

How Corruption and Anti-Corruption Policies Sustain Hybrid Regimes



How Corruption and Anti-Corruption Policies Sustain Hybrid Regimes: Strategies of Political Domination under Ukraine's Presidents in 1994-2024 (Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society Book 218) by Robin Sharma

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Hybrid regimes, characterized by a blend of democratic and authoritarian elements, have proven remarkably resilient in recent times. Corruption and anti-corruption policies play a pivotal role in understanding the longevity of these regimes. This article delves into the intricate relationship between these factors, drawing upon real-world examples and providing a comprehensive analysis.

The Role of Corruption in Hybrid Regimes

Corruption, the abuse of public power for private gain, is often rampant in hybrid regimes. It undermines democratic institutions, erodes trust, and creates opportunities for authoritarian actors to consolidate power.

1. **Weakening Democratic Institutions:** Corruption diverts resources away from essential services and 公共设施，从而破坏民主机构的合法性。
2. **Erode Trust:** Corruption erodes public trust in government and institutions, undermining the very foundations of 民主.
3. **Creating Opportunities for Authoritarianism:** Corruption provides opportunities for authoritarian actors to gain control of the state apparatus, suppress dissent, and consolidate power.

Examples:

- In Russia, corruption has been a major factor in the erosion of democratic institutions and the rise of authoritarianism under Vladimir Putin.
- In Hungary, corruption has contributed to the decline of democratic norms and the consolidation of Viktor Orbán's authoritarian rule.

Anti-Corruption Policies in Hybrid Regimes

Hybrid regimes often adopt anti-corruption policies to appease public discontent and maintain a semblance of legitimacy. However, these policies can be ineffective or even counterproductive.

1. **Selective Enforcement:** Anti-corruption campaigns are often used to target 政敌，而不是有效地解决腐败问题。
2. **Weak Institutionalization:** Anti-corruption agencies may lack the resources and independence to effectively investigate and prosecute corruption cases.

3. **Elite Capture:** Corrupt elites may capture anti-corruption institutions, ensuring that their own activities remain immune from scrutiny.

Examples:

- In China, anti-corruption campaigns have been used to purge political rivals and consolidate Xi Jinping's power, while systemic corruption remains largely unchecked.
- In Mexico, anti-corruption efforts have been hampered by weak institutions and elite capture, leading to limited progress in reducing corruption levels.

The Nexus between Corruption and Anti-Corruption Policies

Corruption and anti-corruption policies are inextricably linked in hybrid regimes. Corruption creates the need for anti-corruption policies, while ineffective or counterproductive anti-corruption policies can perpetuate corruption and further undermine democratic institutions.

1. **Cycle of Corruption and Repression:** Hybrid regimes may use anti-corruption campaigns to suppress dissent and consolidate power, leading to a cycle of corruption and repression.
2. **Legitimation of Authoritarianism:** Anti-corruption rhetoric can be used to legitimate authoritarian rule by portraying the regime as a necessary force against corruption.
3. **Erosion of Democratic Space:** Anti-corruption measures can be used to restrict civil society, media, and political opposition, further eroding democratic space.

Examples:

- In Turkey, anti-corruption investigations have been used to silence critical journalists and opposition politicians, contributing to the erosion of democratic norms under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.
- In Egypt, anti-corruption campaigns have been used to suppress dissent and consolidate the military's grip on power after the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi.

Corruption and anti-corruption policies are central to understanding the resilience of hybrid regimes. Corruption undermines democratic institutions and creates opportunities for authoritarian actors to consolidate power. Anti-corruption policies can be ineffective or even counterproductive if they are selectively enforced, weakly institutionalized, or captured by corrupt elites. The nexus between corruption and anti-corruption policies in hybrid regimes is a complex and dynamic one, requiring careful analysis and nuanced policy interventions.

By understanding the intricate relationship between these factors, policymakers and researchers can develop more effective strategies to combat corruption and promote democratic governance in hybrid regimes. Only through a comprehensive approach that addresses both the corrosive effects of corruption and the potential pitfalls of anti-corruption policies can we hope to break the cycle of corruption and authoritarianism that plagues so many hybrid regimes.

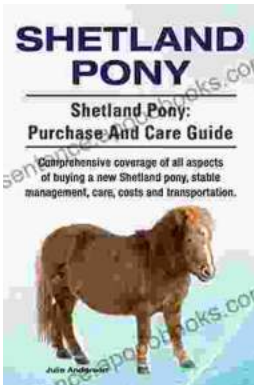
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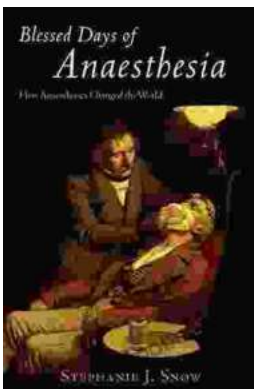
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