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Meeting assets for Jerry Michalski's Zoom Meeting are ready!

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Meeting summary

Quick recap

The group explored the concept of crony capitalism and its various forms, discussing how it manifests in different authoritarian regimes and examining its impact on global issues like wars and human rights repression. They explored potential solutions including transparency initiatives, reputation economies, and alternative governance systems, while considering the role of technology and legal frameworks in addressing corruption. The discussion concluded with reflections on the challenges of implementing effective systems to combat cronyism and corruption, including the importance of maintaining dissident voices and fostering a culture of constructive dialogue.

Next steps

- Jerry: Post the YouTube link for Loretta Ross's TED talk "Don't call people out, call them in" in the chat
- Mike: Research and find information about the "Church of Life" founded by British comedians
- Jerry/Group: Schedule a future OGM call on the topic of call-in culture vs call-out culture
- Jerry/Group: Consider inviting Grace, Kalia, and David Bavill for a specific call focused on identity systems and liquid democracy

Summary

Forms of Crony Capitalism

The group discussed the concept of crony capitalism and its various forms, including crony socialism and what Jerry described as "crony communism" in Russia, where former KGB officials gained control of enterprises through privatization. Mike emphasized that both crony capitalism and disinformation are major drivers of global issues like wars and human rights repression. The discussion touched on the high number of Russian casualties in the conflict, with Mike clarifying that the figure refers to casualties, not deaths, and Jerry expressing astonishment at the scale of the loss.

Models of Influence and Reputation

The group discussed crony capitalism, particularly focusing on Russia's version and comparing it to other authoritarian regimes. Jerry mentioned Lawrence Lessig's efforts to combat corruption in copyright policy, noting his unsuccessful case Eldred versus Reno. The conversation then shifted to exploring different models of influence and reputation economies, with John proposing a system where everyone has some influence but it's bounded and cannot be completely lost or exponentially increased.

Quasi-Public Reputation Economy System

John discussed a reputational economy system that would sit between civic elections and economic transactions, suggesting it could be managed by a quasi-public entity to influence public decisions without being controlled by government or corporations. Jerry inquired about the relationship between this concept and liquid democracy, noting that David Bavill and Grace's work on identity systems might be relevant. Gil suggested inviting Grace and Kalia for a specific call to discuss these ideas further, while also raising questions about the distinction between capitalism and cronyism in such systems.

Understanding Cronyism in Governance

The group discussed the definition and nature of cronyism, exploring its presence in both government and marketplace contexts. They agreed that cronyism exists when friendships and alliances have more influence than market forces or good policy, creating a cycle where government decisions enable projects that generate profits for select few, who then influence policy. Mike suggested that the problem with cronyism is not just removing the cronies but empowering others to have more power, using the example of Russia's attempt to distribute state enterprise shares to citizens.

Share Allocation and Ownership Challenges

The group discussed the allocation and subsequent consolidation of shares, with Gil explaining how they were quickly scooped up by a group he called the Silovichi, who offered vodka in exchange. Jerry noted the challenge of protecting distributed ownership and raised concerns about Hernando de Soto's theories on property rights. Alex shared insights on crony capitalism, emphasizing the importance of transparency and suggesting that forcing immediate documentation of government discussions could help prevent hidden deals.

Blockchain for Government Transparency

The group discussed transparency in government and business, with Alex proposing blockchain technology to track government officials' financial transactions and Stacey sharing her experience of community-based trust in a condo association. Jerry shared examples of electronic government initiatives in Estonia and Iceland, noting that while innovative solutions were developed, they often faced political resistance. The discussion concluded with a reflection on how Nordic countries' civic education systems might contribute to lower corruption levels, though the exact mechanisms remain unclear.

Global Change and Stakeholder Collaboration

The group discussed Transparency International's rankings of public sector corruption, with Alex questioning the interpretation of Denmark's relatively low perceived corruption compared to other countries. Erik shared insights about Global Action Networks and their approach to addressing

complex global issues, including the diamond trade example, and mentioned the work of Adam Kahane regarding power and social change. The discussion highlighted the importance of working with all stakeholders, even those perceived as problematic, to effect meaningful change, and Jerry confirmed that Erik was referring to Adam Kahane's book "Power and Love."

Crony Capitalism: Legal and Moral Challenges

The group discussed the complexities of crony capitalism, distinguishing between its criminal and non-criminal aspects. Alex highlighted the need to address both the influence and criminal elements, while Jerry noted how laws can be manipulated to legitimize immoral actions through regulatory capture. Erik shared examples from The Hague, illustrating the challenges of international law enforcement and the coexistence of lawful and unlawful activities in close proximity. Jerry proposed that Trump and Putin serve as acid tests for global legal systems, prompting Doug to clarify that legal systems are not inherently moral or ethical, but rather systems of rules and penalties, and their effectiveness depends on who wields them.

Addressing Crony Capitalism and Corruption

The group discussed the challenges of addressing crony capitalism and corruption, exploring various approaches and systems. They considered the role of transparency, accountability, and potential solutions, including the importance of maintaining dissident voices and the need for a balance between punishment and redemption. The conversation touched on the limitations of current monitoring systems and the potential of alternative methods like Nonviolent Communication (NVC) for resolving conflicts. The group also reflected on the impact of their discussions being publicly available and the importance of fostering a culture of call-in rather than call-out.

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