

Legal Autonomy vs. Political Dependency: The Role of Prosecutorial Power in Corruption Investigations

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The phrase “this dynamic has been observed in multiple democratic and hybrid regimes” is vague. Please specify at least one or two jurisdictions where this dynamic has been systematically documented.

The statement “Legal autonomy and political dependency are not mutually exclusive but exist on a continuum...” is excellent. However, a conceptual model or visual could reinforce this key theoretical insight.

In referencing the Italian “Clean Hands” operation, it would be beneficial to briefly mention how prosecutorial structure at the time enabled this success, perhaps by pointing to specific institutional protections.

The comparative discussion of Russia and Ukraine is compelling. However, it would be improved by including a summary sentence comparing the outcomes of their prosecutorial approaches, not just structures.

The sentence “This method undermines both public trust and legal neutrality...” should be supported with either survey data or a brief empirical citation demonstrating the erosion of public trust.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The aim statement is well-articulated but overly general. Consider specifying which jurisdictions or typologies of legal systems (e.g., civil vs. common law) are included in the synthesis to clarify the scope.

The citation of Barno & Lynch (2021) is appropriate, but the article could benefit from elaborating how their typology of prosecutorial discretion directly relates to anti-corruption efforts.

The sentence “Political dependency...is often undermined by executive influence” may be a typo; likely you meant “Legal autonomy...is often undermined.” Please clarify.

The section on judicial reforms in Ukraine and Georgia is strong but would benefit from an explanation of implementation challenges—e.g., have these reforms been institutionally entrenched or are they still vulnerable?

Please clarify the dual nature of reforms in Indonesia mentioned by Suwartono. Are these reforms largely perceived as progressive or as thinly veiled tools of control? Nuanced interpretation is needed.

The sentence “Political dependency creates a chilling effect...” is analytically significant. Consider referencing a theoretical model (e.g., chilling effect theory in legal sociology) to deepen the analysis.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.