: 45) model, for instance, includes up to three agents in this relationship, whereby a public official “violates the norms of public office and harms the interests of the public to benefit a third party”. All three parties, according to Philp, are affected by corrupt activity either through active involvement in the malfeasance or through passive suffering of its consequences.

A swift exploration through the literature reveals that research on corruption carries an inherent methodological problem: how is corruption measured? Empirical studies that have corruption as one of their variables have long sought after the most rigorous indicators to portray or measure this phenomenon. One of the most widespread, often acting as a proxy, is corruption perception; it is not rare to find empirical investigations whose measurement of corruption is largely based on one’s level awareness of it or one’s personal experiences with it (see, f. ex., Ecker, Glinitzer and Meyer, 2016 and Seligson, 2002).

Several accounts offer insights into the impact and consequences of corruption on the economy and revenues of a country (Del Monte and Papagni, 2001; Pani, 2010; Rose-
Ackerman, 1997), on its development (Holmberg and Rothstein, 2011; Mauro, 1995) and on its equality and poverty levels (Chong and Calderón, 2000; Gupta, Davoodi and Alonso-Terme, 2002). In social-political terms, higher exposure to corruption is also associated with a weaker political culture overall: in a survey study carried out in four relatively corrupt Latin American countries, Seligson (2002) finds evidence that belief in the political system decreases; in this same vein, Cailler (2010) identifies lower levels of confidence in the government’s ability to solve problems.

Another major proof of corruption’s consequences on political culture has been covered through research on voter turnout. A vignette study in Colombia showed that voters receiving credible information on corrupt behaviour of politicians eligible for office were more likely to refrain from participating in the upcoming election (Carreras and Vera, 2018). In line with these findings, an experiment carried out in twelve Mexican municipalities right before election day revealed that the group of voters who received reliable evidence on mismanagement of local public funds were 2.5% less likely to go out and vote (Chong et al., 2015). Oppositely, Kostadinova’s (2009) study on eight former socialist countries in Europe found a slightly weaker correlation between corruption perception and voter turnout inasmuch as “a slightly more popular choice among those frustrated with the misuse of power by elites was to vote.”

Although explored to a lesser extent by empirical literature, other consequences of corruption in the political arena are the emergence and breakthrough of new contesting parties and organizations (Engler, 2016; Hanley and Sikk, 2016), the rising migration of skilled workers (Ariu and Squicciarini, 2013; Dimant, Krieger and Meierrieks, 2013; Poprawe, 2015) and the weakening of the judiciary’s independence (Buscaglia and Dakolas, 1999; Della Porta, 2001). In this light, there is little doubt that corruption has shaped itself up as a factor that conditions a major share of today’s political, economic and social aspects.

Yet what efforts have been devised so far in order to fight corruption? The top-down approach to dealing with corruption has been majorly embodied in macro-level responses in the form of international campaigns and mechanisms, what Sampson (2010: 262) calls the anti-corruption industry: “policies, regulations, initiatives, conventions, training courses, monitoring activities and programmes to enhance integrity and improve public administration.” The extent to which such tools have been put into practice and succeeded is arguably diverse: some worked as a temporary political fix (Gadowska, 2010), others engulfed local-level anti-corruption mechanisms and weakened them (Sampson, 2008)
whereas a third category proved effective only when deployed within a multilateral framework (Charron, 2011; Moroff and Schmidt-Pfister, 2010). On the other hand, bottom-up approaches against corruption have traditionally involved actions of contentious politics in the form of movements and protests, which I will delve into later. In addition to all this, elections, an indispensable element in democratic multi-party regimes, have also proved to constitute one of the most powerful tools to combat corruption.

**Voting behaviour in corrupt societies**

Upon major evidence that corruption can be punished from the bottom, it is difficult to overlook the potential leverage of an electorate when deciding a malfeasant incumbent’s political fate. Drawing from Bågenholm’s (2013b) cross-national time-series analysis of 215 parliamentary election campaigns in 32 European countries, one of the most thorough quantitative empirical accounts to date, it can be concluded that corrupt incumbents, though to a limited extent, are negatively affected by their misconduct. According to this study, not only are corruption scandals, but also corruption allegations, what lead voters to pull the trigger of responsibility.

The emergence of the concept of electoral accountability has helped to bridge the gap between political corruption and voting behaviour. The account offered by Scott Ashworth (2012) encompasses well what this notion involves:

> Electoral accountability must contain at least two components: an electorate that decides whether or not to retain an incumbent, at least potentially on the basis of her performance, and an incumbent who has the opportunity to respond to her anticipations of the electorate’s decision. Most of the applied theory literature adopts a simple framework with two policy-making periods as the simplest way to embody both components. In the first period, an incumbent is in office, and she must choose an action. This action affects some performance measure observed by a representative voter, who then decides to re-elect the incumbent or to replace her with a challenger. (Ashworth, 2012: 184-5)

An incumbent’s re-election or replacement through an electorate responds to a series of variables in which corruption plays an active role. Electoral accountability mirrors the model of retrospective voting whereby voters will ponder their choice at the polls according to the incumbent’s performance, mostly in the economic realm (Fiorina, 1978; Kiewiet and Rivers, 1984; Svoboda, 1995).
Despite the economic inspiration of electoral accountability mechanisms, political corruption and malfeasance are also subject to voter scrutiny and judgement. Just like Bågenholm, many other scholars have shed light on voting trends whereby corrupt activities get punished (see, f. ex., Shabad and Słomczyński, 2011) – or, quite oppositely, do not get punished and give birth to what has been coined as corruption voting (see, f. ex., De Sousa and Moriconi, 2013). Research on this field has made enough progress to offer a myriad of accounts on what leads to an effective attainment of electoral accountability.

Methodologically, voting behaviour is diverse and feeds from a wide range of designs and techniques thanks to which a big share of independent variables, both at a macro- and micro-level can be identified. In this light, the main questions to be asked are: what conditions electoral accountability? And what encourages corruption voting?

One of the most prolific sources of evidence at a macro-level is provided by the economic theory school under the economic voting premise: “voters hold the government responsible for economic events” (Lewis-Beck and Paldam, 2000: 114). This same logic, thus, converts leaders’ performances in the economic realm into the test for their political survival. It supports the idea that this can happen to the extent that, even when a public office holder has engaged in corrupt or malfeasant behaviour, voters will majorly judge their overall performance from an economic point of view despite public awareness of the scandal. Carlin, Love and Martínez-Gallardo (2015) find evidence through the analysis of 84 presidential administrations in 18 Latin American countries: increases in inflation and unemployment –two proxies for economic deterioration– have negative effects on executive approval, whereas growth has no significant impact on it. Along this same vein, Fernández-Vázquez, Barberá and Rivero’s (2016) examination of 8004 Spanish municipalities show that, at a local level, mayors suffer an average 4.2% vote share loss when an incumbent’s irregular activities “do not contribute to the welfare of the municipality, whereas they go unpunished when it does”. Both studies shed light on the idea that both the state of the economy and potential economic benefits will indeed affect how incumbents are perceived –and how they are likely to fare– ahead of an election. It also suggests that voters do not always punish corrupt practices.

In terms of micro-level variables, the scholarly literature offers multiple accounts that contribute to identifying the factors that condition electoral accountability. Public perception of corruption, though, can be said to be the foremost. In their survey-based study on corruption perceptions in 20 European elections, Ecker, Glinitzer and Meyer (2016) find
support for the assumption that voters do punish their leaders when higher levels of corruption are perceived (see also McNally, 2016 and Seligson, 2002). This might be further enhanced if the electorate commonly rejects the incumbent or believes there is a new, cleaner alternative (Engler, 2016; Klašnja, 2015).

Perception of corruption is often fostered by the media, which also plays a substantial role in the portrayal of malevolent leaders and their scandals (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944). This is so to such an extent that, under extensive press coverage of a corruption scandal, the incumbent involved may lose up to 14% of their vote share (Costas-Pérez, Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro, 2012). Other aspects such as voter identification with the incumbent’s party and engagement with the political process per se see themselves deteriorated in the light of such information (Chong et al., 2015). According to Botero et al. (2015), newspapers are trusted more than the judiciary or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) whenever these entities are not seen trustworthy enough. Other studies, however, do not contribute to confirming this hypothesis; in fact, neither Camaj (2013) nor McNally (2016) find significant evidence for the media’s actual influence on electoral accountability. What is more, the latter further points towards a counter-effect inasmuch as a media-induced rise in perception of corruption might actually increase public tolerance for it.

Access to information determines and conditions to a large extent the level of political awareness of the electorate, an important variable for electoral accountability. Using merged data from members of the American Congress and the American National Elections Studies survey over several decades, Klašnja (2017) finds that, on average, more politically sophisticated members of the electorate are less inclined to vote for corrupt incumbents as they are for clean incumbents. Riera et al. (2013), despite using education alone as a proxy for political sophistication, find evidence for this positive association in left-party voters only. Anduiza, Gallego and Muñoz (2013) claim, likewise, that more politically-aware citizens are less affected by partisan influences when assessing corruption cases.

Ideology and partisanship articulate the last wide strand of literature addressing conditions that bring about electoral accountability. Most of the scholarly research suggests that, the higher the level of partisanship, the higher the chances for a voter to support their own party regardless of it being involved in a corruption scandal (Ecker, Glinitzer and Meyer, 2016; Eggers, 2014). This correlation appears more salient in right-wing voters, who seem to be more tolerant of irregular activities when these affect their party (Anduiza, Gallego and Muñoz, 2013) and thus more party-biased (Jiménez and García, 2018). Voters in the centre
of the political spectrum are found to be overall less supportive of corrupt incumbents either through switching party or simply through abstention (Charron and Bägenholm, 2016; Riera et al., 2013).

**Accountability from below: anti-corruption movements**

A neglected aspect within the study of electoral accountability is the role played by agents of contentious politics and, more specifically, by social movements. However intangible a concept, Tarrow and Tilly (2009) define social movements as “a sustained challenge to power holders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those power holders by means of public displays of that population’s worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment.” Such displays are commonly characterized by mobilized groups making use of non-institutionalized tools so long an opportunity –this means, a possibility of success– is identified (Della Porta, 2017a; Leenders, 2013; Pickvance, 1999).

As of recently, many new movements have become aware of the fight against corruption and have adopted it as an ideology of their own. Della Porta’s (2015; 2017a; 2017b) several accounts on what she calls “anti-corruption from below” depict the birth of such movements as a consequence of neo-liberal economic privatization and deregulation processes, among other factors. These have largely translated into a decline in both citizens’ rights and institutional trust – which can be understood as a crisis of legitimacy. In more specific terms, ACMs have been defined as “varying forms of collective action in reaction to […] high-level or political corruption” (Pirro, 2017: 775).

The motivations behind the emergence of ACMs are diverse and they need not be originally sparked by corruption and its consequences. While some civic action is encouraged by both a decline in perceived government effectiveness and an appreciation of high corruption levels (Gingerich, 2009; Peiffer and Álvarez, 2016), other mobilizations are ideologically detached and strictly corruption-linked (Mágarit, 2015) whereas others have members who have become aware of corruption as a social evil only within the frame of protests over other contentious issues (Pirro, 2017).

ACMs’ tools of action are no different from those deployed by other social mobilizations, being protest its most visible representation (Tilly and Tarrow, 2006). Demonstrations and other forms of street performance aim at conveying a message both externally, towards the authorities or the media, and internally, within the protestors
themselves (Klandermans, Van Stekelenburg and Walgrave, 2014), be it with or without a violent component (Machado, Scartascini and Tommasi, 2011). While protest is, by no means, a phenomenon exclusive of Europe (see, f. ex., Jenkins, 2007; Prause and Wienkoop, 2017; Setiyono and McLeod, 2010; Shih, 2007) many scholars have coincided in the very significant role that street demonstrations have played there since the late twentieth century, particularly in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Several authors have already pointed towards post-socialist societies’ low levels of individual civic participation (Howard, 2003; Tarrow and Petrova, 2007), something that endows protests with a special relevance whenever they take place in this region. Episodes of street strife in Russia and Ukraine (Alyukov et al., 2015), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Milan, 2017a; 2017b; Murtagh, 2016), North Macedonia (Milan, 2017b; Vankovska, 2015), Romania (Olteanu and Beyerle, 2017), Hungary and Bulgaria (Mărgarit, 2015; Pirro, 2017) show that the struggle against the corrupt elites and against social inequality can be inspired by similar demands but followed by a myriad of different outcomes.

Bridging the gap

The literature explored so far has provided normative and empirical insights into the most relevant aspects of political corruption, its implications within electoral systems and the bottom-up approaches to counter it. This final strand of scholarly accounts will attempt to, as mentioned in the beginning of the section, and although very concisely, address the gap between anti-corruption mobilization and voting behaviour. What can be said about the role of ACMs towards the re-shaping of voting behaviour and the eventual attainment of electoral accountability?

Research on social movements’ political impact has majorly focused on their effects over policy agenda-setting and governmental decision-making processes (Baumgartner and Mahoney, 2005; Kitschelt, 1986; Murtagh, 2016; Pettinicchio, 2017), whereas it has not delved much into their effects on the electorate and their voting inclinations (Amenta et al., 2010). Bägenholm (2009; 2013a) has addressed the politicization of corruption – this is, the adoption of the anti-corruption discourse for electoral purposes – and has claimed its particular saliency in Central and Eastern Europe. His findings strongly hint at the idea that the overall success of anti-corruption parties in this region during the early twenty-first century was a sign of voters’ general approval to new platforms that held corruption as their
prevalent issue – in which case a similar logic could be applied to studies on ACMs. Kennedy (2014), on the other hand, focuses explicitly on popular revolutions in former Soviet countries and their impact on democracy and corruption. He claims that the extent to which they resulted in democratic gains and improved control of corruption was quite limited.

In this section I have attempted to pave the way for a thorough understanding of where, how and why corruption, voting behaviour and social movements intersect, through both a theoretical and an experimental lens. Corruption has been portrayed mostly as a deranging social and economic phenomenon given its empirical impact on development and poverty, let alone on political participation in multi-party systems. I have also developed the idea that electoral accountability, which arguably contributes to bridging the gap between corruption and voting behaviour, can be influenced by multiple variables at both a micro- and a macro-level. Being able to identify these triggers, such as the state of the economy, partisanship and political awareness, among others, proves essential for the academic exploration of the variables underlying corruption voting. Finally, the role of social movements and ACMs has been addressed firstly from a theoretical perspective in order to offer a basis upon which to build and empirical construction on their tools of action, their common traits and the motivations behind their emergence.

While a large share of the literature seems to circumvent the gap between ACM activity and its effects on electoral accountability, it has nevertheless provided an insight into the potential of corruption-focused mobilizations and their likely ability to contest political malfeasance from below. Just like the leverage of the media through the delivering information to the electorate, the available scholarly accounts have majorly overlooked the fact that ACMs can arguably hold similar capabilities.
The review of already-existing literature has contributed to fixing a general perception towards the concepts of corruption, electoral accountability and social movement dynamics and, particularly, towards how they have been operationalized and measured. This section, by contrast, will be devoted to presenting and critically discussing the underlying theoretical premises this study takes as basis, namely the framework of sociotropic corruption voting as envisaged by Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause (2014). Firstly, thus, I will introduce the theory and describe its components in its original context. I will conduct a centripetal examination of its claims, hence departing from a general overview in broader terms and flowing towards the description of more specific aspects – aspects that are considered of potentially higher relevance for the purpose of this paper. I will then engage in a critical analysis of the framework’s limitations and shortcomings with a special focus on the operationalization of concepts and their empirical application. The aim is to make an informed, critical and responsible use of these theory’s elements through a thorough examination of its weaknesses and a revision of its components.

**Sociotropic corruption voting**

In their 2014 study, Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause attempt to trace the relationship between corruption and voting behaviour through a channel-centred approach. The argument they put forth draws from economic voting theory and departs from a double assumption: “[f]irst, we argue that corruption-sensitive voters may respond both to the direct effects of corruption in their lives, such as requests to pay bribes, and to indirect effects, such as increased awareness of high-level corruption scandals among politicians.” One the one hand, the direct effects on vote choice –prompted by personal exposure to corruption through, for instance, bribery– is coined as *pocketbook* corruption voting; on the other hand, indirect effects –determined by the perception of corruption in society– is referred to as *sociotropic* corruption voting.
Both pocketbook and sociotropic voting find their roots in economic theory. Kinder and Kiewiet (1981: 132) already provided an insight into what their main typological differences are: “[p]ocketbook voting reflects the circumstances and predicaments of personal economic life; sociotropic voting reflects the circumstances and predicaments of national economic life”. Notwithstanding both types’ conceptual worth, it is the latter sort of voting I will be focusing on for the sake of relevance. Unlike pocketbook voting, sociotropic voting can be examined from a broader analytical lens and allows for a more case-specific study, as it will soon be shown. Furthermore, Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause’s application of the concept into the field of corruption studies demonstrates that sociotropic voting highlights to a very large extent the importance of corruption perception as an independent variable for corruption voting. Thus, in line with the variables explored in the literature and respecting the centripetal purposes of this theoretical overview, the focus will exclusively set on sociotropic corruption voting.

A key component in Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause’s framework is the element of salience in its sociotropic dimension: “the salience of the issue determines the weight it plays in voting behaviour [so] we expect that the prevalence of sociotropic corruption voting depends on the perceived salience of societal corruption.” Corruption as a national problem is expected to be brought into the game by elite action, particularly within events that are susceptible of raising its salience as a political issue. The authors point towards three potential factors leading to an increase in the salience of societal corruption:

First, we would expect public corruption scandals to increase the salience of corruption for self-evident reasons. Second, election campaigns may increase the salience of corruption in countries where corruption is a non-trivial issue because opposition parties may have a political incentive to raise the issue of corruption as a means of winning votes away from incumbent parties. […] We also expect that the emergence of new, anti-corruption parties ought to increase the salience of corruption as a political issue. Therefore, when the salience of corruption is high (e.g., corruption scandals, during an election campaign where parties are highlighting problems with corruption, following the emergence of anti-corruption political parties), we expect to find evidence of sociotropic corruption voting. (Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause, 2014: 73)

The empirical prospects and ambitions of this paper are pushing this framework in a particular direction from this point on. Out of the three potential factors leading to an increase in salience, it is the emergence of anti-corruption political parties what is most in
line with the readings and purposes of the literature analysed – namely, to present and depict the emergence of political forces and movements that publicly oppose corruption and challenge the re-election of corrupt leaders. Because of this, I will condition the salience-based argument exclusively on the emergence of anti-corruption parties. Public corruption scandals and election campaigns, the two other elements, while worth exploring separately in future studies, will not be a prominent part of this paper. A small theoretical adjustment illustrating this will be presented in the last sub-section, dedicated to analysing shortcomings and ambiguities.

**The sociotropic role of the media**

Besides the prominence of the salience-based argument, this theory contains yet another element that renders it critical for the purpose of this study, namely a channel-focused approach. The authors strive to search for a mechanism that accounts for the emergence and application of sociotropic corruption voting:

> We need to know how citizens come to believe that corruption is a problem in society. The usual suspect in this regard would be the media […] This is perhaps most important for the salience argument, where support for this hypothesis increases if the events hypothesized to increase the salience of corruption as a political issue (e.g. […] entrance of new anti-corruption party) likewise lead to an increase in media coverage of corruption. (Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause, 2014: 75)

It is not the emergence of new anti-corruption parties *per se* what contributes to a raising voter awareness against incumbent malfeasance, but the increasing media coverage of corruption-related cases as a result of this. In the end, this derives in a growing voter tendency towards punishing their corrupt leaders at the polls. The mechanism can be depicted as follows:
Thus far, this section has attempted to select sociotropic corruption voting as a more appealing strand of theory when compared with pocketbook corruption voting. Sociotropic components contribute to explaining how perception of corruption pushes voters in a certain direction – a variable duly explored and stressed in the literature. Additionally, understanding salience’s utmost importance is vital in this framework. Sociotropic corruption voting can only be brought about under very particular circumstances of salience triggered by elite action, namely through public corruption scandals, election campaigns and emergence of anti-corruption parties – the latter being the most relevant one for this paper’s aims. The role of the media is equally fundamental, since its expected increase in coverage of corruption-related cases is what finally leads to a rising voter perception of corruption and, eventually, to the application of a sociotropic logic ahead of election day.

**Addressing theoretical shortcomings**

While the previous sub-section has been primarily devoted to presenting sociotropic corruption voting and contextualizing it in a way it fits into the goals of this study, this section
will be aimed at challenging the framework through a critical evaluation of its weaknesses, unclarities and ambiguities. I will particularly focus on ontological issues concerning operationalization of concepts – how terms are defined and explained, which plays a major role in their measurement and understanding. Alongside this, I will make some adjustments to the framework’s premises to broaden its scope and thus expand its theoretical implications. My aim with this will be to challenge Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause’s ostensibly narrow assertions and attempt to demonstrate the functionality of this theory in a broader setting. The application to my case will eventually confirm or deny the utility of these adjustments.

The first unclarity necessary to address concerns one of the first statements delivered in this theory and highlighted in the previous section: “corruption-sensitive voters may respond both to the direct effects of corruption […] and to indirect effects”. Without further context, the reader is introduced to corruption-sensitive voters, a concept lacking a framework as well as a clear meaning – what exactly is a corruption-sensitive voter? This comes as a particularly bewildering term, mentioned at the very beginning of the paper and not referred to or revisited anymore after that. There are no attempts to differentiate a corruption-sensitive voter from, simply, a regular voter: Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause’s data has been majorly obtained from individual-level surveys where the term respondent is rather used. This, obviously, does not give away the idea that these respondents are particularly corruption-sensitive, but are merely a representative sample of the electorate. It can therefore be inferred that this framework’s main unit of analysis is the individual voter – a voter with no specific characteristics beyond being, precisely, a voter.

The second question I want to raise is, more than operational, of an empirical nature. I want to challenge the current theoretical framework by broadening its practical application scope. As previously pointed out, one of Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause’s elements contributing to an increase in salience of corruption is the emergence of anti-corruption parties – the strand of the theory this paper will abide by– followed by a higher coverage of corruption cases by the media. However, a big shortcoming can be identified here, which constitutes my main argument: political parties are not the only entities that have the enough leverage to rise public salience and provoke a shift in media coverage of corruption. According to the authors, anti-corruption parties are characterized by “an incentive to highlight corrupt behaviour on the part of existing parties” and are built upon “a strong anti-corruption agenda” (Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause, 2014: 68, 83). On the basis of
these claims, the only clear difference between an anti-corruption political party and an ACM, as explored in the literature, is the former's ability of being elected into State institutions – otherwise, both anti-corruption parties and ACMs are forces with political ambitions and potential political impact, and both share the commonality of challenging the corrupt establishment.

**Concluding remarks**

In this section I have introduced, explored and critically discussed the components of this paper’s theoretical backbone. My point of departure has been Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause’s 2014 piece, where they attempt to track the relationship between corruption and voting behaviour through the articulation of two possible channels. On the one hand, what is coined as *pocketbook* corruption voting is triggered by personal exposure to corruption through, for instance, personal experiences with bribery; on the other hand, *sociotropic* corruption voting refers to the process sparked by individual perceptions of corruption in society. Both channels depart from an individual level of and both are to eventually lead to the ousting of corrupt incumbents after election day. Despite this, sociotropic corruption voting supports to a larger extent the choice of variables explored in my literature review, inasmuch as it highlights the importance of corruption perception as a plausible independent variable for corruption voting (see, f.ex, Ecker, Glinitzer and Meyer, 2016; McNally, 2016; Seligson, 2002). It is because of this that, as far as this study is concerned, the focus has been set exclusively on sociotropic corruption voting.

I have further limited the theory by directing attention to the emergence of anti-corruption political parties as the foremost factor leading to an increase in corruption salience – thus leaving aside two other factors introduced in the original theory, public corruption scandals and election campaigns. The motivation behind this decision is simple: the emergence of anti-corruption political parties, as presented by the authors, is thought of as a trigger of sociotropic corruption voting. This, indeed, constitutes one of my study’s main pillars, namely exploring the potential effects of political forces that challenge the legitimacy of corrupt incumbents – and it constitutes the reason I have decided to make use of the theory in this particular direction. Additionally, I have argued that broadening the empirical scope of this factor, in a way that both anti-corruption parties and ACMs be included as
potential triggers, is a legitimate adjustment to make given the evident alignments in terms of goals held by these two entities.

The fact that anti-corruption parties are different to ACMs in that the latter are not eligible into State institutions is irrelevant in this context. The reason for this lies in the media: according to the theory, the media’s role as an active agent takes over as soon as anti-corruption parties—and ACMs—have appeared. It is not the emergence of new anti-corruption parties per se what contributes to raising salience and voter awareness against incumbent malfeasance, but the increasing media coverage of corruption-related cases as a result of this. The eventual attainment of sociotropic corruption voting—this is, the punishment of corrupt leaders at the polls— is thus only reached via the active role of television channels, radio stations and newspaper agencies.
4

Research design and method

The aim of this study is to find out to what extent the 2016 anti-corruption protests in North Macedonia influenced electoral accountability in the snap elections that took place in December that year. In this section I will dive into the most technical aspects of my research, namely its design and methodology (Roselle and Spray, 2012). Halperin and Heath (2012: 14) rightly claim this section to be a “strategy for providing a convincing ‘test’ or demonstration of [one’s] hypothesis” through the specification of the type of evidence needed, how it will be gathered and how it will be treated and analysed. A proper research design has to be explicit, convincing, reliable and replicable – aspects that will be tackled accordingly.

This section will be structured as follows: firstly, I will begin with a thorough insight into the paper’s case, namely the emergence in April 2016 of the so-called Colourful Revolution in North Macedonia’s social-political arena. Its broader context will be set through the articulation of a historical narrative aimed at identifying the factors that led to its appearance, such as the government’s corruption-linked misconducts added to its ever-increasing illiberal nature. I will then conduct an overview of the events that ensued until December 2016, when snap parliamentary elections took place and confirmed the government’s loss of rooted support. Subsequently, on a more technical note, I will present a thorough methodological discussion around the nature of this single-case-based research framework and justify my case selection building upon it.

After setting the paper’s context, four sub-sections will follow. I will introduce the study’s dependent and independent variables and its hypothesis; then, I will describe my data collection method; then, I will engage in a discussion on this method’s limitations. I will devote the last sub-section to making some short remarks around the ethical considerations that come implicit when carrying out academic research and I will clarify how I have dealt with them for this study.
Corruption, revolution and the 2016 Macedonian elections

Political life in North Macedonia since the start of the twenty-first century has been framed within the quasi-supreme rule of one party, VMRO–DPMNE, and one man, Nikola Gruevski. As party leader since 2003, Gruevski brought a modernizing and youthful image to North Macedonia’s main right-wing force, which had recently lost the 2002 elections to the left-wing Socijaldemokratski Sojuz na Makedonija (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia; hereinafter, SDSM). His campaign built upon nationalist elements and a pro-European agenda including seeking membership in both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), which awarded him the prime-ministership in the 2006 parliamentary elections (Crowther, 2017).

The years that followed Gruevski’s electoral victory were notably marked by a swift turn to the right alongside a visible crackdown on civil rights and freedoms (Grozdanovska Dimiškovska, 2012). Civil society and non-government groups critical of the regime were being harassed and their independence undermined (Crowther, 2017), key media were taken over and transformed into propaganda machineries (Micevski and Trpevska, 2015) and the judicial authority had been rendered almost powerless before the elites. Additionally, an aggressive rhetoric towards North Macedonia’s Albanian community, which makes up around a quarter of the country’s population, had settled in and had no prospects of leaving. The VMRO–DPMNE party apparatus had captured the country and turned it into a pit of corruption, and its successive victories in the 2008, 2011 and 2014 parliamentary elections suggested that this was far from over.

May 2015 was the turning point that marked the decline of North Macedonia towards political turmoil and the end of Gruevski as leader. SDSM leader Zoran Zaev made public that the VMRO–DPMNE government was involved in a series of wiretapped conversations that confirmed accusations of “widespread corruption, illegal influence on the judiciary [and] pressures on the media” coming from Gruevski’s entourage (Petkovski, 2015: 45). Around 20,000 phone numbers had been eavesdropped on and approximately 670,000 conversations had been illegally listened to “including those of politicians, police officers and judges” (Reef, 2017: 171) evidencing episodes of electoral fraud, extortion and abuse of power (Micevski and Trpevska, 2015). Alongside this, the tapes revealed the government’s responsibility for the coverup of the murder in 2011 of young Martin Neškovski, beaten to death by police
forces at age twenty-two – a highly controversial case that already then had led to crowds of people taking to the streets in protest against police brutality (Marušić, 2011).

The tape scandal evidenced institutionally-entrenched corruption that affected all administrative levels and whose machinery was steered by Gruevski’s VMRO–DPMNE. Shortly after the so-called “political bomb” was released, angry protesters led by rights groups, political parties and non-governmental associations gathered in front of the government building demanding the immediate resignation of the whole government cabinet – a mobilization that was crushed with violence from the police forces. Protests thereafter were held in a peaceful fashion for days with the aim of having Prime Minister Gruevski step down and finding a solution to the turmoil. According to Milan (2017b: 837), “the broad citizens’ movement articulated several demands, which ranged from the immediate resignation of the incumbents to the release of the demonstrators detained since May 5th, to the call for electing a new democratic government.” After two months of protests, a solution to the deadlock was eventually brokered by the EU in the form of the so-called Pržino Agreement (Crowther, 2017), which enshrined Gruevski’s stepping down in January 2016 “in favour of an interim government made of VMRO and SDSM members [and] early parliamentary elections for April 24th, later rescheduled for June 5th” (Esteso Pérez, 2018: 3).

By March 2016, the Special Public Prosecutor’s Office (SPO) – an ad hoc prosecuting body constituted as part of the Pržino Agreement – had already investigated a large share of Gruevski’s entourage in relation to the tape scandal, plus snap elections were hardly four months away (Petkovski, 2015). However, the political crisis was about to deepen further: on April 12th 2016 the President of North Macedonia, Gjorgje Ivanov, himself a member of VMRO–DPMNE, announced a pardon to all the party officials facing charges and crime investigations linked with the wiretapped conversations, in an attempt, he claimed, to overcome the deadlock and act in the country’s best interest (Marušić, 2016a; Reef, 2017). Notwithstanding his intentions, this move had the opposite effect and triggered yet another massive wave of protests, starting in Skopje that very evening and rapidly spreading through several towns and major villages across the country – Bitola, Kumanovo, Prilep, Strumica, Veles, Kavadarcı, and Ohrid, among others. The opposition and citizens understood Ivanov’s decision “as a clear intention to protect party officials from prosecution, exacerbating thus the perception of the impunity of political elites” (Milan, 2017b: 838).

This wave of anti-government mobilizations was a turning point in North Macedonia’s history of contention inasmuch as it displayed a completely new repertoire of
action and showed somehow remarkable differences with the demonstrations that had been held in 2015 as an earlier episode of the same political crisis. The protest series became known as the Šarena Revolucija (Colourful Revolution) and its most significant action included the protesters’ firing paintballs and hurling paint-filled balloons at buildings and monuments in the centre of Skopje, including the parliament house. At the same time, street demonstrations took place every day all over the country and online activism – mostly on Twitter – spread like wildfire within and beyond its borders. The Colourful Revolution showed off an undeniable intersectional and interethnic component, bringing together Macedonians and Albanians of all ages and status as well as uniting protestors standing up for diverse series of demands, spanning from the economic situation to the protection of LGBT+ rights (Ozimec, 2016). What had been sparked as an anti-corruption movement soon evolved into an all-encompassing display of social demands.

Protests were held on a regular – when not daily – basis until early July. By then, President Ivanov had revoked the pardons to the officials charged in the tape scandal (Marušić, 2016b) and a new date for early elections had been set for December 11th 2016 after another EU-brokered agreement between the parties – given the opposition’s refusal to take part in the June elections which, they claimed, lacked sufficient democratic guarantees (Reef, 2017). Gruevski would, despite all, be running for Prime Minister.

The results after election day left no doubt that a strong social force had exercised a substantive effect on the outcome: the gap between VMRO–DPMNE (38.14% of votes) and SDSM (36.66% of votes) was of fewer than 20,000 ballots, equivalent to two seats in the 120-seat parliament – a remarkable difference from the previous parliamentary election only two years before, where VMRO–DPMNE obtained 42.97% of votes and SDSM obtained 25.34% of votes. This time, although Gruevski tightly obtained 51 seats against Zaev’s 49, SDSM finally managed to form a coalition government with one ethnic Albanian party, thus attaining power in North Macedonia and putting an end to a decade of VMRO–DPMNE in power. To this day, the emergence and actions of the Colourful Revolution are believed to have played a considerable role in the portrayal of political corruption and in the rise in corruption awareness through a novel and creative repertoire of action (Esteso Pérez, 2018; Reef, 2017). Also, VMRO–DPMNE’s defeat added to the comeback of Zaev’s SDSM after a decade out of office has resulted in a myriad of implications for the Western Balkan region, spanning from the establishment of an anti-nationalistic and inter-ethnic cooperative scheme.
of relations to the effective manifestation of a pragmatic leadership that openly rejects flirting with authoritarian policies and practices (Horowitz, 2019; Marušić, 2019).

**A discussion on case studies and case selection criteria**

The selection of a case for analysis is considered a crucial step when articulating a case-based research study. According to Roselle and Spray (2012: 37), “[o]nce you have chosen a case or cases for your project, you have accomplished two necessary tasks. First, you have defined the parameters that make your project original. Second, you have further narrowed the scope of your project to a more manageable level”. This section will thus be devoted to building upon methodological postulations and case study theory in order to justify my case selection – this is, to explain why the 2016 elections in North Macedonia and the events that preceded constitute a case of academic interest and relevance in the field of political science.

The utility of a single-case-based research paper lies in the ambition of shedding light on a decision or set of decisions, individuals, processes and events upon the researcher’s belief that contextual conditions are “highly pertinent” to the phenomenon in question (Yin, 2003: 46). In order to select that phenomenon, though, we first have to turn towards our dependent variable and render it our point of departure (Roselle and Spray, 2012). As far as this paper is concerned, electoral accountability – as an expression of voting behaviour – acts as the only dependent variable and is defined as “an incumbent’s re-election or replacement through an electorate whereby voters ponder their choice according to the incumbent’s perceived level of corruption”. In empirical terms, electoral accountability appears when the allegedly corrupt incumbent ends up not holding office for the term following the election. Further operationalization of the dependent variable will follow in the next section.

In the light of this definition, the 2016 election in North Macedonia presented itself from the outset as a very appealing and relevant case. Ever since Gruevski’s VMRO–DPMNE reached power in 2006, the country had undergone a steady decline in democratic practices and political corruption had boosted (Coppedge et al., 2019), brought to attention by national and international observers. To begin with, therefore, I was searching for a case that could provide a good example of entrenched political and institutional corruption as a basis upon which electoral accountability could flourish – and this is precisely what happened in the aftermath of the December elections. VMRO–DPMNE suffered a blow big enough
to prevent it from holding office for a fifth consecutive term thanks to the negotiation efforts of SDSM, which managed to form a coalition government with one minor party – thus achieving electoral accountability by stripping Gruevski of power. VMRO–DPMNE still was the most voted party but its evident involvement in institutional malfeasance and corruption – as made public by the tape scandal – and the crisis that unfolded thereafter were the reasons snap elections were called in the first place and, most probably, the reasons for the party to lose a large share of its votes. Thus, given its paradigmatic nature in attaining electoral accountability from a corruption-infested backdrop and its relevance as a regional frontrunner, I considered North Macedonia as a top choice and therefore selected it as my single framework of analysis within which to test my hypothesis and answer my research question.

In order to be able to categorize my single-case-based research within a broader methodological frame, it is worth looking into Yin’s typological distribution of case study designs. His point of departure is the total number of cases explored, this being one (single-case) or more than one (multiple-case). Within the former category, which is the one that applies to my research inasmuch as I am exploring one case, Yin presents up to five potential sorts, or rationales, for single-case designs: the critical, the extreme, the representative, the revelatory and the longitudinal (Yin, 2003). A thorough insight into my case, with special attention to the premises of my theoretical framework, points towards its being a critical single-case study:

The theory has specified a clear set of propositions as well as the circumstances within which the propositions are believed to be true. To confirm, challenge, or extend the theory, there may exist a single case, meeting all of the conditions for testing the theory. The single case can then be used to determine whether a theory's propositions are correct or whether some alternative set of explanations might be more relevant. (Yin, 2003: 86)

Yin’s definition of a critical rationale matches both the aim of my theory – i.e., its future applicability – as well as my own aspirations behind selecting North Macedonia as a case country. In practice, this means that my research will depart from a set of theoretical assumptions and my case will “confirm, challenge, or extend” them to a larger or lesser extent.
Variables and hypothesis

In this sub-section, I will firstly and secondly present this study’s dependent and independent variables, respectively, and will operationalize them in relation to my case choice drawing from the literature explored. Operationalization is described as “the process used to define variables in terms of observable properties” (Roselle and Spray, 2012: 38). Lastly, I introduce the hypothesis along which I will be articulating my research, paying special attention to discussing its plausibility, validity and coherence within the whole research framework.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable of a study is the factor or concept that occurs last in the investigative process and constitutes the phenomenon that the study seeks to find an answer to (Halperin and Heath, 2012). As mentioned in the previous sub-section, this study’s dependent variable is electoral accountability as an expression of voting behaviour. Such a variable has been explored in depth in the literature review and has been presented as a link between political corruption and voting behaviour in a way that, thanks to electoral accountability, we can help explain how high-level corruption affects the decisions voters can potentially make on election day.

A convenient operationalization of electoral accountability draws from the literature explored previously, namely from Ashworth (2012) and from other retrospective voting theory accounts (Fiorina, 1978; Kiewiet and Rivers, 1984; Svoboda, 1995). Electoral accountability can be defined as “an incumbent’s re-election or replacement through an electorate whereby voters ponder their choice according to the incumbent’s perceived level of corruption”. The concept of re-election must be clearly operationalized as an effective attainment of office after post-election negotiations – this means that re-election cannot be inferred from just victory at the polls. In this same vein, therefore, replacement must be understood as actual replacement in office by a candidate from another party – effectively barring the corrupt incumbent from holding office for the term following the election. This is, precisely, the framework applying to North Macedonia as a case: even though Gruevski’s VMRO–DPMNE won the December 2016 election, the coalition negotiations that followed
ended up with Zaev’s SDSM attaining office. Electoral accountability translated, thus, into Gruevski’s replacement in office through the Macedonian electorate – which is exactly the phenomenon that this research is seeking an answer to, hence rendering it the dependent variable.

The idea that electoral accountability is effectively reached upon the incumbent’s ousting from office must be further qualified in the light of very important nuances that should not be overlooked. Certain signs can depict how successful the attainment of electoral accountability can be: these include purely quantitative measurements deriving from the election results (f.ex., percentage of votes obtained by the incumbent party and by the opposition forces in comparison with the last election) and post-election surveys (f.ex., percentage of voters that voted for a different party in comparison with the last election). These are all measurements where the support and approval rates for corrupt incumbents can be quantified, which can provide an empirical basis to analyse the potential attainment of electoral accountability.

**Independent variable**

Since the aim of this study is to find evidence on how the 2016 anti-corruption protests in North Macedonia – this is, the Colourful Revolution – influenced electoral accountability in the December elections, the focus now must be placed on the independent variable. It is a factor “believed to influence the project’s dependent variable” (Roselle and Spray, 2012: 10) and thus that makes the dependent variable, in this case electoral accountability, be affected in some way or another. This paper’s single independent variable, therefore, is the emergence and actions of the Colourful Revolution during the months of April, May, June and July 2016.

Exploring the effect of the Revolution endorses this analysis with a twofold benefit, both to this study as well as to the field of global politics. Firstly, as far as this study is concerned, this exploration provides an answer to whether and to what extent this movement played a significant role in Nikola Gruevski’s defeat. Its utility can render it a highly referred-to study by a large deal of stakeholders when trying to understand electoral dynamics in politically corrupt societies. Secondly, what concerns the field of global politics, this analysis contributes greatly to bridging the gap discussed in the literature review. There is an evident lack of studies that focus explicitly on the direct and indirect social-political consequences of
social movements, let alone anti-corruption platforms and ACMs. This study tackles this gap head-on and offers a novel insight into the political potential of social movements.

In line with the content explored in the literature review, the Colourful Revolution represents an evident example of an ACM and will thus be operationalized as such. The reasons for this decision are simple and can be appreciated in the movement’s motivations and repertoires of action: firstly, and according to the literature, ACMs emerge in response to a visible decline in citizen’s rights and institutional trust fuelled by high-level corruption. This condition is clearly fulfilled by the Colourful Revolution, which took to the streets directly after the Macedonian President publicly pardoned those involved in the tape scandal – a representation of elite impunity in the framework of corrupt power relations. As far as ACM repertoires of action are concerned, protests and other forms of street performance are the most visible expressions, where the aim is to convey a message to the authorities, as well as to the media and within the protestors themselves. The Colourful Revolution’s tools of action clearly followed these guidelines not only through daily demonstrations but also through the characteristic and novel paint hurling. The paint was mainly targeted at buildings and monuments erected within the government-led urban renovation project Skopje 2014, a source of financial malfeasance and also a symbol for the government’s corruption (Kjuka, 2013). It is evident, given this, that the Colourful Revolution meets the characteristics – both in terms of motivations and in terms of repertoires of action – to be considered an ACM.

**Hypothesis**

Hypotheses are situated in relation to the dependent and independent variables, primarily based upon the literature review and the theoretical framework and are the main output of a study’s research design (Halperin and Heath, 2012). As for this study, the dependent variable – electoral accountability – is what I will attempt to provide an explanation to, whereas the independent variable – the emergence and actions of ACMs – corresponds to the factors believed to condition the dependent variable. The theory of sociotropic corruption voting, examined in the previous section, will serve as the guiding thread between the independent and the dependent variable. Accordingly, the formulation of this study’s hypothesis can be summed up as follows:
The emergence and actions of ACMs, channelled through an increasing media coverage of corruption-related cases, explain sociotropic corruption voting and the attainment of electoral accountability as an expression of voting behaviour.

This hypothesis includes components of everything that has been examined so far. It contains the independent and dependent variable, traced in the literature review and further defined and operationalized in this section. It also contains elements from the theory, namely the role of the media as an awareness raiser and the attainment of sociotropic corruption voting—the electoral punishment of corrupt leaders—as a necessary prelude for electoral accountability to be achieved.

This hypothesis’ plausibility is, therefore, more than evident. It feeds from both literature and theory and it represents a natural potential timeline which can indeed shed light upon the role of ACMs in electoral accountability and thus advance in the study of voting behaviour and global politics. It also tackles directly a major gap in the literature in that it offers a novel and underresearched independent variable whose potential relevance is worth testing and paying further attention to.

**Measurement and data collection**

In this sub-section I will address the technical discussion around what is being measured and how the information necessary to test the study’s hypothesis can be obtained. A well-summarized definition of what a data collection method must entail is offered by Halperin and Heath (2012: 165): “[i]t might specify, for instance, that we will use surveys or interviews, ethnographic research, or content analysis [and] whether the data will be collected using qualitative or quantitative methods, and whether we will collect them ourselves or use data collected by others”. Along this same vein, Roselle and Spray (2012) set the focus on the replicable nature of the data collection method—a prerequisite to present it in a highly specific and explicit way.

The data collection method for this study builds on two different information-seeking stages that represent two different sets of observable properties as well as two different and successive points in time. This means that the data collection process will respect the timeline-like format of the study’s hypothesis in an attempt to reveal whether or not the events that led to the attainment of electoral accountability in North Macedonia were preceded and motivated by an increased media engagement with corruption-related news.
Tracking media coverage of corruption

The first stage – so the first set of observable properties – attempts to find evidence on whether the emergence and actions of the Colourful Revolution influenced media coverage of corruption, as the hypothesis claims. In accordance with the theoretical framework, the entry of the Colourful Revolution in the Macedonian political arena should lead to an increased coverage of corruption in the media. For evidence, I used TIME.mk, a large computer-based Macedonian-language news aggregator that comprises online articles from more than 100 news sources in North Macedonia, including television channels, newspapers and radio stations. TIME.mk organizes the stories in a way that news from different sources that are covering the same event appear in one single news cluster. This approach, operated in its entirety by a computer formula, groups the headings from different sources together and then ranks those clusters according to their estimated priority, this is, according to the total number of related news items in each cluster (TIME.mk, 2018). This effectively means that more popular news stories will be placed higher up in relevance.

From this point, I ran a search on North Macedonia’s news stories through TIME.mk’s archive, where I found weekly reviews of the top 100 news clusters since January 2001. I analysed 65 weeks of news starting from September 14th to 20th 2015, until December 5th to 11th 2016, the week of the parliamentary elections. Whereas the selected ending week is evident inasmuch as it constitutes the end of the period I am analysing, I have selected the week of September 14th to 20th 2015 as my departing week since it was then that the SPO’s prosecuting competences entered into force, thus opening a new historic period of public prosecution of corruption in North Macedonia in both symbolic and technical terms.

The methodology I used to explore the weekly news reviews was the following: firstly, I ran an overall search through every weekly review and created an aggregate of all politics-themed articles in all clusters. This means I selected those news stories whose main topic was, strictly, Macedonian political life – political party activity, elections, parliament activity and judiciary activity if it included political agents. On the contrary, this category did not include any events where education, security, infrastructures, health, environment or culture were addressed from a political perspective. Followingly, I ran a new search within these selected articles to further pick those that contained any reference to corruption involving members of government at the national or local level, such as the Prime Minister or other public office holders. Besides references to actual embroilment in corruption cases, this category included news stories referring to court or trial hearings where a corruption
case involving members of government at the national or local level was being assessed, as well as news stories offering insights into past corruption-related events. In all cases, high-level political corruption was the main topic of the article and thus constituted media coverage of corruption. Finally, I calculated the total weekly number of corruption-themed articles as a percentage of the total weekly politics-themed news stories.

The reason I opted for this simple methodology is twofold. On the one hand, the TIME.mk news database, however comprehensive, lacked certain provisions that would have allowed for a more advanced search, which I will tackle in the limitations sub-section. On the other hand, in this light, I was not attempting to carry out an exercise of numerical accuracy: my intention was simply to reveal a trend in the amount of corruption-related news stories. Obtaining an exact number of stories was secondary as long as there was a clear insight into what kind of media coverage patterns followed in North Macedonia after the emergence of the Colourful Revolution.

**Investigating changes in voting patterns**

The second stage—and thus the second set of observable properties—attempts to find evidence on voting patterns. Looking back on the theory, it is not the emergence of anti-corruption forces *per se* what contributes to an increase in voter awareness against incumbent malfeasance, but the rising media coverage of corruption-related cases as a result of this. Therefore, the electorate receives signs from television channels, newspapers and radio stations and, upon their effect, they may apply a sociotropic logic and vote against a corrupt incumbent.

In order to find out the extent to which this claim is true or not, I opted for the development of an online survey with the intention of circulating it across the Macedonian electorate. Halperin and Heath’s (2012) take on survey research contributed to a large degree towards how I articulated my sets of questions, how I phrased them, how I selected my sample and how I attempted to avoid error to the extent possible. The main reason I opted for carrying out a survey is their ability to measure ordinary people’s attitudes and behaviours, many of which are not observable – a perfect method for measuring the effect of media and potential vote change patterns at an individual level.

Questionnaire design, as a key element of survey research, required an optimal formulation of questions and an in-depth clarification of potentially confusing or vague
concepts (f.ex., corruption). The survey included three different blocks of questions in Macedonian language, spanning from voting habits and political parties in North Macedonia to reliance on the media (see Appendices 1 and 2). I used closed questions only given that they are “quick and easy for the respondent to answer and for the interviewer to code” and thus lead to a lower risk of ambiguity (Halperin and Heath, 2012: 239); likewise, answers were majorly either dichotomous (yes/no) or polytomous (degrees of agreement) depending on the subject of the question and the type of measurement expected. Concerning question order, more important questions were asked either first or last “so they are not contaminated by responses to less important questions” (Halperin and Heath, 2012: 238), also leaving strategic gaps between questions where contamination was possible. I tackled question validity through making sure the questions asked would constitute a good measure of my concepts (face validity), would cover the concept in its entirety (content validity), would match existing measures of the same concept (criterion validity) and would suit the theory (construct validity).

I created the online survey using Sunet, the free default survey software available for students and staff at Malmö University. I opted for simple random sampling –making every unit in the sampling frame have the same chance of being selected– when selecting my sample, namely Macedonian citizens above voting age on December 11th 2016 and thus potential voters in the parliamentary elections. Selecting a good sample is important in order to be able to generalize the findings “from the survey to the population” (Halperin and Heath, 2012: 243) but, unfortunately, not without its constraints. A discussion on online survey limitations will follow in the next sub-section.

My analysis of survey figures in the next chapter will build on descriptive statistics based on the results I gathered – unfortunately, engaging in more advanced software-run analyses is far beyond my abilities. I decided to set the confidence level at 95% —a rule of thumb in most statistical analyses—, opted for a 3% margin of error and departed from a population size of around 1,800,000 (IFES, 2019). Based on this, I then used a sample size calculator to determine my sample size and obtained 1,066 respondents as the ideal number for my survey to yield statistically reliable results.
Assessing methodological limitations

In this sub-section I will present my data collection method’s limitations and offer a reasonable explanation on how and to what extent I have dealt with them. Firstly, as mentioned before, the TIME.mk news database thorough nature did not prevent it from carrying implicit a lack of provisions that would have allowed for a more specific and accurate research. For instance, there was no option for narrowing down search subjects or applying certain keywords, which made the overall quest very time-consuming; also, the database offered no certainty whatsoever that the results would not yield any article duplicates. Because of this, numerical accuracy is not guaranteed – however, as previously noted, it is not this study’s aim to provide an exact article count but to show a pattern in corruption coverage.

Concerning the online survey, a series of limitations and potential biases must be acknowledged. As Halperin and Heath (2012: 17) rightly point out, “a major weakness is that surveys can, and frequently do, misrepresent what people think and do and thus create misleading information”. In these terms, one of the most challenging aspects is to deal with the so-called problems of recall, namely respondents struggling to remember certain information (f.ex., who they voted for in a past election). In this same vein, non-response poses an additional challenge – particularly in online surveys, not as effective as face-to-face surveys or, to a lesser extent, phone surveys. Finally, it is worth pointing out an intrinsic coverage error inasmuch as online surveys, inevitably, entail the exclusion of a fair proportion of the population: those with no access to the internet or computer illiterate. In North Macedonia, the Internet Penetration Rate was of 75.9% as of March 2019¹, meaning that one out of every fourth Macedonian citizens was automatically out of the survey. This most likely led to a demographic bias, whereby younger and more computer-literate citizens could be overrepresented in the sample.

Ethical considerations

When carrying out academic research, it is necessary to pay attention to a series of ethical regards that come implicit in the evidence-seeking process, not least when conducting research methods that require critical input from ordinary individuals, such as interviews or

¹ The Internet Penetration Rate corresponds to the percentage of the total population of a given country that uses the internet. Retrieved from: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats4.htm#europe>.
surveys. To the extent that this study is concerned, surveys entail participation from a random representative sample of a target population, and respondents must be fully aware of the implications of taking part in the data gathering process.

Participants in this study’s online survey were explicitly asked to give their informed consent voluntarily in order to “reasonably ensure that [they] understand the nature and the purpose of the survey” (Lavrakas, 2008), which they were explained accordingly at the beginning of the questionnaire – including its academic goal, the way data will be treated afterwards and the approximate expected amount of time for completion. They were duly notified beforehand that declining to participate or withdrawing from the survey at any given point would not lead to penalties of any sort, and that the survey’s anonymous nature ensured privacy and confidentiality (Halperin and Heath, 2012; Lavrakas, 2008).
5 Analysis and results

Thus far, this paper has attempted to trace and develop the components necessary for delving further into the role of ACMs and their effects over voting behaviour and electoral accountability – owing to the need of bridging a well underresearched gap in the scholarly literature. While the theoretical framework provided the normative premises for making sense of this study, the methodological discussion contributed to the establishment of the epistemological parameters and technical procedures undertaken to either support or discard the hypothesis. The final purpose of this paper is to find out how the 2016 anti-corruption protests in North Macedonia influenced electoral accountability in the snap elections that took place in December that year.

As explained in the previous section, I devised one single hypothesis to vertebrate the whole study through one main axis. This hypothesis feeds, firstly, from the contents explored in the literature review, namely the independent and dependent variables; and secondly, from my theoretical assumptions, namely the role of the media as an awareness raiser and the prior attainment of sociotropic corruption voting for electoral accountability to be achieved:

*The emergence and actions of ACMs, channelled through an increasing media coverage of corruption-related cases, explain sociotropic corruption voting and the attainment of electoral accountability as an expression of voting behaviour.*

This hypothesis encompasses all elements explored up until now and it represents a natural timeline which can help depict the role of ACMs in electoral accountability and thus shed light upon the study of voting behaviour and the field of global politics overall.

This section will be devoted to presenting my results and analysing my findings. It will be structured as follows: firstly, I will introduce and examine the data corresponding to the first component of my hypothesis, namely the online media coverage of corruption, obtained through online search of corruption-related news stories as a fraction of politics-themed news stories. I will then present the data referring to the second component of my hypothesis, namely the changes in voting patterns, obtained through online surveys distributed among the Macedonian electorate. In the light of both sets of results, I will analyse
their relations and correlations to evaluate finally the strength of my hypothesis. The last subsection will contain a discussion on validity and reliability in relation to my findings.

**Media coverage of corruption: results**

After completing the news search and assembling the relevant data, the presentation of findings that now follows will be carried out in a relatively straight-forward way. The introduction and description of this data will be executed along this paper’s ambitions inasmuch as it will shed light upon whether the emergence and actions of the Colourful Revolution exercised an effect over the media coverage of corruption, as the hypothesis claims. For this, the presentation of the data will foremostly stress its longitudinal nature to appreciate temporal variations of the same phenomenon, namely media coverage of corruption.

Politics take up a large deal of online media activity in North Macedonia, be it through reports, articles, interviews and several other forms of audio-visual output. Media coverage of domestic political life and events are, as one could suspect, majorly conditioned by episodes of higher political activity – for instance, ahead of an election. *Fig. 2* depicts this trend in North Macedonia through a longitudinal lapse of 65 weeks, starting from the week of September 14th to 20th 2015 (week 1) up until the week of December 5th to 11th 2016 (week 65), when the elections took place.

*Fig. 2. Weekly figures for politics-themed news stories.*
As Fig. 2 illustrates, the influx of politics-themed news stories undergoes a visibly irregular behaviour that is reflective of the up-and-down stages thoroughly present in political life. This is so to such an extent that the numerical difference between the lowest coverage point –27 news stories on week 52– and the peak –1,248 news stories on week 65– was of 1,221 news stories and an increase of 4,522%. The nature of this immense gap is not only numerical but also contextual – whereas news reporting during week 52 would focus extensively on the disastrous floods that ravaged the country and left 21 dead, hence a very diminished coverage of politics, week 65 would see it skyrocket ahead of the highly controversial 2016 parliamentary elections. Other noteworthy coverage peaks were week 64, right before election week (835 stories); week 44, when EU-brokered domestic party negotiations led to the entry into force of the the Pržino Agreement (719 stories); and week 31, when President Gjorgje Ivanov announced a pardon to all the VMRO–DPMNE party officials facing charges and crime investigations linked with the wiretapped conversations (709 stories). The latter week also saw the irruption of the Colourful Revolution’s first street protests.

After tracing a longitudinal insight into Macedonian media coverage of domestic politics, certain questions are to be asked: what link is there between media coverage of politics and media coverage of corruption? Most importantly, how much of the media coverage of politics is devoted to coverage of corruption cases involving the government? Fig. 3 depicts this.

As opposed to the content of the previous graph, the results featured in Fig. 3 can be very deceiving when analysed from a contextual point of view, since all conclusions are drawn in relation to politics-related stories. To put it simply, take this example: week X contains a very high number of politics-related stories of which, for instance, 30% are corruption-related. On the other hand, week Y has a rather low number of politics-related stories of which 60% are corruption-related. In strict numerical terms, week X features more corruption-related stories than week Y – which can wrongly suggest a higher coverage of corruption during week X. However, in relation to the overall number of politics-related stories, more space and relevance have been given to corruption-related stories at the expense of other political news during week Y – this is what we are looking for. As clarified in the methodology section, the aim through this exercise is to reveal a trend in the relevance corruption-related news stories are given in relation to other politics-related stories. The
focus is set on whether there is a visible raise in the coverage of corruption as a direct effect of the emergence of the Colourful Revolution.

Fig. 3. Weekly figures for corruption-related news stories as a percentage of the overall figures for politics-themed news stories.

The results reveal several peaks in corruption coverage – being week 23 the most prominent at 63%, triggered by the criminal involvement of the then Interior Minister in the corruption case known as Titanic. Week 32 (57%), week 45 (50%), week 16 (53%), week 51 (46%), week 55 (44%) and week 59 (43%) follow as the largest peaks. On the other hand, heavy fluctuation is noticed by several troughs where no corruption cases were reported on: weeks 1 to 5, 8, 11, 17, 18, 21, 24, 26, 28, 31, 33, 35, 36, 42, 44, 48, 52, 53, 56, 57, 60, 61, 64 and 65 were at 0% in media coverage of corruption.

What do these findings show in regard to this study’s hypothesis? In order to make sense of the results (see Appendix 3 for full figures), we have to turn towards corruption coverage after week 31 – thus after the emergence and actions of the Colourful Revolution. *A priori* there does not seem to be any consistent media coverage of corruption-related news that can potentially point towards the irruption of the Revolution’s protests as a causal factor. The most significant coverage comes during week 32, catalysed by the corruption case known as Transporter, when the media majorly reported on trial hearings and charges its suspects were facing. The weeks that followed peaked at a maximum point of 31% (weeks 34 and 39), both framed within the reporting on corruption cases Transporter and TNT, respectively.
Besides that, there was very poor coverage overall, with four troughs at 0% (weeks 33, 35 and 36) and a very low 5% (week 37).

Fig. 4. Weekly figures for politics-themed news stories and, within these, corruption-related news stories.

Fig. 4 shows there was a reasonable amount of reporting on politics-themed content during the first eight weeks that followed the irruption of the Colourful Revolution –381 weekly stories on average, against 356 weekly stories on average for all 65 weeks— but, in relation to this, corruption reporting was still very low. This means effectively that there was a lack of corruption coverage during those weeks not only in relation to the overall politics coverage, but also in numerical terms. In other words, the low percentages on corruption reporting are not due to a higher reporting on politics at the expense of a lower reporting on corruption, but rather to the fact that there was barely any reporting on corruption per se with the exception, as stated earlier, of weeks 34 and 39.

The Colourful Revolution’s activities of contention were over by early July 2016, between weeks 47 and 48. After this, media coverage of corruption seemed to shoot back up in several waves (weeks 51, 55, 59 and 62) with peaks between 43% and 46% –mainly reporting on trial hearings and criminal charges of suspects in the corruption cases Tender and Bribery– only to eventually drop back to 0 (weeks 52, 56, 60 and 64). This is, clearly enough, hardly indicative of the movement’s actual effect.
Changes in voting patterns: results

The second segment of this paper’s analysis will turn towards the findings accounted for by the online surveys distributed among the Macedonian electorate. In methodological terms, this second set of observable properties is aimed towards shedding light upon potential voting patterns as a result of an increasing media coverage of corruption-related stories. What is the initial standpoint regarding social perception of corruption? To what extent does the media condition voting patterns in a society where corruption is arguably perceived as widespread? Does the electorate apply a sociotropic logic and vote against corrupt incumbents upon a higher media coverage of corruption-related cases involving them?

Demographically, the results are very much in line with the expectations outlined in the section devoted to the assessment of methodological limitations. Namely, that the very nature of an online survey experiment would automatically leave a wide sector of the population out in such a way that younger, urban and more educated and computer-literate citizens would be overrepresented in the sample. Indeed, out of 1,066 respondents, only 261 are age 41 or older (24%), while those between the ages of 26 to 30 alone submitted 267 responses (25%), followed by those between ages 36 to 40 (189 responses, 18%) and ages 31 to 35 (184 responses, 17%). In terms of education, 812 respondents (76%) have completed at least a bachelor’s degree, meaning that only 24% of responses come from voters with no university education. Urban dwellers are well represented among the respondents, since 764 of them (72%) live in towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants – of which 561 in the capital, Skopje. Gender-wise, male participation in the survey was slightly more prominent at 653 respondents (61%) versus 410 (38%) for females. Finally, in national-ethnic terms, an overwhelming 994 respondents (93%) declared themselves as Macedonian – a good sign inasmuch as the subject of this study involves a party whose programme and policies appeal majorly to the ethnic Macedonian electorate, not to the Macedonian Albanian electorate. See Appendix 4 for full results.

A social assessment of corruption

The first stage of concern is finding out whether we can depart from the assumption that North Macedonia can be talked about as a corrupt country. As explored in the literature review, the success of electoral accountability can be largely dependent on how corrupt a
society considers itself to be – this is, through levels of public perception of corruption. Where does North Macedonia stand in these terms? Is corruption a problem which citizens – voters, in particular – are aware of? These are two very important questions inasmuch as looking into a society where corruption is deemed residual and far from an issue will be different from looking into a society where corruption prevails and is socially understood as widespread.

Results shown in Fig. 5 leave no doubt that public perception of corruption is very high in North Macedonia. No less than 84% of respondents rate corruption as an extremely important national problem, followed by 9% who consider it to be very important; likewise, the outlook on the situation five years ago left similarly high figures, with 60% of respondents rating corruption as an extremely important national problem then (see Appendix 4, Q7). While higher figures for 2019 might suggest a worsening of corruption perception in five years, problems of recall might apply here – namely, respondents struggling to remember certain information or certain situations with accuracy, in this case leading to a stronger assessment of the current situation and a softer assessment of events that took place a long time ago. In any case, however, the rather negative ratings yielded along a five-year span are highly indicative of the persistence and longevity of corruption as a national issue.

Fig. 5. Survey responses to the question “On a scale from 1 to 5, how important is corruption as a national problem? (1: not important at all, 5: extremely important)” Observations: 1,066.

Public perception of corruption is far from a uniform attitude and can acquire more particular nuances and expressions, for instance, when assessing different strata of public life
and the corruption therein. When asked for public perception of corruption in the police, the judiciary and the public administration—three main institutions generally present in contemporary states—respondents rated it as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
<th>Prefer not to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 Police</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 Judiciary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 Public administration</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Police</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Judiciary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Public administration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas the judiciary is perceived as the most corrupt institution from this group, both the police and the public administration are rated as highly corrupt—in fact, only a handful of respondents consider them to host little to no corruption. These figures suggest that Macedonian voters do not only have a feeling of widespread corruption in holistic terms at a national level, as shown in Fig. 5, but they are also able to dissect and break down these perceptions so as to rate each of the three given institutions in a more specific way. In either case, the Macedonian electorate perceives high levels of corruption in both national and institution-specific terms.

Notwithstanding these negative assessments, the political elite is, by far, the worst-rated institution in North Macedonia. When asked about the current level of perceived corruption among politicians, 96% of respondents said it is very or extremely widespread—as for five years ago, 84% claimed so. The Macedonian Albanian party DUI is considered extremely corrupt by the largest share of respondents (87%), followed by SDSM (70%), VMRO–DPMNE (63%), DPA (60%), AA (46%) and Besa Movement (42%). The current SDSM government coalition with DUI is rated as very or extremely corrupt by 92% of respondents, whereas the former VMRO–DPMNE government coalition with DUI, which stood until early 2016, was considered as such by 84% of respondents.
Does high perception of corruption in the Macedonian political elite occur even regardless of partisanship? In other words, can a voter think their party is extremely corrupt even after having voted for it? Figures in Table 2 seem to indicate so. 42% of those who voted for SDSM in the December 2016 elections believe this party is extremely corrupt, while 24% of those who voted for VMRO–DPMNE do so. Unsurprisingly, harsher assessments are directed towards the main rival party (i.e., 86% of those who voted for SDSM in 2016 believe VMRO–DPMNE is extremely corrupt, whereas 95% of VMRO–DPMNE voters think so about SDSM), but a large deal of voters do acknowledge their own party to be engaged in high corruption regardless of having supported it at the polls.

Table 2. Relation between party voted for in 2016 and perception of corruption in political parties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party voted for in 2016*</th>
<th>Respondents who think party is extremely corrupt** (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SDSM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSM</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VMRO–DPMNE</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUI</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besa Movement</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* DPA is deliberately excluded from this set of data after no respondent selected it as the party they voted for in 2016 (see Appendix 4, Q28).
** I.e., respondents whose answer was “5” (see Appendix 4, Q16 to Q21).

What does the data presented in this sub-section suggest and how does it contribute to this research? First and foremost, this analysis has helped to find strong evidence that corruption perception is extremely high in North Macedonia – both in overarching national terms and in an institution-specific sense. The data shows that voters are particularly sensitive to corrupt practices in political parties and within the political elite, demonstrating consciousness of this even within the party they have most recently voted for in a parliamentary election. Corruption is, thus, a rooted issue which voters are fully aware of as a question of national concern.
**Measuring media attitudes**

Media consumption in North Macedonia is considerably diverse and the attitudes emerging from it are substantively less polarised than the ones emerging from political-institutional corruption. The media service most frequently used by respondents is the online press: 64% consume online news every day and 91% do so at least once a week; closely followed by social media platforms, used by 59% of respondents on a daily basis and by 86% at least once a week. On the other side of the spectrum, neither radio nor the printed press are popular media services: 52% of respondents claim to never listen to Macedonian news on the radio, while 56% never read Macedonian news on the printed press. As for television, however, there is an even distribution of habits, namely 20% of respondents claiming to watch it every day and 19% who never watch it, whereas 24% do so several times a week (see Appendix 4, Q31 to Q35).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Respondents’ trust attitudes towards different media services when consuming Macedonian news (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all) (%)</th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed press</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online press</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the light of this data, it can be concluded that the Macedonian electorate does consume media services frequently, albeit majorly online. However, despite voters being considerably loyal media consumers, to what extent do they trust the content they are consuming? This is, how much do voters trust the media? Table 3 depicts this relation and reveals a rather cautious electorate: around a third of all responses indicates very limited trust overall (30% to 36%) while around a quarter shows no trust at all (18% to 26%). It is the online press and social media that are the most trustworthy media services, at 57% and 54% respectively of respondents who trust them either a lot or to a reasonable extent. Being a frequent media consumer, however, does not seem to affect trust rating: out of all respondents who read the online press more than once per week, only 7% claims to trust it.
a lot, whereas 16% does not trust it at all. This effectively means there are frequent online press readers that do not trust the online press at all.

**Comparing voting trends in 2014 and 2016**

My task in this last segment of data analysis will be twofold. Firstly, I will present the brief survey results concerning voting habits and electoral volatility in North Macedonia; which will lay the foundations for, secondly and most importantly, tying together the different threads of information that have emerged from the survey and that have been described in this section.

*Fig. 6. Electoral volatility between the 2014 and 2016 general elections. The figures show the number of respondents that opted for each option*.  

![Bar chart showing electoral volatility](image)

*DPA, GROM, RDK/NDP in 2014, and Besa Movement and AA in 2016 are deliberately excluded from this graph as individual options and instead integrated in the category Other.*

The results obtained in the online survey, depicted in *Fig. 6*, mirror very accurately the trends reflected in North Macedonia’s actual parliamentary election results for 2014 and 2016. Analytically, however, I will exclusively focus on the figures provided by the survey and will in no case refer to the actual voting figures published by the Macedonian State Election Commission (SEC). Electoral participation in North Macedonia is deeply conditioned by high abstention rates, where almost a third of the electorate does not cast a
vote at all – 30% and 28% of respondents for 2014 and 2016, respectively. VMRO–DPMNE was the party that received the highest share of votes in 2014 (25%) but it dropped in 2016 following the country’s political crisis involving its government (19%). In contrast, SDSM received 19% of votes in 2014 and shot up to 29% in 2016. Other minor parties, including DUI and other Macedonian Albanian groups, oscillated around 7% in both elections.

From these results, one major trend can be identified. There seems to be an exchange of votes between VMRO–DPMNE and SDSM between the 2014 and 2016 parliamentary elections – or rather, an increase of one at the other’s expense. To what extent can we affirm this is true? In order to find a response to this, I turn back to my hypothesis. According both to it and to sociotropic voting theory, this study’s dependent variable, electoral accountability, is reached upon an incumbent’s ousting from office and, most importantly, it is inherently based upon the electoral punishment of corrupt leaders. Being aware of this, then, can it be suggested that VMRO–DPMNE – this study’s corrupt incumbent – was punished by voters? In this light, there is a group of respondents I am particularly interested in looking further into, namely those who voted for VMRO–DPMNE in 2014 but not in 2016. Did they vote for rival party SDSM or did they not vote at all? How corrupt do they consider these parties to be, and how disapproving are they of corruption? How often do they consume online news, and how much do they trust them? All in all, could media corruption coverage have been the motivation behind their refraining from voting for VMRO–DPMNE again in 2016?

274 respondents cast a vote for VMRO–DPMNE in the 2014 parliamentary election. While 169 (61%) voted for it again in 2016, 95 (35%) did not. As Table 4 shows, VMRO–DPMNE voter outflow split between abstention (18%), voting for SDSM (14%) and voting for other parties (3%):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDSM</th>
<th>VMRO–DPMNE</th>
<th>DUI</th>
<th>Besa Movement</th>
<th>DPA</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Did not vote</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
<th>Prefer not to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Voting choice in 2016 of respondents who voted for VMRO–DPMNE in 2014 (%).
Table 5. Survey responses to the question “On a scale from 1 to 5, how did the level of perceived corruption determine your vote in the last parliamentary elections that took place the 11th of December 2016? (1: it was not an important factor at all; 5: it was the most important factor)” (%). Answers come exclusively from respondents who voted for VMRO‒DPMNE in 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voted for VMRO‒DPMNE again in 2016</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To what degree was this vote change conditioned by incumbent corruption? According to figures in Table 5, to a rather large degree. Out of those who voted for VMRO‒DPMNE in 2014 but not in 2016, 39% claimed corruption to be the most important factor steering this decision, followed by 13% who considered it of substantive importance; on the other side, a mere 3% believed corruption had nothing to do with their not supporting VMRO‒DPMNE again in 2016. The assumption that corruption did play a role in vote change is further strengthened by the fact that respondents who voted for VMRO‒DPMNE both in 2014 and 2016 did not feel as sensitive about this issue when casting their ballot: 18% did not consider corruption perception an important factor at all, while a remarkable 30% felt in an intermediate position. Corruption perception was, thus, a main factor that differentiated loyal VMRO‒DPMNE voters from those who refrained from supporting this party again in 2016.

After finding out that corruption perception is, to a certain extent, a major factor behind old VMRO‒DPMNE voters’ decisions to not back this party again in 2016, how can we determine whether this decision was made because of a higher exposure to media coverage of corruption? For this, I will address these voters’ media consumption habits and trust attitudes focusing exclusively on the online press – since the first component of data gathered, news clusters from TIME.mk, is presented in online format and thus aimed at online users.

Out of all 95 respondents that did not support VMRO‒DPMNE again in 2016, 73% state that their perception of an incumbent will change very or extremely negatively upon consuming corruption-related news involving the incumbent (see Table 6). This is taking us down the right track, since a major share of these voters are affirming that corruption-related stories read on the media can influence their opinion on an incumbent and, potentially, affect their choice at the polls. This view is strongly supported by the fact that, among these voters, 66% read online press every day and 19% do so several times per week, meaning that a very
large segment of individuals who decided not to vote for VMRO-DPMNE again in 2016 are exposed to such type of news on, almost, a daily basis.

Table 6. Survey responses to the question “On a scale from 1 to 5, to what extent does consuming corruption-related news involving the government affect the way you perceive the government? (1: my perception changes extremely positively towards the government; 5: my perception changes extremely negatively towards the government)” (%). Answers come exclusively from respondents who voted for VMRO-DPMNE in 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
<th>Prefer not to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 7. Survey responses to the question “On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust the printed press when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)” (%). Answers come exclusively from respondents who voted for VMRO–DPMNE in 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
<th>Prefer not to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Whether these voters grant credibility in the news stories they read can be better explored through their trust attitudes towards the online press. As found out previously, online news sites are the best-rated media services in terms of trust and reliability by respondents, at 57% overall (see Table 3). As for those who voted for VMRO–DPMNE in 2014 but not in 2016, this percentage shows some similarities: while only 5% trust fully and 17% trust somehow, a large 34% fall moderately between trust and mistrust (see Table 7). The share of those who, to several degrees, do not trust the online media is at 43%.

**A sociotropic explanation?**

After a thorough exploration of the data gathered, I shall now turn to making sense of it all in the frame of my hypothesis. To what extent can it be supported in the light of my analysis?

The first component of the hypothesis, whose data was obtained through online search of corruption-related news stories as a fraction of politics-themed news stories, envisaged rising corruption coverage as a result of the emergence and actions of the Colourful Revolution. However, as results show, there does not seem to be any consistent media coverage of corruption-related news that can point towards the irruption of the
Revolution’s protests during week 31 as a causal factor. All remarkable corruption reporting that followed was framed within corruption cases Transporter and TNT, when the media majorly covered trial hearings and the charges its suspects, VMRO–DPMNE officials, were facing. These weeks saw a lack of corruption coverage not only in relation to the overall politics coverage, but also in numerical terms – there was barely any reporting on corruption save for the aforementioned cases during weeks 34 and 39. This means effectively that the theory of sociotropic corruption voting—which articulates my hypothesis—whereby ACMs increase the salience of corruption leading to a higher coverage of corruption cases in the media, does not hold in the case of North Macedonia. The findings are not strong enough to suggest that the emergence and actions of the Colourful Revolution affected media reporting of corruption.

The second component of my hypothesis, namely changes in voting patterns, was accounted for through online surveys distributed among the Macedonian electorate. My aim was to find out whether there was a link between corruption perception via the news and incumbent disapproval at the polls – which could explain VMRO–DPMNE’s loss of support in the 2016 parliamentary elections. My findings suggest, firstly, that North Macedonia is conceived as a very corrupt society by its electorate – something that shapes its attitudes when casting a ballot. I purposely focused on voters that supported incumbent VMRO–DPMNE in 2014 not in 2016, since their voting choice could have been influenced by a sociotropic logic. My results show that these voters were considerably put off by incumbent corruption, which could have been motivated by corruption coverage in the online press (of which they are rather frequent consumers). Higher consumption of online news entails higher exposure to corruption-related news. This suggests that voters do get informed about corruption via the online press and that it does have an impact on the way they vote, even in spite of rather modest trust attitudes regarding the online press. To this extent, sociotropic corruption voting does take place.
In the light of my two sets of results, I can claim that my hypothesis is only partially supported: voters’ perception of corruption can lead to the attainment of electoral accountability insofar as corrupt incumbents are indeed punished at the polls, also taking into account the role of the online press as an awareness-raiser. However, sociotropic theory envisions a raise in corruption coverage by the media motivated by the emergence of ACMs, which I did not find support for, in order for an electorate to be influenced against an incumbent. Therefore, when voters applied a sociotropic logic when casting their ballot, it was not because of an increase in media corruption reporting (see Fig. 7).

**Validity and reliability**

This last sub-section is devoted to engaging in a short discussion in terms of validity and reliability as posited by Halperin and Heath (2012). Regarding reliability—the “repeatability or consistency of […] findings”—there is no room for misinterpreting the
online survey results since they consist of straight-forward, mostly numerical data that cannot be read ambiguously. On the other hand, the online news search could have yielded somehow different results if an alternative filter had been applied to news selection – for instance, conceiving of politics-themed stories as any story including a political actor regardless of the content, whereas I used more defined news selection criteria.

As for validity of internal nature, namely “the extent to which we can be confident that the independent [...] variable produced the observed effect” (Halperin and Heath, 2012), the partial confirmation of my hypothesis provides an unsure response on whether it was the emergence and actions of the Colourful Revolution that led to the attainment of electoral accountability in North Macedonia. As Fig. 7 depicts, the process by which my hypothesis was abiding is incomplete since not all stages are present in my case. Thus, since the sociotropic channel has not been fully accounted for, I cannot be certain about my independent variable as a causal factor.

Concerning external validity, or “the extent to which results [...] can be generalized beyond the particular study” (Halperin and Heath, 2012), the case of North Macedonia, as a critical single-case study, has challenged my theoretical framework in that it does not follow its premises in accurate terms. If my findings were to be generalized beyond this research, they clearly would not be articulated along the assumptions of sociotropic corruption voting theory – at least not without further adjustments. This fact notwithstanding, my survey findings provide a very thorough insight into electoral volatility and public corruption perception in North Macedonia and can certainly act as a basis for future studies on the matter.
6

Conclusion

The raison d’être of this paper developed as a way of addressing an important literature gap that rendered the role of ACMs in electoral accountability a majorly underresearched subject. The study of corruption is a broadly documented field and a myriad of accounts have shed light upon its social consequences, its diverse political representations and the actors involved; however, little attention has been paid to agents of contentious politics and their potential effects on the corrupt elites via the electorate. This study was devised as an academic attempt to show the extent to which social movements can steer voting behaviour and lead to the electoral punishment of corrupt leaders. Its structure has, thus, aimed towards articulating this puzzle along credible theoretical and methodological lines, through which I have then channelled my argument.

I have addressed my puzzle aware of the limitations of this paper’s research topic and its relative novelty. I have developed my argument by drawing from Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause’s (2014) sociotropic corruption voting framework and revising it in a way it matched my goals. I acknowledged the importance this theory gives to the emergence of anti-corruption parties as forces pushing public salience of corruption, yet I challenged its practical application scope and broadened it in a way I could include ACMs in this definition: platforms characterized by “an incentive to highlight corrupt behaviour […] of existing parties” and built upon “a strong anti-corruption agenda”. Departing from this point, I articulated a channel that recognized the media’s sociotropic role as an agent that takes over as soon as ACMs have appeared. The eventual attainment of sociotropic corruption voting –this is, the punishment of corrupt leaders at the polls– is only reached via the active role of television channels, radio stations and newspaper agencies, whose increased reporting leads to a boost in voters’ perception of incumbent corruption.

Methodologically testing the sociotropic corruption voting framework required quantitative procedures. I devised a two-stage data-gathering process consisting of, first, a method able to reveal trends in media coverage of corruption with the intention of showing whether the irruption in North Macedonia of my case ACM, the Colourful Revolution (independent variable), generated a rising coverage of corruption-related cases in the online
news. Second, a method able to portray whether rising coverage of corruption-related cases in the online news affected voters’ choice in the December 2016 elections in order to explain incumbent VMRO–DPMNE’s loss of voter support – this is, the attainment of electoral accountability (dependent variable). Accordingly, media coverage of corruption was tracked through a search of corruption-themed news stories as a percentage of the total politics-themed news stories, whereas changes in voting patterns were investigated through the distribution of an online survey to a representative sample of the Macedonian electorate. These theoretical and methodological choices have both nurtured my hypothesis and contributed to addressing my research question “To what extent did the 2016 anti-corruption protests in North Macedonia influence electoral accountability in the December 2016 elections?”.

My findings yield very contrasting conclusions and are to be interpreted with caution. The first set of data, namely the tracking of media coverage, reveals no remarkable increase in media coverage of corruption-related cases upon the emergence of the Colourful Revolution in April 2016 – which automatically debunks the applicability of my theory in the case of North Macedonia and, thus, the acceptance of my hypothesis as a whole. On the other hand, the second set of data gathered through the online surveys provides an insightful reading of Macedonian society and Macedonian voting patterns. Those who did not support incumbent VMRO–DPMNE for a second consecutive election were put off by the party’s perceived level of corruption, likely motivated by corruption coverage in the online press (of which they are rather frequent consumers). This suggests that voters do get informed about corruption via the online press and that it does have an impact on the way they vote, even in spite of rather modest trust attitudes regarding the online press. To this extent, sociotropic corruption voting does take place.

As it can be understood, VMRO–DPMNE’s loss of support in the December 2016 elections does not have a fully sociotropic explanation at least in the terms I have decided to frame the theory – this is, with the Colourful Revolution, an ACM, as my independent variable and point of departure. The sociotropic corruption voting theory provides a very solid framework within which to explore electoral accountability and electoral punishment of corrupt incumbents, but it proves not to be applicable to every case. Having included other elements present in the original premises of the theory that were deliberately excluded from my interpretation of it – for instance, public corruption scandals or election campaigns as salience boosters – could have endowed this study with additional support.
Despite the partial rejection of my hypothesis, the results of this study—especially the ones deriving from the online survey—provide extremely valuable information to the fields of corruption and voting behaviour in particular, and to global politics overall. Firstly, it has put to the test and challenged the applicability of a robust theory that is still worth trying out in several other cases. Secondly, to the extent North Macedonia as a case study is concerned, my findings have shed light upon how the Macedonian electorate reacts to media stimuli and have placed the country in terms of public perception of corruption. The results have shown that VMRO–DPMNE’s defeat in the December 2016 elections was partially due to voters’ awareness of incumbent corruption and, through the application of a sociotropic logic, to voters’ engaging in electoral punishment of incumbents. The utility of this study has the potential to render it a highly referred-to source by a large deal of stakeholders when trying to understand electoral dynamics in politically corrupt societies, such as Western Balkan countries.


Appendix

Appendix 1. Copy of the distributed online survey in English language.
Appendix 2. Copy of the distributed online survey in Macedonian language.
Appendix 3. News stories search on TIME.mk, full results.
Appendix 4. Online survey, full results.
Appendix 1. Copy of the distributed survey in English language.

Survey on corruption, Macedonian political parties and elections

This survey is aimed at those who:

- hold Macedonian citizenship
- were 18 years old or above the 11th of December 2016.

If you do not fulfil both prerequisites, please refrain from participating. Thank you!

Please, read carefully before proceeding:

This survey constitutes a part of the data-gathering process needed towards the completion of a Master’s thesis within the framework of the Master’s program in Global Politics at Malmö University (Sweden). The thesis’s main goal is to explore the role of anti-corruption movements in Macedonian voting trends and patterns.

The purpose of this survey is to gather individual-level information on Macedonian political life, voting habits and levels of sympathy towards the media and the so-called Colourful Revolution.

Please answer truthfully. Your answers will be treated with the utmost privacy and confidentiality.

This survey is fully anonymous. Declining to participate in it or withdrawing from it at any given point will not incur in penalties of any sort.

The approximate time of completion of this survey is 15 minutes.

☐ I understand and wish to proceed

1. Please select your current age range

☐ 25 or less
☐ 26-30
☐ 31-35
☐ 36-40
☐ 41-45
☐ 46-50
☐ 51-55
☐ 56 or more

2. Please select your gender

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Other
3. Please write down your current city/town/village of residence

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   - Primary
   - Secondary
   - Technical School / Vocational School
   - Bachelor
   - Master
   - Doctorate
   - None

5. To what national-ethnic community do you consider yourself to belong?
   - Macedonian
   - Albanian
   - Other
   - None

In this section, you will be asked some questions related to your perceptions of administrative corruption in our country.

Corruption is understood as “the misuse of public office for private gain”.

☐ I understand

6. On a scale from 1 to 5, how important is corruption as a national problem? (1: not important at all, 5: extremely important)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Do not know
   - Prefer not to say

7. On a scale from 1 to 5, how important was corruption as a national problem five years ago? (1: not important at all, 5: extremely important)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Do not know
   - Prefer not to say
8. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption is among politicians? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Do not know
☐ Prefer not to say

9. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption was among politicians five years ago? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Do not know
☐ Prefer not to say

10. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption is among the police? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Do not know
☐ Prefer not to say

11. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption was among the police five years ago? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Do not know
☐ Prefer not to say

12. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption is within the judiciary system? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
13. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption was within the judiciary system five years ago? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread)

☐ 1  ☐ 2  ☐ 3  ☐ 4  ☐ 5  ☐ Do not know  ☐ Prefer not to say

14. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption is within the public administration? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread)

☐ 1  ☐ 2  ☐ 3  ☐ 4  ☐ 5  ☐ Do not know  ☐ Prefer not to say

15. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption was within the public administration five years ago? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread)

☐ 1  ☐ 2  ☐ 3  ☐ 4  ☐ 5  ☐ Do not know  ☐ Prefer not to say

In this section, you will be asked some questions related to Macedonian political parties, including former governments, and your corruption perceptions towards them.

☐ I understand

16. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is SDSM (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

☐ 1  ☐ 2  ☐ 3
17. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is VMRO-DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Do not know
- Prefer not to say

18. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is DUI (Democratic Union for Integration) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Do not know
- Prefer not to say

19. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is Besa Movement as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Do not know
- Prefer not to say

20. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is AA (Alliance for Albanians) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Do not know
- Prefer not to say
21. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is DPA (Democratic Party of Albanians) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Do not know
☐ Prefer not to say

22. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is the current SDSM/DUI government coalition? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Do not know
☐ Prefer not to say

23. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is SDSM within the current government coalition? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Do not know
☐ Prefer not to say

24. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is DUI within the current government coalition? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Do not know
☐ Prefer not to say

25. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think was the previous VMRO-DPMNE/DUI government coalition (2014-2016)? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
26. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think was VMRO-DPMNE within the previous government coalition (2014-2016)? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Do not know
- Prefer not to say

27. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think was DUI within the previous government coalition (2014-2016)? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Do not know
- Prefer not to say

In this section, you will be asked some questions about your recent voting habits.

28. Did you vote in the last parliamentary elections that took place the 11th of December 2016? If so, what party did you vote for?
- SDSM
- VMRO-DPMNE
- DUI
- Besa Movement
- AA
- DPA
- Other
- Do not know
- Prefer not to say
- Did not vote

29. On a scale from 1 to 5, how did the level of perceived corruption determine your vote in the last parliamentary elections that took place the 11th of December 2016? (1: it was not an important factor at all; 5: it was the most important factor)
30. Did you vote in the parliamentary elections that took place the 27th of April 2014? If so, what party did you vote for?
   - SDSM
   - VMRO-DPMNE
   - DUI
   - DPA
   - GROM
   - RDK / NDP
   - Other
   - Do not know
   - Prefer not to say
   - Did not vote

In this section, you will be asked some questions about your general levels of sympathy and trust towards several types of media at a national level.

I understand

31. How often do you watch Macedonian news on television?
   - Never
   - 1-3 times a month
   - Once a week
   - Several times a week
   - Every day

32. How often do you listen to Macedonian news on the radio?
   - Never
   - 1-3 times a month
   - Once a week
   - Several times a week
   - Every day

33. How often do you read Macedonian printed press?
   - Never
   - 1-3 times a month
   - Once a week
   - Several times a week
34. How often do you read Macedonian online press?

☐ Never
☐ 1-3 times a month
☐ Once a week
☐ Several times a week
☐ Every day

35. How often do you read the Macedonian news on social media?

☐ Never
☐ 1-3 times a month
☐ Once a week
☐ Several times a week
☐ Every day

36. What type of media do you trust the most when it comes to consuming Macedonian news?

☐ Television
☐ Radio
☐ Printed press
☐ Online press
☐ Social media
☐ Other

37. What type of media do you trust the least when it comes to consuming Macedonian news?

☐ Television
☐ Radio
☐ Printed press
☐ Online press
☐ Social media
☐ Other

38. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust television when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Do not know
☐ Prefer not to say

39. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust the radio when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)
40. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust the printed press when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)

41. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust the online press when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)

42. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust social media when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)

43. On a scale from 1 to 5, to what extent does consuming corruption-related news involving the government affect the way you perceive the government? (1: my perception changes extremely positively towards the government; 5: my perception changes extremely negatively towards the government)
In this section, you will be asked some questions about the so-called Colourful Revolution, the series of street protests that took place in our country from April to July 2016.

44. What is your level of acquaintance with the Colourful Revolution? *You may select several options.*

- [ ] I saw it on television
- [ ] I heard it on the radio
- [ ] I read it on the printed press
- [ ] I read it on the online press
- [ ] I read it on social media
- [ ] I saw it live / I came across it
- [ ] I took part in it
- [ ] Never heard of it / Not acquainted
- [ ] Do not know
- [ ] Prefer not to say

45. When did you become acquainted (i.e. see it on television, read it on newspapers, come across it, etc.) with the Colourful Revolution for the first time?

- [ ] Between April and July 2016
- [ ] Between July and December 2016
- [ ] After December 2016
- [ ] Not acquainted
- [ ] Do not know
- [ ] Prefer not to say

46. How did you become acquainted with the Colourful Revolution for the first time?

- [ ] I saw it on television
- [ ] I heard it on the radio
- [ ] I read it on the printed press
- [ ] I read it on the online press
- [ ] I read it on social media
- [ ] I saw it live / I came across it
- [ ] I took part in it
- [ ] Not acquainted
- [ ] Do not know
- [ ] Prefer not to say
47. What do you think was the main issue the Colourful Revolution was protesting against? *You may select up to three options.*

- ☐ The government
- ☐ The president
- ☐ The economic situation
- ☐ Corruption
- ☐ Poverty
- ☐ The judiciary
- ☐ Unemployment
- ☐ Inter-ethnic conflict
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not acquainted
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

48. On a scale from 1 to 5, how did the Colourful Revolution affect the way you perceived the government? (1: my perception changed extremely positively towards the government; 5: my perception changed extremely negatively towards the government)

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ My perception did not change
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Prefer not to say
Анкета за корупција, македонските политички партии и избори

Оваа анкета е наменета за они кои:
имаат македонско државјанство
имае 18 или над 18 години по 11 декември 2016 година

Ако не ги исполнувате двата предуслови, ве молам да се воздржите од учество. Ми благодарам!

Ве молам, прочитајте внимателно пред да продолжите:

Оваа анкета претставува дел од процесот на собирање податоци потребни за завршување на магистерски труд во рамките на програмата за магистерски студии за Глобална политика на Универзитетот во Малме (Шведска). Главната цел на овој труд е да ја истражи улогата на антикорупцииските движења во македонските трендови и типови на гласање.

Целта на оваа анкета е да се соберат информации на индивидуално ниво за македонскиот политички живот, гласачките навики и нивото на разбирање на медиумите и на таканаречената Шарена револуција.

Ве замолувам да одговарате искрено. Вашите одговори ќе бидат обработени со најголема приватност и доверливост.

Оваа анкета е целосно анонимна. Одбивањето да ја одговорите или да се повлечете од одговарањето во кој било даден момент, нема да повлече никакви казни.

Приближното време за пополнување на оваа анкета е 15 минути.

1. Ве молам, изберете ја вашата старосна граница:
   - 25 или помалку
   - 26-30
   - 31-35
   - 36-40
   - 41-45
   - 46-50
   - 51-55
   - 56 или повеќе

2. Изберете го вашиот пол:
   - Машки

Разбирам и сакам да продолжам
3. Напишете го вашето моментално место на живеење (град/село):

4. Кое е највисокото ниво на образование кое сте го завршиле?
- Основно образование
- Средно образование
- Техничко образование / Стручна школа
- Додипломски студии
- Магистерски студии
- Докторски студии
- Никакво

5. Во која национално-етничка заедница сметате дека припаѓате?
- Македонска
- Албанска
- Друго
- Ниедна

Во овој дел ќе ви бидат поставени неколку прашња поврзани со вашите гледишта за административна корупција во вашата држава.

Корупцијата се сфаќа како „злоупотреба на јавната функција за приватна корист“.
- Разбирам

6. На скала од 1 до 5, колку е важна корупцијата како национален проблем? (1: воопшто не е важна, 5: многу е важна)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Не знам
- Не сакам да кажам

7. На скала од 1 до 5, колку беше важна корупцијата како национален проблем пред 5 години? (1: воопшто не беше важна, 5: многу беше важна)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
8. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е распространета корупцијата помеѓу политичарите? (1: воопшто нераспространета, 5: многу распространета)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Не знам
   - Не сакам да кажам

9. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека беше распространета корупцијата помеѓу политичарите пред 5 години? (1: воопшто нераспространета, 5: многу распространета)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Не знам
   - Не сакам да кажам

10. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е распространета корупцијата во полицијата? (1: воопшто нераспространета, 5: многу распространета)
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - Не знам
    - Не сакам да кажам

11. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека беше распространета корупцијата во полицијата пред 5 години? (1: воопшто нераспространета, 5: многу распространета)
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - Не знам
    - Не сакам да кажам
12. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е распространета корупцијата во судскиот систем? (1: воопшто нераспространета, 5: многу распространета)

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<td></td>
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13. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека беше распространета корупцијата во судскиот систем пред 5 години? (1: воопшто нераспространета, 5: многу распространета)

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14. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е распространета корупцијата во јавната администрација? (1: воопшто нераспространета, 5: многу распространета)

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<th>Не сакам да кажам</th>
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15. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека беше распространета корупцијата во јавната администрација пред 5 години? (1: воопшто нераспространета, 5: многу распространета)

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</table>

 Во овој дел ќе ви бидат поставени неколку прашања поврзани со македонските политички партии, вклучувајќи ги и претходните влади, и вашето мислење за нивната корумпираност.
16. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е корумиран СДСМ (Социјалдемократски сојуз на Македонија) како партија? (1: воопшто некорумпиран; 5: многу корумпиран)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

17. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е корумпирано ВМРО-ДПМНЕ (Внатрешна македонска револуционерна организација – Демократска партија за македонско национално единство) како партија? (1: воопшто некорумпирано; 5: многу корумпирано)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

18. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е корумпирано ДУИ (Демократска унија за интеграција) како партија? (1: воопшто некорумпирано; 5: многу корумпирано)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

19. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е корумпирано Движењето Беса како партија? (1: воопшто некорумпирано; 5: многу корумпирано)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам
20. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е корумпирана АА (Алијансата на Албанците) како партија? (1: воопшто некорумпирана; 5: многу корумпирана)
☐ 1  
☐ 2  
☐ 3  
☐ 4  
☐ 5  
☐ Не знам  
☐ Не сакам да кажам

21. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е корумпирана ДПА (Демократска партија на Албанците) како партија? (1: воопшто некорумпирана; 5: многу корумпирана)
☐ 1  
☐ 2  
☐ 3  
☐ 4  
☐ 5  
☐ Не знам  
☐ Не сакам да кажам

22. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е корумпирана моменталата владина коалиција СДСМ/ДУИ? (1: воопшто некорумпирана; 5: многу корумпирана)
☐ 1  
☐ 2  
☐ 3  
☐ 4  
☐ 5  
☐ Не знам  
☐ Не сакам да кажам

23. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е корумпирано СДСМ во моменталната владина коалиција? (1: воопшто некорумпирано; 5: многу корумпирано)
☐ 1  
☐ 2  
☐ 3  
☐ 4  
☐ 5  
☐ Не знам  
☐ Не сакам да кажам
24. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека е корумпирано ДУИ во моменталната владина коалиција? (1: воопшто некорумпирано; 5: многу корумпирано)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Не знам
- Не сакам да кажам

25. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека беше корумпирана претходната владина коалиција ВМРО-ДПМНЕ/ДУИ (2014-2016)? (1: воопшто не беше корумпирана; 5: многу беше корумпирана)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Не знам
- Не сакам да кажам

26. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека беше корумпирано ВМРО-ДПМНЕ во претходната владина коалиција? (2014-2016) (1: воопшто не беше корумпирано; 5: многу беше корумпирано)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Не знам
- Не сакам да кажам

27. На скала од 1 до 5, колку мислите дека беше корумпирано ДУИ во претходната владина коалиција (2014-2016)? (1: воопшто не беше корумпирано; 5: многу беше корумпирано)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Не знам
- Не сакам да кажам
Во овој дел ќе ви бидат поставени неколку прашања за вашите неодамнешни гласачки навики.

28. Дали гласавте на последните парламентарни избори кои се одржаа на декември 2016 година? Ако гласавте, за која партија?

☐ СДСМ
☐ ВМРО-ДПМНЕ
☐ ДУИ
☐ Движењето Бesa
☐ АА
☐ ДПА
☐ Друго
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам
☐ Не гласав

29. На скала од 1 до 5, како нивото на согледана корупција го одреди вашият глас на последние парламентарни избори кои се одржаа на 11 декември 2016 година? (1: не беше воопшто важен фактор; 5: беше најважниот фактор)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам
☐ Не гласав

30. Дали гласавте на последните парламентарни избори кои се одржаа на 27 април 2014 година? Ако гласавте, за која партија?

☐ СДСМ
☐ ВМРО-ДПМНЕ
☐ ДУИ
☐ ДПА
☐ ГРОМ
☐ РДК/НДП
☐ Друго
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам
☐ Не гласав

Во овој дел ќе ви бидат поставени неколку прашања за вашето општо ниво на разбирање и верба кон неколку видови медиуми на национално ниво.
31. Колку често гледате македонски вести на телевизија?
- никогаш
- 1-3 пати месечно
- Еднаш неделно
- Неколку пати неделно
- Секој ден

32. Колку често слушате македонски вести на радио?
- никогаш
- 1-3 пати месечно
- Еднаш неделно
- Неколку пати неделно
- Секој ден

33. Колку често читате македонски печатени медиуми?
- никогаш
- 1-3 пати месечно
- Еднаш неделно
- Неколку пати неделно
- Секој ден

34. Колку често читате македонски медиуми на интернет?
- никогаш
- 1-3 пати месечно
- Еднаш неделно
- Неколку пати неделно
- Секој ден

35. Колку често читате македонски вести на социјалните медиуми?
- никогаш
- 1-3 пати месечно
- Еднаш неделно
- Неколку пати неделно
- Секој ден

36. На кој тип медиуми верувате најмногу кога станува збор за следење на македонски вести?
- Телевизија
- Радио
- Печатени медиуми
- Медиуми на интернет
- Социјални медиуми
- Друго
37. На кој тип медиуми верувате најмалку кога станува збор за следење на македонски вести?
☐ Телевизија
☐ Радио
☐ Печатени медиуми
☐ Медиуми на интернет
☐ Социјални медиуми
☐ Друго

38. На скала од 1 до 5, колку ја верувате на телевизијата кога станува збор за следење на македонски вести? (1: ја верувам многу; 5: воопшто не ја верувам)
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

39. На скала од 1 до 5, колку му верувате на радиото кога станува збор за следење на македонски вести? (1: му верувам многу; 5: воопшто не му верувам)
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

40. На скала од 1 до 5, колку им верувате на печатените медиуми кога станува збор за следење на македонски вести? (1: им верувам многу; 5: воопшто не им верувам)
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

41. На скала од 1 до 5, колку им верувате на медиумите на интернет кога станува збор за следење на македонски вести? (1: им верувам многу; 5: воопшто не им верувам)
42. На скала од 1 до 5, колку им верувате на социјалните медиуми кога станува збор за следење на македонски вести? (1: многу им верувам; 5: воопшто не им верувам)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

43. На скала од 1 до 5, до кој степен следењето на вести поврзани со корупција кои ја вклучуваат владата влијае на начинот на кој ја гледате владата? (1: моето гледиште се менува крајно позитивно за владата; 5: моето гледиште се менува крајно негативно за владата)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

Во овој дел ќе ви бидат поставени неколку прашања за таканаречената Шарена револуција, серијата улични протести кои се случуваа во нашата држава од април до јули 2016 година.

☐ Разбирам

44. Кое е вашето ниво на запознаеност со Шарената револуција? Може да изберете повеќе одговори.

☐ Го гледав тоа на телевизија
☐ Слушнав за тоа на радио
☐ Читав за тоа во печатени медиуми
☐ Читав за тоа по медиумите на интернет
☐ Читав за тоа на социјалните медиуми
☐ Гледав во живо / Ја имам пресретнато
☐ Учествував во тоа
45. Кога за првпат разбравте за Шарената револуција? (односно, сте виделе на телевизија, сте прочитале во весник, сте ја пресретнале и слично)

☐ Помеѓу април и јули 2016 година
☐ Помеѓу јули и декември 2016 година
☐ По декември 2016 година
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

46. Како за првпат разбравте за Шарената револуција?

☐ Видов на телевизија
☐ Слушнав на радио
☐ Прочитав во печатени медиуми
☐ Прочитав во медиуми на интернет
☐ Прочитав на социјални медиуми
☐ Гледав во живо / Ја имам пресретнато
☐ Учествував во неа
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

47. Што мислите, кој беше главниот проблем против кој протестираше Шарената револуција? Може да одберете до три опции.

☐ Владата
☐ Претседателот
☐ Економската ситуација
☐ Корупција
☐ Сиромаштија
☐ Судството
☐ Невработеност
☐ Меѓуетнички конфликт
☐ Друго
☐ Не знам
☐ Не сакам да кажам

48. На скала од 1 до 5, како Шарената револуција влијаеше врз вашите гледишта за владата? (1: моите гледишта се сменија крајно позитивно за владата; 5: моите гледишта се сменија крајно негативно за владата)

☐ 1
☐ 2
Моите гледишта не се сменија
Не сум запознаен/а
Не знам
Не сакам да кажам
Appendix 3. News stories search on TIME.mk, full results.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Number of politics-themed news stories (units)</th>
<th>Number of corruption-related news stories (units)</th>
<th>Corruption-related news stories as a percentage of politics-themed news stories (%)</th>
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Appendix 4. Online survey, full results.

**Q1. Please select your current age range.** *Observations: 1,066.*

![Age distribution graph](image)

**Q2. Please select your gender.** *Observations: 1,066.*

![Gender distribution graph](image)
Q4. What is the highest level of education you have completed? *Observations: 1,066.*

![Bar chart showing distribution of educational levels: Bachelor (520), Master (253), Doctorate (39), Technical school/Vocational school (82), Secondary (167), Primary (5).]

Q5. To what national-ethnic community do you consider yourself to belong? *Observations: 1,066.*

![Bar chart showing distribution of national-ethnic communities: Macedonian (994), Albanian (17), Other (39), None (16).]
Q6. On a scale from 1 to 5, how important is corruption as a national problem? (1: not important at all, 5: extremely important) Observations: 1,066.

Q7. On a scale from 1 to 5, how important was corruption as a national problem five years ago? (1: not important at all, 5: extremely important) Observations: 1,066.
Q8. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption is among politicians? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread) Observations: 1,066.

Q9. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption was among politicians five years ago? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread) Observations: 1,066.
Q10. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption is among the police? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread) Observations: 1,066.

Q11. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption was among the police five years ago? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread) Observations: 1,066.
Q12. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption is within the judiciary system? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread) 
Observations: 1,066.

Q13. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption was within the judiciary system five years ago? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread) 
Observations: 1,066.
Q14. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption is within the public administration? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread) Observations: 1,066.

Q15. On a scale from 1 to 5, how widespread do you think corruption was within the public administration five years ago? (1: not widespread at all, 5: extremely widespread) Observations: 1,066.
Q16. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is SDSM (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.

Q17. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is VMRO-DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.
Q18. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is DUI (Democratic Union for Integration) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.

Q19. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is Besa Movement as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.
Q20. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is AA (Alliance for Albanians) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.

Q21. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is DPA (Democratic Party of Albanians) as a party? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.
Q22. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is the current SDSM/DUI government coalition? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)  
Observations: 1,066.

Q23. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is SDSM within the current government coalition? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt)  
Observations: 1,066.
Q24. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think is DUI within the current government coalition? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.

Q25. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think was the previous VMRO-DPMNE/DUI government coalition (2014-2016)? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.
Q26. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think was VMRO-DPMNE within the previous government coalition (2014-2016)? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.

Q27. On a scale from 1 to 5, how corrupt do you think was DUI within the previous government coalition (2014-2016)? (1: not corrupt at all; 5: extremely corrupt) Observations: 1,066.
Q28. Did you vote in the last parliamentary elections that took place the 11th of December 2016? If so, what party did you vote for? *Observations: 1,066.*

Q29. On a scale from 1 to 5, how did the level of perceived corruption determine your vote in the last parliamentary elections that took place the 11th of December 2016? (1: it was not an important factor at all; 5: it was the most important factor) *Observations: 1,066.*
Q30. Did you vote in the parliamentary elections that took place the 27th of April 2014? If so, what party did you vote for? Observations: 1,066.


Q35. How often do you read the Macedonian news on social media? Observations: 1,064.
Q36. What type of media do you trust the most when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? Observations: 1,059.

Q37. What type of media do you trust the least when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? Observations: 1,062.
Q38. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust television when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)
Observations: 1,066.

Q39. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust the radio when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)
Observations: 1,066.
Q40. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust the printed press when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)  
*Observations: 1,066.*

Q41. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust the online press when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)  
*Observations: 1,066.*
Q42. On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you trust social media when it comes to consuming Macedonian news? (1: I trust a lot; 5: I do not trust at all)
Observations: 1,066.

Q43. On a scale from 1 to 5, to what extent does consuming corruption-related news involving the government affect the way you perceive the government? (1: my perception changes extremely positively towards the government; 5: my perception changes extremely negatively towards the government) Observations: 1,066.
Q44. What is your level of acquaintance with the Colourful Revolution? You may select several options. Observations: 1,066.

Q45. When did you become acquainted (i.e. see it on television, read it on newspapers, come across it, etc.) with the Colourful Revolution for the first time? Observations: 1,061.
Q46. How did you become acquainted with the Colourful Revolution for the first time? *Observations: 1,063.*

[Bar chart showing responses to Q46]

Q47. What do you think was the main issue the Colourful Revolution was protesting against? You may select up to three options. *Observations: 1,066.*

[Bar chart showing responses to Q47]
Q48. On a scale from 1 to 5, how did the Colourful Revolution affect the way you perceived the government? (1: my perception changed extremely positively towards the government; 5: my perception changed extremely negatively towards the government) Observations: 1,066.