Tsai

Accountability Without Democracy

Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision in Rural China

Examines the fundamental issue of how citizens get government officials to provide them with the roads, schools, and other public services they need by studying communities in rural China. In authoritarian and transitional systems, formal institutions for holding government officials accountable are often weak. The state often lacks sufficient resources to monitor its officials closely, and citizens are limited in their power to elect officials they believe will perform well and to remove them when they do not. The answer, Lily L. Tsai found, lies in a community's social institutions. Even when formal democratic and bureaucratic institutions of accountability are weak, government officials can still be subject to informal rules and norms created by community solidary groups that have earned high moral standing in the community.

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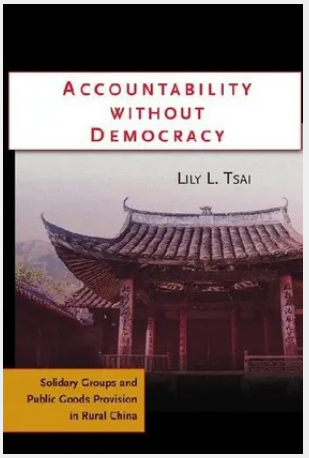

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