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Oksana Huss

**HOW CORRUPTION AND
ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICIES
SUSTAIN HYBRID REGIMES**

Strategies of Political Domination under
Ukraine's Presidents in 1994-2014

With a foreword by Tobias Debiel and Andrea Gawrich

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Abstract

This book argues that leaders of hybrid regimes in pursuit of political domination and material gain instrumentalize both hidden forms of corruption and public anti-corruption policies. Corruption is pursued for different purposes including cooperation with strategic partners and exclusion of opponents. Presidents use anti-corruption policies to legitimize and institutionalize political domination. Corrupt practices and anti-corruption policies become two sides of the same coin and are exercised to maintain an uneven political playing field.

This study combines empirical analysis and social constructivism for an investigation into the presidencies of Leonid Kuchma (1994–2005), Viktor Yushchenko (2005–2010) and Viktor Yanukovich (2010–2014). Explorative expert interviews, press surveys, content analysis of presidential speeches, as well as critical assessment of anti-corruption legislation, provide data for comparison and process tracing of the utilization of corruption under three Ukrainian presidents.

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List of Abbreviations

ACN OECD	OECD Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia
AntAC	Anti-Corruption Action Centre
AP	Administration of the President
BYuT	Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRFC LLC	Donbass Rozrakhunkovo Finansovyi Centr
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
GRECO	Council of Europe’s Group of States against Corruption
IAHR	Institute of Applied Humanitarian Research
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MP	Member of Parliament
NAC	National Anti-Corruption Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NiT index	Freedom House Nations in Transit Index
NSDC	National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine
NUNS	Nasha Ukraina – Narodna Samooborona (“Our Ukraine” – People’s Self-Defense Bloc)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PGO	Prosecutor General’s Office
PM	Prime Minister
PUMB	First Ukrainian International Bank
RUE	RosUkrEnergo
SBU	Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukrainy (Security Service of Ukraine)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

SME	Small and medium enterprises
TI	Transparency International
UBD	Ukrainian Bank of Development
UHHRU	Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Foreword

Although it is challenging to research corruption, this book provides an innovative conceptual and empirical contribution to both research areas, corruption and transformation studies alike. The study is based on a Most Similar Systems Design through an intra-case comparison of three presidencies: Leonid Kuchma (1994–2005), Viktor Yushchenko (2005–2010) and Viktor Yanukovych (2010–2014). The book investigates the following research questions: Why do presidents in Ukraine use different political strategies and discursive framings to address corruption? How do they utilize corruption as a tactic to maintain political domination in hybrid regimes?

The book applies both positivist and constructivist approaches. The empirical analysis reveals the role of corrupt practices in sustaining political domination. Furthermore, it demonstrates impressively that anti-corruption policies in a hybrid regime like Ukraine can be understood as discursive framing strategies applied by political leaders to ensure and legitimize their political domination.

The book studies how different regime trajectories under authoritarian or semi-democratic rule led to different corruption practices. In a cartel-like deal, Kuchma managed to construct a centralized system of corruption that traditionally framed the problem along a principal-agent approach. Yushchenko, on the other hand, could not centralize elites and attempted to secure power through a decentralized system in which he discursively emphasized European values in the fight against political corruption. However, he was unable to present himself credibly to the population as a politician of a new type. In a way, as Oksana Huss contends, he became the victim of his own discourse. Yanukovych, in turn, succeeded in monopolizing corruption because of his “political machine”, the Party of Regions. His political discourse remained deliberately vague and shaped by metaphors, which made it difficult to measure the success of anti-corruption policies.

Despite these differences, the three presidents shared a willingness to adapt their framing strategies to account for the constellation of their political opponents and addressed the expectations of external actors. Furthermore, their administrations were all initially supported by the population—and failed to adjust their strategies appropriately as their popularity ratings declined.

In summary, this book provides an important contribution in a challenging empirical research field. It corresponds to the state of the art and provides an in-depth case study based on an analytically attractive theoretical and methodological framework.

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