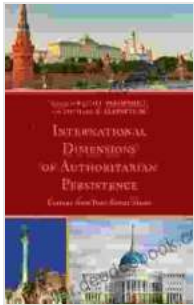


# Unveiling the Labyrinth: International Dimensions of Authoritarian Persistence



## International Dimensions of Authoritarian Persistence: Lessons from Post-Soviet States by Elizabeth Bromke

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Authoritarian regimes have proliferated across the globe, defying the predictions of democratic transitions. This article delves into the international dimensions that contribute to the persistence of authoritarianism, unraveling the intricate web of economic ties, geopolitical alliances, and the diffusion of repressive practices.

## Economic Dependence

### Resource Wealth

Authoritarian regimes often exploit rich natural resources, leveraging their economic power to secure external support. Countries with abundant oil and mineral deposits tend to have higher levels of authoritarianism, as their

leaders can use resource revenues to suppress dissent and consolidate control.

- Saudi Arabia: The Saudi monarchy has long relied on oil revenues to maintain its authoritarian rule, using wealth to fund a vast security apparatus and suppress political opposition.
- Russia: The Russian government's control over vast oil and gas reserves has provided it with significant economic leverage, enabling it to withstand sanctions and support authoritarian regimes abroad.

## **Foreign Investment**

Foreign direct investment (FDI) can provide economic benefits to authoritarian regimes, but it can also contribute to their resilience. Multinational corporations seeking access to markets or resources may be willing to overlook human rights abuses and corruption, inadvertently propping up authoritarian governments.

- China: China's Belt and Road Initiative has extended investment into authoritarian countries, providing them with economic incentives to maintain friendly relations.
- Uzbekistan: The Uzbek government has attracted foreign investment in its mining and energy sectors, which has helped stabilize its authoritarian regime.

## **Geopolitical Alliances**

### **Major Power Support**

Authoritarian regimes can seek support from major powers to bolster their legitimacy and deter external challenges. These alliances can involve

military aid, economic assistance, or diplomatic backing.

- North Korea: The Kim regime has long maintained close ties with China, which provides critical economic and military support, despite international condemnation of its human rights record.
- Syria: The Assad regime benefited from Russian military intervention in the Syrian civil war, which helped it regain control of territory and suppress opposition.

## **Regional Security Arrangements**

Authoritarian regimes may form regional alliances to enhance their security and counter external threats. These alliances can create a buffer against democratic pressures and provide legitimacy to repressive practices.

- Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): The SCO is a Eurasian security alliance that includes several authoritarian states, such as China, Russia, and Uzbekistan. It provides a platform for cooperation and mutual support.
- Arab League: The Arab League has often defended authoritarian regimes within its membership, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, from international pressure.

## **Diffusion of Repression**

### **Learning from Others**

Authoritarian regimes learn from the experiences of other authoritarian states, adopting repressive tactics that have proven effective in maintaining control. This process of "diffusion" can spread both soft and hard authoritarian practices.

- Singapore: The Singaporean government has been cited as a model for "authoritarian capitalism," using strict laws and social control measures to maintain economic growth and political stability.
- China: China's success in using surveillance technology to suppress dissent has inspired other authoritarian regimes, such as Myanmar and Zimbabwe, to adopt similar techniques.

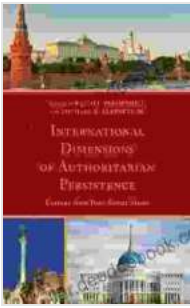
## **International Cooperation**

Authoritarian regimes cooperate with each other to share information, coordinate crackdowns, and develop new methods of repression.

Transnational networks of autocrats facilitate the exchange of knowledge and resources.

- Interpol: Interpol has been criticized for allowing authoritarian regimes to use its database to target political opponents and suppress dissent abroad.
- International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO): This organization has provided training and equipment to police forces in authoritarian states, contributing to their capacity for repression.

The international dimensions of authoritarian persistence present a complex challenge to democracy promotion. Economic dependence, geopolitical alliances, and the diffusion of repression create a support system for authoritarian regimes, which enables them to withstand domestic and external pressures. Understanding these international factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to counter authoritarianism and foster democratic transitions worldwide.



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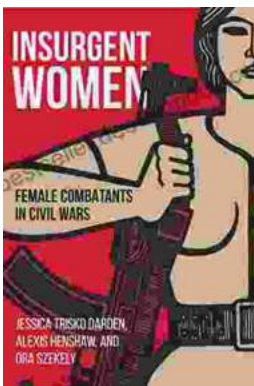
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