

Why Does Putin Refuse to Adopt Anti-Corruption Policies?: The Impact of Putin's Governance Strategy on Political Will to Fight Corruption*

왜 푸틴은 부패방지정책의 도입을 거부하는가?:
푸틴의 통치전략이 부패척결의지에 미치는 영향

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국문초록

많은 학자들은 정치적 지도자가 부패방지정책의 도입 및 이행을 거부하는 이유는 정치적 의지가 부족해서라고 설명한다. 정치적 의지의 정의에 대해 다양한 견해가 있으나, 통상적으로 정치지도자나 정치적 행위자가 정치적 목적을 달성하기 위해 보여주는 확약이라고 할 수 있다. 즉, 부패척결을 위한 일관적인 의지가 없다면 부패방지정책의 도입 및 이행이 제대로 이루어질 수 없다는 주장이 널리 받아들여지고 있다. 그러나 무엇이 정치적 의지를 부족하게 하는지에 대한 충분하고 깊이 있는 설명을 찾아보기는 어렵다. 본 연구는 이를 설명하기 위해 거버넌스 전략이라는 개념을 도입하여 이론적 모형을 구성하였다. 거버넌스 전략은 국내 문제에 있어서 정치적 지도자가 자신의 권력을 강화하기 위한 포괄적인 계획이라고 할 수 있다. 지도자들은 국내외 문제에 대응하는 과정에 있어서 효과적인 통치를 위해 그들의 권력을 극대화하기를 원한다. 국내외 문제에 대응함에 있어서 지도자들은 거버넌스 전략을 강화하려고 한다. 거버넌스 전략이 강화되는 방향에 도움이 되는 정책에 대해서는 정치적 의지가 강화되고, 거버넌스 전략이 강화되는 방향에 도움이 되지 않는 정책에 대해서는 정치적 의지가 약화되게 된다. 이러한 모형의 타당성을 검증하기 위해, 본 연구는 푸틴이 처한 러시아의 정치적 상황과 선택을 분석하였다. 푸틴의 거버넌스 전략은 정치적 기구들을 수직적 권력을 통해 효과적으로 조정하는 것이다. 이러한 거버넌스 전략을 강화하기 위해 푸틴은 부패한 정치 엘리트와의 협력적 관계에 부정적인 영향을 주는 개혁적인 부패방지정책을 거부하게 된다.

주제어: 부패방지정책, 거버넌스 전략, 정치적 의지, 푸틴, 러시아

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I . Introduction

To combat corruption, experts have developed a general anti-corruption toolkit, which consists of not only investigation and enforcement, but also prevention measures such as institutional reforms, education, and the participation of civil society. Despite the considerable investment and development of various anti-corruption policies, political leaders usually refuse to adopt them. Why is this the case?

An extensive body of literature focuses mainly on the concept of political will to fight corruption as an explanation for political leaders' refusal (Rotberg, 2017). It is not easy, however, to find sufficient and profound explanations for what encourages or discourages political will. This study introduces a more sophisticated decision-making model by political leaders to explain what encourages or discourages political will. This model assumes that political leaders want to maximize their power to govern their people efficiently. This assumption is based on realists' research in the field of international relations, who construe the state as a rational power maximizer (Gel'man, 2015; Halliday, 1990). Considering realists' viewpoint, this article assumes that political leaders are rational power maximizers in national affairs.

Political leaders face and respond to international and national circumstances. Their reactions are partly understood through the assumption that political leaders are power maximizers. Their primary interest – maximizing their power – leads them to react in various ways. To validate their responses to various circumstances, they look to their governance strategy.

A governance strategy is a grand plan selected by political leaders to fortify and then maintain their power within national affairs (Roberts, 2018a). Political leaders seek to maximize their power to govern their people effectively while operating within their international and national circumstances, and their governance strategy enables them to do so. Therefore, it is one of their top priorities to strengthen their governance strategy, which is accomplished by carefully adopting or rejecting policies. Their governance strategy thereby increases or decreases political will to fight corruption. If fighting corruption has a negative effect on fortifying their governance strategy, then political leaders will have a weak political will to fight corruption.

To evaluate the validity of this assertion, this study examines Russia. There are three reasons why the situation in Russia makes it a prime case study for this

purpose. First, corruption is a severe problem in Russia, but Putin is not interested in implementing anti-corruption policies. Second, its status as a superpower is well-known. We cannot ignore Russia's influence in the geopolitical sphere: huge populations, a strong military, and economic power. Finally, many authors and researchers have written about Russia, so there is ample data to draw from.

This study examines literature that deals with the concept of political will and suggests a new model that contains the concept of governance strategy, which affects the level of political will to fight corruption. To test the validity of the model, this paper discusses the conditions faced by Putin. After reviewing Russia's international and national circumstances, this article explicates Putin's governance strategy. Throughout, anti-corruption policies in Russia are introduced and evaluated. Finally, this study explains why Putin has intentionally avoided the implementation of anti-corruption policies.

This study has only looked at a big state. Russia is so huge that it cannot be accurately compared to smaller countries. It is not easy to find a big state that has reduced corruption dramatically. If big countries are different from small countries in fighting corruption, the further studies should also test the validity of the model in small countries.

The paper proceeds as follows. Chapter II provides the discussion and definition of political will. Chapter III explains the concept of governance strategy and develops the model that makes a bridge from governance strategy to political will. Chapter IV investigates the case of Russia, and Chapter V concludes.

II. Political Will

Political will is now a frequently used but still controversial concept (Post, Raile and Raile, 2010). Brinkerhoff (1999: 3) construes political will as "the commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives – in this instance, reduced corruption – and to sustain the costs of those actions over time." Treadway, Hochwarter, Kacmar and Ferris (2005: 231) conceptualize political will as "an actor's willingness to expend energy in pursuit of political goals." According to Quigley (2009), political will can be defined as "the demonstrated credible intent of political actors to

take meaningful action toward reform.”

These definitions have some common components: actors, demonstrated commitment and political goals. Political will can be constructed at an individual level in the case of a single political leader, or a collective level such as a group of politicians (Post et al., 2010). Political will should be accompanied by demonstrated commitment (Brinkerhoff, 2010), without which it is empty rhetoric. Finally, these definitions mention political goals. The political will exists for political goals or specific objectives. It can, therefore, be generally construed as the demonstrated commitment of a political leader or political actors to achieve political goals.

A broad consensus has emerged that political will is an important concept to explain anti-corruption policies' effectiveness. An extensive body of literature suggests that a strong political supporting the implementation and administration of anti-corruption policies is necessary to reduce corruption significantly (Altamirano, 2007; Brinkerhoff, 2000; Rotberg, 2017). Many researchers maintain that the lack of political will is negatively associated with the effect of anti-corruption efforts in many African countries (Amundsen, 2006; Asongu, 2013). Similarly, scholars who study Asian countries argue that the absence of political will is the most important factor in the failure of anti-corruption policies (Perlman, 2008). Today, it is widely accepted that the lack of political will is the main reason for the failure of anti-corruption policies (Zhang, 2015), and a substantial body of literature emphasizes that the successful cases of reduced corruption are correlated with the presence of political will (Rotberg, 2017).

Political will, however, is not a panacea for explaining the success or failure of anti-corruption policies. First, political will is a normatively loaded concept. If the lack of political will is the leading cause of anti-corruption policies' failure, then we can blame political leaders for the failure. Political leaders may, therefore, be stigmatized because of their lack of political will. Anti-corruption reformers can use the concept of political will to blame political leaders when the level of corruption has not decreased. Moral judgment, however, does not help us analyze the reality of decision-making on implementing anti-corruption policies.

Second, the discussion of political will overlooks the fact that political leaders are self-interested. Social scientists who emphasize the importance of political will have the implicit assumption that political leaders should be altruists; in other words, political leaders should fight corruption because it is right and desirable. However, it is hard to believe that political leaders work solely for the public interest. It is more

plausible that they control corruption for their own personal benefit.

A lack of research on what encourages or discourages political will degrades the concept's explanatory power. Only a small body of literature tries to explain the factors that affect political will (Kpundeh, 1998). Odugbemi and Jacobson (2008) assert that political parties, coalitions with interest groups and timing can be factors that have a significant effect on political will. Wayne (2008) argues that domestic events can affect political will in China. Kpundeh (1998: 92) explains that "the rule of the political game" is associated with political will. However, these studies only focus on partial circumstances and avoid discussing political leaders' motivation and therefore do not provide a deep and comprehensive explanation of the influences on political will. To upgrade the concept's explanatory power, this study suggests a theoretical model that focuses on political leaders' circumstances and behaviour.

III. Theory: Governance Strategy

1. Governance Strategy

This article develops the concept of governance strategy to elucidate the model that explains the relationship between political leaders' circumstances and political will. A governance strategy is a grand plan selected by political leaders to maintain and fortify their power within national affairs (Roberts, 2018a). The governance strategy is a new concept developed from the grand strategy.

Although there is not a clear consensus on the concept of grand strategy amongst political theorists (Monaghan, 2017), it can be sufficiently defined as a set of policies chosen by a state to increase power and national security within international affairs (Brands, 2014). The idea of the grand strategy has five main properties. First, it consists of various policies. Christensen (1996: 7) explains that the grand strategy has "the full package of domestic and international policies." Second, the goal of the grand strategy is to secure national interests (Kennedy, 1992). Third, to pursue these national interests, long-term strategies are developed (Liddell, 1967). Fourth, although the grand strategy takes a long view, it changes over time. For instance, the United States' grand strategy has had to change from the era of the Cold War to the present day.

Finally, a grand strategy is influenced by various circumstances (Monaghan, 2017). Liddell (1967: 188) argues that a grand strategy should consider “the power of financial pressure, diplomatic pressure, commercial pressure, and, not least, ethical pressure.”

If a country has a grand strategy that deals with international affairs, it is plausible that it has another grand strategy for national affairs (Roberts, 2018b).¹⁾ While grand strategy typically deals with international affairs, the governance strategy in this study focuses on national affairs. Governance strategy also has five main properties:

- It is a grand plan for selecting a set of policies.
- Political leaders formulate grand strategies (Roberts, 2017).
- Governance strategy takes a long view.
- Governance strategy can be changed over time (Roberts, 2017).
- International and national circumstances affect the construction of a governance strategy (Roberts, 2017).

Some authors understand that grand strategy can deal with not only international affairs but also national affairs. For example, Trubowitz (2011: 9) construes grand strategy as “the purposeful use of military, diplomatic, and economic tools of statecraft to achieve desired ends.” His concept of desired ends includes both international affairs and national affairs. However, this idea is not popular among scholars in international affairs.

2. Model

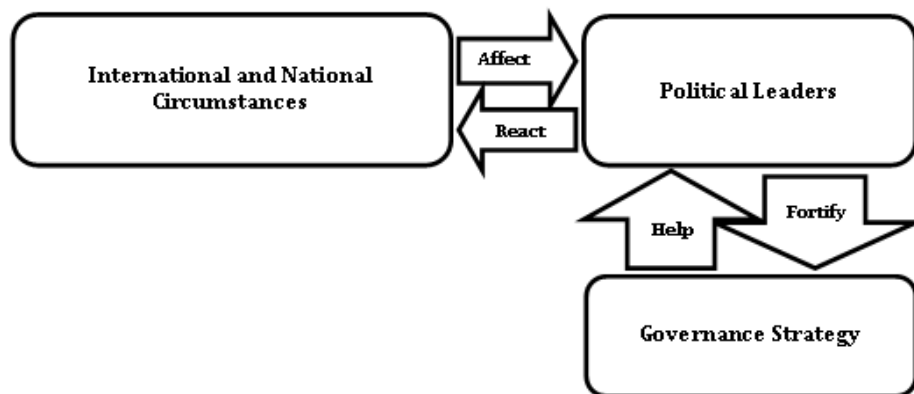
Political leaders seek to maximize their power within their given circumstances to govern their people effectively (Roberts, 2017). To maximize their power, they need strategic guidance in the selection of policies. This guidance, a governance strategy, helps political leaders react to their circumstances efficiently. Since they need to use their governance strategy in response to various circumstances, it is in their interest to

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fortify that strategy.

Political leaders cannot maximize their power without thinking about the international and national constraints that they face. Different situations elicit different reactions from political leaders. For instance, authoritarian leaders oppress their people by using coercive institutions to fortify their power while populist leaders try to win the voters' favour by excessively increasing welfare subsidies. If a country suffers from poverty, then political leaders might placate the poor to avoid the possibility of being attacked by an angry mob. If a country has a strong civil society, then political leaders cannot ignore people's voice. Thus, when we think about how political leaders maximize their power, we should first consider their international and national circumstances. Figure 1 visually explains these relationships.

〈Figure 1〉 Political Leaders with Circumstances and Governance Strategy

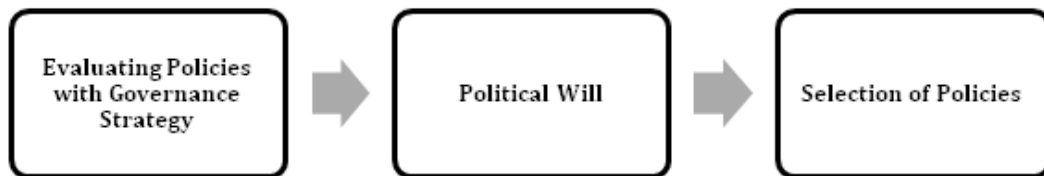


Since political leaders use their governance strategy to respond to their circumstances, it is in their interest to fortify their governance strategy. Therefore, when they select policies, they mainly consider the effectiveness of those policies on their governance strategy. To maintain their governance strategy, they carefully select policies. Political leaders tend to judge a new policy based on whether or not it is consistent with their governance strategy. When they think that a policy is consistent with their governance strategy, they have a strong political will to adopt it. In contrast, when they believe that a policy is inconsistent with their governance strategy, their political will to adopt this policy is weak.

If political leaders have a strong political will to fight corruption, they support

adopting and implementing anti-corruption policies. Political leaders adopt and implement anti-corruption policies not because they want to fight corruption, but because they believe that the policies are consistent with their governance strategy. In such situations, political leaders have a strong political will to adopt and implement the policies. In contrast, political leaders refuse to adopt anti-corruption policies when they believe that the policies are not consistent with their governance strategy. In this case, political leaders have a weak political will to adopt and implement the policies. Figure 5 shows the process of policy selection.

〈Figure 2〉 Process of Policy Selection



This model can shed light on why different political leaders vary in their political will to fight corruption. There are several types of governance strategies. While some leaders try to win elections to maintain their power, other leaders might fortify their party's power. Different governance strategies are associated with different political motivations. Even when political leaders have not clearly stated their governance strategies, observing their reactions enables us to sketch their strategies.

IV. Case: Russia

1. Circumstances

1) International Circumstances

Tensions between Russia and Western powers have increased. EU-US economic sanctions have harmed Russia's economy. In June 2017, the United States Congress decided to impose sanctions against Russia aimed at persuading Putin to remove

Russian forces from Syria and Ukraine (Porter, 2017). This is not the first time that Western powers have put economic pressure on Russia. In July and September 2014, the United States and the European Union imposed economic sanctions on Russia, including the restriction of imported food, exported energy technology and access to the credit market (Kanter and Herszenhorn, 2014).

Russia, however, continues to pursue military expansion and aggressive diplomacy. Despite the economic crisis, Russia has not faltered at all. EU-US economic sanctions have had no impact on Russia's military campaigns in Syria and Ukraine. Instead, on March 1st, 2018, Russia announced new missile systems that have the ability to pierce the defensive missile shield of the United States (MacFarquhar and Sanger, 2018). Despite its poor economy, Russia has increased its budget on national defence. Since 2008, The Russian leaders have initiated military reform to increase combat readiness and modernize military equipment (Monaghan, 2017). Russia's military expenditure was 3.40 per cent of the GDP in 2011 and 4.84 per cent in 2015 (Cooper, 2017). In 2017, six per cent of the GDP was allocated to military expenditure (Hanson, 2016). Many experts predict that this trend will continue (Hanson, 2016).

Some international relations experts believe that Putin does not understand the consequences of military expansion to Syria and Ukraine and therefore is a poor strategist (Monaghan, 2017). They expect that his aggressive diplomacy will hurt Russia's global power and leave his country isolated (Monaghan, 2017). This point of view suggests that Putin is not smart enough to understand the impact of his choice. These scholars construe Russia's intervention in Ukraine and Syria as "a self-defeating strategy" (Monaghan, 2017: 1). However, if Putin is not smart enough to understand his military move's impact, how has he held onto power since 2000?

In fact, there are some significant reasons why Putin pursues military intervention. First, he wants to maintain Russia's influence in the post-Soviet states. Russia is striving to be as great as it was during the time of the Soviet Union (Hanson, 2016; Tsygankov, 2014). The threat of terrorism, which has increased since the intervention in Syria, has no significant impact on Putin's popularity (Kolesnikov, 2016). The Syria intervention led Russians to believe that their country was again acting as a great power (Kolesnikov, 2016).

Second, Russia feels that their enemy is at the gate. Although Russia hopes to maintain close ties with the former Soviet states at their borders, some of these countries are tending instead to build strong relationships with Western powers. For

example, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are now members of the European Union, and no longer belong to the Commonwealth of Independent States (Danzig, 2013). The acceptance of these countries into the EU has, from Russia's perspective, removed the bumpers between them and Western powers (Monaghan, 2017). Russian politicians construe Western sanctions as pressure to change the current regime, so Western powers' increased influence on the former Soviet states is a formidable threat. Based on this belief, Russia's leaders assert that their military expansion is not aggressive, but defensive and preventive (Kolesnikov, 2016; Monaghan, 2017).

Third, this aggressive strategy positively affects sustaining Putin's popularity (MacFarquhar and Sanger, 2018; Porter, 2017). Putin's popularity is partly derived from his leadership in international affairs (Kolesnikov, 2016). One survey shows that Putin's popularity increased from sixty per cent to ninety per cent after the intervention in Syria and Crimea (Kolesnikov, 2016). Thus, he knows that this military expansion has a positive effect on his popular support (Kolesnikov, 2016).

Finally, both Western sanctions and Russia's military expansion encourage patriotism in Russia (MacFarquhar and Sanger, 2018). According to a survey conducted by the Levada Center in 2015, sixty-nine per cent of Russian people supported the Russian government's decisions related to military expansion despite the country's economic difficulty (Kolesnikov, 2016). Many Russian people seem to believe that they are in a constant battle against evil Western powers. A survey shows that about sixty per cent of Russian citizens negatively image the European Union after 2014 (Kolesnikov, 2016).

These reasons are interrelated. For instance, Putin encourages patriotism by insisting that enemies are at the gates (Monaghan, 2017). From the experience of World War II, especially the Great Patriotic War against Nazi Germany, the Russian leaders have learned that fighting an enemy significantly increases national unity (Kolesnikov, 2016). Thus, military expansion is not "a self-defeating strategy," but rather a well-calculated strategy that uses international responses to improve domestic situations (Lo, 2015: 3).

2) National Circumstances

Politically, Russia is a managed democracy (Tsygankov, 2014, p. 132). Although Russia is not a liberal democratic country, it is also not nearly as undemocratic as the former Soviet Union (Inozemtsev, 2011). Basic human rights are somewhat guaranteed,

but political freedom is limited. Their democracy is not close to the same level as Western democracy.

Although they are not completely satisfied with today's political system, people in Russia do not tend to change their political regime. Various surveys show that the Russian citizens prefer order with political stability to freedom with chaos (Tsygankov, 2014, p. 138). They also believe that a strong state can be compatible with democracy (Tsygankov, 2014, p. 130). They are generally satisfied with the status quo.

In this situation, it is easy for the Russian leaders to win elections. In 2000, Vladimir Putin won a presidential election with fifty-three percent of the vote (Tsygankov, 2014, p. 104). In 2004, he was re-elected with more than seventy percent of the vote (Lally & Englund, 2011). In 2008, Dmitry Medvedev, Vladimir Putin's successor, was elected as President with about seventy percent of the vote (Blomfield, 2008). In 2012, Vladimir Putin won the presidential election again, this time with sixty percent of the vote (Tsygankov, 2014, p. 104). In March 2018, he started his fourth term with seventy-five percent of the vote (Roth, 2018).

These victories, however, do not accurately reflect the will of the people. These election elections come partly from manipulation and fraud. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, opposition parties, such as the Union of Right-Wing Forces and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, took anti-corruption as their main issue (Ortung, 2006, p. 3). In 2011, United Russia won the election with about fifty percent of the vote, but people believed that this result was owed to a fraudulent election (Tsygankov, 2014, p. 158).

Russian citizens have the right to vote, but the Russian leaders can manipulate elections. Moreover, candidates are selected by political leaders (Healy & Ramanna, 2013). For example, Ksenia Sobchak, a daughter of Vladimir Putin's mentor, asked Vladimir Putin to let her become a presidential candidate, and he allowed her to do so (Kranz, 2018). Thus, political leaders in Russia carefully design the structure of elections although they are sure of victory.

Why do the Russian leaders manipulate elections even though they expect that they will win elections without fraud? Their goal is to win elections in a landslide. This is not a new phenomenon. Every autocrat tends to have overwhelming victories in elections. In 1987, Muhammad Suharto, the former President of Indonesia, led his ruling party to win the election with more than seventy percent of the vote (Wedel, 1987). In 2005, Hosni Mubarak, the former President of Egypt, won the presidential

election with about eighty-nine percent of the vote (Whitaker, 2005). Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev are not much different from these dictators.

Why do political leaders in Russia want to win elections in a landslide? The Kremlin knows that the beginnings of a small crack can lead to the demise of the current political regime. Boris Nemtsov, the former deputy Prime Minister of Russia in Boris Yeltsin's government, led an opposing party, the People's Freedom Party, and declared his opposition to Vladimir Putin (Kara-Murza, 2018). In 2013, his party entered the regional Parliament of Yaroslavl with seventeen percent of the vote while Vladimir Putin's party earned twenty-four percent of the vote (Kara-Murza, 2013). Although the ruling party defeated Boris Nemtsov's party, seventeen percent of the vote was not negligible. In 2013, Alexei Navalny received about twenty-seven percent of the vote in the Moscow mayoral election (Baczynska & Tsvetkova, 2013). This figure was enough to surprise the Kremlin.

However, the Russian leaders do not allow their rivals to gain strength. In February 2015, Boris Nemtsov was assassinated (Amos & Millward, 2015). Alexei Navalny was charged with embezzlement, and the Central Election Commission disqualified him from running in the presidential election of 2018 (Luhn, 2017). Thus, political leaders in Russia continuously check their potential rivals by using various controversial methods

In 2020, Vladimir Putin proposed the constitutional amendment that strengthens the power of the Russian president (Teague, 2020). The parliament passed the amendment in March 2020, and a referendum approved it in July 2020. This constitutional reform shows that Vladimir Putin will not be a lame duck in the near future. Rather, Russia will be close to an autocracy.

Internally, protests have demanded that the government fix various problems. The failure of social reforms in Russia sparked huge demonstrations in 2005 (Monaghan, 2017). Before 2005, more than thirty million Russians depended on pensions that consisted of seventy dollars a month and other benefits such as free public transportation and housing subsidies (Bukharin, 2015). In January 2005, the government launched a new plan that increased the pension by ten dollars a month but removed benefits (Titova, 2005). In various cities around the country, Russian citizens joined rallies against this reform. For instance, about 13,000 citizen demonstrators participated in the protest in St. Petersburg (Bukharin, 2015).

However, the Kremlin did not suppress these protesters (Tsygankov, 2014). Most of the demonstrators were not arrested. Rather, Putin admitted this reform's failure and

promised a better plan (Bigg, 2005). This response pacified moderate protesters and isolated more radical demonstrators (Tsygankov, 2014).

Election fraud in 2011 triggered another mass protest. In December 2011, the Russian legislative elections were held. The ruling party, United Russia, took 238 of 450 seats in the Lower House (Barry, 2011). After the elections, many observers asserted that they had been manipulated (Lally and Englund, 2011). Alexei Navalny, an anti-corruption activist, published the slogan, "Putin is a thief" (Tsygankov, 2014). More than 25,000 citizens chanted this slogan and at a protest in Moscow (Barry, 2011).

The response from the government, however, was not the same as before. Navalny and hundreds of protesters were arrested (Barry, 2011). Dmitry Medvedev, the incumbent Prime Minister of Russia, publicly blamed the protesters (O'Flynn, 2011). Putin asserted that the radical protesters had been supported by Hillary Clinton, the former United States Secretary of State (Tsygankov, 2014).

In 2017, Navalny and his supporters returned to protest another issue: corruption. The Anti-Corruption Foundation, which Navalny established, reported that Medvedev had a hidden estate worth eighty-five million dollars (Tamkin, 2017). The Foundation also asserted that Medvedev accepted over one billion dollars in bribes from various business people (Bennetts, 2017). Thousands of demonstrators joined rallies in about 100 cities (Meyer, 2017).

The Russian leaders responded even more strongly than before. Navalny was detained again (Meyer, 2017). Hundreds of protesters were arrested (Balmforth, 2017). The government-controlled media did not broadcast the protests: Russian state television did not show the rallies, and Pro-Kremlin newspapers did not report the protests (BBC, 2017). It was a perfect example of how political leaders in Russia can control the media and suppress protesters.

In 2005, the government accepted people's needs, but in 2012 and 2017, the government used coercive power. Why did the government respond differently? The answers lie in their evaluation of the protests. When protesters do not appear to affect the present political regime, Russia's political leaders tend to accept their requests. Putin understands that people construe the country as a paternalistic state (Tsygankov, 2014). Putin is willing to listen to requests for help from the people as long as they are not critical of the government.

On the contrary, when radical protesters negatively affect the present political regime, political leaders in Russia criticize and punish them (Tsygankov, 2014). Putin

has no reason to listen to the demonstrators' voice when their only aim is to get him to step down. Resigning their posts is the last thing that the leaders want to do. Putin stifles protests by controlling the media not to broadcast and use the police to quell the demonstrations to shut down the influence of anti-government activists.

2. Putin's Governance Strategy

To handle issues related to international and national affairs, political leaders in Russia need vertical power (Gel'man, 2015; Inozemtsev, 2011; Man, 2009; Monaghan, 2017; Tsygankov, 2014). Vertical power is defined as political leaders' capacity to control their subordinates. It is a type of power that we can frequently observe Putin using in response to the international, social, economic, and political circumstances he faces, and which we can presume is part of his governance strategy.

To increase vertical power, Putin has formed a symbiotic relationship with corrupt elites. There are two types of elites with which Putin has been associated: oligarchs and siloviki. Oligarchs are business elites who have rapidly acquired wealth since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Siloviki are politicians from military and security agencies. Putin manages economic issues with the help of oligarchs and maintains social order with the help of siloviki (Tsygankov, 2014).

If Putin's governance strategy is to control the various apparatuses consistently with the use of vertical power, how is Russia different from other countries? Every political leader would likely enjoy vertical power, but checks and balances prevent political leaders in democratic countries from having vertical power. Political leaders in authoritarian countries without checks and balances, on the other hand, are able to fortify their vertical power.

So what accounts for the uniqueness of the Russian governance strategy? Although Russia shares authoritarian features with China, Putin's governance strategy is different from Xi Jinping's governance strategy. The difference is the relative power of their parties. Compared to the Communist Party of China, Putin's ruling party, United Russia, is not powerful. United Russia is a relatively new party – it was only established in 2001 after Vladimir Putin's first presidential election (Tsygankov, 2014). Unlike China, Russia is not a party state. United Russia helps Putin win elections, but this ruling party has no capacity to control various apparatus effectively. Moreover, Putin does not need the party badly. For instance, in 2018, Putin ran for president as

an independent candidate unaffiliated with United Russia (Ellyatt, 2017).

Putin does not have a one-party system like Xi (Polyakova and Taussig, 2018). Ostensibly, Russia is a democratic country. Its power is divided into the legislative, judicial, and administrative branches, which means that Russia's present political system does not allow the ruling party to control the government absolutely. A Russian ruling party cannot give Putin the power to control everything. While Xi controls everything in the name of the party, the Russian leaders control their elites personally.

3. Putin's refusal of anti-corruption policies

Many experts have suggested various anti-corruption measures, such as criminalization (Bowles and Garoupa, 1997), freedom of information (Lindstedt and Naurin, 2010), whistleblower protection (Martin, 2003), and education (Klitgaard and Baser, 1998). This study evaluates anti-corruption policies related to these measures in Russia.

Political leaders in Russia have enacted some anti-corruption laws, but there are no systematic approaches to fight corruption. There are indeed some provisions for punishing corrupt actors in Russia. For example, Article 209 and 291 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation prohibits the taking of bribes²⁾ and embezzlement.³⁾ However, these provisions contain nothing but basic criminalization.

While some forms of corruption have been criminalized in Russia, comprehensive anti-corruption reform is still impossible because freedom of information is not fully guaranteed. There was no freedom of information law in Russia before January 2009, when the Lower House, Duma, passed a bill to guarantee the freedom of information (Right2INFO.org, 2009). The bill, "On providing access to information on the activities of government bodies and bodies of local self-government," has been in effect since 2010 (University College of London, 2011). However, its effectiveness has been considerably questionable (University College of London, 2011). According to the law, restricted information will not be released.⁴⁾ However, there are no definitions of

2) The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, 1996, Article 290 and 291.

3) The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, 1996, Article 160.

4) On providing access to information on the activities of government bodies and bodies of local self-government, 2009, Article 20.

restricted information. Moreover, citizen requests for information are still frequently ignored by public officials, who remain unpunished for breaking the law (University College of London, 2011).

Russia also lacks comprehensive whistleblower protection laws. Article 9 of On Combating Corruption indeed provides protection for public officials who report corruption (Lubitzsch, 2018).⁵⁾ However, citizens are not protected by this law, and in fact, no anti-corruption laws in Russia have mentioned the protection of whistleblowers in the general population (Shvets, Maximenko and Klutchareva, 2017). In 2017, the government proposed a draft law that includes protection for whistleblowers who are not civil servants, but the bill has not been passed yet (Lubitzsch, 2018). Moreover, there are no provisions that explain how the government will protect whistleblowers.

Retaliation against whistleblowers is also common. The Kremlin does not protect whistleblowers, but rather punishes them. For example, Sergei Magnitsky, a Russian lawyer, found that police officers, tax officials, and bankers were involved in 230 million dollars' worth of tax fraud (Aldrick, 2009). After reporting this, he was charged with tax evasion, and he died in prison in November 2009 (Barry, 2009). This is not rare; many whistleblowers in Russia have been falsely charged or threatened to be killed.

In addition to restricting the protection of whistleblowers and freedom of information, Russia's political leaders neglect to promote education as a tool for reducing corruption. While the Investigative Committee punishes some corrupt officials in order to instil discipline in the ranks of public officials, education is not a part of the punishment. The Kremlin is also not interested in educating and enlightening citizens about how to fight corruption. In 2016, the government announced that anti-corruption lessons would be taught in schools, but there are no specific plans to implement them (Sharkov, 2016).

In sum, the Russian government has enacted some anti-corruption laws related to criminalization, freedom of information, and whistleblower protection, but because these laws lack specific provisions, they are not effective. The Kremlin is not interested in educating subordinates and citizens on how to fight corruption. Thus, anti-corruption programs are not properly adopted or implemented in Russia. Despite some superficial

5) On Combating Corruption, 2008, Article 9.

legislative gestures, Putin is not seriously interested in fighting corruption.

Since 2000, political leaders in Russia have adopted some anti-corruption laws and plans. In August 2008, in an effort to generate foreign investment, Medvedev declared that he would fight corruption (Levy, 2008). A Presidential decree, On Measures to Combat Corruption, approved the National Anti-Corruption Plan (Ageev and Kuzmenko, 2016). This plan included three sub-plans: giving incentives to upright officials, punishing corrupt employees, and building a culture of zero tolerance to corruption (Man, 2009). Medvedev also enacted three anti-corruption laws (Man, 2009), including the main law, On Combating Corruption, which was enacted in December 2008 (Ageev and Kuzmenko). This law forced public officials to disclose their assets to the public (Man, 2009). In 2010, another Presidential decree was issued: the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and the National Anti-Corruption Plan for years 2010–2011 (Ageev and Kuzmenko, 2016).

Medvedev, however, failed to reduce corruption. In January 2011, he confessed that these policies had not curbed corruption significantly (Tulaeva, 2011). Putin is no different from Medvedev; despite declaring that he would fight corruption and establish the rule of law, corruption has not significantly decreased (Orttung, 2006).

Putin's efforts to reduce corruption are hollow. Both Putin and Medvedev enacted anti-corruption laws and established plans, but they have not adopted other measures to reduce corruption, such as empowering civil society and guaranteeing the freedom of the media (Man, 2009). On the contrary, they have weakened civil society. Without anti-corruption watchdogs, the government has been free from public scrutiny (Man, 2009).

Under Putin's leadership, a reduction in corruption is highly unlikely. Anti-corruption policies have not gone beyond rhetoric because there are no specific, concrete plans for implementing them. Russian leaders are more interested in enacting laws than taking actions against corruption. Anti-corruption activists have asked the Kremlin to adopt institutional reforms, but Putin has refused (Krastev, 2016).

4. The impact of Putin's governance strategy on political will to fight corruption

Why is Putin's political will to fight corruption so low? How does his governance strategy impact his reaction to corruption? Because they allow Putin to control various

political apparatuses through vertical power, Russian elites are the key to Putin's governance strategy. Furthermore, because many of these elites are corrupt, any serious and effective anti-corruption policies can negatively affect the elites and severely damage Putin's relationship with them. Without the symbiotic relationships with corrupt elites, Putin would lose his vertical power.

Therefore, Putin tolerates corruption that helps elites accumulate wealth. When corrupt elites show strong loyalty, the Russian politicians can tolerate corruption and allow their subordinates to plunder the state. (Schulze and Zakharov, 2018). If elites do not show loyalty, they are deemed corrupt and prosecuted (Schulze and Zakharov, 2018).

In 2013, Putin made a new regulation that allowed the president to dismiss elected governors and also select the candidates for elections (Carbonnel, 2013). Putin has since used this regulation to dismiss former governors and appoint the new ones (Monaghan, 2017). In 2016, Aleksei Diumin, Putin's former bodyguard for 15 years, was appointed as the governor of Tula province (Kashin, 2016). Andrei Turchak, whose father was Putin's judo sparring partner, was selected as the governor of Pskov province (Kashin, 2016).

Meanwhile, some big names who showed disloyalty were punished. Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former chairman of Yukos oil company from 1997 to 2004, was arrested after Putin asserted that this oligarch had corrupt dealings (Man, 2009). However, experts believed that Mikhail Khodorkovsky went to jail, not because of corruption, but because of his lack of loyalty (Man, 2009). In 2013, Boris Berezovsky, one of the most famous oligarchs, escaped to the United Kingdom to avoid persecution related to his opposition to Putin (Edward, Verkaik and Williams, 2013). Both of these men were punished not because of corruption, but because of disloyalty.

When Putin fortifies his vertical power with a carrot and stick scheme, fighting corruption is not an ultimate goal (Clarkson, 2018). Rather, corruption is one of the critical tools that this regime uses to manage Russia (Pavroz, 2017). The Russian government can be construed as a corrupt kleptocracy (Healy and Ramanna, 2013). Malgin (2014) asserts that "Corruption is actually the backbone of President Vladimir Putin's power vertical." Corrupt officials are rarely punished (Schulze and Zakharov, 2018), and Putin allows the elites to loot the country (Dawisha, 2015).

Corruption in Russia can furthermore be construed as "neo-feudalism" (Inozemtsev, 2011). Corruption is a crucial part of the power vertical (Inozemtsev, 2011). Because

bosses expect to receive bribes as verification of unconditional loyalty, corruption helps leaders in Russia maintain their subordinates' loyalty (Schulze and Zakharov, 2018).

V. Conclusion

To understand the governance strategy of political leaders in Russia, this study examined the circumstances that Putin faces. Internationally, tensions between Russia and Western powers have increased. Internally, protesters have asked the government to fix social problems. Putin has many responses to these international and national circumstances. Internationally, Putin sticks to military expansion because his aggressive diplomacy helps him sustain his domestic popularity. Internally, when demonstrations have a negative effect on the political regime, Putin controls the media and suppresses civil society.

Observing these reactions indicates that Putin's governance strategy is to control the various apparatuses consistently with the vertical of power (Gel'man, 2015; Inozemtsev, 2011; Monaghan, 2017). With the power vertical, Putin can control the military, the secret police, the media, and state-friendly organizations to react to various circumstances effectively. To increase vertical power, Putin must continue to maintain his symbiotic relationship with corrupt elites. Putin's governance strategy explains why he has a lack of political will to fight corruption: he refuses to adopt anti-corruption policies that have a negative effect on his governance strategy. Ultimately, Putin simply ignores corruption.

The current literature in corruption studies assumes that political leaders adopt and implement anti-corruption policies because they want to fight corruption. Under this assumption, the failure of anti-corruption policies has been explained by the concept of political will to fight corruption. In other words, political leaders refuse to adopt anti-corruption policies because they do not have a strong political will to fight corruption.

However, this study argues that we should not expect political leaders to adopt anti-corruption policies which are not consistent with their governance strategies. If we want them to adopt anti-corruption policies, we should understand the circumstances affecting their governance strategies. If we can change their

circumstances, then their governance strategies would also change. For example, if people refuse to vote for corrupt politicians in a democratic country, then political leaders in the country could not protect their corrupt allies. Changing circumstances is not an easy task. However, although it is difficult, we must try to change the circumstances of political leaders. Without changing their circumstances, we will not be able to force them to adopt an anti-corruption policy seriously.

This study's inevitable limitation comes from the fact that this article has only looked at a big state. Russia is so huge that it cannot be accurately compared to smaller countries. It is not easy to find a big state that has reduced corruption dramatically. On the contrary, some small countries fight corruption successfully. For example, Georgia has decreased its level of corruption. Mikheil Saakashvili, a former President of Georgia from 2004 to 2013, replaced all traffic police officers with well-educated people by increasing wages (Healy and Ramanna, 2013). If big countries are different from small countries in fighting corruption, we should also test the validity of the model in small countries.

If we could look at a country over time, then the validity of this model could be rigorously tested. For example, South Korea is a country that has evolved from authoritarianism to democracy. Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, the former authoritarian leaders, were not interested in reducing corruption. In contrast, to differentiate himself from the former authoritarian leaders, Kim Young-Sam, the former President of South Korea from 1993 to 1998, initiated the Real-Name Financial System. In 2002, the Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption, the first anti-corruption agency of South Korea, was established by Kim Dae-Jung, the former President of South Korea from 1998 to 2003. These changes can be explained by examining the different grand strategies of the political leaders in South Korea. Thus, the second step toward explaining the impact of governance strategy on political will to fight corruption would deal with the cases of other small countries in different time spans.

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<Abstract>

Why Does Putin Refuse to Adopt Anti-Corruption Policies?: The Impact of Putin's Governance Strategy on Political Will to Fight Corruption

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Some scholars argue that political leaders reject anti-corruption policies due to a lack of political will. However, sufficient and profound explanations of what influences political will are lacking. This study builds a theoretical model that contains a new term: governance strategy. Governance strategy is a grand plan to fortify political leaders' power within national affairs. Leaders want to maximize their power to govern their people while responding to international and national circumstances to retain their power. To react to these circumstances, leaders strengthen their governance strategy, and their governance strategy increases or decreases political will. To evaluate the validity of this assertion, this study examines Russia's political situation and explains the circumstances that Putin faces. Putin's governance strategy is to control the various political apparatuses through vertical power. To fortify his governance strategy, Putin avoids introducing reformatory anti-corruption policies that might damage his relationship with corrupt elites.

Key words: Anti-Corruption Policies, Governance Strategy, Political Will, Putin, Russia

