



Combating Corruption in Authoritarian Regimes

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Combating Corruption in Authoritarian Regimes

A dissertation presented

by

Christopher James Carothers

to

The Department of Government

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for the degree of

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in the subject of

Government

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Combating Corruption in Authoritarian Regimes

Abstract

Christopher Carothers

How and why do authoritarian regimes succeed in curbing corruption? Scholars generally assume that autocrats will not curb government corruption because they benefit from it and curbing it would require ceding power to democratic or quasi-democratic institutions. However, authoritarian anti-corruption reform, though not the norm, is too common to be called exceptional and often too impactful to be written off as a political charade.

I find that authoritarian anti-corruption efforts are most likely to succeed when motivated autocrats enjoy high discretionary authority and can command a capable state apparatus. This strong leader–strong state combination is effective because it allows autocrats to employ a decidedly authoritarian playbook for reform. While democracies curb corruption by strengthening institutions like checks and balances and the rule of law, the authoritarian playbook relies on centralized executive power to disrupt entrenched corruption. I find that autocrats curb corruption in order to support broader revolutionary or developmental state-building projects, though they often have other motives as well. Using the authoritarian playbook, autocrats can advance these state-building projects without ceding power and strengthen their regimes. These findings are based on controlled comparisons of nine authoritarian anti-corruption efforts of varying levels of success in China, South Korea, and Taiwan, as well as, to a lesser extent, analysis of cases in 12 other nondemocracies. The research for this study included archival research, expert and elite interviews, and the use of written primary and secondary sources in Chinese and Korean.

This study makes several contributions. First, authoritarian regimes often try to curb corruption and benefit from corruption control successes. Second, high discretionary authority is critical to anti-corruption success, suggesting that under certain conditions personalism is an authoritarian asset, rather than a liability. Third, quasi-democratic institutions, like semi-competitive elections, constrain autocrats and hinder anti-corruption efforts. This point cuts against the increasingly common argument that autocrats can manipulate quasi-democratic institutions to strengthen their regimes. Finally, this study’s analysis of authoritarian corruption

control demonstrates the broader point that regime durability depends, even more than on a regime's origins, on its continuing ability to reform and strengthen itself.

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Chapter One

Theorizing Corruption Control Under Authoritarianism: East Asia and Beyond

1. Introduction

Scholars generally assume that autocrats will not curb government corruption.¹ The conventional wisdom behind this assumption goes something like this: Autocrats are unlikely to be motivated to carry out anti-corruption reforms because they often rely on distributing spoils and patronage to stay in power, benefit personally from corruption, and can use coercive means to suppress public criticism and unrest.² Any putative anti-corruption efforts are likely a cover for the autocrat purging rivals and consolidating power. Even if they did want cleaner government, autocrats would have to face the daunting prospect of giving up substantial power and control to get there. This is because corruption control is achieved, in the consensus view, through democratic institutions: the rule of law, checks and balances, elections, independence for the judiciary and special investigatory committees, government transparency, a free media, public oversight through civil society organizations, and others.³ Even taking small steps toward

¹ See, for example: Martin C. McGuire and Mancur L. Jr Olson, “The Economics of Autocracy and Majority Rule,” *Journal of Economic Literature*, 34.1 (March 1996), pp. 72–96.; Thomas Carothers, “How Democracies Emerge: The ‘Sequencing’ Fallacy,” *Journal of Democracy* (2007), 18(1), p. 16.; Eric Chang and Miriam A. Golden, “Sources of Corruption in Authoritarian Regimes,” *Social Science Quarterly* 91, No. 1, (2010), pp. 1–20. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith, *The Dictator’s Handbook: Why Bad Behavior Is Almost Always Good Politics*, 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), Chapter Six.; Dawn Brancati, “Democratic Authoritarianism: Origins and Effects,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17:2.1–2.14, (2014), p. 317.; Pei Minxin, *China’s Crony Capitalism: The Dynamics of Regime Decay* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 267.

² Barbara Geddes, “What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999), pp. 115–44.; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph Siverson, and James Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003). Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

³ Aymo Brunetti and Beatrice Weder, “A Free Press Is Bad News for Corruption,” *Journal of Public Economics*, 87 (7) (2003), 1801–24.; Rod Alence, “Political Institutions and Developmental Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42.2 (2004), pp. 163–87.; Michael Johnston, *Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).; Catharina

this democratic approach is usually too threatening for authoritarian regimes. Political considerations aside, many authoritarian states may simply be too weak or disorganized to carry out major reform, whether this weakness is a result of endemic corruption itself or any number of other factors.

While there is much truth in this conventional wisdom, authoritarian anti-corruption success, though not the norm, is too common to be considered exceptional and often too impactful to be written off as a political charade. Curbing corruption has been a major agenda item for many “high-performing” authoritarian regimes. In addition to the oft-cited case of Singapore’s anti-corruption success, there have since 1945 been dozens of episodes of intense anti-corruption activity by authoritarian regimes (see Table 1.4).⁴ In at least nine cases, corruption was significantly reduced nationwide, yielding political and economic benefits. In Taiwan, for example, the Kuomintang (KMT) Reconstruction (1950–52) brought previously rampant corruption under control as it reformed the beleaguered ruling party, helping lay a new foundation for regime stability and growth.

Moreover, these authoritarian anti-corruption reforms have not relied on the conventional democratic approach. Authoritarian regimes with quasi-democratic institutions—conceptualized variously as hybrid, competitive authoritarian, or semi-authoritarian regimes, among other terms—have only rarely had anti-corruption success, contrary to what one might expect.⁵ In

Lindstedt and Daniel Naurin, “Transparency Is Not Enough: Making Transparency Effective in Reducing Corruption,” *International Political Science Review* 31, No. 3 (2010), pp. 301–22.; Michael Johnston, *Corruption, Contention and Reform: The Power of Deep Democratization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).; Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, *The Quest for Good Governance: How Societies Develop Control of Corruption* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁴ On Singapore: Mungiu-Pippidi, *The Quest for Good Governance*, pp. 131, 149.; Jon S. T. Quah, “Learning from Singapore’s Effective Anti-Corruption Strategy: Policy Recommendations for South Korea,” *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 6.1 (2017), pp. 17–29.

⁵ Christopher Carothers, “Democratic Institutions, Corruption, and Authoritarian Durability,” *Working Paper*, 2019.

South Korea, President Park Chung-hee's anti-corruption efforts were much more successful under the dictatorial Fourth Republic (1972–79) than in the competitive authoritarian Third Republic (1961–72). More recently, corruption has been reduced in Rwanda under President Paul Kagame's fully authoritarian regime.⁶ Quasi-democratic institutions, such as semi-competitive elections or multiparty legislatures, do not appear to have played a major role in these or other authoritarian anti-corruption reforms.⁷ This is not to suggest that most or even many fully authoritarian regimes have curbed corruption, but that that is where some of the most effective reforms have taken place.

The disparity between common theoretical assumptions about corruption under authoritarianism and empirical observations raises an important question: How and why do authoritarian regimes succeed in curbing corruption? I find that authoritarian anti-corruption efforts are most likely to succeed when motivated autocrats enjoy high discretionary authority and can command a capable state apparatus. This strong leader–strong state combination is effective because it allows autocrats to employ a decidedly authoritarian playbook for reform. While democracies curb corruption by strengthening institutions like checks and balances and the rule of law, the authoritarian playbook relies on centralized executive power to disrupt entrenched corruption. I find that autocrats curb corruption in order to support broader revolutionary or developmental state-building projects, though they often have other motives as

On hybrid regimes, see: Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* (2002), 13(1), pp. 5–21.; Larry J. Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* (2002), 13(2), pp. 21–35.; Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* (2002), 13(2), pp. 51–65.; Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003).

⁶ I use the terms authoritarian and autocratic interchangeably throughout this dissertation. Authoritarianism, though it was not always the case, has become commonly used as a catch-all term for nondemocratic regimes.

⁷ On conceptualizing quasi-democratic institutions, see: Brancati, "Democratic Authoritarianism."

well. Through the authoritarian playbook, autocrats can advance these state-building projects without ceding power and strengthen their regimes.

The rest of this chapter is divided into four main sections. Section Two lays out the conventional view of why corruption is unchecked in authoritarian regimes and then explains how corruption control works (or fails to) in democracies. Section Three examines each part of my main argument, considers alternative hypotheses, and suggests several theoretical contributions. Section Four discusses my study's focus on cases in China, South Korea, and Taiwan, and explores why East Asia as a whole may have an unusual concentration of factors helpful for authoritarian corruption control. In Section Five, I explain my methodological approach and sources. Lastly, a short outline of the study rounds out the chapter.

2. Corruption Control under Authoritarianism and Democracy

Corruption is a debated term in academic literature, with definitions ranging from the strictly legal to the cultural to outright questioning of corruption's conceptual coherence.⁸ This study focuses on government corruption, as opposed to business corruption, private citizens stealing from the state, or forms of cultural or moral decline that are sometimes termed corruption. I follow Joseph Nye's elaboration of the standard definition of an abuse of public office for private gain. He writes that government corruption is "behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public office (elective or appointive) because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) wealth or status gains; or violates rules against the

⁸ Arnold J. Heidenheimer and Michael Johnston, *Political Corruption: Concepts & Contexts*, 3rd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), pp. 15–94. For a representative debate between "broad" and "narrow" definitions of corruption, see: Susan Rose-Ackerman, "Corruption & Purity," and Zephyr Teachout, "The Problem of Monopolies & Corporate Public Corruption" in *Daedalus*, Summer 2018, Vol. 147, No. 3.

exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence.”⁹ One modification or clarification I make to this definition is to suggest that the term “government” applies to both public officials and party members in a one-party or party-run state, even if the latter may not hold formal government positions. Such parties carry out many state tasks, giving rise to the term “party-state,” even if a formal distinction and parallel organizational structure are maintained.¹⁰

The Conventional Wisdom on Autocrats

Authoritarian regimes are well-known to have strong political incentives not to curb corruption.¹¹ Scholars argue that autocrats are unlikely to clean house because trading illicit wealth—or the opportunity to acquire it—for political support is a key strategy to maintain their rule.¹² Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith lay out the basic logic in which autocrats allow their supporters to reap the material benefits of corruption in return for loyalty:

⁹ Joseph S. Nye, “Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis,” *American Political Science Review* 61, No. 2 (June 1, 1967), pp. 417–27.

¹⁰ To elaborate, Nye’s definition seemingly leaves open the question of party-states. Is the Chinese Communist Party, for example, a “private-regarding...private clique?” If so, no further analysis of its anti-corruption efforts would be necessary. Instead, I categorize the CCP as part of the Chinese state, and do the same for ruling parties in other party-states. Note however that a political party does not become part of the state simply by virtue of dominating the country’s political system for a long time. Therefore, the appropriation of tax revenue by the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan or the United Malays National Organisation in Malaysia is still corruption. This discussion leaves open many questions, such as precisely how enmeshed in the state a party needs to be to qualify as a party-state, but I suggest that this is a necessary distinction to allow for a reasonable discussion of how corrupted a political system is.

¹¹ If for whatever reason there is an authoritarian regime that has never combated corruption because there was so little of it, then this situation is beyond the scope of this analysis. We could ask there why corruption has never emerged, but my project does not address these situations. Two cases of this unusual situation suggested by some scholars are Chile under President Augusto Pinochet and the United Arab Emirates.

On historically low corruption in Chile see: Benny Pollack and Ann Matear, “Dictatorship, democracy and corruption in Chile,” *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 1996, Vol.25(4), pp. 371-382.; Patricio Silva “‘A Poor but Honest Country’: Corruption and Probity in Chile,” *Journal of Developing Societies*, June 2016, Vol.32(2), pp. 178-203. On the United Arab Emirates: Transparency International rates highly the perception of clean government: <https://www.transparency.org/country/ARE>. However, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index has a more negative assessment in their Country Report: <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/ARE/>.

¹² Catherine Boone, “The Making of a Rentier Class: Wealth accumulation and political control in Senegal,” *Journal of Development Studies*, 01 April 1990, Vol.26(3), p. 425–449.; Lisa Blaydes, “Authoritarian Elections and Elite

“Power leads to corruption and corruption leads to power. As the title of this chapter instructs us, corruption empowers leaders and absolute corruption empowers them absolutely—or almost so....That’s why coalition leaders need coalition members who support them, and why coalition members need opportunities for enrichment if they are to remain loyal to their leader, empowering her to stay on in office, getting and spending money—on them.”¹³

Autocrats agree to turn a blind eye to the corruption of their coalition members and may also order their subordinates to engage in corruption and distribute the proceeds directly. Prominent authoritarian regimes such as Egypt, Russia, and formerly the Philippines, for example, are/were generally in this camp.¹⁴ The exchange of state resources for political support has become so entrenched in many African states that “neopatrimonialism” has unfortunately become a “convenient, all purpose, and ubiquitous moniker for African governance.”¹⁵ At the extreme, states are captured by criminal organizations or simply become so corrupt that the supposed distinction between public and private resources becomes unclear.¹⁶ Even the rare “enlightened” autocrat, who in theory wants to eliminate corruption for the good of the people, may make concessions to corrupt elites who could otherwise turn on them and remove them from power.

Management: Theory and Evidence from Egypt,” Paper prepared for delivery at the Princeton University Conference on Dictatorships, April 2008.

¹³ Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, *The Dictator’s Handbook*, p. 128.

¹⁴ David Wurfel, *Filipino Politics: Development and Decay*. Politics and International Relations of Southeast Asia. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).; Belinda Aquino, *Politics of Plunder: The Philippines under Marcos*, 2nd ed. (University of the Philippines, National College of Public Administration and Governance, 1999).; Philip Marfleet, “Mubarak’s Egypt – Nexus of Criminality,” *State Crime Journal* Vol. 2, No. 2 (Autumn 2013), pp. 112–134.; Hamouda Chekir and Ishac Diwan, “Crony Capitalism in Egypt,” *Journal of Globalization and Development* 5, No. 2 (2014), pp. 177–211.; Ivan Krastev in *The New York Times* (hereafter NYT), 2016/5/16, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/16/opinion/why-putin-tolerates-corruption.html>

¹⁵ Thandika Mkandawire, “Neopatrimonialism and the Political Economy of Economic Performance in Africa: Critical Reflections,” *World Politics*, Vol. 67 No. 3, 2015, p. 563.

¹⁶ Sarah Chayes, *Thieves of State: Why Corruption Threatens Global Security* (New York: WWNorton & Company, 2015).; Moisés Naím, “Mafia States: Organized Crime Takes Office,” *Foreign Affairs* 91, No. 3 (May 1, 2012), pp. 100–111.

This logic of politically useful corruption obtains, though in a slightly different way, when authoritarian regimes have semi-competitive elections or other quasi-democratic institutions. Autocrats facing elections are well-known to engage in repression, electoral cheating, and media manipulation. Alongside these tactics, they usually deploy their comparative advantage in corruption over the opposition. Their comparative advantage is that as incumbents they can steal state resources, divert foreign aid, and take large bribes from businesspeople to build up an election campaign war chest that the opposition will find it hard to match. In Malaysia, for example, United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) officials for decades engaged in illicit business deals to fund their “rampant use of cold hard cash” for vote-buying.¹⁷

In many democracies, especially poor and poorly institutionalized ones, political leaders take a similar approach. Incumbents use state resources or accept bribes to pay for legislators’ votes, pay brokers who can deliver voters, or engage directly in mass vote-buying; opposition parties are left to fight back however they can. In India, vote-buying is common and, as Milan Vaishnav explains, political parties often accept criminals as candidates because they can bring in desperately needed funds.¹⁸ Elections in the Philippines are another case in point, at least before and after President Ferdinand Marcos’s imposition of martial law.¹⁹

Among authoritarian regimes, personalist regimes are thought to have a particularly bad record on corruption—worse than military, party, or monarchic regimes.²⁰ This could be because

¹⁷ Barry Wain, *Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 142, 326.

¹⁸ Milan Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

¹⁹ Nathan Gilbert Quimpo, “The Philippines: Political Parties and Corruption,” *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2007), pp. 277–294.

²⁰ Natasha M. Ezrow and Erica Frantz, *Dictators and Dictatorships: Understanding Authoritarian Regimes and Their Leaders* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2011), p. 133.; Bueno de Mesquita et al.,

personalist leaders have narrower and less institutionalized bases of support, therefore relying more on doling out material benefits to stay in power.²¹ Or it could be because personalist leaders are relatively unconstrained; a monopoly on power plus no accountability is a recipe for wrongdoing.²² This thinking is in line with the old adage, paraphrased from Lord Acton, that “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”²³ Others point to the idea that personalist dictators often believe that they will be in power for a long time, leading them to predate without the fear of reprisals that might constrain other leaders.²⁴ Whatever the mechanism, there is agreement on the unfortunate outcomes of personalism.

Beyond political incentives, the conventional wisdom also tells us that autocrats and other regime insiders have private material incentives not to reduce corruption. Many autocrats indeed enjoy accumulating private wealth and luxury items, which corruption helps them acquire. And autocrats are relatively free to discount corruption’s negative consequences for the state and the economy because they do not have to run in fair elections and can suppress public dissent. Bueno de Mesquita cautions, however, that autocrats should only pursue personal enrichment after rewarding the coalition that keeps them in power.²⁵ Former North Korean leader

The Logic of Political Survival.; Robert E. Klitgaard, *Controlling Corruption* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).; Chang and Golden, “Sources of Corruption in Authoritarian Regimes.”

²¹ Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*.

²² Robert E. Klitgaard, “International Cooperation Against Corruption,” The International Monetary Fund, March 1998. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/1998/03/pdf/klitgaar.pdf>

²³ John Acton, “Letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton, April 5, 1887” in *Historical Essays and Studies*, edited by J.N. Figgis and R.V. Laurence. London: Macmillan, 1907.

²⁴ Chang and Golden, “Sources of Corruption in Authoritarian Regimes.” On the other hand, many argue short time horizons may lead to greater motivation to predate. See: Mancur Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy and Development,” *American Political Science Review*, 87 (3) (1993), pp. 567–76.

²⁵ Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, *The Dictator’s Handbook*, p. 128.

Kim Jong-il, Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe, and Libyan prime minister Muammar Gaddafi come to mind as extreme examples of pursuing private gain at the public's expense. While it may be possible to posit some political purpose for ostentatious displays of wealth—perhaps Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov built a huge, golden statue of himself riding a horse to strengthen his cult of personality in a horse-loving country—hidden wealth, like that of Kim Jong-il, is a sign of luxury as an end in itself.²⁶ Even if some autocrats do not personally enjoy “the finer things,” they may want to provide them for their spouse, their friends, etc.²⁷

A final point in the conventional wisdom is that autocrats have incentives to deploy anti-corruption measures selectively to attack political rivals and protect loyal allies.²⁸ Instead of implementing systematic reforms or new rules for officials, autocrats will focus on specific corrupt actors who have enough power to potentially challenge them, or at most a faction or rogue province.²⁹ Accusing officials of wrongdoing is certainly a common method to build momentum for their dismissal, and it has the added benefit of often being true. In President Vladimir Putin's Russia, for example, systemic corruption is “a highly effective tool for consolidating domestic political control,” in part because it keeps officials “permanently under

²⁶ *Business Insider*, 2016/5/26, <https://www.businessinsider.com/turkmenistans-dictator-just-built-a-huge-golden-statue-of-himself-riding-a-horse-2015-5>

²⁷ On the trope of conspicuous consumption among autocrats' wives, see: BBC, 2007/11/29, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-42108646>

²⁸ Zhu Jiangnan and Zhang Dong, “Weapons of the Powerful: Authoritarian Elite Competition and Politicized Anticorruption in China,” *Comparative Political Studies*, August 2017, Vol.50(9), pp. 1186–220.

²⁹ Michael E. Urban, “Conceptualizing Political Power in the USSR: Patterns of Binding and Bonding,” *Studies in Comparative Communism* (1985), pp. 207–26.; Jiang Junyan and Xu Yan, “Popularity and Power: The Political Logic of Anticorruption in Authoritarian Regimes,” (August 9, 2015). *SSRN Electronic Journal*: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2641567>

the threat of selective punishment.”³⁰ Many high-profile anti-corruption cases in authoritarian regimes are clearly motivated by partisanship. In Malaysia, for example, the UMNO-led government hounded political leader and reform advocate Anwar Ibrahim with accusations of corruption and sodomy in the 1990s and 2000s.³¹

I submit that while some anti-corruption efforts are indeed a cover to purge rivals, others cannot be explained this simply and many combine narrow political goals with broader governance goals. Reforms often go beyond investigations to include new rules aimed at systematically constraining corruption, as will be discussed. Even just looking at investigations, we can note that Chinese president Xi Jinping’s ongoing anti-corruption campaign has produced investigations against more than 2.7 million officials despite him not possibly having that many rivals.³² Often the only evidence given that purged elites were potential rivals to Xi is that they were purged—a circular logic difficult to refute. Moreover, purging rivals and curbing corruption are not mutually exclusive goals. Democratic leaders also often have narrowly political motives when they launch anti-corruption reforms that “just so happen” to net mostly members of the opposition party. Ultimately, if we assume that all leader-driven anti-corruption efforts are shams, then it becomes difficult to explain the variation in outcomes.

Nevertheless, justifiable doubts about authoritarian corruption control may help explain why there are few broadly comparative or theoretical studies that address the phenomenon, despite single-country studies being common. Kate Gillespie and Gwenn Okruhlik examine 25

³⁰ Miriam Lansky and Dylan Myles-Primakoff, “Power and Plunder in Putin’s Russia,” *Journal of Democracy*, 2018, Vol.29(1), p. 76.; Daniel Treisman, “Russia Renewed?” *Foreign Affairs* 81.6 (Nov/Dec 2002), pp. 58–72.

³¹ CNN, 1999/4/14, <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/asiapcf/9904/13/anwar.01/>

³² Andrew Hall Wedeman, “China’s Corruption Crackdown: War Without End?” *Current History* 116, No. 791 (Sep. 2017), pp. 210–16.

announced anti-corruption cleanups between 1970 and 1986 in the Middle East and North Africa and typologize them on timing, motive, and other variables.³³ Leslie Holmes argues that the inability of communist states to curb corruption, in particular in the 1980s, helped bring about legitimacy crises and the fall of communism.³⁴ Nick Robinson and Nawreen Sattar explain how the problem of corruption is often used to justify coups; coup leaders promise to deliver good governance, but usually do not. Examples include coups in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Thailand.³⁵ James Hollyer and Leonard Wantchekon argue that some autocrats, including Park Chung-hee, build anti-corruption institutions to signal that “monetary benefits from bureaucratic office” will be limited, thus deterring opportunistic non-loyalists from entering the bureaucracy.³⁶ And in the most recent book-length study on the topic, Vineeta Yadav and Bumba Mukherjee argue that autocrats will clean up corruption under organized pressure from opposition parties in alliance with independent business interests. Their case studies are on cleanups in Jordan, Malaysia, and Uganda.³⁷ Among individual cases in the literature, Singapore’s anti-corruption success has generated the broadest scholarly interest in how an authoritarian regime can achieve clean government.³⁸

³³ Kate Gillespie and Gwenn Okruhlik, “Cleaning Up Corruption in the Middle East,” *The Middle East Journal*, Winter 1988, Vol.42(1), pp. 59–82.

³⁴ Leslie Holmes, *The End of Communist Power: Anti-Corruption Campaigns and Legitimation Crisis* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993).

³⁵ Nick Robinson and Nawreen Sattar, “When Corruption Is an Emergency: ‘Good Governance’ Coups and Bangladesh,” *Fordham International Law Journal* 35, No. 3 (2012), pp. 737–79.

³⁶ James R. Hollyer and Leonard Wantchekon, “Corruption and Ideology in Autocracies,” *The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 31, No. 3 (2015), pp. 499–533.

³⁷ Vineeta Yadav and Bumba Mukherjee, *The Politics of Corruption in Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

³⁸ Stephan Ortmann and Mark R. Thompson, “China’s Obsession with Singapore: Learning Authoritarian Modernity,” *The Pacific Review* 27, No. 3 (2014), pp. 433–55.; Stephan Ortmann and Mark R. Thompson, “China and the ‘Singapore Model,’” *Journal of Democracy* 27, No. 1 (2016), pp. 39–48.

The Conventional Wisdom on Democracies

The consensus in the corruption literature is that strong democratic institutions are the key to corruption control. These include checks and balances, the rule of law, open elections, judicial independence, freedom of the press, civil society, a culture of activism, transparency, and independent investigatory organs, which could be an auditor-general, ombudsperson, or a legislative committee or commission. In the ideal democratic approach, corrupt officials are constrained by the rule of law and a separation of powers; monitored by a free media and civil society organizations; and punished by an independent judiciary, a special investigatory body, or simply electoral defeat.³⁹ Transparency International’s influential corruption control source book, published in 2000, brings all of these institutions together and epitomizes this approach.⁴⁰ Case studies of successful anti-corruption efforts in democracies often point to these institutions as critical.⁴¹ Without them, the literature commonsensically suggests, anti-corruption reformers will face tremendous obstacles in identifying corrupt actors, punishing them, and enforcing anti-corruption rules or laws as deterrents. As Robert Klitgaard famously argued, “Monopoly +

³⁹ Louis Brandeis, “What Publicity Can Do,” *Harper’s Weekly* (Dec. 1913).; Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).; Brunetti and Weder, “A Free Press Is Bad News for Corruption.”; Alence, “Political Institutions and Developmental Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa.”; Christian Göbel, “Beheading the Hydra: Combating Political Corruption and Organized Crime in the KMT and DPP Eras,” *China Perspectives*, No. 56 (2004), pp. 14–25.; Lindstedt and Naurin, “Transparency Is Not Enough.”; Dan Hough, *Corruption, Anti-Corruption and Governance* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Mungiu-Pippidi, *The Quest for Good Governance.*; Pei, *China’s Crony Capitalism.*, Robert I. Rotberg, *The Corruption Cure: How Citizens and Leaders Can Combat Graft* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

⁴⁰ Jeremy Pope, *Confronting Corruption: The Elements of a National Integrity System – The TI Source Book 2000* (Berlin and London: Transparency International, 2000).

⁴¹ Dafydd Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan: Party Change and the Democratic Evolution of Taiwan, 1991–2004* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005).; Kathryn Rix, “The Elimination of Corrupt Practices in British Elections? Reassessing the Impact of the 1883 Corrupt Practices Act,” *The English Historical Review* 123, No. 500 (2008), pp. 65–97.; Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), Chapter Ten.

Discretion – Accountability = Corruption.”⁴² While there are disagreements about the relative importance of the various institutions involved, some version of the democratic approach to corruption control is common.⁴³ That said, many scholars have set scope conditions on these mechanisms, arguing that new, poor, or weakly institutionalized democracies will be less likely to achieve clean government.⁴⁴

Most autocrats are naturally unwilling to empower democratic institutions that could check their power or end their rule, but some version of the democratic approach is thought to be possible in authoritarian regimes through quasi-democratic institutions.⁴⁵ Though they are less

⁴² Klitgaard, *Controlling Corruption*, p. 75.

⁴³ All this consensus over the democratic approach does not mean there are no disagreements about how to reduce corruption. One major debate is between those who see small government as cleaner government and those who disagree and caution that privatization can create opportunities for greater corruption. Another division is between those who emphasize the importance of leadership and those who argue bottom-up pressure or cultural change is the real cure. Further disagreements arise over the value of specific anti-corruption tactics. Some scholars advocate quick, dramatic reform—a “big push”—to shift the country to a cleaner equilibrium, while others believe eliminating corruption is a gradual, cultural process of shifting incentives. It is unclear how effective anti-corruption prescriptions tied to international assistance are for recipient countries. Should the Swedish ombudsman (or ombudsperson) become a standard clean governance-promoting institution? Is it a good idea to raise bureaucrats’ wages, as appears to have worked in Singapore?

See: Alberto Alesina and George-Marios Angeletos, “Fairness and Redistribution,” *American Economic Review*, 95 (4), (2005), pp. 960–80.; John Kramer, “The Politics of Corruption,” *Current History* 97 (Oct. 1998).; Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, Andrei Shleifer, and Robert W. Vishny, “The Quality of Government,” *The Journal of Law, Economics and Organization* XV (1), (1999), pp. 222–79.; Nicholas A. Lash, “Corruption and Economic Development,” *The Journal of Economic Asymmetries* 1, No. 1 (2004), pp. 85–109.; Cuneyt Koyuncu, Harun Ozturkler, and Rasim Yilmaz, “Privatization and Corruption in Transition Economies: A Panel Study,” *Journal of Economic Policy Reform* 13, No. 3 (Sep. 2010), pp. 277–84.; Carl Dahlström, Victor Lapuente, and Jan Teorell, “The Merit of Meritocratization: Politics, Bureaucracy, and the Institutional Deterrents of Corruption,” *Political Research Quarterly* 65, No. 3 (2012), pp. 656–68.; Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, “Seven Steps to Control of Corruption: The Road Map,” *Daedalus* Summer 2018, Vol. 147, No. 3, pp. 20–34.; Matthew M. Taylor, “Getting to Accountability: A Framework for Planning & Implementing Anticorruption Strategies,” *Daedalus* Summer 2018, Vol. 147, No. 3, pp. 63–82.

⁴⁴ Kurt G. Weyland, “The Politics of Corruption in Latin America,” *Journal of Democracy* 9, No. 2 (1998), pp. 108–21.; H.-E. Sung, “Democracy and Political Corruption: A Cross-National Comparison,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 41, No. 2 (2004), pp. 179–93.; Sun Yan and Michael Johnston, “Does Democracy Check Corruption? Insights from China and India,” *Comparative Politics* 42, No. 2 (2010).; Christian Göbel, “Warriors Unchained: Critical Junctures and Anticorruption in Taiwan and South Korea,” *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 7, No. Supplement 1 (2013), pp. 219–42.; Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays*.

⁴⁵ Brancati, “Democratic Authoritarianism.”

than democratic institutions, quasi-democratic institutions provide some of the same benefits, the thinking goes. Autocrats can use quasi-democratic institutions to tie their hands, credibly committing to not predate on private businesses and to keep corruption low.⁴⁶ Semi-competitive elections and legislatures can help regimes better monitor officials, bureaucrats, and businesspeople.⁴⁷ Institutions that improve information acquisition, which is important for autocrats on numerous issues, may help inform them about lower-level corruption.⁴⁸ These arguments suggest that regimes with quasi-democratic institutions should be able to control corruption better than fully authoritarian ones. The broader context of these claims is a growing political science literature that contends that quasi-democratic institutions strengthen authoritarian regimes in various ways and increase their durability.⁴⁹

In line with this explanation, scholars assessing authoritarian corruption control often credit successes to quasi-democratic institutions and chalk failures up to authoritarianism itself. Yadav and Mukherjee, for example, see quasi-democratic institutions—specifically, opposition parties in multiparty legislatures supported by private business interests—as pushing autocrats to curb corruption. Absent this pressure, autocrats supposedly have little reason to pursue clean government. Improvements in China’s pre-Xi Jinping anti-corruption efforts are sometimes

⁴⁶ Carles Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁷ Lisa Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak’s Egypt* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011).

⁴⁸ Brancati, “Democratic Authoritarianism,” p. 315.

⁴⁹ Barbara Geddes, “Why Parties and Elections in Authoritarian Regimes?” Unpublished manuscript, (2006).; Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski, “Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 40.11 (2007), 1279–301.; Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy*.; Gary W. Cox, “Authoritarian elections and leadership succession.” Presented at the 2009 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Sep. 3–6, Toronto.; Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak’s Egypt*.; Milan Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).; Alberto Simpser, *Why Governments and Parties Manipulate Elections: Theory, Practice, and Implications* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

attributed to the somewhat better rule of law, transparency, and media freedoms in the 2000s.⁵⁰ Critics of the Chinese Communist Party's efforts, on the other hand, broadly see authoritarianism as the problem and advise China to learn from the democratic approach.⁵¹ Scholars argue that political will from leaders is useful to drive anti-corruption reform, but that in authoritarian regimes it is detrimental. "A leader or regime might overcome some obstacles by coercion, but that sort of 'will' can do immense damage to state integrity and will scarcely foster anticorruption strength in the rest of society."⁵² Even scholars who note authoritarian success cases do not attempt to generalize from them. For example, Richard Rotberg's global study of corruption control includes autocratic success cases, like Rwanda, and rightly highlights the importance of political will by the country's leadership. Nevertheless, he has one all-purpose list of recommendations very much in line with the democratic approach: "adherence to a robust rule of law and a panoply of legal, judicial, regulatory, and procedural reforms that inhibit bureaucratic discretion...the existence and support of a free and energetic media, the presence of an emboldened civil society, and the actions of an aroused public appraised of its rights and responsibilities."⁵³

In sum, scholars of authoritarianism and corruption find that 1) autocrats have strong political and personal incentives to accept and engage in corruption, especially personalists; 2)

⁵⁰ Fu Hualing, "The Upward and Downward Spirals in China's Anti-Corruption Enforcement" in Mike McConville and Eva Pils, Eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Criminal Justice in China* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013), pp. 390–410.; Peter Lorentzen, "China's Strategic Censorship," *American Journal of Political Science* 58, No. 2 (2014), pp. 402–14.

⁵¹ Melanie Manion, *Corruption by Design: Building Clean Government in Mainland China and Hong Kong* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004).; Pei, *China's Crony Capitalism*.

⁵² Michael Johnston, "Reforming Reform: Revising the Anticorruption Playbook," *Daedalus* Summer 2018, Vol. 147, No. 3, p. 53.

⁵³ Rotberg, *The Corruption Cure*, p. 10.

the path to clean government is through strengthening democratic institutions, which authoritarian regimes will not accept, and 3) authoritarian anti-corruption efforts may be explained with reference to quasi-democratic institutions or narrowly political motives, like purging rivals.

3. Explaining Corruption Control Outcomes

This section develops my explanation for how and why authoritarian anti-corruption efforts succeed. First, I unpack the effective combination of unconstrained leadership and high state capacity, which can be simplified as “strong leader–strong state.” I then explain the resulting authoritarian playbook for corruption control and autocrats’ state-building motivations.

Strong Leader–Strong State

An autocrat’s leadership can be said to be unconstrained if they have high discretionary control over the regime’s operations and policies. The idea of unconstrained leadership draws heavily from discussions of “despotic power” in Michael Mann (1984, 2008), Dan Slater (2003), and Hillel Soifer (2008).⁵⁴ Mann defines despotic power as “the range of actions which the [state] elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalised negotiation with civil society groups.”⁵⁵ Mann’s concept captures that some political leaders enjoy direct and discretionary authority over others beyond that granted by laws, bureaucratic norms, or

⁵⁴ Michael Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results,” *European Journal of Sociology* 25, No. 2 (1984), pp. 185–213.; Dan Slater, “Iron Cage in an Iron Fist: Authoritarian Institutions and the Personalization of Power in Malaysia,” *Comparative Politics* 36, No. 1 (Oct. 1, 2003), pp. 81–101.; Hillel Soifer, “State Infrastructural Power: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 231–51. Michael Mann, “Infrastructural Power Revisited,” *Studies in Comparative International Development*, (2008), Vol.43(3), pp. 355–365.

⁵⁵ Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State,” p. 188.

agreement through negotiation.⁵⁶ I follow Slater in broadening the concept to include checks on an autocrat internal to the regime, such as by regime elites or norms limiting executive power, as well as external checks, such as by private economic elites.

Unconstrained leadership helps curb corruption when it allows an autocrat to challenge entrenched interests that otherwise could threaten to withdraw political support. Ideally unconstrained leaders would not need to accept corruption among officials or bureaucrats in return for factional backing, electoral campaign funds, votes, the maintenance of patron-client ties, armed defense of their rule, or the implementation of their policy agenda. In reality, every political leader needs supporters and makes compromises, but some leaders are much better insulated from political demands and have much greater latitude to act. If other regime elites oppose corruption control, then an unconstrained reformer is necessary to push through change. If, on the other hand, regime elites all see corruption as a threat to the regime, an unconstrained leader may still be necessary to resolve a collective action problem or a standoff situation in which no elite is willing to “disarm” their network of corruption first. In addition, an unconstrained leadership may be the only force within an authoritarian system capable of piercing local protectionism on a national scale, which is necessary to address many corrupt government practices that directly affect citizens.

⁵⁶ There is some debate as to whether such strong personal leadership is compatible with infrastructural power, but I ultimately follow Slater in arguing that it can be. The tension that Mann asserts between the two powers is about whether power operates through will and whim, as in his descriptions of despotic power, or through rules and norms, as is the case with infrastructural power. This tension harkens back to the one Max Weber argues exists between charismatic and rational or legal authority. I agree with Mann that there is a tension in the sense that a leader who can break the rules weakens the rules, to put it very simply. However, there is a difference between regimes where the leader’s exceptionalism is replicated at lower levels and turns into a principle of lawlessness that defines the whole system, and political systems in which there are laws and bureaucratic rules but the autocrat can break them or is above them. In this latter case, the strong leader–strong state combination is possible. Max Weber, “The Three Types of Legitimate Rule,” *Berkeley Publications in Society and Institutions*, Summer 1958, Vol.4(1).

Unconstrained leadership may arise in a regime's origins or develop in a later power consolidation. Regimes with their origins in revolutionary struggle give autocrats the most promising start in claiming discretionary power. One reason for this is that the struggle produces iconic military leaders or national unifying figures who head the new government once the conflict is over.⁵⁷ Having a revolutionary background gives leaders a massive boost of personal authority. This can be true of founders or initial leaders in democracies as well; American president George Washington is a commonly cited example of a leader who had prestige beyond his formal position.⁵⁸ In addition, revolutions break the back of "independent power centers" in society, such as private economic elites, which in some authoritarian regimes serve as an external check on an autocrat's control of the economy.⁵⁹ Finally, new leaders can benefit from elite cohesion, which may be an outcome of violent struggle regardless of whether the outcome is revolutionary or counterrevolutionary.⁶⁰

In later leadership consolidations, ambitious autocrats weaken existing institutions that constrained their power, undermine rivals, and find other ways to bolster their personal position, such as by building a cult of personality. If they are authoritarian successors, their ability to consolidate power once in office will be greatly influenced by the extent of the *oversight* that their predecessor and other retired regime elites or party elders are able to exert over them. If oversight is strong, as indicated by the retention of top regime positions by the predecessor or

⁵⁷ Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 24, No. 3 (2013), pp. 5–17.

⁵⁸ Seymour M. Lipset, "George Washington and the Founding of Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 9, No. 4 (1998), pp. 24–38.

⁵⁹ Levitsky and Way, "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes," pp. 7–9.

⁶⁰ Dan Slater and Nicholas Rush Smith, "The Power of Counterrevolution: Elitist Origins of Political Order in Postcolonial Asia and Africa," *American Journal of Sociology* 121, No. 5 (Mar. 1, 2016), pp. 1472–516.

their immediate family members, then the new leader will generally be unable to personalize power. In other research, my co-authors and I demonstrate the crucial role of oversight in cases studies of authoritarian leadership transitions.⁶¹ In cases where the same autocrat who has already been in office makes moves to acquire more power, it seems that they take advantage of moments of regime weakness, crisis, or transition to leverage a base of loyal support into a power expansion. For example, Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek leveraged his core support within the Kuomintang into a full takeover of the regime after its retreat to Taiwan. The story of Mao Zedong's rise to paramount leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has some similarities. It was during the retreat known as the Long March (1934–35) that Mao secured the top spot, and during the CCP's internal exile in Yan'an, Shaanxi Province that he consolidated power fully. In South Korea, Park removed quasi-democratic constraints on his rule by pushing through the Yushin constitution of 1972. He was able to do this because the rising possibility of the opposition taking power in the legislature threatened and unified his junta.

After unconstrained leadership, the second factor to assess is state capacity—a broad term that may encompass many aspects of a state's ability to get something done: external coercive capacity, internal coercive capacity, extractive capacity, regulatory capacity, distributive capacity, symbolic capacity, etc.⁶² Executing anti-corruption reforms is essentially a combination of two state tasks: gathering information for and carrying out investigations of officials and bureaucrats, and reliably enforcing new laws or rules at the intersection of political

⁶¹ Andrew Leber, Christopher Carothers, and Matthew Reichert, "When Do Dictators Go It Alone?: Personalism in Authoritarian Regimes," *Working Paper*, 2019.

⁶² Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966).; Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988). Note: Mann's idea of infrastructural power captures several aspects of state capacity at once.

power and economic resource distribution. These tasks come under the regulatory and distributive capacities of the state, which are therefore the most relevant to implementing corruption control. Without state capacity, even a motivated and powerful leader will at most be able to swat at obviously corrupt actors, not gather systematic information on the problem and enforce rules to address it.

The origins of state capacity are complex, with scholars pointing to a wide array of structural and political factors. Most famously, Charles Tilly argues for the state's origins in war and explains how inter-state conflict incentivizes state-building.⁶³ Numerous scholars have added to this thesis, challenged it, and tested its applicability in different times and places.⁶⁴ Revolutionary struggle can have state-building outcomes through logics similar to those of inter-state conflict, regardless of whether the newly consolidated regime was the revolution or the forces opposed to it.⁶⁵ Colonialism can also have dramatic effects on the colony's state capacity, with exploitative colonialism stripping capacity and settler colonialism tending to build it, though not usually to the benefit of the colonized.⁶⁶ Joel Migdal raises the state-society dynamic as a key factor, arguing that massive "social dislocation" weakens society's ability to resist a

⁶³ Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime" in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, Eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).; *Charles Tilly, Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990–1992* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell 1990).

⁶⁴ Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).; Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).; Miguel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2002).; Victoria Tin-bor Hui, *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁶⁵ Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*.; Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).; Levitsky and Way, "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes."; Slater and Smith, "The Power of Counterrevolution."

⁶⁶ Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review* 91, No. 5 (2001), pp. 1369–401.; Susan Pedersen and Caroline Elkins, Eds., *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century* (Routledge, 2005).

strong state's penetration and control.⁶⁷ From a different perspective, Robert Putnam sees high social capital as assisting state institutional performance and low social capital as hindering it.⁶⁸ These are largely structural explanations, but political leadership may also play an important role in driving state-building projects and related macro processes, as Migdal and others note.⁶⁹

With these two elements, the strong leader–strong state combination is more effective, I find, than either personalism (strong leader–weak state) or “hands-tied” authoritarianism (weak leader–strong state). The problems with personalism are commonsensical, but my argument raises the question of whether authoritarian regimes with leaders constrained by a strong bureaucracy and the rule of law would not be better against corruption than those having unconstrained leaders. I agree that full bureaucratism might be effective at slowing the advance of corruption if a low level already exists, perhaps as a holdover from a previous regime. However, *without an unconstrained leader there is little hope for aggressive reforms to challenge corrupt interests in an authoritarian regime.*⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Migdal, *Strong Societies, Weak States.*; Joel Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁶⁸ Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press 1993). In a related but distinct argument, Francis Fukuyama focuses on a society's level of trust. See: Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

⁶⁹ Migdal, *Strong Societies, Weak States*, p. 172. Eric Selbin, “Revolution in the Real World: Bringing Agency Back In” in John Foran, Ed., *Theorizing Revolutions* (Routledge, 1997), pp. 123–36. Tuong Vu, *Paths to Development in Asia: South Korea, Vietnam, China and Indonesia* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁷⁰ The best case to use against this argument and in support of the weak leader–strong state combination might be the relatively rule-bound East German regime, which was often held up as a model of functional communism. It was overall less corrupt than many of its authoritarian peers in Europe and there was never a major, public anti-corruption campaign. But even with advantages like pre-existing wealth, high levels of education, and many would argue a disciplined German culture, the country's strict laws and strong bureaucracy were not able to prevent a slide into greater malfeasance and abuse of power by officials in the 1970s and 1980s. Anti-corruption measures were half-hearted. After the regime's end in 1989, East Germans were shocked to learn how much corruption there had been, especially at elite levels. Ousted leader Erich Honecker later faced serious embezzlement charges.

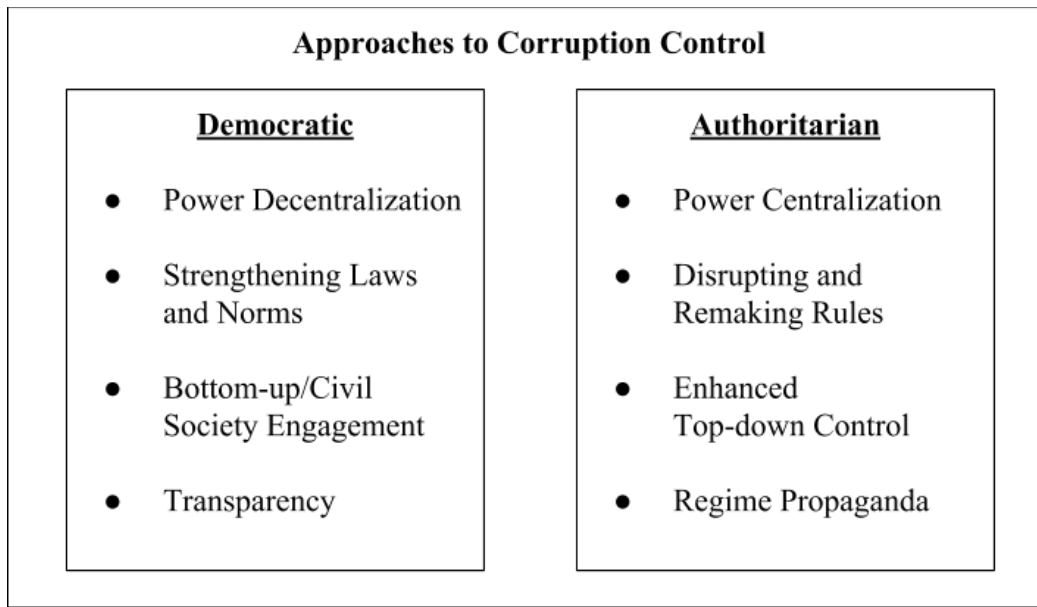
On corruption in the German Democratic Republic see: André Steiner and Kirsten Petrak-Jones, “Corruption in an Anticorruption State? East Germany under Communist Rule” in Ronald Kroeze, André Vitoria, and Guy Geltner, Eds., *Anti-corruption in History: From Antiquity to the Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp.

The Authoritarian Playbook

The strong leader–strong state combination allows for an authoritarian playbook for corruption control substantially different from the democratic approach. Democracies harness a desire for cleaner government that can come from the top leadership, a particular branch of government (often the judiciary), the citizenry, or any interest group to which the government is responsive or accountable. By contrast, the authoritarian playbook relies primarily on the will of the top leadership, though leaders may also be pressured by other interest groups or directly by the public through protest. Democratic institutions curb corruption by decentralizing the government’s power across mutually checking organizations or bodies, by constraining power within disinterested laws and rules, by increasing the public’s power to participate in government decision-making and the execution of policies, and by making government more transparent. The authoritarian playbook constrains corruption in a different way: by centralizing power, in order to limit it to actors committed to reform; by disrupting and remaking laws and norms, which challenges entrenched corrupt interests before establishing new standards; by increasing vertical discipline and upward accountability; and by using propaganda, ideology, and psychological pressure to create support and momentum for anti-corruption reforms.

Table 1.1:

302–305.; Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (Yale University Press, 2005).



All parts of the authoritarian playbook are not used in every successful episode of corruption control, but its traits hang together as a conceptually distinct reform approach.

Corruption control in Taiwan since democratization exemplifies the democratic approach.⁷¹ Since the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) took power in 2000, power **decentralization** has helped curb corruption. The separation of powers among the branches of government has allowed anti-corruption investigations to proceed against top officials and even the president. Six important **laws or acts** with anti-corruption functions were passed in the Chen Shui-bian (CSB) administration, three of them known as the Sunshine Laws. Enforcement of these laws was routinized and continued even as the DPP and the KMT alternated power. Democratization empowered **civil society** groups, such as Citizen Congress Watch, and the public in general to push for corruption control. In 2006, in a show of bottom-up anti-corruption activism, opponents of CSB organized protests called “A Million Voices Against Corruption –

⁷¹ See Chapter Six.

President Chen Must Go.” Clean government was a voter priority in the late 1990s and 2000s, resulting in the initially resistant KMT establishment backing reforms and trying to clean up its image. Greater government **transparency** reinforced the monitoring abilities of the public, civil society organizations, and the free press. For example, Citizen Congress Watch is able to rate or score legislators’ activities with publicly available information and then provide citizens with profiles of which legislators are the most effective or the most wasteful.

By contrast, the KMT Reconstruction in the 1950s demonstrated the authoritarian playbook in Taiwan.⁷² By **centralizing** power under his leadership, Chiang Kai-shek (CKS) nearly eliminate the factionalism and “disorganization” that he believed had allowed corruption to flourish. Like the reforms of the 2000s, the Reconstruction had helpful institutional changes that continued to constrain corruption after the end of the campaign. But first, CKS had to use his personal authority to force a **disruption** of the existing institutional arrangements. He created, rearranged, or disbanded state organs, like the Central Executive Committee, and launched a mass party re-registration drive in which his hand-picked Central Reconstruction Committee investigated and trained members. CKS tightened **vertical control** with the return of the political commissar system in the military, a new and centralized Discipline Committee, and special investigation teams to monitor local bureaucrats. The Reconstruction was not an opportunity for the Taiwanese population to air its corruption-related grievances—which were tremendous—against the KMT. Instead, dissent was quashed and the Reconstruction was supported by pro-regime coverage in KMT-controlled news outlets and **propaganda** materials party members were required to study about how to keep up discipline.

⁷² See Chapter Two.

While the KMT Reconstruction was half a century earlier and used a different approach than Taiwan's democratic anti-corruption reforms, it also successfully curbed what had been rampant government corruption.

Autocrats' Motives

Why would some autocrats be more motivated to curb corruption than others? Many autocrats can accept the negatives of widespread corruption—less efficient and effective governance, slower economic growth, and public discontent—as long as the problems do not rise to the level of threatening the regime or their rule. For them, corruption may be politically well worth the costs of lost revenue, forgone foreign investment, national brain drain, public unrest, or even a rise in violent extremism.⁷³ But autocrats with ambitious programmatic goals have good reason to care that corruption does not get out of hand. Whatever their ideology or specific economic plan, they will need an effective government, a strong economy, and some degree of public support.⁷⁴ Put another way, government corruption in authoritarian regimes represents

⁷³ Chayes, *Thieves of State.*; Sarah Chayes, “Corruption and Terrorism: The Causal Link” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2016. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/05/12/corruption-and-terrorism-causal-link-pub-63568>.

Estimates of the amount of corruption globally are tremendous: the World Bank has put the number at roughly \$1 trillion in “tainted” transactions. See: Kaufmann, Daniel. “Myths and Realities of Governance and Corruption,” in Massimo Mastruzzi, Aart Kraay, and Daniel Kaufmann, eds., *Measuring Corruption: Myths and Realities*, 273:Chapter 2.1. Africa Region Findings & Good Practice Infobriefs. World Bank, Washington, DC, 2007.; Stephenson, Matthew. “It’s Time to Abandon the ‘\$2.6 Trillion/5% of Global GDP’ Corruption-Cost Estimate,” *GAB | The Global Anticorruption Blog* (blog), January 5, 2016. <https://globalanticorruptionblog.com/2016/01/05/its-time-to-abandon-the-2-6-trillion5-of-global-gdp-corruption-cost-estimate/>.

⁷⁴ That corruption hurts national economies is generally accepted, but some scholars argue that in limited circumstances corruption can be an informal institution that aids state capacity or helps ‘grease the wheels’ of economic development. See: Colin Leys, “What is the problem about corruption?” *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3 (2) (1965), pp. 215-230.; Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968), p. 64.; Michael T. Rock and Heidi Bonnett, “The Comparative Politics of Corruption: Accounting for the East Asian Paradox in Empirical Studies of Corruption, Growth and Investment,” *World Development*, 2004, Vol.32(6), pp. 999-1017.; Keith Darden, “The Integrity of Corrupt States: Graft as an Informal State Institution,” *Politics & Society*, March 2008, Vol.36(1), pp. 35-59.; Pierre-Guillaume Méon and Laurent Weill, “Is Corruption an Efficient Grease?” *World Development* 38, no. 3 (2010), pp. 244–59.

“agent failure” because officials and bureaucrats are not following the laws or the orders the leadership passes down.⁷⁵ Many autocrats let their agents predate or otherwise exploit their positions on the condition that they do not challenge the political center, but autocrats who have ambitious programmatic goals have a much greater need to reduce this agent failure.

Building on this premise, I argue that autocrats are highly motivated to see anti-corruption efforts through to success when they are committed to revolutionary or developmental state-building projects, which corruption control supports. Revolutionary regimes vary in their ideological commitments, but all have ambitious programmatic goals for remaking national politics, the economy, and society. Developmental regimes are quite different, both from revolutionary regimes and often each other, but they share an overriding commitment to state-led advancement of the national economy. State-building can be defined in different ways, but in this study it refers to increasing the size of the state and strengthening the capacity of state institutions and agents—officials and bureaucrats—to execute laws and instructions, handle resources, and manage relations with the public.⁷⁶ Revolutionary and developmental state-building projects do not include privatization and the free-market model as a path to economic growth, as with Chile under President Augusto Pinochet, or the economic projects of rentier states, which achieve growth through rents and largely neglect the aspects of state-building unrelated to coercion, as in Saudi Arabia.

⁷⁵ Corruption is often viewed as a principal-agent problem. See: Nico Groenendijk, “A Principal-Agent Model of Corruption,” *Crime, Law and Social Change*, May 1997, Vol. 27, Iss. 3–4, pp. 207–29. But there is also a debate about whether it should be seen as a collective action problem or a principal-agent problem. See: Anna Persson, Bo Rothstein, and Jan Teorell, “Why Anticorruption Reforms Fail—Systemic Corruption as a Collective Action Problem,” *Governance* 26, No. 3 (2013), pp. 449–71.; Bo Rothstein, “Fighting Systemic Corruption: The Indirect Strategy,” *Daedalus* Summer 2018, Vol. 147, No. 3, pp. 35–49.

⁷⁶ Cf.: Francis Fukuyama, “The Imperative of State-Building,” *Journal of Democracy*, April 2004; 15.

This argument about the source of motivations does not challenge the conventional view that autocrats' primary objective is seeking and retaining political power, but extends it. Staying in power may be the base for a political Maslow's hierarchy of needs, but beyond this autocrats' goals vary widely.⁷⁷ When staying in power is an end in itself, autocrats respond to threats and show little initiative. Others see political office as a stepping stone to accumulate more power; they wage wars of foreign conquest to increase their territory or building a cult of personality and establish totalitarian rule at home. Some are obsessed with accumulating wealth and material comforts, while others live simply. Some autocrats are ideologues or idealists, taking policy steps that are tremendous risks for accomplishments that do not improve, or may even harm, their material wellbeing. In short, autocrats are people—which is not to say they are necessarily average people. Staying in power may be the most basic goal of autocrats, but it is often not the only one. It is in this context that we should understand some autocrats' commitment to revolutionary and developmental projects.

While ambitious programmatic goals are a strong motivator, I do not argue that they are the only motivator. In all nine cases of authoritarian anti-corruption success identified in this study, autocrats launch corruption control efforts as part of broader revolutionary or developmental state-building projects. But there are other—often overlapping—reasons why autocrats might try to curb corruption, such as to respond to foreign military threats, pressure from friendly foreign powers, or domestic unrest.

Foreign military threat as an explanation for autocrats' motivations to curb corruption overlaps significantly with revolutionary and developmental projects, in part because it often

⁷⁷ Calvert W. Jones, "Seeing Like an Autocrat: Liberal Social Engineering in an Illiberal State," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 13, Iss. 1 March 2015, pp. 24–41.

helps trigger those projects.⁷⁸ Chiang Kai-shek's aggressive rebuilding of the KMT in the early 1950s should certainly be understood in the context of the CCP's continuing military threat. And Park Chung-hee's militarized developmentalism was indeed shaped by the threat from and competition with North Korea. Even if corruption control is not explicitly raised, the general idea of state-building or domestic reform being motivated by the threat of war or war itself is theoretically well-developed.⁷⁹ Logically, under military threat, autocrats should have incentives to take reform measures that would otherwise be too risky, too costly, or simply not in their interests.

However, military threat is insufficient as a stand-alone explanation for autocratic motivations. There are many reform episodes that do not make sense to link to foreign military threat, such as Xi's current campaign in China. At the same time, there are many foreign military threats in the world that should have motivated domestic reforms, including corruption control, but did not. After all, the military threat of North Korea did not lead President Syngman Rhee to build a developmental state in the 1950s or President Chun Doo-hwan to curb corruption in the 1980s. And as Wonik Kim argues, "the external threat thesis can work in an opposite direction. Callahan's (2003) painstaking work suggests that Burma is poor precisely because of this war

⁷⁸ Meredith Woo-Cumings, "National Security and the Rise of the Developmental State in South Korea and Taiwan" in Henry S. Rowen, Eds., *Behind East Asian Growth: The Political and Social Foundations of Prosperity* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1998).; Zhu Tianbiao, "Developmental States and Threat Perceptions in Northeast Asia," *Conflict, Security & Development* 2, No. 1 (Apr. 1, 2002), pp. 5–29.

⁷⁹ Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: a book of essays* (Cambridge : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1966, c1962).; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1990* (Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1990).; Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).; Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan*.; Hui, *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe*.; Vu, "Studying the State through State Formation," *World Politics* 62, No. 1 (2010), pp. 148–75.

factor, which has entailed the remarkable durability of the Burmese military regime and a persistent low-growth pattern.”⁸⁰

Pressure to curb corruption can come from friendly foreign powers, though this turns out not to have been a major factor in East Asia. Developing countries often receive offers of foreign aid conditional on political or economic reform. Autocrats may curb corruption in order to attract foreign aid or investment, or even simply prestige in the international community. During the Cold War, the United States often tried to shape the domestic policies of its authoritarian allies, including regimes in Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan. However, the overarching goal of supporting strong and strongly anti-communist governments prevented the U.S. from pushing allies too hard and often frustrated attempts to make aid conditional on autocrats carrying out domestic reforms.⁸¹ In addition, there are many cases of authoritarian reform that seemingly have no direct connection to foreign pressures or even go against foreign advice.

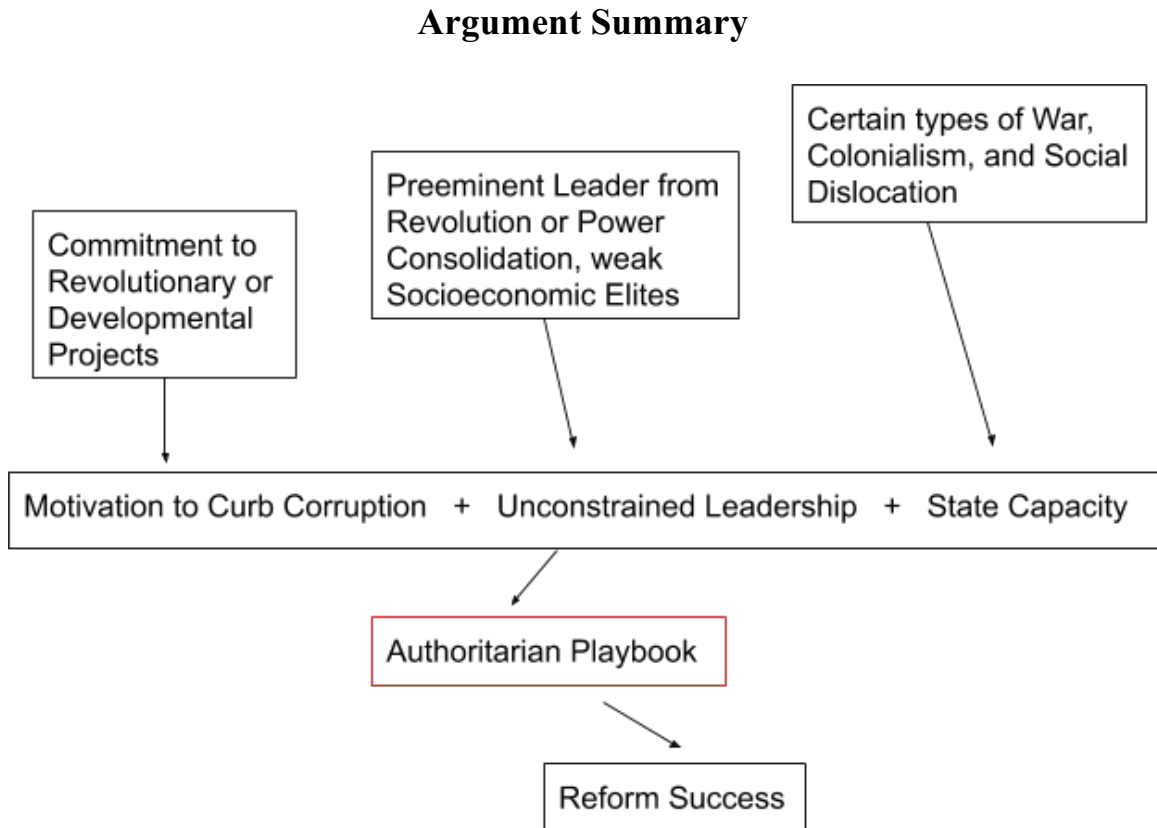
Anti-corruption efforts may also be in response to domestic threats, such as from mass protests or elite discontent. For example, the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests demanded an end to corruption, as well as greater democracy in China. While the CCP leadership chose to brutally repress the student-led movement, it also decided to launch an anti-corruption crackdown after the fact. Yadav and Mukherjee point to discontent among Malaysian economic elites as a key

⁸⁰ Kim Wonik, “Rethinking Colonialism and the Origins of the Developmental State in East Asia,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 39, No. 3 (Aug. 1, 2009), p. 387. See: Mary Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁸¹ Neil H. Jacoby, *U.S. Aid to Taiwan: a Study of Foreign Aid, Self-Help, and Development* (New York: FAPraeger, 1966), p. 41.; Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992: uncertain friendships* (Twayne Publishers, 1994), p. 4.; Kim Taehyun and Baik Chang Jae, “Taming and Tamed by the United States” in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 59.

factor in motivating corruption control efforts starting in the late 1990s. On the other hand, mass protests are not a necessary or sufficient condition for an authoritarian regime to launch anti-corruption measures. And while autocrats may curb corruption to the benefit of some elites, this usually comes at the expense of other elites' interests in continuing corruption.

Figure 1.1:



Alternative Explanations

One theoretically-grounded explanation already mentioned is that quasi-democratic institutions reduce corruption in authoritarian regimes. If this hypothesis is correct, authoritarian regimes with somewhat open and competitive institutions will in general have cleaner government. Also, we should be able to observe these institutions' anti-corruption mechanisms in action during authoritarian anti-corruption efforts. The weakness of this democratic

institutions hypothesis is that most successful episodes of reform are in fully authoritarian regimes without quasi-democratic institutions, such as China and Cuba. Moreover, the ways in which authoritarian regimes try to curb corruption are much more autocratic than the theory would predict.

A different explanation would be that state capacity is key and will largely determine the level of anti-corruption success regardless of other factors. For example, it could be argued that East Asia has lower corruption than Africa or Latin America not because of regime types or other political factors, but because its countries have higher state capacity. Just as some scholars argue that regime durability or economic growth is determined by the state as much as or more than by the regime, the same might be true for corruption control.⁸² I find, however, that strong state capacity is a necessary but not sufficient condition; some regimes with strong state capacity fail to curb corruption. China, South Korea, and Taiwan all have high state capacity by global standards, but also varied corruption control outcomes.

Alternatively, another explanation would focus on regime origins and argue that revolutionary origins predict good corruption control outcomes. Whereas revolutionary origins bestow elite cohesion, organizational capacity, and other helpful properties, regime origins in a coup or a foreign invasion would supposedly not prepare a regime to combat corruption. This hypothesis has two weaknesses, however. One is that it misses success cases in regimes with other origins, including but not limited to counterrevolutionary regimes, like Singapore. The second and more important problem is that it seems to predict uniform outcomes within regimes

⁸² Dan Slater and Sofia Fenner, "State Power and Staying Power: Infrastructural Mechanisms and Authoritarian Durability," *Journal of International Affairs* 65, No. 1 (Oct. 1, 2011), pp. 15–29.; Carl Henrik Knutsen, "Democracy, State Capacity, and Economic Growth," *World Development*, 43 (2013), pp. 1–18.; Centeno et al., *States in the Developing World*.

over time. Change over time is generally a problem in the revolutions literature because regimes are defined by their increasingly distant origins.

In sum, these three explanations all have some merit, but also all leave significant variation unexplained. The best theory should explain both variation across regimes and within regimes over time. My argument, though not a complete departure from theories about state capacity and regime origins, directly challenges the explanation based on quasi-democratic institutions.

Theoretical Contributions

Firstly, this study's findings point to the need to revise common assumptions about the supposed scarcity of authoritarian corruption control and its lack of importance for autocrats. There have been dozens of cases since 1945 in which authoritarian regimes launched widespread investigations into corruption, often alongside legal and bureaucratic reforms, and at least nine cases that were somewhat or very successful. I explain later in the study how these cases were classified and how their outcomes were empirically assessed.

Secondly, this study points to several ways in which autocrats benefit from reducing corruption, especially if reforms need not involve constraining their own powers. While corruption helps keep some autocrats in power, reducing it can also be a path to regime durability. Curbing corruption through the authoritarian playbook provides for more effective government, stronger economic growth, and less public anger over corruption. Anti-corruption reform itself demonstrates a regime's ability to auto-reform and to reverse internal rot. Moreover, failing to curb corruption can be dangerous, as autocrats themselves often admit.

Thirdly, the idea of the authoritarian playbook cuts against a recent trend in the authoritarianism literature that proposes that quasi-democratic institutions improve the strength

or durability of authoritarian regimes. Rather than being able to manipulate quasi-democratic institutions to their benefit, autocrats attempting to curb corruption find that quasi-democratic institutions constrain them and hinder reform efforts. In general, anti-corruption success occurs in fully authoritarian regimes. Moreover, some cases in this study show quasi-democratic institutions incentivizing greater corruption.

Finally, this study's analysis of authoritarian anti-corruption reform demonstrates the broader point that a regime's durability depends, even more than on its origins, on its continuing ability to reform and strengthen itself. In anti-corruption efforts, democracies reform themselves by strengthening democratic institutions, whereas authoritarian regimes reform themselves through an authoritarian playbook. Though not equally successful in general, in both cases, success depends on a regime's ability at that moment to draw on its own particular institutional strengths. The key ability to reform a regime from within, we can see throughout this study, cuts across regime types and regime origins, and can develop or atrophy over time.

4. Combating Corruption in East Asia

In this section, I justify this study's focus on certain authoritarian regimes and explain what has and has not yet been examined about their anti-corruption efforts in the literature. I also propose a regional explanation for the origins of unconstrained leadership, state capacity, and state-building motivations in 20th century East Asia. These factors, while by no means limited to the region, have been unusually prevalent there.

Why Compare China, South Korea, and Taiwan

East Asia, which encompasses current-day China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, Singapore (arguably), South Korea, and Taiwan, is an advantageous region in which to study

corruption politics because its countries are historically interconnected and share many cultural characteristics.⁸³ Historically, the region was heavily influenced by Imperial China and saw important interchanges of people and ideas between China and other territories. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, Imperial Japan in turn made its mark, shaping the history of every country in the region.⁸⁴ In terms of cultural traditions, Confucianism and Buddhism have historically had the deepest influences on East Asia.

One benefit of studying a region with shared cultural characteristics is that corruption is arguably a culturally-inflected concept, with varied interpretations in different cultures.⁸⁵ This perspective suggests that cross-regional comparisons may be omitting an important variable: culture. For example, it could be argued that East Asians are for cultural reasons more tolerant of violations of the public-private divide in resources, lessening public anger and therefore the political risk that corrupt autocrats sustain. Indeed, East Asia has certain traditions of gift-giving that are not seen as corruption even though they would be seen this way by many foreigners. Or perhaps Confucian precepts of benevolent autocracy, even long after the fall of the last Chinese dynasty, continue to steer East Asian leaders into taking hardline, moralistic stances against

⁸³ I refer to post-war Taiwan as a country throughout this dissertation, despite recognizing that disagreements exist on its status. While some critics suggest that Taiwan is not a country because many in the international community do not recognize it as such, this was also true of China from 1949–1971 and rarely if ever prevents the China of that era from being called a country. Instead, I adopt a simple and sensible definition of a country: a territory controlled by a government.

⁸⁴ Except perhaps Mongolia.

⁸⁵ Sun Yan, “The Politics of Conceptualizing Corruption in Reform China,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 35, No. 3 (2001), pp. 245–70.; Lisa A. Cameron, Ananish Chaudhuri, Nisvan Erkal, and Lata Gangadharan, “Do Attitudes Towards Corruption Differ Across Cultures? Experimental Evidence from Australia, India, Indonesia and Singapore,” 2005, *SSRN Electronic Journal*: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=778464; James Lloyd Bierstaker, “Differences in Attitudes about Fraud and Corruption across Cultures,” *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal* 16, No. 3 (Jul. 2009), pp. 241–50.; Yaw Mensah, “An Analysis of the Effect of Culture and Religion on Perceived Corruption in a Global Context,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 121, No. 2 (2014), pp. 255–82.

corruption. There are many ways in which cultural understandings of corruption could influence the politics of cleaning it up.

That said, corruption is not *so* culturally specific that this study will not have lessons that can travel outside of the region. People from all over the world can cite specific “untranslatable” words and practices from their home countries that allegedly demonstrate a culture uniquely permissive of corruption. In general, however, people tend to overestimate how unique their views on corruption are. Supposedly untranslatable concepts usually boil down to the idea that most cultures are very social, value family and personal connections above the law, and do not have a high level of trust for impersonal authority. Rotberg argues that “there is very little evidence that the nature and practices of corruption vary from culture to culture or that the corrupt act itself is viewed more permissively in some societies than in others.”⁸⁶

Despite this region’s historical and cultural connectivity, it has tremendous diversity in both regime types and corruption outcomes. This simultaneous connectivity and diversity has attracted scholarly attention, making East Asia the site of many cross-national corruption comparisons. These studies often compare outcomes across regime types—for example, authoritarian China and Singapore versus democratic Taiwan and Hong Kong.⁸⁷ Comparative work with East Asian cases has produced numerous useful typologies of corruption profiles or

⁸⁶ Robert I. Rotberg, “Accomplishing Anticorruption: Propositions & Methods,” *Daedalus* Summer 2018, Vol. 147, No. 3, p. 8.

⁸⁷ Jon S. T. Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asia: A Comparative Study of Six Countries* Public Administration & Policy. (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003).; Manion, *Corruption by Design.*; Michael Johnston, “Japan, Korea, the Philippines, China: Four Syndromes of Corruption,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 49, No. 3 (2008), pp. 205–23.; Wedeman, *Double Paradox.*; Jon S. T. Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asian Countries: An Impossible Dream?* (Singapore: ISEAS Pub, 2013).

syndromes.⁸⁸ One downside, however, is that cross-regime type comparisons are less likely to highlight differences among nondemocratic regimes, as this study does.⁸⁹

Within East Asia, authoritarian China, South Korea, and Taiwan form a useful three-way comparison because they share many structural characteristics but have varied anti-corruption outcomes. The People’s Republic of China has a decidedly mixed record on corruption control, with campaigns at different times having had more or less success. By contrast, the authoritarian-era KMT was mostly successful and South Korea’s military government was mostly unsuccessful.

Table 1.2:

**Key Background Characteristics:
Regimes in China, South Korea, and Taiwan**

Regime → Characteristic ↓	People’s Republic of China	Republic of Korea	Republic of China / Taiwan
Confucian cultural background	✓	✓	✓
Invasion and at least partial colonization by the Empire of Japan	✓	✓	✓
“Divided” country	✓	✓	✓

⁸⁸ Andrew Hall Wedeman, “Looters, Rent-Scrapers, and Dividend-Collectors: Corruption and Growth in Zaire, South Korea, and the Philippines,” *The Journal of Developing Areas* 31, No. 4 (1997), pp. 457–78.; David C. Kang, *Crony Capitalism: Corruption and Development in South Korea and the Philippines* Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge University Press, 2002).; Shang Ying, *Curbing Corruption: A Comparative Analysis of Corruption Control in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2002).; Johnston, “Japan, Korea, the Philippines, China.”; Andrew Hall Wedeman, *Double Paradox: Rapid Growth and Rising Corruption in China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

⁸⁹ That said, some East Asia scholars do narrow their scope and flesh out how particular pairings of authoritarian regimes vary on corruption. See: Sun Yan, “Reform, State, and Corruption: Is Corruption Less Destructive in China than in Russia?” *Comparative Politics* 32, No. 1 (1999), pp. 1–20.; Kang, *Crony Capitalism*.

Recent civil war and a challenging security environment	✓	✓	✓
Developmental leadership	✓	✓	✓
High state capacity	✓	✓	✓
Revolutionary party	✓		✓
Right-wing regime		✓	✓
Small country (size being relevant for corruption control)		✓	✓

Within this three-way comparison, the dyadic relationships are equally interesting. China and Taiwan are a natural comparison for governance outcomes because they used to be a unified country, with all the shared history and culture that that entails. Moreover, the KMT and the CCP are two revolutionary parties that developed in the wake of the Xinhai Revolution (1911), cooperated for years, and, despite ideological differences, shared the mission of modernizing and strengthening China. South Korea and Taiwan shared many of the above characteristics and, unlike China, were small countries with right-wing leaders. The China-South Korea comparison is less clean, though there are also significant commonalities; an old saw has it that Korea is just “Little China.”

Other East Asian countries fit less well or present other challenges for research on the post-1945 period: Japan became a democracy; Mongolia was essentially part of the Soviet Union, though nominally independent; and North Korea, while I make an effort to analyze it in Chapter Six, continues to be difficult to research due to informational constraints about its domestic politics. Singapore is a possibility, but several factors lead me to examine it only as a

minor case. First, Singapore's corruption control is already widely researched and often cited as an exceptional case of success. I do not want to reinforce the misperception that authoritarian corruption control is a Singaporean fluke. Second, even beyond the issue of corruption, the Singaporean regime is seen as exceptional: "enlightened" authoritarian leadership and multi-decade authoritarian stability with few protests. Third and finally, Singapore has some unusual features as a country that affect its governance, such as its small size, even compared to South Korea and Taiwan, and its status as a city-state. I explain in Chapter Five how the Singaporean case conforms to my theoretical expectations in some ways but challenges them in others.

While many scholars point to Hong Kong's anti-corruption successes from the 1970s onward as a model for China or elsewhere, I argue that Hong Kong is not comparable because it was not and is not an independent country.⁹⁰ Because of its non-independence, Hong Kong's government in the 1970s faced a political calculus of incentives and risks in corruption control quite different from those of independent autocrats. Unlike Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew or Chiang Kai-shek, the British administrators of Hong Kong who enacted anti-corruption reforms were formally under the authority of another government. It would be more appropriate, therefore, to compare Hong Kong to other subnational units in Great Britain or China. Furthermore, because colonialism complicates regime categorizations intended for independent countries, it is unclear whether British Hong Kong should be classified as authoritarian or democratic. In sum, although the case of Hong Kong should continue to receive scholarly attention and inform our understanding of several aspects of corruption control, its colonial

⁹⁰ Lo T. Wing, *Corruption and Politics in Hong Kong and China* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1993).; Shang, *Curbing Corruption.*; Manion, *Corruption by Design.*; Robert Gregory, "Political Independence, Operational Impartiality, and the Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Agencies," *Asian Education and Development Studies* 4, No. 1 (2015), pp. 125–42.

entanglement complicates its use to study the relationship between authoritarian politics and corruption.

The bulk of single-country research on corruption control in East Asia is on China. China studies treats corruption as a key political and economic issue throughout the People's Republic, though there are heated debates about its origins and consequences. What is the primary cause of corruption: the nature of the Chinese economy or the nature of the Chinese state?⁹¹ Can the CCP's anti-corruption efforts in the reform era succeed?⁹² Has decentralization increased corruption?⁹³ Will rising corruption weaken economic growth?⁹⁴ What was corruption's role in the legitimacy crisis that unfolded in China in 1989?⁹⁵ And do anti-corruption campaigns help legitimacy by showing that the government is on the case, or actually hurt legitimacy by revealing the extent of the problem?⁹⁶

⁹¹ Julia Kwong, *The Political Economy of Corruption in China*. Studies on Contemporary China. (Armonk, N.Y.: MESHARPE, 1997).; Lü Xiaobo, *Cadres and Corruption: The Organizational Involvement of the Chinese Communist Party*. Studies of the East Asian Institute. (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2000).; Sun Yan, *Corruption and Market in Contemporary China* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

⁹² Wing, *Corruption and Politics in Hong Kong and China*.; Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asia*.; Manion, *Corruption by Design*.; Guo Xuezhong, "Controlling Corruption in the Party: China's Central Discipline Inspection Commission," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 219, (2014), pp. 597–624.; Cecilia Lavena and Zhang Yahong, *Government Anti-Corruption Strategies: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2015).

⁹³ Ko Kilkon and Zhi Hui, "Fiscal Decentralization: Guilty of Aggravating Corruption in China?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 22, No. 79 (2013), pp. 35–55.; Mayling Birney, "Decentralization and Veiled Corruption under China's 'Rule of Mandates,'" *World Development* 53 (2014), pp. 55–67.

⁹⁴ Pei Minxin, "Corruption Threatens China's Future," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2007/10/09/corruption-threatens-china-s-future/>.; Wang Yuanyuan and You Jing, "Corruption and Firm Growth: Evidence from China," *China Economic Review* 23, No. 2 (2012), pp. 415–33.; Wedeman, *Double Paradox*.

⁹⁵ Lynn T. White, "Changing Concepts of Corruption in Communist China: Early 1950s vs. Early 1980s," *Issues & Studies: A Social Science Quarterly on China, Taiwan, and East Asian Affairs* 24, No. 1 (1988), pp. 49–95.; Holmes, *The End of Communist Power*.; Carolyn L. Hsu, "Political Narratives and the Production of Legitimacy: The Case of Corruption in Post-Mao China," *Qualitative Sociology* 24, No. 1 (2001), pp. 25–54.

⁹⁶ Jiang Junyan and Dali L. Yang, "Lying or Believing? Measuring Preference Falsification From a Political Purge in China," *Comparative Political Studies*, 49, No. 5 (2016), pp. 600–34.; Wang Yuhua and Bruce J. Dickson, "How Corruption Investigations Undermine Regime Support: Evidence from China," December 11, 2017. *SSRN Electronic Journal*: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3086286>

This project asks why the CCP has been able to control corruption effectively or not in different periods of its long rule. At the risk of oversimplifying, most scholars agree that corruption in China was widespread in the first half of the century, was muted in the Mao era, and then took off again in the early post-Mao era with rapid increases in the number of cases and the amounts of money involved. The four main anti-corruption campaigns I focus on in China span the major periods of CCP rule: the Mao era, the reform era, and the as-yet-unnamed era that Xi Jinping has ushered in.⁹⁷

The major campaigns of the Mao era have by now received significant scholarly attention, though not always through the lens of corruption control. The Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign was the first major anti-corruption push after the communist takeover in 1949, targeting first officials and then capitalists as a way to bring cities and their resources thoroughly under the new regime’s control.⁹⁸ In the early 1960s, the Four Cleans also had a large anti-corruption component. The campaign has been described as Mao’s answer to the sprouting of capitalism and its attendant vices—especially among rural cadres—after the economic disaster and famine in the Great Leap Forward (1958–1961).⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Carl Minzner, *End of an Era: How China’s Authoritarian Revival is Undermining Its Rise* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁹⁸ Theodore Hsi-En Chen and Wen-Hui C. Chen, “The ‘Three-Anti’ and ‘Five-Anti’ Movements in Communist China,” *Pacific Affairs* 26, No. 1 (1953), pp. 3–23.; Frederick C. Teiwes, *Elite Discipline in China: Coercive and Persuasive Approaches to Rectification, 1950–1953*. Contemporary China Papers ; No. 12. Canberra: Contemporary China Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, (Australian National University, 1978).; Lü, *Cadres and Corruption.*; Michael M. Sheng, “Mao Zedong and the Three-Anti Campaign (November 1951 to April 1952): A Revisionist Interpretation,” *Twentieth-Century China* 32, No. 1 (2006), pp. 56–80.

⁹⁹ Richard Baum and Frederick C. Teiwes, *Ssu-Ch’ing: The Socialist Education Movement of 1962–1966* (Berkeley, Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, 1968).; Teiwes, *Elite Discipline in China.*; Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3: The Coming of the Cataclysm 1961–1966* (Oxford University Press, 1997).; Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).; Patricia M. Thornton, *Disciplining the State: Virtue, Violence, and State-Making in Modern China* Harvard East Asian Monographs ; 283. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

In the reform era, the regime showed a greater tolerance for corruption, even as some clean government efforts continued. Meng Qingli sees corruption “emerging” from 1979–1987, “spreading” from 1988–1997, and “exploding” from 1998–2012.¹⁰⁰ Sun Yan sees a transition happening in 1992, when minor corruption and plan-market arbitrage became high-stakes corruption that worked its way up the CCP ladder.¹⁰¹ Hsieh Chang-Tai and Pei Minxin both (separately) describe China’s economic system as “crony capitalism.”¹⁰² Andrew Wedeman contrasts “degenerative” and “developmental” corruption before concluding that China is characterized overall by neither.¹⁰³ Corruption in the reform era at times aided, or at least did not impede, the key political goal of rapid economic growth. Anti-corruption efforts did not seem to keep pace; even scholars who take the CCP’s efforts seriously conclude that it was largely unsuccessful.¹⁰⁴

Xi Jinping’s wide-ranging, multiyear anti-corruption campaign, which began in 2012 and is still ongoing, has sparked debates about motives and methods. Theories on the motives for this campaign include that it is about power consolidation, factional conflict, policy advancement, corruption control, party rejuvenation, economic growth, and public legitimacy. To take just one perspective, Li Ling argues that after anger at corruption figured prominently in the 1989

¹⁰⁰ Meng Qingli, *Corruption in Transitional China: a 33-year study* (Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2014).

¹⁰¹ Sun, *Corruption and Market in Contemporary China*.

¹⁰² Pei, *China’s Crony Capitalism*.; Hsieh Chang-Tai, “Becker Brown Bag: Crony Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics,” presented at the Becker Friedman Institute, Chicago, Ill., February 22, 2018. <https://bfi.uchicago.edu/events/becker-brown-bag-crony-capitalism-chinese-characteristics-featuring-booths-chang-tai-hsieh>

¹⁰³ Wedeman, *Double Paradox*.

¹⁰⁴ Lo, *Corruption and Politics in Hong Kong and China*.; Lü, *Cadres and Corruption*.; Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asia*.; Manion, *Corruption by Design*.; Chan Hon and Gao Jie, “Old Wine in New Bottles: A County-Level Case Study of Anti-Corruption Reform in the People’s Republic of China,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 49, No. 2 (2008), pp. 97–117.

Tiananmen Square protests, corruption charges replaced nakedly political ones in struggles between top Chinese officials.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Arthur Kroeber sees Xi's anti-corruption efforts as well-intentioned overall, though of course biased and selective with regard to top-level officials.¹⁰⁶ The campaign's harsh and authoritarian methods have naturally come under criticism by people all around the world concerned about the rule of law and human rights in China, but scholars also criticize the campaign's methods as ineffective. Yukon Huang argues that the campaign treats corruption as a moral failing and ignores the structural incentives behind the bulk of corrupt behavior.¹⁰⁷ And Pei argues that the CCP's anti-corruption efforts focus on enforcement at the expense of prevention and do not protect the autonomy of investigatory agencies.¹⁰⁸

Corruption has been less of a focus in studies of South Korea's military regimes, though not for lack of subject matter. The authoritative edited volume *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (2011) explains how the corruption and economic mismanagement of the short-lived Second Republic (1960–61) contributed significantly to the coup in 1961 and specifically to Park's rise—he was seen as a clean candidate for leadership within the military.¹⁰⁹ Widespread corruption in South Korea under military rule is often overlooked because of the “Miracle on the Han River” economic growth, David Kang

¹⁰⁵ Cited in Wong Chun Han, “China's Xi Jinping Puts Loyalty to the Test at Congress; President Focuses on Party Discipline, as Corruption Crackdown Has Unsettled Chinese Officials,” *Wall Street Journal (Online)*, 2016/3/1.

¹⁰⁶ Arthur Kroeber, *China's Economy: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 222.

¹⁰⁷ Huang Yukon, “The Truth About Chinese Corruption,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015/5/29,, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/05/29/truth-about-chinese-corruption/i99k>

¹⁰⁸ Pei, “How Not to Fight Corruption: Lessons from China.”

¹⁰⁹ Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

suggests.¹¹⁰ One of Kang's conclusions is that while the Philippines has a much worse reputation than South Korea on the issue, before democratization the two countries were not as different as people think. Comparativists often point out that corruption in South Korea is shaped by the unique relationship between the government and the country's large chaebol (Korean-style conglomerates).¹¹¹ Scholars who write on the chaebol or Korean economic development are well aware of the abundance of corruption in the quarter century of military rule.¹¹² Existing studies downplay anti-corruption efforts under the military regimes, however. This is understandable given their limited success, but has the unintended consequence of obscuring strong efforts and meaningful improvements, especially in the 1970s.

In Taiwan studies, corruption also does not emerge as a major topic, at least until democratization in the 1990s. After Japan's defeat in 1945 but before the central KMT leadership retreated to it from the mainland in 1949, Taiwan suffered brutal and corrupt Nationalist rule.¹¹³ Corruption was brought under control in the 1950s through impressive reforms, and clean government endured, though imperfectly.¹¹⁴ Local government, where the

¹¹⁰ Kang, *Crony Capitalism*, p. 2.

¹¹¹ Wedeman, "Looters, Rent-Scrapers, and Dividend-Collectors.,"; Johnston, "Japan, Korea, the Philippines, China."

¹¹² Meredith Woo-Cumings, *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).; Martin Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development: Economic Change and Political Struggle in South Korea* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993).; Mark Clifford, *Troubled Tiger: Businessmen, Bureaucrats, and Generals in South Korea*, Rev. ed. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).; John Lie, *Han Unbound: The Political Economy of South Korea* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998).

¹¹³ Douglas Heusted Mendel, *The Politics of Formosan Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).; Lai Zehan, *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1991).; Chu Jingtao, *Research on the National Government's Recovery of Taiwan* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2013). / 褚静涛, 《国民政府收复台湾研究》 (北京: 中华书局, 2013).

¹¹⁴ Tillman Durdin, "Chiang Ching-Kuo and Taiwan: A Profile," *Orbis* 18, No. 4 (1975), p. 1023.; Lin Feng, "Analysis of Taiwan's 'Governmental Rejuvenation'," *Taiwan Research Journal*, 1987, Iss. 03, pp. 29–36. / 林冈, "台湾'政治革新'探析," 台湾研究集刊, 1987, 期 03, pp. 29–36.; Ma Yinghua, *Chiang Ching-kuo's Full Record: 1910–1988* (Beijing: Wenhua Publishing, 2009). / 马英华, 《蒋经国全纪录: 1910–1988》 (北京市: 华文出版社, 2009).

KMT ruled more indirectly and allowed relatively open elections, had substantial corruption.¹¹⁵ But during the transition to democracy in the late 1980s and 1990s, national-level corruption increased rapidly.¹¹⁶ Taiwan should be of particular interest to scholars of corruption because of the way that corruption control outcomes have varied sharply across different periods in the KMT's relationship with Taiwan—ruling it from the mainland, ruling it from Taipei, and then governing it as a democratic political party.

Given the interconnectedness of East Asian countries, to what extent were their anti-corruption strategies learned from each other? Government documents and speeches show that in most cases governments were at least aware of the anti-corruption efforts elsewhere in the region. For example, KMT intelligence reported on the CCP's Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign in the early 1950s, even acknowledging the enemy party's effectiveness in reforms.¹¹⁷ In a speech in 1969, CKS lauded the South Korean junta's efforts to improve bureaucratic quality and control corruption.¹¹⁸ In that same year, a Taiwanese government report summarized Singapore's anti-corruption successes and proposed adopting similar measures in Taiwan.¹¹⁹ But in most

¹¹⁵ Steven J. Hood, *The Kuomintang and the Democratization of Taiwan* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996).; Wu Chung-li, "Taiwan's Local Factions and American Political Machines in Comparative Perspective," *China Report* 37(1), (2001), pp. 51–69.; Shang, *Curbing Corruption*.; Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).; Christian Göbel, "Taiwan's Fight Against Corruption," *Journal of Democracy* 27, No. 1 (2016), pp. 124–38.

¹¹⁶ Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*.; Yu Chilik, Chen Chun-Ming, Juang Wen-Jong, and Hu Lung-Teng, "Does Democracy Breed Integrity? Corruption in Taiwan during the Democratic Transformation Period," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 49, No. 3 (2008), pp. 167–84.; Göbel, "Warriors Unchained."; Mungiu-Pippidi, *The Quest for Good Governance*, p. 150.

¹¹⁷ Document at repository number 002-110703-00129-007, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1953/10, p. 43.

¹¹⁸ Document at repository number 020-130600-0001, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica Archives, 1969/6/9, p. 66–69.

¹¹⁹ "On Singapore's Anti-Corruption..." / "關於新加坡因設有反貪污...", President Chiang Ching-kuo Case Files. Academia Historica Archives. The report is undated, but mentions a Singaporean government hygiene campaign that began "last year." If I am correct in assuming this is the Keep Singapore Clean campaign of 1968, then it stands to reason that this report is from 1969.

cases anti-corruption strategies were not the direct result of authoritarian learning. Foreign advisers were not brought in from neighboring countries to manage anti-corruption policies, for example, as occurred at times with Soviet or American advisers for other policies. Much more significant was what authoritarian regimes in the region were learning from each other about basic regime organization, as with CKS studying the party structure of the CCP before launching the KMT Reconstruction in 1950 or Park taking pre-war Japan as a model for his military regime in South Korea.

Why East Asia Had the Right Conditions

While there have been authoritarian anti-corruption reforms in countries globally, East Asian countries have had an unusually high concentration of helpful factors. From the 1950s onward, there was high state capacity in most countries most of the time, often unconstrained leadership, and many autocrats committed to ambitious state-led projects with revolutionary or developmental goals. This observation leads me to ask if there is some unified explanation behind these trends in China, South Korea, and Taiwan, as well perhaps as in other states in the region. This explanation would necessarily be historical, as many of the authoritarian regimes that dominated the second half of the 20th century had their institutional roots in the first half.

I posit that Japan's early modernization and rise to great power status forced neighboring countries to "step up their game" as well, provoking developments that would later be conducive to authoritarian reform.¹²⁰ Following the Meiji Restoration (1868), the Empire of Japan modernized rapidly; it became unique among non-European countries by achieving significant

¹²⁰ I gratefully borrow this apt phrase from "The Power of Counterrevolution" by Slater and Smith, though they are not its coiners.

industrialization before the 20th century. Because of its modernization and the accompanying political, economic, and military changes, Japan exerted strong ideational and material influences over East Asia in the early 20th century. As a “local,” non-Western power, Japan was both more of a threat and more of a model for its less developed neighbors than other colonial powers. Not all East Asian countries sought to explicitly imitate Japan’s development model, but it was impossible to ignore. Japan had at least three kinds of influence that were relevant: direct state-building in its settler colonies, the instigation of revolutionary movements in response to its territorial aggression, and the training and inspiring of future developmental leaders.

Japan engaged in substantial state-building in its settler colonies in Korea (1910–45) and Taiwan (1895–1945). Korea and Taiwan received much more Japanese investment than territories acquired later, which were used more simply for extraction. Though colonialism in Korea was “brutal and humiliating,” it turned the previously weak and “ineffective” Korean state “into a highly authoritarian, penetrating organization, capable of simultaneously controlling and transforming Korean society.”¹²¹ The colonial government “intervened in the economy extensively, taking upon itself the leading role in creating the ‘spurt’ of industrialization.”¹²² Despite “discontinuities following WWII,” Park Chung-hee was able to build on this colonial foundation.¹²³ Japan also built substantial state capacity in Taiwan, though there was much less

¹²¹ Atul Kohli, “Where do high growth political economies come from? The Japanese lineage of Korea’s ‘developmental state,’” *World Development*, 1994, Vol.22(9), p. 1269.; Jonathan Tabor Krieckhaus, *Dictating Development: How Europe Shaped the Global Periphery* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), pp. 48–9.

¹²² Woo-Cumings, *Race to the Swift*, p. 32.; Bruce Cumings, “The Legacy of Japanese Colonialism” in Stephen S. Large, Ed., *Showa Japan: Political, economic, and social history 1926–1989 Volume II* (Routledge, 1998), pp. 221–22.

¹²³ Thomas B. Gold, “Colonial Origins of Taiwanese Capitalism” in Edwin A. Winckler and Susan Greenhalgh, Eds., *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan* (Armonk, N.Y.: MESHARPE, 1988).; Kohli, “Where do high growth political economies come from?” p. 1269.; Wang Jian, *Research on the Economic Policy of the Governor’s Office of Taiwan during the Japanese Colonial Period (1895–1945)* (Taipei City: Straits Academic Press, 2009). / 王鍵, 《日据时期台湾总督府经济政策研究 (1895–1945)》 (台北市: 海峽學術出版社, 2009).

industrialization.¹²⁴ During its half century of rule, Japan “imposed a strong colonial state on Taiwan,” which had not previously had an independent state; now it would have “an administrative structure which penetrated right down to the villages.”¹²⁵ The colonial government led economic modernization: “in the late 1930s, Taiwan was still a predominantly agricultural economy. However, its agriculture had been transformed from a traditional sector to a modern sector.”¹²⁶ North Korea also benefitted in terms of state capacity—perhaps more, considering that the North was more economically advanced than the South in 1945—but the destructive force of U.S. bombings during the Korean War set it back further.¹²⁷ Japanese rule may have also had positive effects on state capacity in Manchuria, though because of its harsh rule and extractive practices in China it cannot be said to have contributed to Chinese state capacity overall.¹²⁸ In sum, developmental states in South Korea and Taiwan and the strong state in North Korea after post-war reconstruction all had roots in Japanese colonial state-building.

Japanese imperialism triggered the mobilization and aided the growth of three revolutionary parties that eventually put powerful, motivated leaders into office. Two commonly cited structural factors contributing to revolutions are narrow and oppressive rule, especially colonial rule, and state weakness, especially due to military defeats.¹²⁹ The Qing dynasty (1644–

¹²⁴ Woo-Cumings, *Race to the Swift*, p. 32.; Cumings, “The Legacy of Japanese Colonialism,” p. 221.

¹²⁵ Robert Wade, *Governing the Market: economic theory and the role of government in East Asian industrialization* (Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 231–32.

¹²⁶ Samuel P. S. Ho, “The Economic Development of Colonial Taiwan: Evidence and Interpretation,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (1975), p. 439.

¹²⁷ Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: a history* (New York: Modern Library, 2010), Chapter Six.

¹²⁸ Daniel Mattingly, “Colonial Legacies and State Institutions in China: Evidence From a Natural Experiment,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 2017, 50(4), pp. 434–63.

¹²⁹ Theda Skocpol, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).; Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*.

1912) had lost wars before, but its loss in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 was a blow to its prestige and power from which it never recovered. The loss convinced many in China that reforming the Qing was impossible and its overthrow was the answer; a new state would need to be built. The revolutionary Tongmenghui [United League] was founded in 1905. After the Xinhai Revolution, it was this organization that became the core of the new KMT, with revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen as the “Father of the Nation.” After Sun’s death in 1925, leadership of the KMT passed to his close ally Chiang Kai-shek, who reunified much of China through the Northern Expedition (1926–28) military campaign. Then, Japanese military incursions in the 1930s weakened the Nationalist government and saved the marginal Chinese Communist Party.¹³⁰ Japan’s takeover of large swaths of northern and eastern China and the brutality visited on the local people rallied Chinese nationalism and bolstered the communist revolution.¹³¹ Revolutionary regimes tend to give individual leaders high prestige and broad discretionary powers, which was true of Mao and CKS when they came to lead China and Taiwan respectively. In addition, Japanese imperialism inspired the Korean guerrilla resistance movement that propelled Kim Il-sung to national fame and then power.

Besides building state capacity and indirectly aiding revolutionary leaders in the region, Japan also taught or inspired many Chinese and Korean elites to embrace state-led developmentalism in their own countries. In this study’s previous discussion of motivations to

¹³⁰ Mao later commented that the Japanese military intervention in China had saved the CCP. See: Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao: The Memoirs of Mao’s Personal Physician*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1994), p. 568.

¹³¹ Chalmers A. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: the Emergence of Revolutionary China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962).; Zhu Jianrong, “Japan’s Role in the Rise of Chinese Nationalism: History and Prospects” in Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo, Eds., *East Asia’s Haunted Present: historical memories and the resurgence of nationalism* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2008), p. 181.

curb corruption, I pointed to developmentalism as a broader mission that autocrats use anti-corruption efforts to support but did not develop a theory of why some autocrats have such developmental goals in the first place. While I do not propose a global theory, I would argue that Japan's rise was a major contributing factor to the prevalence of developmental goals and therefore anti-corruption motivations among East Asian leaders.¹³² This is not a novel argument: "The diffusion of authoritarian developmentalism from Japan to South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore is...widely known."¹³³ As Bruce Cumings writes, Japanese colonialism "goes a long way toward explaining the subsequent (post 1945) pronounced centralization of Taiwan and both Koreas, and has provided a model for state-directed development in all three."¹³⁴

Japanese influences on key East Asian leaders show this ideational transmission. Park's experience receiving training at a Japanese military academy taught him that state-led economic modernization brought security and national power, and that the military had a leading role to play.¹³⁵ In a sign of things to come, Park reportedly idolized the "daring spirit" and "boldness of vision" of the Japanese officers who subverted democracy in the 1930s.¹³⁶ Many educated Koreans of his generation also received Japanese training and took the Empire of Japan as a model of national success, even if they resented its rule in Korea. As for KMT leaders, Sun Yat-

¹³² For a regional explanation emphasizing other factors, see: Richard F. Doner, Bryan K. Ritchie, and Dan Slater, "Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective," *International Organization*, 2005, Vol.59(2), pp. 327–361.

¹³³ Mark R. Thompson, "East Asian Authoritarian Modernism: From Meiji Japan's 'Prussian Path' to China's 'Singapore Model,'" *Asian International Studies Review* Vol. 17 No.2 (Dec. 2016), p. 127.

¹³⁴ Bruce Cumings, "The Origins and Development of the Northeast Asian Political Economy: Industrial Sectors, Product Cycles, and Political Consequences," *International Organization* (1984) 38(1), p. 11.

¹³⁵ Carter J. Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea: The Roots of Militarism 1866–1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016).

¹³⁶ Lee Chong-Sik, *Park Chung-Hee: From Poverty to Power* (Palos Verdes, Calif.: KHU Press, 2012), p. 276.

sen lived in Japan for several years in the early 1900s, using it as an early base of operations. He was very impressed by Japan's transformation "into a first-class power," arguing strongly after its victory in the Russo-Japanese War that China should learn from Japan's rise.¹³⁷ The KMT "inherited from Sun Yat-sen a belief in centrally planned economy in which the state would promote industry while China regained its rights...Japan's development was an obvious model."¹³⁸ Chiang Kai-shek lived in Japan for some years as well. He also spoke and read Japanese "fairly well," underwent Japanese military training, and served for two years in the Japanese Imperial Army. Like many, CKS was impressed with the Imperial Army and believed China needed to learn from Japanese discipline and efficiency.¹³⁹ In Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew doubted the applicability of Western models of development to his country and instead looked East, especially to Japan. Both in its Meiji-era development and its rapid recovery after World War II, Japan impressed the Singaporean prime minister as a successful—and Asian—model of state-led growth.¹⁴⁰ Singapore is "an important case in which the democratic legacy of British rule was rejected in favor of illiberal rule influenced by Meiji Japan."¹⁴¹

An additional relevant factor, though this cannot be attributed to Japanese imperialism, is that several East Asian countries, at least in the 20th century, lacked major ethnic cleavages. Ethnic homogeneity makes it easier to mobilize revolution and for leaders to adopt ambitious

¹³⁷ *Taiwan Today*, 1966/1/1, <https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=4&post=6275>

¹³⁸ Jonathan Fenby, *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the China he Lost* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2003).

¹³⁹ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, pp. 21–22.

¹⁴⁰ Robin Ramcharan, *Forging a Singaporean Statehood, 1965–1995: The Contribution of Japan* (The Hague: Kluwer Law, 2002).; See also: Oral History Interview of Robert Milne, National Archives of Singapore, 1984/10/31, Reel 36.

¹⁴¹ Thompson, "East Asian Authoritarian Modernism," p. 127.

“save the nation” programs of any variety.¹⁴² China had many minorities, but the Han were and still are solidly dominant. Japan and Korea are famously ethnically homogenous, though of course if one scratches the surface these kinds of divisions do exist. The largest minority groups in Japan are the Ryukuan people, the Ainu people, and the burakumin, though the latter is somewhat more like a class than an ethnic group. Korea, like China, has regional cultural divisions. Taiwan, besides also having various aboriginal groups, has a large cleavage between Mainlanders (who arrived with the KMT in the late 1940s) and previous residents of the island under Japanese rule. But this post-WWII cleavage is not relevant to CKS’s or his son’s previous education and the development of their revolutionary aspirations on the mainland. By facilitating revolutionary movements and collective action in general, ethnic homogeneity may have contributed to bringing state-building autocrats to power.

5. Methodological Approach

This section explains this study’s methodological approach, case selection, empirical strategy for assessing anti-corruption efforts and outcomes, and use of sources. I employ qualitative, sequencing, comparative-historical analysis, which is the most appropriate approach given the questions addressed and their scope. Comparative-historical analysis is most useful when, as here, research is case-based, “temporally oriented,” and requires a “macroscopic

¹⁴² Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies: A Comparative Study of Civilizations* (New York: Free Press, 1978), p. 282.; Skocpol, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, p. 269.; T. J. Pempel, “The Developmental Regime in a Changing World Economy” in Meredith Woo-Cumings, Ed., *The Developmental State* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 168.

Similarly, ethnic divisions are often used to explain failed development, as in parts of Africa. E.g.: William Easterly and Ross Levine, “Africa’s Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Nov. 1997, pp. 1203–50.

orientation.”¹⁴³ This study takes a medium number of cases that span several regimes and decades and posits widely-applicable but not universal conclusions. As with other studies using comparative-historical analysis, this work can also be described as “comparative sequential” analysis because the cases are chains of conditions, contexts, and events that I interpret into causal relationships.¹⁴⁴

Cases in East Asia and Beyond

The cases in this study are authoritarian anti-corruption efforts, not regimes or countries. I focus on major, national-level reforms and campaigns that depart from routine low-level enforcement; these episodes represent the most challenging reforms for autocrats to undertake and have the clearest effect on a country’s overall level of corruption. The purpose of this approach is to allow for case comparisons across regimes and across time within each regime.

The first task, then, is to define and identify major anti-corruption efforts. To qualify, three criteria should be met. First, there should be an announced reform push with corruption control as a stated goal. Second, there should be a surge of at least 50 percent in corruption-related investigations from one year to the next. This can either be a surge in investigations into public officials and bureaucrats generally or, in an elite-focused campaign, a surge in just the number of elites and high-ranking officials investigated.¹⁴⁵ The reasoning behind requiring a surge is that the reform effort should be distinct from routine anti-corruption enforcement, which

¹⁴³ Kathleen Ann Thelen and James Mahoney, Eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Chapter One.

¹⁴⁴ Tulia G. Falletti and James Mahoney, “The Comparative Sequential Method” in Kathleen Ann Thelen and James Mahoney, Eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹⁴⁵ The starting year of a campaign is the year it was announced, and therefore may be earlier than the year that achieves the surge in investigations.

varies dramatically across countries. Third, there should be at least .01 percent of all public officials and bureaucrats investigated, or, in an elite-focused campaign, at least 100 elites and high-ranking officials should be disciplined.¹⁴⁶ If the number of total public officials and bureaucrats is unavailable for a country in a certain timeframe, I use the standard of .001 percent of the national population. If a regime had been doing nothing against corruption, investigating a small number of low-level officials might not signal a major effort, despite being a quantifiable surge. For that reason, I set minimum thresholds on investigations. The focus is on the number of investigations rather than convictions because in some cases of Failed Reform investigations were substantive but then failed to result in convictions as the campaign was blocked or abandoned.

Elites and high-level officials are national-level politicians, cabinet ministers, generals, the heads of major state-owned enterprises, judges/justices of the country's highest court, close confidantes or politically active family members of national leaders, and top-ranked officials down to and including the vice-provincial/ministerial level (or equivalent officials at the level of government below the national level), or, in a one-party state, party members of equivalent

¹⁴⁶ These three numbers, 50 percent, .01 percent, and 100, are loosely based on the successful experience of the United States curbing corruption in the second half of the 20th century. Corruption control in the United States, though still in need of improvement, has advanced in waves—reforms in the late 19th century, reforms in the 1930s and 1940s, and most recently in a wave of reform in the 1970s. This last wave of reforms, which was in response to major scandals and public anger over corruption, saw the enactment of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (1970), the establishment of the Public Integrity Section in the Department of Justice Criminal Division, and the enactment of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (1977), among other reforms. In this critical period between 1970 and 1980, the average annual increase in federal prosecution of officials at federal, state, and local levels for corruption was 43 percent, leading me to suggest that an anti-corruption effort should have at least one year with a 50 percent surge. In 1971, the first year after the passage of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, indictments surpassed .01 percent of all government employees for the first time. In 1976, the first year the Public Integrity Section reported to Congress, convictions against federal officials rose to 101.

Data sources: Report to Congress on the Activities of the Public Integrity Section, various years. On the number of government employees, see John Tucker, "Government Employment: an era of slow growth," *Monthly Labor Review*, Oct 1, 1981, Vol.104(10), p. 20.

status. The vice-provincial/ministerial rank is the commonly accepted cutoff for the designation of high-level official in the Chinese political system.¹⁴⁷ This list excludes many important types of non-regime elites, such as private economic elites, leaders of major religious organizations, celebrities, and so forth. But anti-corruption investigations against these figures usually merit analysis anyway because they also involve regime elites and high-level officials, often as the bribe-takers. Only if corruption is not related to government, as in private business corruption, should it be excluded.

If these three criteria are not met, the announced anti-corruption effort is just an Empty Gesture. This means that while there are promises to curb corruption, the limited actions taken do not meet the minimum threshold to be considered an anti-corruption effort. Examples of Empty Gestures include North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's ongoing "struggle" against corruption, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev's promises to curb malfeasance in his 2008–2012 term, and Indonesian president Suharto's sloganeering in the late 1960s.¹⁴⁸

By focusing on what makes corruption control succeed or fail, this study leaves open the question of when a regime will move past corruption control rhetoric (Empty Gestures) and launch an anti-corruption effort in the first place. In practice, there are many goals—including some quite superficial ones—that are sufficient to motivate an autocrat to order a 50 percent surge in anti-corruption investigations: showing the public that something is being done, virtue-signaling to foreign donors or allies, consolidating personal power through purges, shrinking the

¹⁴⁷ E.g. "Guidelines of the Secrets Protection Committee of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Senior Cadres' Party Conservation and State Secrets," *News of the Communist Party of China* [translation given], 1990/12/13. / 中共中央保密委员会关于高级干部保守党和国家秘密的规定, 中国共产党新闻, 1990/12/13, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/71380/71387/71590/4855405.html>. Thanks to He Jingkai for his help finding this official source.

¹⁴⁸ See Chapter Five for analysis of these and other Empty Gestures.

government through firings and forced retirements, etc. These are not the kind of state-building goals that I argue motivate autocrats to see anti-corruption efforts through to success, though reforms are often undertaken with multiple goals in mind. Furthermore, even revolutionary or developmental state-building goals are not a guarantee that an autocrat will launch a nationwide anti-corruption effort. In Indonesia, the Suharto era was arguably developmental, but had a high level of corruption and saw only weak government efforts to check it.

While so far corruption control efforts have simply been discussed as successful or unsuccessful, there are in practice two levels of success. Through analysis of cases in East Asia, I inductively arrived at three possible outcomes: Failed Reform, Limited Victory, and Breakthrough. Limited Victory and Breakthrough are the two categories that denote success, though to different degrees.¹⁴⁹ The combination of factors I lay out should allow authoritarian regimes, via the authoritarian playbook, to achieve a Breakthrough or at least a Limited Victory. I discuss how these outcomes are determined later in this section.

Table 1.3:

Corruption Control Outcomes

Failed Reform: An anti-corruption effort takes place, but investigations are either backtracked on, abandoned, or left unsupported by the institutionalization of new or strengthened anti-corruption rules.

Limited Victory: Offenders are widely investigated and disciplined, and some new or strengthened rules are successfully enforced, but elites and high-level officials are spared from systematic institutional constraints that could curb corruption.

Breakthrough: Offenders are widely investigated and disciplined, and new or strengthened rules systematically constrain previous corrupt behaviors by high-level and low-level officials, even if enforcement remains imperfect.

¹⁴⁹ Note that not even a Breakthrough reform leads to a total or permanent eradication of corruption. No system is so strong and flexible that it can predict and absorb all future change in a country—whether change is cultural, economic, political, social, or technological.

Table 1.4:

National-Level Authoritarian Anti-Corruption Efforts (1945–)¹⁵⁰

Regime + Dates	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
South Korea 1961–63	✓		✓	Failed Reform
China 1962–65			✓	Failed Reform
The Philippines 1975				Failed Reform
Mexico 1976–77			✓	Failed Reform
Iran (Pahlavi) 1977–79		✓	✓	Failed Reform
South Korea 1980–81			✓	Failed Reform
Mexico 1982–83			✓	Failed Reform
The USSR 1982–84	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Cuba 1986–89	✓	✓	✓	Failed Reform ¹⁵¹
Vietnam 1986–89	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Malaysia 1997–2004	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Vietnam 1998–2001	✓		✓	Failed Reform

¹⁵⁰ The scoring for all cases beyond the main East Asian ones is justified with sources in Chapter Five.

¹⁵¹ Red indicates that the case's outcome does not conform to my basic theoretical expectations.

Table 1.4 Continued: National-Level Authoritarian Anti-Corruption Efforts (1945–)

Cuba 2004–? ¹⁵²	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Iran 2005–2009			✓	Failed Reform
Saudi Arabia 2017		✓		Failed Reform
North Korea 1955–58	✓	✓	✓	Unclear, limited information
KMT/Taiwan 1969–72	✓	✓	✓	Limited Victory
South Korea 1973–77	✓	✓	✓	Limited Victory
Ethiopia 2001–2005?	✓	✓	✓	Limited Victory
China 2012–	✓	✓	✓	Limited Victory, ongoing
KMT/Taiwan 1950–52	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough
China 1951–53	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough
Cuba 1959–66	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough
Singapore 1960–66?	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough
Rwanda 1999–?	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough

¹⁵² A question mark after a date denotes uncertainty on the date.

This is an incomplete list of authoritarian anti-corruption efforts, but it demonstrates the wide applicability of my argument.¹⁵³ It is possible that there are other success cases that I failed to examine that challenge the theory. However, there are unlikely to be many undiscovered successes in the chosen time period because authoritarian anti-corruption success tends to draw international attention. It is more likely that I have missed failure cases with the conditions that I suggest would predict success. On the other hand, authoritarian regimes with high state capacity are not too common, so any failure case I have missed that should have succeeded has to be in one of a limited number of regimes.

While I discuss many of the above cases in Chapter Five, the main analysis of this study focuses on nine cases in China, South Korea, and Taiwan, which were identified using the same standards. However, because the CCP has had so many reform campaigns with an anti-corruption component, I focus only the largest from each period of CCP rule: two from the Mao era, one from the reform era, and the main one under Xi.

Table 1.5:

**Authoritarian Anti-Corruption Efforts and Outcomes
In China, South Korea, and Taiwan**

China

1951–53	The Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign helped the party discipline complex urban areas and curb corruption among bureaucrats and businesspeople.	<i>Breakthrough</i>
1962–65	The Four Cleans disciplined local officials en masse but failed to enforce new anti-corruption standards.	<i>Failed Reform</i>

¹⁵³ See also the list of anti-corruption cleanups by regimes in the Middle East in Kate Gillespie and Gwenn Okruhlik, “The Political Dimensions of Corruption Cleanups: A Framework for Analysis,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Oct., 1991).

1989–90	Despite increases in arrests and anti-corruption rhetoric after the Tiananmen Square protests, reforms were backpedaled and ultimately half-hearted.	<i>Failed Reform</i>
2012–	Xi Jinping’s campaign is much-debated, but has produced positive changes in bureaucratic behavior and disciplined numerous high-level officials.	<i>Limited Victory (ongoing)</i>

South Korea

1961–63	Park Chung-hee purged politicians and civil servants widely, but faced political incentives to limit systematic rules curbing corruption.	<i>Failed Reform</i>
1973–77	The General Administrative Reform disciplined the bureaucracy with purges and new rules, but failed to challenge high-level state-business collusion.	<i>Limited Victory</i>
1980–81	Chun Doo-hwan purged the civil service, but soon abandoned efforts to reimpose the anti-corruption discipline of the 1970s.	<i>Failed Reform</i>

Taiwan

1950–52	The KMT Reconstruction overhauled the party, including membership, and strengthened the regime’s anti-corruption infrastructure.	<i>Breakthrough</i>
1969–72	The Governmental Rejuvenation curbed bureaucratic privileges but did not aim at high-level targets.	<i>Limited Victory</i>

Scoring Anti-Corruption Efforts

Measuring anti-corruption outcomes in a way that allows for cross-national comparison has always been a challenge for scholars. Many comparative studies rely heavily or entirely on polling and survey data about people’s perceptions of corruption, such as Transparency International’s well-known Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). But the CPI and other indexes cannot be used for this study because they are only comprehensive from the mid-1990s onward

or later. Moreover, the CPI's methodology can be and has been criticized on several grounds.¹⁵⁴

In general, perception-based measures are not ideal to use in comparisons because most surveyed populations have no frame of reference for how corrupt their country is except for their own experiences of the past. The perceptions of outside experts or foreigners with experience doing business in a country may also not be based on comparative knowledge, or may fail to capture the difference between how corruption affects foreigners and how it affects the local population.

Relying on polling to measure corruption across time in a historical study like this one is problematic because polling fails to take into account new knowledge that improves our understanding of the past. For example, the CPI rated Tunisia as one of the least corrupt countries in the Middle East and North Africa in 2010. But the next year, when President Ben Ali fell in the Arab Spring and his family's massive corruption was revealed, Tunisia's score dropped from 4.3 to 3.8, recoloring Tunisia into the bright red (indicating widespread corruption) that the CPI uses to shade most of the region on their annually updated map. This progression makes it seem as if Tunisia became more corrupt in 2011, when most likely what happened was that old corruption was revealed in the process of reform. The pre-2011 scores for Tunisia were not changed. Why was the CPI getting Tunisia wrong before 2011? Perhaps because Tunisia's government treated foreign businesses relatively well and the CPI samples from foreign business leaders in its expert surveys.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Staffan Andersson and Paul M. Heywood, "The Politics of Perception: Use and Abuse of Transparency International's Approach to Measuring Corruption," *Political Studies* 57, No. 4 (2009), pp. 746–67.; Dan Hough, "The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI); Much Ado about Nothing?" *Sussex Centre for the Study of Corruption*, 2017/1/25. <https://scscsussex.wordpress.com/2017/01/25/the-corruption-perceptions-index-cpi-much-ado-about-nothing/>.

¹⁵⁵ Hannes Baumann, "A Failure of Governmentality: Why Transparency International Underestimated Corruption in Ben Ali's Tunisia," *Third World Quarterly*. Feb. 2017, Vol.38(2), pp. 467–482.

My assessment strategy takes polling into account when it is available, but also draws on government reports and data, interviews of people with firsthand knowledge, and expert analyses. Rather than trying to measure the level of corruption in a given country at a specific moment, I focus on whether anti-corruption efforts created a change in the level of corruption, which is easier to define and observe because it is a change. One potentially problematic assumption in this approach is that anti-corruption efforts are key determinants of a country's level of corruption, which may not always be accurate. For each episode of anti-corruption reform, I assess investigations, institutions, and impressions. That means assessing to what extent corrupt actors were disciplined, rules were made or strengthened, and reforms created positive perceptions. These three categories are scored on an 11-point scoring system, as explained below, and used to determine whether an anti-corruption effort resulted in a Failed Reform, a Limited Victory, or a Breakthrough.

Discipline Enforcement: Beyond the minimum level necessary for a campaign to qualify as an anti-corruption effort, discipline enforcement can be judged on its scope (or breadth), permanence, and vertical reach.

- I. If investigations against corruption or related economic crimes were carried out widely within the state and regime, including in a majority of bureaus or ministries or a majority of provinces/states/geographic regions, add 1 point.

If investigations against corruption or related economic crimes were carried out narrowly, targeting or seeming to target only a political faction, province or state at odds with the regime, or a particular ethnic or religious group, add 0 points.

- II. If the vast majority of punishments were enforced with little or no backtracking, add 1 point.

If investigations were blocked, convictions were later reversed, or there was significant backtracking on actual punishments, add 0 points.

- III. If at least 10 elites or high-level officials were severely disciplined for corruption, meaning at least dismissed from all positions of power, add 1 point.¹⁵⁶

If elites were avoided in the campaign or elites largely avoided punishment despite credible accusations, add 0 points.

Rulemaking: There are broadly three types of reform having to do with institutions, laws, and norms that can directly impact corruption.

- I. The creation or reform of organs tasked with anti-corruption work: strengthening the powers to monitor, investigate, or prosecute wrongdoing
- II. Institutional measures that eliminate or reform a governmental body or governmental practices plagued with corruption
- III. New or revised laws, regulations, or party rules that directly address corrupt practices (sometimes overlapping with Type II)

Reforms in any of these three categories may or may not achieve institutionalization—meaning that the reforms “sink in” or “stick” for at least *five years* after being announced. Multiple reforms in the same category in the same campaign—for example, two anti-corruption laws passed in the same year and then successfully implemented—do not add more points. However, Type II and Type III reforms are judged as more successful if they systematically address corruption among elites and high-level officials as well as non-elites, for which each can earn an extra point, as below.

Type I reform was successful if changes to anti-corruption work endured and were integrated into the state’s existing anti-corruption infrastructure. (add 1 point)

Type II reform was successful if the measures were not reversed, improper practices continued to be sanctioned, and violators continued to be disciplined. (add 1 point)

¹⁵⁶ Anti-corruption investigations into elites are often motivated by political concerns unrelated to curbing corruption, but multiple motives can coexist. Even a small number of high-level investigations can signal to other elites that the regime has standards for their cleanliness.

If a Type II reform systematically addressed improper governmental or bureaucratic practices by elites as well as non-elites, add 1 point.

Type III reform was successful if the new or modified rules continued to be enforced, as seen in their usage in anti-corruption investigations or prosecutions. (add 1 point)

If a Type III reform systematically addressed corruption by elites and high-level officials as well as low-level offenders, add 1 point.

Perceptions: I examine the state of expert opinion about the outcome of anti-corruption efforts.

Expert opinion broadly includes that of scholars with expertise in corruption or the domestic politics of a particular country, foreign intelligence analysts, international or domestic NGOs, and in some cases domestic leaders of a political opposition or independent media.¹⁵⁷ A full score indicating positive perceptions is 3 points, which matches the full score of 3 points in the enforcement and rulemaking sections above, not counting points added for rules addressing elite corruption. The score for somewhat positive perceptions is half of that, 1.5 points.

- I. If a majority of experts use words like “success,” “breakthrough,” “effective,” “reformed,” “greatly reduced,” “curbed,” etc. in relation to corruption control, add 3 points.
- II. If a majority of experts describe efforts as “somewhat effective,” “partially successful,” a “limited success,” having produced a “moderate reduction” in corruption, etc., add 1.5 points.
- III. If a majority of experts describe efforts as “failed,” “unsuccessful,” “ineffective,” “abortive,” etc., add 0 points.

Translating Scores into Outcomes

Breakthrough: a cumulative score of at least **8.25 points (75%)** with at least 1 point in each category.

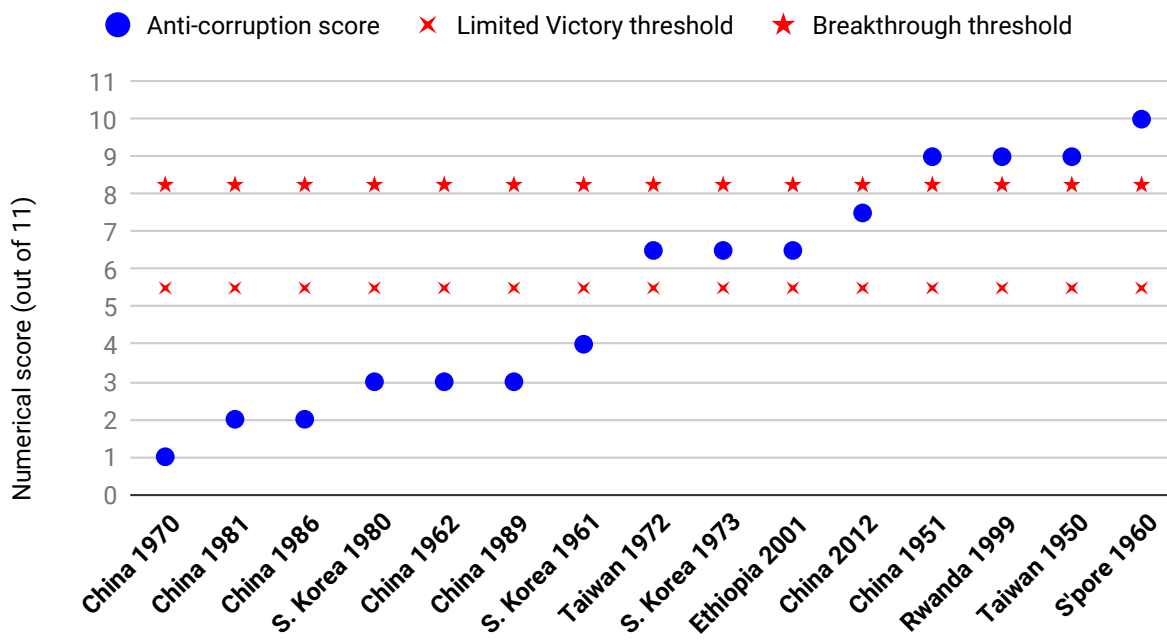
¹⁵⁷ The choice of expert assessments consulted for this research cannot be considered a random sample of some theoretical set of all expert assessments. Interviews were obtained through a snowball technique beginning from multiple points and based on availability.

Limited Victory: a cumulative score of at least **5.5 points** (50%) with at least 1 point in each category.

Failed Reform: a cumulative score of less than **5.5 points** or a failure to score at least 1 point in each category.

Figure 1.2:

Select Scoring of Anti-Corruption Efforts



Assessing Unconstrained Leadership

I propose that unconstrained leadership exists in an authoritarian regime if two conditions are met. First, semi-competitive elections and other quasi-democratic institutions must be absent.¹⁵⁸ Leaders may be able to personalize power within authoritarian regimes with quasi-democratic institutions, but they do so through negotiations, quid pro quo arrangements,

¹⁵⁸ See: Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, “A measure of personalism in dictatorships,” Published online 2017/10/9, <http://sites.psu.edu/dictators/files/2017/10/PersMeasure-1ph2gwp.pdf>.; My proposed indicators also overlap with Christopher Way and Jessica L. P. Weeks, “Making It Personal: Regime Type and Nuclear Proliferation,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (July 2014), p. 712.

clientelism, vote-buying, and generally building a broad network of support through material incentives. This level of compromise, I suggest, is itself a constraint on an autocrat's ability to challenge corrupt interests. In this study, regimes with quasi-democratic institutions include all those that meet Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way's definition of competitive authoritarianism, as well as tutelary regimes, such as Iran (under religious elites) and Pakistan (under the military).¹⁵⁹ Second, unconstrained leaders must demonstrate control over their regimes, especially regime elites. An affirmative answer to any one of these three questions demonstrates such control.

- I. Does the regime leader purge high-level officials from groups other than his own without a reasonably fair trial?¹⁶⁰
- II. Does the regime leader monopolize decision-making by becoming the head of powerful policy-making bodies or creating ones loyal to himself?
- III. Does access to high office depend on personal loyalty to the regime leader?

I provide these three different indicators because autocrats may demonstrate their unconstrained leadership in different ways. For example, an autocrat may not feel the need to purge any high-level officials in a particular time period, even though they could. Or an autocrat who cares little for policy may not bother to monopolize policy decision-making. Other signs of unconstrained leadership, though not necessities, may be that the leader has a cult of personality or that their position survives shocks to patronage.¹⁶¹ These indicators do not establish that an autocrat has unconstrained leadership permanently. Constraints may arise if collective leadership

¹⁵⁹ Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*, p. 14.

¹⁶⁰ Some of these indicators are from Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, "A measure of personalism in dictatorships," Published online 2017/10/9, <http://sites.psu.edu/dictators/files/2017/10/PersMeasure-1ph2gwp.pdf>; They also overlap in part with Way, Christopher and Jessica L. P. Weeks. "Making It Personal: Regime Type and Nuclear Proliferation," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (July 2014), pp. 705–19.

¹⁶¹ See: Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "Beyond Patronage: Violent Struggle, Ruling Party Cohesion, and Authoritarian Durability," *Perspectives on Politics*, 2012, Vol.10(4), pp. 869–89.

is imposed by other elites or quasi-democratic institutions are introduced. A drop in personal authority may also be evident if exiled rivals are brought back into the supporting coalition or autocrats are sidelined during policy discussions that they previously dominated.

A weakness of this simple standard is that it does not tell us about a potentially important aspect of unconstrained leadership: its timing relative to the political regime's development. The (not novel) idea here is that the formative early years of a regime are the time during which ambitious top-down reforms have the greatest likelihood of succeeding. Regime change almost by definition is the decisive settlement of a power struggle in the interests of one group over others. The leadership's mandate for reforming the state, if it has one, is therefore strongest in the aftermath of a regime change. After this initial period, even an unconstrained leader will find it more difficult to make as large reforms in the face of new entrenched interests. Applying this logic to corruption control, *I find that anti-corruption reforms are likely to be Breakthroughs if they are launched in the first few years of a new regime and Limited Victories if they are launched at other times.* Of the nine successful anti-corruption efforts discussed in this study, all fit this pattern except for the KMT Reconstruction, which was in the early formative years of what is often thought of as the KMT's new post-war regime in Taiwan, and Rwanda's Breakthrough reforms under Kagame.

Assessing State Capacity

For the purpose of assessing its ability to implement corruption control, a state can be said to have **high state capacity** if it has high regulatory and distributive capacities. A state can be said to have high regulatory and distributive capacities if it has **successfully undertaken nationwide land reform or industrialization** and is not temporarily incapacitated by **mass violence or famine**.

The measurement of state capacity is a thorny issue in the field.¹⁶² In most cases, scholars are unable to measure the actual capacity of a state to carry out some task *ex ante*, but rather assess the state's performance and then infer the level of capacity that must have existed. For example, a state that effectively collects taxes is inferred to have a high capacity for tax collection or in general. There are known weaknesses with this approach, such as that performance is affected by things besides capacity, such as how capacity is deployed by the political system or what the state's intentions are.¹⁶³ An additional difficulty is that many cross-national datasets of indicators of state capacity do not go back in time far enough to use consistently for this study.¹⁶⁴

This project demands only a basic differentiation between high and low state capacity—between states with and without the capacity to carry out wide-ranging anti-corruption reforms ordered from above. A state that successfully implements ambitious economic reforms, such as land reform or industrialization, demonstrates sufficient regulatory and distributive capacity, the two most relevant aspects of state capacity.¹⁶⁵ In land reform or industrialization, state agents must responsibly handle tremendous economic resources and implement the regime's ambitious

¹⁶² Jonathan K. Hanson, "State Capacity and the Resilience of Electoral Authoritarianism: Conceptualizing and measuring the institutional underpinnings of autocratic power," *International Political Science Review*, January 2018, Vol.39(1), pp. 17–32.

¹⁶³ Miguel Angel Centeno, Atul Kohli, and Deborah J. Yashar, Eds., *States in the Developing World* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 8.; Francis Fukuyama, "What Is Governance?" *Governance*, July 2013, Vol.26(3), pp. 347–368.

¹⁶⁴ Jonathan K. Hanson and Rachel Sigman, *Leviathan's Latent Dimensions: Measuring State Capacity for Comparative Political Research*, Unpublished manuscript, Sept. 2013.; Melissa M. Lee and Zhang Nan, "The Art of Counting the Governed: Census accuracy, civil war, and state presence," *Working Paper*, Department of Political Science, Stanford University, 2013.

¹⁶⁵ There is a large literature on the need for the state to lead economic modernization, at least in the developing world. E.g. Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, "The Myths of the Market and the Common History of Late Developers," *Politics & Society*, September 1993, Vol.21(3), pp. 245–74. On land reform, see: Michael Albertus, *Autocracy and Redistribution: The Politics of Land Reform* (Cambridge University Press 2015), p. 6.

vision of redistributing them.¹⁶⁶ Strong states implemented land reform in China, South Korea, and Taiwan in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Malaysia's New Economic Policy (1971–1991) was not land reform, but can be thought of as another major redistribution policy that demonstrated capacity. Industrialization, such as in Meiji-era Japan or Indonesia from the 1970s, also puts a state in the high capacity category.

Once there is high state capacity in a country, it usually continues for the long term; large reversals in state capacity have been uncommon since the end of WWII. However, temporary incapacitation can happen if there is mass violence, such as in the case of war within the territory, or a large-scale famine. During the first half of the Cultural Revolution, 1967–71, the Chinese state certainly had the power to coerce people and punish them (internal coercive capacity), but its ability to enforce reforms and rules about the state's economic behaviors (regulatory and distributive capacities) was weakened. The same is true of the North Korean state during the Arduous March in the mid-1990s.

Using the implementation of land reform or industrialization as a standard is not exact and cannot be used to assess all states at all times. These two kinds of reforms are largely modern phenomena, giving us little purchase on the state of state capacity in previous centuries. An additional issue with this approach is that state-led economic reforms may coincide and be mutually supportive with anti-corruption efforts, making it difficult to avoid endogeneity concerns.

Nevertheless, this standard provides sufficient guidance to sort most modern states into high or low capacity categories. In the 1960s, for example, Taiwan and South Korea had high

¹⁶⁶ This standard is more relevant specifically to regulatory and distributive capacities than commonly used tests of overall state capacity, such as the execution of a national census. See: Lee and Zhang, "The Art of Counting the Governed."

state capacity, whereas the Philippines and Indonesia did not. In the 2000s, Rwanda and Ethiopia had high state capacity, whereas Somalia and Sudan did not.¹⁶⁷ In China in the early 1950s, the CCP showed its high state capacity through: a war with the United States fought to a draw, a consolidation of power over a uniquely populous country fractured for decades, and several massive campaigns that reshaped the nation, including land reform, elimination of counterrevolutionaries, social modernization, and economic restructuring.¹⁶⁸ Importantly, this test is more targeted at the aspects of state capacity relevant to corruption control and holds the state to a higher capacity standard than oft-used measures like national census-taking.¹⁶⁹ The results of using my proposed standard roughly align with commonly cited qualitative cross-national assessments of which states have high state capacity.¹⁷⁰

A Word on Sources

This research is based on a wide array of sources: government documents and data, domestic and foreign news reports, 70 interviews with experts and elites, memoirs of participants, and secondary scholarship in Chinese, Korean, and English. I began my search for sources at Harvard University's excellent Yenching and Fung Libraries, and by exploring the wider Harvard system of online academic resources. While in the United States, I was able to use materials from various official sources, such as the Department of State, the Central Intelligence

¹⁶⁷ Ledesma, "Land Reform in East and Southeast Asia."

¹⁶⁸ A few dissensions aside, scholars agree that the CCP has continued to have high capacity in recent decades. See: Pei Minxin, *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

¹⁶⁹ Lee and Zhang, "The Art of Counting the Governed."

¹⁷⁰ Migdal, *Strong Societies, Weak States.*; Woo-Cumings, *The Developmental State.*; Centeno et al., *States in the Developing World.*

Agency, the Department of Defense, The National Archives and Records Administration, and several presidential libraries.¹⁷¹ The primary-source research on North Korea in Chapter Five, for example, is based on DPRK documents seized during the Korean War and now available in the National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, 1675 – 1958, as well as on materials from the Wilson Center Digital Archive.

In East Asia, I conducted research for several months each in mainland China, South Korea, and Taiwan between 2015 and 2019. Overall, I spent more than 16 months in East Asia for this project, excluding trips for language study and other work. I interviewed scholars with expertise on corruption and politics in each country, former high-level officials, current and former anti-corruption investigators, prosecutors, journalists, and NGO activists. This was much easier in Taiwan and South Korea than in China, where interviews were more difficult to conduct and often less revealing. In Taiwan, I was affiliated with the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy in 2018. I gathered materials from Academia Sinica, the Academia Historica Archives, the Kuomintang Party History Archives, National Taiwan University Library, National Central Library, and various government agencies that produce reports and data. In South Korea, I gathered written materials from the National Library of Korea, the Seoul Metropolitan Library, the National Archives of Korea (Daejeon, Sejong, Seongnam, and Seoul branches), and again several government agencies. In China, I was based in Shanghai, where I received generous help from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Besides American archives and interviews, the China chapter draws on materials from collections at the Universities Service Centre for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Central Commission for Discipline

¹⁷¹ Many of the Department of State and Department of Defense records were available through the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. In terms of the presidential libraries, materials are cited from The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, and the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Inspection, the National Library of China, and WikiLeaks. I also examined oral interview recordings held in the National Archives of Singapore.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

After this chapter, Chapter Two explains how the KMT went from notoriously corrupt rule in China to reforming itself in Taiwan after retreating there in 1949. Theoretically, Chapter Two highlights the importance of the strong leader–strong state combination. Chapter Three analyzes why South Korea’s military regimes were less successful in curbing corruption, with a focus on constraints on leadership. Chapter Four explains the success or failure of the CCP’s major campaigns against corruption from the Mao era to today. The chapter proposes that greater authoritarianism has helped Xi Jinping curb corruption, within limits, and complicates the commonly proposed dichotomy of a relatively clean Mao era and a rampantly corrupt post-Mao era. In Chapter Five, we see how the theory developed from the major cases in Chapters Two, Three, and Four applies to the wider world of authoritarian regimes, with minor case studies on Cuba, Malaysia, North Korea, Singapore, and Vietnam. Chapter Six examines democratic-era Taiwan and South Korea and describes the multipart impact of democratization on corruption control. Finally, Chapter Seven brings the study to a close by presenting the main conclusions, theoretical contributions, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two

The Kuomintang and Taiwan

1. Introduction

This chapter profiles the Kuomintang and explains how it went from being notoriously corrupt in China to relatively clean after its mid-century retreat to Taiwan. During China's Republican Era, the KMT failed to curb rampant government wrongdoing and at times even engaged in corruption as a matter of policy. But shortly after the KMT's defeat in the Chinese Civil War, President Chiang Kai-shek led a successful KMT Reconstruction (1950–52) in Taiwan, which reorganized and strengthened the party, including bringing corruption largely under control. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, unwelcomed diplomatic developments threw the country's future into doubt, leading CKS and his son Chiang Ching-kuo (CCK) to implement a campaign of Governmental Rejuvenation between 1969 and 1972. This set of reforms brought more native Taiwanese and young people into the party, launched gradual political liberalization, and reversed a troubling rise in bureaucratic corruption. Widespread corruption would only return to Taiwan after the onset of democratization in the late 1980s.¹

This chapter rates the KMT's anti-corruption efforts on the Chinese mainland and in Taiwan and explains their outcomes. As the Republican Era progressed, it became increasingly obvious that corruption within the KMT's ranks was robbing the state of much-needed funds; by the 1940s, corruption became an all-encompassing problem that threatened the KMT's very existence. I argue that the KMT was successful in cleaning house in its post-1949 authoritarian

¹ See Chapter Six.

period because, while the motivation to reduce corruption already existed at the top, only then did the regime develop a strong leader–strong state combination of powers. I argue that while clean government was to some degree a goal in itself, CKS and CCK’s overarching motivation to combat corruption was to advance their broader state-building agenda, which over the course of their long rule was first revolutionary and later developmental. Additionally, the political weakness of Taiwanese socioeconomic elites—especially after the February 28 Massacre in 1947—was an external factor that contributed to CKS’s unconstrained leadership and the ease of anti-corruption reform. In the 1969–72 Governmental Rejuvenation, the same factors allowed for a follow-up Limited Victory against government corruption.

Table 2.1:

Kuomintang Anti-Corruption Efforts and Rhetoric, 1912–1987

Name and Dates	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
“Nanjing Decade Cleanup” ² 1927–30	✓			Failed Reform
“Wartime Reform Movement” 1944–47				Empty Gestures
KMT Reconstruction 1950–52	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough
Governmental Rejuvenation 1969–72	✓	✓	✓	Limited Victory

² These names in quotations are descriptions rather than established names for these periods of anti-corruption activity.

The key political conditions that allowed corruption control to succeed developed over time. CKS did not simply inherit revolutionary “Father of the Nation” Sun Yat-sen’s tremendous authority and status when he took over the KMT, but he was also a revolutionary and soon became the victorious leader of the Northern Expedition (1926–28). CKS was able to loosen party constraints on his personal authority somewhat during the New Life Movement (1934–), but his crowning moment, ironically, was during the KMT leadership’s difficult transition immediately after it retreated to Taiwan. CCK built up his authority within the KMT under CKS, shared power with his father through the early 1970s, and then effected a smooth succession. Underlying state capacity in Taiwan was a product of Japanese colonial rule (1895–1945), which had significantly developed the island. The retreating KMT core also contributed its organizational capacity to the formation of an almost new regime.

The rest of this chapter gives a chronological but also analytical account of the KMT’s development and its relationship with corruption in four main sections. Section Two, covering the KMT before Taiwan, introduces the KMT and CKS and analyzes relevant developments in the Republican Era. Section Three, on the origins of the KMT Reconstruction, unpacks the KMT leadership’s motives for reform after the retreat to Taiwan. Section Four, on the KMT Reconstruction and its success, analyzes the reforms of the early 1950s, assesses their outcomes, and considers competing explanations for reform success. Section Five turns to CCK and the Governmental Rejuvenation; it discusses his rise to power and the reasons for and outcomes of the 1969–72 reforms. A brief concluding section reviews the main arguments and alternative explanations and proposes a takeaway for future Taiwan scholarship.

2. The Kuomintang Before Taiwan

The Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party, was formed in 1912, shortly after the fall of the Qing Dynasty. It succeeded the Tongmenghui, the revolutionary party which in turn was created by the union of various anti-Qing dynasty forces in 1905. Its leader was Sun Yat-sen, a unifying figure of tremendous prestige who also served as president of the Republic of China. After Sun's death in 1925, leadership of the KMT passed to Chiang Kai-shek, a close ally of Sun's and the first head of the KMT's influential Whampoa Military Academy. CKS launched the Northern Expedition and reunified much of warlord-controlled China under Nationalist rule. The expedition was put on hold as a purge was carried out against Communist sympathizers and other leftists, but resumed and concluded in 1928. The period of relatively stable rule from CKS's capital in Nanjing between the Northern Expedition and the Japanese invasion in 1937 is known as the Nanjing Decade. After Japan's defeat in 1945, full-scale civil war broke out between the KMT and the Communist Party, with the former losing control of the Chinese mainland and retreating to Taiwan in 1949.

KMT rule throughout the Republican Era, especially in the later two decades, was notoriously corrupt.³ Malfeasance was by no means confined to the party, but was also rampant within the bureaucracy across different sectors and administrative levels. Much of this corruption was the result of ubiquitous state-business entanglement. On the part of public office holders, there was much abuse of power to extort private businesses and bribe-taking to allow illegal activity. A related problem was that many who were KMT officials or nominally allied under the

³ See: Frederic Wakeman Jr., *Policing Shanghai, 1927–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).; Wang Yanmin, *Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang Corruption* (Anhui University Press, 1998). / 王彥民, 《蔣介石與國民黨腐敗》(安徽大學出版社, 1998).; Edward R. Slack, *Opium, State, and Society: China's Narco-Economy and the Guomindang, 1924–1937* (University of Hawaii Press, 2001).; Patricia M. Thornton, *Disciplining the State: Virtue, Violence, and State-Making in Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

KMT-led government had in fact carved out their own fiefdoms, whether territorially or within a sector of the economy or bureaucracy. This led to yet more corruption, especially embezzlement of taxes and direct predation on the public.

Failed Reform in the Nanjing Decade (1927–37)

While corruption was already a well-known problem, it was not until the victories in the Northern Expedition and the start of the Nanjing Decade that the KMT could hope to address it. In the chaotic 1910s, as warlords carved out areas of control and President Yuan Shikai (1912–16) made a doomed bid to return China to monarchic rule, no single government was sufficiently in control of the country for long enough to enforce national reforms of almost any kind. But by mid-1927, the KMT was in a stronger position to address China's myriad governance problems, including corruption. By then, CKS had taken the reins of the KMT, begun purging Communist sympathizers, and unified much of the country through military campaigns, including Nanjing.⁴

The KMT launched several campaigns in this period to punish people who did not support it politically, stole from the government, or mistreated the public so badly that they were a liability. For example, “in May 1927, Nationalist Party branches at the county level were ordered to eliminate all ‘Communists, local bullies, and evil gentry (土豪劣绅), corrupt officials and [their] venal underlings (贪官污吏), and [all] reactionary, opportunistic, corrupt, and evil elements’ from their ranks.” And “on August 18, 1927, the Nationalists amended the penal code by mandating the punishment of ‘local bullies and evil gentry’ in order to ‘develop the spirit of

⁴ Corruption was also recognized as a key governance challenge by Chinese warlords outside the KMT. Marshal Yan Xishan said in 1930 that corruption control was one of the four principles of his governmental program. His forces were later defeated by the KMT (in August). See: Document 17, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1930, Volume II*, 1930/8/15.

party rule and safeguard the public interest’.”⁵ Even months before this, a campaign to oppose embezzlement by local bullies and evil gentry had been launched with a mass rally in Changsha, the capital of Hubei province, from where it spread to over 20 counties in the province.⁶ There were also attempts to punish businesspeople who were colluding with officials to evade taxes and commit other economic crimes, such the arrest of five salt magnates in Tianjin in October 1928.⁷ In late 1930, the KMT moved to end the *lijin* (釐金), a form of taxation susceptible to widespread abuse by local officials because of its easy, decentralized collection.⁸ CKS called it a burden on the people, “the inveterate foe to honest political administration,” and “the fountain-head of political corruption.”⁹

The motives for these anti-corruption efforts were pragmatic in light of the country’s divisions: to retain resources desperately needed to suppress warlord and bandit opposition, and to win the contested support of China’s corruption-weary populace. Embezzlement by supposed KMT allies and local officials cut off revenue streams to the central government and turned the public against the KMT, which was still struggling to exert control over large portions of the country. Additionally, from a more individual perspective, CKS hated corruption and perceived it to be a threat to the reunification of China. His many diary entries on the topic show his

⁵ Thornton, *Disciplining the State*, p. 105.

⁶ Zhu Peng, *Study on the Policy of “Evil Gentry” between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party during the National Revolution* (Central China Normal University College of History and Culture, 2014), p. 28.

朱朋, 《国民革命时期国共两党“土豪劣绅”政策研究》(华中师范大学历史文化学院 2014), p. 28.

⁷ Zhou Licheng, *Archive Secret: Record of Modern and Contemporary Cases* (Baihua Literature and Art Publishing House, 2000), p. 72.

周利成, 《档案揭秘: 近现代大案实录》(百花文艺出版社, 2000), p. 72.

⁸ Felix Boecking, “Unmaking the Chinese Nationalist State: Administrative Reform among Fiscal Collapse, 1937–1945,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 2011, Vol.45(2), p. 290.

⁹ Document 28, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1930, Volume II*, 1931/1/12.

feelings, though this diary should not be read uncritically.¹⁰ On January 18, 1948, he bemoaned reports of large-scale corruption in Chongqing, writing to himself: “hearing the news, I go pale. I do not know what the prospects are for this revolution. I am overcome with grief.”¹¹ He often personally intervened to ensure punishment in big corruption cases. When Lin Shiliang, close associate of the prominent banker and politician H. H. Kung, used his contacts to escape punishment for embezzling 30 million yuan, CKS “intervened and ordered him killed the very next day.”¹² When the Tianjin salt magnates appealed directly to CKS to free them from arrest, he rebuffed them and the order came down for a thorough investigation of corruption in the salt trade.¹³ He often ordered his generals to clean up military corruption.¹⁴ Throughout his long political career, CKS benefitted many times from his reputation of personal incorruptibility.¹⁵

Despite the severity of corruption and occasional harsh punishments for individuals, the reform measures rolled out in the late 1920s and 1930 were aborted relatively quickly or failed to take hold. This was not because the KMT leadership would not have preferred in theory to

¹⁰ Zheng Huixin, *The Private Archives of the Republic of China* (Zhonghua Publishing House, 2014). 鄭會欣, 《民国政要的私密档案》(中华书局, 2014).

Three scholars who have examined Chiang Kai-shek’s diary extensively believe it to be a useful record of the Generalissimo’s thoughts, though with parts written with posterity in mind. (Author’s interviews in Taiwan, July, 2018.)

¹¹ Ma Zhenduo and Xing Wei, “Why is Chiang Kai-shek’s anti-corruption ‘lacking muscle?’” *Leaders’ Companion* (2015) Iss. 2, p. 46. 马振犊、邢焯, “蒋介石反腐为何‘肌无力’,” 领导之友 (2015) 第 2 期, p. 46.

¹² Ma and Xing, “Why is Chiang Kai-shek’s Anti-corruption ‘Lacking Muscle?’,” p. 6.

¹³ Zhou, *Archive Secret*, p. 72.

¹⁴ Document at repository number 002-010100-00010-074, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1928/3/28.; Document at repository number 002-010100-00005-080, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1927/1/29.

¹⁵ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).

reduce corruption, but because it still needed—or at least felt it needed—corrupt allies to govern China and stay in power. Much of China was still only shakily under KMT control or ruled by KMT-allied warlords. As Patricia Thornton explains, opponents to “the campaign against ‘local bullies and evil gentry’” within the KMT, like “right-wing Nationalist Party ideologue Dai Jitao,” argued that the party needed cooperation from landed elites to win the support of the local communities that they still controlled. The Central Political Council was afraid of “destabilizing the already fragile state of most county government operations.”¹⁶ In Hubei, leaders walked back the campaign when they realized that curbing corruption was negatively impacting tax revenue and that the scope was widening to target too many wealthy allies.¹⁷ Despite CKS’s intervention, the case against the Tianjin salt magnates stalled because of complaints by the Tianjin Merchants Association that finance in the city was being hurt by the investigation, and also because investigators realized that “if investigated thoroughly, it would have implicated lots of important people.”¹⁸ As for the *lijin*, despite being officially banned starting January 1st, 1931, it continued to be a “favourite financing tool of local power-holders.”¹⁹ CKS himself acknowledged failure with some “guilt” in a speech in late 1930: “in spite of the state of corruption into which Party affairs have degenerated...not a single case of impeachment and prosecution of corrupt officials (with the exception of the ringleaders of rebellions) has so far taken place.”²⁰

¹⁶ Thornton, *Disciplining the State*, p. 108.

¹⁷ Zhu, *Study on the Policy of “Evil Gentry” between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party during the National Revolution*, p. 33.

¹⁸ Zhou, *Archive Secret*, p. 72.

¹⁹ Boecking, “Unmaking the Chinese Nationalist State,” p. 290.

²⁰ Document 27, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1930, Volume II*, 1930/12/18.

These efforts failed for two related reasons: CKS's constrained leadership and the continued weakness of the state. CKS was eager to curb corruption, at least in principle, but his need for political support and unity was so desperate that it pushed corruption control onto the back burner. His dependence on a diverse coalition of supporters constrained his ability to take reform measures that would have challenged their economic interests. Consider Jay Taylor's explanation of why CKS retreated from his first stab at an anti-corruption measure: an attempt to centralize military finances in 1925.

“Chiang soon realized that he had to give the fight against corruption much lower priority than that of retaining cohesion and loyalty among his disparate supporters and allies, both civilian and military. He had no choice. Significantly, however, his aborted effort to implement this basic financial reform as soon as he had obtained command of the Revolutionary Army in 1925 does suggest that he was aware of endemic corruption on the mainland...”²¹

Taylor connects CKS's limited ability to push reforms to the background situation of national fragmentation, which both directly inhibited top-down reform measures and created an all-encompassing need for unity, even with corrupt actors.

After the failed reform attempts in the early years of the Nanjing Decade, the KMT seemed to make its peace with corruption as the price of useful allies and necessary revenue. It was in the Nanjing Decade, for example, that the government established a semi-official, “covert opium monopoly.”²² In Shanghai, the powerful, drug-smuggling Green Gang could “count on the public cooperation of government agencies such as the Chinese Maritime Customs.”²³ Some scholars go so far as to say that the opium trade, denounced by the government that engaged in it,

²¹ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 51.

²² Brian G. Martin, “The Green Gang and the Guomindang State: Du Yuesheng and the Politics of Shanghai, 1927—37,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 54, No. 1 (1995), p. 83.

²³ Martin, “The Green Gang and the Guomindang State,” p. 83.

was the issue with “the most potential to cause a disastrous loss of legitimacy for the regime.”²⁴ Though politically risky and illegal, opium could bring the government much-needed revenue—tens of millions each year.²⁵ This Faustian bargain, and similar compromises with corruption, were major factors in the KMT’s delegitimization and eventual defeat by the Chinese Communist Party in the late 1940s.

Chiang Kai-shek’s Power Grows

Also unfolding during the Nanjing Decade was a KMT movement not directly against corruption but with consequences for the relationship between CKS and his government: the New Life Movement (NLM). The NLM was CKS’s campaign to improve public morality, discipline, and hygiene through a top-down promotion of traditional culture, including Confucianism, and select ideas from Western culture, such as individualism. To enforce these new standards of citizen behavior and thought, CKS moved to increase the state’s control over society, for example by empowering policemen to police social mores and minor public behaviors.²⁶ Much of the campaign was actually carried out by semi-governmental organizations created by and/or loyal to CKS, such as the New Life Movement Promotion Association.²⁷ By the end of 1935, the movement had spread to 19 provinces and over 1000 districts.²⁸

²⁴ Alan Baumler, *Playing with Fire: The Nationalist Government and Opium in China, 1927–1941* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1997), p. 1.

²⁵ Slack, *Opium, State, and Society*, p. 92.

²⁶ Liu Wennan, “Redefining the Moral and Legal Roles of the State in Everyday Life: The New Life Movement in China in the Mid-1930s,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, 01 June (2013), Iss. 7, p. 51.

²⁷ Federica Ferlanti, “The New Life Movement in Jiangxi Province, 1934–1938,” *1 Modern Asian Studies*, (2010), Vol.44(5), pp. 961–1000.

²⁸ Arif Dirlik, “The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counterrevolution,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 1 August 1975, p. 950.

Through the NLM, CKS was able to increase his personal control over the regime, leading to fewer constraints on his authority. In the preceding years, CKS's leadership had hardly been absolute. Because of criticism over his "illegal" and "authoritarian" actions during a conflict with Hu Hanmin, the head of the Legislative Yuan, CKS was temporarily forced to resign his government positions in late 1931, returning in January the following year.²⁹ The biggest challenge to CKS's primacy within the KMT was from left-wing politician Wang Jingwei. Wang had set up a rival KMT government in Wuhan back in 1927, but it had failed almost immediately. Another government was attempted in 1931, but it quickly fell to CKS's forces. Still, CKS felt that he could not get rid of Wang without displeasing the KMT's left wing. Wang led various anti-CKS factions during the Nanjing Decade (1927–37), and feuded with CKS even from the premiership of the national government. He finally split with the KMT for good in 1937 and in 1940 accepted an invitation to head the Japanese collaborationist government in Nanjing.

The NLM allowed CKS to sell his self-advancement as modern nation-building, empower his loyalists in quasi-official organizations, and undermine his rivals within the KMT. Many scholars see the NLM as a fascist movement intended to elevate CKS into the position of "absolute national leader, mimicking Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy."³⁰ CKS's union of traditional culture and a modern European political system led Frederic Wakeman to term the

²⁹ Frederic Wakeman Jr., "A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade: Confucian Fascism," *The China Quarterly*, June 1997, Vol.150, pp. 397–98.

³⁰ Liu, "Redefining the Moral and Legal Roles of the State in Everyday Life," p. 31.; Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927–1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).; Dirlik "The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement."; William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984).; Wakeman, "A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade."

desired outcome “Confucian Fascism.”³¹ Even scholars critical of this term, such as Maggie Clinton, would agree that “departing from the ideals of social reciprocity intrinsic to dynastic strains of Confucian thought, NLM Confucianism stressed top-down chains of command and the unquestioning loyalty of social inferiors to superiors.”³² Starting around the same time as the NLM, some of CKS’s supporters in the KMT—many his former students from the Whampoa Military Academy—formed the Blue Shirts. This tightly-organized and initially covert group of loyalists made it their mission to make CKS China’s dictator.³³ The Blue Shirts, along with a host of related and sometimes confusingly overlapping pro-CKS organizations, served as foot soldiers in his campaigns.³⁴ The NLM in particular “meshed precisely with the spirit and program of the Blue Shirts.”³⁵ While the Blue Shirts disbanded in 1938, groups of core CKS loyalists, some which had been formed even earlier, continued to be influential in the KMT—a fact that helps us understand CKS’s recovery of authority after the KMT’s defeat in the Chinese Civil War.

CKS’s major rivals fell in line with the NLM. “Even the dominant figures of the Kuomintang and the National Government that [sic] belonged to the Western Hills and Reorganization cliques, including Lin Sen and Wang Jingwei, were unable to reject Chiang Kai-shek’s undeniably ‘just’ cause, which resulted in their unanimous participation.”³⁶ Relatively

³¹ Wakeman, “A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade.”

³² Maggie Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism: Fascism and Culture in China, 1925–1937* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), p. 22.

³³ Wang, *Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang Corruption*, p. 16.

³⁴ Wakeman, “A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade.”

³⁵ Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p. 66.

³⁶ Fukamachi Hideo, “Prairie Fire or The Gimo’s New Clothes? Chiang Kaishek’s New Life Movement,” *The Chinese Historical Review* 01 (Jan. 2010), Vol.17(1), p. 73.

autonomous “provincial ‘warlords’ [such] as Yan Xishan (Shanxi), Han Fujun (Shandong), Long Yun (Yunnan), Liu Xiang (Sichuan), etc., jumped on the bandwagon in succession, not only because of their approval of the movement, but also from a desire to maintain their de facto autonomy by displaying obedience.” CKS’s victory was evident in the fact that he succeeded Wang Jingwei as Premier in December of 1935.³⁷ As Fukamachi Hideo argues, this was “partly due to the status he achieved as a nationally respected leader through the New Life Movement...he successfully raised his status to increase his power.”³⁸ Perhaps the most credible recognition of CKS’s status came from the Chinese Communist Party. The CCP leadership’s initial purpose in build a cult of personality around Mao Zedong was to compete with CKS’s cult of personality.³⁹

Empty Gestures Against Wartime Corruption

Years of war with Japan threw Chinese governance into disarray, which only served to loosen the already weak checks on corruption. Though hard numbers are scarce, observers agree that corruption was ubiquitous. Lloyd Eastman states that “without any question, corruption became infinitely greater during the 1940s.”⁴⁰ Among officials and businesspeople, “depression about the war led to a desire to ‘live rich for now.’”⁴¹ When Japan lost, KMT officials retaking major cities had massive opportunities for corruption.⁴² A top official in charge of taking back

³⁷ That said, being temporarily kidnapped in the Xian Incident of 1936 was certainly a “constraint” on CKS’s leadership.

³⁸ Hideo, “Prairie Fire or The Gimo’s New Clothes?” pp. 73–74.

³⁹ Daniel Leese, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China’s Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁴⁰ Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p. 17.

⁴¹ Zheng, *The Private Archives of the Republic of China*, p. 3.

⁴² Ma and Xing, “Why is Chiang Kai-shek’s anti-corruption ‘lacking muscle?’”

Japanese-controlled territory told CKS that “if things keep going this way we will have recovered national territory but lost the hearts of the people.”⁴³ CKS got word that “corruption was rapidly spreading throughout the society. Only two months after Japan’s surrender, [CKS] called in the newly appointed senior officials of Nanking, Shanghai, Peking, and Tianjin and scolded them for the bad discipline of KMT officers taking over those cities.”⁴⁴ “The corruption of high officials” was the “chief cause of the economic chaos.”⁴⁵ Many American officials in China emphasized the issue of corruption in their analyses of the KMT’s problems. One noted that “various Kuomintang officials made private estimates that between a third and a fourth of what was actually collected from the people reached the government.”⁴⁶ Another recalled “there was great corruption in Chiang Kai-shek's political organization. It was increasingly dependent on cronyism, I think. There was no real vitality in the political organization of Chiang Kai-shek, of the Nationalist Party. The vital force, politically, was the Communist Party...”⁴⁷ Even before the Chinese Civil War began in earnest in 1945, Chinese military commander Li Jishen openly expressed to U.S. officials his concern that corruption was losing the KMT popular support.⁴⁸

⁴³ Zhou, *Archive Secret*, p. 196.

⁴⁴ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 330. People got angry and started calling the return of these cities to KMT control “taking” as in theft (劫收) instead of “taking over” (接收), using a kind of wordplay in Chinese where one character is replaced by another of similar pronunciation.

⁴⁵ Document 552, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS), 1947, *The Far East: China, Volume VII*, 1947/7/23. See also: Document 444, 1945/10/22.; Document 202, 1943/6/24.

⁴⁶ Oral History Interview with John S. Service. Conducted September 12, 1977 in Berkeley, California. Chapters V through VIII. Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

⁴⁷ Oral History Interview with Livingston Merchant. Conducted on May 27, 1975 in Washington, D.C. Harry S. Truman Presidential Library. See also: Oral History Interview with Edwin W. Martin. Conducted on June 3, 1975 in Washington, D.C. Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

⁴⁸ Telegram to the Department of State from Chungking via Navy, August 16, 1944, President’s Secretary’s File (Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration), 1933 – 1945, File Unit: China, July-December 1944, Box 27.

In 1944, an anti-corruption, pro-reform movement within the KMT began to gain momentum. Many influential people in this movement, such as Liang Hanco and Gu Zhengding, were from the right-wing CC Clique, which was opposed to CKS having total control of the party.⁴⁹ Their first goal was to get rid of H. H. Kung and the economic minister Weng Wenhao, who were both seen as very corrupt.⁵⁰ Members of the People's Political Council (PPC) and the Federation of Democratic Parties advocated wide-ranging reforms, including measures to eliminate corruption, profiteering, excess bureaucracy, and inefficiency in tax collection.⁵¹ The PPC was frustrated by malfeasance and mismanagement "in the Ministries of Finance, Military Administration, Food and Education" in particular, and "recommended by a vote of 112 to 6 that the Minister of Finance not be allowed to serve simultaneously as head of a bank."⁵² A critical mass of important legislative and judicial leaders forced CKS to commit to serious reform in March of 1946.⁵³ CKS had already tasked General Qian Dajun, Beijing mayor Xiong Bin, and other high-level officials with cleaning up the most troubling corruption.⁵⁴ But this was not nearly enough to assuage the "veritable rebellion" that the party leadership faced.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Wang, *Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang Corruption*, p. 186.

⁵⁰ Wang, *Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang Corruption*, p. 186; Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction*, p. 109.

The American Embassy was even informed of a plot among young officers "to seize Chiang at Kunming upon his return...and force him to issue order for dismissal H. H. Kung, Ho Ying-chin, Chen Li-fu, Chen Kuo-fu, and other unnamed high officials." However, "Kuomintang sources [were] inclined to dismiss matter as nothing serious." See: Document 262, FRUS: *Diplomatic Papers, 1944, China, Volume VI*, 1944/1/24.

⁵¹ Document 147, FRUS: *Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The Far East, China, Volume VII*, 1945/1/31.

⁵² Document 496, FRUS: *Diplomatic Papers, 1944, The Far East, China, Volume VI*, 1944/11/14.

⁵³ Wang, *Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang Corruption*, p. 189.

⁵⁴ Document at repository number 002-090106-00017-293, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1946/1/11.

⁵⁵ Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction*, p. 116.

The pressure was compounded later that month by strongly-worded articles in the U.S. press by reporter William Newton attacking KMT corruption.⁵⁶ The KMT's belated response was a proposal that all party members would have to re-register and party members and government officials would have to declare their assets—those who did not would be out of a job.⁵⁷ This would, in theory, purge the party of corruption, factionalism, and other problems.⁵⁸ Additionally, there were plans to have some officials “register property before taking up their positions,” and to have “absolutely no fake or changed names on bank accounts.”⁵⁹

Despite his continued commitment to revolutionary state-building, CKS had good reason to be resistant to this reform movement: it directly threatened his political position. Many reform advocates connected their demands for clean government with demands for more “democratic governance” in the KMT, signaling their opposition to CKS's autocratic dominance.⁶⁰ So even if reformers within the party had convinced the whole KMT leadership that corruption was destroying the country and had to be dealt with, CKS would have had good political reasons to keep from accepting the reformers' demands. This exemplifies a general point about motivations: anti-corruption efforts in authoritarian regimes led by anyone who is not the autocrat or one of his close allies are almost always seen as too risky by the autocrat, who is after all the leader of the system that reformers are calling corrupt.

⁵⁶ Document at repository number 008-010602-00047-036, Vice-President Chen Cheng Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1946/4/3.

⁵⁷ Ma and Xing, “Why is Chiang Kai-shek's anti-corruption ‘lacking muscle?’,” p. 46.

⁵⁸ *Ta Kung Pao* 1947, cited in Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction*, p. 106.

⁵⁹ Document at repository number 001-011130-00051-018, Nationalist Government (general documents), Academia Historica Archives, 1946/07/03.

⁶⁰ Wang, *Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang Corruption*, p. 188.

Motivation aside, CKS's leadership was again constrained by coalitional politics. CKS could not—or at least believed he could not—afford to lose allies and revenue, even if they were corrupt. The need was especially dire in the middle of a civil war and with the state already falling apart. Curbing corruption, which would entail purging useful military and economic specialists, was thought to come second to political stability. This “need for loyalty” argument applied both to the need to secure the KMT's position as China's ruling party and to CKS's desire to retain his top position within the regime. CKS was, the United States Embassy concluded, a “political hostage to the corrupt system which he manipulates—he cannot institute sweeping reforms without destroying the balance.”⁶¹ The Central Intelligence Agency's analysts concurred that “the conservative landlord groups from which Chiang derives much of his support would hardly accept the desired reforms.”⁶²

Ultimately, the anti-corruption movement failed as the most important reform proposals came to nothing, though some would be resurrected after the move to Taiwan. CKS's Empty Gestures toward reform were even less substantive than the Failed Reform of the late 1920s, though CKS did take a few small steps, such as firing General Xia Chuzhong for embezzlement.⁶³ In sum, the reasons for this failure were the reform movement's challenge to CKS's position, the continued constraints on his leadership, and the weakness of state capacity, which was exacerbated by the Chinese Civil War.

Massive Corruption in Taiwan

⁶¹ Document 202, FRUS: *Diplomatic Papers, 1943, China*, 1943/6/24.

⁶² Records of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, ORE 45–48, “The Current Situation in China, 07/22/48,” Record Group 263.

⁶³ Document at repository number 001-016142-00009-057, Chiang Kai-shek Orders and Approvals (2), Academia Historica Archives, 1947/10/22.

Taiwan had at this point already been under KMT rule for several years, since Japan had ceded it to China after being defeated in World War II in 1945.⁶⁴ The KMT appointed Chen Yi as the first governor and garrison commander of Taiwan, which administratively became a province. Chen brought thousands of officials from the mainland and took over “virtually all political, administrative, and security posts, including control of all state-run—meaning formerly Japanese private and government-owned—enterprises, which dominated the economy.”⁶⁵ The island’s population was initially welcoming of Taiwan’s return to mainland rule, but the mood quickly soured.⁶⁶

KMT governance of Taiwan in the late 1940s was abysmally violent and corrupt. The mainlanders preyed upon the populace and looted public and private assets. “Beginning...in October 1945 the same ineptitude, corruption and exploitation which characterized Chiang Kai-shek’s government on the mainland was evident in Taiwan.”⁶⁷ The American general Albert Wedemeyer “reported to the Secretary of State [that] ‘Chen Yi and his henchmen ruthlessly, corruptly, and avariciously imposed their regime.’”⁶⁸ Chen Yi himself admitted that in Taiwan “kickback embezzlement is a terrifying contagious disease.”⁶⁹ “By the beginning of 1947, these

⁶⁴ American diplomat George Kerr, however, protested vigorously to the Truman administration that “Japan had surrendered Formosa to the Allies, and not to China alone.” George H. Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 145.

⁶⁵ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 370.

⁶⁶ Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed*, pp. 61–96.

⁶⁷ Joseph Heinlein, *Political Warfare: The Chinese Nationalist Model* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1974), p. 501.

⁶⁸ Douglas Heusted Mendel, *The Politics of Formosan Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 41.

⁶⁹ Chu Jingtao, *Research on the National Government’s Recovery of Taiwan* (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2013), p. 496.

褚靜濤, 《国民政府收复台湾研究》 (北京: 中华书局, 2013), p. 496.

Nationalist officials had taken over or absconded with an estimated \$1 billion [USD] in property and other assets.”⁷⁰ In late 1946, an investigation team from the central government arrived in Taiwan and gathered evidence about 68 cases of embezzlement in two ministries.⁷¹ A debate took place over whether Chen was himself corrupt or simply unable to control subordinates.⁷² In any case, besides a few harsh prosecutions there were no efforts made by the KMT leadership to curb corruption.⁷³ In late February 1947, public anger over the KMT’s political repression and economic mismanagement, including corruption, exploded into an island-wide uprising. The government violently put down the uprising in what is now referred to as the February 28 Massacre, killing between 10,000 and 28,000 people.⁷⁴

After the February 28 Massacre, the KMT made some effort to reform Taiwan’s government. Chen was replaced by Wei Daoming, many of Chen’s top officials were ousted, and some Taiwanese were brought in to replace them.⁷⁵ The central government also reduced Wei’s authority relative to what Chen had wielded. Lin Hsiao-ting argues that “the decreased provincial authority served as a crucial factor in the final survival of Chiang Kai-shek’s political life in the late 1940s and early 1950s,” when he was not formally head of state but still had some authority

⁷⁰ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 370.

⁷¹ Chu, *Research on the National Government’s Recovery of Taiwan*, p. 497.

⁷² Lin Hsiao-ting, *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 35.

⁷³ Chu, *Research on the National Government’s Recovery of Taiwan*, p. 498.

⁷⁴ See: Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed*, Chapter 12.; Allan J. Shackleton, *Formosa Calling, An Eyewitness Account of Conditions in Taiwan During the February 28th 1947 Incident* (Taiwan Publishing Company and Taiwan Communiqué, Chevy Chase, 1998).

For Chinese-language sources on the February 28 Massacre, see: *2.28 Incident Sources Selection* (Taipei: Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History, 1992). / 《二二八事件資料選輯》(台北市：中央研究院近代史研究所, 1992).

⁷⁵ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 54.

vis-à-vis the provincial chairman.⁷⁶ In January 1949, CKS replaced Wei with close ally Chen Cheng, but the situation in Taiwan did not immediately change. As Chen Cheng admitted in a speech in February 1949, “many people are saying the government is corrupt and incompetent.”⁷⁷ There was little evidence at the time that the long-standing unhealthy tendencies that had lost the KMT the mainland would not simply continue in Taiwan.

3. The Origins of the KMT Reconstruction

The KMT’s increasingly obvious “loss of China” was a massive blow to Chiang Kai-shek’s prestige, threatening his position as the regime’s leader. By December of 1948, the United States was urging that CKS be replaced.⁷⁸ Also challenging him was the Guangxi Clique, led by Vice President Li Zongren. “The victory of General [Li Zongren] in the contest for the vice presidency reflected popular dissatisfaction with Chiang’s failure to effect reform measures and represented a vote of protest against the ineffectiveness of his Government.”⁷⁹ CKS was “humiliated and maddened” that the party seemed out of his control.⁸⁰ The last straw for many in the KMT was the Communist Party’s successful Huaihai Campaign (Nov. 1948 – Jan. 1949), after which the Nationalist army was no longer able to hold the important Yangtze River defense line. So on January 21, 1949, the Generalissimo “retired” from leading the government and was succeeded by Li.

⁷⁶ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 54.

⁷⁷ Document at repository number 008-010401-00003-002, Vice-President Chen Cheng Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, p. 12.

⁷⁸ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 74.

⁷⁹ Records of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, ORE 45–48, “The Current Situation in China, 07/22/48,” Record Group 263.

⁸⁰ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 75.

Perhaps surprisingly, CKS was soon able to bounce back and achieve new heights of dominance and authority in the regime. He managed this by leveraging unofficial and continuing loyalties not affected by his formal retirement in a paradoxically advantageous period of jarring transition for the regime. CKS had been able to appoint several loyalists right before he retired and his orders still meant more than Li's in some parts of the military.⁸¹ More importantly, many who were not loyal to CKS simply left the KMT altogether, rather than quixotically following the core leadership to Taiwan.⁸² The Communists had won on the mainland and the assumption was that the takeover of Taiwan would soon follow; those who had supported the KMT opportunistically or with less than fervent devotion had few good reasons to make the journey. Some key figures whom CKS had relied on to run China but who were seen as deeply corrupt did not move to Taiwan, such as T. V. Soong and H. H. Kung.⁸³ Some rivals, like Li, fled to the United States, not Taiwan, when their armies were defeated. To make a complicated story simple, Taiwan became the only part of China the Communists did not hold and the Nationalists solidly did, and CKS's supporters were in Taipei.

Increasing control of the military told the same story. It was only after retreating to Taiwan that the “adequate combination of Party pervasiveness and coercive power was at the disposal of the KMT to enforce its dictates vis-a-vis the military.”⁸⁴ CKS was able in 1950 to re-establish a system of political commissars in military units at each level through which the party

⁸¹ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 82.

⁸² Records of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, ORE 7–50, “Probable Developments in Taiwan, 03/20/50,” Record Group 263.

⁸³ The “four big families” that held great economic power in the 1940s in Nationalist-controlled China—the Chiang, Song, Kun, and Chen families—were broken up by the move. See also: Jonathan Fenby, *Chiang Kai-shek: China's generalissimo and the nation he lost* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2004), p. 212.

⁸⁴ Heinlein, *Political Warfare*, p. 514.

could control the military.⁸⁵ It was only in Taiwan that CKS managed the “centralization of military payrolls...[and] procurement” first attempted in 1925.⁸⁶ At the same time, “beginning in early 1950 the secret police [controlled by Chiang Ching-kuo]...purged the military establishment of scores of officers who had been labelled untrustworthy.”⁸⁷

In March 1950, CKS formally returned to the presidency with deep support among the remaining KMT members.⁸⁸ He had remained head of the party throughout, which gave him a strong position from which to stage a comeback. Perhaps also CKS’s year out of the presidency showed that no other Nationalist leader had a magic bullet that could stop the CCP’s advance. Upon his return, American observers concluded that “the authority of the President is close to absolute in those matters in which he chose to exercise it.”⁸⁹

CKS’s Motives for Reform

The tens of thousands of Nationalists newly arrived in Taiwan found themselves in a precarious geopolitical position, to put it mildly. Besides the hostility of much of the local population, it was commonly assumed among observers, including in Taipei, that communist forces would soon invade the island. The regime was also reeling from the U.S.’s virtual abandonment of its former ally amid attempts to reach out to the victorious CCP. The need to prepare for an invasion was palpable in the early months of 1950.

⁸⁵ Cheng Hsiao-shih, *Party-Military Relations in the PRC and Taiwan: Paradoxes of Control* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1990).

⁸⁶ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 488.

⁸⁷ Heinlein, *Political Warfare*, p. 510.

⁸⁸ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 121.

⁸⁹ Neil H. Jacoby, *U.S. Aid to Taiwan: a Study of Foreign Aid, Self-Help, and Development* (New York: FAPraeger, 1966), p. 33.

Faced with these challenges “both external and internal, [the] KMT national security apparatus under Chiang Ching-kuo began campaigns of terror to root out Communist networks and sympathizers on the island and to extend the reach of their surveillance and cells down to the grass roots.”⁹⁰ In the first few months after the official retreat in December 1949, pro-CKS elements in the KMT were “relatively successful in stabilizing Nationalist rule domestically and reestablishing Chiang Kai-shek’s supremacy in the political hierarchy.”⁹¹ In the end, the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 changed America’s mind about defending Taiwan, and China has been successfully deterred from invading the island ever since.⁹²

The combination of the loss of the Chinese Civil War and the precarious position in Taiwan led CKS to reflect on past mistakes and to rethink how to build a strong, prosperous, modern, non-communist China under his leadership.⁹³ The most consequential of his conclusions, at least for the regime, was the urgent need to fundamentally rebuild the KMT. As CKS explained in a speech in 1951: “Ever since our party lost to the Communists two years ago, I have come to believe firmly that if we ever want to destroy the Communists, recover the Mainland, and save our people, *we have to first make our various organizations more solid and stronger than those of the Communists*” [emphasis in the original].⁹⁴ CKS saw the whole

⁹⁰ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 162.

⁹¹ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 162.

⁹² An alternative view is that it was the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance on February 14, 1950 that changed the U.S.’s position on Taiwan. See: Shen Zhihua, “The Reasons Sino-Soviet Relations Broke Down,” 2012/1. / 沈志华, “中苏关系破裂原因,” 2012/1, (video in Chinese, skip to 25:40): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOcdrhGOsEY>

⁹³ Author’s interviews with two scholars of the period suggest CKS’s reflection was genuine and greatly shaped his future plans.

⁹⁴ Lin Chia-Lung, *Paths to Democracy: Taiwan in comparative perspective* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1998), p. 6.

struggle as a “*war of our organization against their organization*” [emphasis in the original].⁹⁵

Other KMT leaders came to similar conclusions. Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Taiwan Defense Command Shih Chueh believed that it had been the CCP’s “superior organization” and KMT mistakes that led to defeat.⁹⁶ This need for strong organization led CKS to undertake major state-building reforms.

CKS launched the KMT Reconstruction (改造) (1950–52) to reform the institutional makeup of the party and its relationship with the state—changes that would define the regime for decades to come.⁹⁷ The Reconstruction would centralize and bureaucratize the party, expand the party’s control over Taiwan’s government and society, and promote “Party cells as the basic units of the Party.”⁹⁸ With these moves, CKS argued, the party would be able to “eliminate corruption and factions, to bring in younger party members, and to focus on serving society and the masses.”⁹⁹ In instructions for the Reconstruction, CKS invoked the party’s revolutionary legacy, the suffering of the Chinese people, and Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People. He argued that the Reconstruction had to be a crucial node and turning point in restoring that

⁹⁵ Lin, *Paths to Democracy*, p. 67. Lin is citing Chiang Kai-shek’s speech “The Principles and Efficacy of Organization.”

⁹⁶ Record of Interview with Mr. Shih Chueh, Oral History Series, Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1986/1, p. 402.
石覺先生訪問紀錄, 口述歷史叢書, 中央研究院近代史研究所, 1986/1, p. 402.

⁹⁷ There was even some discussion of whether the party should change its name. See: Document at repository number 002-020400-00041-114, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1950/3/17.; Document at repository number 002-090104-00001-310, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1950/3/16.

⁹⁸ Bruce J. Dickson, “The Lessons of Defeat: The Reorganization of the Kuomintang on Taiwan, 1950–52 *,” *The China Quarterly* 133 (1993), p. 65.

⁹⁹ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 442.

revolution because the party's failures threatened the people and the party with destruction.¹⁰⁰

The KMT was not rebuilt from scratch; despite the devastation of the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War, the transplanted core of the revolutionary party retained significant organizational capacity.

Corruption control was necessary to advance the KMT Reconstruction because CKS understood it to have been a costly failing of the KMT in the past. After “five months” of reflection, CKS concluded that there were five types of KMT mistakes. The first of these, about compromises made, included that “our party is in this dire situation because we abandoned our principles...in politics we compromised with corrupt local tyrants and evil gentry, in the economy we compromised with speculators and monopolists, and in our hearts we became full of defeatism.” The party could succeed in saving the country and the people “only by eliminating corruption,” he argued.¹⁰¹ In private as well, CKS wrote that “corruption and discord are the main causes of losing our nation.”¹⁰² CKS wrote in his diary on March 31st, 1949 that the KMT was being defeated because of its “discipline being in the dust, organizational collapse...failure to set up a cadre system, and cadre corruption and selfishness.”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Document at repository number 002-020400-00041-071, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1949/7/18.; See also: Document at repository number 002-080300-00034-003, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1950/7/27.; *Compilation of Thoughts and Speeches of President Chiang* Vol. 32, (KMT Party History Compilation Committee, 1985), p. 219. / 《總統蔣公思想言論總集》第32卷 (中國國民黨中央委員會黨史委員會, 1985), p. 219.

¹⁰¹ Document at repository number 002-020400-00041-071, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1949/7/18.; See also: Document at repository number 002-080300-00034-003, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1950/7/27.

¹⁰² Document at repository number 005-010502-00055-036, President Chiang Ching-kuo Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, Undated.

¹⁰³ Quoted in Feng Lin, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952* (Phoenix Publishing House, 2013), p. 7.
馮琳, 《中國國民黨在台改造研究 1950–1952》(鳳凰出版社, 2013), p. 7.

CKS repeatedly raised the issue in public and promised to address it through the reforms. In July of 1949, for example, he argued that “our fellow party members must no longer behave in such a way as to undo the discipline and make people despise the organization...The reform of the party this time is calculated to take stringent measures against those members who have been proven to be corrupt and opportunistic and have violated law and discipline.”¹⁰⁴ Part of this quotation was widely repeated in written materials promoting the Reconstruction.¹⁰⁵ There are many variations on: “the reform’s focus is eliminating corruption, getting fresh blood, thoroughly investigating and reflecting on mistakes, and serving as a model for the people.”¹⁰⁶ KMT-run newspapers were clear that “because of widespread corruption, we have to reform the government, military, and economy, restore the people’s trust in the government, [and] prevent the military from going off on its own without orders from above.”¹⁰⁷

Other Reform Motives?

While the preceding section has basically accepted CKS’s stated reasons for launching the KMT Reconstruction, a common assumption about autocratic reforms is that they are simply a cover for eliminating political rivals. While reasonable for other cases, however, this view is not useful in understanding the KMT Reconstruction and its effects. CKS’s personal power may have increased as the campaign reordered the state to match his wishes, but he already had

¹⁰⁴ Heinlein, *Political Warfare*, p. 504.

¹⁰⁵ Milton Shieh and Xie, Ranzhi, *The Kuomintang: selected historical documents, 1894–1969* (St. John’s University Press, 1970), p. 214.

¹⁰⁶ Qin Xiaoyi, *The History of the Political Development of the Republic of China* (Modern China Publishing House, 1985), p. 1636.

秦孝儀, 《中華民國政治發展史》(近代中國出版社, 1985), p. 1636.

¹⁰⁷ *Central Daily News* / 中央日報 (ZYRB), 1950/3/24, p. 2.

unconstrained leadership at its start, and anyway different kinds of goals are not incompatible.¹⁰⁸ When I lay out the achievements of the reforms later in this section, it will become clear that there was too much to this Reconstruction for it to be explained away so simply.

If we believe that corruption control was seriously pursued, it might be logical to assume that this was due to American influence over the KMT. The United States was certainly a desperately-needed military ally and frequently tried to influence developments in mainland China and Taiwan. The U.S. established a military mission to aid the KMT on February 20, 1946 and gave Taiwan nearly \$1.5 billion in nonmilitary aid between 1951 and 1965.¹⁰⁹ This was a huge sum for the small island, but still less than what the U.S. gave in military assistance.

However, the U.S. played at most a minor role in motivating the KMT Reconstruction. For one thing, the Reconstruction was not what Washington had had in mind. In the early 1950s, the U.S. hoped Taiwan would transition gradually to democracy, not undergo a “quasi-Leninist” reorganization.¹¹⁰ In their communications, U.S. officials explicitly pushed for greater democracy and linked it to the KMT regime’s survival.¹¹¹ And as Shang Ying points out, the American government had been urging the KMT to curb corruption and other abuses of power

¹⁰⁸ Su Ruiqiang, *White Terror in Taiwan: Post-War Handling of Political Cases* (Daw Shiang Publishing, 2014), p. 69.

蘇瑞鏘, 《白色恐怖在臺灣：戰後台灣政治案件之處置》(稻鄉出版社, 2014), p. 69.

¹⁰⁹ Records of the U.S. Army, Pacific, 1945–1984, “Selected Aspects of U.S. Military Assistance,” Department of Defense, 1961, Record Group 550.; Some small portion of this aid was left undelivered in 1965.; Jacoby, *U.S. Aid to Taiwan*, p. 38.; Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992: uncertain friendships* (Twayne Publishers, 1994), p. 54.

¹¹⁰ This term to describe the KMT’s regime in this time period comes from Cheng Tun-Jen, “Democratizing the Quasi-Leninist Regime in Taiwan,” *World Politics* 41, No. 4 (1989), p. 471.

¹¹¹ Document 308, FRUS, 1950, *East Asia and the Pacific, Volume VI*, 1950/9/19.

by officials for decades to no avail.¹¹² Taiwan proved “not to be a predictable ward,” acting “independent of and sometimes contrary to American interests.”¹¹³

Furthermore, in early 1950, CKS was planning the Reconstruction at a time when the U.S. was supporting other contenders to take over the KMT and more generally had given the regime up for lost.¹¹⁴ “The inactivation of the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group—China and the retreat of the Nationalist forces to the island of Taiwan temporarily ended the American program of military aid to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's government.”¹¹⁵ As a result, the U.S. was not in a position to influence CKS greatly through personnel. The American Chargé D'affaires related in June 1950 that CKS was “recently more bitter than ever against [the] US. As is always case when he is in tight spot and things going badly he shouts over telephone and at visitors, and slams objects about his office.”¹¹⁶ CKS did not trust those in his regime too closely tied to the U.S; he dismissed Wei Daoming, pressured K. C. Wu to flee to America, and put Sun Liren under house arrest.¹¹⁷ Despite their repeated efforts, U.S. advisers were unable to convince the KMT to abandon the political commissar system.¹¹⁸ When interviewed, a former KMT

¹¹² Shang Ying, *Curbing Corruption: A Comparative Analysis of Corruption Control in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2002), p. 229.

¹¹³ Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Secretary of State Dean Acheson was widely, though slightly inaccurately, quoted as saying the U.S. should “let the dust settle” following the Chinese Communist victory on the mainland. This was interpreted as meaning the U.S. was not standing behind CKS. See: James Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), Chapter 20.; Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 141.

¹¹⁵ Records of the U.S. Army, Pacific, 1945–1984, “Selected Aspects of U.S. Military Assistance,” Department of Defense, 1961, Record Group 550.

¹¹⁶ Document 189, FRUS, 1950, *East Asia and the Pacific, Volume VI*, 1950/6/7.

¹¹⁷ Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, p. 73.

¹¹⁸ Document 203, FRUS, 1951, *Korea and China, Volume VII, Part 2*, 1951/10/3.; Document 237, FRUS, 1951, *Korea and China, Volume VII, Part 2*, 1951/12/11.

intelligence officer who arrived in Taiwan in 1949 and claimed to have extensive experience with early corruption cases flatly rejected the suggestion that CKS's or CCK's anti-corruption efforts resulted from American pressure.¹¹⁹

Explanations of corruption control focused on grassroots pressure from society or proto-democratic institutions similarly run into major difficulties. The Nationalist party-state in this period was a model of state autonomy. The cleavage between the newly-arrived mainlanders, who worked in the regime, and the Taiwanese, who mostly did not, was very salient. There had not yet been time to establish strong ties across this divide to the local gentry or businesses either. And Taiwan's local businesses were not powerful conglomerates that could hold the economy hostage if the government planned unfavorable policies, like South Korea's chaebol. In fact, one goal of the KMT Reconstruction was to recruit for the party heavily among the local population and establish party representation in various sectors of society. Believing superior CCP organization—even more than military prowess—had defeated him on the mainland, CKS drew his inspiration for the reformed structure the KMT should take from the CCP.¹²⁰ The reforms “accentuated [the KMT's] Leninist characteristics.”¹²¹

An explanation that holds more water for why the KMT curbed corruption is that military threat necessitated it. CKS himself raised the KMT's contest with the CCP as a crucial justification for the need to clean out corruption, end factionalism, and generally carry out the reforms he proposed. The official records of his meetings from 1950–1952 show that CKS

¹¹⁹ Author's interview, 2018/8/4.

¹²⁰ Bruce J. Dickson, “The Kuomintang Before Democratization: Organizational Change and the Role of Elections” in Tien Hung-Mao, Ed., *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave* (Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 46.

¹²¹ Dickson, “The Kuomintang Before Democratization,” p. 43.

personally spent significant time on military affairs and thinking about Communist strengths and weaknesses.¹²² This argument does not contradict the general one I advance because in this case military threat motivated state-building and state-building involved corruption control. However, it would be a mistake to collapse CKS's commitment to state-building into a rational response to threat model.¹²³ Firstly, CKS's revolutionary state-building agenda was long-standing, though often frustrated on the mainland. And secondly, the U.S. decision to guarantee Taiwan's security did not cause CKS to abandon his agenda. CKS did not, for example, slash the military budget to transition to peaceful development, as Japan did after World War II under the Yoshida Doctrine.¹²⁴ We can also note that if external military threat led reliably to anti-corruption reform, then authoritarian anti-corruption reform would be very common indeed.

Overall, CKS sought to curb corruption in the early 1950s because it was necessary for the success of a state-building project, in this case the KMT Reconstruction, which in turn reflected CKS's long-standing commitment to building a strong, modern, anti-communist China. CKS drew "on a long legacy of party reform, going back to Sun Yat-sen, aimed at making the KMT a more effective revolutionary weapon."¹²⁵ This explanation basically accepts and generalizes the stated rationales for the reforms, including reorganizing and centralizing the party, reducing corruption and factionalism, and strengthening the KMT's influence in society.

¹²² Qin Xiaoyi, *First Draft of the Honorable President Chiang's Major Events* Vol.11, (Zhongzheng Culture and Education Foundation Publishing, 1978), p. 5040.

秦孝儀,《總統蔣公大事長編初稿》第11卷(中正文教基金會出版1978),p.5040.

¹²³ Zhu Tianbiao, "Developmental States and Threat Perceptions in Northeast Asia," *Conflict, Security & Development* 2, No. 1 (Apr. 1, 2002), pp. 5–29.; Richard F. Doner, Bryan K. Ritchie, and Dan Slater, "Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective," *International Organization*, Vol. 59, Iss. 2 April 2005, pp. 327–61.

¹²⁴ For a primer on Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru's doctrine, see: Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 13–59.

¹²⁵ Thomas B. Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle* (Armonk: Routledge, 1986), p. 58.

The timing of these measures is best explained not by a change in fundamental KMT goals, but by a change in strategies and opportunities. Many of the anti-corruption measures carried out had been attempted in the past, but the retreat was a major turning point for the regime—almost like a refounding. It does not make sense to say the whole exercise was a façade for CKS to grab power.

4. The KMT Reconstruction and Its Success

In this section, I lay out how the KMT transformed between 1950 and 1952, argue that one of its successes was reducing corruption, and explain why. The Central Reconstruction Committee (CRC), which had vast powers to oversee the Reconstruction, first met in August 1950. CKS personally selected many of its members and sidelined rivals by shunting CC Clique members and other party veterans who might interfere with his plans into the newly created but largely powerless Central Advisory Committee. Notably, the CRC membership was relatively young, averaging 47 years old.¹²⁶ The CRC met 420 times, averaging several times a week.¹²⁷ It launched multiple reforms, with the most fundamental being the dismissal and re-registration of all party members.

Re-registering KMT members en masse was the first step in investigating and cleansing the party. It was not a new idea, having been proposed and promised at least once before, in 1947—but now it would actually happen. Just over 20,000 civilian members reapplied, with the vast majority ultimately being accepted.¹²⁸ Those who did not reapply were automatically out.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Dickson, “The Lessons of Defeat,” pp. 65–67.

¹²⁷ *KMT Central Reconstruction Committee Resolution Compilation* (CRC Secretariat, Taipei, 1952).
《中國國民黨中央改造委員會決議案彙編》(中央委員會秘書處, 臺北, 1952).

¹²⁸ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, pp. 56–57.

¹²⁹ Dickson, “The Lessons of Defeat,” p. 67.

This was an important process of assessment because during the chaotic 1930s and 1940s many people had joined the KMT almost without screening.¹³⁰ According to the CRC, the two key reasons for making people rejoin the party were the “chaos of war” and “taking the opportunity to clean those who wavered and were corrupted, and those without solid faith [in the cause].”¹³¹ Now members would all be investigated, mainly for any past disloyalty, corruption, incompetence, or act of “oppressing or exploiting people.”¹³² This was also true for new party members, whom the KMT recruited aggressively in this period. The CRC explained that “from now on, our party pays a lot of attention to quality, where quality is cleanliness and being committed to revolution...new members must undergo ‘small group discussion,’ training, testing, and only then can join the party.”¹³³ By the end of the Reconstruction in October 1952, the total of returning members and new members both civilian and military was around 280,000.

Figure 2.1:¹³⁴

KMT Reconstruction Organization Chart

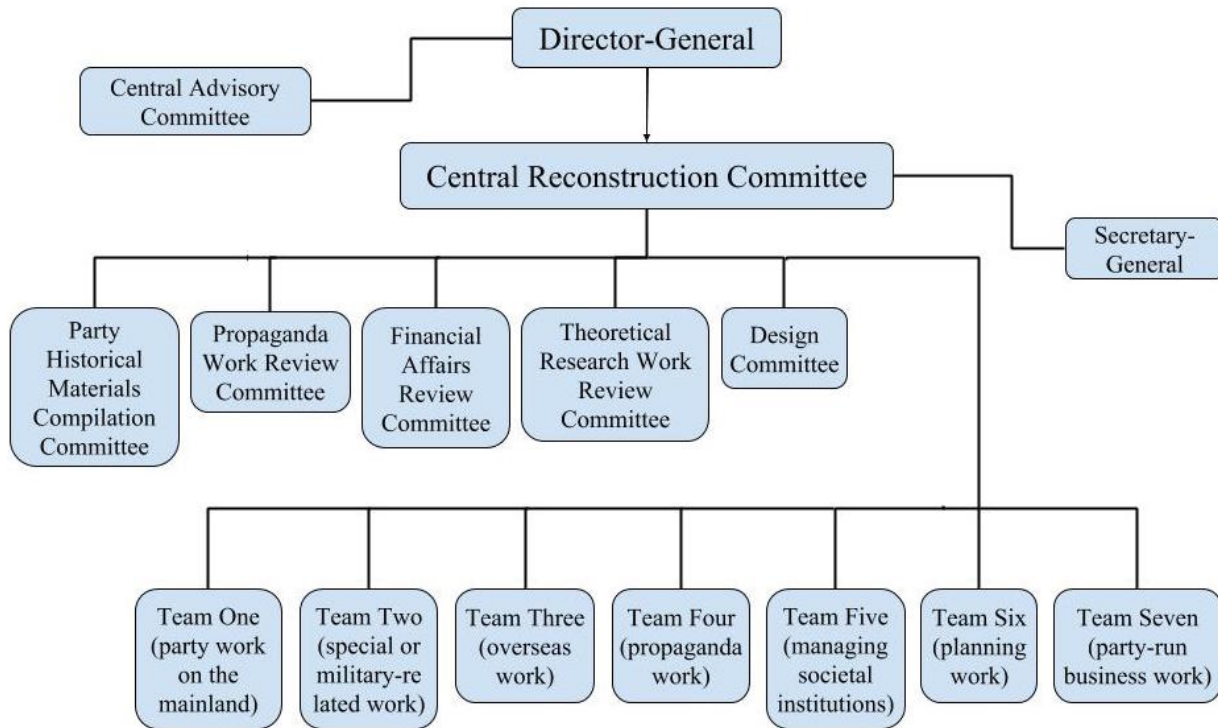
¹³⁰ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, p. 60.

¹³¹ Quoted in Qin, *The History of the Political Development of the Republic of China*, p. 1627.

¹³² Document at repository number 002-080300-00011-019, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1949–50.

¹³³ Quoted in Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, p. 60.

¹³⁴ Sources: Li Yunhan, *History of the Chinese Kuomintang* Vol. 4. (Party History Committee of the Kuomintang Central Committee, published by Modern China Publishing House, 1994), p. 85. / 李雲漢, 《中國國民黨史述》第4卷 (中國國民黨中央委員會黨史委員會, 近代中國出版社發行, 1994), p. 85.; President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, various documents.



Related to the investigation and training of members was the KMT's reorganization into party cells, which were embedded into governmental bodies and societal institutions to an unprecedented degree. Each cell had "3–11 people," a reduction from the party branches of 10–50 they replaced. This small size made them more versatile in terms of where they could penetrate. Overall, over 34,000 party cells were established.¹³⁵ These party cells served similar functions to those in the CCP and other communist regimes. "Party cells in government organizations gave the KMT political control over the state apparatus, cells in economic, educational, and social organs allowed the KMT to control and mobilize the population."¹³⁶ From their positions in schools, overseas communities, military-run businesses, and many other

¹³⁵ Lin, *Paths to Democracy*, pp. 74–75.

¹³⁶ Dickson, "The Kuomintang Before Democratization," p. 46.

places, party cells served to enforce discipline and “keep the leadership informed.”¹³⁷ In the military, the new political commissars ““were charged with forming and supervising party cells, conducting political indoctrination, and serving as the party’s eyes and ears in the military.’ Membership drives in 1952–54 tried to recruit at least one member from every squad and to have a party cell in each platoon.”¹³⁸

The Reconstruction saw previously important bodies disbanded, sidelined, or bypassed. The CRC replaced the Central Executive Committee, which was disbanded. The existing Supervision Commission, which combated corruption and other disciplinary infractions, also ceased operations. Various other central committees were relegated to limbo, shutting out some factions from power forever.¹³⁹ As mentioned, the Central Advisory Committee kept older and less malleable party veterans out of the way. These institutional changes, and the KMT Reconstruction more generally, were planned by the President’s Office, which CKS had created and staffed in the summer of 1949. The declaration of martial law in May 1949, besides having a chilling effect on society and civil liberties, loosened the already weak constraints on the top leadership. CKS was able to bypass constitutional requirements, like having executive orders approved by the legislature.¹⁴⁰

Aiming to ensure future discipline, the party created a centralized disciplinary and investigatory apparatus, and placed trained teams in party and state organs to monitor them. The new Discipline Committee coordinated these efforts and oversaw 1,040 cases involving

¹³⁷ Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle*, p. 60.

¹³⁸ Tien Hung-Mao, *The Great Transition: Political and Social Change in the Republic of China* (Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1989), p. 68.

¹³⁹ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁰ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, p. 261.

violations of party discipline before August 1952.¹⁴¹ Most of these had to do with officials being suspected of aiding the Communists, not corruption, but a powerful mechanism was in place to deter or punish future corruption. The Discipline Committee had subsidiary committees at all party levels and carried out yearly re-registrations of all party members as a compliance measure.¹⁴² It did not hold back from investigating high-level officials and was aided at lower levels by numerous investigatory teams.

Investigatory teams placed in different sectors and levels were able to accuse cadres of disciplinary violations, pass these accusations up through the Reconstruction Committees one level above theirs (e.g. district reports to county), and then have people thrown out of the party or otherwise punished—all without judicial oversight. Some teams were “roving,” descending on a county and carrying out training in KMT procedures, propagandizing, and investigating discipline. Special teams mobilized from the CRC investigated the government’s work in four areas, “the economy, society, culture, and politics,” and reported directly to the president.¹⁴³ In one monthly report from 1952, the CRC stated that it continued to investigate members and give out registration cards, sent committee members to every county to oversee local campaign work, and held four meetings on small group issues, two on economic issues, and one on party work. They also discussed various random inspections that might be carried out.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Dickson, “The Lessons of Defeat,” p. 71.

¹⁴² Chen Zhengmao, “Survival under Defeat: The Nationalist Party’s Reform Movement in Taiwan,” *Journal of General Science of Northern Taiwan Institute of Science and Technology*, (2008), Iss. 4, p. 99.
陳正茂, “挫敗下求生：國民黨在臺灣的改造運動,” 北臺灣科技學院通識學報 4 期, p. 99.

¹⁴³ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, pp. 64, 110, 133.

¹⁴⁴ Document at repository number 6.41/84, Kuomintang Party History Archives, April 1952.

Early 1952 saw the launch of a more proactive discipline campaign, in which local cadres were supposed to reveal and report their personal histories, monitor and criticize each other, and “clean themselves.”¹⁴⁵ Indeed, the whole Reconstruction was infused with campaigns aimed to make party members develop intrinsic motivation to support KMT projects and stay disciplined. Party members were supposed to rouse their morale, cultivate a fighting spirit, and make progress by working harder and taking personal responsibility.¹⁴⁶ Adding to the general atmosphere, major papers like the *Central Daily News* (中央日報) covered the Reconstruction heavily, usually on the front page, for the two years it was underway. Many of the KMT’s campaign-style tactics and methods were similar to those used to spread central government directives to local areas by the CCP on the mainland.¹⁴⁷ After the Reconstruction, the tasks of investigatory teams and Reconstruction Committees were institutionalized, often by the party cells permanently embedded in state organs at all levels.

Also under the umbrella of the Reconstruction, the leadership reformed party-controlled businesses to reduce conflicts of interest. While mainlanders’ connections to local Taiwanese businesses were initially weak, there were some businesspeople who followed the KMT from the mainland to Taiwan.¹⁴⁸ More importantly, the nearly defeated party still managed major enterprises, like its newspapers, broadcasting company, and other propaganda apparatuses. It also managed interests in “insurance, machinery, and textiles.”¹⁴⁹ In 1950, “industrial

¹⁴⁵ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, p. 66.

¹⁴⁶ Qin, *First Draft of the Honorable President Chiang’s Major Events*, p. 5072.

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter Four.

¹⁴⁸ Cheng Tun-Jen, and Stephan Haggard, *Political Change in Taiwan* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), p. 4.; Edwin A. Winckler and Susan Greenhalgh, Eds., *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan* (Armonk, N.Y.: MESHARPE, 1988), p. 153.

¹⁴⁹ Chen, “Survival under Defeat,” p. 90.

production” was “almost entirely a government responsibility.”¹⁵⁰ The KMT’s goal in these reforms was to get profits out of its businesses but maintain state autonomy from business interests, in part as an anti-corruption measure. So the CRC rationalized and reorganized the party-run businesses, purposefully dividing ownership and management.¹⁵¹ They also put in place hiring restrictions, like three-year waiting periods, and especially tight supervisory measures to prevent collusion and theft among employees.¹⁵² These were not the largest reforms, but the issue of party-run businesses is a tricky one for anti-corruption policies, as evidenced by the CCP’s struggle to define the nature of its party-run businesses in China’s reform era.

Finally, one minor policy worth noting is that the KMT restricted officials’ movements until they could be cleared of corruption and other disciplinary violations. The party announced in February 1950 that it was strictly limiting passports for officials to travel abroad, and that officials would need to get Foreign Ministry clearance. Officials could not go to Hong Kong or Macao in their capacity as private citizens and in official capacities would not be allowed to linger. This was explicitly an anti-embezzlement measure.¹⁵³ There are again parallels to anti-corruption efforts by the CCP, which has in recent years tightened restrictions on the rights of certain officials to travel, move their families abroad, and take large amounts of money out of the country.

Table 2.2:

¹⁵⁰ Records of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, ORE 7–50, “Probable Developments in Taiwan, 03/20/50,” Record Group 263, p. 9.

¹⁵¹ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, p. 123.

¹⁵² Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, p. 91.

¹⁵³ ZYRB, 1950/2/10, p. 1.

Summary of the KMT Reconstruction's Main Reforms

1. CKS created a loyal Central Reconstruction Committee with vast authority to remake the party and the state.
2. The CRC made party members reapply in order to screen, investigate, and train them. It also launched a massive drive to expand membership.
3. The KMT was reorganized into party cells, which then penetrated into governmental bodies and society to an unprecedented degree.
4. CKS brought the military firmly under KMT control with a renewal of the system of political commissars and a centralized budget. (This actually started earlier, in 1949.)
5. Important national bodies were created, rearranged, or disbanded, like the Central Executive Committee.
6. A new, centralized Discipline Committee embedded itself in party organs at various levels.
7. Special teams organized from the center brought the campaign to local areas: training, investigating, punishing wrongdoing, and reporting up.
8. Party-controlled businesses were reformed to reduce conflicts of interest.

Despite these reforms, it is worth noting that the KMT did not go after corruption at the local level in Taiwan, which by all accounts was common, especially in local elections. There were no national elections in the Republic of China until 1969, and the lowest levels of government were the most open and competitive. While some corruption continued at higher levels after the early 1950s in Taiwan, “it was at the lower levels where it was most rife.”¹⁵⁴ Clientelism was common in local elections because “the KMT tolerated the existence of

¹⁵⁴ Keith Maguire, “Modernisation and Clean Government: Tackling Crime, Corruption and Organised Crime in Modern Taiwan,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 28, No. 1 (1997), p. 82.; Ramon H. Myers, Linda Chao, and Kuo Tai-chun, “Consolidating Democracy in the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1996–2000” in Bruce J. Dickson and Chien-min Chao, Eds., *Assessing the Lee Teng-hui Legacy in Taiwan's Politics: Democratic Consolidation and External Relations* (M.E. Sharpe, 2002), pp. 80–81.; Steven J. Hood, *The Kuomintang and the Democratization of Taiwan* (Boulder, Colo.: WestviewPress, 1996), p. 34.

patronage relations in local areas, but prohibited them from entering the central level or otherwise operating outside their local boundaries.”¹⁵⁵ There was a lot of corruption in “issues such as the zoning of land and the awarding of contracts for local government.”¹⁵⁶ Why did the KMT allow factional conflict and money politics in local elections? The most important reason was that they did not threaten the center’s power; factions were local and most winning candidates were allied with the KMT-supported faction anyway.¹⁵⁷ Since local factions operated as political machines, they needed resources to run and then to distribute to their supporters, which drove many of them to ally with the resource-rich KMT.¹⁵⁸ Local elections helped maintain social stability in a country with a major social cleavage between Taiwanese locals and mainlanders, who dominated the government. Local elections also helped the KMT legitimize itself as a democracy.¹⁵⁹ This rife corruption, perpetually just below the eye-line of national Taiwanese politics, would have a major effect on the regime’s overall corruption profile during democratization.

The Reconstruction’s Outcome

The evidence available suggests that the KMT Reconstruction was successful at corruption control, among other reforms. Crucially, many of the new organizations and institutions created by the Reconstruction endured in some form, blocking or reducing the

¹⁵⁵ Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, p. 241.

¹⁵⁶ Maguire, “Modernisation and Clean Government,” p. 82.

¹⁵⁷ Wu Chung-li, “Taiwan’s Local Factions and American Political Machines in Comparative Perspective,” *China Report* 37(1), (2001), pp. 51–69.

¹⁵⁸ Wu, “Taiwan’s Local Factions and American Political Machines in Comparative Perspective.”; Dafydd Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan: Party Change and the Democratic Evolution of Taiwan, 1991–2004* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 10.

¹⁵⁹ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 182.

incentives for future corruption. The Discipline Committee, for example, remained a powerful mechanism for investigating and punishing wrongdoing. After the KMT Reconstruction was complete, “the party still continued to hold annual investigations of all party members.”¹⁶⁰ Party cells continued to spread, routinizing discipline inspections and serving as the party’s eyes and ears in state organs and broader society. The personnel screening and training process established to handle the massive influx of new party members became the standard for future hiring decisions.¹⁶¹ Moreover, political control of the military, which backslides in many new regimes, only got stronger over time. In the years immediately after the Reconstruction, about one third of previously unruly and corrupt military personnel joined the party, organizing into party cells within the military’s existing structure.¹⁶² The major factions from the old KMT never rose again to challenge CKS in any serious way, and exiled corrupt allies from the past were never welcomed back into the party. The informal firewall between corrupt local politics and national politics held; violators of this rule were purged or charged with crimes, like non-KMT politician and activist Lei Chen in 1961, after he tried to unify local leaders into a new party.¹⁶³

More evidence comes from the KMT’s vigor in investigating and punishing corruption. As other scholars have noted, much of the work of clearing out bad apples was done for CKS by the retreat to Taiwan; the harder task was institutionalizing corruption control. But CKS also showed his resolve by challenging high-level corruption in late 1949 and during the KMT

¹⁶⁰ Lin, *Paths to Democracy*, p. 80.

¹⁶¹ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, pp. 154–55.; Qin, *First Draft of the Honorable President Chiang’s Major Events*, p. 5054.

¹⁶² Tien, *The Great Transition*, p. 67.

¹⁶³ Cheng Tun-jen and Chou Tein-cheng, “Informal Politics in Taiwan” in Lowell Dittmer, Haruhiro Fukui, and Peter N.S. Lee, Eds., *Informal Politics in East Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 48.

Reconstruction, especially in the military. For example, the discovery of large-scale embezzlement by General Mao Bang-chu put the leadership in a bind, “since Mao was not only a senior military officer but also a relative of the Generalissimo.” Risking international scandal, since Mao was also the regime’s United Nations representative, CKS purged him and ordered “him to stand trial immediately.”¹⁶⁴ The president showed similar resolve against Mao Renfang and later Lin Dingli, both high-ups in military intelligence, as well as Lu Chengren, from the Central Executive Committee.¹⁶⁵ CKS’s in-laws, H. H. Kung and T. V. Soong, did not follow him to Taiwan, but he at least approved the party’s resolution to expel them. At lower levels in the party and government, the set-up of the Reconstruction provided for “blanket coverage” anti-corruption inspection. That is because intrusive examinations for past disciplinary violations of all varieties were integrated into the party member re-registration, training, and mobilization process. CKS and other KMT leaders highlighted corruption as a particularly dangerous disciplinary violation, allowing reports of it to jump bureaucratic levels to reach the center.¹⁶⁶

The CRC’s own assessments of its work, for what it is worth, were positive. Within the first year, the CRC claimed that the process of reintegrating old party members and initiating new ones was successful, and that factionalism was disappearing.¹⁶⁷ In a follow-up report, the CRC concluded that the “remaking of the party-government relationship was completed,”

¹⁶⁴ Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, p. 250.

¹⁶⁵ Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, pp. 239, 246.; ZYRB, 1950/8/30, p. 1.

¹⁶⁶ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, pp. 92, 245.

¹⁶⁷ Document at repository number 002-080200-00346–011, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1951/05/22.

training and education was “on schedule,” and inspections, including roving inspections had had some success.¹⁶⁸ The work-style of the party, likewise, had “noticeable improvement.”¹⁶⁹

A third kind of evidence is that the KMT Reconstruction left a positive legacy of reduced corruption that has held up even under the scrutiny of historical hindsight. The KMT’s rampant corruption before 1950, including in Taiwan, was no secret to outside observers. After the reforms, appraisals underwent a transformation, to the point of exaggerating success. *The New York Times*, which had reported on the rampant KMT corruption of the 1940s, reported in 1958 that “corruption [on Taiwan] has been largely stamped out.”¹⁷⁰ Certainly, the visibly predatory KMT of the past seemed to have been replaced. “In the mid-1970s, a survey conducted by the *Far Eastern Economic Review* found that: ‘With perhaps one or two exceptions, corruption does not exist at the highest political levels in Nationalist China. The Chinese communists have many appellations for President Chiang Kai-shek. ‘Thief’ is not among them.’”¹⁷¹ The view among most Taiwan experts, even decades after the fact, points to the reforms being a success, specifically in reducing corruption.¹⁷² One Taiwanese corruption control expert I interviewed compared Taiwan under CKS to “early Singapore,” with corruption “strongly controlled.”¹⁷³ The

¹⁶⁸ Document at repository number 13297, Kuomintang Party History Archives, August 1951.

¹⁶⁹ Document at repository number 13297, Kuomintang Party History Archives, August 1951.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 488.

¹⁷¹ Quoted in Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, p. 224.

¹⁷² See: Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle*, p. 59; Hood, *The Kuomintang and the Democratization of Taiwan*, p. 31.; Maguire, “Modernisation and Clean Government,” p. 81.; Peter Chen-main Wang, “A Bastion Created, a Regime Reformed, an Economy Reengineered, 1949–1970” in Murray A. Rubinstein, Ed., *Taiwan: A New History* (M.E. Sharpe, 2007), p. 322.; Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, p. 224.; Cal Clark, “Taiwan Enters Troubled Waters: The Elective Presidencies of Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian” in Murray A. Rubinstein, Ed., *Taiwan: A New History* (M.E. Sharpe, 2007), p. 505.; and Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 525.

¹⁷³ Author’s interview, 2018/6/25.

KMT's own internal assessment, based on detailed analysis of various aspects of the Reconstruction, concluded that after two years substantial progress had been made.¹⁷⁴

There are also indirect signs that the reforms were a success. First, there was not another corruption and economic mismanagement-related uprising by the public. Second, the pace of high-level corruption cases slowed, though there could be many reasons for this. Third, the organized opposition to the KMT that developed in the 1970s was generally not focused on the issue of corruption, though this would later change. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party certainly attacked the KMT for its corruption, but the target was usually the recent corruption that had seemed to rise alongside the regime's political opening.¹⁷⁵ Naturally, tremendous anger also surfaced over the lack of civil liberties, violations of human rights, and other brutal realities of authoritarian rule.

Explanations for the Reconstruction's Outcome

I argue that CKS's unconstrained leadership, assisted by high state capacity, allowed the KMT regime to successfully rebuild itself and curb corruption in the early 1950s. CKS's personal power allowed him to use aggressive tactics to disrupt the corrupt status quo that had settled into almost all parts of the regime. The capable party-state enforced these aggressive reforms, resulting in their institutionalization as checks on official wrongdoing after the Reconstruction's conclusion. By contrast, democratic institutions are an unlikely explanation for the Reconstruction's successes. Neither bottom-up pressure nor quasi-democratic institutions

¹⁷⁴ Document at repository number 002-110701-00011-047, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, July 1952.

¹⁷⁵ See Chapter Six.

were key in motivating CKS to carry out the reforms, and the most democratic political arena—local elections—was the least affected by these reforms.

Chiang Kai-shek's strong leadership, recovered after the retreat to Taiwan, drove this major reorganization of the party and the state. There were no institutional constraints on CKS's personnel choices for the powerful CRC.¹⁷⁶ "All 16 members were hand-picked by Chiang Kai-shek to guarantee that the Reconstruction would serve his interests. The CRC took over all administrative functions that had previously been invested in the Central Standing Committee."¹⁷⁷ Once excluded from the CRC, the CC Clique had even less power to influence the course of reform. CKS overruling entrenched interests, like the military's resistance to centralized KMT control, and bypassed institutional constraints, like judicial oversight and legislative approval. On his authority, the KMT purged even some high-level officials and military officers. Shang argues that "the paramount leader [CKS] had great personal influence over government officials because of his overwhelming personal authority and charisma."¹⁷⁸ The campaign also used propaganda and ideology to keep bureaucrats in line, especially through investigatory teams sent down from the center. Influence on the Reconstruction process from Taiwanese society was limited by the weakness of connections between society and a regime dominated by newcomer mainlanders. CKS purposefully limited the contact between top officials and local elites.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, p. 47.

¹⁷⁷ Dickson, "The Lessons of Defeat," p. 65.

¹⁷⁸ Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, p. 232.

¹⁷⁹ Maguire, "Modernisation and Clean Government," p. 81.

A non-state factor that contributed to CKS's discretionary authority was the relative political weakness of Taiwanese socioeconomic elites. Initially, "the KMT had no ties with Taiwan's gentry, as it had on the mainland, and could therefore harm their economic and political interests without risking its own power base."¹⁸⁰ The Japanese colonial administration did not lay a strong foundation for large-scale industry in Taiwan, unlike in South Korea; Taiwan was initially and primarily for agricultural production.¹⁸¹ "The economic boom in Taiwan did not begin in earnest until the 1970s, and few local businesses had the financial capacity strong enough to afford such bribes until the late 1980s."¹⁸² Overall, big businesses were "more reliant on the state" than it was on them; businesses that came with the KMT from the mainland had few connections in Taiwan, making them reliant on the state as well.¹⁸³ The weakness of these elites constrained their ability to negotiate with CKS on an even footing or push back against the central government's economic plans. Leading economic reforms is more difficult if a few businesses control a large percentage of the economy, monopolize strategic resources or services, or can mobilize public support.

While CKS was able to exercise unconstrained leadership in the Reconstruction, even greater personal control over the regime was also an outcome of the Reconstruction's reforms. "Party authority was to be centralized as never before in the hands of Chiang Kai-shek and his

¹⁸⁰ Dickson, "The Lessons of Defeat," p. 64.; Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 94.

¹⁸¹ Thomas B. Gold, "Colonial Origins of Taiwanese Capitalism" in Edwin A. Winckler and Susan Greenhalgh, Eds., *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan* (Armonk, N.Y.: MESHARPE, 1988).; See also: Wang Jian, *Research on the Economic Policy of the Governor's Office of Taiwan during the Japanese Colonial Period (1895–1945)*, (Taipei City: Straits Academic Press, 2009). / 王鍵, 《日据时期台湾总督府经济政策研究 (1895–1945)》 (台北市: 海峡學術出版社, 2009).; Andrew D. Morris, *Japanese Taiwan: Colonial Rule and Its Contested Legacy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

¹⁸² Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, p. 222.

¹⁸³ Winckler and Greenhalgh, *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan*, p. 153.

son, but the change was portrayed as essential to achieve the necessary and long-sought unity.”¹⁸⁴ He sidelined rival factions, like the CC Clique, and promoted loyalists into the numerous positions of power vacated or created by the Reconstruction.¹⁸⁵ By 1952, CKS became “every bit as much a ‘paramount leader’ in his own (admittedly much smaller) sphere as was Mao on the mainland.”¹⁸⁶

State capacity was necessary but not sufficient for the KMT Reconstruction and its anti-corruption success. Such a major reorganization of the party would have led to chaos in a less capable state. Re-registering party members, building party cells, and empowering investigatory teams to penetrate governmental bodies and societal groups are all tasks that demand and demonstrate a high level of administrative/organizational capacity. The KMT also demonstrated its capacity to manage the distribution of resources by reforming party-run businesses and restricting access to the central government for local political machines. If the Reconstruction’s outcomes had come about through a gradual process of improving quality and integrity in existing KMT institutions, then pre-existing state capacity might be a sufficient explanation. But the Reconstruction required leadership. CKS and other KMT leaders planned and executed a remaking of the KMT. High state capacity does not give leaders that authority, and is perfectly compatible with constrained leaders or even collective leadership. Without a paramount leader, which is not to say CKS in particular, it is hard to see how most of the reforms that make up the KMT Reconstruction could have been pushed through.

¹⁸⁴ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 442.

¹⁸⁵ Feng, *Research on the Chinese Kuomintang Reconstruction in Taiwan 1950–1952*, pp. 28–31.

¹⁸⁶ Roy, *Taiwan*, p. 82.

The KMT's revolutionary origins contributed to its development of both unconstrained leadership and state capacity, but did not lead automatically to anti-corruption success. Revolutions, Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way explain, "tend to produce a generation of leaders with extraordinary legitimacy and unquestioned authority, which can be used to unify the party and impose discipline during crises." Under them are mass-based, "unusually disciplined ruling parties, marked by militarized structures, [and] strong partisan identities."¹⁸⁷ However, the KMT was already a revolutionary regime in control of a state during the Nanjing Decade (1927–37), when corruption was rampant. Further consolidation of power by the top leadership and advances in state capacity were necessary. The retreat to Taiwan was in this sense fortuitous, the challenges this relocation posed notwithstanding.

5. Chiang Ching-kuo and the Governmental Rejuvenation

Long before he took over as Taiwan's paramount leader in the early 1970s, Chiang Ching-kuo was at his father's side, learning to lead and cultivating his own authority within the KMT. CKS involved his son in important military and political decision-making throughout the 1940s, including tasking him late in the decade with reversing Shanghai's troublesome inflation and economic mismanagement. After the retreat to Taiwan, CCK acted on his father's behalf to appoint political commissars in the military, causing the U.S. to complain of his "growing influence" in military affairs.¹⁸⁸ Even more importantly, he became head of the secret police, a position which he used to ruthlessly stamp out opposition to his father's rule, committing grave human rights abuses along the way. As in other cases in authoritarian regimes, leadership of the

¹⁸⁷ Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 24, No. 3 (2013), pp. 7–9.

¹⁸⁸ Lin, *Accidental State*, p. 193.

coercive apparatus was a stepping stone to greater power. After a few years as Minister of Defense (1965–69) and Vice Premier (1969–72), he became Taiwan’s premier in 1972, effectively putting him in charge despite his elderly father’s position as president until his death in 1975.

From his time on the mainland, CCK is best known in China for his “tiger-hunting” anti-corruption efforts in Shanghai in 1948. Shanghai was seen as representative of China’s many problems in the 1940s: foreign occupation, corruption, opium addiction, crime, prostitution, etc. But CCK’s efforts failed to bring down many “tigers” (meaning elites and high-level officials) because of “vested interests” among the “colluding officials and businesspeople.”¹⁸⁹ In particular, the credibility of his tiger-hunting was punctured by his inability to follow through on a particular corruption case—against the Yangtze Development Corporation—that implicated members of H. H. Kung’s family.¹⁹⁰ CCK had long shielded Kung from accusations of corruption.

In his first years in Taiwan, CCK built up his own support base and significant personal authority. Already he had close supporters from his time on the mainland: friends from his years in the USSR, supporters from when he ran Gannan in Jiangxi Province (1939–45)—“the most trusted,”—and former students.¹⁹¹ In Taiwan, CCK found that the secret service was in disarray

¹⁸⁹ Wang Heng, “Special Interest Groups and the Fall of the Nanjing National Government—The Example of Chiang Ching-kuo ‘Fighting Tigers’ in Shanghai in 1948,” *Social Science Forum*, (2015), Iss. 4.
王衡, “特殊利益集团与南京国民政府的覆亡——以 1948 年蒋经国上海‘打虎’为例,” *社会科学论坛*, (2015), 4 期, p. 1.

¹⁹⁰ Zheng Huixin, “The Party-State’s Honor and Disgrace and the Rise and Fall of Families—Analysis of the Relationship between Chiang Kai-shek and H. H. Kung,” *Journal of Nanjing University* Vol.48(5), (2015), pp. 59–72.
郑会欣, “党国荣辱与家族兴衰——析蒋介石与孔祥熙之间的关系,” *南京大学学报* Vol.48(5), (2015), pp. 59–72.

¹⁹¹ Sun Jiaqi, *How Chiang Ching-kuo Stole the Nation* (Hong Kong: Zili Publishing House, 1961), pp. 56–57.
孫家麒, 《蔣經國竊國內幕》(香港: 自力出版社, 1961), pp. 56–57.

and that Communists had infiltrated the island with numerous spies, as their own documents later confirmed.¹⁹² CKS had just purged two of the secret service's factions: the military intelligence group formerly headed by Dai Li "and the party intelligence group...headed by the Chen brothers." CCK further purged those "not affiliated with him," brought in old friends, and turned the National Security Bureau into "the core of [his] power and an inner sanctum" for key decision-making.¹⁹³ CCK built a ruthlessly effective intelligence service, and because of growing respect for him within the KMT and his father's support, he had authority beyond his already powerful formal positions.¹⁹⁴ For decades, this was the predominant image of CCK among the Taiwanese: the brutal chief of the secret police. From intelligence, he expanded his profile; soon, he either directly controlled or had allies in the six teams under the Central Committee that were considered the most important in the party, including propaganda, operations on the mainland behind enemy lines, and "political warfare."¹⁹⁵ Analysis by the United States Embassy suggested that CCK's organization-building with the Youth Corps and his later advocacy for more young people and Taiwanese people in the party helped him build up his own power and "erode the residual power and influence of the mainlander old guard." In a win-win, Taiwanization and youthification complemented CCK's desire to "improve [the KMT's] efficiency and responsiveness."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Qi Gaoru, *Chiang Ching-kuo's Critical Biography: I am Taiwanese* (Zhongzhong Publishing House, 1998), p. 156.

漆高儒, 《蔣經國評傳: 我是台灣人》 (正中書局, 1998), p. 156.

¹⁹³ Winckler and Greenhalgh, *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan*, pp. 156–57.

¹⁹⁴ Winckler and Greenhalgh, *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan*, p. 157.

¹⁹⁵ Sun Jiaqi, *How Chiang Ching-kuo Stole the Nation*, pp. 31–34.

¹⁹⁶ "The Kuomintang: A Party in Transition, 1974/8/5," U.S. State Department cable. Central Foreign Policy Files, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

CCK continued his power consolidation in the 1960s and early 1970s, rising to a position of unconstrained leadership after becoming premier in 1972. By the early 1960s he had a decisive grip on the military, having placed his allies throughout and purged others or sent them to diplomatic posts abroad. Chen Cheng's death from cancer in 1965 sped up this process. "Before he died he advised his followers to dissolve themselves as a faction and to join Chiang Ching-kuo as individuals whenever possible."¹⁹⁷ CCK also began to branch out from military and security fields and "expand his reach into economic affairs."¹⁹⁸ Peng Mengqi, the former city garrison commander in Gaoxiong and another high-profile rival, was sent abroad to be an ambassador.¹⁹⁹ The succession was remarkably smooth, with CCK seemingly in full control even before taking the premiership.²⁰⁰ Remarkably, factionalism in the KMT "was subdued" until after CCK's death in 1988.²⁰¹ Dissident writer Liu Yiliang, who was later assassinated in the U.S., noted in his biography that when CCK took power in 1972, there was no one who could oppose him.²⁰² Western newspapers reported that he was "solidly in charge."²⁰³

In April 1975, after CKS's death, CCK's position as the leader of the party was confirmed by the creation of and his election to a new party position: "chairman." The U.S.

¹⁹⁷ Winckler and Greenhalgh, *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan*, p. 159.

¹⁹⁸ Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992*, p. 113.

¹⁹⁹ Winckler and Greenhalgh, *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan*, p. 160.

²⁰⁰ Chen Mingtong, *Factional Politics and Political Changes in Taiwan* (New Naturalism Publishing House, 2001), p. 191.

陳明通,《派系政治與臺灣政治變遷》(新自然主義, 2001), p. 191.

²⁰¹ Cheng and Chou, "Informal Politics in Taiwan," p. 47.

²⁰² Jiang Nan, *Biography of Chiang Ching-kuo* (Beijing: China Friendship Publishing, 1984), p. 460.

Note: Liu Yiliang, also known as Henry Liu, wrote this biography under the pseudonym Jiang Nan [江南]. 江南,《蔣經國傳》(北京: 中國友誼出版公司, 1984), p. 460.

²⁰³ *Far Eastern Economic Review* (FEER), 1972/10/21, p. 20.

Embassy noted that this move was of dubious legality, but it did not matter. State-controlled television in Taiwan projected CCK's strength with a "slow pan of the assembled delegates so all could see the vote was unanimous...statements of support appeared from all quarters of the local population: from college youth to aging farmers, from independent politicians to the Young China Party and the Democratic Socialist Party."²⁰⁴ The KMT Manifesto promulgated following CKS's death reaffirmed the party's commitment to "strong leadership at the center" as one of its five guiding principles.²⁰⁵

At the same time, government corruption was making a comeback, though by no means reproducing the large-scale embezzlement and insubordination of the pre-1950 era. Though the KMT Reconstruction had successfully pushed government corruption off the political agenda for over a decade, corruption "came creeping back in."²⁰⁶ The Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau's workload of corruption cases inched upwards over the 1960s, until it was processing around 100 cases a year.²⁰⁷ Bribe-taking seemed to be spreading among low- and mid-level officials, for example in the judiciary and the customs office.²⁰⁸ There could be various explanations for this general slide in clean government: bureaucrats were stuck with low wages while the booming economy lifted private enterprises; fears of an imminent communist invasion receded, decreasing incentives for cohesion; and the fact that all campaign-style reforms, even when institutionalized, fade in vigor over time.

²⁰⁴ "Special Central Committee Meeting: CCK Takes Control, 1975/4/29," State Department cable.

²⁰⁵ "KMT Manifesto, 1975/4/29," State Department cable.

²⁰⁶ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 87.

²⁰⁷ Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, p. 234.

²⁰⁸ Ma Yinghua, *Chiang Ching-kuo's Full Record: 1910-1988* (Beijing: Wenhua Publishing, 2009), p. 685. 马英华, 《蒋经国全纪录: 1910-1988》(北京市: 华文出版社, 2009), p. 685.

Motives for a New Reform

Beginning in 1969 and culminating in 1972, CKS and CCK carried out a campaign of Governmental Rejuvenation (政治革新)—the most significant set of political reforms since the KMT Reconstruction two decades earlier. It was CKS who initially ordered the Rejuvenation in 1968, but CCK would come to lead it.²⁰⁹ His father made sure CCK was “at the front line of reform” happening within the KMT in the late 1960s in order to stabilize his future rule.²¹⁰ In broad brushstrokes, the Governmental Rejuvenation was a state-building reform that involved 1) bringing more Taiwanese, more youths, and more educated people into government, 2) gradual political liberalization, and 3) fighting corruption and improving bureaucratic efficiency.

Publicly, CCK presented the Rejuvenation as a way to further the party’s revolutionary principles and speed the recovery of the Chinese mainland. In a speech he made upon becoming premier, CCK explained the connection. His first thought upon taking office, he claimed, was of 1949; “because we lost China we have to get it back... upon becoming premier that is my mission.” The second and third thoughts were that he had a chance to turn things around and work for the people. The fourth thing, therefore, was that he had a chance to “achieve the Three Principles that we believe in...take the ideological ideal and make it a reality.” To do that, CCK argued, there had to be a “Governmental Rejuvenation.”²¹¹ These reforms were also presented in

²⁰⁹ Document at repository number 005-010206-00045-003, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, May 1969.

²¹⁰ Li Songlin and Chen Taixian, *Chiang Ching-kuo Biography* (Unity Publishing House, 2002), p. 294. 李松林、陈太先,《蒋经国大传》(上、下)(团结出版社,2002),p.294.

²¹¹ Document at repository number 005-010503-00048-002, Important Documents, Speeches, Writings, Manuscripts, etc. Part 2, Academia Historica Archives, 1973.

other high-level government communications as being crucial to “counterattacking and restoring the country” and making Taiwan “a three principles model province.”²¹²

The goal of retaking the mainland was increasingly unrealistic, and revolutionary goals were superseded by developmental ones. U.S. intelligence noted in 1975 the declining “frequency and conviction” in the “lip service” paid to retaking the mainland, concluding instead that “Premier Chiang has continued his father’s policy of concentrating on Taiwan’s development and has demonstrated considerable political skills in dealing with the island’s problems.”²¹³ CKS and CCK wanted to advance state-building to make Taiwan as strong and prosperous a base as possible.²¹⁴ CKS evolved less, and continued to say that reforms to the government in Taiwan were “using the methods of reform to achieve the goals of revolution,” citing Japan’s Meiji Restoration as supposedly another such case.²¹⁵

Within that larger agenda, the Governmental Rejuvenation was specifically a response to the threat posed by Taiwan’s weakening international position.²¹⁶ In the early 1960s, the growing Sino-Soviet split was “severely undermin[ing] Taiwan’s strategic importance to US security in the region.” By the late 1960s, American president Richard Nixon was openly mulling shifting

²¹² Document at repository number 005-010201-00007-018, President Chiang Ching-kuo Case Files, 1972/4/4.; 005-010504-00024-001, President Chiang Ching-kuo Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1967/1/06.

²¹³ State Department Briefing Paper, 1975, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 4, folder “China, Republic of (3),” Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

²¹⁴ Scholars interviewed by the author all vouched for CCK’s consistent commitment to development, though a few were doubtful that CKS ever saw Taiwan as more than a temporary base.

The U.S. Embassy in Taipei concluded that “virtually all” Taiwanese wanted Taiwan to be eventually ruled primarily by Taiwanese, while “most” mainlanders desired reunification with the mainland but realized this was “unlikely in the near future.” See: “Views on the Political Future of Taiwan, 1975/10/2,” State Department cable.

²¹⁵ Document at repository number 020-130600-0001, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica Archives, 1969/6/9, p. 65.

²¹⁶ Tien Hung-Mao and Shiao Chyuan-Jeng, “Taiwan’s Democratization: A Summary,” *World Affairs* Vol. 155, No. 2, Democracy in Taiwan: Part One (Fall 1992), p. 58.

the U.S.'s policies on China.²¹⁷ There was a great deal of fear in Taiwan that U.S.-China normalization would lead to the U.S. abandoning its promise of military protection for the island. Then the Republic of China lost its United Nations seat in 1971 and the U.S. and China signed the Shanghai Communiqué in early 1972.

The Rejuvenation's political liberalization aimed to appeal to the United States by emphasizing that Taiwan was at least partially democratic, as opposed to China.²¹⁸ Early moves toward political liberalization included new national-level elections and a loosening of political repression. "The regime began gradually to liberalize, allowing more participation, recruiting more Taiwanese to party membership and government posts, and allowing somewhat more freedom of speech."²¹⁹ The supplementary legislative elections in 1969 were an important early step. The government strove to deliver its message of political reform to Nixon. Consider Vice President Yen Chia-kan's reply when in a meeting in early 1973 Nixon expressed his concern that Taiwan was having "problems continuing your diplomatic ties with many countries."

Yen: We know we will continue to work hard and face our future and keep the support of our friends. We have had an election of our legislative bodies. We are drawing more and more local people into politics, more younger people. Education is moving rapidly. We are also emphasizing citizenship and vocational education.

Nixon: That's an excellent move.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Hu Ching-fen, "Taiwan's Geopolitics and Chiang Ching-Kuo's Decision to Democratize Taiwan," *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 1, (2005), p. 29.

²¹⁸ Lin Feng, "Analysis of Taiwan's 'Governmental Rejuvenation,'" *Taiwan Research Journal*, (1987), Iss. 03, pp. 29–36. / 林冈, "台湾'政治革新'探析," 台湾研究集刊, (1987), 3 期, pp. 29–36., Ma, *Chiang Ching-kuo's Full Record*, p. 678.

²¹⁹ Andrew J. Nathan and Helen V.S. Ho, "Chiang Ching-kuo's Decision for Political Reform" in Leng Shao-chuan, Ed., *Chiang Ching-kuo's Leadership in the Development of the Republic of China on Taiwan* Vol. 3, (University Press of America, 1993), p. 50.

²²⁰ Document 2, FRUS, 1969–1976, *Volume XVIII, China, 1973–1976*, 1973/1/5.

CCK also tried to get the good news across to the U.S., telling the American ambassador in Taipei “that his aim [was] to strengthen Taiwan’s unity and to move toward an open society.”²²¹

The U.S. State Department later assessed that “relations with the United States are the government’s overriding concern.”²²²

A weakening international position also meant a greater need to shore up domestic support for the regime. A more inclusive government could help, but CKS and CCK also sought to address a general decline in party image. Officials were seen as too old, too lazy, and unresponsive to the public.²²³ CCK was reportedly personally offended by deteriorating party quality, perhaps because of his “puritanical communist” background and training in the Soviet Union.²²⁴ Many anti-corruption measures in the Rejuvenation were very similar to what the KMT assessed to have been Singapore’s successful and widely praised clean government reforms. An internal KMT report written in 1969 credited Singapore’s success to, among other things, striking hard with its anti-corruption bureau and secret police, forcing early retirements, promoting based on merit, raising wages, and simplifying bureaucratic procedures.²²⁵ The recommendations of the report, which laid out Singapore’s successes as a model for Taiwan, seem to have been followed. That said, we cannot rule out the possibility that this report was manipulated by the KMT leadership to justify future actions.

²²¹ “Morning Summary of Significant Reports, 1973/08/08,” U.S. State Department cable.

²²² State Department Briefing Paper, 1975, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 4, folder “China, Republic of (3),” Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

²²³ Ma, *Chiang Ching-kuo’s Full Record*, p. 678.

²²⁴ Author’s interview in Taiwan with a retired high-level diplomatic official, 2018/7/19.

²²⁵ “On Singapore’s Anti-Corruption...” / “關於新加坡因設有反貪污...”, President Chiang Ching-kuo Case Files, Academia Historica Archives. Note: The report is undated, but mentions a Singaporean government hygiene campaign that began “last year.” If I am correct in assuming this is the Keep Singapore Clean campaign of 1968, then it stands to reason that this report is from 1969.

Though it helped CCK consolidate his status as a new leader, the Governmental Rejuvenation was not simply a cover for purging political rivals. Most of CCK's measures were against low-level corruption, which posed no immediate political threat to him. Power consolidation was not incompatible with more substantial and institutional reforms, which were not a smokescreen. The Rejuvenation's Taiwanization and youthification policies succeeded in changing the makeup of the government, for example, though of course they did not resolve long-standing tensions between mainlanders and Taiwanese people. The concurrent beginning of political liberalization also makes it hard to interpret CCK's efforts as just a power grab. Today, Taiwanese sympathetic to CCK claim he "understood democracy better" than his father and that the commitment to democracy was "always there," but awaited the changed international context of the late 1960s and early 1970s. By contrast, critics see CCK's support for political liberalization—a serious reversal for the head of the secret police during Taiwan's White Terror—as purely strategic.²²⁶ But even harsh critics of his rule concede that CCK was not personally corrupt.²²⁷

Nor was the Rejuvenation a result of democratic pressures for reform from below; it came too early in Taiwan's political development to be attributable to opposition pressure or grassroots protest. After early opposition activity in the 1950s faded or was repressed, Taiwan's domestic political opposition began to organize again in earnest in the 1970s. Mass protests were

²²⁶ Author's interviews with four Taiwanese scholars, summer 2018.

²²⁷ Jiang, *Biography of Chiang Ching-kuo*, p. 451. The National Security Bureau was surprised in 1990 to have returned to them the house that CCK had been using. He returned it because it had not been his personal property. Qi Gaoru, *Chiang Ching-kuo's Life: From Siberian Slave Laborer to the President of the Republic of China* (Biographical Literature Series, 1991), p. 152. / 漆高儒, 《蔣經國的一生: 從西伯利亞奴工到中華民國總統》(傳記文學叢刊, 1991), p. 152.

rare in the early 1970s; mass unrest against the regime and its corruption, which exploded in South Korea in the mid-1970s, was absent in Taipei at the time.

In sum, I argue that the KMT leadership combated corruption in this period as part of the state-building Governmental Rejuvenation, which aimed at securing the regime's future and the nation's future in an increasingly threatening international environment. Taiwanization, youthification, corruption control, and political liberalization were the right tools at the time to improve governance and secure a broader base of support for the regime both at home and abroad. Political liberalization might seem like an ideological departure for a nondemocratic revolutionary party, but the KMT was in principle dedicated to democracy from the beginning. It would be naïve to believe that KMT leaders had been trying to get to democracy all along and did so once the circumstances were right. Instead, we should see the Governmental Rejuvenation as a strategic choice by a party with few immediate threats but also few good long-term options. CKS and CCK were not under threat of overthrow in 1969 or 1972, but the future of a modern, prosperous, non-communist China, even if just on the island of Taiwan, was under threat.

Corruption Control in the Governmental Rejuvenation

KMT slogans for the campaign promised that it would “construct a clean and capable (廉能) modern government and modern country” and an “organized and disciplined democracy.”²²⁸ Various reforms would attempt to increase efficiency, transparency and, as CCK put it, “punish embezzlement heavily, reform the political atmosphere, and purge harmful black sheep.”²²⁹ Of the Ten Principles of Reform that CCK announced for the Rejuvenation, at least half were

²²⁸ Document at repository number 005-010206-00045-003, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, May 1969. P. 26.

²²⁹ Ma, *Chiang Ching-kuo's Full Record*, p. 683.

directly about how public servants should use public resources and remain free from outside monetary influence. The Principles included: a restriction on using public money off-budget for housing construction; a crackdown on luxurious public events, like ribbon-cutting ceremonies; a restriction on blank-check foreign trips by officials and a ban on “receptions” for officials traveling for work domestically; and new rules on civil servants and congratulatory “red envelopes,” which are filled with money and given at weddings and other social occasions.²³⁰

CCK surprised the public with the aggressiveness of his anti-corruption efforts and with his personal involvement in seeing major cases through. In 1969, the Banana Scandal, which was about government-business collusion and the manipulation of one of Taiwan’s biggest exports, led to the removal of the Governor of the Central Bank, Hsu Po-yuan, and more than 50 other officials and businessmen. Hsu was the highest-ranking official dismissed since the early 1950s.²³¹ In the first year after passing the Ten Principles of Reform, some 926 officials appointed or above bureaucratic rank six from within the Executive Yuan and its sub-departments were disciplined.²³² Wang Zhengyi received a life sentence for embezzlement, despite being the former Director of Personnel Administration and a relative of CCK’s. Vice-Inspector General of Customs Bai Qingguo was executed. Gaoxiong’s mayor, Yang Jinhu, got five years; his wife got ten. Newspapers show numerous other arrests and cases of officials being disciplined for handing out money at weddings, partying in a state of undress with girls, or other disciplinary violations.²³³ After CCK instructed the Ministry of Justice to focus on corruption,

²³⁰ *China Times* / 中國時報 (ZGSB), 1972/6/9, p. 1.

²³¹ J. Bruce Jacobs, “Recent Leadership and Political Trends in Taiwan *,” *The China Quarterly* 45 (1971), pp. 131–32.

²³² Ma, *Chiang Ching-kuo’s Full Record*, p. 685.; ZGSB, 1972/1/4, p. 2.

²³³ See for example: ZGSB, 1972/6/11, p. 3.; ZGSB, 1972/7/5, p. 6.; *United Daily News* / 聯合報 (LHB), 1972/7/11, p. 1.; and ZGSB, 1972/7/12, p. 3.

nearly 3,000 people were disciplined as part of the ‘cleaning of politics’ campaign between 1970 and May 1972, though most of these were not specifically corruption cases and finer data are hard to find.²³⁴ There was also a planned wave of retirements—3,857 across the whole government—which the leadership used to put in place younger, better educated, and better trained replacements.²³⁵

Many rules announced in this period intended to prevent corruption by changing the lifestyles of officials. Besides the Ten Principles, new restrictions on extravagant spending at weddings and funerals, hosting banquets, visiting nightclubs, hiring prostitutes, and so on combated the profligate lifestyles that the public and the KMT leadership assumed were seducing officials into misusing public funds. A senior officer in the Ministry of the Interior was dismissed just for preparing more than ten tables at his child’s wedding, which exceeded limits set to ensure official frugality.²³⁶ The most highly publicized anti-corruption actions were the repeated raids on nightclubs, brothels and other leisure establishments, which by early 1973 resulted in the punishment of 1,881 officials.²³⁷ Soon, there were “numerous closings of ‘hostess’ establishments and a steep decline in invitations sent through the mails [sic].”²³⁸ Alongside the disciplining of officials was a major campaign to reward clean officials for their probity. From

²³⁴ ZGSB, 1972/6/19, p. 6.

²³⁵ ZYRB, 1973/6/11.

²³⁶ Qi, *Chiang Ching-kuo’s Life*, p. 151.

²³⁷ LHB, 1973/4/8.

²³⁸ J. Bruce Jacobs, “Taiwan 1972: Political Season,” *Asian Survey* 13, No. 1 (1973), p. 110.

January to November of 1971, more than 7,900 civil servants were materially rewarded for having clean records.²³⁹

As in the KMT Reconstruction, CCK set up special committees and investigation teams loyal to him to go all over the country and enforce his reforms in party and governmental organs. Pilot projects for the Political Work-Style Rejuvenation, part of the Governmental Rejuvenation, began in Yilan and Xinzhu in 1970.²⁴⁰ By mid-1972, it was underway in four cities and Jiayi County. As soon as CCK became premier in June 1972, many more cities and counties set up Political Work-Style teams to investigate disciplinary violations according to the Ten Principles and other new standards.²⁴¹ Part of the work of these teams involved communicating public grievances up to the leadership, whether they were about specific cases of corruption or broader complaints about the KMT's rule.²⁴² Each of the initial trial cities had three "public opinion small teams," with a declared mission to "directly ask agricultural workers and ordinary people" about their grievances.²⁴³ Relatedly, public opinion boxes were set up all around the country. They received 761 complaints in the first year, and over a hundred more complaints directly solicited or "uncovered" by direct interviewing.²⁴⁴ CCK set an example by personally getting involved in going around the country and hearing ordinary people's grievances. Unlike in many

²³⁹ ZGSB, 1972/1/4, p. 2.

²⁴⁰ ZGSB, 1972/1/24, p. 2.

²⁴¹ LHB, 1972/6/19, p. 2.

²⁴² ZYRB, 1972/6/19, p. 3.

²⁴³ ZYRB, 1972/6/19.

²⁴⁴ ZYRB, 1973/06/11.

other cases of authoritarian father-son succession, here the son is said to have had more facility interacting with ordinary people.

CCK made organizational changes and promoted specific new rules to try to institutionalize the Rejuvenation, though these were not as ambitious as the reforms his father had advocated in the early 1950s. The main ones were the Ten Principles, but CCK also ordered members of the Executive Yuan to divest from various business interests.²⁴⁵ He then banned bureau heads from simultaneously holding official and private sector positions, or dual positions that could have some other conflict of interest.²⁴⁶ Another group of new rules attempted to simplify administration and increase transparency: fewer meetings, simpler laws, simplified central administrative units, and sometimes fewer levels in governmental organs.²⁴⁷

Outcomes of the Governmental Rejuvenation

New anti-corruption institutions curbed corruption among low- and medium-level officials, but did little to constrain elites or high-level officials. The government's internal accounting concluded that six of CCK's Ten Principles were fully implemented (1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9) and that varying levels of progress were made on the remaining four.²⁴⁸ That meant successful implementation of reforms curtailing extra-budget housing for officials, ground-breaking ceremonies, travel expenses, hospitality for visiting officials, higher-level officials attending

²⁴⁵ *The Chiang Ching-kuo Collection*, (Government Information Office of the Executive Yuan, 1991). 《蒋经国先生全集》(行政院新闻局, 1991), p. 353.

²⁴⁶ Jiang, *Biography of Chiang Ching-kuo*, p. 430.; Li and Chen, *Chiang Ching-kuo Biography*, p. 298.

²⁴⁷ *The Chiang Ching-kuo Collection*, p. 363.; Jacobs, "Taiwan 1972: Political Season."; and LHB, 1973/6/6, p. 2.

²⁴⁸ Document at repository number 113000000610A, Research, Development and Evaluation Commission of the Executive Yuan, Academia Historica Archives, 1979/9/25.; Document at repository number 020-180100-0001, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1981.

ribbon-cuttings, etc. Government agencies continued to have to report on their progress in enforcing each of the Ten Principles twice a year through the end of the 1970s.²⁴⁹ For example, the Import-Export Bank of the Republic of China continued to report how it had handled issues like housing for employees, expenses for trips to Japan by managers, and expenses for an opening ceremony in the first half of 1979. The Import-Export Bank even reported what kind of “alternative proper entertainment” it provided to keep employees away from “improper entertainment.”²⁵⁰

Beyond the Ten Principles, some rules became routine, while others did not last. We know for example that officials in the transportation department, which had been one of the most corrupt, did follow orders and give up their double posts in the private sector.²⁵¹ So did some top officials, like the head of the postal bureau and the head of the Bureau of Merchant Investments.²⁵² In accordance with the spirit of CCK’s Ten Principles, there were visibly fewer ribbon cuttings and opening ceremonies, and greeting events for officials became less luxurious.²⁵³ And as noted, many leisure establishments did have to close down under the new austerity. The government judged the simplification of bureaucratic procedures to be a success.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ Document at repository number 113000000610A, Research, Development and Evaluation Commission of the Executive Yuan, Academia Historica Archives, 1979/9/25, p. 7.

²⁵⁰ Document at repository number 113000000610A, Research, Development and Evaluation Commission of the Executive Yuan, Academia Historica Archives, 1979/9/25, p. 21.

²⁵¹ *The Independent Evening Post* / 自立晚報 (ZLWB), 1972/7/1, p. 1.

²⁵² ZLWB, 1972/7/1, p. 1.

²⁵³ Li Songlin, *Chiang Ching-kuo in His Later Years* (Anhui People’s Publishing House, 2001), p. 113. 李松林, 《晚年蒋经国》 (安徽人民出版社, 2001), p. 113.

²⁵⁴ Document at repository number 60/0028, President Chiang Kai-shek Approvals Files, Kuomintang Party History Archives, 1971/12/1.

On the other hand, CCK himself expressed public frustration with the limited anti-corruption success of his reforms. He complained in early 1973 that the government “has not fully succeeded in breaking this bad bureaucratic custom.”²⁵⁵ In a speech in late 1973, CCK argued that the government was still not “clean enough,” and urged continued efforts.²⁵⁶ And in 1975 he admitted that, despite his efforts, the practice of sending mass wedding invitations was actually on the rise (which may sound innocent enough but had been identified as a gateway to illicit activity).²⁵⁷ Despite this admission, however, the Governmental Rejuvenation was a significant step in the right direction. Even beyond the specific anti-corruption activities, the Taiwanization, youthification, and bureaucratic simplification were seen as having brought new energy into the party and state.

Contemporary observers judged the Rejuvenation as moderately successful, and scholars agree, though the academic literature covers the Rejuvenation much less thoroughly than it does the KMT Reconstruction. The American view was very positive; the State Department reported that “since assuming the premiership last May, CCK has proven to be a strong, widely respected leader and has demonstrated considerable political skill...” With “attacks on official corruption and inefficiency, and administrative reforms, CCK has satisfied public expectations of more effective government performance.”²⁵⁸ The U.S.’s vice ambassador said in a personal capacity that CCK’s reorganization had been very effective, that the promotion of young people had

²⁵⁵ *The Chiang Ching-kuo Collection*, p. 526.

²⁵⁶ “Thoroughly Improve the Shortcomings of Administrative Work” in *A Compilation of President Chiang Kai-shek’s Speeches and Writings* Vol. 8, (Liming Culture Press, 1982) p. 189.

“徹底改進行政工作的缺點,” 《蔣總統經國先生言論著述彙編》第 8 卷 (黎明文化, 1982), p. 189.

²⁵⁷ ZYRB, 1975/3/7, p. 3.

²⁵⁸ “Economic/Commercial Operations, 1973/4/13,” U.S. State Department cable.

exceeded expectations, and that this was extremely helpful to national unity and governmental reform. He added that American businesses had also praised parts of the reform.²⁵⁹ The *Far Eastern Economic Review* wrote at the time that CCK “has made a deep impression on the public with his efforts to raise the levels of efficiency and honesty in government,” and that “most sceptics were won over, first by the perceptible improvement in service by government bureaus, then by the all-out crackdown.”²⁶⁰ “Premier Chiang’s popularity rose as he pushed for increased administrative efficiency, the extirpation of corruption, and the improvement of Taiwanese-Mainlander relations.”²⁶¹ “Satisfaction with the state increased further because of efforts made by the KMT in 1971–1977 to reduce corruption and inefficiency.”²⁶²

Three retired senior official who had worked in Taiwan’s Ministry of Justice as anti-corruption investigators in the 1980s told me that overall discipline among public servants had been better before democratization. One noted that back in the early 1980s, bureau chiefs could not interfere with investigations in their bureaus. As democratization unfolded, bureau chiefs and other senior officials grew more powerful and were able to “not sign off on”—or block—investigations. Also, the merit system for promotions was weakened as more posts were bought and sold. Corruption had been “strongly controlled” by CCK, they argued. These controls weakened and their work was harder when bureau chiefs and legislators became more powerful.²⁶³ This matches a common perception on the right in Taiwan that the KMT system had

²⁵⁹ Document at repository number 005-010205-00055-014, President Chiang Ching-kuo Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1972/6/08.

²⁶⁰ FEER, 1972/9/16, pp. 24–25.

²⁶¹ J. Bruce Jacobs, “Taiwan 1973: Consolidation of the Succession,” *Asian Survey* 14, No. 1 (1974), p. 22.

²⁶² Phillip Newell, *The Transition to the Transition toward Democracy in Taiwan: Political Change in the Chiang Ching-Kuo Era, 1971–1986* Volumes I-III (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1994), p. 324.

²⁶³ Author’s interview, 2017/8/17.

been “pretty clean” before the Lee Teng-hui administration (1988–2000). On the left, Taiwanese people are more likely to describe the authoritarian KMT party-state as “inherently,” by definition corrupt, even if “individual” corruption was less common.²⁶⁴

Even among the budding political opposition to the KMT, known as Tangwai, there was “widespread recognition” of the positive effect of these reforms.²⁶⁵ The *Independent Evening Post* was an outlet for opposition sentiment at the time, though it was occasionally censored by the KMT. Just after CCK became premier in July 1972, an opinion column in the *Independent Evening Post* criticized the government’s reform plans by saying: “there has been a lot of talk but no clear measures. Saying things is a lot easier than getting them done. What kind of government speaks but does not get things done? A government that cannot get things done.”²⁶⁶ A few months into CCK’s reforms though, the tone had changed. The reforms were “good achievements,” which did not “hurt business,” as some anti-corruption measures do.²⁶⁷ An end-of-year editorial gave CCK credit for “taking the wheel in difficult international circumstances” and “making bold reforms” to the government.²⁶⁸ While it is possible that the KMT forced the *Post* to write this, it seems unlikely because: a) they had allowed criticism at the sensitive beginning of CCK’s term, b) political controls were loosening, and c) the praise was not effusive. In June 1975, the *Post* signaled that their opinion had not changed, writing that more than two years out from the Ten Principles, the situation was “greatly improved” and that CCK deserved

²⁶⁴ Author’s interviews, summer 2018.

²⁶⁵ Newell, *The Transition to the Transition toward Democracy in Taiwan*, p. 324.

²⁶⁶ ZLWB, 1972/7/13, p. 1.

²⁶⁷ ZLWB, 1972/9/17, p. 6.

²⁶⁸ ZLWB, 1972/12/31, p. 1.

credit “for often going down to the people and hearing their problems directly.”²⁶⁹ Decades later, the few scholars who address the topic concur that “official corruption was reduced somewhat” and that CCK used his power to limit corruption.²⁷⁰

Nevertheless, corruption continued unchecked in local government and scandals recurred even at the highest levels from time to time. Like his father, CCK never brought local factions to heel; they had roots too deep in society and as before did not pose a threat to the center.²⁷¹ As for high-level corruption, Lin Chia-long explains one major case in 1984:

“Some high-ranking KMT officials were found involved in the bankruptcy of Taipei’s Tenth Credit Cooperative, with tens of thousands of people victimized. This scandal seriously damaged the government’s reputation and resulted in the resignations of KMT secretary-general Chiang Yen-shih and two cabinet ministers. This banking scandal upset [CCK] immensely because it reminded many people of the KMT’s corruption history on the Mainland.”²⁷²

This story points to the continuing problem of corruption, but also the relative rarity of high-level revelations. Only when national-level corruption scandals are scarce should one be so damaging to the government’s reputation.

In sum, we should categorize the Governmental Rejuvenation as a Limited Victory against corruption. In the 11-point scoring system laid out in Chapter One, the Rejuvenation earns a total of 6.5 points for widespread and consistent discipline enforcement, for being viewed as at least a partial success by experts and contemporary observers, for strengthening disciplinary organizations, and for enforcing rules against corruption and governmental practices associated with corruption. The Rejuvenation was not a Breakthrough because of its failure to severely

²⁶⁹ ZLWB, 1975/6/1, p. 2.

²⁷⁰ Li, *Chiang Ching-kuo in His Later Years*, p. 113.; Myers, Chao, and Kuo, “Consolidating Democracy in the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1996–2000,” p. 75.

²⁷¹ Chen, *Factional Politics and Political Changes in Taiwan*, p. 189.

²⁷² Lin, *Paths to Democracy*, p. 290.

punish corrupt elites, to constrain elites and high-level officials in particular with anti-corruption rules, and to garner more positive perceptions from experts, which is likely related to the first two failings. That these anti-corruption reforms did not go as far as those in the regime's formative period matches the expectations about reform timing discussed in Chapter One. In this case, there could be various reasons. The leadership may not have needed to do reforms large enough to qualify as a Breakthrough because the corruption problem that CCK faced when coming to power was not as dire as the crisis that his father had confronted, in large part due to the earlier success of the KMT Reconstruction. In addition, the political liberalization launched alongside the Rejuvenation's anti-corruption efforts may have conflicted with the full exercise of CCK's autocratic powers and the authoritarian playbook.

Explaining Continued Reform Success

The Governmental Rejuvenation was possible through CKS's and CCK's unconstrained leadership. While unconstrained leadership usually applies to one person at a time, during the succession we can say that this was a father-son team with unconstrained leadership over their regime. Taiwanization, youthification, and anti-corruption measures were forced on the establishment by the unopposed authority of first CKS—who started the campaign—and then CCK—who drove it home. They had a free hand to arrest corrupt actors, carry out forceful police raids, and bring fresh energy to a tired, non-transparent, and increasingly out-of-touch system. They had the power, for example, to expand (or pack) the National Assembly, Legislative Yuan, and Control Yuan through supplementary elections and presidential appointments. As with CCK's new cabinet (May 1972), the replacements were generally younger and more often Taiwanese. As discussed above, CCK initiated and personally led many of the anti-corruption measures, such as the political purification campaign. CCK set a good personal example on

cleanliness to his subordinates—an effect enhanced by his personal power.²⁷³ His outsized role was reflected in appraisals of the reforms too, which unfailingly identify him as its leading force. As J. Bruce Jacobs wrote in 1973: “Why such major changes with the accession of Chiang Ching-kuo? In the past, those charged with responsibility have often lacked the power necessary,” but “his power made [it] possible.”²⁷⁴

Neither quasi-democratic institutions nor high state capacity are sufficient explanations for the Rejuvenation’s success. Gradual political liberalization was an outcome of the Rejuvenation, not a cause. And while organized political opposition to the KMT was stirring, it would only be later in the 1970s that it could exert substantial pressure on the country’s leadership. There is no doubt that the KMT had state capacity in 1969, though CKS and CCK perceived it to be eroding, in part because the party elites were getting too old. As argued before, capacity serves as a necessary but not sufficient condition. It was not bureaucratic gears turning that launched the campaign, but decisions made by the two leaders. The regime’s ability to do something does not provide any trigger or reason why 1969–72 should have been the time for these top-down reforms.

6. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that my theory of an authoritarian playbook for corruption control captures many aspects of the Kuomintang’s trajectory on the issue. In particular, I have advanced arguments about KMT anti-corruption efforts and their motives, about outcomes, and about the reasons for those outcomes. Initial anti-corruption activity in the

²⁷³ Author’s interview with three Taiwan scholars, July 2018.

²⁷⁴ Jacobs, “Taiwan 1972: Political Season,” pp. 105, 110.

late 1920s and mid-1940s in China failed to produce results because Chiang Kai-shek lacked the necessary personal power and the KMT lacked the necessary state capacity. It was only after the retreat to Taiwan that the conditions would align for a Breakthrough: a consolidation of party power in CKS's hands, the jettisoning of disloyal and corrupt allies from the mainland, and a lean KMT with strong organizational capacity and autonomy from Taiwanese society. The KMT Reconstruction succeeded in remaking the regime and, as part of that project, brought corruption under control. The follow-up Governmental Rejuvenation two decades later brought further successes in improving bureaucratic effectiveness and cleanliness; CKS and CCK were crucial in pushing through the reforms. Taiwan's story continues in Chapter Six, which explains how corruption increased greatly as democratization advanced in the late 1980s, only to decrease again under pressure from strong democratic institutions.

Common explanations for why corruption control succeeds or fails do not fully explain the KMT's anti-corruption outcomes. The conventional wisdom that democratic institutions are the key to reducing corruption would lead us to look for the role of quasi-democratic institutions under the KMT. But these institutions were at their weakest during the most successful reform in the early 1950s. In particular, the unconstrained leadership of CKS in the reform process contradicts the notion that corruption control depends upon accountability and constraints on executive power. The KMT did not reform by mimicking democratic reforms, but by employing the authoritarian playbook, which aggressively disrupted the corrupt status quo in party and state organizations. In the case of Taiwan, as elsewhere, high state capacity was a necessary but not sufficient condition; the motivation and leadership of CKS and CCK mattered. This view is in line with the revisionist, generally favorable interpretation of CKS and CCK as leaders promoted

by Jay Taylor and others.²⁷⁵ The KMT leadership was not pressured into curbing corruption by the United States or even the Taiwanese public. The military threat of the CCP added urgency to the KMT's reforms in Taiwan, but is best understood as a contributing factor to a long-standing commitment to state-building. CKS saw the KMT's defeat on the mainland as evidence of the CCP's superior organizational capacity, which shaped how he proposed KMT reforms.

Finally, while the analysis in this chapter agrees with and bolsters various findings from other scholarship on the KMT, it also suggests that the Governmental Rejuvenation has been undervalued as an important state-building reform and key link between 1949 and 1987. The Rejuvenation is often absent or barely mentioned in scholarly analyses, which instead cover only the independent threads—e.g. the start of political liberalization, the advance of Taiwanization, or CCK's succession.²⁷⁶ But the Rejuvenation was more than the sum of its parts; it was an actual rejuvenation of the regime and state that strengthened the KMT's position for later democratization. Its various reforms came together to address or anticipate foreign and domestic criticisms over a lack of political inclusion, political repression, ineffective governance, and growing corruption. It built on the state-building of the KMT Reconstruction, but adapted its goals to meet new challenges that emerged over time. It is hard to empirically show that the Rejuvenation is responsible for the mildness of political unrest and political instability in the 1970s and 1980s, but it is surely the most relevant set of government reforms to that end after that of the early 1950s.

²⁷⁵ See: David D. Buck, "Jay Taylor Finds Rehabilitating Chiang Kai-shek's Reputation No Small Task," *China Review International* Vol. 17, Number 1, 2010.

²⁷⁶ See: Maguire, "Modernisation and Clean Government."; Shang, *Curbing Corruption*.

Chapter Three

Military Rule in South Korea

1. Introduction

This chapter profiles South Korea's military governments and explains why, despite other economic and political achievements, they struggled to control corruption. South Korea's generals-turned-presidents Park Chung-hee (1961–79) and Chun Doo-hwan (1979–87) launched three main campaigns to curb corruption: a crackdown after the 1961 coup, the General Administrative Reform (GAR) in the mid-1970s, and a second post-coup purge known as Purification between 1980 and 1981. The dire state of corruption in South Korea prior to military rule helped pave the way for Park's coup, but his post-coup crackdown mostly failed to institutionalize reforms, especially those necessary to discipline politicians and influential businesspeople. Nevertheless, Park did manage to build pockets of meritocracy in the bureaucracy, which would grow over time. After strengthening his political position and centralizing power in the early 1970s, especially through the passage of the Yushin constitution in 1972, Park was able to advance further his ambitious political and economic reforms, including corruption control. The GAR delivered a Limited Victory against corruption: cleaning up the bureaucracy but leaving in place high-level state-business collusion. Shortly after Park's assassination in 1979, Chun installed himself as the paramount leader and launched a massive shake-up of the political system, including large purges of officials on charges of corruption. The reforms caused a stir, but had little sticking power. The open corruption of Chun's Fifth Republic exceeded that of the somewhat restrained Park era.

Table 3.1:

Anti-Corruption Efforts by South Korea's Military Regimes

Name and Dates	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
“Post-Coup Crackdown” 1961–63	✓		✓	Failed Reform
The General Administrative Reform 1973–77	✓	✓	✓	Limited Victory
Purification 1980–81			✓	Failed Reform

I find that corruption control efforts under military rule suffered because the top leadership was often too constrained in its authority to dictate aggressive reforms. Unlike Chiang Kai-shek, Park had not cultivated authority over years as head of a revolutionary party; he came to power in 1961 in a political environment with quasi-democratic institutions checking his authority and rivals with their own power bases. Even after the passage of the Yushin constitution, an external factor continued to constrain anti-corruption efforts: the economic importance of large chaebol. These private economic elites were necessary partners in Park's developmental projects, which made it difficult to insulate policy-making from their influence. Park controlled, rather than eliminated, the regime's collusive relationships with chaebol in the 1970s. Chun's position after coming to power in 1979 was even more politically insecure than Park's had been in 1961, leading him to rule through deal-making and compromise with a range of other elites. Political incentives to allow corruption were compounded by Chun's weak motivation to curb it.

Park was primarily motivated to curb corruption, I find, because it represented a threat to his developmental state-building mission. Much of Park's commitment to state-building and his

understanding of state-led developmentalism came from Japan and the Japanese model.¹ Japan's example influenced many Koreans in this period, especially elites like Park who received training in a Japanese military academy. Also motivating Park's state-building was South Korea's political and economic competition with North Korea, which took an early lead in industrialization with communist central planning. Chun Doo-hwan, while also a military man, was in office motivated more simply by staying in power and reaping the personal benefits thereof. Chun's short-lived anti-corruption efforts were motivated mostly by political concerns unrelated to corruption itself. He wanted to be seen as tough on crime and at the same time used the campaign as an excuse to weaken resistance to his rule. Narrowly political motives are generally insufficient to see authoritarian corruption control through to success, and indeed Chun abandoned substantive reforms once his position was reasonably secure, unlike Park. Chun's case fits with the conventional wisdom that autocrats do not have sufficient reasons to curb corruption.

That South Korean corruption control was so much less successful than Taiwan's in the same period may be surprising in light of the two countries' many similarities. Both were small countries with Confucian cultural backgrounds, endured decades of Japanese colonialism in the first half of the 20th century, and suffered mass violence at the start of the Cold War—the February 28 Massacre (1947) and the Korean War (1950–53). Both were U.S. allies in divided countries; each faced a rival communist state. Chiang Kai-shek and Park Chung-hee were developmental leaders with military backgrounds, including Japanese training, and were strongly opposed to communism. On the other hand, CKS led a revolutionary party, whereas Park led a

¹ Carter J. Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea: The Roots of Militarism 1866–1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016).

military coup coalition. CKS monopolized power early, while Park early on faced the challenge of semi-competitive elections, factional constraints, and the power of the chaebol. In terms of succession, Chiang Ching-kuo smoothly inherited his father's position, whereas Chun had to weather the chaotic interregnum after Park's assassination and consolidate power anew.

The rest of this chapter is divided into three main sections and a short conclusion. Section Two covers Park's early anti-corruption efforts, including their origins, goals, and outcomes. Section Three analyzes the same aspects of Park's anti-corruption push in the 1970s, as well as how it was shaped by the Yushin system. Section Four examines Chun's rise to power, especially in comparison to Park's, and the short-lived attempt to clean house started in 1980. The concluding section suggests takeaways for the study of South Korea under military rule.

2. The Anti-Corruption Coup of 1961

The Republic of Korea was founded in 1948 after the division of the Korean peninsula between American and Soviet forces. The United States-backed, anti-communist conservative Syngman Rhee became the first president and ruled increasingly dictatorially before being forced out in 1960 by mass protests known as the April 19 Movement. U.S. intelligence found that "public resentment over corrupt practices played an important part in the making of the 1960 revolution."² Then followed the brief and disappointing democratic experiment known as the Second Republic, which was led for less than a year by Prime Minister Chang Myon. He was swept out of power by the May 16th coup in 1961, which began South Korea's era of military government. Park Chung-hee, one of the coup plotters and a major general in the army, quickly became the new regime's leader. Park ruled South Korea until his assassination in 1979.

² Document 206, FRUS, 1961-1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1961/3/21.

From the beginning, the country's widespread corruption was one of the most salient political issues. Writing in the early 1960s, W. D. Reeve described corruption as “deeply ingrained before South Korea achieved independence” and “deeply embedded [and] accepted by society,” noting also that “the theme of governmental corruption has kept on recurring.”³ The Rhee years saw heavy corruption around the sale of formerly Japanese assets, in the military, between the chaebol and the government, and especially in the allocation of U.S. aid.⁴ Another scholar summarized South Korea's 1950s as “autocracy comingled with party politics and semifascist mobilization, thriving on a system-wide corruption.”⁵ After the Korean War ended in stalemate in 1953, corruption and maladministration were constant complaints against the government, which itself acknowledged the problem in public and to U.S. officials.⁶ The developmentalism literature often characterizes Rhee's administration as a “predatory state,” in comparison to Park's developmental state.⁷

After the impressive, regime-changing success of the grassroots April 19 Movement, hopes were high for the Second Republic. Unfortunately, it quickly became apparent that many

³ W. D. Reeve, *The Republic of Korea: a Political and Economic Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 96.

⁴ David Chamberlin Cole and Princeton N. Lyman, *Korean Development; the Interplay of Politics and Economics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 27, 37, 252.

⁵ Meredith Woo-Cumings, *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 44.

⁶ See for example: Document 99, FRUS, 1955–57, *Korea, Volume XXIII, Part 2*, 1955/11/16.; Document 248, FRUS, 1955–1957, *Korea, Volume XXIII, Part 2*, 1957/10/18.; Document 240, FRUS, 1958–1960, *Japan; Korea, Volume XVIII*, 1958/9/5.; Document 329, FRUS, 1958–1960, *Japan; Korea, Volume XVIII*, 1960/8/20.

⁷ You Jong-Sung, “Transition from a Limited Access Order to an Open Access Order: The Case of South Korea” in Douglass C. North, John Joseph Wallis, Steven B. Webb and Barry R. Weingast, *In the Shadow of Violence: Politics, Economics, and the Problems of Development* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 295.; Christian Göbel, “Warriors Unchained: Critical Junctures and Anticorruption in Taiwan and South Korea,” *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 7, No. Supplement 1 (2013), p. 226.

of the Second Republic's top officials were also "incompetent and corrupt."⁸ U.S. officials warned of coming instability due to "the extent and depth of graft, corruption and fraud in the major institutions of Korean society today and the consequent lack of confidence on the part of Koreans, high and low, in these institutions, in themselves, [and] in their own future."⁹ To summarize a messy transition: Chang's mismanaged regime failed to live up to the people's hopes for competent and clean government, opening the door for the military.

By inciting public anger and political chaos, corruption helped the military junta, and Park in particular, to come to power. As Chang's Second Republic faltered, South Korean "society was waiting for effective leadership."¹⁰ Luckily for the coup plotters, the military as an institution was primed to step in. There already existed a deep and pervasive belief within the military that—beyond being responsible for national security—it should have a leading role in state-building and modernization of the economy and society. In *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea: the roots of militarism, 1866–1945* (2016), Carter Eckert explains how the military's expansive sense of mission was a legacy of the instruction many Korean officers received under Japanese rule. The Imperial Japanese Army had long operated on these principles, and Park was said to be "infatuated" with the Japanese military example.¹¹ Combating corruption certainly fell under this state-building ambit, giving a justification for the coup many inside the South Korean military, and some outside it, could accept. Personal accounts by military officers confirm the

⁸ Han Yong-Sup, "The May Sixteenth Military Coup" in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 40.

⁹ Document 202, FRUS, 1961–1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1961/3/6.

¹⁰ Han, "The May Sixteenth Military Coup," p. 41.

¹¹ Lee Chong-Sik, *Park Chung-Hee: From Poverty to Power* (Palos Verdes, Calif.: KHU Press, 2012), p. 276.; Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea*.

inspiration of the Japanese model from the Meiji Restoration onward for the coup.¹² The military “began to consider itself as the only remaining cohesive, disciplined organization to supplant a politically corrupt and scientifically backward civilian rule.”¹³ At a “critical meeting” on November 9th, the nine core coup plotters “decided to use the anticorruption movement as the pretext for the coup.”¹⁴ Coups in which widespread corruption or economic mismanagement are used to justify a military intervention are known as “good governance coups” and have occurred in other countries as well.¹⁵

Park played the issue of corruption expertly in the lead-up to the coup, using it to vault himself into a leadership position. Han Yong-Sup explains that “it is important not to exaggerate Park’s basis of support within the armed forces at the time of the military coup.” Rather than being some kind of natural leader for the whole military, “Park was the deputy commander of the Second Army, [and thus] not favorably positioned to mobilize troops in the event of a military clash.” But as anger was rising over senior military leaders’ involvement in the Rhee administration’s political corruption, Park made a consequential decision: despite being a general, he broke ranks to throw his lot in with the military reformers. He “joined the young officers and demanded that the army chief of staff, Song Yo-ch’an, resign for having meddled in the 1960 presidential election...transforming him[self] overnight into a leader of national

¹² Lee Suk-jae, *Your Excellency, Let’s Make Revolution* (Sojokpo, 1995), p. 67.

李錫濟, 《각하,우리혁명합시다》 (서적포, 1995), p. 67.

¹³ Kim Se-Jin, *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), p. 68.

¹⁴ Han, “The May Sixteenth Military Coup,” p. 46.

¹⁵ Robinson, Nick, and Nawreen Sattar, “When Corruption Is an Emergency: ‘Good Governance’ Coups and Bangladesh,” *Fordham International Law Journal* 35, No. 3 (2012), pp. 737–79.

stature.”¹⁶ Reformist junior officers felt that high-ups in the military were corrupt and that the Chang administration was no better, especially after its “reinstatement of the practice of raising political funds from the military.”¹⁷ Disappointment on several fronts pushed reformers to seek a nondemocratic solution. They militated for “order” and “viewed the splits and maneuverings of Korean party government as chaos. Their reaction to party politics harked back to that of the Japanese in 1910.”¹⁸ They saw a leader in Park, “as the highest-ranking and oldest active-duty officer...His reputation as an uncorrupted officer projected a better image for the revolutionary group.”¹⁹ “As a second-tier general, excluded from powerful posts and political crony networks during the 1950s, [Park] was clean on the corruption issue.” From this advantageous position, he began to “transform the society-wide anticorruption reform movements into his vehicle to challenge others of his rank and to build up his own military faction.”

Among the coup plotters, “despite the participation of generals of similar rank, it was Park who controlled the initiative from the very beginning stage of planning for the coup.” He “put himself in the position of coordinating activities of the different segments,” making him “the de facto leader.” He became the hub in a hub-and-spokes coalition; it was decided that Park should be in charge of the coup itself as “commander of the Revolutionary Army.”²⁰ After delays and false starts, the coup was finally carried out on May 16th. During a pivotal moment that morning when military police arrived to put down the rebellion, Park gave a “moving speech”

¹⁶ Han, “The May Sixteenth Military Coup,” pp. 42–44.

¹⁷ Kim, *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea*, p. 60.

¹⁸ Gregory Henderson, *Korea, the Politics of the Vortex* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 305.

¹⁹ Kim, *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea*, p. 68.

²⁰ The above section is based on Han, “The May Sixteenth Military Coup,” pp. 39–48.

that won them over to the side of the coup. In it, he emphasized the issue of corruption: “We have been waiting for [the civilian government] to bring back order to the country. What a state this country is in. Ministers, including the prime minister, are coming and going with bundles of money in a hotel room to fight over concessions, absorbed in hunting for a political position—what a state things are in. The Liberal Party government, by exceling in corruption and incompetence, is leading the country to the verge of collapse. Unable to bear this government, we shall risk our lives and rise up.”²¹ Park also ordered the seizure of the presidential Blue House. As the coup leaders occupied Seoul later that day, the civilian government’s leaders split; Prime Minister Chang fled, while President Yun Po-son stayed and tried to work with the coup leaders.²²

Later that day, the coup leaders formed the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction (SCNR), which had total power over the government and would lead the new regime. Below the SCNR were “elaborate clusters of subordinate councils,” also led by members of the military.²³ The other leading governmental body set up in the early weeks of the regime was the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA). The KCIA was set up by Kim Chong-pil, a personal ally of

²¹ Cho Gab-je, *Spit On My Grave: Journalist Cho Gab-je’s Account of Modernist Revolutionary Park Chung-hee’s Tragic Life* Vol. 4, (Seoul: Chosun Ilbosa 1998), p. 26.

趙甲濟, 《내무덤에침을뱉어라 : 趙甲濟기자가쓰는근대화혁명가朴正熙의비장한생애》 제 4 집 (서울특별시: 朝鮮日報社, 1998), 페이지 26.

The Korean text: “나라가 바로잡혀지기를 기다렸습니다. 그런데 이게 무슨 나라 꼴입니까. 국무총리를 비롯해서 장관들이 호텔방을 잡고 돈 보따리가 오고가는 이권 운동, 엽관 운동에 여념이 없으니 이게 무슨 꼴입니까. 자유당 정권을 능가하는 부패와 무능으로 나라를 멸망의 구렁텅이로 밀어넣고 있는 이 정권을 보다못해 우리는 목숨을 걸고 쫓겨나고 있습니다.”

²² Document 215, FRUS, 1961–1963, Volume XXII, Northeast Asia, 1961/5/16.

²³ Henderson, *Korea*, p. 263.

Park and a leading officer from the eighth class of the Korean Military Academy (Park was from the fifth). Kim was also Park's nephew by marriage, having married the daughter of Park's older brother. The KCIA began with 3,000 members and rapidly expanded to 370,000 by the late 1960s.²⁴ Park was only vice chairman of the SCNR, under Lieutenant General Chang To-yong, but his personal connections down the ranks were deeper and broader. General Chang faded in importance while Park, "by getting the young colonels to head the SCNR subcommittees and organize the KCIA... came to control the two most powerful sources of political influence." The last serious resistance to the coup from within the military was quashed on May 18th "with the arrest of Yi Han-lim," commander of the First Army in Wonju.²⁵ Then Chang was arrested on July 3rd, along with almost fifty other officers, "on the charge of conspiring to carry out a counter-coup."²⁶ Chang's fall, orchestrated from the KCIA, cleared the way for Park to lead the regime.

As soon as the SCNR was in control, Park prepared to launch a multifaceted campaign of economic reforms. The ultimate goal was to build a high-growth developmental state, though this term had not yet been coined at the time. The military leaders were not well-versed in economics and had not prepared a new economic strategy for South Korea. But the junta was disciplined and effective enough to enforce the "almost immediate utilization" of former prime minister Chang's old five-year plan, which they took "virtually intact," while downplaying its

²⁴ Martin Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development: Economic Change and Political Struggle in South Korea* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993), p. 165.

²⁵ Han, "The May Sixteenth Military Coup," p. 53.

²⁶ Kim Hyung-A, "State Building: The Military Junta's Path to Modernity through Administrative Reforms" in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 89.

origins.²⁷ They also made sure to make a play for rural support by issuing a moratorium on usurious debts by agricultural workers.²⁸ “The Military Revolutionary Committee had publicly stressed the deplorable conditions of corruption and economic stagnation,” and strove to rapidly deliver “visible solutions to these publicized issues.”²⁹

The junta claimed that corruption was a major target within the proposed economic and political reforms. It was listed in their official “Six Principles,” which also included opposing communism and promoting Korean unification. The regime cited “illicit accumulation,” meaning the wages of corruption, as “inviting the economic collapse of the country” and creating “in all areas of society, serious harm.”³⁰ Park declared the urgency of a “surgical strike against injustice and corruption,” and by the end of May the SCNR had promulgated the Illicit Accumulation Act and set up an Illicit Accumulation Committee.³¹ In what followed, the SCNR and KCIA unleashed a barrage of investigations, arrests, and new laws meant to prevent corruption—in particular the collusion between businesses and officials that had resulted in unsavory “accumulation” on both sides.

Park's Motives in Combating Corruption

²⁷ Satterwhite, *The Politics of Economic Development*, p. 375.

²⁸ *Far Eastern Economic Review* (FEER), 1961/11/16, p. 328.

²⁹ David Satterwhite, *The Politics of Economic Development: Coup, State, and the Republic of Korea's First Five-Year Economic Development Plan (1962–1966)* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1994), p. 361.

³⁰ *A History of South Korea's Military Revolution* Vol. 2, (Korean Military Revolution History Compilation Committee 1963), pp. 58–59.

한국군사혁명사. 제 2 집 (상.하 2 책) (한국군사혁명사편찬위원회, 1963), 페이지 58–59.

³¹ Park Chung Hee, *Our Nation's Path: Ideology of Social Reconstruction* (Seoul, Dong-a PubCo, 1962), p. 209.

I argue that Park's anti-corruption efforts were motivated by his commitment to developmental state-building. There is evidence that Park and his advisers saw curbing corruption as necessary to fulfill the "extremely ambitious goals for which the state was mobilized during Park's political rule."³² Adviser Kim Chung-yum, who later became minister of finance and Park's right-hand man as chief presidential secretary, recalls that the regime's high-level economic planners believed that ongoing corruption had to be curbed for South Korea's first five-year plan to succeed: "To build a strong and rich nation, these illicit funds... must be converted into real, long-term savings and investment resources."³³ U.S. intelligence assessed that the coup plotters had "long been disgusted with corruption and inefficiency in the government and the military establishment and disillusioned with the lack of progress under civilian rule" and that "they are convinced that the solution of [South Korea's] many economic, political, and social ills requires rigid public discipline and firm, centralized government control."³⁴ In the months after the coup, the government's anti-corruption efforts seemed to U.S. officials "sincerely designed to root out corruption."³⁵ This makes sense given that many of Park's attempted anti-corruption measures were more institution-building than simply purging elite rivals. In addition, an explanation that takes Park's stated commitments to state-building

³² Kim Byung-Kook, "The Leviathan: Economic Bureaucracy under Park" in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 201.

³³ Kim Chung-yum, *From the Poorest Nation to the Doorstep of Being a Developed Nation: A 30-Year History of South Korea's Economic Policies* (Random House, 2006), p. 117.

김정렴, 《최빈국에서 선진국 문턱까지: 한국 경제정책 30 년사》 (랜덤 하우스 2006), 페이지 117.

³⁴ Document 236, FRUS, 1961-1963, Volume XXII, Northeast Asia, 1961/7/18.

³⁵ Document 242, FRUS, 1961-1963, Volume XXII, Northeast Asia, 1961/8/24.

seriously is more convincing because he kept at it throughout his long rule and went on to lead successful anti-corruption efforts in the 1970s.

Some scholars take the view that post-coup anti-corruption efforts were about purging political rivals and not corruption control.³⁶ Unsurprisingly for a new authoritarian leader, many of Park's actions did indeed aim at consolidating his power. Park disbanded political parties and hundreds of social organizations, and banned more than 4,000 politicians from politics for several years. In addition, 2,000 officers were retired, "eliminating those who were disaffected with the coup-makers."³⁷ These moves should not be called anti-corruption efforts.

At the same time, however, many of Park's actions were a mutually-supportive combination of power consolidation and anti-corruption reforms. Park ordered the arrest of chaebol leaders on charges of illicit accumulation, disciplined tens of thousands of low-level civil servants, and set up the Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) in 1963. Seeing that very low salaries were a major reason for military corruption in the 1950s, Park quickly raised salaries after coming to power.³⁸ This did not purge any rivals, but presumably helped Park's popularity in the military. In addition, new laws, committees, and meritocratic standards in the bureaucracy went beyond simply using the corruption label to smear rivals. The anti-corruption component of many reforms is perhaps easily overlooked because the measures were also self-serving.

In late October 1961, the U.S. Embassy in South Korea reported approvingly that the "military government's efforts to deal with wholesale graft, bribery and corruption in

³⁶ David C. Kang, *Crony Capitalism: Corruption and Development in South Korea and the Philippines* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 119.

³⁷ Kim Chong-won, *Divided Korea: The Politics of Development, 1945–1972* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 231.

³⁸ Lee, *Park Chung-Hee*, p. 287.

government and business, smuggling, large-scale diversion of military supplies, hoodlum terror, and police and press blackmail of individuals are genuine and are producing results.”³⁹ A second report, in December, confirmed that the junta had “produced convincing evidence that they will not tolerate corruption, graft, bribes, smuggling, tax evasion, or political blackmail.”⁴⁰ Even before the coup, the anti-corruption goals of young officers within the military were well-known. On May 8, 1960, “eight lieutenant colonels from the eighth class of the Officers Candidate School began to contemplate the elimination of corrupt generals by means of a ‘purification campaign’.” They were caught and punished, but similar movements were brewing in other branches of the military, like the marines and navy.⁴¹

If not just to purge rivals, were anti-corruption efforts the result of American pressure on the new regime? American influence before the coup was such that South Korea under Rhee has been described as a “client” regime.⁴² In 1960, “most of the South Korean budget was made up of the counterpart fund originating from U.S. aid, in addition to the large sum spent directly on the South Korean military through the Military Assistance Program. American advisers were present throughout the South Korean military.”⁴³ As one U.S. National Security Council staff member wrote in a memo to President John F. Kennedy in 1963: “In short, Korea continues to be our most expensive military satellite.”⁴⁴

³⁹ Document 244, FRUS, 1961–1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1961/8/28.

⁴⁰ Document 249, FRUS, 1961–1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1961/12/15.

⁴¹ Kim, *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea*, p. 77.

⁴² Woo-Cumings, *Race to the Swift*, p. 44.

⁴³ Kim Taehyun and Baik Chang Jae, “Taming and Tamed by the United States” in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 58.

⁴⁴ Document 306, FRUS, 1961–1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1961/5/31.

Despite a heavy presence, however, the superpower's ability to control the junta's domestic policies turned out to be limited. The U.S. at first opposed the coup, but soon had to accept that it was a *fait accompli*. The U.S. pressured the new government to evolve politically in a more democratic direction, but officials noted that "many of our counsels seem to have been ignored" and that the former coup leaders "disregard[ed] our urging."⁴⁵ Park's "strong nationalistic sentiment militates against easy acceptance of U.S. advice," the CIA noted.⁴⁶ In response to purges by Park, the U.S. Embassy could only advise that "we must let this phase of revolution work itself out."⁴⁷ Park also "effectively resisted U.S. pressure to reduce the size of the South Korean armed forces." Even "in the economic realm, where the United States appeared to have the resources to make or break Park, the client more often outmaneuvered the patron than was checked and balanced by it." Kim Taehyun and Baik Chang Jae argue that there was a "failure of the United States in transforming its political, military, and economic resources into power."⁴⁸ America officials did discuss pressuring Park to "deal with corruption" shortly after the coup.⁴⁹ However, the campaign against illicit accumulation was already underway by the time the U.S. got its bearings with the new regime.

Park would have been foolish not to respond in some way to public anger over corruption after the coup, but the broader set of ambitious, far-sighted political and economic reforms Park pushed for went beyond a response to any immediate threat to his position from the public. The

⁴⁵ Document 231, FRUS, 1961–1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1961/6/13.

⁴⁶ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, "South Korean Leader Pak Chong-Hui — Current Intelligence Weekly," 1961/11/3, Document 0000617151.

⁴⁷ Document 235, FRUS, 1961–1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1961/7/9.

⁴⁸ Kim and Baik, "Taming and Tamed by the United States," p. 59.

⁴⁹ Document 221, FRUS, 1961–1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1961/5/23.

public's responses to the coup had ranged from "acceptance of the coup and military rule to bewildered and confusion as to changes," with "disenchantment" among many educated people but much of the general public expressing "apathy" or "indifference."⁵⁰ The intellectual magazine *Sasanggye* wrote in its first issue after the coup that they supported "a nationalistic military revolution aiming to wipe out corruption and disorder, to preempt communist subversions, and to guide the future of the nation onto the right path."⁵¹ But it would not have been their first choice; this takeover was a "last effort" and "inevitable" given the problems of the Second Republic.⁵²

Lastly, the North Korean threat undoubtedly contributed to the urgency of Park's state-building, but is not by itself a strong predictor of anti-corruption reform. As You Jong-sung points out, the threat from the North did not drive the Rhee administration to build a developmental state.⁵³ Nor did it force Chun to get serious about anti-corruption efforts in the 1980s. The North Korean threat has to some extent been present for the past 70 years. If we take it as a constant, then it is unhelpful in explaining varied outcomes. If on the other hand we break it down and look at specific trends, they do not line up with anti-corruption measures. For example, the North Korean threat receded somewhat with the signing of the North-South Joint Declaration in 1972 and the subsequent inter-Korean talks. This was after North Korea's

⁵⁰ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, "Central Intelligence Bulletin," 1961/5/25, Document CIA-RDP79T00975A005700260001-0.; Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, "South Korea—Current Intelligence Weekly Review," 1961/6/16, Document 0000617172.; Kim, *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea*, p. 99.

⁵¹ Quoted in Park Myung-Lim, "The Chaeya" in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 379.

⁵² Park, "The Chaeya," p. 379.

⁵³ You Jong-Sung, "Demystifying the Park Chung-Hee Myth: Land Reform in the Evolution of Korea's Developmental State," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol 47(4), (2017), p. 538.

assassination attempt on Park in January 1968 but long before its terrorism in the 1980s and nuclear revelations in the 1990s. Yet this was precisely the period in which Park's government launched the GAR, which was the only successful anti-corruption campaign.

The Campaign and its Outcome

The junta began its anti-corruption campaign with high-level arrests even before setting up the institutional structure that would support them. "The day after the coup, Park arrested twenty-one business leaders on charges of illicit wealth accumulation. Some younger officers in the junta even called for the execution of some of the chaebol leaders in order to clean up corruption once and for all."⁵⁴ The regime was picking up on widespread anger at chaebol-related corruption, which was manifested in grassroots demands for an anti-corruption campaign following the April 19 Movement.⁵⁵ "The entrepreneurs were accused of illegally acquiring state-invested properties, unjustly purchasing state-owned foreign exchange at preferential rates, profiting from unfair bidding, illicitly benefiting from state-distributed foreign loans," and other crimes. "Under investigation were two of the most successful business tycoons: [Lee Byung-chul], of Samsung, whose illicit wealth was officially estimated at 800 million won...and [Hong Chae-son], of Kumsông Textiles, which later became Ssangyong."⁵⁶ Overall, anti-corruption enforcement rose sharply in 1961:

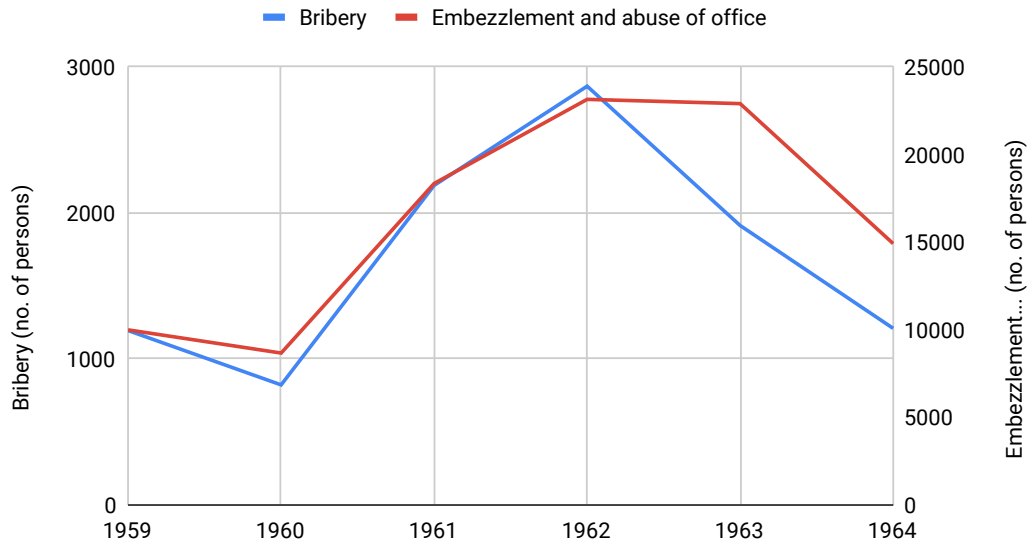
Figure 3.1:

⁵⁴ Kim Eun Mee and Park Gil-Sung, "The Chaebol" in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011) p. 273.

⁵⁵ Kim, "State Building," p. 661.

⁵⁶ Kim and Park, "The Chaebol," p. 273.

Anti-Corruption Prosecution in South Korea



Data source: *Korea Statistical Yearbook*.

Illicit profiteers were hit with massive fines. The Illicit Accumulation Committee slapped “58 enterprises with fines and back taxes of 83 million won, U.S. \$64 million.”⁵⁷ Illicit fortune makers, or profiteers, were explicitly defined as corrupt actors. They were those “who had gained more than 100 million won in illicit profits through lease or purchase of state properties, who obtained a loan of \$100k USD in government-held exchange, who got bank loans by making political donations of more than \$50 million, who got 200 million won under illegitimate contracts...”⁵⁸ According to the junta, 27 businesspeople were fined in August, 24 former officials were fined in September, and “altogether, the Government decision calls for return to the state of about 56.6 billion [won] from those who earned wealth by illicit means.”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ FEER, 1961/10/26.

⁵⁸ FEER, 1961/10/26.

⁵⁹ *Military Revolution in Korea*, p. 97.

Within the government, the KCIA disciplined 1,863 high-ranking current or former officials, including dozens of generals for corruption or “anti-revolutionary” activity.⁶⁰ For example, by the first week of June, high-profile arrests included “ten former officials...former mayors of Seoul,” “the last two Finance Ministers (Kim Yung-sun and Song In-sang), five retired Generals and 12 businessmen.”⁶¹ The charges included hoarding of overseas assets, illegal profits, and tax evasion.⁶² All together, a whopping 41,000 civil servants were cashiered for a mix of corruption-related offenses, but also sometimes just incompetence.⁶³ Between July and December, the Revolutionary Inspection Division discovered 264 corruption cases involving 713 people, and the SCNR approved their sentencing.⁶⁴ The initial burst of reform activity, with its committees, new rules, and arrests, convinced contemporary observers that “the junta took more positive action than the regime of John Chang [Myon] had done in attempting to eliminate corruption.”⁶⁵ U.S. intelligence concluded in late 1961 that “Park’s assertion that he moved against the previous government because of its corrupt nature has been generally confirmed by measures the regime has undertaken.”⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Kim, *Divided Korea*, p. 235.

⁶¹ Reeve, *The Republic of Korea*, p. 155., FEER, 1961/6/8, p. 432.

⁶² FEER, 1961/6/8, p. 432.

⁶³ John Kie-chiang Oh, *Korea: Democracy on Trial* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 124.; Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, p. 165.

⁶⁴ *A History of South Korea’s Military Revolution* Vol. 1, (Korean Military Revolution History Compilation Committee, 1963), p. 1842.

《한국군사혁명사》 제 1 집 (상.하 2 책) (한국군사혁명사편찬위원회, 1963), 페이지 1842.

⁶⁵ Reeve, *The Republic of Korea*, p. 155.

⁶⁶ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, “South Korean Leader Pak Chong-Hui — Current Intelligence Weekly,” 1961/11/3, Document 0000617151.

The Illicit Accumulation Act and its corresponding committee were the main framework to institutionalize the initial anti-corruption efforts. Other reforms that expanded the state's economic role also aimed to reduce incentives for bribing officials. "The anti-chaebol law and the announcement of the economic growth plan in February 1962, the establishment of governmental control over the financial sector in May 1962, and the currency reforms of June 1962 were all attempts to eradicate the structure of corruption and to promote economic nationalism."⁶⁷ The new BAI, though not as powerful as Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, served as a check on corruption in the bureaucracy and still exists today. Starting in 1963, the BAI reported directly to Park and was "free to 'descend on any government or quasi-government organization without warning and conduct a detailed inquiry into financial or other activities.'"⁶⁸

Despite a great deal of motion, the post-coup campaign failed to create systemic change both because the regime backtracked on punishments and because institutional reforms were too minor and/or too weakly enforced to change the incentives for corruption. The result was a Failed Reform. The SCNR released the heads of chaebol who had been arrested, after they pledged "to 'voluntarily donate' their entire assets to the SCNR when required for 'national construction.'"⁶⁹ Eight of the highest-profile businessmen arrested as illicit profiteers, after being paraded on the front pages of newspapers for weeks, were released after writing a public letter "pledging all their resources."⁷⁰ "Once they were released, however, the business leaders back-

⁶⁷ John Lie, *Han Unbound: The Political Economy of South Korea* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 53.

⁶⁸ Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, p. 54.

⁶⁹ Kim, "State Building," p. 95.

⁷⁰ *A History of South Korea's Military Revolution* Vol. 2, p. 61.

tracked, wavered, pleaded, and even resisted.”⁷¹ After 58 enterprises were hit with fines and back taxes of 83 million won in early August, many “complained they would have to close down,” leading the Illicit Accumulation Committee to announce “that clemency would be granted,” and to cut the bill by nearly half.⁷² The Illicit Accumulation Act was amended in October, “permitting illegal accumulators of wealth to turn shares of newly constructed plants over to the Government, instead of making cash payments for fines imposed on them.”⁷³ The regime’s total retreat from its initial hardline position was most visible in its about-face on the treatment of businesspeople. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* discovered that “several leading South Korean businessmen...adjudged guilty of illegal profiteering in the past, are now touring the United States and Europe to spearhead their country’s campaign to obtain foreign loans and investments...including Mr. Lee Byung Chul, the wealthiest industrialist and ‘top illegal profiteer’ of the bygone days.”⁷⁴

There was also trouble with the anti-corruption apparatus. The first power-related corruption scandal of the new regime was one of corruption within the Illicit Accumulation Committee’s subcommittees. Kim Chong-pil accused three members of the investigation team, three members of the evaluation team, and the head of the case processing committee of taking bribes to lower the fines certain businesses had to pay for past corruption. The scheme resulted in the national reserves being deprived of some 3.6 billion won.⁷⁵ Park apparently had the accused

⁷¹ Kim, “State Building,” p. 95.

⁷² FEER, 1961/10/26.

⁷³ FEER, 1961/11/23.

⁷⁴ FEER, 1961/11/23.

⁷⁵ DAIB, 1961/10/27.

brought in front of him and flew into a wild rage at them.⁷⁶ The committee head was later sentenced to death.⁷⁷

Furthermore, the KCIA was allowed to flout anti-corruption measures. The KCIA was damagingly found to have been involved in four corrupt schemes to fund the Democratic Republican Party (DRP), Park's election vehicle. U.S. military intelligence reported that while Park benefitted from "personal integrity, apparent incorruptibility, and fairness," the KCIA's "bribery, secret police methods, and interference with cabinet planning" had "begun to create doubt among many segments of the population as to the integrity of the regime's leadership."⁷⁸ As a member of the Illicit Accumulation Committee wrote of the KCIA's corruption in his memoirs, "the revolutionary government that had shouted for old evils to be eliminated committed new evils, and no matter how it tried to explain this to the people, they could not be made to understand."⁷⁹

A U.S. intelligence review of the Park era so far in 1970 showed the coexistence of successes and failures. "Under Park's supervision, South Korea has developed one of the most competent and professional civil and military government structures in Asia...[and] the civil bureaucracy also has gained in effectiveness." However, "corruption still is an integral part of the governmental process, making the possibility of new national scandals ever-present."⁸⁰ The CIA's summary, written just a month earlier, was that Park's government was "firmly

⁷⁶ Cho, *Spit On My Grave*, p. 257.

⁷⁷ DAIB, 1962/1/17.

⁷⁸ Department of the Army message, "Korea: Security, 1961–1963," Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers.

⁷⁹ Lee, *Your Excellency, Let's Make Revolution*, p. 188.

⁸⁰ "National Intelligence Estimate: The Changing Scene in South Korea - Conclusions," (Document 80), FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume XIX, Part 1, Korea, 1969–1972, 1970/12/2.

established and has gained widespread public acceptance for its economic advances and general stability,” but had ultimately “failed to eliminate” corruption.⁸¹ The SCNR’s propaganda was more one-sided, claiming in late 1961 that corruption had already been addressed:

“Since the military coup, remarkable progress has been achieved. Corrupt elements within the government have been dismissed. Government offices have been reorganized on an efficient, businesslike basis. Thousands of redundant government employees who performed no useful duties and who had secured their sinecures through nepotism, favoritism, or bribery, have been dismissed.”⁸²

Explaining Corruption Control Failure

Anti-corruption measures failed because Park and his allies in the junta, despite appearances to the contrary, were not in a powerful enough position to just dictate terms—they needed funds and wealthy friends. After its initial anti-corruption push, “the junta found that compromise was necessary.”⁸³ Park’s constraints after the 1961 coup can be seen in three areas: he had to run for president in unfair but still competitive elections, factional strife continued within the military, and powerful chaebol were necessary economic partners. For these reasons, Park lacked the unconstrained authority needed to push through his reforms and sustain the pressure.

While the Kuomintang regime and Park’s junta both claimed to be seeking or building democracy during the Cold War, the South Korean Third Republic’s institutions were more open and competitive.⁸⁴ Only the Third Republic should be called a competitive authoritarian

⁸¹ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, “Update of South Korea Handbook,” 1970/11/1, Document CIA-RDP79-00891A000700020001-4.

⁸² *Military Revolution in Korea* (Seoul: Secretariat of the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction, 1961), p. 18.

⁸³ Im Hyug Baeg, “The Rise of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in South Korea,” *World Politics* Vol. 39, No. 2 (Jan. 1987), p. 246.

⁸⁴ Lee Kang-Rho, “The Legitimacy of the Third Republic (1963–1972) and the Park Chung Hee Government,” *Korean Political Review* 31.4 (1997).

regime.⁸⁵ Unlike Chiang Kai-shek, Park had to run for president two years after coming to power in an election that he was not assured to win. Not all other parties and politicians of note were illegal, and not all media was immediately under the junta's thumb. Park "was forced to work behind a democratic façade."⁸⁶ He needed to appease the United States and also a wary populace that, while fed up with economic mismanagement and corruption, had also been protesting in the streets for democracy. The sudden coup in May, despite successfully installing the SCNR in power, left many of society's independent institutions intact. Churches, for example, were not brought under control as they were in the PRC, and would become foci of dissent against the regime in the 1970s.⁸⁷

To make sure that Park won elections, the Democratic Republican Party desperately sought funds.⁸⁸ Formed by Kim Chong-pil and the KCIA in the summer of 1962, the DRP was at first not well-known and not prepared to effectively compete in the 1963 elections, even with the junta's ban on thousands—later reduced to hundreds—of rival politicians.⁸⁹ The junta wrote election laws that made it necessary to have wealthy backers and "secure secret, illegal donations—something the ruling party could do, but which an opposition party would find immensely difficult."⁹⁰

이강로, "제 3 공화국 (1963–1972) 정치제도의 정통성과 박정희정부," 한국정치학회보 31 집 4 호 (1997).

⁸⁵ Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁸⁶ Kang, *Crony Capitalism* p. 99.

⁸⁷ Paul Y. Chang, *Protest Dialectics: State Repression and South Korea's Democracy Movement, 1970–79* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), Chapter Four.

⁸⁸ Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, p. 166.

⁸⁹ Kim, *Divided Korea*, pp. 236–37.

⁹⁰ Quoted in Kang, *Crony Capitalism*, p. 100.

Even with authoritarian tactics and a patronage system against him, former president Yun came impressively close to winning the presidency in October 1963.⁹¹ Instead, Park won, in part because of his greater rural support. The DRP openly cited “the timely and efficient distribution of campaign funds” as a factor in its success.⁹² Also working for Park’s election was the KCIA, which was a key reason for its corrupt schemes. Government-business collusion in the 1960s was largely for financing elections on one side and for obtaining investment opportunities on the other.⁹³ Over time, “political donations by large corporations to the ruling group were routinized.”⁹⁴ So “kickbacks, bribes, and commissions paid by those seeking loans, import and investment licenses, and government contracts...were an important part of the workings” of the regime.⁹⁵

Besides elections, another challenge was that Park and his allies still faced serious factional rivals within the military while carrying out anti-corruption reforms. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, a split was evident between General Chang and others who favored a “quick return to civilian government,” and Park and others who favored extended military rule.⁹⁶ In November, the CIA reported that “Pak [sic] is the most powerful figure in the junta, but his freedom of action is limited by factionalism within the ruling group.” Fortunately for Park, the faction with a more traditional view of civilian-military relations was “stigmatized by past

⁹¹ Document 315, FRUS, 1961–1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1963/10/16.

⁹² Kim, *Divided Korea*, p. 253.

⁹³ Kim, *Divided Korea*, p. 240.; Cole and Lyman, *Korean Development*, pp. 251–52.

⁹⁴ Park Byeong Seog, “Political Corruption in South Korea: Concentrating on the Dynamics of Party Politics,” *Asian Perspective* 19, No. 1 (1995), p. 177.

⁹⁵ Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, p. 170.

⁹⁶ Records of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary,” 1961/5/25, Document 0000617154.

involvement in corruption.”⁹⁷ It was not until March 1963 that Park’s allies delivered the “final blow” against rival factions when “[Major General] Kim Tong-ha, Colonel Pak Im-hang, a moderate member of the SCNR, and Provost Officer Yi Kyu-gwang were arrested on the charge of plotting a counterrevolution.”⁹⁸ So troubling was the conflict and purging in early 1963 that Park at one point “in tears” even “agreed to step down,” before reversing himself.⁹⁹ Gregory Henderson called the incident “eloquent testimony to factionalism’s strength.”¹⁰⁰ The corruption discovered in the Illicit Accumulation Committee subcommittees mentioned earlier was part of the factional conflict between the northern faction (as in military officers from South Korea’s northern provinces) and Park and Kim Chong-pil’s own mainstream/southeast faction. Park had “the almost complete support and allegiance of officers of Southeastern origin.”¹⁰¹ The illicit funds were ostensibly to support northern chaebol and the northern faction.¹⁰²

A third challenge was the concentrated power of the chaebol. Park’s plans for rapid economic modernization could not proceed without the cooperation of the nation’s leading conglomerates. In the end, capable people were not fired and “lead financiers and industrialists were allowed to operate their enterprises, despite their previous corruption.”¹⁰³ The dominant

⁹⁷ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, “South Korean Leader Pak Chong-Hui — Current Intelligence Weekly,” 1961/11/3, Document 0000617151.

⁹⁸ Kim, “State Building,” p. 110.

⁹⁹ Kim, *Divided Korea*, p. 247.

¹⁰⁰ Henderson, *Korea*, p. 268.

¹⁰¹ Kim, *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea*, p. 156.

¹⁰² Kim, “State Building,” p. 96.

¹⁰³ Kim, *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea*, pp. 171–72.

role in the economy of chaebol is a Korea-specific legacy of Japanese rule.¹⁰⁴ Most autocrats in the 20th century, including Chiang Kai-shek in the formerly-Japanese Taiwan, did not have to deal with such powerful domestic conglomerates. Chaebol grew dramatically throughout the 1960s and afterwards, so we should be careful when looking back not to overstate their size in 1961. Beyond their importance in Park's economic plans, the chaebol also provided critical funding for Park and the DRP in elections. Without semi-competitive elections and factional conflict, therefore, he would have been in a stronger position to discipline them.

Park's regime is today associated more with developmentalism than widespread corruption, but scholars agree that the two coexisted.¹⁰⁵ Patronage did not undermine state capacity because Park's use of corruption was mostly strategic; rather than maximizing personal returns, he used corruption to secure his political position and further his reform goals. David Kang explains that "Park carefully orchestrated bureaucratic appointments to allow for both patronage and reform. Cronyism was far from overwhelming and was differentiated by various ministries. This allowed Park to achieve domestic control by buying off supporters and also to create pockets of efficiency."¹⁰⁶ In other words, Park created "a professional and yet patrimonial hybrid state bureaucracy," which was an improvement over Rhee's administration. For example, "Park refrained from appointing military officers as the banks' governors. Instead he turned to civilians to lead both the Ministry of Finance and the Economic Planning Board, in sharp contrast to large parastatal institutions under the direction of other state ministries." Park knew

¹⁰⁴ Carter J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876–1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

¹⁰⁵ Glenn Paige, "1966: Korea Creates the Future," *Asian Survey* 7, No. 1 (Jan. 1967); Kim, *Divided Korea*; Woo-Cumings, *Race to the Swift*.

¹⁰⁶ Kang, *Crony Capitalism*, p. 85.

“he needed to rely on professional civil servants in the elite ministries for financial and banking management.”¹⁰⁷ Carving out certain areas of the bureaucracy and raising their quality was Park’s biggest initial anti-corruption success, but patronage in other areas was the cost of achieving it. The result was that “development and money politics proceeded hand in hand.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, it is important not to exaggerate state autonomy in the 1960s, as comparative studies of developmentalism sometimes do.¹⁰⁹

Alternative Explanations for the Failed Reform

The failure to enforce anti-corruption reforms should not be blamed on the military regime’s lack of democratic institutions or the regime’s military origins. The Third Republic was more democratic, in terms of openness and competitiveness of institutions, than Taiwan until the late 1980s and China at any time under the CCP. The political incentives created by semi-competitive elections actually pushed the regime to engage in corruption.¹¹⁰ The origin of this regime in a coup and its nature as a military regime may have impacted corruption control performance, but initial conditions alone cannot explain the regime’s evolution and the resulting variation in outcomes over time. Barbara Geddes argues that military regimes “carry within them the seeds of their own disintegration” in the form of internal elite splits and are often led by

¹⁰⁷ Kim, “State Building,” p. 104–5.

¹⁰⁸ Kang, *Crony Capitalism*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁹ Author’s interview with Dr. John Lie via email, 2018/7/16.

¹¹⁰ Democratic institutions were critical, however, in enforcing South Korea’s anti-corruption reforms in the 1990s, as we will see in Chapter Six.

military officers who do not actually want to take or hold power themselves.¹¹¹ But in this case, the junta stayed in power, grew more cohesive, and saw the emergence of a powerful leader.

It is also unlikely that a lack of state capacity doomed corruption control in the 1960s. The basic premise of the developmental state literature, which counts South Korea under Park as a paradigmatic example, is that a strong state guides economic policy in far-sighted ways.¹¹² Even if this is an idealized situation for May 1961, the SCNR was not prevented from carrying out industrialization and major governance reforms unrelated to corruption control by weak state capacity. To the contrary, the new regime was able to move swiftly in carrying out major, top-down reforms in the political and economic arenas. Furthermore, the junta's initial arrests, new anti-corruption organizations, and laws all suggest that the capacity for reform was not lacking so much as the follow-through. The South Korean bureaucracy was less effective in the 1950s after the devastating Korean War, but as You Jong-sung explains, the difference between the bureaucracy under Park and the bureaucracy under Rhee or Chang "has been exaggerated" in the literature. "Meritocracy in South Korea's bureaucratic recruitment and promotion systems developed gradually over several decades, including during Rhee's regime as well as the short democratic episode (1960–1961)."¹¹³ Im Hyug Baeg agrees that "a strong state apparatus had

¹¹¹ Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999), pp. 115–44.

¹¹² Ziya Onis, "The Logic of the Developmental State," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Oct., 1991), pp. 109–26. See also: Chalmers A. Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1982).; Frederic C. Deyo, Ed., *The Political Economy of the New Asian Industrialism* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1987).; Alice H. Amsden, *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989).; Robert Wade, *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).; Peter B. Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).; Karl Fields, "Strong States and Business Organization in Korea and Taiwan" in Sylvia Maxfield and Ben Ross Schneider, Eds., *Business and the State in Developing Countries* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1997).

¹¹³ You, "Demystifying the Park Chung-Hee Myth," p. 535.

already been established” and was “overdeveloped” relative to civil society “even before the industrialization drive began.”¹¹⁴ It is also worth mentioning the role of Japanese settler colonialism in building the modern Korean state and inculcating a kind of “colonial modernity” in society at large.¹¹⁵

3. The Yushin Period and the General Administrative Reform

The junta faced increasing public pressure over corruption after the 1963 elections. 1964 was a year of protest as “students and opponents of the government...took to the streets in violent opposition to the government’s alleged corruption and the potential treaty between the Republic of Korea and Japan.”¹¹⁶ Within the regime, revolutionary zeal “waned” as “financial irregularities among public officials” increased 30–40 percent across the late 1960s.¹¹⁷ Skewering corrupt junta-chaebol dealings, many South Koreans began referring to their country as the “Zaibatsu Republic”—zaibatsu being Japanese conglomerates similar to the chaebol.¹¹⁸ Alongside protests against dictatorship and inequality, some targeted corruption. In 1971, “on October 4, Korea University students began a sit-in to demand punishment for corrupt politicians. Included in the list of politicians the students wanted dismissed from office were

¹¹⁴ Im, “The Rise of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in South Korea,” pp. 241, 249.

¹¹⁵ Shin Gi-Wook and Michael Robinson, Eds., *Colonial Modernity in Korea Attribution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹¹⁶ William Slany, *Preface to FRUS, 1964–1968, Volume XXIX, Part 1, Korea*, August 2000.

¹¹⁷ *Dong-A Ilbo* quoted in Kim, *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea*, p. 167.

¹¹⁸ Paige, “1966: Korea Creates the Future,” p. 24.

DRP finance chairman Kim Chin-man, KCIA director Yi Hu-rak, and [military] commander Yun P'il-yong.”¹¹⁹ And the known wrongdoing may have been just “the tip of the iceberg.”¹²⁰

Opposition parties scored points by slamming the government on its malfeasance, threatening to unseat Park through the ballot box. The People's Party's Dr. Yu Chin-O, for example, focused on corruption and inequality in his campaigning for the 1967 elections.¹²¹ The New Democratic Party (NDP), led by Kim Dae-jung, prepared for the 1971 elections with “an all-out attack against a wide range of Park's failures—including government corruption, regional developmental gaps, income inequalities, and external difficulties.”¹²² Kim Dae-jung used allegations of corruption and patronage in the regime to bolster his argument that power rotation was healthy.¹²³ The NDP's “effective political offensive compelled Park to admit there was government corruption.”¹²⁴ Corruption became a major “issue” for the regime in the 1971 elections, as Park himself acknowledged afterwards.¹²⁵ The issue was so prominent that even Korean intellectuals, known for their strong advocacy of democracy, were shown in surveys to

¹¹⁹ Kim Joo-Hong, “The Armed Forces” in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 186.

¹²⁰ Woo-Cumings, *Race to the Swift*, p. 200.

¹²¹ Paige, “1966: Korea Creates the Future,” p. 24.

¹²² Lee Chae-Jin, “South Korea: Political Competition and Government Adaptation,” *Asian Survey* 12, No. 1 (1972), p. 38.

¹²³ Kim Haeng-son, *Park Chung-hee and the Yushin System* (Seoul: Sonin, 2006), p. 37.
김행선, 《박정희와 유신체제》 (서울: 선인, 2006), 페이지 37.

¹²⁴ Lee, “South Korea,” p. 38.

¹²⁵ Park Chung-hee at a press conference on Jan. 11, 1972, from *A Collection of President Park Chung-hee's Speeches* Vol. 9, (The Presidential Secretariat, 1972).
1972년 연두 기자회견, 《박정희대통령연설문집》 제 9 집 (대통령비서실, 1972).

be “far more concerned with the problem of economic justice, the redistribution of income and the elimination of corruption.”¹²⁶

Driven by an increasing electoral threat, Park moved to bolster authoritarianism by forcing through the 1972 Yushin constitution. If Park was already “anxious” at the level of opposition in 1970, the 1971 elections’ results were a flashing danger sign. Even with his illegal election behavior and the regime’s authority behind him, Park defeated opposition leader Kim Dae-jung by barely 940,000 votes.¹²⁷ In the legislature, “to Park’s alarm, the NDP had 20 more seats than the minimum (69) required to stop” any amendment to the constitution that would allow Park to serve further presidential terms.¹²⁸ He had to act before his political position weakened further.

Some scholars believe that the adoption of the Yushin system was more security-driven than politically-motivated, but this is a minority position in the field. Peter Kwon argues that the important Heavy-Chemical Industry Drive (HCI) and related “defense build-up [of the 1970s] could not have been implemented without the political stability and control provided by the Yushin system.” Park certainly linked internal and external threats in speeches, saying for example: “in history there are two reasons for the fall of countries, external invasion or corruption from inside resulting in division and collapse...if a country is strong and unified inside then it cannot be invaded from outside.”¹²⁹ Nevertheless, Kwon concedes that

¹²⁶ Kim Joungwon, “The Republic of Korea: A Quest for New Directions,” *Asian Survey* 11, No. 1 (1971), p. 102.

¹²⁷ Kim, *Park Chung-hee and the Yushin System*, p. 36.

¹²⁸ Im Hyug Baeg, “The Origins of the Yushin Regime: Machiavelli Unveiled” in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 246.

¹²⁹ New Year’s Press Conference on January 15, 1976, quoted in “The Direction and Tasks of the General Administrative Reform” (Central Officials Training Institute, 1976).
1976 년 연두 기자회견, “서정쇄신의 방향과 과제” (중앙공무원교육원, 1976).

contemporary scholars “increasingly...have treated Park’s Yushin reform as more politically-motivated than it was security-driven.”¹³⁰ The CIA also judged that the push for the Yushin constitution was connected to the potential threat posed by the growing domestic opposition. “Park has been contemplating for some time ways to extend his term of office beyond 1975—the limit set by the constitution. His decision to move now may reflect an attempt to settle the matter before opposition and factional maneuvering can develop.”¹³¹

Park marketed the adoption of the Yushin system as a reduction of unnecessary constraints on government power in order to support HCI, support national security, enhance governance, reduce corruption, and speed growth. The Yushin would allow Park to push past judicial and legislative constraints, as well as the rule of law. As Park himself explained: “If you rely on the rule of law too much, you cannot get things done. Wiping out gangsters is a case in point. If you have important tasks to implement, don’t be constrained by the law!”¹³² His “readiness to compromise the law was most evident when he dealt with corruption and organized crime.”¹³³ The idea that the Yushin system would facilitate impressive top-down reform is right

¹³⁰ Peter Banseok Kwon, *The Anatomy of Chaju Kukpang: Military-Civilian Convergence in the Development of the South Korean Defense Industry under Park Chung Hee, 1968–1979* (Proquest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), pp. 134–36.

¹³¹ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, “The President’s Daily Brief 17 October 1972.”

The State Department correctly argued in late 1970 that rising opposition pressures and “criticism could intensify Park’s tendency under stress to withdraw into a distant authoritarianism.” See: “National Intelligence Estimate: The Changing Scene in South Korea - Conclusions,” (Document 80), 1970/12/2, FRUS, 1969–1976, *Volume XIX, Part 1, Korea, 1969–1972*.

¹³² Quoted in Moon Chung-in and Jun Byung-joon, “Modernization Strategy: Ideas and Influences” in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 129.

¹³³ Moon and Jun, “Modernization Strategy: Ideas and Influences,” p. 129.

in the name, which harkens back to the Meiji Restoration by using the same two Chinese characters for restoration or rejuvenation (維新).

The Yushin system strengthened both Park's personal control over the regime and the regime's control over society. In the lead-up to it, "in December 1971, Park crossed the bridge of no return with the declaration of a state of emergency and the enactment of the Special Law for National Security."¹³⁴ The new constitution was written in the spring, and in October 1972 Park declared martial law and had the Yushin passed by the Emergency Committee on State Affairs, which according to the new constitution itself had the powers of the National Assembly.¹³⁵ The Yushin system gave Park the power to dissolve the National Assembly at will, appoint one third of its members, appoint any judge, and stay in power indefinitely without direct presidential elections.¹³⁶ In short, it was the end of any semblance of democracy. Dissidents termed the regime "the Winter Republic," a play on the traditional Korean association of spring with political opening and freedom.¹³⁷ The single most repressive measure was Emergency Decree No. 9, issued by the president in May 1975, which made criticism of the government illegal. Beyond the accumulation of power through formal means, Park also tried to ensure greater personal loyalty, for example by bringing more military officers into governmental—but not bureaucratic—positions. And "consecutive post holdings increased even more...Park tried to

¹³⁴ Im, "The Origins of the Yushin Regime: Machiavelli Unveiled," p. 247.

¹³⁵ Kahng Byungsun, "The Yushin Constitution and the Establishment of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in the Republic of Korea," *Korea Observer*, (Jul. 1992), Vol. 23, p. 179.

¹³⁶ Kahng, "The Yushin Constitution and the Establishment of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in the Republic of Korea," p. 179.; You Jong-sung, *Democracy, Inequality and Corruption: Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines Compared* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 108.

¹³⁷ Ryu Youngju, *Writers of the Winter Republic: literature and resistance in Park Chung Hee's Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016).

link the destiny of the political elite with his own personal political fate as consciously and as systematically as possible.”¹³⁸ The Yushin system provided for its own defense vis-à-vis a hostile public by granting Park the power to issue extraordinary measures, including prohibition of criticism of the Yushin system itself.¹³⁹

In line with his justifications for adopting the Yushin system, Park soon launched the General Administrative Reform. The GAR sought “a National Restoration through enhancement of administrative and political efficiency, elimination of corruption in officialdom, clean-up of social waste and injustice, and valuational and mental revolution. Its action programs cover[ed] three domains: i.e. purification of officialdom; social purification; and mental revolution.”¹⁴⁰ The GAR was initiated and led from the top, with Park keeping a tight grip on the campaign; the two new organizations created to oversee and manage the reforms were the Office of Executive Coordination and the Presidential Inspection Special Aide Office.¹⁴¹ GAR’s measures to control corruption dramatically increased in “severity and pervasiveness” relative to previous efforts by

¹³⁸ Kim Byung-Kook, “The Labyrinth of Solitude: Park and the Exercise of Presidential Power” in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 164.

¹³⁹ Kahng, “The Yushin Constitution and the Establishment of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in the Republic of Korea,” p. 179.

¹⁴⁰ Oh S. H., “The Counter-Corruption Campaign of the Korean Government (1975–77)” in Kim Bun Woong and Rho Hwa-Jun, Eds., *Korean Public Bureaucracy* (Seoul, Korea: Kyobo Publishing, 1982), p. 324.

¹⁴¹ Park Joong-hoon, “National Government Anti-Corruption Reform Measures: Content and Evaluation,” *Korean Administrative Research*, Vol. 8(4) (1999), p. 107.

朴重勳, “國民의 政府 反腐敗 改革政策의 內容 및 評價,” 韓國行政研究, 제 8 권제 4 호 (1999), 페이지 107.

the junta.¹⁴² “The main thrust of the movement’s policy was on the elimination of corruption,” especially among those officials who made direct contact with the general public.¹⁴³

Park’s Motives in Launching the GAR

I argue that the GAR followed logically from Park’s long-standing commitment to state-building and aligned with it in both rhetoric and actual policy, which is not to say there were no other motivations. Empowered by the Yushin system, Park launched a reform that furthered the state-building begun in the 1960s and attempted to follow his own rhetoric of national advancement through military-style discipline. In a typical statement on the need for the GAR, Park argued that “to fight the North we need a strong economy, and the biggest hindrances to that are corruption, irregularities, and the degradation of official discipline.”¹⁴⁴ In his New Year’s press conference in 1976, Park called combating corruption “a task no less important than economic buildup,” noting that “there are still some tax officials who accept bribes from [the] public.”¹⁴⁵ Even though this rhetoric was self-serving, Park was relentless in his drive to build a strong state and promote economic growth, and connected these goals to modernizing the country and defeating North Korea.

¹⁴² Oh, “The Counter-Corruption Campaign of the Korean Government (1975–77),” p. 326.

¹⁴³ A. T. Rafique-Rahman, “Legal and Administrative Measures Against Bureaucratic Corruption in Asia” in Ledivina V. Cariño, Ed., *Bureaucratic Corruption in Asia—causes, consequences, and controls* (Quezon City : JMC Press, 1986), p. 120.

¹⁴⁴ “The Direction and Tasks of the General Administrative Reform” (Central Officials Training Institute, 1977), p. 129.

“서정쇄신의 방향과 과제,” (중앙공무원교육원, 1977), 페이지 129.

¹⁴⁵ “President’s New Year Inspections Begin,” 1976/1/26, U.S. State Department cable, Central Foreign Policy Files, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

Several common explanations for anti-corruption motives can be reasonably ruled out in the case of the GAR. Quasi-democratic institutions, which were at their lowest ebb in the Fourth Republic, were not a major factor. Nor is there much evidence that American pressure on the regime played a substantial role. The U.S. opposed the abandonment of democracy ideals that the Yushin system represented. But “it withdrew 20,000 troops from South Korea in the early 1970s” as “part of its effort to pull back from its overseas military commitments,” meaning that “in the context of military withdrawal, the United States was not in a position to proactively engage in South Korea’s domestic political developments.”¹⁴⁶ And despite the general rivalry with North Korea, there was no specific North Korean threat. The two sides announced the North-South Joint Statement in 1972 and engaged in several rounds of talks over the next few years. Also, it was just before or in the early years of the Yushin period that the South passed the North economically.¹⁴⁷ Finally, the GAR was launched after Park’s successful power consolidation and did not aim to purge elite rivals.

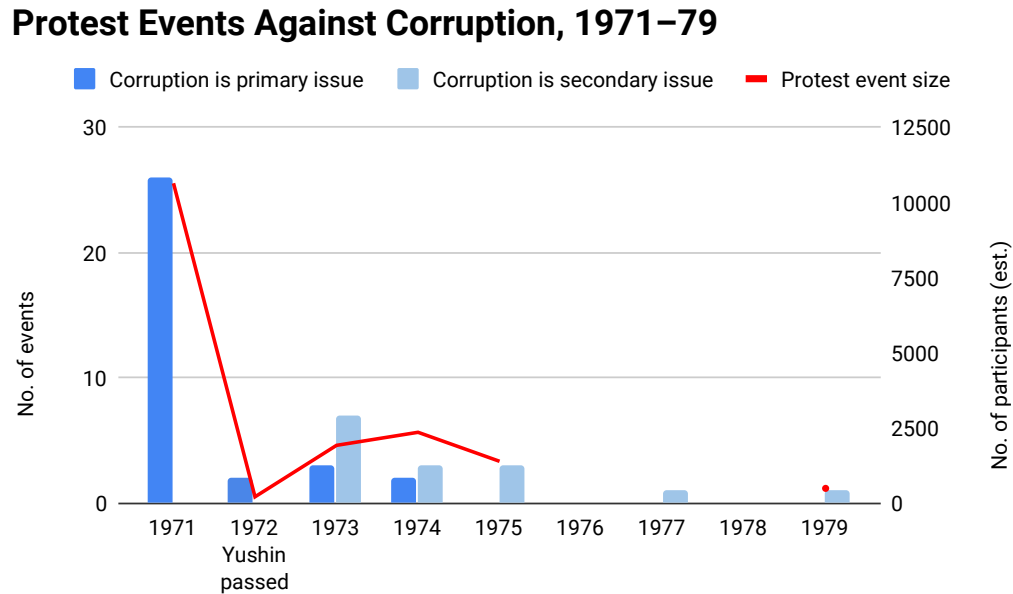
Park’s desire to address public anger over corruption cannot be ruled out as a motivator, but this was not a reform won through public protest. The adoption of the Yushin system meant that anti-corruption protests declined in favor of anti-authoritarianism protests and overall state repression of activism strengthened. Paul Chang writes that there were three main complaints that motivated students to come out and lead public protests in the early 1970s: the mistreatment of labor; the government’s intrusions into college campuses, for example to carry out mandatory

¹⁴⁶ Im, “The Origins of the Yushin Regime: Machiavelli Unveiled,” p. 258.

¹⁴⁷ Most expert assessments place the moment the South passed the North economically in the mid-1970s, but Andrei Lankov has argued it was actually earlier, around 1970. See *NKNews Podcast* ep. 1 “NKNews interviews DPRK expert Andrei Lankov on his recent trip to Yanji and more,” Posted Feb 12, 2018.

military training; and the lack of democracy, especially unfair elections.¹⁴⁸ The dramatic decline of corruption-related protest events under the Yushin constitution can be seen below.¹⁴⁹

Figure 3.2:



Data Source: Event data compiled by Paul Y. Chang from the Korea Democracy Foundation Sourcebook on Korean Protest Events, used with his permission.

Additionally, if addressing public anger was the GAR’s primary purpose, Park would probably have disciplined more high-profile offenders, which is usually how autocrats show off and make anti-corruption efforts seem more consequential than they are.

Implementing the GAR

The General Administrative Reform, though formally launched in 1975, began to be implemented almost as soon as the Yushin constitution was adopted. The number of

¹⁴⁸ Chang, *Protest Dialectics*, p. 55.

¹⁴⁹ See also: Han Sungjoo, “South Korea in 1974: The ‘Korean Democracy’ on Trial,” *Asian Survey* 15, No. 1 (1975), p. 35.; Chang, *Protest Dialectics*, p. 76.

investigations jumped into the tens of thousands in 1973 from just a trickle in 1972.¹⁵⁰ When the Office for Executive Coordination was created in January 1973, one of its five offices, Executive Office #4, was dedicated to “supervising, directing, and implementing” the GAR.¹⁵¹

The GAR disciplined civil servants widely, but focused more on low- and mid-level offenders than elites. In 1975, 21,919 civil servants were disciplined, with 4,178 of those being dismissed from their positions. The campaign grew in 1976, with 51,468 sanctioned—roughly a tenth of all government employees—including 8,194 who were fired.¹⁵² “Under the slogan that corruption is the first enemy of national security,” this was the biggest cleanup ever carried out by Park. Just by September 1975, “the number of disciplined officials broke down to 2,322 central government officials, 1,815 provincial government employees, 1,839 policemen, and 242 others.” There were 237 bureaucrats grade three or higher who were disciplined.¹⁵³ Ministry of Justice statistics show that police, local officials, education officials, and military personnel were often disciplined for accepting bribes.¹⁵⁴ The total number of people disciplined in the GAR was over 155,000, though many were simply transferred, docked pay, or given an official warning.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ “General Administrative Reform Model Civil Servant Reward Recommendation” (Ministry of Government Administration, 1978), p. 7.

“서정쇄신수범공무원포상추천” (총무처, 1978), 페이지 7.

¹⁵¹ “Office for Executive Coordination (1973–1998),” Office for Government Policy Coordination.

“행정조정실 (1973–1998),” 국무조정실, http://m.pmo.go.kr/m/office/office02_02d.jsp

¹⁵² Rafique-Rahman, “Legal and Administrative Measures Against Bureaucratic Corruption in Asia,” p. 122.; Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, p. 54.

¹⁵³ *Korea Annual*, 1975, p. 31.

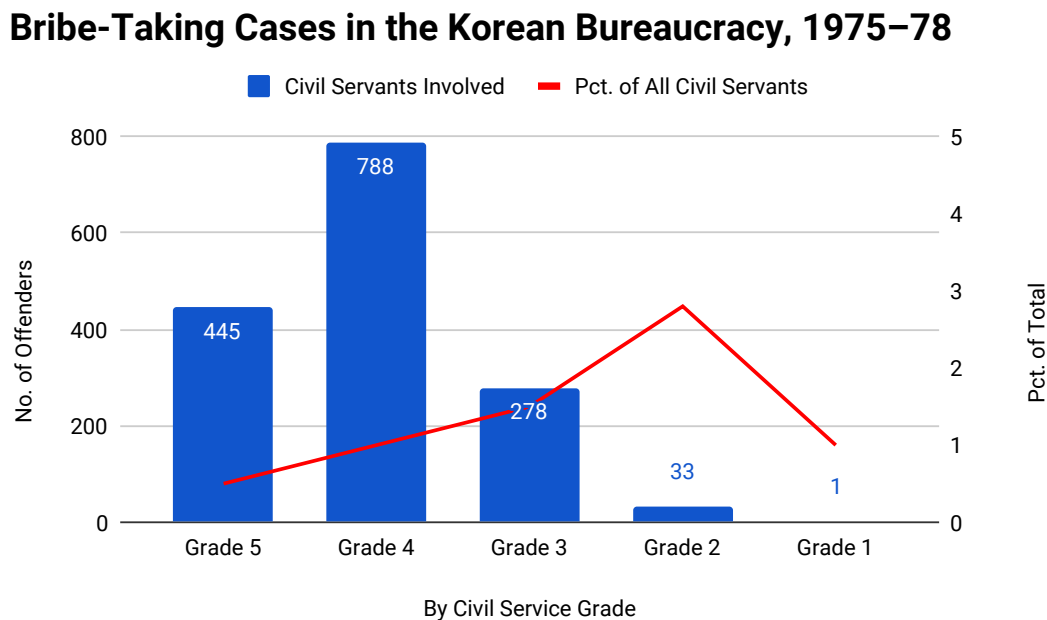
¹⁵⁴ Cited in Zhao Yongzai, *About South Korea’s General Administrative Reform: Focused on Control of Corruption Among Public Officials* (government publication – ministry unspecified, 1980), p. 99.

趙永載, 《한국의 서정쇄신론 : 공직자 부패방지를 중심으로》 (1980), 페이지 99.

¹⁵⁵ Zhao, *About South Korea’s General Administrative Reform*, p. 100.

17,485 bureaucrats and officials were “expelled or fired.”¹⁵⁶ While not all punishments were harsh, investigations were aggressive, often challenging commonly-accepted standards of legality. At the same time as all these arrests, Park ordered a 50 percent pay raise for almost half a million government employees.¹⁵⁷ This supplemented the 10 percent boost given at the start of the year and a year-end bonus of a month—the first ever.¹⁵⁸ Raising civil servants’ salaries is a common measure taken to increase morale and professionalism, as well as to reduce incentives for corruption.

Figure 3.4:



Data Source: Zhao, *About South Korea’s General Administrative Reform*, p. 100.

¹⁵⁶ Yoon Seung-jin, Yoo Hong-joon, Kim Hyeong-rae, Kim Yong-se, and Chu Hyeong-gwan, “A Study on the Effectiveness of the Corruption Control System,” *Korean Institute of Criminology* (2007), p. 93.

연성진, 유홍준, 김혁래, 김용세, 추형관, “부패사범 통제체계의 실효성 평가연구,” 한국형사정책연구원 (2007), 페이지 93.

¹⁵⁷ CSIB, 1975/4/20.

¹⁵⁸ *Korea Annual*, 1975, p. 31.

Several institutions were put in place to solidify the crackdown, with three of the most important being the GAR Almanac, the vertical collective responsibility system, and the double punishment system. The Almanac recorded the crimes and punishments of officials from the GAR, preventing exposed crimes from later being swept under the rug. It was used to block disciplined officials from working in related private sector jobs in the economic boom after being discharged.¹⁵⁹ It covered most civil servants above a certain rank and included the legislative and judicial branches, though temporary workers were excluded. The Almanac's coverage was expanded at the end of 1976.¹⁶⁰ Even for civil servants who left their jobs without being fired, there were new restrictions on taking jobs in related industries within a certain timeframe. For enforcement, job brokers and community leaders needed to be “vigilantly monitored,” even at social gatherings like “picnics” and sporting events.¹⁶¹ Vertical collective responsibility meant holding higher-level officials accountable for the economic crimes of their subordinates.¹⁶² The highest-ranking official in each agency or bureau at each level of government was responsible for clearing his or her “base” in accordance with the GAR.¹⁶³ From the earliest planning, Park made clear that the “key” to the campaign would be the leadership echelon of the bureaucracy.¹⁶⁴ Under the responsibility system, 21,267 civil servants were disciplined between 1975 and

¹⁵⁹ Oh, “The Counter-Corruption Campaign of the Korean Government (1975–77),” p. 327.

¹⁶⁰ CSIB, 1977/3/26.

¹⁶¹ CSIB, 1977/2/12.

¹⁶² Oh, “The Counter-Corruption Campaign of the Korean Government (1975–77),” p. 332.

¹⁶³ CSIB, 1976/1/27.; CSIB, 1976/11/19.

¹⁶⁴ Instructions at a National Mayor Magistrate Comparative Administration Conference on 1971/9/17, from *A Collection of President Park Chung-hee's Speeches* Vol. 8, (The Presidential Secretariat, 1972).

“전국 시장·군수 비교행정 회의 유시,” 《박정희대통령연설문집》 제 8 집 (대통령비서실, 1972).

1978.¹⁶⁵ The policy of double punishment made it easier to punish people involved in corruption; it allowed, for example, a bribe-payer and bribe-taker to both be punished for the same bribe.¹⁶⁶ And not for the first or last time in an East Asian anti-corruption campaign, the government tried to ban the private use of public vehicles by bureaucrats.¹⁶⁷ Overall, the central government claimed to have developed “more than 700 rules and regulations” for reform.¹⁶⁸

To enforce all these new rules and otherwise monitor the bureaucracy, the campaign deployed numerous “temporary organizations” in every government bureau at the central and provincial levels.¹⁶⁹ Each bureau formed a General Administrative Reform Promotion Committee, with the vice bureau chief as the chair, the secretary for planning and management as the vice-chair, and committee members appointed by the chief of the bureau.¹⁷⁰ At the central and provincial levels, each bureau had some combination of “a Special Investigation Team, a Confirm-and-Check Team, a Special Task Force, a GAR Promotion Committee, a Secret Inspection Team, an Irregularities Correction Special Team, etc.”¹⁷¹ Above all these was the Executive Decree Organization and Preparation Committee, which coordinated campaign activity but unlike the lower committees was written into law and was intended to be

¹⁶⁵ Zhao, “About South Korea’s General Administrative Reform,” p. 99.

¹⁶⁶ Park, “National Government Anti-Corruption Reform Measures,” p. 107.

¹⁶⁷ *Kyunghyang News* / 경향신문 (KHSM), 1976/2/18.

¹⁶⁸ “General Administrative Reform,” Ministry of Culture and Public Information, 1976, National Archives of Korea, Number: C11M34142.

“서정쇄신,” 문화공보부, 1976, 행정안전부 국가기록원, 관리번호: C11M34142.

¹⁶⁹ Park, “National Government Anti-Corruption Reform Measures,” p. 107.

¹⁷⁰ “The Direction and Tasks of the General Administrative Reform,” p. 130.

¹⁷¹ Yoon et al., “A Study on the Effectiveness of the Corruption Control System,” pp. 91–92.

permanent.¹⁷² Even after temporary organizations were phased out or receded in importance, this was not the end of the reform effort, which transitioned into routine enforcement.¹⁷³ Regular reports about the campaign's progress and specific activities, like worker inspections, continued to be reported up to central organs quarterly through 1979.¹⁷⁴

Other institutional reforms could address corruption indirectly. In 1975, the government “revised or repealed 475 laws and regulations” to reduce red tape and streamline the bureaucracy. Reportedly, the government discovered that in some cases bureaus needed 19 forms to complete routine tasks, like issuing licenses, and that routine tasks “could take up to 110 days.”¹⁷⁵ In addition, Citizen Complaint Offices set up in dozens of cities passed information up to a central Citizen Complaint Committee.¹⁷⁶ The Ministry of Home Affairs implemented a six-part plan to address citizen complaints, resulting in ten laws and 15 presidential decrees addressing problems the public faced.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² CSIB, 1975/12/28.

¹⁷³ Compared to cases in Taiwan and China, the GAR's committees and inspection teams were not given as much leeway to take control of bureaucracy even at the height of the campaign; they supervised rather than commandeered internal investigations.

¹⁷⁴ See for example: “General Administrative Reform Progress Report 1978, 3rd quarter,” State Administration and Administrative Adjustment Office. / “行政刷新推进状况报告 1978 年度 3/4 分期分,” 国务管理行政调整室.; “General Administrative Reform Progress Report 1979, 1st quarter” Workplace Information Collection. / “1979 년도 ¼분기 서정쇄신 추진 상황보고” 사업장정보집. For both: National Archives of Korea, Number: BA0158332. / 국가기록원, 관리번호: BA0158332.

¹⁷⁵ *Korea Annual*, 1975, p. 31.

¹⁷⁶ Kim Hong-zhou, *Research on Seoul City Civil Servants' General Administrative Reform* (Yonsei University Publishing, 1980), p. 22.

金洪周, 《서울特別市 公務員의 庶政刷新에 관한 研究》 (연세대학교발행, 1980), 페이지 22.

¹⁷⁷ Kim, *Research on Seoul City Civil Servants' General Administrative Reform*, p. 30.

Later stages of the GAR broadened the campaign out from the state and attempted to use propaganda to change societal norms of corruption. The GAR aimed to “eradicate societal wrongdoing and corruption,” as well as any “anti-social, anti-country, Yushin-resisting, civilian life-violating...behavior.” The most ambitious mission of the campaign was a “mental revolution,” which meant instilling the values of “diligence, self-help, cooperation” and having the people arm themselves with the proper “perspective, anti-Communist spirit...and value system.”¹⁷⁸ Millions of South Koreans received “education” on this “mental revolution” and “training” on how to support the GAR.¹⁷⁹ Civil servants underwent “mental/spiritual education.”¹⁸⁰ If the campaign could make the public internalize opposition to luxurious and undisciplined lifestyles, the logic went, corruption would decline and economic efficiency would increase.¹⁸¹ We can see in these propaganda tactics how state control of the media and societal discourse contributed to the overall campaign effort.

Anti-Corruption Outcomes

The General Administrative Reform was a Limited Victory; its successes can be seen in the wide-ranging purges of the bureaucracy, new and improved rules against corruption and governmental practices associated with corruption, institutionalized monitoring of indiscipline, and somewhat positive assessments by experts. Indirect evidence for anti-corruption success also comes from rising bureaucratic quality.¹⁸² The campaign’s limitations were mainly in its lack of

¹⁷⁸ Park, “National Government Anti-Corruption Reform Measures,” p. 107.

¹⁷⁹ Oh, “The Counter-Corruption Campaign of the Korean Government (1975–77),” p. 338.

¹⁸⁰ “Special Report / General Administrative Reform: Results of One Year,” Ministry of the Interior (1976), p. 28. “특집 / 서정쇄신 : 서정쇄신 1 년의 결산,” 內務部 (1976), 페이지 28.

¹⁸¹ Rafique-Rahman, “Legal and Administrative Measures Against Bureaucratic Corruption in Asia,” p. 120.

¹⁸² Yoon et al., “A Study on the Effectiveness of the Corruption Control System,” p. 93.

high-level prosecutions and the absence of rules that could constrain corruption among elites and high-level officials, which often involved collusion with chaebol “greased by cash.”¹⁸³

Discipline enforcement in the GAR was not only broad—cutting across the whole bureaucracy—but also relatively permanent. The GAR brought on a wave of disciplined civil servants appealing their cases, but statistics show that even as appeals increased, their success rate dropped throughout the campaign (see below). The GAR Almanac remained a constraint on “revolving door” corruption for disciplined officials, though restrictions on working in related private industries did not apply to the many officials who left public jobs for other reasons.

Table 3.2:

Success Rate of Civil Servant Appeals of Disciplinary Verdicts

1974	1975	1976	1977 (first quarter)
33%	20%	15.8%	17.8%

Source: DAIB, 1977/4/14.

The rising prevalence of meritocratic recruitment for top bureaucrats shows a rise in bureaucratic quality in this period. Between 1961 and 1970, 40 bureaucrats above the section chief level—29 percent of the total—were recruited through civil service examinations, as opposed to out of the military or through other procedures. Just between 1971 and 1975, however, 54 bureaucrats came in through examinations—61 percent of the total hired; the overall percentage between 1971 and 1979 was 57 percent.¹⁸⁴ In a separate measure of bureaucratic

¹⁸³ Author’s interviews with four scholars of South Korea’s authoritarian period. Summer 2018.; “The Plus and Minus of Korea,” 1976/11/5, State Department cable, Central Foreign Policy Files, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁸⁴ Ha Yong-Chool and Kang Myung-Koo, “Creating a Capable Bureaucracy With Loyalists: The Internal Dynamics of the South Korean Developmental State, 1948–1979,” *Comparative Political Studies* 44, No. 1 (2011), p. 87.

quality, tax collection improved after 1972.¹⁸⁵ The Yushin system “engendered an atmosphere conducive to the formation of an extremely cohesive and powerful bureaucracy.”¹⁸⁶

The GAR received moderately positive or mixed reviews in expert assessments.¹⁸⁷ The campaign “has seen many successes, as everyone knows, but corruption is still around us.”¹⁸⁸ It was “at least partly successful.”¹⁸⁹ The GAR overall fell “short of a satisfactory level...[but] the visible components of administrative corruption have significantly been reduced.”¹⁹⁰

“Wrongdoing was markedly reduced,” concluded a 1977 study from Seoul National University (SNU). The study cited the feedback of bureau reports passed up to central organs about the campaign and, as indirect evidence, the “unprecedented scale,” vigor, and consistency of government action. In a nationwide survey—the quality of which cannot be independently verified—79.4 percent of 2,400 respondents in December 1976 said that corruption had been reduced significantly or somewhat.¹⁹¹ Andrew Wedeman agrees that Park “vigorously

¹⁸⁵ Ha Tae-su, “Analysis of Revision of Government Organizational Law in the Opening of the Yushin Regime: Reasoning and Interpretation Based on the Political and Economic Background,” *Korean Policy Studies*, 10.2 (2010), pp. 435, 442.

하태수, “유신 정권 출범기의 정부조직법 개정 분석: 정치경제 배경 중심의 추론과 해석,” *한국정책연구* 10.2, (2010), 페이지 435, 442.

¹⁸⁶ Kim Byung-kook, “Economic Policy and the Economic Planning Board (EPB) in Korea,” *Asian Affairs* Vol. 18, No. 4, (Winter, 1992), pp. 206–207.

¹⁸⁷ Author’s interviews with two corruption control researchers in South Korea, January 2019.

¹⁸⁸ Kim, *Research on Seoul City Civil Servants’ General Administrative Reform*, p. 1.

¹⁸⁹ Author’s interview with Dr. You Jong-sung, 2018/7/17.

¹⁹⁰ Oh, “The Counter-Corruption Campaign of the Korean Government (1975–77),” p. 344.

¹⁹¹ Wu Xihong, “Focusing on the Work of Corruption Control in the Administrative System” in *Treatises on Administration* (Seoul National University Graduate School of Public Administration, 1977), pp. 124–25.

吳錫泓, “行政體制內的 腐敗除去作業을 中心으로,” 《행정논총》 (서울대학교 행정대학원, 1977), 페이지 124–25.

prosecuted corruption among low-ranking officials.”¹⁹² The GAR also simplified procedures for tasks such as getting travel money and paying business fees.¹⁹³ However, the SNU studies cautions, the “government...exaggerates the achievements.”¹⁹⁴ Park claimed publicly in January 1977 that “it is true that the campaign achieved many results,” including increasing the public’s level of trust in civil servants. But in a separate speech later in 1977 he complained that the GAR did not meet its full goals and “the pathogen of disorder remains in society.”¹⁹⁵ Other assessments agree that the “rejuvenation achieved in the bureaucracy...did not spread to the society at large.”¹⁹⁶

Official American assessments were positive, even excessively so. The annual Human Rights Report - Korea sent to Congress by the State Department in early 1978 reported that “the [South Korean] government has conducted an intense campaign which virtually eliminated low-level corruption and significantly reduced it at the higher levels.” It noted that this campaign was “impressive and important for public support.”¹⁹⁷ The Human Rights Report, including the assessment of South Korea’s anti-corruption efforts, was strongly criticized in an open letter to President Jimmy Carter from Korean critics of the Park government. The letter argued that in

¹⁹² Andrew Hall Wedeman, “Looters, Rent-Scrapers, and Dividend-Collectors: Corruption and Growth in Zaire, South Korea, and the Philippines,” *The Journal of Developing Areas* 31, No. 4 (1997), p. 468.

¹⁹³ Kim, *Research on Seoul City Civil Servants’ General Administrative Reform*, p. 20.

¹⁹⁴ Wu, “Focusing on the Work of Corruption Control in the Administrative System,” p. 125.

¹⁹⁵ Park Chung-hee at a press conference on January 12th, 1977, from *A Collection of President Park Chung-hee’s Speeches* Vol. 14, (The Presidential Secretariat, 1977). / 1977 년 연두 기자회견, 《박정희대통령연설문집》 제 14 집 (대통령비서실, 1977).; CSIB, 1977/10/28. The Prime Minister’s office at first boasted the bureaucracy was “a new world” in terms of probity, but later complained that “some departments did only tepid inspections of themselves” for GAR. Source: KHSM, 1976/08/31.; DAIB, 1978/3/2.

¹⁹⁶ Yoon et al., “A Study on the Effectiveness of the Corruption Control System,” p. 95.

¹⁹⁷ “Annual Human Rights Report – Korea,” 1978/1/28, U.S. State Department cable, Central Foreign Policy Files, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

praising the reduction in corruption, the State Department was “closing its eyes to the violations of human rights, while patronising a regime which is trampling human rights.”¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the State Department continued to praise the Park administration’s enforcement of anti-corruption measures in drafting the 1978 Human Rights Report on Korea.¹⁹⁹

Elites and high-level officials were in fact able to continue with established corrupt practices, although it is worth noting that the centralization of power around Park in the Yushin period almost certainly shrank the number of participants in high-level corruption. An “increasing concentration of power on the president meant increasing concentration of clientelistic resources.”²⁰⁰ The cancellation of direct presidential elections, for example, lessened the need for broadly distributed payoffs. In the economic sphere, Park gained the upper hand over the chaebol, meaning he needed their donations less and had more authority to direct them.²⁰¹ His plan to advance HCI fueled the rapid growth of his select few chaebol into the massive conglomerates Koreans associate the term with today.²⁰² This is why Michael Johnston characterizes South Korean corruption in this period as an “elite cartel.”²⁰³ The Yushin system, as Im writes, “stunted what potential the Third Republic had for democratization, but it was at

¹⁹⁸ “State Department Report on Human Rights in Korea: Dissidents Address Open Letter to President Carter,” 1978/2/21, U.S. State Department cable, Central Foreign Policy Files, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁹⁹ “1978 Human Rights Report – First Draft,” 1978/10/11, U.S. State Department cable, Central Foreign Policy Files, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

²⁰⁰ You, *Democracy, Inequality and Corruption*, p. 108.; Author’s interview with Dr. You Jong-sung. 2018/7/17.

²⁰¹ Mark Clifford, *Troubled Tiger: Businessmen, Bureaucrats, and Generals in South Korea*, Rev. ed. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), p. 74; Kelley K. Hwang, “South Korea’s Bureaucracy and the Informal Politics of Economic Development,” *Asian Survey* Vol. 36, No. 3, (Mar., 1996), p. 311.

²⁰² Hwang, “South Korea’s Bureaucracy and the Informal Politics of Economic Development,” p. 311.

²⁰³ Michael Johnston, *Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

the same time one of the factors that contributed to South Korea's transformation into a model East Asian developmental state."²⁰⁴ This narrowing of corruption does not imply a reduction of the amount of money involved, which may well have grown because of the rapid economic growth in the 1970s—this would be difficult to establish definitively.²⁰⁵

Explaining the GAR's Outcomes

The GAR's successful execution depended on Park's unconstrained leadership of the regime in the 1970s. Park ordered the reform, created the organizations that would lead it, kept those organizations close, and used his executive decrees and influence over the legislature to write the GAR's rules and regulations. Yun Tae-bum summarizes the style of Park's anti-corruption efforts as: "revolutionary promises, generalized and politicized purges, broad policy implementation, leadership by the Blue House, and the use and empowerment of temporary organizations."²⁰⁶ "More than legal measures, [the campaign] was mainly driven by politically strategic presidential orders."²⁰⁷ Park's consolidation of power undercut much of the leverage corrupt actors in the government had over him, helping prevent the backsliding that characterized anti-corruption efforts in the early 1960s. The leadership echelon of the bureaucracy, the prime location for patronage appointments, became relatively dispensable. The inability of these high-ranking bureaucrats to even collectively check the leader can be seen in the enforcement of the

²⁰⁴ Im, "The Origins of the Yushin Regime: Machiavelli Unveiled," p. 234.

²⁰⁵ "The annual contributions by the top *chaebol* to Park are known to have increased, reaching 500 to 600 million won (about 1.7 to 2.5 billion won in 2000 constant prices) during the late *Yushin* period." Source: You, *Democracy, Inequality and Corruption*, p. 132.

²⁰⁶ Yun Tae-bum, "An Evaluation of Anti-Corruption Strategies and Its Sustainability in Korea," *Korean Review of Public Administration*, 33(4), 2000, p. 137.

윤태범, "우리 나라 정부의 반부패정책의 평가," *한국행정학보*, 33(4), (2000), 페이지 137.

²⁰⁷ Yoon et al., "A Study on the Effectiveness of the Corruption Control System," p. 95.

vertical responsibility system, which held heads of bureaus accountable for the crimes of their subordinates. Scholars have noted the importance of Park's individual leadership in other reforms carried out in this period. For example, "both the [expanded] Saemul movement and the formulation and implementation of [Park's chaebol plan] bypassed existing bureaucratic structures by creating new ones directly responsible to the president."²⁰⁸ The Economic Planning Board and the Ministry of Finance were bypassed in policy-making in favor of the Presidential Secretariat and the Office for Executive Coordination.

Motivated and empowered leaders still need strong state capacity to carry out reforms, which Park had. The GAR—itself a state-building campaign—was possible through the existing capacity built up in the 1960s and earlier. Implementing the new rules of the reform required bureaucratic discipline, organization, and general professionalism. Implementing even a small anti-graft measure like the new "daily settlement of accounts" system throughout the whole government would be a challenge in most developing countries.²⁰⁹ The bureaucracy also had to absorb unusually high personnel turnover. While the importance of state capacity is uncontested in the literature, this factor alone does not explain why a reform succeeds. In the case of GAR, sufficient state capacity had been in place for years, if not decades; it was the top leadership's political will and authority propelled the reforms.

Park embraced many elements of the authoritarian playbook for corruption control in the GAR. Park centralized power, giving himself more of a free hand to challenge corrupt interests in the government and reducing the necessary scope of strategic patronage. He disrupted and

²⁰⁸ Cheng Tun-Jen, Stephan Haggard, and David Kang, "Institutions and Growth in Korea and Taiwan: The Bureaucracy," *Journal of Development Studies* 34, No. 6 (August 1, 1998), p. 106.

²⁰⁹ "Special Report / General Administrative Reform: Results of One Year," p. 28.

remade governing institutions, meaning dismantling, reorganizing, or sidelining state organizations; creating new organizations, sometimes temporarily, that were empowered to monitor and investigate existing ones; and issuing executive decrees that overrode existing laws and procedures to create higher anti-corruption standards or improve enforcement. Park also tightened vertical discipline. By designating organizations personally loyal to him as the command centers of anti-corruption efforts, Park increased his control over public officials who were previously only indirectly his subordinates or were distant from the center under several layers of bureaucratic authority. Loyalists in roving inspection teams were empowered to pass information directly to the center, avoiding possible bureaucratic inertia or defensiveness in the face of scrutiny. At the same time, lower-level officials were brought under more direct supervision by their superiors. Lastly, Park used state propaganda and his own rhetoric to portray corruption as an attack on the nation. Corruption was, in his telling, the cause of myriad economic, political, social, and military ills. Through this rhetoric, spread through the GAR's education and training, the regime strove to create a social atmosphere conducive to successful reform.

Finally, it would have been difficult for corruption control efforts to achieve a Breakthrough in the 1970s because of the political and economic influence of private socioeconomic elites, especially the heads of the chaebol. Park's leadership of the regime was less constrained than ever in the 1970s, but he had to compromise with the rapidly growing private sector. To advance his developmental goals, Park continued to have to treat chaebol leaders as essential business partners, with all the quid pro quo that this close relationship implied. Kang calls the politicians and economic elites under Park "mutual hostages."²¹⁰ The

²¹⁰ Kang, *Crony Capitalism*, pp. 96–121.

most likely time for Park to establish a different kind of relationship with the chaebol would have been at the beginning of his rule after the 1961 coup, before the chaebol became so dominant, but it was an insurmountable challenge even then for reasons discussed above. As with other anti-corruption efforts begun outside the early formative years of a regime, the GAR remained a Limited Victory. The main failing of the GAR in the 11-point scoring system is that it did not use new or improved rules to constrain high-level corrupt practices. Nevertheless, the Park era is rightly reputed to have been better for corruption control than the regimes that came before (Rhee and Chang) or immediately after (Chun and Roh).²¹¹ The independent power of socioeconomic elites continues to be a challenge in anti-corruption efforts in South Korea today.

4. Chun Doo-hwan and the Purification Campaign

Park Chung-hee was assassinated on October 26, 1979 by the director of the KCIA for unclear and possibly personal reasons. In the aftermath, the group of elites “that supported Park’s authoritarian developmental coalition first rallied behind Kim Chong-pil and after May 1980 behind Chun Doo-hwan.”²¹² Chun, an influential army general, was put in charge of the KCIA and the investigation into Park’s assassination. He soon leveraged this position and his influence over the Hanahoe—a secret faction Park had allowed him to cultivate within the military—to sideline Acting President Choi Kyu-ha and take over the regime. Chun declared martial law in May 1980 and stepped down from the military to become president in September. Within a few

²¹¹ Author’s interviews with several scholars of South Korea, including Dr. Martin Hart-Landsberg, Dr. Eun Mee Kim, Dr. John Lie, and Dr. You Jong-sung. Summer 2018. See also: You, “Demystifying the Park Chung-Hee Myth,” p. 540.

²¹² Kim Byung-Kook, “Conclusion: The Post-Park Era” in Kim Byung-Kook and Ezra F. Vogel, Eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 638.

months of Park's assassination, Chun had "filled the power vacuum [sic]" and "emerged as the most powerful figure in South Korea."²¹³

Much of the public felt robbed of the chance to institute a democratic system after the sudden fall of Park's regime, and protests quickly arose. Unlike the mild response to Park's coup in 1961, the public was angered by Chun's coup, giving him an immediate "legitimacy problem."²¹⁴ Chun was "core elite" in the military—even more of an insider than Park, who had been a marginal elite before 1961.²¹⁵ "The first few months after Park's death were a time of euphoria;" Choi "cautiously began to dismantle the Yushin system." The student protest movement, which had been effectively repressed, "changed dramatically when a new school year began in March 1980." Soon, "the streets of Korean cities witnessed daily demonstrations calling for the end of martial law, speedy democratization under a new constitution and the removal of Chun." Labor activists were also turning more militant. On May 15th, "fifty thousand students gathered in front of Seoul Station" and a serious fight with riot police followed.²¹⁶ Chun declared martial law and ordered the arrest of hundreds of protesters. The biggest resistance was in Kwangju, a major city in the southwest with a proud history of political protest and activism. The Kwangju Uprising, as it became known, met lethal repression by Chun's regime—hundreds of civilians were killed and thousands more were wounded, though precise numbers are unknown.

²¹³ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, "Political Reconstruction in South Korea: A Difficult Road," 1980/5/14, CIA-RDP85T00287R000101140001-6.

²¹⁴ Author's interview with Dr. You Jong-sung, 2018/7/17.

²¹⁵ Jung Yun-jae, "An Analysis of President Chun Doo-hwan's Political Leadership," *The Korean Journal of Political Science and Communication* 3.1. (2000), p. 141.

정윤재, "전두환 대통령의 정치리더십 분석," 한국정치정보학회 3.1. (2000), 페이지 141.

²¹⁶ Clifford, *Troubled Tiger*, p. 149–54.

The brutal crackdown cast a dark shadow over the Fifth Republic that never dissipated, regardless of how quickly the economy grew in the 1980s.

Chun was willing to carry out lethal repression to stay in control, but also tried to appeal to the public with governmental reforms, including mass disciplining of corrupt officials under the label of “Purification” (정화). Like Park before him, Chun justified his takeover by promising that a military-led regime would bring order, progress, and clean government. “Like Park, he also set up a quasi-revolutionary body to bypass the normal bureaucracy.”²¹⁷ On May 31st, Chun established the Special Committee for National Security Measures (國保委/국보위) (SCNSM) as the chief governing organ for his regime. The initial aims of the SCNSM included eliminating opposition to the government on security grounds, wresting control of academia from “north Korean puppets,” stopping the corrupt political wind of the times, and combating drug trafficking.²¹⁸ In early June, the SCNSM “inaugurated its purification campaign with a nine-point guideline promising to ‘purge impure elements,’ ‘rectify amoral business activities,’ and ‘purify the nation by rooting out various social vices’.”²¹⁹ Chun later explained that part of SCNSM’s missions was to eliminate “power-related wrongdoing” and “purify the political atmosphere polluted by corruption, scheming, flame-fanning, and libel.”²²⁰ Another SCNSM statement summarized the goals: “eliminate iniquity, irregularities, and corruption in officialdom, clean up political power-related illicit fortune-making and social evils.”²²¹ But many

²¹⁷ Clifford, *Troubled Tiger*, p. 163.

²¹⁸ KHSM, 1980/6/13.

²¹⁹ Clifford, *Troubled Tiger*, p. 164.

²²⁰ Chun Doo-hwan, *Chun Doo-hwan Memoirs v. 1: A Turbulent Time 1979–1980* (Birch Forest, 2017), p. 553. 전두환, 《전두환 회고록 1 권: 혼돈의시대 1979–1980》 (자작나무숲, 2017), 페이지 553.

²²¹ *Korea Annual, 1980–1981* (Hapdong News Agency), p. 25.

South Koreans had “grown cynical about periodic announcements of wiping out corruption among government officials and politicians. Thus, few people appeared stunned by the martial law command’s anti-graft announcement on June 18.”²²²

Chun’s Motives for the Purification

Chun’s involvement in and acceptance of corruption was a marked departure from Park’s behavior. “For all his faults, Park had never allowed his family to profit personally from his position. Unfortunately, the Chun and Lee families [his wife’s family] set an example of egregiously corrupt behavior that still undermines the Korean social contract.”²²³ Wedeman writes that “after Park, corruption no longer served purely political purposes and the amount of money that ended up in the pockets of individual leaders increased dramatically. Chun and Roh pocketed upward of a third of what they collected.”²²⁴ Whereas Park had colluded with chaebol in ways that benefitted his political party, the chaebol, and the economy, Chun plundered.²²⁵ “By the mid-1980s, this heavy financial burden of corruption had led the chaebol into open conflict with Chun.”²²⁶

Chun’s malfeasance in office went far beyond minor personal corruption or strategic, temporary acceptance of corrupt allies for political support. As came out at his trial in 1996, Chun pressured companies into paying him massive bribes and embezzled public funds through

²²² FEER, 1980/7/4.

²²³ Clifford, *Troubled Tiger*, p. 287.

²²⁴ Wedeman, “Looters, Rent-Scrapers, and Dividend-Collectors,” p. 468.

²²⁵ To explain why Chun was more corrupt than Park, scholars Kim Dongryul and James Christopher Schopf point to the issue of time horizons—Park’s were long, while Chun’s were short. Author’s interviews, September 2018.

²²⁶ Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, p. 236.

multiple channels. “Prosecutors said Mr. Chun had admitted receiving nearly \$900 million for a slush fund while he was President,” and that at least \$275 million of that met the legal definition of bribery.²²⁷ Chun was convicted of treason, mutiny, and corruption; his death sentence was commuted, however. Previously, in 1988, his younger brother had been convicted of embezzling \$5.8 million and had gone to prison.²²⁸ The problem was not confined to the leader and his family; “many senior officials in the Chun and Roh administrations—including a dozen ministers, a dozen senior military officers, half a dozen presidential advisers, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, the speaker of the National Assembly, the chief of the National Police Administration, the mayor of Seoul, and a host of other officials were subsequently charged.”²²⁹ While the personal use of corruption does not disqualify a leader from being a reformer, this kind of rampant embezzlement by numerous family members and cronies makes it difficult to accept that Chun had any sincere anti-corruption goals.

There is little to suggest that Chun’s motives for the purification campaign went beyond securing his position in power by weakening rivals and putting on a political show for the public. The campaign helped Chun control two groups of potential rivals: politicians and military officers. The CIA reported that South Korean politicians “generally regard the young general’s rise to power as a threat to their own prospects and to the nation’s political liberalization program. Students are highly suspicious of Chun’s motives and have begun calling for his ouster.”²³⁰ It is unsurprising, therefore, that 800 politicians were barred from participating in

²²⁷ NYT, 1996/1/13: <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/13/world/seoul-indicts-ex-president-on-bribery-charges.html>

²²⁸ NYT, 1988/9/6: <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/06/world/brother-of-seoul-s-ex-leader-is-found-guilty-of-corruption.html>

²²⁹ Wedeman, “Looters, Rent-Scrapers, and Dividend-Collectors,” p. 467.

²³⁰ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, “Political Reconstruction in South Korea: A Difficult Road,” 1980/5/14, CIA-RDP85T00287R000101140001-6.

politics for several years, including almost all National Assembly members, though some successfully appealed the decision.²³¹ The elites purged in the Purification were “a clever mix of corrupt politicians and genuine members of the opposition.”²³² Many were former close allies of Park, and at least a few of them might have succeeded Park had Chun not, such as Kim Chong-pil or chief of staff and former KCIA director Lee Hu-rak. Others were cabinet ministers, former cabinet ministers, and DRP members and aides to the former president.²³³ A former economic adviser of Chun’s interviewed for this study explained that Chun knew that focusing on the issue of corruption would help justify his purges of the government and bureaucracy.²³⁴ “Cleansing” the government of “illicit accumulators” might help ameliorate high “social distrust.”²³⁵

Purification and its Outcomes

Chun’s wide-ranging purification campaign shook the state, but ultimately should be rated as a Failed Reform. Unprecedentedly broad investigations and arrests were undermined by an unambiguous failure to institutionalize anti-corruption reforms. The campaign had, moreover, virtually no effect on expert opinion.

Scores of high-level military officials, politicians, and senior bureaucrats were charged with corruption and a mix of others political and economic crimes. The *Far Eastern Economic*

²³¹ FEER, 1980/11/21.; *Korea Annual, 1980–1981*, p. 12.

²³² FEER, 1980/11/21.

²³³ Nam Koon Woo, *South Korean Politics: The Search for Political Consensus and Stability* (Lanham [MD]: University Press of America, 1989), p. 142.

²³⁴ Author’s interview with former adviser to Chun, January 2019.

²³⁵ *Dong-A Yearbook 1981* (Seoul: Donga Ilbosa, 1981), pp. 116, 804.
《동아연감 1981》 (서울: 동아 일보사, 1981), pp. 116, 804.

Review noted that “one of [Chun’s] first aims appear[ed] to be elimination of endemic corruption from the bureaucracy.”²³⁶ But the dizzying speed and unprecedented scale of the purge—12 percent of high-level officials and 19.3 percent of vice-ministers²³⁷—created tremendous uncertainty. “Among bureaucrats in Seoul, a common greeting, only half in jest, is, ‘How nice it is to see you again this morning’—as if routine meeting these days are in doubt.”²³⁸ The most visible early act was the arrest of nine high-level public officials, including Kim Chong-pil, Lee Hu-rak, and Lee Se-ho, former army chief of staff, for corruption and related charges. The details of their cases were splashed on the front pages of newspapers for weeks. The government recovered from them some 85.3 billion won and eventually let them go.²³⁹ The SCNSM “anti-corruption squad” removed 232 senior officials, almost all from the executive, including one cabinet minister, five vice-ministers, three provincial governors, six National Assembly members, etc.²⁴⁰ Common crimes included accepting valuables in return for business favors, embezzlement of public funds, speculation on real estate or antiques, and providing private loans to businesses at high rates in one’s own jurisdiction.²⁴¹ Chun purged more than 300 officials from the KCIA for being “corrupt and incompetent.”²⁴² “No fewer than 100 from the Board of

²³⁶ FEER, 1980/7/18.

²³⁷ “Special Committee for National Security Measures White Paper,” p. 34.

²³⁸ *The Washington Post* (hereafter WP), 1980/7/20:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1980/07/20/hundreds-more-held-or-fired-in-s-korean-purge/729117a5-de2c-4ea7-a02d-7455d7d2a16a/?utm_term=.eb07f4f78db8

²³⁹ CSIB, 1980/6/19.; *Korea Annual, 1980–1981*, pp. 9, 54.

²⁴⁰ Nam, *South Korean Politics*, p. 233.

²⁴¹ *Dong-A Yearbook 1981*, p. 804.

²⁴² FEER, 1980/7/4.

Audit and Inspection...tendered their resignations.”²⁴³ 5,237 low- and mid-level officials were forced to leave their posts.²⁴⁴ By early 1981, some 8,000 civil servants had lost their jobs and 130,000 others had received clemency for minor disciplinary violations.²⁴⁵ Within the bureaucracy, special attention was paid to tax officials, the police, and bureaucrats in economic departments.²⁴⁶ Outside of government, at the broadest level of the Purification, more than 40,000 people were disciplined for corruption, smuggling, violence, and other anti-social behaviors.²⁴⁷

The Purification was accompanied by some proposals to institutionalize anti-corruption reform, but they did not go far. A former Hanahoe member and top adviser to Chun recalled in an interview that “the corrupt bureaucracy had to be fired...so we did [the Purification] not legally, but with power.”²⁴⁸ The Public Servant Ethics Law (PSEL) (1980) supposedly required officials to register and publicly disclose their personal assets and any gifts they received. But despite the “initial threat,” punishments for noncompliance were not specified and the law was ultimately not enforced.²⁴⁹ The new rules were opaque and “ineffective.”²⁵⁰ The Ethics Law also

²⁴³ FEER, 1980/7/18.

²⁴⁴ *Dong-A Yearbook 1981*, p. 116.

²⁴⁵ FEER, 1981/1/30.

²⁴⁶ “Special Committee for National Security Measures White Paper,” (Seoul: SCNSM, 1980), pp. 37–38. “國保委白書,” (首爾: 國家保衛非常對策委員會, 1980), 페이지 37–38.

²⁴⁷ *Dong-A Yearbook 1981*, p. 116.

²⁴⁸ Author’s interview, January 2019. This statement is not a translation, but rather was said in English.

²⁴⁹ DAIB, 2008/11/20, <http://news.donga.com/3/all/20081120/8660163/1>

²⁵⁰ Kim Seon-il and Lee Youn-hwan “Legal Alternative plan for public servant Ethic Act,” *Journal of Digital Convergence* [translation given], 12(1), (2014), p. 63.

김선일, 이윤환, “공직윤리제도 개선을 위한 법적대안,” *국방경찰행정학부*, 12(1), (2014), 페이지 63.

tried to put limits on where civil servants could work after leaving the government, but with no success.²⁵¹ Chun was still talking about implementing that part of the law in 1986.²⁵² Similarly, the Act on Real Name Financial Transactions passed in the National Assembly in December 1983, but it was watered down and implementation was put off.²⁵³ the PSEL was overhauled in 1993, under the democratically elected President Kim Young-sam (KYS). The KYS administration implemented anti-corruption proposals from the military period that were then not properly enforced, such as the real-name financial transaction system and registration and disclosure of officials' assets. It also expanded the scope of targets for such reforms.²⁵⁴

Chun's purification campaign has not made much of a mark on scholarship. News reports in domestic and foreign media show that it appeared dramatic at the time but in retrospect has been overshadowed by the Fifth Republic's brutal repression, especially of the Kwangju Uprising, and by Chun's own involvement in corruption. In rare praise for the Purification, Kim Seok-Ki suggests that Chun's initial emphasis on "eradicating corruption from the nation's political and bureaucratic sectors" led to increased "standardization" and "decentralization" of many decisions made in the bureaucracy.²⁵⁵ In his controversial memoir, Chun argues that there

²⁵¹ Park, "National Government Anti-Corruption Reform Measures," p. 108. On other problems with the law, see: Yun Tae-bum, "Public Ethics and Conflicts of Interest" [translation given], in Kim Byung-sup and Park Soon-ae, Eds., *Corruptions in Korea: Diagnoses and Prescriptions* (Seoul: Parkyoungsa, 2013), pp. 117–19. / 윤태범, "공직자의 윤리 확보와 이해충돌의 방지," 김병섭, 박영사, 《한국 사회의 부패: 진단과 처방》 (서울: 박영사, 2013), 페이지 117–19.

²⁵² *Yonhap News* / 연합뉴스 (YHN), 2013/8/5.

²⁵³ Jon S. T. Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asian Countries: An Impossible Dream?* (Singapore: ISEAS Pub, 2013), p. 326.

²⁵⁴ The 1990s reforms will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

²⁵⁵ Kim Seok-Ki, *Business Concentration and Government Policy: A Study of the Phenomenon of Business Groups in Korea, 1945–85* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1987), p. 247.

were swift and significant accomplishments in the “elimination of illicit accumulators,” the “purification of bureaucrats,” and the “establishment of national discipline.”²⁵⁶ Experts on Korean history and politics, however, do not agree.

Chun’s efforts suffered not only from his weak motivation but also from the fact that his leadership was constrained, even compared to Park’s in the early 1960s. Chun’s need to curry favor with multiple groups incentivized the use of corruption. After Park’s assassination, “all parties—including Chun—appear to recognize that a return to the excessive controls of the Park era would not be acceptable to the Korean people.”²⁵⁷ Pressure to not rebuild the Yushin system would come from U.S. officials as well.²⁵⁸ While presidential elections were indirect, Chun still needed substantial funds to build up his Democratic Justice Party (DJP), which kept him in power and assured legislative victories. Former advisers of Chun’s, when asked about his corruption, justified it as necessary to win elections.²⁵⁹ The DJP grew quickly by offering new members cash bribes: “local party officials or candidates sponsored ‘membership training meetings,’ at which scores of people acquired instant ruling party membership and 100,000 won (US \$150) each.”²⁶⁰ Vote-buying was also widespread.²⁶¹ Even within the military, Chun “does not seem automatically to have his way in his dealings with the military; he is rather considered a

²⁵⁶ Chun, *Chun Doo-hwan Memoirs* v. 1, p. 557.

²⁵⁷ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, “Political Reconstruction in South Korea: A Difficult Road,” 1980/5/14, CIA-RDP85T00287R000101140001-6.

²⁵⁸ Document 200, FRUS, 1977–1980, *Volume II, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs*, 1980/4/30.

²⁵⁹ Author’s interview with a close associate of CDH’s during his presidency, January 2019.

²⁶⁰ You, *Democracy, Inequality and Corruption*, p. 109.; FEER, 1981/3/27.

²⁶¹ You, *Democracy, Inequality and Corruption*, p. 109.

first among equals, with important decisions being made by a small group of his close supporters in a collegial fashion.”²⁶²

Comparisons between Park’s commitment to state-building and Chun’s personal greed raise the question of whether anti-corruption outcomes come down to idiosyncratic personal differences. Individual characteristics can certainly predispose some leaders to attempt governance reforms and others not, but structural factors still matter. Firstly, attempts are not outcomes, which are determined by much more than the choices of even a powerful leader. Secondly, for virtually all autocrats, political survival takes priority (or at least precedence) over pursuing other goals. This means that without some level of political security, differences in personal preference on questions of policy will be flattened. Finally, the emergence of leaders with revolutionary or developmental state-building commitments is not random. East Asia in the 20th century was particularly fertile ground for such leaders for historical reasons, as discussed in Chapter One. Chun Doo-hwan, the leader of the last new authoritarian regime in East Asia as of this writing (April 2019), was a break from that pattern.

5. Conclusions

This chapter demonstrates that South Korea was less effective at corruption control under military rule than the KMT-led regime in Taiwan because of three factors: the greater political constraints on South Korea’s top leadership, the concentration of private economic power in the hands of the chaebol, and, in Chun Doo-hwan’s case, weak motivation to curb corruption. Park Chung-hee was motivated to reduce government malfeasance primarily because of his developmental state-building mission, which grew out of his appreciation for the Japanese

²⁶² Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, “Political Reconstruction in South Korea: A Difficult Road,” 1980/5/14, CIA-RDP85T00287R000101140001-6.

model. But facing semi-competitive elections, factional conflict, and powerful private business interests, Park backtracked on his initial anti-corruption efforts. He used strategic corruption in his relations with businesses, politicians, and the public to secure his political position. The passage of the Yushin constitution loosened constraints on Park's power, which aided corruption control efforts. The General Administrative Reform curbed bureaucratic corruption but largely avoided addressing wrongdoing by elites. After Park's assassination in 1979, Chun did not curb governmental wrongdoing, but rather oversaw its increase. His leadership was much more constrained than Park's in the Yushin period, increasing incentives to rely on corruption. Moreover, his motives in launching an anti-corruption campaign in 1980 were narrowly political.

The analysis in this chapter suggests at least two South Korea-specific takeaways for future scholarship. First, though Park is often described as a “dictator” throughout 1961–79, I find that his leadership within the Third Republic was substantially constrained in ways that shaped his policy choices.²⁶³ And second, anti-corruption efforts under military rule, even if unsuccessful, were important political developments deserving of much greater scholarly attention than they have received. Park's post-coup anti-corruption efforts were an integral part of his developmental agenda and should not be dismissed out of hand.²⁶⁴ Despite its contributions to South Korea's developmental state, the General Administrative Reform has also often been overlooked, especially in English-language scholarship. Even Chun's short-lived

²⁶³ Lee Byeong-cheon, *Development Dictatorship and the Park Chung Hee Era: The Political and Economic Origin of our Era* (Paju, Gyeonggi-do: Changbi, 2003).

이병천, 《개발독재와박정희시대 : 우리시대의정치경제적기원》 (경기도파주시: 창비, 2003).

²⁶⁴ E.g. Kang, *Crony Capitalism*, p. 119.

purge of the government and bureaucracy had lasting political and economic effects worthy of further analysis.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ His former advisers were keen to convince me of this point.

Chapter Four

The Chinese Communist Party

1. Introduction

This chapter profiles the Chinese Communist Party's recurring struggle against corruption and explains why some of its efforts have been successful while others have not. As with Taiwan and South Korea in previous chapters, I find that authoritarian anti-corruption success in China has depended on a strongly motivated and unconstrained leadership being able to command a capable state apparatus. While the PRC has generally had high party-state capacity, the top leadership has often been constrained in ways that prevent it from effectively commanding this capacity and following through on reform plans. Motivation to curb corruption has often been high, reflecting corruption control's inclusion in the CCP's revolutionary and developmental state-building projects. But we can also see that even an individual leader's motivation can rise or fall as goals or situations change. Overall, the CCP has been less effective at curbing corruption than the KMT was in authoritarian Taiwan but arguably more effective than South Korea's military regimes.

The CCP has viewed corruption among party members as a critical challenge almost since its founding.¹ In the early 1930s, Mao Zedong—not yet chairman of the party—launched the party's first anti-corruption campaign of note in the southeastern revolutionary base known as the Jiangxi Soviet. After winning the Chinese Civil War and declaring the establishment of the

¹ The CCP's Central Committee promulgated the first party-wide circular on corruption on August, 4th, 1926: "Circular on Resolutely Cleaning Up the Corrupt." See: Wang Wenke, "Victory if Clean, Defeat if Corrupt—A Historical Record of Building Clean Government in Revolutionary Bases," *Journal of Yanan University (Social Science Edition)*, 1994(4). / 王文科, "廉则胜 腐则败——革命根据地廉政建设史鉴," *延安大学学报(社会科学版)*, 1994(4).

People's Republic of China (PRC), the party faced the monumental tasks of rebuilding and governing. In the early 1950s, the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign (三反五反运动) allowed the CCP to address corruption and reorder China's complex urban centers. In the early 1960s, after the humanitarian tragedy and economic failure of the Great Leap Forward (GLF), the party leadership tried to stamp out bottom-up capitalism and rural cadre corruption with the Four Cleans Campaign (四清运动). The widespread chaos created by the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s provoked violent state crackdowns on all forms of indiscipline. Economic crime, which had flourished in the turmoil, came under attack by the harsh One Strike–Three Antis Campaign (一打三反运动) (1970–71).

In the post-Mao era, the politics of corruption have become more complicated and the task of controlling it arguably even more important for the CCP. China's Reform and Opening under Deng Xiaoping brought rapid growth and social change, but also a dramatic rise in corrupt behaviors. Deng led three campaigns in the 1980s to reverse the trend to little avail. The last of these crackdowns was precipitated by the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, in which protesters called for greater democracy and an end to rampant official malfeasance. In the 1990s and 2000s, anti-corruption campaigns were less significant and, following the general trend of political liberalization, the CCP experimented with a more democratic approach to corruption control. But rather than establish clean government, these reform efforts exposed the weakness of party discipline in an increasingly open political environment, contributing to a sense of slow-motion crisis within the party. Since 2012, Xi Jinping's sweeping, multiyear anti-corruption campaign has been part of and a strategy for achieving his overarching mission in office: to reverse political trends under his predecessors and restore party discipline and party control over the state and society.

The CCP’s major anti-corruption successes are the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign, which was a Breakthrough, and Xi’s ongoing campaign, which has already achieved a Limited Victory. The later Mao era (after the Leap) and the reform era saw several Failed Reforms, usually because the government ramped up anti-corruption investigations but then failed to enforce new rules or clean government norms. At other times, Chinese leaders have announced anti-corruption campaigns but then not significantly increased enforcement. This is either because their efforts were blocked or because the campaign was not national in scope. Less than Failed Reforms, these cases are Empty Gestures.

Table 4.1:

Major Anti-Corruption Efforts in the People’s Republic of China

Name and Dates²	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
Three Antis–Five Antis 1951–53	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough
Four Cleans 1962–65			✓	Failed Reform
One Strike–Three Antis 1970–71	✓	✓		Failed Reform
“Campaign Against Economic Crime” 1981–82	✓		✓	Failed Reform
“Party Work-Style Rectification” 1986	✓		✓	Failed Reform

² This list excludes many campaigns that were announced but did not meet the minimum threshold of a 50 percent rise in annual anti-corruption enforcement discussed in Chapter One—e.g. Empty Gestures in 1993, 1995, 2005, 2009. Fluctuations in the number of elite and high-level officials prosecuted for corruption were so common in the reform era that for the sake of manageability I did not include any cases on that basis alone. In addition, I exclude the campaign in the Jiangxi Soviet in the early 1930s because even rough data on its discipline enforcement are not available.

“Post-Tiananmen Crackdown” 1989–90			✓	Failed Reform
Xi’s Anti-Corruption Campaign 2012–	✓	✓	✓	Limited Victory

Following this introduction, Section Two of this chapter focuses on the pre-PRC period of the CCP. It seeks to explain the origins of Mao Zedong’s powerful leadership, his and other CCP leaders’ motives for pursuing corruption control, and the CCP’s high state capacity. Section Three covers the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign. Section Four analyzes the Four Cleans and the One Strike–Three Antis campaigns. Section Five investigates ineffective anti-corruption efforts in the 1980s under Deng, while Section Six focuses on the quasi-democratic approach pursued in the 1990s and 2000s. Section Seven examines Xi’s signature anti-corruption campaign. Lastly, I propose two takeaways for future research on Chinese corruption control.

2. The Chinese Communist Party and Mao Zedong

The CCP was founded in July 1921 by a small circle of intellectuals and grew rapidly in membership throughout the 1920s. It joined with the larger Kuomintang and was a major left-wing influence until anti-communist leader Chiang Kai-shek moved to violently purge CCP members in April 1927. After Mao’s abortive rebellion known as the Autumn Harvest Uprising (秋收起义), the CCP retreated into various parts of southern China, where it increasingly drew support not from urban workers but from peasants. When Nationalist forces encircled its rural bases, the CCP retreated on its famous Long March (1934–35) across the country. In its new northwestern base at Yan’an in Shaanxi Province, the CCP again grew rapidly and won popular support in the late 1930s and early 1940s. After Japan’s defeat in World War II in 1945 and the

withdrawal of its forces from China, the Chinese Civil War broke out in earnest between the KMT and the CCP. The CCP drove the KMT off the Chinese mainland and founded the People's Republic of China in the fall of 1949.

Initially inspired by the Russian Revolution, the CCP was committed to radically transforming the Chinese state, economy, and society in line with the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The Russian Revolution provided an attractive model of how a formerly great but now “backward” society humiliated by foreign powers could dramatically remake itself to be strong and modern.³ In the troubled decades after the Xinhai Revolution (1911), educated Chinese debated the relative merits of various foreign models and ideologies that could be borrowed or adapted to build a new China, including anarchism, Christianity, communism, democracy, and fascism.⁴ The CCP and the KMT shared the goal of unifying and modernizing China, but had starkly different visions of how to go about it. As in other communist states, the CCP aimed to become the sole legitimate political force in China and eliminate or co-opt unfriendly or independent social classes, political parties, private organizations, etc. Economically, the CCP aimed to rapidly industrialize and otherwise develop the country under state socialism.⁵ While the mission of growth was similar to that of capitalist developmental regimes, state socialism entailed central planning and public control of the bulk of industries. Socially, the CCP aimed to control civil society (if such a foreign term is appropriate in China), mobilize the masses, and

³ Ronald G. Suny and Terry Martin, Eds., *A State of Nations: empire and nation-making in the age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford; New York : Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴ There remains scholarly debate as to the level of borrowing or Chinese indigenous innovation in its own Communist revolution. See: Deborah A. Kaple, *Dream of a Red Factory: the legacy of high Stalinism in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).; Elizabeth J. Perry, *Anyuan: Mining China's Revolutionary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

⁵ Timothy Cheek and Tony Saich, Eds., *New Perspectives on State Socialism of China* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).

mold public consciousness to align with its principles and ideals. While the strategies taken to achieve these goals changed over time, these aims did not fundamentally change until the reform era began after Mao Zedong's death in 1976.

Mao, who had attended the CCP's First National Congress in 1921, established himself as the preeminent Communist leader during the party's tumultuous early decades. After leading the failed Autumn Harvest Uprising in 1927, Mao's relationship with the party leadership deteriorated and he came under repeated criticism for his unorthodox emphasis on peasant mobilization among other issues. But as the CCP suffered repeated setbacks, it increasingly embraced Maoist tactics and policies. At the Zunyi Conference in January 1935, which occurred during the Long March, Mao became the de facto leader of the communist movement. He was able to use dissatisfaction with the strategic choices of other leaders, especially Bo Gu and Comintern representative Otto Braun, to push them aside. Mao further consolidated his power in the Yan'an period—a revolutionary interlude of isolation, austerity, and popular support later romanticized as embodying communist ideals. David Apter and Tony Saich explain how Mao outmaneuvered several other prominent figures in the movement, including Zhang Guotao, Wang Ming, Wang Shiwei, and Liu Zhidan, and criticized them without acknowledging his own errors.⁶ It was also in Yan'an that the party began to build Mao's cult of personality.⁷ Arguably the most important development in terms of Mao's status was the Yan'an Rectification Movement (延安整风运动) (1942–44), the first in what would become a CCP tradition of rectifications: internal party movements that combine ideological, political, and coercive tactics

⁶ David E. Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Harvard University Press, 1994).

⁷ Daniel Leese, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

to reorder power. The Yan'an Rectification Movement, over which Mao "exercised almost total control," ended overt challenges to Mao's authority in the party, established many of Mao's policies and views as party doctrine, and allowed Mao Zedong Thought to be enshrined in the new party constitution.⁸ This successful rectification would become a model for future CCP reforms and was studied by Chiang Kai-shek as well.⁹ After October 1949, Mao's cult of personality was propagated throughout China, along with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's.¹⁰

To carry out the CCP's revolutionary projects, Mao and the rest of the leadership would need strong state capacity (or proto-state capacity, before 1949). The party experienced numerous setbacks and defeats in its decades of revolutionary struggle, but these tribulations also screened members for loyalty and taught the leadership how to organize and mobilize supporters with relatively scarce resources. In the Yan'an period in particular, the party "tightened its organizational form" in terms of the party, the government, and the army, while also expanding its membership.¹¹ One key factor in its revolutionary success was the CCP's ability, which the KMT lacked, to penetrate the natural village and rally peasant support.¹² The CCP did not wait until 1949 to begin implementing its agenda; it successfully led land reform and rural

⁸ "China: Cleansing the Party—Rectification and Reform in the 1980s," Central Intelligence Agency - Research Paper, Sept. 1983.; "Summary: Mao's Current These on Contradiction and the Cheng Feng (Party Reform Movement)," General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1957/6/17, CIA-RDP78-00915R000700200022-8.

⁹ Bruce J. Dickson, "The Lessons of Defeat: The Reorganization of the Kuomintang on Taiwan, 1950–52 *," *The China Quarterly* 133 (1993), p. 63.

¹⁰ Lawrence R. Sullivan, "Leadership and Authority in the Chinese Communist Party: Perspectives from the 1950s," *Pacific Affairs*, Winter 1986/1987, Vol.59(4), pp. 605–33.

¹¹ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 1st ed. (W W Norton & Co, 1991), p. 461.

¹² Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, 2nd ed., enl., (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971), p. 412.

development projects throughout the 1940s in areas already under its control.¹³ Most dramatically, the CCP demonstrated high capacity in its come-from-behind military victories. Many observers inside and outside China were shocked that the KMT, which was in control of most of China in 1945, could lose the Chinese Civil War to the CCP, which had been a marginal power in terms of manpower and territorial control only a decade earlier. In the early months of the People's Republic of China, the CCP's organizational skills were on display in taming inflation, restoring law and order, and stamping out residual resistance, whether from KMT agents, ethnic minority groups, or intellectuals. The U.S. State Department concluded in 1951 that the new regime had quickly brought "efficiency," and that the "bureaucracy has been built up to the extent that it touches the daily activities of practically every Chinese individual."¹⁴

On the specific issue of capacity to control corruption, the CCP's development had begun in the early 1930s in the Jiangxi Soviet, with the party's first major anti-corruption campaign.¹⁵ Soon after the Soviet's establishment in November 1931, the official newspaper *Red China* (红色中华) reported alarming cases of corruption, including dozens of embezzlement cases in just one small county.¹⁶ Cadres reportedly used embezzled funds for speculative business, including

¹³ Edward Friedman, Paul Pickowicz, and Mark Selden, *Chinese Village, Socialist State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 80–110.; Kristen Looney, *The Rural Developmental State: Modernization Campaigns and Peasant Politics in China, Taiwan and South Korea* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2012), pp. 59–68.

¹⁴ Document 34, FRUS, 1951, *Korea and China, Volume VII, Part 2*, 1951/2/8.; Document 227, FRUS, 1951, *Korea and China, Volume VII, Part 2*, 1951/11/15.

¹⁵ Miao Pingjun, "The Establishment of the Chinese Soviet's First 'Anti-Corruption and Waste' Law from Beginning to End," *The Whole Party History*, 2015/3/5.
缪平均, "中华苏维埃第一部'反贪污浪费'法律形成始末," 党史纵横, 2015/3/5,
<http://www.bjdj.gov.cn/news/201535/n211111644.html>

¹⁶ Tian Yanguang, "Red China and Efforts to Uphold Integrity of the CPC in the Early Time" [translation given], *Journal of Nanchang University*, 2014, Iss. 5, pp. 111–115.
田延光, "《红色中华》与中共早期廉政建设," 南昌大学学报, 2014年5期, pp. 111–15.

the resale of items like salt that were in desperately short supply.¹⁷ Some cadres “falsified accounts, forged documents, or destroyed incriminating evidence in order to embezzle public funds.”¹⁸ Promising harsh punishments, Mao launched a campaign against “corruption,” “waste,” and “bureaucratism” in the party (反贪污浪费运动).¹⁹ The campaign was an early test of capacity and a learning experience for the CCP’s discipline inspection system, which was based on the Soviet Union’s and was first institutionalized in 1927. The Worker-Peasant Inspection Committee (WPIC), which headed several province-level disciplinary supervisory commissions, “issued a series of directives concerning the scope, targets, and reform methods of the campaign.”²⁰ In addition, it was during this crackdown that the CCP established its auditing agencies at various levels.²¹ The campaign had several characteristics that would feature in the party’s later anti-corruption efforts: the heavy use of inspection teams sent to local areas to investigate corruption, the establishment of temporary organizations to lead the campaign, greater reliance on party decrees than laws, and even mass participation.²² The WPIC reported in

¹⁷ Huang Zhaokang, “On the History of the Chinese Communist Party’s Struggle Against Corruption,” *Party History World*, 2008(12), pp. 43–50.

黄兆康, “论中共历史上的反腐败斗争,” 党史天地 2008 (12), pp. 43–50.

¹⁸ Gong Ting, *The Politics of Corruption in Contemporary China: An Analysis of Policy Outcomes* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1994), p. 43.

¹⁹ *People’s Daily* [人民日报] (hereafter RMRB), 2013/12/2, <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/n/2013/1202/c85037-23711658.html>

²⁰ Gong Ting, “The party discipline inspection in China: Its evolving trajectory and embedded dilemmas,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* Vol. 49, Iss. 2, (March 2008), p. 141. Oddly, the CCP already had a provincial level as part of its structure.

²¹ Liu Enze, “A historical review of the control of corruption on economic crime in China,” *Journal of Financial Crime*, London Vol. 23, Iss. 1, (2016), p. 11.

²² Huang, “On the History of the Chinese Communist Party’s Struggle Against Corruption.”; Yuan Lihua, “On the Basic Experience of the Party-led Mass Campaign in the Chinese Soviet Against Corruption,” *Gansu Social Sciences*, No. 2, 2011, pp. 108–11. / 袁礼华, “论中央苏区党领导群众运动反腐败的基本经验,” 甘肃社会科学 2011 年第 2 期, pp. 108–11.

March 1934 that an investigation into the Soviet's central organs had resulted in 29 cadres being tried in court and three being dismissed from their jobs.²³ Apart from this and the announcement of some rudimentary anti-corruption decrees, it is not clear what success the campaign might have had; it was interrupted by the CCP's retreat from the area in October 1934 to escape KMT encirclement.

Despite the CCP's prior corruption control experience and state capacity, after 1949 the general mess left by the retreating KMT and the challenges of a complex governance transition created fertile conditions for corruption among party members. As discussed in Chapter Two, in the 1940s, the KMT regime became "one of history's most corrupt governments."²⁴ Without exaggerating the CCP's relative cleanliness, we can say that many CCP members had endured years of austerity in revolutionary struggle. As a result, as party leaders acknowledged, many party members could not resist the corrupt and luxurious lifestyle of the city.²⁵ Throughout 1950, official media reported a trend of new corruption by party members and in areas under their authority.²⁶ Government reports concurred; one report from July 1950 related that many counties in the northwestern Ningxia Province had a "very chaotic and severe" situation of embezzlement

²³ "Revealing the Chinese Soviet's 1933 Anti-Corruption and Waste Campaign," 2013/12/10, *China Organization Personnel News*.

"揭秘中央苏区 1933 年反贪污浪费运动," 2013/12/10, 中国组织人事报.

²⁴ Shang Ying, *Curbing Corruption: A Comparative Analysis of Corruption Control in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2002), p. 195.

²⁵ T. Wing Lo, *Corruption and Politics in Hong Kong and China* (Open University Press, 1993), p. 22.

²⁶ RMRB, 1950/10/24; *Guang Ming Daily* [光明日报], 1950/10/26; and *Northeast Daily* [东北日报], 1950/10/31, Quoted in General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1951/1/25, CIA-RDP80-00809A000600370599-7.; Further examples cited in: General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1950/9/28, CIA-RDP80-00809A000600350037-2.

and waste.²⁷ Politburo member Gao Gang raised concerns about the prevalence of corruption among CCP members in a speech in August 1951, arguing that they must have been “contaminated” by the holdover bureaucrats, merchants, reactionaries, etc.²⁸ Put in less ideological terms, it is clear many party members took advantage of their new powers and the insecurity of private businesses after the civil war to engage in a variety of predatory or collusive behaviors.

3. The Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign

This section describes how Mao launched the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign (or simply Three Antis–Five Antis) to address these problems and advance his and the CCP’s revolutionary state-building mission. I argue that this campaign was, like the contemporaneous KMT Reconstruction in Taiwan, a Breakthrough success in curbing corruption. I attribute this success to the combination of Mao’s unconstrained leadership, his strong motivation in pursuing corruption control to further broader goals, and the CCP’s high party-state capacity, which together allowed for an authoritarian playbook of reform. Despite the Three Antis–Five Antis’ success, corruption rose again several years later because of the disastrous Great Leap Forward.

²⁷ “Ningxia’s counties have a very chaotic and severe situation of corruption and waste of money and grain,” 1950/7/22, The Database for the History of Contemporary Chinese Political Movements, 1949–. (hereafter ZDZYSS).

“宁夏各县财粮工作存在严重贪污浪费现象,” 1950/7/22, 中国当代政治运动史数据库 (ZDZYSS).

Ningxia was a province until it became part of Gansu Province in 1954. In 1958, it became separate again as the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

²⁸ Chen and Chen, “The ‘Three-Anti’ and ‘Five-Anti’ Movements in Communist China,” p. 11.; The charge of “contamination” would be widely repeated in government reports during the campaigns. E.g. “Study the Tongxian County Party Committee to focus on the experience of investigating corruption and waste,” Editorial in *Construction*, 1951/11/12, ZDZYSS. / “学习通县地委重点检查贪污、浪费的经验,” 《建设》编辑部, 1951/11/12, ZDZYSS.

In October 1951, Mao launched the Three Antis Campaign (三反运动), which combined a focus on corruption and economic mismanagement with a broader effort to penetrate and reform urban areas. Its name meant that the campaign was anti-corruption, anti-waste, and anti-bureaucratism.²⁹ After decades of emphasizing the rural over the urban, the CCP needed to build support in cities and learn how to govern them. The campaign was a way for the CCP “to grapple with the complex influence of urban life on the governing elite.”³⁰ Only through this campaign did the CCP become a “truly revolutionary force” for urban citizens.³¹ The campaign contributed to state-building in multiple ways: purging questionably loyal holdover bureaucrats, building urban CCP networks and recruiting activists, advancing the state takeover of private industry, recovering illicit funds for the state treasury (in part for the war effort), strengthening trade unions, centralizing the CCP’s own economic activity, mobilizing the urban public into CCP campaigns, and checking corruption among CCP members during the transition.³²

²⁹ Li Guangzeng, Niu Xinquan, Ma Shuang, and Wang Liqun, “Properly Guiding Public Opinion and the Victorious Advance of Initial Post-Liberation Economic Construction,” *Hebei University Journal*, Vol.27(3), pp. 80–85. / 李广增、牛新权、马爽、王立群, “正确的舆论导向与建国初期经济建设的凯歌行进,” 河北大学学报, 2002, Vol.27(3), pp. 80–85.; Ren, “On Jiangsu’s Three Anti and Five Antis Campaigns,” p. 52.

There was a trial run for the campaign in Manchuria, where the term “three antis” was used by Gao Gang, but Mao made it national policy.

The Chinese words 贪污 [*tanwu*] and 腐败 [*fubai*] are both often translated as “corruption,” but the first can also refer to embezzlement or theft of state assets while the second sometimes specifically means bribery.

³⁰ Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics & Purges in China: rectification and the decline of party norms, 1950–1965* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1979), p. 85.

³¹ Kenneth G. Lieberthal, *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin, 1949–1952* (Stanford University Press, 1980), p. 8.

³² Document 64, FRUS, 1952–1954, *China and Japan, Volume XIV, Part 1*, 1952/12/30.; Bo Yibo, “Fight for a More Penetrative and Universal Expansion of the Anti-corruption, antiwaste, and Antibureaucratism Movement,” 1952/1/9, from General Central Intelligence Agency Records, CIA-RDP80-00809A000700110317-6.; Teiwes, *Politics & Purges in China*, pp. 84, 125.; On the shift in the CCP’s policy towards private industry during the campaign, see: Liu Dejun, “Change Your Perspective and Hills Become Peaks: On the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign’s Positive Influence,” *Gansu Social Science Journal*, 2015, Iss. 1. / 刘德军, “横看成岭侧成峰: 论‘三反五反’运动的积极影响,” 甘肃社会科学, 2015年1期.

Mao viewed corruption control as a necessary project to advance the revolution, as well as a way to show the public that CCP rule would be different from KMT rule.³³ Mao argued that if corrupt actors were not purged, there would be “damaging effects in the future.” “If we don’t carry out the Three Antis, the party will go bad (变质)...if it isn’t implemented within a decade, the Communist Party will turn into the Nationalist Party.”³⁴ Therefore, Mao proposed, there should be a “big clean up of the whole party” to prevent the “extreme danger of many party members being corroded by the bourgeoisie.”³⁵ The “struggle against corruption, waste, and bureaucratism should be seen as just as important as the struggle against counterrevolutionaries.” In many statements, Mao connected cleaning up corruption to class struggle and to economic advancement.³⁶ In early 1952, for example, he instructed Beijing’s party committee to “take this opportunity [corruption control] to make a resolute counterattack...to the capitalist class’s rampant attack on this issue in the past three years.”³⁷ U.S. intelligence also assessed that anti-

³³ The CCP’s relative cleanliness, real or not, had long been a point of propaganda. Back in Yan’an, Mao had argued to U.S. officials that KMT corruption was the reason it could not withstand Japanese attacks. See: Document 491, FRUS: *Diplomatic Papers, 1944, China, Volume VI*, 1944/11/8.

³⁴ Quoted in Yang Kuisong, “The Evolution of the Chinese Communist Party’s Policy toward the Bourgeoisie before and after the Establishment of the People’s Republic of China” [translation given], *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, 2006, Iss. 2, p. 14.

杨奎松, “建国前后中国共产党对资产阶级政策的演变,” 近代史研究, 2006年2期, p. 14.

³⁵ “Mao Zedong’s Instructions for the Three Anti and Five Anti Struggle,” 1951/1/30, ZDZYSS.
“毛泽东关于‘三反’、‘五反’的斗争的指示,” 1951/1/30, ZDZYSS.

³⁶ “Mao Zedong’s Instructions for the Three Anti and Five Anti Struggle,” 1951/12/8, ZDZYSS.
“毛泽东关于‘三反’、‘五反’的斗争的指示,” 1951/12/8, ZDZYSS.

³⁷ Quoted in Tong Hua and Ding Xiaoli, “The Historical Experience of the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign,” *Ideological and Theoretical Education Guide*, 2009, Iss. 11, p. 28.

全华、丁小丽, “‘三反’、‘五反’运动的历史经验,” 思想理论教育导刊, 2009年11期, p. 28.

corruption efforts in the early 1950s were linked to larger, long-term goals as the CCP set up a “new China.”³⁸

In early 1952, the Five Antis Campaign (五反运动) was started as a companion to and largely merged with the Three Antis, creating the Three Antis–Five Antis. While the Three Antis was more about government officials, the Five Antis focused more on businesses. The Five Antis opposed bribery, tax evasion, laxity at work, embezzlement, and the theft of economic reports. Mao gave the campaign eight goals, many of which overlapped with the Three Antis’ goals and contributed to the CCP’s penetration of cities and increased regulation of urban economic activity.³⁹ The goals included “thoroughly investigate the situation of private industry and commerce,” “clearly delineate the boundary between the working class and the bourgeoisie,” “clean up the five vices [the antis] and eliminate speculation,” and “set up party chapters and strengthen party work among the workers and employees of large and medium private enterprises.”⁴⁰ In some areas, there were slightly different versions of the Three Antis–Five Antis. Shanghai briefly launched a Four Antis Campaign (四反运动) against bribery, fraud, violence, and tax evasion, which expanded to “five antis” in February 1952.⁴¹

³⁸ He Yanqing, “Analyses and Assessments by the U.S. Intelligence Community of the CPC’s Social Control and Political Movements in the Early Days of New China,” *Journal of Chinese Communist Party History Studies*, 2011 Iss. 3, pp. 58–68.

贺艳青, “新中国成立初期美国情报界对中国共产党的社会治理和政治运动的分析与评估,” 中共党史研究, 2011, 3 期, pp. 58–68.

³⁹ “Mao Zedong’s Instructions for the Three Anti and Five Anti Struggle,” 1952/3/5, ZDZYSS.
“毛泽东关于‘三反’、‘五反’的斗争的指示, 1952/3/5, ZDZYSS.

⁴⁰ “Mao Zedong’s Instructions for the Three Anti and Five Anti Struggle,” 1952/3/5.

⁴¹ Zhang Xule, “Shanghai’s Private Financial Industry and the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign,” *Contemporary China History Studies*, 2005, Iss. 6. / 张徐乐, “上海私营金融业与‘三反’‘五反’运动,” 当代中国史研究, 2005 年 6 期.; Yang Kuisong, “The Whole Story of the Five Antis Campaign in Shanghai, 1952,” *Social Science*, 2006, Iss. 4. / 杨奎松, “1952 年上海‘五反’运动始末,” 社会科学, 2006 年 04 期.

Was the Three Antis–Five Antis a way for Mao to consolidate his power, as is the case with many autocrats’ anti-corruption efforts? We cannot rule out personal power accumulation as a motive, but this alone would be insufficient to explain the reforms. Mao did not purge any elites who could be considered his rivals in the campaign. The first purges among top officials after the revolution were only in 1954 with the Gao Gang Affair.⁴² Furthermore, Mao had already consolidated a high degree of personal power before the campaign. This does not mean that Mao did not benefit from leading such a major campaign, but only that it would be a mistake to dismiss the broader implications of these measures for governance and the Chinese economy.

Three Antis–Five Antis Reform Measures

Between 1951 and 1953, officials, civil servants and businesspeople were investigated and disciplined widely. Three main groups were targeted with anti-corruption investigations: holdover bureaucrats from the KMT regime, CCP members, and private economic elites and businesspeople—especially “managers of factories and other businesses.”⁴³ In his first move against high-level corruption after the founding of the PRC, Mao ordered that two high-ranking CCP officials in Tianjin, Liu Qingshan and Zhang Zishan, should be executed for corruption. Nationwide there were reportedly 105,916 people disciplined in the Three Anti alone—investigations had reduced the number from 292,000—for economic crimes involving more than 10 million yuan. In total, 1.23 million people were found to be corrupt or have made “a corrupt error,” including 202,683 party members.⁴⁴ Because of its economic focus, the campaign was

⁴² Document 126, FRUS, 1955–1957, *China, Volume III*, 1956/1/5. Gao Gang was also accused of establishing an “independent kingdom.” See: Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics at Mao’s Court: Gao Gang and Party Factionalism in the Early 1950s* (Routledge, 1990), p. 5.

⁴³ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, p. 536.

⁴⁴ Wu Jue, *Record of the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign*, (Dongfang Press, 2014), pp. 321, 335. 吴珏, 《三反五反运动纪实》(东方出版社, 2014), pp. 321, 335.

initially described as an “inseparable part of the production and thrift movement (增产节约运动),” but later outgrew that campaign.⁴⁵

Table 4.2:

Investigating Corruption in the Three Antis–Five Antis⁴⁶

City or Province	Corruption Uncovered (No. of offenders)	No. of “Tigers” Uncovered	Illicit Funds Recovered in the Three Antis (in new RMB)	Businesses “half or more in breach of the law” (%)	Businesses “half or more in breach of the law” (#)
Beijing City	21,878	1,122	2,210,000	14.1%	6,981
Fujian Province	20,623	1,931	2,800,000	—	—
Guangzhou City	14,335	385	—	22.4%	10,240
Jiangxi Province	18,950	1,154	2,500,000	10.5%	2,758
Shanghai City	36,464	1,275	3,780,000	32.0%	44,820
Shenyang City	20,143	1,563	3,036,700	25.7%	9,230
Xian City	4,375	131	506,091	23.4%	4,264

⁴⁵ The boundaries between campaigns are often fuzzy. See: RMRB, 1951/11/23, quoted in Theodore Hsi-En Chen and Wen-Hui C. Chen, “The ‘Three-Anti’ and ‘Five-Anti’ Movements in Communist China,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Mar., 1953), p. 4.

⁴⁶ Hao Yumei, “A Profile of Beijing’s Three Antis Campaign,” *Beijing Party History*, 2000, Iss. 1. / 郝玉梅, “北京市‘三反’、‘五反’运动简介,” 北京党史, 2000年1期.; Huang Suisheng, “Guangzhou’s Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign,” *Guangdong Party History*, 2005, Iss. 4. / 黄穗生, “广州的‘三反’、‘五反’运动,” 广东党史, 2005年4期.; Li Yuchu, “Research on Shanghai’s Three Antis Campaign,” Shanghai Normal University, Masters Thesis, 2012. / 李寅初, “上海‘三反’运动研究,” 上海师范大学硕士学位论文, 2012.; Lu Dayou, “Jiangxi’s Three Antis-Five Antis Campaign,” *Literary Circles of Party History*, 2013, Iss. 1. / 卢大有, “江西的‘三反’、‘五反’运动,” 党史文苑, 2013年第1期.; Ma Yucong, “The Three Antis Campaign in Fujian,” *Party History Research and Education*, 1998, Iss. 3. / 马郁葱, “‘三反’运动在福建,” 党史研究与教学, 1998年3期.; Mu Zhongde, “An Outline of Liaoning’s ‘Three Anti’ and ‘Five Anti’ Campaigns,” *Social Science Journal*, 2013 Iss. 3. / 穆忠德, “辽宁‘三反’、‘五反’运动略述,” 社会科学辑刊, 2013年3期.; Wang Enbao, “A Summary of Liaoning’s Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign,” *Party and Government Cadre Journal*, 2016 Iss. 04. / 王恩宝, “辽宁‘三反’、‘五反’运动简况,” 党政干部学刊, 2016年4期.; Zheng Weiwei, “Power Transfer and Organizational Adjustment: An Analysis of Shanghai’s ‘Five Antis Campaign,’” *21st Century*, 2018, Iss. 4. / 郑维伟, “权力转移与组织调适: 上海‘五反’运动浅析,” 二十一世纪, 2018年4月号.

Implementation of the Three Antis–Five Antis varied across regions, but was generally characterized by top-down control, ad hoc organizations, mass mobilization of party members and the public, and extensive propaganda work. Once orders were received from the center, regional and local governments set up organizations to lead the campaigns in their areas. Production and Austerity Committees (PAC) and Austerity and Inspection Committees (AICs) were set up at various levels of government, along with an assortment of subcommittees, inspection teams, and work teams. PACs and their subordinate institutions, along with special courts established for the campaigns, had wide-ranging powers to investigate, fine, arrest, and punish officials.⁴⁷ Other “regular institutions” at the same level of government had to defer to these new bodies.⁴⁸ Nanjing’s PAC organized 30 inspection supervision teams.⁴⁹ In Shanghai, the roughly 81,000 people working in the Five Antis Campaign were divided into thousands of local committees, small and medium inspection teams, and small and medium work teams.⁵⁰ As in other campaigns, party cadres recruited activists from the general public to mobilize more people and to lead denunciations and investigations of targets. More than 40,000 activists were selected in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, for example.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Shang Hongjuan, “On the CCP’s ‘Campaign Model for Governance’ in the Early PRC Period—The Three Antis Campaign as an Example,” *Jianghuai Forum*, 2008 Iss. 2, p. 101.

尚红娟, “试论建国初期中共的“运动治国”模式——以“三反运动”为例,” 江淮论坛, 2008年2期, p. 101.

⁴⁸ Lü Xiaobo, *Cadres and Corruption: The Organizational Involvement of the Chinese Communist Party* (Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 51–52.; Zhang, “Shanghai’s Private Financial Industry and the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign,” p. 41.

⁴⁹ Ren Lingling, “On Jiangsu’s Three Anti and Five Antis Campaigns,” *Journal of Jiangsu University* (Social Science Edition), 2006, V.8(5), p. 55.

任玲玲, “论江苏‘三反’、‘五反’运动,” 江苏大学学报(社会科学版), 2006, 第8卷第5期, p. 55.

⁵⁰ Zhang Zhongmin, “Five Antis Campaign and Change in the Private Enterprise Management Structure,” *Journal of Social Science*, 2012, Iss. 3, p. 143.

张忠民, “‘五反’运动与私营企业治理结构之变动,” 社会科学 2012年3期, p. 143.

⁵¹ Wang, “A Summary of Liaoning’s Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign.”

While mass mobilization might seem to suggest bottom-up enforcement, the center remained in control. For example, factory workers were organized into unions and empowered to launch investigations against their bosses, but workers and their unions were soon brought “firmly under the control of...higher authorities.”⁵² In Shanghai, Nara Dillon explains, workers had early on been given free rein to use the campaign to attack management, but were later “held back” by authorities; in March 1952, “12,000 government and military cadres were brought in” to take control.⁵³

Propaganda work was a priority in the regime’s early years. The CCP had “developed an elaborate system of persuasion, involving social, economic, legal, and psychological pressures, and the operations of an extensive and highly coordinated propaganda apparatus.”⁵⁴ In the Three Antis Campaign, this apparatus was put to work teaching people the importance of corruption control within the new economic system, guiding them in self-criticisms, and stoking and guiding public indignation at local cases of wrongdoing.⁵⁵ Employees in joint venture private financial industry nationwide attended on average over 30 criticism sessions during the campaign, while managers averaged more than 40.⁵⁶ Such heavy indoctrination, on top of state-run media and activities for numerous other campaigns, aimed not only to disincentive

⁵² Lieberthal, *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin*, p. 173.

⁵³ Nara Dillon, *Radical Inequalities: China’s revolutionary welfare state in comparative perspective* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), pp. 165–66.

⁵⁴ Document 209, FRUS, 1952–1954, *China and Japan, Volume XIV, Part 1*, 1954/6/3.

⁵⁵ “The Northwest Bureau Propaganda Department’s Inspection Report on Newspapers’ Three Antis–Five Antis Propaganda,” 1952/2/20, ZDZYSS.
“西北局宣传部关于报纸‘三反’‘五反’宣传的检查报告,” 1952/2/20, ZDZYSS.

⁵⁶ Zhang, “Shanghai’s Private Financial Industry and the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign,” p. 45.

corruption, but also to change “consciousness” and “wrong ideas”—as defined by the regime—so that people would not *want* to engage in corruption.⁵⁷

Reports to the central government from lower levels explained how the cleanup was implemented in phases. The precise order and content of these typically three to five phases varied, but the main tasks were organizing campaign leaders and workers, leading study of the campaign and its goals, mobilizing the masses to join the campaign, guiding self-criticism and reflection, investigating accusations of wrongdoing and recovering stolen assets, and implementing new standards and practices to institutionalize positive outcomes.⁵⁸ This rather abstract description does not do justice, however, to the campaign’s often dramatic execution. CCP propaganda could whip activists into a frenzy against capitalists accused of past abuses of power, and its harsh investigations led many, especially businesspeople, to commit suicide.⁵⁹ Suicides reportedly averaged over ten a day in Shanghai during the Five Antis Campaign.⁶⁰

Anti-Corruption Outcomes

The Three Antis–Five Antis’ success is reflected in its thorough discipline enforcement, rulemaking and institutional reforms, and positive assessments from scholars and experts. There

⁵⁷ Gao Gang, “Fully carry out the Production and Austerity Campaign, further deepen the struggle against corruption, waste, and bureaucratism (Report),” 1951/10/26, ZDZYSS.

高岗, “全面开展增产节约运动, 进一步深入反贪污、反浪费、反官僚主义的斗争 (报告),” 1951/10/26, ZDZYSS.

⁵⁸ Ye Shuming, “In the ‘Three Antis–Five Antis Storm,’” *Guangdong Chronicles*, 2003 Iss. 1, pp. 9–15. / 叶曙明, “在‘三反五反’风暴中,” 广东史志, 2003年1期, pp. 9–15.; Huang, “Guangzhou’s Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign.”; Shang Jinming and Bei Guangsheng, “A Summary of Chongwen District’s Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign in the Early PRC,” *Jingchun Spring and Autumn*, 1998 Iss. 1. / 商进明、贝光生, 建国初期崇文区‘三反’‘五反’运动概述, 京畿春秋 1998年1期.; Mu, “An Outline of Liaoning’s ‘Three Anti’ and ‘Five Anti’ Campaigns.”

⁵⁹ Wu, *Record of the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign*, p. 240.

⁶⁰ Yang, “The Evolution of the Chinese Communist Party’s Policy toward the Bourgeoisie before and after the Establishment of the People’s Republic of China,” p. 22.

was success in all three three types of rulemaking in the 11-point scoring system laid out in Chapter One: improvements to the investigatory and prosecutorial powers of organs tasked with anti-corruption work, elimination or reform of government practices plagued by corruption, and the enforcement of new or improved rules against corruption. In addition, we can see that some reforms to corrupt government practices systematically constrained high-level officials as well.

Investigations and disciplinary actions against corrupt actors were not limited to some rival faction of Mao's or a handful of low-level officials, but were carried out throughout the state and in large numbers. While the highest-ranking elites were not targeted, there were investigations of officials at the provincial level and heads of state enterprises.⁶¹ Jilin Province's governor Zhou Chiheng was dismissed for various charges of abuse of power and economic mismanagement, "the governor and vice governors of Jiangxi undertook self-criticism, as did Party secretaries in Hebei," and half a dozen mayors were removed.⁶² The recovered assets and fines collected overall were considerable: 2 trillion yuan of an estimated 6 trillion corrupt assets, though this number cannot be independently verified.⁶³ By the end of 1951 alone, the CCP had reportedly recovered 600 billion yuan in illicit funds, which is equivalent to 60 million yuan after the 1955 currency devaluation.⁶⁴ While there was a slow-down in the Three Antis Campaign around March 1952 and some businesses were granted greater leniency in payment schedules, by all reports enforcement of discipline was thorough and often harsh. After setting high quotas for the number of corrupt "tigers" to be caught, Mao had to clarify that lower-level offenders should

⁶¹ RMRB, 1952/1/13, 1952/1/14, 1952/1/24.

⁶² Teiwes, *Politics & Purges in China*, p. 116.

⁶³ Wu, *Record of the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign*, p. 336.

⁶⁴ General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1952/3/21, CIA-RDP82-00457R010900340008-0.

not be treated too punitively.⁶⁵ In instructions to the South Central Bureau in March 1952, for example, Mao walked back the earlier goal of executing 70,000 people in each province.⁶⁶

The campaign led to the buildup of the party-state's anti-corruption capabilities. The anti-corruption infrastructure of the campaign did not dissipate afterwards, but transitioned into enhanced routine anti-corruption enforcement.⁶⁷ In 1953, the "supervision apparatus underwent a major expansion: not only was each county required to set up a supervisory agency but government financial agencies of provinces and large state enterprises were also required to establish internal supervision offices."⁶⁸ In September 1954, The People's Supervision Committee became the Ministry of Supervision under the State Council. In addition, new organizations at lower levels within the party were established to continue monitoring cadre behavior, such as the "[democratic] life meeting system, austerity system, and inspection and report system."⁶⁹

The campaign effected major reforms to governmental organizations and practices that were seen as highly corrupt. The CCP's "agency production" (机关生产) was a system of decentralized industrial and commercial activity undertaken directly by the party and party-led

⁶⁵ Wang Shanzhong, "Review of the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign in the Early PRC Period," *Journal of Chinese Communist Party History Studies*, 1993 Iss. 1, p. 72. / 王善中, "建国初期三反五反运动述评," *中共党史研究*, 1993, 1 期, p. 72.; "Mao Zedong's Instructions for the Three Anti and Five Anti Struggle," 1952/3/5.

⁶⁶ "The Central Office sends the South Central Bureau matters that should be noted on the Three Anti and Five Anti meeting minutes being published in Party publications (Excerpts)," 1952/3/22, ZDZYSS.
"中央办公厅转中南局三反五反座谈纪要在党刊登载时应注意事项的通知 (节录)," 1952/3/22, ZDZYSS.

⁶⁷ "The Central South Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China approved the report of the Central South Bureau's Disciplinary Inspection Committee on cadre corruption after the Three Antis Campaign," 1954/5, ZDZYSS.
"中共中央中南局批转中南局纪律检查委员会关于'三反'运动后干部贪污情况的报告," 1954/5, ZDZYSS.

⁶⁸ Lü, *Cadres and Corruption*, pp. 64–65.

⁶⁹ Wang, "A Summary of Liaoning's Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign," p. 35.

agencies to address financial problems and food shortages in the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s.⁷⁰ This model allowed for substantial flexibility and mobility of production in wartime, but ran into problems in the post-1949 transition. In the new China, as Bo Yibo informed Mao, this un-standardized model created ballooning opportunities for abuse, “corruption and waste.”⁷¹ Following the State Council’s “On the Decision for Unified Handling of Agency Production” (Feb. 1952), agency production was successfully phased out, except for some factories and businesses still under control of the military.⁷² Production was increasingly centralized and forced into budget constraints decided from the center. This meant that high-level officials, such as those in charge of ministries, provinces, and cities, were forbidden from drawing from these financial resources at will.⁷³ Similar problems also emerged with the “supply system” (供给制), the old, ad hoc system for distributing resources to party members. The supply system’s coexistence alongside the more standard salary system in the early 1950s “became a source of cadre misconduct and corruption.”⁷⁴ The supply system was effectively reformed to centralize and regularize the distribution of wages within the party, though the wage system continued to evolve long afterwards.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Wang Yonghua, “Agency Production in Chinese Communist Party History,” *Party History Review*, 2006 (8), pp. 56–59.

王永华, “中共历史上的机关生产,” 党史博览, 2006 (8), pp. 56–59.

⁷¹ Yang Kuisong, “From Supply System to Job Rank Salary System,” *Historical Research*, (2007), p. 123.

杨奎松, “从供给制到职务等级工资制,” 历史研究, 2007, p. 123.

⁷² Liu, “Change Your Perspective and Hills Become Peaks,” p. 132.

⁷³ “Guidelines and tasks for financial work in 1952,” 1952/1/15, ZDZYSS.

“一九五二年财经工作的方针和任务,” 1952/1/15, ZDZYSS.

⁷⁴ Lü, *Cadres and Corruption*, p. 37.

⁷⁵ Yang, “From Supply System to Job Rank Salary System.”

New and revised anti-corruption rules used throughout the campaign persisted. “The People’s Republic of China’s Rules for Punishing Corruption” (Apr. 1952) (中华人民共和国惩治贪污条例) defined different economic crimes, specified punishments based on the degree of corrupt behaviors, and explained the handling of seized illicit assets. This key anti-corruption law became a reference and basis for cases long after the campaign ended; it was abolished and replaced only in 1987 by a decision from the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress.⁷⁶ Anti-corruption rules developed in the campaign quashed businesses’ ability to bribe officials, although here the primary goal was extending party-state supervision over industry and not addressing the issue of corruption.⁷⁷ Even so, businesses were classified according to their alleged level of bribery, tax evasion, or theft—“On the Standards and Methods for Classifying Businesses in the Five Antis Campaign” (Mar. 1952)—and thoroughly disciplined and reformed.⁷⁸ Related restrictions aimed to insulate the state from private industry, such as state enterprises being required to obtain the approval of the relevant PAC before partnering with a private business on an important construction project or work order.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ “Provisions of the Hubei Provincial Committee on Certain Specific Policy Limits of the Five Antis Campaign (Draft),” 1963/4/24, ZDZYSS. / “湖北省委关于五反运动的若干具体政策界限的规定（草稿）,” 1963/4/24, ZDZYSS.; “Request from the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Communist Party to the Center and the North China Bureau on handling the Five Antis cases,” 1964/9/12, ZDZYSS. / “中共北京市委关于处理五反案件向中央、华北局的请示,” 1964/9/12, ZDZYSS.

⁷⁷ Yang, “The Whole Story of the Five Antis Campaign in Shanghai, 1952.”; Zhang, “Five Antis Campaign and Change in the Private Enterprise Management Structure.”

⁷⁸ *Mao’s Writings Since the Founding of the State*, p. 334.; Yang, “The Whole Story of the Five Antis Campaign in Shanghai, 1952.”; “Fang Zhongru’s report on the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign in Xian and the situation of industry and commerce,” 1952/4/30, ZDZYSS. / “方仲如关于西安市‘三反’‘五反’运动和工商业情况的报告,” 1952/4/30, ZDZYSS.; “Tianjin’s Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign Victoriously Closes,” 1952/6/16, ZDZYSS. / “天津市‘三反’‘五反’运动胜利结束,” 1952/6/16, ZDZYSS.; “The Guangzhou City Production and Austerity Committee’s Summary Report on Guangzhou’s Five Antis Campaign,” July 1953, ZDZYSS. / “广州市节约委员会关于广州市‘五反’运动总结报告,” July 1953, ZDZYSS.

⁷⁹ Ren, “On Jiangsu’s Three Anti and Five Antis Campaign,” p. 58.

Other rules Mao approved were not necessarily meant to outlive the campaign: “On the Four-part Standard for Defining the Boundary Between Waste and Corruption,” “Supplementary Instructions on the Problem of Distinctions in Punishing Small and Medium-Scale Corruption,” “Several Rules on Handling the Problems of Corruption and Waste in the Five Antis Campaign,” “Several Rules About Mistakes in Handling Corruption and Waste and Overcoming Bureaucratism,” “Rules on Recovering Illicit Funds” (issued by the Central Austerity and Inspection Committee), and others.⁸⁰ There is some evidence that these rules were generally enforced through to the conclusion of all campaign tasks, which in most places was in 1954 or 1955 at the latest. There are numerous subnational government reports claiming successful enforcement of these rules and success in curbing corruption, though they should be regarded with skepticism. Many are quite detailed about the number of activists recruited, study sessions and self-criticisms held, investigations conducted, punishments carried out, funds recovered, etc.⁸¹ Positive reports are made more believable by the existence of reports that also point out “problems” in certain localities: difficulty mobilizing the masses, as reported in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region; overly violent treatment of suspected offenders and confessions extracted through torture, as reported in Sichuan Province; inappropriate confiscation of property, including “even children’s toys;” and incomplete repayment of embezzled funds by offenders, with for example 1,193 businesses in arrears at the end of 1954 in Wuhan City.⁸² In

⁸⁰ *Mao’s Writings Since the Founding of the State*, pp. 60, 174, 282, 319, 327, 410.

⁸¹ For example: “Resolution on the in-depth development of Lanzhou’s Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign,” 1952/2/6, ZDZYSS. / “关于深入开展兰州市‘三反’和‘五反’运动的决议,” 1952/2/6, ZDZYSS.; “Fang Zhongru’s report on the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign in Xian and the situation of industry and commerce.”; “Tianjin’s Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign Victoriously Closes.”; “Shanghai’s Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign Victoriously Closes,” 1952/7/24, ZDZYSS. / “上海市‘三反’‘五反’运动胜利结束,” 1952/7/24, ZDZYSS.; “The Guangzhou City Production and Austerity Committee’s Summary Report on Guangzhou’s Five Antis Campaign.”

⁸² “Three Antis Campaign Briefing,” 1952/2/5, ZDZYSS. / “三反运动简讯,” 1952/2/5, ZDZYSS.; “Beating tigers in Guangzhou’s financial and economic system has been slow work, and the Five Antis Campaign in the business

another example of the campaign's limitations, it was suspended in rural areas during spring plowing season because it took too much energy away from critical agricultural work.⁸³

Scholars largely view corruption control in the Three Antis–Five Antis as successful.⁸⁴ They write that “bribery ceased to play a large role in tax evasion,” “corrupt practices involving the private sector such as bribery and profiteering were contained, if not eliminated,” “monitoring and supervisory mechanisms” were put in place, there was “a thorough rooting out” of the five vices (of the Five Antis), and that there were “thorough investigations of offices and enterprises.”⁸⁵ Taiwanese and American intelligence at the time judged the campaign a success, though they focused on how the CCP was establishing its power, not on corruption control. The KMT assessed that the campaign had “clearly changed the spirit” in China—accusations were

sector is still in the preparation stage,” 1952/2/7, ZDZYSS. / “广州市财经系统打虎工作进展缓慢，工商界五反运动尚在准备布置阶段，” 1952/2/7, ZDZYSS.; “The Sichuan Wanxian District Committee concealed serious violations of law and discipline in the Three Antis and Five Antis,” 1953/3/21, ZDZYSS. / “四川万县地委隐瞒‘三反’和‘五反’中严重的违法乱纪行为，” 1953/3/21, ZDZYSS.; “Report by the Party Committee of the Wuhan Municipal Industry and Commerce Bureau asking for instructions regarding continuing problems in the Five Antis Campaign,” 1955/2/25, ZDZYSS. / “武汉市工商局党组关于全面结束‘五反’遗留问题的请示报告，” 1955/2/25, ZDZYSS.

⁸³ *Chen Yun Chronicles*, expanded ed., Vol. 2, 3, (Central Literature Publishing House, 2016), p. 195, 204. 《陈云年谱（修订本）》（中，下）（中央文献出版社，2016），pp. 195, 204.

⁸⁴ Michael Sheng has a rare dissenting view, at least of the Three Antis Campaign. In his “revisionist” account, Mao so mismanaged the campaign that it “endangered both the military’s effectiveness and the economic well-being of the country.” See: Michael M. Sheng, “Mao Zedong and the Three-Anti Campaign (November 1951 to April 1952): A Revisionist Interpretation,” *Twentieth-Century China*, 32:1, 2006. Sheng is convincing when he argues that Mao bypassed other leaders and personally dominated the campaign, but is on less solid ground discussing the campaign’s problems. Certainly, Mao was a poor planner, had an imprecise conception of corruption, demanded an unrealistically high number of arrests, and acted dogmatically throughout the campaign. But these charges do not show that the campaign was a failure in reducing corruption. The negative economic effects of the campaign Sheng points to were real, such as a decline in tax income, but hardly surprising given the context of a hostile takeover of a capitalist economy by a communist regime.

⁸⁵ Lieberthal, *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin, 1949–1952*, pp. 169–71.; Lü, *Cadres and Corruption*, p. 72.; Yang, “The Whole Story of the Five Antis Campaign in Shanghai, 1952.”; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, pp. 536–40.

flying and fancy restaurants had no more business.⁸⁶ The Central Intelligence Agency concluded that “in carrying out the three- and five-anti’s campaigns, the Communists were successful in controlling the middle class and in eliminating its economic power. The Communists collected vast sums through fines.”⁸⁷ The U.S. State Department listed the Three Antis–Five Antis as among the key early CCP policies and called it “unquestionably sobering” that the new communist regime had “been able to accomplish so much.” The speed at which China had become a “centralized, tightly controlled, and militarized police state in the image of the Soviet Union has surprised many observers.”⁸⁸

Explaining the Breakthrough

Commonsensibly, we can say that state capacity was essential to implementing this complex and multifaceted campaign nationwide. The CCP was able to rely on its flexibility, discipline, and organizational capacities to crack down on corrupt actors and disrupt and remake existing institutional structures in ways that reduced corruption. In turn, cleaner government and structural reforms begun in the campaign contributed to greater state capacity in the future.

But the Three Antis–Five Antis also owes its success to Mao’s revolutionary mission and unconstrained leadership. Mao saw corruption control as necessary to advance his revolutionary goals, which after 1949 involved substantial state-building to prepare the CCP to govern China, to help it penetrate socially complex cities, and to take control of economic activity in preparation for central planning. Despite claiming to be against “bureaucratism,” the campaign

⁸⁶ Document at repository number 002-110703-00129-007, President Chiang Kai-shek Case Files, Academia Historica Archives, 1953/10, p. 43.

⁸⁷ General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1952/11/29, CIA-RDP82-00457R015100140002-4.

⁸⁸ Document 64, FRUS, 1952–1954, *China and Japan, Volume XIV, Part 1*, 1952/12/30.

was essentially bureaucracy-building. Throughout, Mao had the personal power to set goals for enforcement and push the campaign past all obstacles. “The [Three Anti] campaign was the brainchild of Mao, who dictated the decision process...single-handedly.”⁸⁹ In 1952 alone, Mao personally responded to and gave guidance on more than 150 reports about the campaign from different bureaus, regions, localities, and officials.⁹⁰ He instructed provincial leaders that “in every agency that disposes of large amounts of money and materials, there must be a large number of grafters,” and urged them to find these “big tigers.”⁹¹ He set targets for the number of officials who should be punished in each region, threatening that leaders who failed to meet quotas could be labeled rightists or corrupt themselves.⁹² When Minister of Finance Bo Yibo and other officials questioned Mao’s decision to execute Liu Qingshan and Zhang Zishan for corruption, Mao overruled them and insisted on the maximum punishment.⁹³

Finally, with this strong leader–strong state combination, the campaign took a decidedly authoritarian playbook to cleaning house. Many of the reform measures listed above exhibited key indicators of an authoritarian playbook: centralizing power, disrupting and remaking institutions from above, tightening vertical control rather than promoting horizontal checks, and propagandizing rather than allowing transparency. One part of the campaign that combined all

⁸⁹ Sheng, “Mao Zedong and the Three-Anti Campaign,” p. 57.

⁹⁰ *Mao’s Writings Since the Founding of the State*, 1952, (Central Literature Publishing House, 1987), pp. 1–35. 《建国以来毛泽东文稿》, 1952, (中央文献出版社, 1987), pp. 1–35.

⁹¹ Quoted in Lü, *Cadres and Corruption*, p. 52.; Mu, “An Outline of Liaoning’s ‘Three Anti’ and ‘Five Anti’ Campaigns.”

⁹² Wu and Ye, *Record of the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign*, p. 227.; Shang, “On the CCP’s ‘Campaign Model for Governance’ in the Early PRC Period,” p. 102.

⁹³ Bo Yibo, *A Look Back at Several Major Decisions and Events* Vol. 1, (Chinese Communist Party Central Party School Press, 1991), p. 157–58.

薄一波, 《若干重大决策与事件的回顾》上卷, (中共中央党校出版社, 1991) p. 157–58.

four of these aspects was the penetration and elimination of “independent kingdoms” (独立王国).⁹⁴ Independent kingdom is the CCP’s term for when an official personally monopolizes the power and resources of an administrative unit under their control. The spread of these independent kingdoms in the early 1950s was an extreme form of the general problem of “departmentalism,” which the campaign treated as a “serious transgression.”⁹⁵

4. Later Mao: The Four Cleans and the One Strike–Three Antis

In this section, I argue that these two later anti-corruption efforts under Mao were largely Failed Reforms, though there remain some unknowns regarding the One Strike–Three Antis. The Four Cleans (1962–65) failed because new constraints on Mao’s leadership gave rise to infighting over the nature of the campaign and resistance from lower levels. In addition, Mao ideologically rejected state-building as a goal of the campaign, creating a conflict between his utopianism and his motivation to curb rural corruption that the latter ultimately lost. In the One Strike–Three Antis (1970–71), on the other hand, Mao had regained his unconstrained leadership and had a basic state-building motive, but the state suffered from capacity problems as a result of the Cultural Revolution.

In early 1958, Mao Zedong unveiled the Great Leap Forward, a radical program of collectivization and rural industrialization intended to catapult China into the ranks of developed nations. Instead, the poorly-conceived GLF brought economic catastrophe and the world’s largest famine—at least 36 million deaths, according to one authoritative calculation.⁹⁶ This

⁹⁴ Teiwes, “Politics & Purges in China,” p. 96.

⁹⁵ Lü, *Cadres and Corruption*, p. 49.

⁹⁶ Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958–1962*, Editing and translation by Edward Friedman and Stacy Mosher, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012). Estimates of the death toll vary.

humanitarian and economic disaster triggered the breakdown of central government authority in many rural areas and generated desperate grassroots experimentation with decollectivization and capitalist production.⁹⁷

The failure of the GLF produced a collapse of discipline that “widely infected the lower levels of the party,” led to decision-making based on local material needs, and resulted in a great deal of personal profit-seeking among officials.⁹⁸ Documents captured in a KMT raid of Lianjiang in Fujian Province in 1964 show that the Chinese government was highly concerned with five kinds of problems relating to local cadres: allowing partial decollectivization in agriculture, a return of “feudal customs and practices,” a “general decline in cadre moral,” the rise of “misappropriation” and other “corrupt practices,” and the increased “boldness” of “former landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, and ‘bad elements’” in trying to undermine collectivization.⁹⁹ Corruption was widespread among rural cadres, who in some areas had “sunk to the level of no organization and no discipline.”¹⁰⁰ In May 1963, Mao acknowledged that “there are some spotless cadres, but we can’t say there are too many.”¹⁰¹ Other CCP leaders,

⁹⁷ Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3: The Coming of the Cataclysm 1961–1966* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 266–67.

⁹⁸ Document 96, FRUS, 1964–1968, *Volume XXX, China*, 1965/8/5.; Wang Yonghua, *Research on the Four Cleans Campaign: A Case Study of Jiangsu Province* (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2014), p. 29. / 王永华, 《“四清”运动研究: 以江苏省为例》(北京: 人民出版社, 2014), p. 29.

⁹⁹ *Fujian Lianjiang County Bandit Party Documents and Their Analysis* (Taipei: Kuomintang Taiwan Post Office Reprint, 1964). / 《福建連江縣匪方文件及其研析》(臺北: 中國國民黨臺灣區郵政黨部翻印, 民國 53); Richard Baum, *Prelude to Revolution: Mao, the Party, and the Peasant Question, 1962–66* (Columbia University Press, 1975), pp. 12–13.

¹⁰⁰ *Fujian Lianjiang County Bandit Party Documents and Their Analysis*, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ “Mao Zedong’s speech on the Four Cleans Campaign at the Central Committee,” 1963/5, ZDZYSS. “毛泽东在中央会议上关于四清运动的讲话,” 1963/5, ZDZYSS.

especially those who had circumvented official channels to conduct their own private investigations of the rural situation, agreed that the problem was severe.¹⁰²

Because the GLF had been largely Mao's policy, the ensuing disaster hurt his standing in the party and placed greater constraints on his personal power in the early 1960s. The "disastrous impact of the Great Leap Forward...shattered belief in Mao's infallibility."¹⁰³ At the elite level, other leaders openly challenged Mao's policies and got away with it. Defense Minister Peng Dehuai famously did not get away with criticizing Mao at the 1959 Lushan Conference, but First Vice Chairman Liu Shaoqi was able to do so at the important Seven Thousand Cadres Conference in early 1962. Roderick MacFarquhar argues that Mao probably realized in 1962 "that he could no longer rely upon the man he had placed in the post of General Secretary [Liu] to ensure the loyalty of the party to himself."¹⁰⁴ Liu's challenge represented a more collective resistance to Mao than Peng's had. Perhaps for this reason, Mao was not (yet) in a position to purge Liu. With Mao temporarily chastened, the initiative and leading role in determining government policy—called the "first line" in CCP parlance—fell to Liu Shaoqi, Vice Premier of the State Council Deng Xiaoping, and First Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee Peng Zhen.¹⁰⁵ Just as significant as developments at the elite level were those below. After the

¹⁰² Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China: Rectification and the Decline of Party Norms, 1950–65*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 1993), p. 420.

¹⁰³ Leese, *Mao Cult*, p. 254.

¹⁰⁴ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3*, p. 261.

¹⁰⁵ Han Gang, "Liu Shaoqi and the Four Cleans Campaign," Lecture, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Cultural Research Centre, 2012. 韩钢, "刘少奇与四清运动," 讲座, 香港科技大学 人文社会科学学院 文化研究中心, 2012, (video in Chinese, skip to 20:42): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGHLTuHZG_w

On the history of line struggle see: Lowell Dittmer, "'Line Struggle' in Theory and Practice: The Origins of the Cultural Revolution Reconsidered," *The China Quarterly*, No. 72 (Dec., 1977), pp. 675–712.

GLF, “the party bureaucracy was no longer a tool that would yield to all of [Mao’s] wishes.”¹⁰⁶ His initial calls for a nationwide anti-corruption campaign in September 1962, for example, frustratingly produced only tepid responses from the party bureaucracy and a good deal of foot-dragging in the following months.¹⁰⁷

Local economic experimentation and the breakdown of cadre discipline sparked serious reflection within the party and a partial policy retreat. To assess the economic situation, Liu, Deng, and Peng brought in Vice Chairman Chen Yun, the head of the Central Finance and Economic Commission who had tried in the 1950s to moderate Mao’s Leap and whom Mao had politically isolated.¹⁰⁸ Chen recommended formally accepting much of the grassroots experimentation with decollectivization, in particular devolving farm output quotas to households (包产到户). The other leaders could see the immediate benefits produced by partial decollectivization and agreed with Chen’s recommendations. This was a sign of the “political regime being forced by growing discontent to start relaxing its stringent rules.”¹⁰⁹

But Mao deeply opposed “revisionist” reforms; for him, collectivization was “probably the central issue of Chinese politics.”¹¹⁰ As U.S. intelligence noted, Mao “expressed bitter resentment of the ‘revisionist’ domestic policies forced on him by the collapse of the Leap.”¹¹¹ He believed that “the extreme permissiveness of the early 1960s should...not have been

¹⁰⁶ Leese, *Mao Cult*, p. 254.

¹⁰⁷ Han, “Liu Shaoqi and the Four Cleans Campaign,” 47:30.; Baum, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 161.

¹⁰⁸ Han, “Liu Shaoqi and the Four Cleans Campaign,” 23:45.

¹⁰⁹ Document 16, FRUS, 1961–1963, *Volume XXII, Northeast Asia*, 1961/4/3.

¹¹⁰ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3*, p. 209.; Document 172, FRUS, 1964–1968, *Volume XXX, China*, 1966/7/28.

¹¹¹ “Annex: Mao’s China, 1962–1971,” 1971, General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA-RDP85T00875R001000010044-8, p. 2.

extended or permitted to become institutionalized once the immediate crisis had passed—as it appeared to have passed by the time of the Tenth Plenum in September 1962.”¹¹² At the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Party Congress, Mao tried to reassert his power. The result was a communiqué released in late September that advocated a more hardline economic policy reflecting Mao’s views.¹¹³

Concerned with the problems in rural areas and the party’s ideologically suspect response to them, Mao developed the Four Cleans, which began as the Socialist Education Movement (社会主义教育运动) and is sometimes also called that.¹¹⁴ In large part because of the GLF’s outcomes, a new anti-corruption effort was necessary less than a decade after the Three Antis–Five Antis. The main motivation for the new campaign was ideological: to defend the revolution from revisionism with a crusade against capitalism in the countryside, and the bureaucratization and abandonment of class struggle within the party.¹¹⁵ Concretely, this would entail rectifying the work-style of lower-level cadres and enhancing political education to eliminate the tendencies discussed above. Much of this rectification would be achieved through class struggle,

¹¹² Baum, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 163.

¹¹³ “Communist China: Economic Performance in 1962,” 1962/12/3, General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA-RDP79T01003A001400130001-1, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ I follow other scholars in using the name of one campaign as a catch-all for the overlapping campaigns of 1962–65. On the interchangeability of the Socialist Education Movement and the Four Cleans labels, see: “National Work Conference 1964/12/15 - 1965/1/14,” *News of the Communist Party of China*. / “全国工作会议 (1964年12月15日-1965年1月14日),” 中国共产党新闻, <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/151935/176588/176596/10556215.html>

¹¹⁵ Michel C. Oksenberg, “Policy Making under Mao Tse-Tung, 1949–1968,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Apr., 1971), p. 333.; MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3*, p. 334.; Bo Yibo, *A Look Back at Several Major Decisions and Events Vol. 2* (Chinese Communist Party Central Party School Press, 1997), pp. 1140, 1164. / 薄一波, 《若干重大决策与事件的回顾》下卷, (中共中央党校出版社, 1997), pp. 1140, 1164.; Maurice Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic*, 3rd ed. (Simon and Schuster, 1999), p. 274.; Gao Hua, “The Great Famine and the Four Cleans Campaign’s Origins,” *Aisixiang*, 2006/10/9. / 高华, “大饥荒与四清运动的起源,” 爱思想, 2006/10/9, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/11264.html>

which had been critical in Land Reform a decade earlier and to which Mao urged the leadership to renew its commitment in the Four Cleans. Class struggle was both a means and an end: it would change cadres' behaviors and shape their thinking while itself being a revolutionary, ideology-affirming practice. Ideological motives aside, the campaign's attacks on lower-level officials for varied wrongdoing also served to shift some of the responsibility for the GLF's failure off of Mao's shoulders.¹¹⁶

Combating corruption was one goal among others in the Four Cleans, but it was important because of how corruption was connected to and exacerbated ideological problems among cadres and the public. It weakened discipline by luring cadres with the material benefits of capitalism and turned the public against local representatives of the CCP; Mao believed that "since cadres could be bribed for three catties of pork or a few packs of cigarettes, only class struggle could prevent revisionism."¹¹⁷ Cadres were being dissuaded from the cause, Mao lamented: "At present you can buy a [party] branch secretary for a few packs of cigarettes, not to mention marrying his daughter."¹¹⁸ The Former Ten Points (前十条), promulgated by Mao in May 1963 as the first of three key policy documents, argued that cadre corruption was the "most prevalent source of peasant dissatisfaction with the existing rural leadership,"¹¹⁹ "Corruption and theft" were "primarily a contradiction between the cadres and the masses."¹²⁰ For example, one

¹¹⁶ Patricia M. Thornton, *Disciplining the State: virtue, violence, and state-making in modern China* (Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 131–32.

¹¹⁷ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3*, p. 336.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China*, p. 418.

¹¹⁹ Baum, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 24.

¹²⁰ "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Several Issues in Current Rural Work (Draft)," *Compilation of Important Historical Documents of the CCP, Series 25: The first half of the 1960s, Vol. 2.* [hereafter ZLWZH 25.x], p. 12.

much-resented practice was “using the back door,” in which cadres used their privileged positions to improperly obtain scarce or expensive commercial goods.¹²¹ As the name Four Cleans suggests, four aspects of local government were singled out as urgently needing to be “cleaned”: accounts, workpoints, granaries and warehouses, and finances.¹²²

The Four Cleans was a complicated campaign that shifted course more than once following the release of key policy documents: The Former Ten Points (1963), the Latter Ten Points (1964) (后十条), and the Twenty-three Articles (1965) (二十三条). After Mao’s initial call in September 1962 for the campaign that would become the Four Cleans did not produce the desired effect, he raised the stakes with the Former Ten Points. What had begun as a mild reproach of wayward rural cadres would grow into an unprecedentedly—at least since Land Reform—thorough class struggle against bureaucratism, corruption, and capitalism.¹²³ The Latter Ten Points, drafted under Liu but theoretically in line with Mao’s wishes, made two consequential changes to the campaign: expanded its investigatory scope and strengthened top-down party control.¹²⁴ The above-mentioned “small” Four Cleans were superseded by the “big”

“中共中央关于目前农村工作中若干问题的决定（草案），”中共重要历史文献资料汇编 第25辑 1960年代前半期史料专辑 2分册, p.12.

¹²¹ “Briefing on the Campaign Against Commercial Goods ‘Going Through the Back Door,’” 1962/1/9, ZLWZH 25.19.

“反对商品‘走后门’运动简报,” 1962/1/9, ZLWZH 25.19.

¹²² The Former Ten Points’ small four cleans were based on the Baoding model from Hebei Province. See: The Party History Research Office of the Baoding Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China, “The History of the Party History of the Communist Party of China (1949.10–1978.12)” (Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 1999), pp. 252, 268.

中共保定市委黨史研究室《中共保定黨史大事記(1949.10—1978.12)》（北京:中央文獻出版社, 1999）, pp. 252, 268.

¹²³ “[Mao Zedong’s] Speech on the Siqing Campaign at the Central Conference,” 1963/5, ZDZYSS. / “在中央会议上关于四清运动的讲话,” 1963/5, ZDZYSS.

¹²⁴ The Latter Ten Points owe a debt to Liu’s wife Wang Guangmei’s private investigation of local conditions in Taoyuan, Hebei Province, which revealed major problems with the campaign’s implementation. See: Lin Xiaobo

Four Cleans: politics, economics, organization, and ideology. Increased party control was evident in the “all power to the work teams” line, which put work teams sent from higher levels in charge of the campaign and by extension much of rural government.¹²⁵ For reasons discussed below, Mao disagreed with the centralization and top-down spirit of the Latter Ten Points. Very much in response, Mao announced his Twenty-three Articles in January 1965.¹²⁶ The Twenty-three Articles embodied a shift in Mao’s thinking regarding the campaign that had actually occurred earlier—namely, that the Four Cleans was not primarily a matter of curbing rural cadres’ malfeasance, but a struggle against “power holders within the party going the capitalist road.”¹²⁷ To defeat these capitalist-roaders, Mao sought to put the masses in charge of the campaign. The Twenty-three Articles thereby exposed to the public conflicts brewing among the leadership, especially between Mao and Liu Shaoqi, and presaged the intra-party strife of the Cultural Revolution.¹²⁸

The campaign was carried out in several steps in each locality, as previous campaigns had been, but there were shifting instructions from the central government. In northern Hebei Province, for example, a pilot of the campaign was launched in Baoding City in 1962, within which the goals were first to address the “evil” trend of individual farming, then to propagandize

and Guo Dehong, *Preview for the Cultural Revolution: The Four Cleans Campaign* (People’s Publishing House, 2013), Chapter Six.

林小波、郭德宏，《“文革”的预演：“四清”运动》（人民出版社，2013），第六章。

¹²⁵ Baum, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 160.

¹²⁶ Thornton, *Disciplining the State*, p. 191.

¹²⁷ Li Haihong, “Analysis and Enlightenment on Anti-corruption in the ‘Siqing’ Movement,” *Journal of Hebei Normal University: Philosophy and Social Sciences* 2012, 35(3), p. 107.

李海红, “‘四清’运动的反腐败评析及启示,” *河北师范大学学报: 哲学社会科学版*, 2012, 35(3), p. 107.

¹²⁸ Baum and Teiwes, *Ssu-ch’ing*, p. 37, Appendix.; MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3*, pp. 427–30.

widely, such as by teaching about the Sixty Articles of Agriculture (农业六十条), then to rouse activists to investigate wrongdoing in production teams. After an initial successful implementation, the campaign was reproduced elsewhere throughout Hebei. When the targets of the Four Cleans expanded in 1964, work teams carried the campaign out more aggressively and with more focus on class status. Their standard approach was to: 1) enter a locality, visit the poor, hear their stories of hardship, and organize a revolutionary class team; 2) mobilize the masses, select activists, and educate cadres to “take a bath” (to get clean of wrongdoing); 3) launch class struggle and clean the class ranks; 4) rectify organizations, elect new cadres, establish rules and regulations, and establish class files.¹²⁹

As in the Three Antis–Five Antis and other campaigns, propaganda and psychological pressure were important. One common obstacle that work teams encountered was the reluctance of many among the masses to criticize cadres and assume responsibility for production themselves for fear that after the campaign ended they would be blamed or suffer retribution. This, after all, had happened after past campaigns. Easing this fear required careful propaganda

¹²⁹ Liu Hongsheng, “The Whole Story of Rural Hebei Province ‘Four Cleans’ Campaign,” *Party History*, 2004, pp. 1–4.

刘洪升, “河北省农村‘四清’运动始末,” 党史博采, 2004, pp. 1–4.

The campaign had significant regional variation in the measures taken, the order in which they were taken, and how aggressively they were taken. See: Dai Anlin, “Comment on the ‘Four Cleanups’ Movement in Hu Nan Province” [translation given], 2004, Iss. 3, pp. 51–62. / 戴安林, “湖南四清运动述评,” 党史研究与教学, 2004, 3 期, pp. 51–62. Hunan was a leading province in the campaign. See also: Meng Yonghua, “A Review of the ‘Four Cleans’ Campaign in Shanxi Rural Areas,” *Party History Research and Teaching* 2007, Iss. 4, p. 50–56. / 孟永华, “山西农村‘四清’运动述评,” 党史研究与教学 2007 年第 4 期, p. 50–56.; Gong Qianghua, “The Whole Story of the Four Cleans Campaign in Rural Hubei,” *Hubei Cultural History* 2009, p. 17. / 龚强华, “湖北农村‘四清’运动始末,” 湖北文史 2009, p. 17.; Liu Yanwen, “Studies on ‘Four Cleanups’ Work Team Members: A Case Study of Gansu Province” [translation given], *Journal of Chinese Communist Party History Studies*, 2010, Iss. 10. / 刘彦文, “‘四清’工作队员研究——以甘肃省为中心的考察,” 中共党史研究, 2010 年 10 期.; Yang Zeyu, *Yunnan’s Four Cleans Campaign* (Kunming: Yunnan University Press, 2011). / 杨泽宇, 《云南“四清”运动》(昆明: 云南大学出版社, 2011).

about the campaign and reassurances that activists would be protected.¹³⁰ A work team's report from a township in northeastern Heilongjiang Province explained how its members used psychological “pull” and “push” techniques to allay the public's fears and convince them the campaign would “save” them.¹³¹ As for cadres, making them write detailed confessions and promises to perform better in future was a way to persuade them to accept the state's narrative of their crimes. One template began: “From today, I resolutely make a clean break with capitalism...”¹³² A deeper problem faced by the Four Cleans was that after the GLF many rural residents actively preferred decollectivization, or at least less radical policies than full collectivization.¹³³ Party propaganda tried to use the issue of corruption to change minds by associating corruption with capitalism and collectivism with wealth.¹³⁴

Campaign Outcomes

The Four Cleans was a Failed Reform, as can be seen by the metrics of discipline enforcement, rulemaking, and perceptions. While enforcement was broad, few elites and high-level officials were punished. Charitably, we can say that the campaign enforced some reforms of corrupted government practices, such as the distribution of workpoints. But the attempts to

¹³⁰ “Basic Summary of the First Socialist Education Movement in Linchuan County (Draft),” ZLWZH 25.19, pp. 17–18.

“临川县第一期社会主义教育运动基本总结（初稿），” ZLWZH 25.19, pp. 17–18.

¹³¹ “Basic Summary of the Small Four Cleans of the Taxi Brigade,” ZLWZH 25.19, p. 82.

“塔溪大队小四清基本总结，” ZLWZH 25.19, p. 82.

¹³² Yang Wei, “Rural Cadres' Four Cleans Inspection Book (1965–1966),” *Frontiers*, 2016 Iss. 1, pp. 137–45. 杨澍, “农村干部‘四清’检查书（1965—1966）,” 天涯, 2016 Iss. 1, pp. 137–45.

¹³³ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3*, p. 335.

¹³⁴ Yang Liwen and Lü Mao, “The Propaganda and Practice of ‘Common Wealth:’ a case study of Shaanxi Province's Yan'an County,” *Journal of Chinese Communist Party History Studies*, 2009 Iss. 3, p. 82–89. 杨利文、吕莹, “农村‘四清’运动中‘共同富裕’的宣传与实践——以陕西省延安县为例,” 中共党史研究, 2009年3期, p. 82–89.

strengthen institutional oversight and enforce anti-corruption rules were highly inconsistent. Perceptions of the campaign by experts and by Mao himself suggest it was a failure.

The campaign's strongest points were the extent of disciplinary actions undertaken and the growth of party membership throughout. Incomplete national statistics from early October 1963 suggest that there were more than 20,000 cases of corruption, theft, or speculation involving over 1,000 yuan or non-monetary resources of equivalent value.¹³⁵ The campaign only expanded its targeting from there. Statistics compiled in 1966 show that there were 11,650 cadres with Four Cleans-related problems in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region alone.¹³⁶ In Jiangxi Province, which is in Southeast China, the majority of cadres were discovered to have some disciplinary problem—mostly the misuse of resources.¹³⁷ For this later period in the campaign, local numbers are easier to obtain than national totals. In Zhanjiang Port at the southernmost tip of Guangdong Province, 101 cadres were removed for corruption, theft, and speculation, and 34,400 yuan was recovered.¹³⁸ At the same time, “the CCP admitted 940,000 new members (in 1965) and 3.23 million (in 1966), most of whom had been activists in the campaign.”¹³⁹ Some party and government reports pointed to party-building successes as a result of the campaign, but these should not be taken at face value given the discrepancy between what

¹³⁵ Guo and Lin, *The Record of the Four Cleans Campaign*, p. 90.

¹³⁶ Thornton, *Disciplining the State*, p. 155.

¹³⁷ Wang, *Research on the Four Cleans Campaign*, pp. 166–67.

¹³⁸ “The Zhanjiang Port Authority’s Initial Summary of the Four Cleans Struggle,” 1965/11, ZLWZH 25.21, p. 121–22.

“湛江港务局四清斗争阶段总结,” 1965/11, ZLWZH 25.21, p. 121–22.

¹³⁹ Lü, *Cadres and Corruption*, p. 127.; For more detail on how party membership expanded see: Wang Yonghua, “Features of Rural Grass-roots Party Organizations in the Socialist Education Campaign Called ‘Four Cleanups’ Movement” [translation given], *Journal of the Party School of Nanjing Municipal Party Committee*, 2011 Iss. 1, pp. 67–74. / 王永华, “四清运动中农村基层党组织建设述略——以江苏省句容县为例,” 中共南京市委党校学报, 2011 第 1 期, pp. 67–74.

local governments reported and what the national leadership said about the campaign's progress.¹⁴⁰

The most prominent rural organizations empowered by the Four Cleans were the Poor and Lower-Middle Peasant Associations, but these were highly inconsistent in their ability to monitor rural cadres and check corruption. In the later stages of the campaign, these associations were meant to take over for party activists sent to a locality and take the lead in developing collective production, conducting investigations against cadres, and all other aspects of the campaign.¹⁴¹ Peasant associations must “dare to supervise cadres.”¹⁴² But local cadres were in many cases able to resist giving up their powers. Once the work teams sent from higher levels left, the peasant associations often reverted to being low-level groups.¹⁴³ In addition, the associations were mostly set up only in 1965 and 1966, at the tail end of the campaign after Mao had shifted his focus away from the Four Cleans.¹⁴⁴ Instead of supervisory organizations, they became warring factions in the Cultural Revolution.

¹⁴⁰ “Report of the CPC Hebei Provincial Committee on Implementing the Resolutions of the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Party in Rural Areas, Report on the Development of the Rectification Campaign,” ZLWZH 25.2, p. 13.

“中共河北省委关于在农村贯彻党的八届十中全会决议，开展整风整社运动情况的报告，” ZLWZH 25.2, p. 13.

¹⁴¹ Liu Xueqin, “The Four Cleans Campaign in Guangdong: on the role poor peasant associations played in the Four Cleans Campaign,” *Southern Journal*, 2008 Iss. 7, pp. 35–37. / 刘雪琴, “‘四清’运动在广东——浅谈贫协在四清运动中所发挥的作用,” 南方论刊, 2008年7期, pp. 35–37.; Wu Yuzhen, “Research on Rural Social and Political Construction in the Four Cleans Campaign: a case study of Shandong Province’s Poor and Lower-Middle Peasant Association,” *Qiusuo*, 2013/7/31, pp. 80–82. / 伍玉振, “四清运动中农村社会政治建设研究——以山东省贫下中农协会为例,” 求索, 2013/7/31, pp. 80–82.

¹⁴² Baum and Teiwes, *Ssu-ch’ing*, p. 32, Appendix D.

¹⁴³ Wang, *Research on the Four Cleans Campaign*, p. 248.

¹⁴⁴ Ahn Byung-joon, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution: Dynamics of Policy Processes* (University of Washington Press, 1976), p. 116.

On the other hand, there were at least some reforms to rural economic management, such as in the four target areas of the small Four Cleans, that went into effect.¹⁴⁵ Workpoints, for example, were a very common source of corruption; people would manipulate them in varied and creative ways, such as by giving themselves points for work done on “June 31st.” The campaign improved the distribution of workpoints both in terms of transparency and accounting.¹⁴⁶ A report from Haiyang City in Shandong explained that in the reformed workpoint system points had to be consistent in how they were assigned or recorded; needed to be clear, specifying down to individual person and household, and for what; and “must be explained orally to the people in case they can’t read.”¹⁴⁷

Mao himself judged the Four Cleans to have been unsuccessful at nearly every step. “The countryside has undergone several rectifications, but it never gets rectified,” he complained in June 1963. At several points he made comments to the effect that fully one third of the country or one third of government units were controlled by class enemies engaging in revisionism.¹⁴⁸ It was Mao’s increasing frustration with the campaign that convinced him to shift its focus onto the party establishment in 1964. This new mission found its expression in the Twenty-three Articles. By May 1965, Mao was certain that “just doing the Socialist Education Movement cannot fully

¹⁴⁵ “Basic Summary of the First Socialist Education Movement in Linchuan County (Draft).”; “The Zhanjiang Port Authority’s Initial Summary of the Four Cleans Struggle.”

¹⁴⁶ “Work Briefing #21,” 1964/12/8, ZLWZH 25.4, p. 3. / “工作简报 21 期,” 1964/12/8, ZLWZH 25.4, p. 3.; Baum and Teiwes, *Ssu-ch’ing*, p. 18.

¹⁴⁷ “Work Briefing #21.”

¹⁴⁸ Bo, *A Look Back at Several Major Decisions and Events Vol. 2*, p. 1151.; Guo Dehong, Lin Xiaobo, *The Record of the Four Cleans Campaign* (Zhejiang People’s Publishing House, 2005), p. 108. 郭德宏、林小波, 《四清运动实录》 (浙江人民出版社, 2005), p. 108.

solve the problem.” Mao had openly lost interest in the campaign even though it was still underway in many localities.¹⁴⁹

Scholars have similarly judged the campaign unsuccessful, with a consensus view being that its unresolved problems and tensions developed into the Cultural Revolution.¹⁵⁰ Patricia Thornton writes that “regardless of what the aims of the central leadership may have been, or how they may have diverged, the Socialist Education Movement can hardly be counted as a success.” She also finds that popular evaluations were “overwhelmingly negative.”¹⁵¹ Lowell Dittmer refers to it as “the unsuccessful Socialist Education Movement.”¹⁵² Ahn Byung-joon finds the anti-corruption component of the campaign to have been ineffective.¹⁵³ Michel Oksenberg notes that the implementation of the campaign obviously “displeased” Mao.¹⁵⁴ Richard Baum likewise concludes that it ultimately ended in “failure.”¹⁵⁵ U.S. intelligence assessed that “by 1965 the rectification movement was faltering badly,” and “probably no disciplinary movement of the party was so thoroughly honored in the breach.”¹⁵⁶ Elizabeth Perry and Merle Goldman write that “disappointment over the party's inability, and in some cases

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in: Han, “Liu Shaoqi and the Four Cleans Campaign,” 1:22:50.

¹⁵⁰ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3*.

¹⁵¹ Thornton, *Disciplining the State*, p. 196. On the other hand, some scholars find evidence for recent nostalgia for the Four Cleans Campaign among ordinary Chinese people. See: Kevin J. O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, “Campaign Nostalgia in the Chinese Countryside,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (May - Jun., 1999).; Lianjiang Li, “Support for Anti-corruption Campaigns in Rural China,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2001, 10:29, pp. 573–86.

¹⁵² Lowell Dittmer, *Liu Shaoqi and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Routledge, 1997), p. 45.

¹⁵³ Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 101.

¹⁵⁴ Oksenberg, “Policy Making under Mao Tse-Tung,” p. 334.

¹⁵⁵ Baum, *Prelude to Revolution*, quote on the book jacket.

¹⁵⁶ Document 172, FRUS, 1964–1968, *Volume XXX, China*, 1966/7/28. See also: General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1969/5/23, CIA-RDP85T00875R001000010035-8.

refusal to police itself during the Four Cleans set the stage for the even more draconian Cultural Revolution.”¹⁵⁷

Reasons for Reform Failure

Constraints on Mao’s leadership, as seen in unresolved conflicts among elites and resistance to his directives at lower levels, prevented the campaign from going according to plan. In particular, Mao and Liu’s disagreements about how and why the campaign was necessary confused its implementation. While Liu and others sought to strengthen the central party’s control over rural areas by sending down work teams, Mao opposed this centralization, increasingly distrusted the party apparatus, and insisted that the masses take the lead. At some point in late 1963 or early 1964, Mao decided that the party establishment itself was the root of his frustrations.¹⁵⁸ This major turning point in his thinking set Mao on the path to attacking high-level party officials during the Cultural Revolution. As a result, the Four Cleans went from being about peasant-cadre relations—as Liu and others seemed to prefer—to a general struggle of socialism versus capitalism. In this struggle, a broader set of officials was targeted for more varied offenses, taking the focus off of corruption. This can be seen in the expansion from the small Four Cleans, which had all been economic in nature, to the big Four Cleans, which included political, organizational, and ideological issues. Mao argued in late 1964 that “even clean officials in the old dynasties were pernicious.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Elizabeth J. Perry and Merle Goldman, Eds., *Grassroots Political Reform in Contemporary China* (Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 12.

¹⁵⁸ Han, “Liu Shaoqi and the Four Cleans Campaign,” 58:16.

¹⁵⁹ Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 112.

Even when the leadership agreed, lower levels of party and government—not to mention private citizens—were resistant. In 1962 and 1963, local communities “frequently attempted to subvert, sabotage, and derail...efforts to penetrate and remake the local political scene.”¹⁶⁰ Many rural cadres resisted “actively, by threatening or buying off villagers, or passively, by quitting their positions.”¹⁶¹ The Lianjiang documents captured in 1964 show that the CCP knew that cadre non-responsiveness was a key reason for the lack of campaign progress.¹⁶² A clear measure of non-compliance was that “the practice of assigning quotas or land to small groups continued” throughout the campaign, despite re-collectivization having been at the very top of Mao’s list of goals.¹⁶³

Constrained leadership aside, Mao’s ideological motives for the campaign might also have proven problematic for corruption control even if he had had his way.¹⁶⁴ Mao’s vision of class struggle and increasing distrust for party bureaucracy led him to resist party/state-building as a central component of the campaign. I say resist because other leaders advanced a strategy against corruption more in line with my proposed general authoritarian playbook: centralized and top-down, with temporary organizations empowered to penetrate and disrupt local institutions and remake them. Mao wanted “revolutionary” believers among the masses to criticize and challenge rural cadres and ultimately take control of rural governance. This utopianism contained a basic tension between on the one hand the wish to curb capitalistic practices and the corruption

¹⁶⁰ Thornton, *Disciplining the State*, p. 164.

¹⁶¹ Lü, *Cadres and Corruption*, p. 127.

¹⁶² *Fujian Lianjiang County Bandit Party Documents and Their Analysis*, p. 12.

¹⁶³ Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 291.

¹⁶⁴ Perry and Goldman, *Grassroots Political Reform in Contemporary China*, p. 12.

rampant in rural communities and on the other hand the demand that this somehow be done without strengthening bureaucracy and party control. While it is true that the Three Antis Campaign had also attacked excessive bureaucracy, Mao had in practice overseen the thorough bureaucratization of a guerrilla CCP into a ruling CCP. But in the early 1960s, state-building was not Mao's goal for the Four Cleans and his relationship with the party bureaucracy was more conflictual.

The One Strike–Three Antis Campaign

Mao launched the Cultural Revolution, an all-enveloping political and social movement that defined China between 1966 and 1976, to purge the political and ideological impurities that he believed had grown within the party establishment. Mao mobilized the masses to challenge power holders within the party who he believed had betrayed the revolution, leading to a breakdown of social order and mass violence in the late 1960s. It was, in MacFarquhar's apt term, a national "cataclysm."¹⁶⁵ The movement changed course in 1969, leading to a period of military ascendancy and tremendous state violence in the name of restoring order. The Cultural Revolution shifted again after the stunning death of Mao's chosen successor, Vice Chairman of the CCP and Minister of National Defense Lin Biao, following an alleged coup attempt in 1971.¹⁶⁶ The military's dominance was checked and the rest of the Cultural Revolution was much less violent. Mao's death in 1976 and the subsequent arrest of the radical Gang of Four closed the door on further revolution.

¹⁶⁵ The CCP admitted as much after the fact, calling the Cultural Revolution a ten-year catastrophe (十年浩劫).

¹⁶⁶ For a credible account that disputes there was any coup attempt, see Jin Qiu, *The Culture of Power: The Lin Biao Incident in the Cultural Revolution* (Stanford University Press, 1999).

The onset of the Cultural Revolution brought the return and even expansion of Mao's unconstrained leadership. It is generally acknowledged that the movement's early phases were "the peak of Party Chairman Mao Zedong's reign in China." The nation would "rush wherever Chairman Mao points," as a slogan of the time instructed.¹⁶⁷ It was in this period that Mao's Little Red Book of his famous quotations was widely distributed. Coverage of Mao in official media, already copious, reached new levels of saturation.¹⁶⁸ And the personality cult around the Great Helmsman was one of the most intense in the 20th century, outdone perhaps only by Kim Il-sung's in North Korea. One young participant in the Cultural Revolution explained that when he and his middle-school classmates heard Mao on the radio calling for them to rise up and make revolution, it "brought tears to my eyes...as if we had heard the voice of God."¹⁶⁹ More concretely, Mao's unconstrained leadership can be seen in his ability to purge many high-level officials who had troubled him just a few years before, such as Liu Shaoqi. As Mao pushed aside old allies in the party, he elevated the military's profile, a transition epitomized by Lin Biao's rise to the position of presumptive successor.

Alongside his expansion of personal power, Mao's attacks on the party establishment temporarily undermined state capacity and halted economic growth. The Cultural Revolution brought "near civil war in many parts of China" as rival factions all swearing allegiance to Mao fought each other in the streets.¹⁷⁰ There was both a "popular insurgency against "party-state

¹⁶⁷ Lynn T. White, *Policies of Chaos - The Organizational Causes of Violence in China's Cultural Revolution* (Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 3, 5.

¹⁶⁸ Leese, *Mao Cult*, pp. 23–24, 130.

¹⁶⁹ Author's interview, Summer 2011. See also: Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Son of the Revolution* (New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1983), pp. 40–60.

¹⁷⁰ Michael Schoenhals, "'Why don't we arm the left?' Mao's culpability for the cultural revolution's 'great chaos' of 1967," *The China Quarterly*, 2005 Jun, Vol.182, p. 277.

cadres” and a “widespread rebellion” by lower-level cadres against their superiors, which together “destroyed the civilian state in early 1967.”¹⁷¹ Many government institutions were systematically purged of technical expertise under the theory that “experts” were of dubious loyalty to Mao and the revolution.¹⁷² Economic production came under the control of revolutionary committees, which by 1971 had “evolved into groups led by the top military or Party leaders in the plant, composed of pliant delegates who had survived the previous years of investigation and purge by not rocking the boat.” They were “empty institutional shells” that “could not handle all the necessary administrative work.”¹⁷³ Mainstream scholarly estimates of the death toll of the Cultural Revolution range from 400,000 to several million.¹⁷⁴ Even analysts advocating a revisionist view in which the decade was not uniformly disastrous admit that the most chaotic period between 1966 and 1969 saw a major economic downturn.¹⁷⁵ The general chaos eventually became too much even for the man who advocated “continuous revolution,” leading Mao to shift to policies that reined in the masses and empowered the military to restore order and rebuild the state. The most important of these repressive measures were the Cleansing the Class Ranks Campaign (1968–69) and the following year’s One Strike–Three Antis.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ Andrew G. Walder, “Rebellion of the Cadres: The 1967 Implosion of the Chinese Party-State,” *The China Journal*, 01 January 2016, Vol.75(1), p. 102.

¹⁷² Joel Andreas, *Rise of the Red Engineers: The Cultural Revolution and the Origins of China’s New Class* (Stanford University Press, 2009).

¹⁷³ Andrew G. Walder, “Some Ironies of Maoist Legacy in Industry,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No. 5 (Jan., 1981), p. 33.

¹⁷⁴ Meisner, *Mao’s China and After*.

¹⁷⁵ Cheng Donglin, “Analysis of China’s Economic Situation in the Cultural Revolution Period,” *Contemporary China Studies*, 2008, Vol. 3 (2). / 陈东林, “文化大革命时期国民经济状况研究述评,” 当代中国史研究, 2008 年第 15 卷第 2 期.; Wang Shaoguang, “1970s China: A New Trend in the Cultural Revolution,” *The Age of Opening*, 2013 (247), pp. 5–14. / 王紹光, “七十年代的中國：文革中的新思潮,” 開放時代, 第 247 期, 2013, pp. 5–14.

¹⁷⁶ Andrew G. Walder, “Rebellion and Repression in China, 1966–1971,” *Social Science History*, 2014, Vol.38(3), p. 518.

The One Strike–Three Antis aimed to repress insurgency and rebuild the damaged state; it targeted corruption as part of this mission, making it the largest anti-corruption campaign of the Cultural Revolution. The “strike” of the campaign was political, targeting counterrevolutionaries; the “three antis” were economic, opposing “corruption and theft,” speculation, and waste. CCP leaders were alarmed by reports of all manner of corruption proliferating in the breakdown of order. Premier Zhou Enlai in particular was frustrated by the sorry state of production and “anarchy” in enterprises, and took the shift in Mao’s thinking as an opportunity to advocate a discipline-restoring anti-corruption campaign.¹⁷⁷ It was time for the party to “crush the class enemies’ attack in the economic field.”¹⁷⁸

In February 1970, the central government announced a series of measures “to prevent corruption, theft, and speculation, and to not give class enemies any opening to exploit,” such as banning private economic activity (production and commerce) and increasing controls and monitoring on lower-level economic management (such as in *danwei*).¹⁷⁹ That said, the campaign’s “main subject matter” seems to have been the one strike rather than the three antis, reflecting the need to put political repression ahead of economic reform.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Robert Ash, Christopher Howe, Y. Y. Kueh, Eds., *China’s Economic Reform: A Study with Documents* (Routledge, 2003), p. 34.; Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen, *Zhou Enlai: a political life* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2006), p. 267.; *Zhou Enlai Chronicles, Vol. 3* (Central Literature Publishing House, 1997), p. 347. / 《周恩来年谱(下)》(中央文献出版社, 1997), p. 347.

¹⁷⁸ Yan Zhifeng, “How the One Strike–Three Antis Campaign was Launched,” *The Whole Party History*, 2006 (3), pp. 32–34. / 阎志峰, “‘一打三反’运动是怎样掀起来的,” *党史纵横*, 2006(3), pp. 32–34.

¹⁷⁹ “Instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China against corruption, theft, and speculation,” 1970/2/5, ZDZYSS.
“中共中央关于反对贪污盗窃、投机倒把的指示,” 1970/2/5, ZDZYSS.

¹⁸⁰ Wang Rui, “Zhou Enlai and the One Strike–Three Antis Campaign,” *Remembrance*, Special One Strike–Three Antis Issue, 2010/9/13.
王锐, “周恩来与‘一打三反’运动,” 记忆, “一打三反”专辑, 2010/9/13.

Available figures show that in 1970 alone the campaign resulted in the arrest of some 284,000 “traitors,” “spies,” and “counterrevolutionaries.”¹⁸¹ These terms were sometimes used flexibly, meaning that this figure does not exclude targets prosecuted for economic crimes. Party instructions “on cracking down on counter-revolutionary destructive activities” issued in 1970 note that some “counterrevolutionary elements” are those who “engage in graft, embezzlement, and speculation, and sabotage the socialist economy.”¹⁸² A report in the same year from Nanhua County in Yunnan Province shows the mixture of economic and non-economic issues uncovered in the campaign: “some [wrongdoers] are a bourgeoisie faction; some are corrupt, thieves, or speculators; some watch pornographic shows or sing dirty songs; some are anarchists... some embezzle construction fees, public fees, medical fees,” etc.¹⁸³

While in-depth research on the One Strike–Three Antis is limited, the campaign seems to have been unsuccessful in curbing corruption because of its diversion into factional conflict, misidentification of targets, and excessive violence—all issues that suggest a failure of state capacity. To be clear, there was no lack of coercive capacity in early 1970, as evidenced by the campaign’s thorough repression, but problems with implementing the anti-corruption part reflected the damaged regulatory and distributive capacities of the Chinese state.¹⁸⁴ The campaign was from the beginning vague about how it should be carried out and whom it should

¹⁸¹ Wang Nianyi, *The Age of the Great Turmoil* [translation given] (Henan People’s Publishing House, 1996), p. 337.

王年一, 《大动乱的年代》 (河南人民出版社, 1996), p. 337.

¹⁸² Translated in Michael Schoenhals, *China’s Cultural Revolution, 1966–69: Not a Dinner Party* (Routledge, 1996), p. 86.

¹⁸³ “Report on the One Strike–Three Antis Campaign Launched by Nanhua County’s Culture and Education Front,” 1970/9/6, ZDZYSS.

“南华县文教战线开展‘一打三反’运动情况,” 1970/9/6, ZDZYSS.

¹⁸⁴ Coercive capacity is just one of several aspects of state capacity and as argued in Chapter One is by itself insufficient to implement corruption control.

target, which contributed to biased and self-serving implementation by officials.¹⁸⁵ “Like the May Sixteenth conspiracy, many of the charges [in the One Strike–Three Antis] were trumped up.”¹⁸⁶ “In many places, the campaign was completely intertwined with factional in-fighting among officials and activists.”¹⁸⁷ The misidentification of targets is a problem in all anti-corruption work, but here it was extreme. In Mian County in Shaanxi Province, for example, the campaign uncovered corruption to the tune of “160,000 yuan in cash, 50,000 in grain tickets...speculation 14,000 yuan of speculation profits.” But it later turned out that “all the cases were wrongful.”¹⁸⁸ Even the party center admitted in early 1972 that some public security officers had mismanaged cases, resulting in “false cases and mistaken cases, maligning good people, and letting enemies go.”¹⁸⁹ Reports from Taiyuan City in Shanxi Province did not paint a rosy picture: sloppily handled and wrongful cases, forced confessions, motivated reasoning and framing people, and a spirit of “better to be overly strict than too lenient.” Some participants were engaging in illicit behaviors while campaigning against them (边反边犯), whereas other participants were simply tired of the campaign and wanted to go home.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 301–307.; Frank Dikotter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962–1976* (Bloomsbury Press, 2016), p. 236–41.

¹⁸⁶ Dikotter, *The Cultural Revolution*, p. 236.

¹⁸⁷ Lü, *Cadres and Corruption*, p. 129.

¹⁸⁸ Ding Shu, “Record of the 1970 One Strike–Three Antis Campaign,” *Botanwang*, 2014/4/12.
丁抒, “1970年一打三反运动记实,” 博谈网, 2014/4/12, <https://botanwang.com/articles/201404/1970年一打三反运动记实.html>

¹⁸⁹ “The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China approves the ‘Fifteenth National Public Security Conference Summary,’ Central Document [1971] No. 20,” 1971/2/26, ZDZYSS.
“中共中央批转《第十五次全国公安会议纪要》中发[1971] 20号,” 1971/2/26, ZDZYSS.

¹⁹⁰ “The Taiyuan Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China approved the report of the Municipal Revolutionary Committee’s One Strike–Three Antis Office: Policy meeting report on convening a city-wide One Strike–Three Antis, cleaning up teams and implementing the party,” 1972/11/20, author’s collection.

Andrew Walder and Su Yang estimate that the Cultural Revolution caused between 750,000 and 1.5 million deaths, and that the “vast majority” of casualties occurred during the 1968–71 period.¹⁹¹ In that period, the One Strike–Three Antis was associated with the second biggest spike in violent events, after the Cleansing the Class Ranks Campaign.¹⁹² Walder and Su’s data and several anecdotal accounts suggest that the violence of the One Strike–Three Antis was far in excess of what would have been necessary to quell disorder and not targeted accurately at actual threats to the state.¹⁹³ Moreover, it is not clear that any concrete, lasting anti-corruption institutions were established by the campaign.

In sum, the One Strike–Three Antis was unsuccessful in curbing corruption despite Mao’s unconstrained leadership and the goal of state-building—or rather rebuilding—following his purge of the party establishment and recognition of the resulting disorder. Corruption control seems to have floundered because of weakened state capacity following the highly destructive early phase of the Cultural Revolution. However, much research remains to be done about this short but lethal campaign.

Figure 4.1:

“中共太原市委批转市革委一打三反办公室“关于召开全市一打三反、城镇清队落实党的政策会议的报告,” 1972/11/20, 笔者收藏.

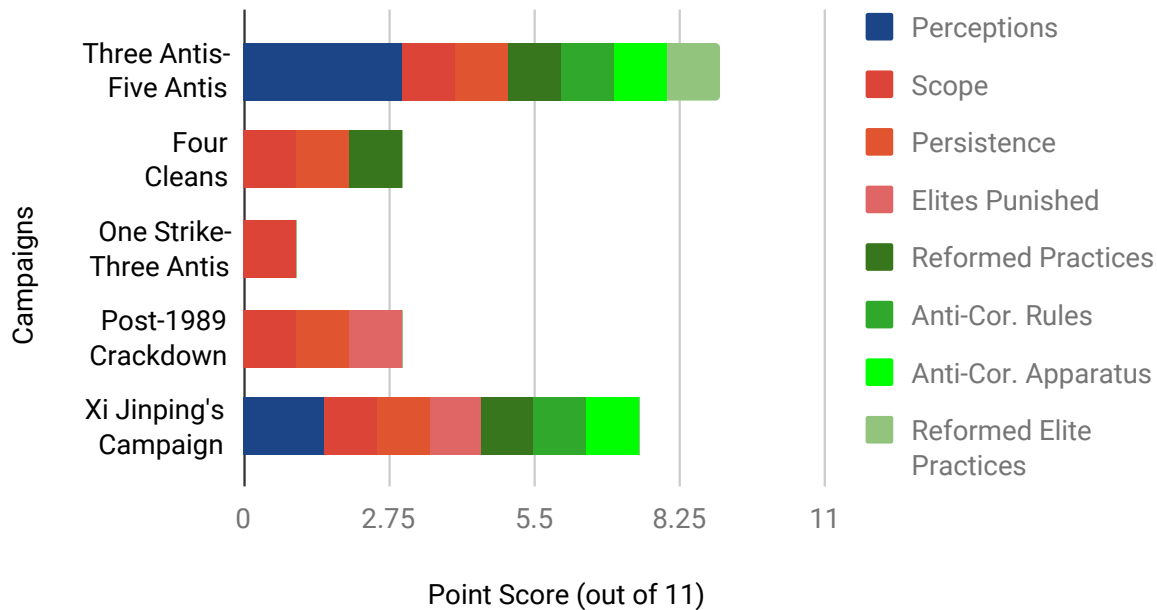
¹⁹¹ Andrew G. Walder and Su Yang, “The Cultural Revolution in the Countryside: Scope, Timing and Human Impact,” *The China Quarterly*, 1 March 2003, Iss. 173, p. 74.

¹⁹² Walder, “Rebellion and Repression in China,” p. 519.

¹⁹³ For a survivor’s perspective on the wanton violence of the campaign, see Zhang Langlang, “On the Cultural Revolution’s One Strike–Three Antis Campaign,” Speech in July, 2001 at the 35th Anniversary of the Cultural Revolution Conference.

张郎郎, “关于文革中的‘一打三反’运动,” 2001/7, 文革三十五周年研讨会上的发言:
<http://www.yxjedu.com/li shi shun jian/wen ge/1 da 3 fan/wen ge 1da 3fan.htm>

Scoring Selected PRC Anti-Corruption Campaigns



5. Deng Xiaoping and Three Reform-Era Campaigns

This section discusses Deng's leadership of China (1977–89) and three campaigns that addressed corruption in the early reform era: a campaign against economic crime in 1981–82, a party work-style rectification in 1986, and the post-Tiananmen crackdown in 1989–90. I find that these campaigns were all unsuccessful. In part, this was because new constraints on the post-Mao leadership allowed the party-state bureaucracy to resist policies that contradicted its interests, which were in exploiting the country's economic reforms for private gain. Deng was a tremendously successful reformer, but he generally promoted reforms through persuasion, not coercion. In addition, weak anti-corruption motivation hindered the post-Tiananmen crackdown, as discussed below.

Mao Zedong's death on September 9th, 1976 was the end of an era. In the complex political maneuvering that followed, Mao's more radical allies in the party were arrested or

sidelined and twice-purged veteran revolutionary Deng Xiaoping emerged as the country's paramount leader. Deng launched wide-ranging liberal economic reforms that continued and evolved over the next three decades.¹⁹⁴ Deng's agenda should be characterized as developmental; China moved away from a planned economy but preserved the guiding hand of the state to pursue rapid growth.¹⁹⁵ These reforms, beginning from regional experiments and transitional institutions, came to transform China and touch every aspect of society. Deng ruled from 1977 until 1989, when he began to hand power over to his chosen successor, Jiang Zemin.

Despite being the propelling force on economic reforms and unchallenged leader of the country throughout the 1980s, Deng was not Mao. Rather than become an unconstrained leader, Deng shared the regime's power, especially among members of the Politburo Standing Committee.¹⁹⁶ This was partly by choice, as the horrors of the Cultural Revolution had convinced Deng and many others in the party who had been personally affected that Mao's one-man rule should not be replicated. In a key speech to the Politburo in August 1980 entitled "On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership," Deng criticized the Cultural Revolution, the past "over-concentration of power," "patriarchal methods, life tenure in leading posts and privileges of various kinds." He announced a major reduction of party and government leaders holding concurrent positions, himself stepping down as Vice-Premier "so that more energetic

¹⁹⁴ Some argue persuasively that the Xi administration marks the beginning of a post-reform era. E.g. Elizabeth C. Economy, *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

¹⁹⁵ Chang Ha-Joon, "The Economic Theory of the Developmental State" in Meredith Woo-Cumings, ed., *The Developmental State* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 182–99.; Verena Fritz, and Alina Rocha Menocal, "Developmental States in the New Millennium: Concepts and Challenges for a New Aid Agenda," *Development Policy Review* 25, No. 5 (2007), pp. 531–52.

¹⁹⁶ Li Cheng, *Chinese Politics in the Xi Jinping Era: Reassessing Collective Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2016), p. 13.

comrades can take over.”¹⁹⁷ Deng also criticized cults of personality, and for himself “would not tolerate the cult of personality that Mao happily indulged in.”¹⁹⁸

The constraints on Deng’s leadership were not only self-imposed. Deng had to work around substantial conservative resistance to his economic reforms, often led by Chen Yun. Chen popularized the famous metaphor that the economy should be controlled like “a bird in a cage.” Ezra Vogel argues that Deng adopted the principle of “sidestep[ping] conservative resistance through experimentation.” For example, on the issue of Special Economic Zones, Deng “could not have gotten the support to introduce such policies for the entire country, but it was far harder for conservatives to oppose experiments.”¹⁹⁹ “Four times...he personally initiated or endorsed efforts to overhaul China’s overcentralized, ossified leadership system; in all four instances intense factional strife, combined with mounting economic difficulties, compelled him to abort the project.”²⁰⁰ Beyond just the reformer-conservative split, Deng was also constrained by party and bureaucratic resistance to policies that did not benefit local interests.

It is well-known that Deng’s Reform and Opening caused or at least contributed to a major rise in corruption in the 1980s.²⁰¹ Gordon White wrote in 1996 that “there is a consensus

¹⁹⁷ Deng Xiaoping, “On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership,” 1980/8/18, <http://en.people.cn/dengxp/vol2/text/b1460.html>

邓小平, “党和国家领导制度的改革,” 1980/8/18, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64165/68640/68658/4709791.html>

¹⁹⁸ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 377.

¹⁹⁹ Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, pp. 389, 399.

²⁰⁰ Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 16.

²⁰¹ Lo T. Wing, *Corruption and Politics in Hong Kong and China* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1993), p. 71.; *Roots of Corruption: Has China Become a Rent-Seeking Society?* (China Economic Press, 1999). / 《腐败寻根: 中国会成为寻租社会吗》 (中国经济出版社, 1999). Sun Yan, *Corruption and Market in Contemporary China* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).; Meng Qingli, *Corruption in Transitional China: a 33-year study* (Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2014).

among all shades of opinion both in China and abroad that politico-bureaucratic corruption, defined simply in terms of the abuse of public office for private gain, has increased during the era of market reforms in terms of the numbers of people involved, their seniority and the financial scale of abuse.”²⁰² Julia Kwong argues that corruption in the reform era should be compared unfavorably to the 1950s in particular, and that corruption in China was shaped like a “parabola” from the 1940s through the 1980s.²⁰³ Large-scale economic transitions almost inevitably create opportunities for corruption, and China’s liberalization was no exception.²⁰⁴ The introduction of new economic rules of the game for some parts of the country but not others and some sectors or bureaus but not others created massive incentives for arbitrage.²⁰⁵ Transitional institutions used in the reform process, like the dual track system and Township and Village Enterprises were plagued by corruption.²⁰⁶ As some Chinese were becoming rapidly wealthy, bureaucrats’ salaries rose only gradually throughout the 1980s, incentivizing bribe-taking.²⁰⁷

²⁰² Gordon White, “Corruption and the Transition from Socialism in China,” *Journal of Law and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (Mar., 1996), p. 151.

²⁰³ Julia Kwong, *The Political Economy of Corruption in China* (Armonk, N.Y.: MESHARPE, 1997).

²⁰⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968), p. 59.; Guo Yong, “Corruption in Transitional China: an empirical analysis,” *The China Quarterly*, 194, June 2008, pp. 349–64.

²⁰⁵ Susan L. Shirk, *How China Opened Its Door: The Political Success of the PRC’s Foreign Trade* (Brookings Institution Press, Dec 1, 1994), p. 50.

²⁰⁶ He Zengke, “Corruption and anti-corruption in reform China,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 33 (2000), p. 248.; Li Wei, “Corruption and Resource Allocation Under China’s Dual Track System,” IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc, 2000.; Sun Yan, “Reform, State, and Corruption: Is Corruption Less Destructive in China than in Russia?” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 1999, pp. 3–4.

²⁰⁷ Stephen K. Ma, “Reform Corruption: A Discussion on China’s Current Development,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Spring, 1989), p. 45.

Deng was not prepared to give up his ambitious reform agenda to prevent a rise in corruption, but within the constraints of the reform agenda he did want to minimize corruption. Cleaning house would assist Deng's developmental mission by preventing officials from turning liberalization into a license for predatory behavior and rent-seeking, as well as blunting criticism of the reforms from conservatives and the public. Conservatives tried to use the issue of corruption to slow reforms, arguing that corruption was caused by "Western influences brought about by the economic opening" and was weakening party discipline. "Early in the 1980s, Chen spoke of corruption as a matter of life and death of the party."²⁰⁸ Deng and other reformers agreed that the problem was severe, but argued that the only way forward was to combat corruption while continuing and deepening economic transformation. Throughout the 1980s, Deng's references to corruption in his speeches show that he understood that corruption was growing, that conservatives saw it as grounds to slow reforms, and that the public's reaction was "revulsion." He called for the party to "grasp Reform and Opening with one hand and punish corruption with the other."²⁰⁹

Some analysts argue that corruption aided Chinese growth and even furthered Reform and Opening in some ways.²¹⁰ On the one hand, corruption can help businesspeople get around burdensome regulations and may motivate officials to allow more free market activity in order to

²⁰⁸ Tony Saich, *Governance and Politics of China*, 4th ed. (Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), p. 354.

²⁰⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping's Selected Works, Vol. 3* (People's Publishing House, 1993), pp. 143, 154, 156, 290, 297, 313, 314.

邓小平, 《邓小平文选, 第三卷》 (人民出版社, 1993), pp. 143, 154, 156, 290, 297, 313, 314.

On the reformer vs conservative debate on corruption, see: Richard Levy, "Corruption, Economic Crime and Social Transformation since the Reforms: The Debate in China," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No. 33 (Jan., 1995), pp. 1–25.

²¹⁰ He, "Corruption and anti-corruption in reform China," pp. 256–60.; Stephen K. Ma, "Reform Corruption: A Discussion on China's Current Developments," *Pacific Affairs* Vol 62, no 1 (Spring 1989), p. 47.

skim greater amounts off the top. But on the other hand, corruption also leads to non-productive behaviors, like predation, rent-seeking, and officials trying to block further reform in order to keep hold of their petty regulatory powers. Arthur Kroeber explains that “allowing some degree of official corruption was the deal that the leadership offered to officials in order to marshal their support for reforms,” but also that this “tacit license to steal was not unlimited.”²¹¹

For the purposes of this study, whether corruption was on balance good for growth in the 1980s is less important than the fact that Deng believed that too much corruption could threaten his reform agenda and urged the CCP to curb it. In the last estimate, Deng led successful economic reforms and created high levels of growth very much despite rising corruption.²¹²

The 1981–82 and 1986 Campaigns

The campaign against economic crime launched in 1981 and the party work-style rectification launched 1986 both aimed to support Deng’s developmental reform agenda and to address growing public anger over official privilege and corruption. While both campaigns created momentum and produced large annual increases in nationwide anti-corruption investigations, they were not “Maoist-style mass movements.”²¹³ Both faded away without making progress against growing corruption.

²¹¹ Arthur Kroeber, *China’s Economy: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 207.

²¹² This study does not go into why that was possible, but Andrew Wedeman provides smart analysis in *Double Paradox: Rapid Growth and Rising Corruption in China* (2012).

²¹³ Melanie Manion, *Corruption by Design: Building Clean Government in Mainland China and Hong Kong* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 88, 160.; Andrew Hall Wedeman, *Double Paradox: Rapid Growth and Rising Corruption in China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), p. 96.

In late 1981, party leaders launched China's first campaign against economic crime since the beginning of Reform and Opening.²¹⁴ Graft, speculation, smuggling, and tax evasion were on the rise, especially in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Guangdong Province and Fujian Province.²¹⁵ "Mounting popular anger over improper cadre behavior" even fueled "a sharp upsurge in the number of letters to the editor submitted by irate newspaper and magazine readers around the country." The campaign was led primarily by Deng, Premier Zhao Ziyang, and Chen Yun.²¹⁶ Deng maintained that economic reforms and these anti-corruption efforts could proceed in tandem.²¹⁷ A joint statement by the Central Committee and State Council in April 1982 announced that there was "no contradiction;" cleaning up corruption was in fact "in order to remove obstacles" to production and economic modernization.²¹⁸ The campaign proceeded with strengthened discipline enforcement, punishment for those found guilty, and propaganda about the evils of corruption.²¹⁹ The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) (中央纪律

²¹⁴ Tang Shenming, "Official Corruption in a Developing Country: The Case of The People's Republic of China," *Humanity and Society*, Vol. 20, Iss. 2, (May 1, 1996), p. 67.

This campaign preceded and should not be confused with the campaign against spiritual pollution in 1983 or the general "Strike Hard" campaign against crime between 1983 and 1986. Anti-corruption investigations occurred as part of these campaigns but were not the primary focus. See: Thomas B. Gold, "'Just in Time!': China Battles Spiritual Pollution on the Eve of 1984," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 9 (Sep., 1984), pp. 947-74.; Susan Trevaskes, *Policing Serious Crime in China: From 'Strike Hard' to 'Kill Fewer'* (Routledge, 2013).

²¹⁵ Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, pp. 413-14.

²¹⁶ Baum, *Burying Mao*, p. 140.

²¹⁷ Huang Liurong and Liu Songbin, *The History of the Anti-corruption of the Communist Party of China* (China Fangzheng Press, 1997), p. 255.

黄修荣、刘宋斌,《中国共产党廉政反腐史记》(中国方正出版社,1997),p.255.

²¹⁸ "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Combating Serious Criminal Activities in the Economic Field (Excerpt)," 1982/4/13, *Extracts of Important Documents since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee* (People's Publishing House, 1987).

"中共中央、国务院关于打击经济领域中严重犯罪活动的决定(节录)," 1982/4/13,《十一届三中全会以来有关重要文献摘编》(人民出版社,1987),<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64186/66694/4494785.html>

²¹⁹ For a list of the key government documents detailing this campaign, see Guo Gang, "The Five Anti-Corruption Campaigns in Post-Mao China," 1998/6, Unpublished research, <http://home.olemiss.edu/~gg/paperhtm/anticrrp.htm>

检查委员会), the party organ established in 1978 to be in charge of rooting out all forms of indiscipline, reported in February 1983 that it had sent some 30,000 offenders to prison, expelled 5,500 party members, and “recovered 320 million yuan in cash and goods.”²²⁰

But the post-Mao leadership had become less capable of forcing the bureaucracy to undertake unpleasant reforms. While many localities willingly embraced Reform and Opening, which was lucrative for them, they often resisted and avoided anti-corruption reforms. Knowing this, on January 11th, 1982, the Central Committee decided to send trusted high-level officials (Xi Zhongxun, Yu Qiuli, Peng Chong, and Wang Heshou) to provinces with SEZs to make sure that they took anti-corruption and anti-smuggling efforts seriously.²²¹ But in April 1982, the Central Committee and the State Council “introduced a series of differentiations whose hair-splitting served to lessen the impact” of the campaign’s initially harsh penalties. Reports of “resistance, uncertainty, retaliation, unconcern and perfunctoriness” came out in official media. Provincial reports “revealed some of the confusion and hesitation.” “Rural collective enterprises worried that they would be cut off from their sources of raw materials and their developments stultified.”²²² Melanie Manion notes that “some local party leaders refused to take the campaign seriously,” and “a number of government departments and localities substituted fines for criminal punishment in cases of economic crimes...[which] undermined deterrence.”²²³ CCDI Secretary Wang Congwu gave a report on the campaign’s progress at the CCDI’s second

²²⁰ Keith Forster, “The 1982 Campaign Against Economic Crime in China,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no 14 (July 1985), p. 15.

²²¹ *Chen Yun Chronicles*, p. 330.

²²² Forster, “The 1982 Campaign Against Economic Crime in China,” pp. 1–19.

²²³ Manion, *Corruption by Design*, pp. 175–76.

plenum, in March 1983. After a pro forma reference to the campaign's "achievement," Wang claimed that there remained "holes" in the system of regulations, education for the campaign had "not sunk in," and in some localities there was a "relaxed mood" inconsistent with the spirit of the "struggle."²²⁴

The party leadership soon tried again, launching a campaign in early 1986 to rectify party work-style, including corruption. The mid-1980s had seen an "upsurge in official misconduct, including criminal corruption;" "1984 and 1985 were years of 'rampant economic crime,' according to the chief procurator."²²⁵ In late 1985, the party identified "six unhealthy winds" blowing in the country.²²⁶ Several party leaders raised the issue of problems in work-style and growing indiscipline at the "Eight Thousand Person Conference" of the central organs held in January 1986.²²⁷ Following speeches by Deng, Chen, General Secretary Hu Yaobang, Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission Qiao Shi, and others calling for reform, The Central Committee, State Council, and CCDI announced a series of crackdowns and stricter penalties for offenders: on the misuse of official overseas travel (Jan. 23), cadres traveling domestically at public expense (Feb. 1), illicit commercial activity by governmental organs and cadres (Feb. 4), speculation and fraud (Jan. 15), the importation of foreign cars for illicit resale,

²²⁴ "The second plenary meeting of the Central Committee for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China was held in Beijing," 1983/2/9, *Major Events in Combating Corruption and Building Clean Government in China 1978–2010* (Second Part) (Dongfang Press, 2010).
"中国共产党中纪委第二次全体会议在北京举行," 1983/2/9, 《中国反腐倡廉大事记 1978–2010》 (第二部) (东方出版社, 2010), <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/146570/198299/199543/199546/12369773.html>

²²⁵ Manion, *Corruption by Design*, p. 177.

²²⁶ "Notice on resolutely implementing the instructions of the Central Committee and the State Council on correcting unhealthy practices," 1985/11/26, Reported in *People's Daily*.
"关于认真执行中央和国务院关于纠正不正之风的指示的通知," 1985/11/26, 人民日报, <http://fanfu.people.com.cn/GB/143349/165093/165096/165116/9892778.html>

²²⁷ Li Xueqin, Ed., *Survey of Anti-Corruption in New China* (Tianjin People's Publishing, 1993), p. 349.
李雪勤 (主编), 《新中国反腐败通鉴》 (天津人民出版社, 1993), p. 349.

and wasteful “entertainment” of visiting officials.²²⁸ Anti-corruption enforcement, which had declined after the 1981–82 campaign, shot up to a new high of more than 49,000 in 1986.²²⁹

This campaign was even more short-lived than before. “The campaign against economic crime has fallen far short of the mark so far. After an initial flurry of highly publicized crackdowns, chiefly involving officials in the provinces and municipalities...[the] campaign fizzled.”²³⁰ By May or June 1986, “the anticorruption effort clearly began to wind down to a much gentler focus on improper (not criminal) conduct.”²³¹ Elites and their relatives got off particularly easy, despite the fact that official privilege in connection to corruption was a major concern of the public’s and a rhetorical target in leaders’ speeches. Politburo member Hu Qiaomu’s son Hu Shiying got away with the legal equivalent of a slap on the wrist despite major corruption allegations thanks to the help of his father and other influential party elders. Fu Yan, daughter of Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress Peng Zhen, was not indicted despite serious allegations of corruption.²³² In a rare counterexample, former naval commander Ye Fei’s daughter Ye Zhifeng was sentenced to 17 years in prison in 1986.²³³ Nor had corruption been noticeably reduced lower down the rank and file, as party leaders would admit just two years later; many of the same specific offenses targeted in the campaign had to be

²²⁸ Guo, “The Five Anti-Corruption Campaigns in Post-Mao China.”

²²⁹ Wedeman, *Double Paradox*, p. 96.

²³⁰ Mitchell A. Silk, “Economic Crime in China,” *The China Business Review*; Jan/Feb 1988, p. 25.

²³¹ Manion, *Corruption by Design*, p. 179.

²³² Murray Scot Tanner and Michael J. Feder, “Family Politics, Elite Recruitment, and Succession in Post-Mao China,” *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 1993 Jul, Iss. 30, pp. 89–119.

²³³ Silk, “Economic Crime in China,” p. 29.

targeted again in 1989. Foreshadowing that year's crisis, students demanding democracy and reforms to curb social ills led demonstrations in several major cities in December 1986.²³⁴

1989: a Corruption Crisis and a Crackdown

This section analyzes the government's post-Tiananmen crackdown and concludes that it was a Failed Reform in terms of corruption control.

Demanding greater democracy and an end to corruption, an unprecedented student-led movement occupied Tiananmen Square in Beijing between April 15th and June 4th. The protests began with small gatherings to mourn the death on April 15th of former general secretary Hu Yaobang, who was seen as a liberal reformer but had been ousted by conservatives two years earlier. The protests, which soon spread to other cities, were supported by many Beijing residents and captured global attention through coverage by foreign reporters who happened to be in Beijing at the time.

While most famous abroad for their calls for political reform, the protests were also about the public's anger over corruption.²³⁵ Zhao Ziyang, who succeeded Hu as general secretary and continued some of his policies until being ousted himself in 1989, notes in his memoirs that "there was a lot of dissatisfaction with corruption back then, so commemorating Hu Yaobang provided a chance to express this discontent." "Most of the students were demanding the punishment of corruption and the promotion of political reform, and were not advocating the

²³⁴ Julia Kwong, "The 1986 Student Demonstrations in China: A Democratic Movement?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 9 (Sep., 1988), pp. 970–85.

²³⁵ Lee Feigon, *China Rising: The Meaning of Tiananmen* (Ivan R. Dee, 1990), pp. 129–30.; Corinna-Barbara Francis, "The Progress of Protest in China: The Spring of 1989," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 29, No. 9 (Sep., 1989), pp. 898–915.; Clemens Ostergaard and Christina Petersen, "Official profiteering and the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in China," *Corruption and Reform*, 1991, Vol.6(2), pp. 87–108.; Carolyn L. Hsu, "Political Narratives and the Production of Legitimacy: The Case of Corruption in Post-Mao China," *Qualitative Sociology*, 2001, Vol.24(1), pp. 25–54.

overthrow of the Communist Party.”²³⁶ The idea that “linked the students more strongly to the general population of Beijing” was not democracy but bringing “an end to corruption.” In a survey of 111 bystanders to the movement asking which were the most important goals of the movement, 82 percent responded ending corruption.²³⁷ The CIA assessed that the protests were “symptomatic of public dissatisfaction with the leadership because of its unwillingness to make the political system more responsive to public concerns and inability to control growing official corruption, nepotism, and inflation.”²³⁸ Even the infamous “26 April Editorial” in the official *People’s Daily*—a harsh condemnation of the protests that angered protesters further—claimed to stand with the “vast majority of students who sincerely wish to get rid of corruption and advance democracy.”²³⁹

Protesters had many slogans and messages emphasizing their disgust with government corruption. For example: “Publicize government officials’ wealth;” “Mao Zedong’s officials were clean, the Gang of Four’s were brave, and Deng Xiaoping’s are millionaires!” “Economic chaos is the inevitable outcome of government corruption and impotence;” “The biggest and sharpest contradiction in China today is between the filth of corrupt officials and the interests of the masses;” “Today’s China has filth everywhere; it’s time for a big clean-up;” and “Corruption

²³⁶ Zhao Ziyang (Author), Adi Ignatius (Author, editor, translator), Bao Pu (Editor, Translator), Renee Chiang (Editor, Translator), *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* (Simon and Schuster 2009), pp. 17, 79.

²³⁷ Craig Calhoun, *Neither Gods Nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China* (University of California Press, 1995), pp. 247–48.

²³⁸ “The Chinese Economy in 1988 and 1989: Reforms on Hold, Economic Problems Mount,” August 1989, General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, Document Number: CIA-RDP04T01091R000200210001-3.

²³⁹ RMRB, 1989/4/26, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64186/66681/4494004.html>

and Mistakes Are the Root of ‘Disturbances’.”²⁴⁰ This last message was in response to accusations from official media that protesters were creating a “disturbance.”

It may seem that regime-threatening protests over corruption like those in Tiananmen Square should create a strong motivation for an authoritarian regime to clean house, but I find that such defensive motivations are in fact relatively weak. Substantial anti-corruption efforts challenge established political and bureaucratic interests, and therefore at least in authoritarian regimes need to be forced on the establishment by a powerful leadership. But in the face of mass protests, the leadership is more reliant on the establishment than usual to suppress dissent; naturally, it is extremely difficult for any leader to take on the public *and* the political establishment at the same time. What tends to happen instead is that leaders make a show of curbing corruption until the crisis is over but spare the establishment in return for support. In short, the threat posed by the protests can paradoxically make it harder for the regime to solve the problem that caused the protests.

The CCP leadership’s first response was to acknowledge the need to curb corruption, even in private. Conversations and speeches by party leaders during and after the 1989 protests that were leaked and later published in *The Tiananmen Papers* (2002) show broad consensus, at least in principle. In this collection of documents, we find that at least ten top CCP leaders spoke of the need to curb corruption in connection with the protests.²⁴¹ The people’s anger over corruption was perceived to be a major threat that “could indeed have grave consequences for the

²⁴⁰ Tiananmen Square Incident Materials Collection [天安门资料集], Harvard University’s Harvard-Yenching Library, Boxes 6–8 and 14–17, various files.

²⁴¹ Zhang Liang [a pseudonym], *The Tiananmen Papers*, Eds.: Andrew J. Nathan and Perry Link, (Abacus, 2002 [originally published 2001]), pp. 168–69, 171, 181, 182, 183, 199, 411, 428.

Party and the nation,” in the words of Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection Qiao Shi.²⁴²

But statements by top leaders suggest that the crackdown that followed the protests was primarily defensive—focused on overcoming a specific corruption-related public relations crisis. Leaders sought a crackdown on corruption to “restore the Party’s image,” restore “Party prestige in the eyes of the people,” and to be able to “face the people.” Deng himself spoke of using a small number of high-level arrests as showcases of intent to clean house, rather than discussing new rules that could be put in place to curb corruption or explaining how corruption control could further economic reforms. On May 31st, at the height of the crisis, Deng told Premier Li Peng and First Vice Premier Yao Yilin that the party needed to make an “explanation” to the people about corruption: “We’ve got to win back the people’s trust. We should take a couple dozen cases of corruption, embezzlement, or bribe taking—some at the province level and some national—and pursue them vigorously and swiftly.”²⁴³ A leaked assessment from the U.S. Embassy with intelligence based on discussions with China’s Ministry of Justice, concluded that “the PRC views the anti-corruption campaign as key in its efforts to regain the confidence of the Chinese people.”²⁴⁴ The momentum for a new anti-corruption crackdown spanned the reformer-conservative divide in the leadership, with reformers like Zhao Ziyang and conservatives like Li Peng in significant agreement.

²⁴² Qiao Shi was still the Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, but had also become the head of the CCDI in 1987.

²⁴³ These quotations are from *The Tiananmen Papers*, as cited above.

²⁴⁴ “PRC Goals After Tiananmen: The Official View from the Ministry of Justice,” ID: 89BEIJING21902_a, WikiLeaks, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/89BEIJING21902_a.html

Besides assuaging public anger, the post-Tiananmen crackdown was also a way to purge disloyal party members and exact retribution for the protests. The party began by “isolating and criticizing” some 250 “liberal-minded leading cadres” who had supported the student protesters. In Beijing and elsewhere, “party members and cadres were required to give detailed accounts of their actions—and the actions of their coworkers—throughout the period of the spring disorders.” Baum explains that much of this campaign to root out those who had supported the wrong side was thwarted by a “tacit conspiracy of silence” and the fact that many within the party, including at high levels, had supported the students.²⁴⁵ But the party succeeded in ousting many of Zhao’s reformist allies. Zhao himself had already been removed from his position as general secretary and would live the rest of his life under house arrest. Conservatives had wanted Zhao to step down for years, but only after the Tiananmen Square protests was the pressure enough to unseat him.²⁴⁶

Despite much of the crackdown being overtly political at the elite level, it also produced more anti-corruption investigations than any other campaign before or after in the reform era. In the initial burst of the campaign, “20,794 criminals were arrested, 482.86 million yuan was recovered, and 36,171 officials surrendered themselves to the anti-corruption agencies from 15 August 1989 to 31 October 1989.”²⁴⁷ A record 77,432 economic crime cases were filed by the Procuratorate in 1989, up from 32,626 the previous year.²⁴⁸ Wedeman’s summation of official statistics shows that there were more than 60,000 cases filed relating to graft, bribery, and

²⁴⁵ Baum, *Burying Mao*, pp. 315–16.

²⁴⁶ Zhao, *Prisoner of the State*, pp. 233–44.

²⁴⁷ He, “Corruption and anti-corruption in reform China,” p. 267.

²⁴⁸ Andrew Hall Wedeman, “Anticorruption Campaigns and the Intensification of Corruption in China,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:42 (2005), p. 100.

misappropriation in 1989, and even more in 1990.²⁴⁹ High-level officials and major state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were not spared investigations, but as mentioned these tended toward selective enforcement. Liang Xiang, the governor of Hainan Province, and two State Council ministers—all of whom were associated with Zhao—were accused of corruption and removed from all government positions.²⁵⁰

In the weeks after the bloody June 4th crackdown, the regime put forward strict new rules to curb corruption and official media made a big show of investigations into economic crime. Children of senior cadres were forbidden from engaging in commercial activity and new restrictions were placed on the private use of public cars, the importation of foreign cars, and foreign travel by officials. In addition, high-ranking officials would no longer be allowed to entertain guests in their homes at public expense.²⁵¹ The new motto for officials would be “hard work and plain living.”²⁵² The Supreme People’s Court and the Supreme People’s Procuratorate asked those guilty of corruption to turn themselves in in return for clemency, but only within a short time frame before harsher penalties would apply.²⁵³ Alongside these measures, to show it

²⁴⁹ Wedeman, *Double Paradox*, p. 129.

²⁵⁰ Baum, *Burying Mao*, p. 318.

²⁵¹ “The decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on the recent work of doing things that the masses care about,” 1989/7/28, *Major Events in Combating Corruption and Building Clean Government in China 1978–2010* (Second Part) (Dongfang Press, 2010).

《中共中央、国务院关于近期做几件群众关心的事的决定》，1989/7/28，《中国反腐倡廉大事记 1978–2010》（第二部）（东方出版社，2010），
<http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/146570/198300/200214/200216/12449252.html>

²⁵² *Boston Globe*, 1989/7/29, “China announces corruption crackdown.”

²⁵³ “Criminals guilty of corruption, bribery, speculation, and other crimes must confess by the deadline,” 1989/8/15, *Major Events in Combating Corruption and Building Clean Government in China 1978–2010* (Second Part) (Dongfang Press, 2010).

“贪污受贿投机倒把等犯罪分子必须在限期内自首坦白,” 1989/8/15, 《中国反腐倡廉大事记 1978–2010》（第二部）（东方出版社，2010），<http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/146570/198300/200214/200216/12449859.html>

was serious, the party leadership staged public sentencings and summary executions of corrupt officials. 1990 was a high-water mark for executions in China overall. These “most graphic examples” of the regime’s tough response to economic crime were widely reported.²⁵⁴

Despite the rhetoric and large number of investigations, the ambitious new rules to curb corruption did not stick and the CCP pulled its punches on convicting allegedly corrupt officials. As numerous scandals and attempts by the party to revise and reissue similar restrictions in the following years and decades demonstrate, the children of senior officials largely did not get out of business. And despite new rules, the rampant overuse of public cars continued in the 1990s.²⁵⁵ Continuing the trend of corruption control in the reform era, “only a handful of high-level officials were indicted or brought to trial.” Liang Xiang and the two ministers were spared prosecution. By the end of 1991, there had been only one prosecution at the ministerial level and 34 at the provincial level.²⁵⁶ The U.S. Embassy noted that the campaign was “largely of rhetoric -- with plenty of loopholes for well-connected cadres and their relations,” at least in the initial weeks.²⁵⁷ In hindsight, experts do not see the campaign as any kind of anti-corruption success, arguing instead that corruption continued to rise—or even rose faster—in the early 1990s.²⁵⁸ In 1994, Deputy Procurator-General Liang Guoqing frankly assessed that corruption was “worse than at any other period since New China was founded in 1949. It has spread into the Party,

²⁵⁴ *The Standard* (Hong Kong), 1989/9/21.

²⁵⁵ Guo Yong, “Political Culture, Administrative System Reform and Anticorruption in China: Taking the Official Car Management Institution Reform as an Example,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 53, No. 5 (2010), p. 498.

²⁵⁶ Baum, *Burying Mao*, p. 318.

²⁵⁷ “PRC Goals After Tiananmen: The Official View from the Ministry of Justice.”

²⁵⁸ Meng, *Corruption in Transitional China.*; Sun, *Corruption and Market in Contemporary China.*; Guo Yong, “Corruption in Transitional China: an empirical analysis,” *The China Quarterly*, 194, June 2008, pp. 349–64.

government, administration and every part of society, including politics, economy, ideology and culture’.”²⁵⁹

6. The Failure of a Quasi-Democratic Approach

This section describes how the CCP continued to combat corruption in the 1990s and 2000s but did so under a more collective leadership style, with less aggressive campaigns, and with some borrowing from the democratic approach to corruption control. These three developments, though welcome news to many critics of China’s authoritarianism and experts on government integrity, did not produce effective corruption control. Though the political liberalization of the Jiang-Zhu and Hu-Wen administrations hardly constitutes a thorough test of the possibility of a democratic approach to corruption control under authoritarianism, its failure is suggestive. In all likelihood, the CCP would have to go much further in a democratic direction for this to be a fruitful anti-corruption strategy. This point reinforces the argument made in previous chapters about poor corruption control under competitive authoritarianism, such as in South Korea’s Third Republic or Taiwan in the 1990s.

The events of June 4th notwithstanding, the political liberalization which had begun under Deng Xiaoping early in the 1980s accelerated in the 1990s and 2000s. Though a far cry from democratization, liberalization came to affect nearly every aspect of CCP rule. Media, both traditional and social, become more open and commercial. Civil society organizations multiplied and were allowed to become more independent. The party allowed direct elections at the village level and in some townships. Private businesspeople were accepted into the party as members, along with other previously excluded groups. Religious affiliation boomed as restrictions on faith

²⁵⁹ Quoted in Elizabeth J. Perry, “Crime, Corruption, and Contention” in Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Paradox of China’s Post-Mao Reforms* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 313.

were lifted, even on politically sensitive Christianity. Religion was just one area in which China opened its doors to a new range of foreign influences and connections. Overall, governance became more open, more consultative, more representative, less centralized, and less violent.²⁶⁰

Deng's constrained leadership developed into a system of collective leadership under Jiang and then Hu.²⁶¹ Even after his retirement in 1989, Deng retained significant influence behind the scenes as a revered party elder and powerbroker. It was Deng, along with a group of other party elders, who elevated Hu Jintao to the position of Jiang's presumptive successor for 2002. But Deng also "pushed for the establishment of a new collective leadership" with Jiang as its "core."²⁶² Jiang and Hu did not monopolize decision-making in their administrations; they both left "economic and social management portfolios to the Premier[s] (Zhu Rongji 1998–2003 and Wen Jiabao 2003–2013)."²⁶³ In 2003, Andrew Nathan described the incoming Hu-Wen administration's leadership as "politically balanced in representing different factions in the Party." It was lacking "one or two dominant figures, and is thus structurally constrained to make decisions collectively; and that is probably as collegial as any political leadership can be."²⁶⁴ Alice Miller argued that "the structure and processes of the Politburo Standing Committee under Hu Jintao have... appeared to reflect the goal of reinforcing consensus-based decision-making

²⁶⁰ The brutal persecution of adherents of Falun Gong from 1999 onward is a major exception. See: David A. Palmer, *Qigong Fever: Body, Science, and Utopia in China* (Columbia University Press, 2007).

²⁶¹ Li Cheng, "The Battle for China's Top Nine Leadership Posts," *The Washington Quarterly*, Published online 16 Dec. 2011, pp. 131–45. Hu Angang, *China's Collective Leadership* (Beijing: Renmin University Press, 2015). / 胡鞍钢, 《中国集体领导体制》 (北京: 中国人民大学出版社, 2015).

²⁶² Li Cheng, *China's Leaders: the new generation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2001), p. 8.

²⁶³ Wang Zhengxu and Zeng Jinghan, "Xi Jinping: the game changer of Chinese elite politics?" *Contemporary Politics*, 01 October 2016, Vol.22(4), pp. 469–86.

²⁶⁴ Andrew J. Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2003, p. 11.

under oligarchic collective leadership.”²⁶⁵ Neither Jiang nor Hu had a personality cult or even the legitimacy that came with having personal revolutionary experience, which Deng had enjoyed. These leaders accepted succession according to norms and both stepped down in a basically orderly fashion at the end of their mandated terms in office.

This is not to say, however, that there was no power accumulation and elite conflict in these decades. Jiang cultivated his Shanghai Gang faction and surprised observers with his influence over the military and state institutions, especially after Deng’s death in 1997.²⁶⁶ Hu had the Youth League—his own, rival faction—but was overshadowed by Jiang and arguably was “never able to accumulate enough power to become *yibashou* [the boss].”²⁶⁷

Several anti-corruption campaigns were announced in the 1990s and 2000s, but they were all relatively minor or targeted. “Since the Chinese government shifted from a campaign-based to an institutional approach in the mid-1990s, there have been no really major anti-corruption campaigns.”²⁶⁸ Campaigns announced in 1993, 1995, 2005, and 2009, for example, were not accompanied by significant (50 percent) increases in nationwide prosecutions.²⁶⁹ These anti-corruption announcements were all Empty Gestures, though this label may seem too harsh if we consider subnational successes the campaigns might have had in certain localities or against certain types of corruption. Whereas in the 1980s “Chinese leaders sought drastic reductions in

²⁶⁵ Alice Miller, “The Politburo Standing Committee under Hu Jintao,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 35., (2011).

²⁶⁶ Ji You, “Jiang Zemin’s command of the military,” *China Journal*, Jan 2001, Vol.45, pp. 131–38.

²⁶⁷ Fewsmith, “Authoritarian Resilience Revisited,” p. 9. Joseph Fewsmith holds the minority view that collective leadership was actually never established under Jiang or Hu.

²⁶⁸ Ko Kilkon and Weng Cuifen, “Structural Changes in Chinese Corruption,” *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 211 (2012), p. 728.

²⁶⁹ Wedeman, *Double Paradox*, p. 94.; Andrew Hall Wedeman, “The Dark Side of Business with Chinese Characteristics,” *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, Vol. 80, No. 4, Winter 2013, p. 1217.

the overall high volume of corruption,” in the 1990s they were “more selective in their demands.”²⁷⁰ Lowell Dittmer exaggerates only a little when he writes that “though the war on corruption continued” under Jiang, “no new institutional countermeasures or policy initiatives were adopted to deal with the problem.”²⁷¹ It was not “that Jiang and Hu ignored the challenge of corruption, but rather that they were unable to maintain any momentum” against it.²⁷²

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that there was a gradual rise in investigations into the corruption of party elites, even if enforcement for such high-level cases continued to be selective.²⁷³ Politburo member and mayor of Beijing Chen Xitong became the highest-ranking official convicted of corruption after being dismissed in 1995 along with several of his associates. This rare purge of a Politburo member was widely interpreted as part of a factional conflict between Jiang Zemin’s Shanghai Gang and the “Beijing clique.”²⁷⁴ After its political clout began to decline around 2002, the Shanghai Gang was left increasingly vulnerable to charges of corruption.²⁷⁵ In 2006, Politburo member and Shanghai party boss Chen Liangyu (no relation to Chen Xitong) was dismissed for misuse of the city’s pension fund and other corruption and abuses of power. This time it was probably loyalty to Jiang and conflict with Hu

²⁷⁰ Manion, *Corruption by Design*, p. 168.

²⁷¹ Lowell Dittmer, “Sizing Up China’s New Leadership” in Tien Hung-Mao and Chu Yun-Han, Eds., *China Under Jiang Zemin* (Lynee Rienner Pub. 2000), p. 45.

²⁷² Saich, *Governance and Politics of China*, p. 354.

²⁷³ Fu Hualing, “The Upward and Downward Spirals in China’s Anti-Corruption Enforcement” in Mike McConville and Eva Pils, Eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Criminal Justice in China* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013), p. 402.

²⁷⁴ Bo Zhiyue, “Economic Development and Corruption: Beijing beyond ‘Beijing’,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 9, No. 25 (2000), pp. 479–84.; Tien Hung-Mao and Chu Yun-Han, Eds., *China Under Jiang Zemin* (Lynee Rienner Pub. 2000), pp. 1, 74.

²⁷⁵ Richard McGregor, *The Party: The Secret World of China’s Communist Rulers*, 1st U.S. ed. (New York, NY: Harper, 2010), Chapter Five.

and Wen Jiabao that did him in.²⁷⁶ Dismissals of provincial-level officials on corruption charges rose throughout the 2000s and reached a reform-era record annual high of 15 in 2009.²⁷⁷ This was partly as a result of a Hu-led attack on officials in the “Guangdong Gang.”²⁷⁸ U.S. intelligence noted in 2008 that there was a rise in high-level prosecutions in China’s Northeast, but that “a concerted effort to combat the region’s corrosive official corruption does not seem to be at work.”²⁷⁹

The anti-corruption investigation closest to the heart of power, however, came in 2012 against Bo Xilai, the party boss in the important Chongqing Municipality and a contender for promotion to the Politburo Standing Committee.²⁸⁰ Bo had made waves in Chongqing with “neo-Maoist” rhetoric and a broad anti-crime campaign, which included anti-corruption investigations. Bo was also controversial because of his self-promotion and unconcealed political ambitions, which are generally frowned upon in the party. Bo’s position was undermined after February 2012, when it was revealed that Chongqing’s deputy mayor and police chief Wang Lijun had leveled shocking accusations of corruption and involvement in a murder case against his boss to officials at a U.S. consulate. The highly public scandal embarrassed the party leadership and

²⁷⁶ Li Cheng, “Was the Shanghai Gang Shanghaied? The Fall of Chen Liangyu and the Survival of Jiang Zemin’s Faction,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 20 (2007).; Zhou Xiang, “The political blogosphere in China: A content analysis of the blogs regarding the dismissal of Shanghai leader Chen Liangyu,” *New Media & Society*, September 2009, Vol.11(6), pp.1003–22.

²⁷⁷ RMRB, 2009/12/20, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/10614881.html>

²⁷⁸ Wu Guoguang, “China in 2009: Muddling through Crises,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Jan./Feb. 2010), pp. 34–35.

²⁷⁹ “Northeast China: Corruption Scandals Snare Judges, Senior Officials and the Police, But to What Effect?” 08SHENYANG134_a, WikiLeaks, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08SHENYANG134_a.html

²⁸⁰ Roderic Broadhurst and Wang Peng, “After the Bo Xilai Trial: Does Corruption Threaten China’s Future?” *Survival*, 56:3, (2014), pp. 157–78.

sealed Bo's fate. He was ousted from his positions, stripped of party membership, and sentenced to life in prison.

Political liberalization in these two decades shaped China's anti-corruption strategy, bringing it closer to the democratic approach. This trend could be seen in the government's moves to strengthen the rule of law, accept greater input on corruption control from private media and the public, and improve governmental transparency. In addition, there were other developments in corruption control in this period that were not inherently authoritarian or democratic, such as improved training and funding for investigators, bureaucratic reorganization and streamlining, and the increased use of audits to discover potential cases of malfeasance.²⁸¹

The CCP leadership increasingly recognized the need for a stronger legal system and at least partial rule of law under party rule. In the 1990s, the regime began "more systematic legal reforms, in which building a professional, efficient, and fair legal system was the essential goal."²⁸² In this vein, there were meaningful improvements in the right to counsel, the presumption of innocence, pretrial detention, specialist participation in law-making, courts "exercising interpretive functions of the law," state laws against corruption (as opposed to party regulations), laws regarding compensation for victims, and other areas. Judicial independence,

²⁸¹ Wong Yiu-chung, "Political reform and democratization in China under the leadership of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao" in Brian Bridges and Ho Lok-sang, Eds., *Public Governance in Asia and the Limits of Electoral Democracy* (Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2010), p. 67.

Some scholars point to decentralization as a reform-era trend that has affected anti-corruption enforcement positively or negatively, but decentralization in the sense of center-provincial or local relations—as opposed to in the sense of checks and balances at the national level—is not inherently democratic or authoritarian and is not included in my characterization of the democratic approach. See: Mayling Birney, "Decentralization and Veiled Corruption under China's 'Rule of Mandates'," *World Development*, January 2014, Vol.53, pp. 55–67.; Gong Ting, "Managing Government Integrity under Hierarchy: Anti-Corruption Efforts in Local China." *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, No. 94 (2015): 684–700.

²⁸² Wang Yuhua, *Tying the Autocrat's Hands: The Rise of the Rule of Law in China* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 3.

though still limited, improved significantly in these decades, which also influenced anti-corruption enforcement.²⁸³ The urgency of the problem of corruption itself “helped to accelerate administrative and legal reforms...and in this way corruption has indirectly contributed to the rise of a new legalistic culture.”²⁸⁴

As restrictions on private media were relaxed, the CCP “benefitted from an active watchdog media that helps keep local officials in check, although it is largely blocked from serious reporting on malfeasance at higher levels of government.”²⁸⁵ “Chinese news coverage...is in the midst of something of a golden age,” Howard French noted in late 2007.²⁸⁶ This was “largely due to the rapid growth of investigative reporting since the early 1990s.”²⁸⁷ The spread of internet access meant that “negative reports and criticism of local officials, especially relating to corruption, social justice, or people’s daily experiences, are now being exposed and nationally distributed...and can resonate broadly.”²⁸⁸ And since the early 2000s, citizen activists have been creating websites to report on corruption. “Jiang Huanwen, who runs the *China Civilian Report Website*, has reported nearly 4,000 cases of wrongdoing by officials and led some of them (e.g. a vice mayor in Yunnan Province) to be punished.”²⁸⁹ Some subnational governments

²⁸³ Randall Peerenboom, Ed. *Judicial Independence in China: Lessons for Global Rule of Law Promotion* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²⁸⁴ Hao Yufan, “From Rule of Man to Rule of Law: an unintended consequence of corruption in China in the 1990s,” *Journal of Contemporary China* (1999), 8(22), pp. 412–13.

²⁸⁵ Peter L. Lorentzen, “China’s Strategic Censorship,” *American Journal of Political Science* 58, No. 2 (2014), p. 402.; Susan L. Shirk, “Changing Media, Changing China” in Susan Shirk, Ed. *Changing Media, Changing China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

²⁸⁶ NYT, 2007/12/7, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/07/world/asia/07china.html>

²⁸⁷ Lorentzen, “China’s Strategic Censorship,” p. 410.

²⁸⁸ Xiao Qiang, “The Rise of Online Public Opinion and Its Political Impact” in Susan Shirk, Ed. *Changing Media, Changing China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 217.

²⁸⁹ Ma Jun, “The Rise of Social Accountability in China,” *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 71(2), (2012), p. 116.

implemented rudimentary public accountability systems. In Huizhou City in Guangdong, the public was invited to comment on the performance of public officials. “Starting in 2002, the three officials with the greatest number of negative comments were required to have special interviews with the disciplinary commission. Any official who appeared on the complaints list for two years in a row would lose his job.” This system was later adopted in other cities, including Zhuhai, Zhanjiang, and Chaozhou.²⁹⁰

Lastly, the quality of information about its decisions and operations the government chose to disclose to the public improved markedly, especially in the 2000s. In April 2007, the State Council published regulations on “Open Government Information” (政府信息公开条例) (OGI), which “provide the legal basis for China’s first nationwide government information disclosure system.” Among the main reasons for adopting this transparency reform were “enhancing trust between the public and the government [and] curbing government corruption.”²⁹¹ The national OGI regulations were preceded by experimentation with greater transparency at lower levels. In 2000, the CCP expanded OGI initiatives in 2000 from the village to the township level and in 2003 “to include higher-level municipal governments.”²⁹²

Transparency initiatives and other aspects of a more open approach to clean government reform appeared to be a secular trend, but the Xi Jinping administration undertook a major course correction.

²⁹⁰ “Guangzhou Government Corruption - Hard to See, Even Harder to Stop,” 08GUANGZHOU173_a, WikiLeaks, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08GUANGZHOU173_a.html

²⁹¹ Jamie P. Horsley, “China Adopts First Nationwide Open Government Information Regulations,” *Freedominfo.org*, 2007/5/9.

²⁹² Jonathan R. Stromseth, Edmund J. Malesky, Dimitar D. Gueorguiev, *China’s Governance Puzzle: Enabling Transparency and Participation in a Single-Party State* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 35–36.

7. Xi Jinping: The Return of the Authoritarian Playbook

This section discusses Xi's ongoing anti-corruption campaign, which I argue employs a throwback authoritarian playbook and has already produced a Limited Victory. I further argue that the campaign's success owes a great deal to the same combination of factors that made the Three Antis–Five Antis effective in the 1950s. The main limitation of the campaign, as reflected in this study's scoring system and common expert opinion, has been in enforcing rules that systematically restrain elites and high-level officials from corruption, despite the large number of elites disciplined.

By the end of Hu Jintao's second term, there was a growing sense within the CCP that corruption was rampant and feeding a "severe organisational crisis."²⁹³ Problematic not only in itself, corruption contributed to rising social unrest, environmental problems, the "stagnation" of the Hu-Wen administration, and a general "sense of malaise."²⁹⁴ Premier Wen Jiabao was "widely criticized as a weak premier who failed to pushed through key economic reforms [and] tolerated bloat in the [state-owned enterprises] and rampant official corruption."²⁹⁵ A full half of Chinese surveyed in 2012 before the start of Xi's term listed corrupt officials as "a very big problem, up 11 percentage points since 2008."²⁹⁶ Hu himself highlighted the issue in his report to

²⁹³ Sebastian Heilmann, "Introduction to China's core executive: Leadership styles, structures and processes under Xi Jinping" in Sebastian Heilmann and Matthias Stepan, Eds., "MERICS Papers on China: China's Core Executive," June 2016, p. 7.

²⁹⁴ Li Cheng and Eve Cary, "The Last Year of Hu's Leadership: Hu's to Blame?" *China Brief* Vol 11. Iss. 23., 2011/12/20, The Jamestown Foundation.; *South China Morning Post* (hereafter SCMP), 2012/9/7, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1031120/president-hu-jintaos-legacy-seen-one-stability-stagnation>; *DW News*, 2013/3/13, <https://www.dw.com/en/looking-back-at-chinas-lost-decade/a-16667956>; Elizabeth C. Economy, "China's Imperial President: Xi Jinping Tightens His Grip," *Foreign Affairs*, Nov./Dec. 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2014-10-20/chinas-imperial-president>

²⁹⁵ Kroeber, *China's Economy*, p. 18.

²⁹⁶ "Growing Concerns in China about Inequality, Corruption," 2012/10/16, *Pew Research Center*, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/10/16/growing-concerns-in-china-about-inequality-corruption/>

the 18th Party Congress in November 2012, arguing in no uncertain terms that mishandling it “could prove fatal to the Party, and even cause the collapse of the Party and the fall of the state.”²⁹⁷ He had voiced nearly identical worries at the CCP’s 90th anniversary celebration the previous year.²⁹⁸

General secretary of the CCP from November 2012 and president of China from March 2013, Xi Jinping wasted no time in launching a far-reaching anti-corruption campaign that would become the signature policy of his rule. In his first speech to the Politburo as general secretary, Xi “denounced the prevalence of corruption and said that officials needed to guard against its spread or it would ‘doom the party and the state’.”²⁹⁹ In December 2012, the new administration put forward an Eight-point Code (八项规定) for party members to avoid extravagance and undisciplined behavior, especially in their relations with the public.³⁰⁰ The campaign has been carried out primarily by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, which saw its investigatory powers enhanced in several rounds of reforms. In late 2012, Deputy Party Secretary of Sichuan Province Li Chuncheng became the first senior official brought down by

²⁹⁷ “Full text of Hu Jintao’s report at 18th Party Congress,” Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States, 2012/11/27, http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/18th_CPC_National_Congress_Eng/t992917.htm

²⁹⁸ Economy, *The Third Revolution*, p. 26. Jiang Zemin had also said the regime could fall if corruption control failed as early as July 1989. See: Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China’s New Elite* (University of California Press, 1998), p. 157.

²⁹⁹ NYT, 2012/11/20, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/20/world/asia/new-communist-party-chief-in-china-denounces-corruption.html>

³⁰⁰ As others have also noticed, Xi’s Eight-point Code is very similar in content to Chiang Ching-kuo’s Ten Principles of Reform (1972), which is discussed in Chapter Two. See: ZGSB, 2013/5/8, <https://www.chinatimes.com/cn/realtimenews/20130508003170-260409>

the CCDI as part of Xi's campaign.³⁰¹ Starting in 2013, the number of anti-corruption investigations into officials rose sharply, and as of late 2018 totaled more than 2.7 million.³⁰²

Xi's Motives and Constraints

I find that Xi has pursued corruption control as part of his broader mission to restore party discipline and reassert party leadership over China's state and society. This mission, which has been the defining theme of his time in power, is a response to what Xi saw as a crisis of the CCP's ability to rule in the 2000s. Policy failings, including the failure to curb corruption, are of course nothing new for the CCP. The crisis was instead that the policy failings of the Hu-Wen administration were unfolding in a period of unprecedented political liberalization and retreat of party control over the state and society. A similar combination of policy failings and weak party leadership in an increasingly liberal atmosphere, many CCP leaders believe, led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.³⁰³ This is why, as many commentators have noted, the Xi administration has reversed course on political liberalization and made a partial return to the revolutionary, Maoist tradition of rule.³⁰⁴ In his first term, Xi oversaw myriad policy changes in this direction: a rollback of privatization (国进民退), tightening party control over SOEs, and a crackdown on

³⁰¹ NYT, 2012/12/06, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/06/world/asia/early-target-of-chinas-anti-corruption-commission-identified.html>

³⁰² Andrew Hall Wedeman, "Does China Fit the Model?" *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 29, Iss. 1, (Jan 2018), p. 86.; WP, 2018/10/22, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-china-investigations-and-purges-become-the-new-normal/2018/10/21/077fa736-d39c-11e8-a275-81c671a50422_story.html?utm_term=.2fc323fbb86c

³⁰³ See MacFarquhar's analysis: WP, 2015/3/2, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/twin-historical-traumas-shape-xi-jinpings-china-presidency/2015/03/02/b4074516-b2f0-11e4-bf39-5560f3918d4b_story.html?utm_term=.9b02222725cc; SCMP, 2013/11/18, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1359350/paranoia-soviet-union-collapse-haunts-chinas-communist-party-22-years>

³⁰⁴ Michael Auslin, "Rejuvenation, Muddling Through, or Manning the Pumps? Xi Jinping and China's Turning Point," *Asia Policy* Vol. 13 No. 4, October 2018.

civil society, private media, culture, and religion.³⁰⁵ The anti-corruption campaign strengthens party discipline and organization, making Xi's vision of expanded party power possible and averting the crisis.³⁰⁶ While I find that to be the main motivation, corruption control, as always, has other benefits: appeasing public discontent, aiding the leader's power consolidation within the regime, and supporting economic growth, at least in the long run.³⁰⁷

There is understandably much skepticism about Xi's motives in this campaign because anti-corruption efforts in China and elsewhere have often coincided with attacks on political rivals. As Joseph Fewsmith writes, "charging one's opponents (or their close followers) with corruption – a charge that seems increasingly true of most officials – had become the weapon of choice for political maneuver" in the mid-1990s.³⁰⁸ As for political bias in Xi's campaign, Pei Minxin writes that "not a single colleague who has worked closely with Xi before his ascent to

³⁰⁵ Economy, *The Third Revolution*, p. 12.

³⁰⁶ Xi emphasizes in his speeches and writing that corruption control will strengthen party and state institutions. See: *A Selection of Xi Jinping's Discourse on Building Party Conduct and Clean Government and the Struggle Against Corruption* (China Fangzheng Press, 2015). / 《习近平关于党风廉政建设和反腐败斗争论述摘编》(中国方正出版社, 2015).; Many analysts have also connected corruption control to the goal of party/state-building. See: *The Atlantic*, 2015/4/7, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/04/xi-jinping-china-corruption-political-culture/389787/>; Wang and Zeng, *Xi Jinping*.; Lorentzen and Lu, "Personal Ties, Meritocracy, and China's Anti-Corruption Campaign."

³⁰⁷ Also, the campaign weakens resistance within the state to the Xi administration's policy goals. Whatever Xi's other policy goals, however, he has not yet pivoted away from the issue of corruption. See: Pei Minxin, "How Xi Jinping Can Sustain His Anti-Corruption Drive," 2014/1/16, *China-US Focus*.; Kroeber, *China's Economy*, p. 222.; Wang and Zeng, "Xi Jinping: the game changer of Chinese elite politics?" Official Chinese media often say anti-corruption efforts will assist reform. E.g. *Xinhua* [新华], 2015/2/28, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-02/28/c_127526991.htm

As for economic effects, according to the Supreme People's Procuratorate, cases of neglect of duty are on average 17 times more economically damaging than corruption cases. *Xinhua* [新华], 2007/5/23, <http://www.zigui.gov.cn/2007-05/23/cms26481article.shtml>.; Cai Yongshun, *State and Agents in China: Disciplining Government Officials* (Stanford University Press, 2015).

³⁰⁸ Joseph Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen: From Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 231.

power has been investigated or arrested during the five-year campaign.”³⁰⁹ Similarly cynical, Willy Wo-Lap Lam is a leading proponent of the idea that the lens of factional struggle best explains the anti-corruption campaign and much of Chinese elite politics.³¹⁰

Why, then, should we not conclude that this campaign is a cover for Xi’s personal power consolidation? In fact, I submit that it is; Xi has clearly used this anti-corruption campaign to strengthen his position. This power consolidation and the broader party/state-building mission have proceeded hand in hand. The point is that personal power consolidation is an *insufficient* explanation for this campaign. I make three points as to why. Firstly, while some particular investigations against elites may be purely political, the campaign’s investigations have by now burst the bounds of targeting any one faction, social group, sector of the economy, region, or type of official.³¹¹ Personal vendettas or factionalism can at most explain only part of this now six-year campaign that has disciplined millions.³¹² Secondly, the complex reforms enforced by the campaign go far beyond power consolidation, including everything from limiting how many dishes public servants can order at restaurants to how city-level SOEs manage their accounts to streamlining reporting rules for lower-level committees involved in anti-corruption work. Xi’s campaign looks very different from typical autocratic uses of corruption as a smear against rivals

³⁰⁹ Pei Minxin, “How Not to Fight Corruption: Lessons from China,” *Daedalus* Summer 2018, Vol. 147, No. 3, p. 228.

³¹⁰ Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Era of Xi Jinping: Renaissance, Reform, or Retrogression?* (Routledge, 2015).

³¹¹ Others suspected that the campaign was a way for Xi to weaken opposition within the bureaucracy to other important policy goals, to which he would shift attention after a brief stab at corruption. With the campaign having focused on corruption as long as it has, that no longer seems likely. See: Youwei, “The End of Reform in China: Authoritarian Adaptation Hits a Wall,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2015.; SCMP, 2017/10/16, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/2115285/dont-hold-your-breath-xi-reform-chinas-economy>

³¹² Li, *Chinese politics in the Xi Jinping era*, p. 23.; Andrew Hall Wedeman, “Xi Jinping’s Tiger Hunt: Anti-Corruption Campaign or Factional Purge?” *Modern China Studies* Vol 24, Iss. 2 (2017), pp. 35–94.

just to consolidate power. And thirdly, based on the seriousness and unusual scope of investigations, not to mention the length of the campaign, most scholars have concluded that curbing corruption is among the main goals of Xi's campaign.³¹³

Xi began as a relatively constrained leader, but consolidated his power rapidly, in part through the anti-corruption campaign. The "fifth-generation leadership" that came into power alongside Xi was largely not of his choosing and therefore it was widely presumed that the norms of collective leadership that had defined the previous administrations would continue to apply.³¹⁴ Some China analysts were suggesting that Xi would be "a very weak leader" who would "need to compromise."³¹⁵ Xi began to subvert these expectations by approving a graft probe against former Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang. With tight control over the fearsome anti-corruption campaign through his deputy and CCDI chief Wang Qishan, Xi deterred any open challenge from within the party establishment.³¹⁶ In late 2013, Xi pushed major institutional reforms that strengthened his policy-making power. A new National Security

³¹³ Li Cheng and Tom Orlik, "China's Corruption Crackdown More Than Factional Politics," 2014/7/31, Brookings Institution.; Macabe Keliher and Wu Hsinchao, "Corruption, Anticorruption, and the Transformation of Political Culture in Contemporary China," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 75, Iss. 1, February 2016.; Jessica Batke, "Xi Jinping: The man, the myth, the Party: Some western misunderstandings of Xi Jinping's leadership" in Sebastian Heilmann and Matthias Stepan, Eds., "MERICS Papers on China: China's Core Executive," June 2016, p. 73.; Andrew Hall Wedeman, "China's Corruption Crackdown: War Without End?" *Current History* 116, No. 791 (Sep. 2017).; Peter L. Lorentzen and Lu Xi, "Personal Ties, Meritocracy, and China's Anti-Corruption Campaign," (November 21, 2018). *SSRN Electronic Journal*: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2835841>

³¹⁴ As late as 2015, some analysts saw Xi as still "well within the trappings of collective leadership." Alice L. Miller, "The Trouble with Factions," *China Leadership Monitor*, 2015/3/19, <https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/clm46am-2.pdf>

³¹⁵ *Radio Free Asia* (hereafter RFA), 2012/11/12, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/xi-jinping-11122012110129.html>; Li Cheng, "The Powerful Factions Among China's Rulers," Brookings Institution, 2012/11/5.; CNN, 2012/11/7, <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2012/11/07/west-should-prepare-for-confusing-new-chinese-leader/>

³¹⁶ Fu Hualing, "Wielding the Sword: President Xi's New Anti-Corruption Campaign" in Susan Rose-Ackerman and Paul Felipe Lagunes, Eds., *Greed, Corruption, and the Modern State: Essays in Political Economy* (London: Edward Elgar, 2015).

Commission was created with Xi at the helm. He moved decision-making from existing state channels to new ad hoc bodies, such as “leading small groups” each in charge of a particular governance agenda.³¹⁷ The newly-created Central Leading Group on Comprehensively Deepening Reform (中央全面深化改革领导小组), which Xi headed, “is in some ways a shadow State Council.” In his first term, Xi personally headed eight leading small groups.³¹⁸ Xi has become the head of so many party organizations that he has been called the “chairman of everything.”³¹⁹ Late 2013 also saw the first major propaganda push to build up a new cult of personality that ultimately seeks to put Xi above all previous CCP leaders except Mao.³²⁰ With hindsight, we can see that Xi had already consolidated significant power before 2015. He continued to strengthen his position with two key moves around the end of his first term. In a rare honor, the 19th Party Congress approved the insertion of Xi Jinping Thought into the party constitution in October 2017. And in March 2018, the National People’s Congress allowed for the removal of presidential term limits, theoretically allowing Xi to rule indefinitely.

While many analysts have been surprised at the seeming ease with which Xi consolidated his power, the constraints on Xi’s leadership were from the beginning weaker than has generally been acknowledged. A key but underexamined constraint on authoritarian personalization is the

³¹⁷ Christopher K. Johnson and Scott Kennedy, “China’s Un-Separation of Powers,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 24, 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-07-24/chinas-un-separation-powers>

³¹⁸ Christopher K. Johnson, Scott Kennedy, and Qiu Mingda, “Xi’s Signature Governance Innovation: The Rise of Leading Small Groups,” 2017/10/17, Center for Strategic and International Studies. This and other leading small groups were later renamed “commissions.”

³¹⁹ *The Economist*, 2016/4/2, <https://www.economist.com/china/2016/04/02/chairman-of-everything>. Interestingly, Mao was also sometimes called the “chairman of everything” in the 1940s and 1950s. See: Teiwes, *Politics at Mao’s Court*, p. 17.

³²⁰ Willy Wo-Lap Lam, “A Modern Cult of Personality? Xi Jinping Aspires To Be The Equal of Mao and Deng,” The Jamestown Foundation, 2015/3/6.; *The Guardian*, 2017/10/24, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/24/xi-jinping-mao-thought-on-socialism-china-constitution>

oversight that retired leaders, party elders, or other non-ruling elite from the previous generation exercise over an autocrat newly in power.³²¹ Oversight from party elders helped hold in place the collective leadership of the Jiang and Hu administrations. Both the Deng-Jiang and Jiang-Hu transitions involved “staggered retirement,” in which the predecessor lingered in powerful positions, such as chairman of the Central Military Commission, to oversee the new administration.³²² Deng remained popular and authoritative within the party after stepping down, despite his lethal response to the Tiananmen Square protests, and was often consulted on major decisions up until close to his death in 1997. Jiang also had a second life after his retirement as a powerbroker and respected party elder.

Fortuitously for Xi, he was able to begin his first term with far less oversight from either Hu or Jiang than they had had from their predecessors. Hu’s leadership was widely seen as overshadowed by the still-powerful Jiang and at least partly for this reason not strong enough for the challenges China faced.³²³ Hu’s ineffectiveness and the desire in the party for change may have contributed to Hu giving up the chairmanship of the Central Military Commission and all other key posts promptly at the end of his two terms.³²⁴ Xi “took advantage of social demand for reform coordination” to centralize power.³²⁵ Jiang might have exercised more control over Xi, especially since he was instrumental in putting Xi in power in the first place. However, by 2012,

³²¹ Andrew Leber, Christopher Carothers, and Matthew Reichert, “When Do Dictators Go It Alone?: Personalism in Authoritarian Regimes,” *Working Paper*, 2019.

³²² Alice Miller, “The New Party Politburo Leadership,” *China Leadership Monitor*, 2013/1/14, <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM40AM.pdf>

³²³ Joseph Fewsmith, “Authoritarian Resilience Revisited: Joseph Fewsmith with Response from Andrew J. Nathan,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 28 Iss. 116, published online Sept. 23, 2018.

³²⁴ Li, *Chinese Politics in the Xi Jinping Era*, p. 13.

³²⁵ Lee Sangkuk, “An Institutional Analysis of Xi Jinping’s Centralization of Power,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 26(105), (2017), p. 325.

Jiang had formally been retired for almost a decade, was 86 years old, and had reportedly suffered heart failure the previous year.³²⁶ His health problems sparked rumors, which would recur, that he had died. Jiang's declining influence in the fifth generation leadership was arguably evident when Bo Xilai broke ranks to make a dramatic and party-damaging bid for power before Xi's ascension. This scandal, according to some analyses, allowed Xi to portray himself as the only possible protector of the party in a time of elite strife and thereby justify his power consolidation.³²⁷ In sum, the lack of oversight by party elders at the start of his term gave Xi advantages in power consolidation that his immediate predecessors did not have.

The Campaign and its Outcomes

The most attention-catching aspect of Xi's campaign has been the explosion of anti-corruption investigations against high-ranking officials—more than 212 in Xi's first term.³²⁸ Many analysts have noted that Xi broke the informal norm of immunity from anti-corruption probes for Politburo Standing Committee members by opening an investigation against retired security chief Zhou Yongkang in August 2013.³²⁹ Zhou was only one of several “big tigers” brought down in the campaign, including former vice-chairmen of the Central Military

³²⁶ NYT, 10/10/2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/10/world/asia/jiang-zemin-re-emerges-in-china.html>

³²⁷ Author's conversation with Joseph Fewsmith, 2018/10/6.

³²⁸ Generally, to qualify as a “tiger,” an official must be at the “deputy ministerial or deputy provincial level” or higher. See, for example “Guidelines of the Secrets Protection Committee of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Senior Cadres' Party Conservation and State Secrets,” *News of the Communist Party of China* [translation given], 1990/12/13. / “中共中央保密委员会关于高级干部保守党和国家秘密的规定,” 中国共产党新闻, 1990/12/13, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/71380/71387/71590/4855405.html>.; This is also the standard used for the data in “Visualizing China's Anti-Corruption Campaign,” *ChinaFile*, <http://www.chinafile.com/infographics/visualizing-chinas-anti-corruption-campaign>

³²⁹ Zheng Yongnian and Chen Gang, “China's Political Outlook: Xi Jinping as a Game Changer,” *East Asian Policy* Vol. 7 No. 1 (2015), p. 5.; *Reuters*, 2013/8/30, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-corruption-zhou/former-china-security-chief-faces-corruption-probe-report-idUSBRE97T01Z20130830>

Commission Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, former chief of the General Office of the CCP and a close adviser to Hu Jintao Ling Jihua, and Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference Su Rong.

Below the highest-profile cases, this complex campaign has shifted its focus regionally and sectorally over time. The first regional inspections, in 2013, rooted out corruption in “Jiangxi, Hubei, Inner Mongolia, Guizhou, Chongqing, China Grain Reserve Corporation...China Publishing Group, The Export-Import Bank of China, and Renmin University of China.”³³⁰ As inspections continued across the country, often doubling back to the same places to keep up the pressure, the number of investigations grew annually through at least 2018. In late 2014, China was captivated by the news of an “officialdom earthquake” in Shanxi Province, where scores of top provincial officials were prosecuted for corruption—the highest concentration of any province relative to its size.³³¹ In 2015, SOEs were a major focus of the campaign and targets of inspection teams.³³² In November 2015, it was announced that the People’s Liberation Army’s vast commercial activities, which are well-known avenues of corruption, would be discontinued.³³³ In 2016, the military deployed its own anti-corruption inspectors for the first time.³³⁴ In March 2018, the National People’s Congress approved the

³³⁰ *China News* [中国新闻网], 2013/9/27, <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2013/09-27/5327995.shtml>

³³¹ RMRB, 2014/12/9, <http://gz.people.com.cn/n/2014/1209/c344102-23160983.html>; *The Economist*, 2015/11/28, <https://www.economist.com/china/2015/11/28/king-coals-misrule>

³³² Li Chengyan and Zhuang Deshui, “Four Big, New Features of China’s Anti-Corruption in 2015,” *Chinese Cadres Tribune*, 2016/1.

李成言、庄德水, “2015年中国反腐败的四大新特征,” 治党论苑, 2016/1.

³³³ James Mulvenon, “PLA Divestiture 2.0: We Mean It This Time,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 50 (2016). As the title of this piece suggests, this is not the first time the CCP has tried this particular reform.

³³⁴ “The Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Military Commission held a centralized training for the discipline inspection team cadres,” 2016/5/5, CCP Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. “军委纪委举办派驻纪检组干部集中培训,” 2016/5/5, 中共中央纪律检查委员会, http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/ldhd/wbld/201605/t20160506_115650.html

creation of a new, overarching anti-corruption body to police not only the wrongdoing of China's roughly 90 million party members, as the CCDI does, but also non-party state employees.³³⁵ The full impact of this leviathan, called the National Supervision Commission (国家监察委员会) (NSC), remains to be seen.

As in past campaigns, inspections have been a key enforcement mechanism. The CCDI dispatches inspection teams to investigate party members in provinces, state organs, ministries, and SOEs all over the country. "Since Xi Jinping took over as Party chief, the role of the [CCDI] ad hoc inspection teams has been strengthened and enhanced in terms of their scope, intensity, and frequency of their inspections."³³⁶ More than half of the "leading cadres" brought down in the campaign, the CCDI reported in 2016, were initially discovered by inspection teams.³³⁷ The Xi administration also "introduced new institutions, called...central inspection groups to complement the existing inspection system." Because they report to the Leading Small Group on Central Inspection Work (中央巡视工作领导小组), which was headed by Wang Qishan during Xi's first term, these groups (teams) provide the most "*direct* channel for central supervision of leaders in both local government and key SOEs" [emphasis in the original].³³⁸ The CCDI also installs disciplinary inspection teams in central state and party institutions on a more permanent

³³⁵ *The Diplomat*, 2018/5/30, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/whats-so-controversial-about-chinas-new-anti-corruption-body/>

³³⁶ Guo Xuezi, "Controlling Corruption in the Party: China's Central Discipline Inspection Commission," *The China Quarterly* Vol. 219, September 2014, p. 613.

³³⁷ *Sina* [新浪], 2016/1/4, <http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2016-01-04/doc-ifxnept3647129.shtml>

³³⁸ Yeo Yuckyung, "Complementing the local discipline inspection commissions of the CCP: empowerment of the central inspection groups," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 25, No. 97, p. 60.

basis; it reported in January 2016 that it had successfully installed 47 such teams in all 139 central party and state institutions.³³⁹

Beyond just investigating wrongdoing, inspection teams can also supervise a wide range of reforms. Inspection teams assess the state of reforms in local governments, ministries, or SOEs that are their hosts and write reports to those institutions pointing out weaknesses and urging improvements. For example, inspection teams may advise that SOEs address issues like efficiency, solvency, nepotism, salaries and bonuses, the relationship among companies under the same corporate umbrella, or party representation in SOE leadership.³⁴⁰

Though Xi's campaign remains unfinished as of this writing, it has developed far enough for us to conclude that it is a Limited Victory against corruption. To start with, discipline enforcement, though uneven, has been undeniably far-reaching both horizontally and vertically within the party-state. Top officials from every province have been disciplined, along with more than 70 SOE executives and 63 generals between 2012 and 2017.³⁴¹ In the first six years after the Eight-point Code was announced, the party has dealt with some 250,000 suspected violations of the anti-austerity and anti-extravagance rules, disciplining nearly 350,000 people.³⁴² According

³³⁹ "Stationed supervision, while exploring innovation, achieves full coverage," 2016/1/7, Central Discipline Inspection Commission Supervision Department.

"派驻监督在探索创新中实现全覆盖," 2016/1/7, 中央纪委监察部, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2016-01/07/content_5031209.htm

³⁴⁰ "Circular of the Chongqing Municipal Committee regarding the feedback on rectification from the Central Fifth Inspection Team," 2014/2/21. / "重庆市委关于中央第五巡视组反馈意见整改情况的通报," 2014/2/21, http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/special/zyxszt/2013dyl_zyxs/zgls_dyl_zyxs/201402/t20140225_19090.html; "Bulletin on the inspection and rectification work of state-owned enterprises in Guangzhou," 2015/11. / "广州市国企巡察整改工作通报," 2015/11, http://www.gzsdfz.org.cn/dzyw/jw/201511/t20151124_35573.html

³⁴¹ QZ, 2015/11/13, <https://qz.com/547695/chinas-corruption-crackdown-is-so-vast-top-officials-from-every-single-province-have-been-nabbed/>; *China Daily*, 2015/1/9, http://www.china.org.cn/china/2015-01/09/content_34514533.htm; Li Ling, "Politics of Anticorruption in China: Paradigm Change of the Party's Disciplinary Regime 2012–2017," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 28, Iss. 115, (2019), p. 55.

³⁴² *Xinhua* [新华], 2018/12/4, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-12/04/c_1123802424.htm

to official statistics, “disciplinary action [has] been taken against 25 officials at the ministerial or provincial level, and 28,532 county or divisional level officials [have] been punished.”³⁴³ The CCDI confiscated 20.1 billion yuan in allegedly corrupt funds between the start of the campaign in late 2012 and June 2015—a total not including significant confiscations by other bodies.³⁴⁴ Unlike in some previous campaigns, discipline enforcement has not suffered any significant backtracking; the unprecedented length of the campaign reflects strong political will at the top and makes it increasingly unlikely that its verdicts will be overturned.

Anti-corruption bodies, procedures, and organizational arrangements that were established or enhanced under the campaign have supposedly become permanent.³⁴⁵ The introduction of the NSC in 2018 is the latest and greatest institution-building in corruption control, and follows numerous enhancements to the CCDI’s capabilities and reach. “The retention of temporarily mobilized anticorruption resources,” the “simplification of evidence production procedure,” and other reforms from the campaign have resulted in “a considerable expansion of the CCDI’s anticorruption investigative capacities and a significant increase in Xi Jinping’s leverage to impose political loyalty and compliance upon Party officials in the future.”³⁴⁶ Unlike “the many others over the past thirty years,” Xi’s anti-corruption campaign has

³⁴³ SCMP, 2018/12/5, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/2176572/nearly-350000-chinese-cadres-disciplined-during-xi-jinpings>

³⁴⁴ *Sina* [新浪], 2016/11/17, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/zs/2016-11-17/doc-iffxwsix3901052.shtml>

³⁴⁵ I say supposedly because while the campaign has been unprecedentedly long and the party is treating these changes as permanent, we cannot be sure what retreats the end of the campaign might bring.

³⁴⁶ Li, “Politics of Anticorruption in China,” p. 47.

been combined with substantial “administrative reform” and “disciplinary regulation.”³⁴⁷ Even analyses critical of the campaign accept that it has strengthened party discipline and capacity.³⁴⁸

The campaign’s myriad rules have deeply affected the behavior of bureaucrats and officials. As Elizabeth Economy writes, “Xi has sought to eliminate through regulation even the smallest opportunities for officials to abuse their position. Regulations now govern how many cars officials may own, the size of their homes, and whether they are permitted secretaries.”³⁴⁹

The Bertelsmann Transformation Index assesses that “‘petty corruption’ in the form of demanding bribes for services has become more difficult. Service providers are monitored with computer programs and even video cameras, and the electronization of financial transactions has imposed additional barriers to corrupt behavior.”³⁵⁰ Economic studies analyzing land

transactions, luxury imports, car sales, and new business registration conclude that there has indeed been success in curbing corruption in those areas.³⁵¹ Market research shows that party regulations against extravagant spending by officials in restaurants—“corruption on the tongue tips”—sharply affected the high-end dining industry starting in 2013, as well as the hotel industry.³⁵² Government statistics show that the number of cases of misuse of public funds on

³⁴⁷ Keliher and Wu, “Corruption, Anticorruption, and the Transformation of Political Culture in Contemporary China,” p. 5.

³⁴⁸ Samson Yuen, “Disciplining the Party: Xi Jinping’s anti-corruption campaign and its limits,” *China Perspectives*, 2014/3.

³⁴⁹ Economy, *The Third Revolution*, p. 30.

³⁵⁰ “BTI 2018 | China Country Report,” Bertelsmann Transformation Index, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/CHN/>

³⁵¹ Nancy Qin and Jaya Wen, “The Impact of Xi Jinping’s Anti-Corruption Campaign on Luxury Imports in China,” April 20, 2015, *Working Paper.*; Chen Nan and Zhong Zemin, “The Economic Impact of China’s Anti-Corruption Campaign,” (September 16, 2017). *SSRN Electronic Journal*: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2996009>; Ting Chen and James Kai-sing Kung, “Busting the ‘Princelings’: The Campaign Against Corruption in China’s Primary Land Market,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 134, Iss. 1, 1 February 2019, pp. 185–226.

³⁵² *Jing Daily*, 2013/7/25, <https://jingdaily.com/study-links-ccps-crackdown-to-business-banquet-spending-slump/>; *Jing Daily*, 2014/8/7, <https://jingdaily.com/chinas-anti-graft-drive-prompts-reshuffle-for-high-end-restaurants/>

dining, presents, and travel was initially large in 2013 but has been declining sharply year-on-year through 2017. If this trend is accurate, it suggests that strong enforcement of these rules has succeeded in deterring these behaviors.³⁵³ However, one troubling outcome of the campaign for the CCP is the widely-reported trend of “doing nothing” (不作为), in which cadres slow down their ordinary work to avoid making decisions that could get them in trouble with graft-busters.³⁵⁴ It remains unclear how much of a problem this is, given that some bureaucratic paralysis has been reported as a result of every PRC anti-corruption campaign from the 1930s campaign in the Jiangxi Soviet onward. Furthermore, with worries that the economy was overheating early in the Xi administration, curbing corruption-fueled and likely wasteful economic activity may in fact be beneficial.

Several reforms that could constrain high-level corruption have not been systematically enforced. The party’s “Rules for Disciplinary Action” (中国共产党纪律处分条例) put restrictions on the business activities of officials’ family members, which is seen as a crucial reform because so much high-level corruption is hidden in this manner. But, as Pei explains, the party’s rules on this and many other proscribed activities remain so “vaguely defined” that they can be easily skirted, even after revisions to the “Rules for Disciplinary Action” in 2015.³⁵⁵

³⁵³ RMRB, 2017/12/5, <http://dangjian.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1205/c117092-29686072.html>

It could be argued that enforcement is simply slacking off, but overall anti-corruption investigations have been increasing year-on-year.

³⁵⁴ Zheng Yongnian, “How China Can Avoid the Phenomenon of ‘Officials Not Working’,” *Aisixiang*, 2014/11/11. / 郑永年, “中国如何避免‘官员不作为’现象,” 爱思想, 2014/11/11, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/79934.html>; RMRB, 2016/1/21, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/pinglun/n1/2016/0121/c78779-28071984.html>; *Xinhua* [新华], 2016/3/13, http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2016-03/13/c_128795281.htm

³⁵⁵ Pei, “How Not to Fight Corruption,” p. 220. The Rules for Disciplinary Action were updated again in 2018. Several of the changes seemingly aim to clarify proscribed activities and punish resistance to the campaign. See: *Xinhua* [新华], 2018/8/27, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-08/27/c_1123332297.htm

Regulations have been similarly weak with regard to the country's stock market, where corruption is common and China's rich are getting richer. The CCDI signaled in November 2018 that it was working on new measures to address the problem.³⁵⁶ Although the campaign proposes to prevent capital flight, tax evasion, and international money laundering, international document leaks like the Panama Papers have revealed how troubled and contradictory these tasks are for China's leaders. In groundbreaking analysis of leaked documents, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists found "nearly 22,000 offshore clients with addresses in mainland China and Hong Kong... Among them are some of China's most powerful men and women — including at least 15 of China's richest, members of the National People's Congress and executives from state-owned companies." Many records pointed to family members of current and past leaders, including Xi's brother-in-law Deng Jiagui and former premier Wen Jiabao's son Wen Yunsong.³⁵⁷ The extent of Xi's personal corruption is unknown. A leaked U.S. intelligence portrait of Xi from 2009 based on conversations with an informant who knew Xi personally argued that the future leader was "not corrupt and does not care about money," but has always been power-hungry: "exceptionally ambitious," "driven," and "calculating."³⁵⁸

Though the campaign continues to inspire debate in academic and policy circles, most analysts conclude that it has had a real if limited effect on corruption. Manion argues that "the campaign has significantly changed the structure of Party and government incentives so as to

³⁵⁶ *Reuters*, 2018/11/25, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-stocks-corruption/china-steps-up-fight-against-abuse-of-power-by-stock-market-regulators-idUSKCN1NU05J>

³⁵⁷ To be clear, this leak was before the Panama Papers leak. "People's Republic of Offshore," International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, 2014/1/21, <https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/leaked-records-reveal-offshore-holdings-of-chinas-elite/>

³⁵⁸ "Portrait of Vice President Xi Jinping: 'Ambitious Survivor' of the Cultural Revolution," 09BEIJING3128_a, WikiLeaks, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BEIJING3128_a.html

reduce bureaucratic opportunities for corruption and structural obstacles to anticorruption enforcement.³⁵⁹ Economy, while noting problems and contradictions, writes that “by several measures, the anticorruption campaign has been very effective.”³⁶⁰ Fang Qiang concludes that Xi in his campaign has “made more significant inroads against corruption than [his] immediate predecessors”—but that a full cleaning would be “an impossible mission.”³⁶¹ Sun Yan and Yuan Baishun see “mixed effects,” with the national-level campaign being more successful than cleanups at local levels.³⁶² Wedeman hedges, arguing that Xi has “at best...perhaps brought the problem [of corruption] closer to some sort of ‘controlled’ level.”³⁶³ The World Bank’s control of corruption indicator shows modest improvement from “-0.51” in 2011 to “-0.27” in 2017 on a scale of -2.5 to 2.5 (the cleanest).³⁶⁴ Xi Jinping himself, for what it is worth, has announced that “the struggle against corruption has won an overwhelming victory.”³⁶⁵

A minority of appraisals are decidedly more negative. Pei argues that while “corruption is temporarily suppressed” during the campaign, it will bounce back afterwards.³⁶⁶ “It is

³⁵⁹ Melanie Manion, “Taking China’s anticorruption campaign seriously,” *Economic and Political Studies*, Vol. 4 Iss. 1, 2016, p. 3.

³⁶⁰ Economy, *The Third Revolution*, p. 32.

³⁶¹ Fang Qiang, “Xi Jinping’s Anticorruption Campaign from a Historical Perspective,” *Modern China Studies*, Vol. 24, Iss. 2, (2017), p. 134.

³⁶² Sun Yan and Yuan Baishun, “Does Xi Jinping’s Anticorruption Campaign Improve Regime Legitimacy,” *Modern China Studies*, 2017, Vol. 24(2), pp. 14–34.

³⁶³ Andrew Hall Wedeman, “Four Years On: Where is Xi Jinping’s Anti-corruption Drive Headed?” *Asia Dialogue*, 2016/9/19.

³⁶⁴ The World Bank: Worldwide Governance Indicators, <http://info.worldbank.org/Governance/wgi/-home>; “The 15th Global Fraud Survey 2018,” by the accounting firm EY, also shows a reduced perception of corruption in China since the start of Xi’s campaign. [https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY_Global_Fraud_Survey_2018_report/\\$FILE/EY_GLOBAL_FIDS_FRAUD_SURVEY_2018.pdf](https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY_Global_Fraud_Survey_2018_report/$FILE/EY_GLOBAL_FIDS_FRAUD_SURVEY_2018.pdf)

³⁶⁵ RMRB, 2019/1/14, <http://fanfu.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0114/c64371-30525447.html>

³⁶⁶ Pei, “How Not to Fight Corruption,” p. 218.

inconceivable that the CCP can reform the political and economic institutions of crony capitalism because these are the very foundations of the regime's monopoly of power."³⁶⁷

Analyzing Chinese firms, John Griffin, Clark Liu, and Tao Shu find that the campaign has failed to change the country's corporate culture of self-dealing.³⁶⁸ And Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index records only a miniscule improvement: an increase of only 3 points on a 100-point scale between 2011 and 2018.³⁶⁹

In sum, Xi's anti-corruption campaign has been a Limited Victory but not a Breakthrough success. It earns points in this study's scoring system for substantial disciplinary action (3 points), enforcement of all three kinds of institutional reforms (3 points), and an overall somewhat positive perception of its achievements among experts (1.5 points). It falls short of a Breakthrough because of its failures in systematic enforcement of reforms that could constrain high-level corruption, despite the numerous arrests of elites.³⁷⁰ This issue of high-level corruption is a key reason why expert assessments of the campaign were not more positive, which also lost it points.³⁷¹ The campaign being a Limited Victory accords with the expectation

³⁶⁷ Pei Minxin, *China's Crony Capitalism: The Dynamics of Regime Decay* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 267.

³⁶⁸ John Griffin, Clark Liu, and Tao Shu, "Is the Chinese Anti-Corruption Campaign Effective?" Presented at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, May 11, 2016, http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/fin/event/symposium/SEFM_2016_paper_109.pdf

³⁶⁹ Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, <https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>

I exclude indices that use measures of democracy as measures of clean government, as they do not account for the possibility of an authoritarian anti-corruption reform that does not make the country more democratic. For example, the Index of Public Integrity measures corruption through indicators like judicial independence and freedom of the press. See: <https://integrity-index.org/about/>

³⁷⁰ SCMP, 2018/2/14, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2133251/xi-jinpings-anti-graft-drive-has-caught-so-many>

³⁷¹ Zhu Lin, "Punishing Corrupt Officials in China," *The China Quarterly* 223 (2015), 595–617.

discussed in the first chapter that full Breakthroughs are unlikely after a regime's formative early years.

Explaining Xi's Limited Victory

The effectiveness of the current anti-corruption campaign owes a great deal to Xi's unconstrained leadership—the consolidation of which was made easier by weak oversight from party elders—and his deployment of the authoritarian playbook.

Xi has been instrumental in enforcing, expanding, and sustaining the campaign. Official media highlights Xi's leadership, Xi's reforms, and Xi's instructions for combating corruption. As a professor at a prominent Party School explained in a frank interview: “Naturally, the center has to be powerful for our political system to work.”³⁷² Other experts in China who are supportive of Xi's anti-corruption efforts deny that they constitute a political campaign comparable to those of the Mao era, but they note that Xi's leadership of the campaign is a return to CCP “tradition.”³⁷³ Outside analysts often refer to “Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign,” which was not common usage for the anti-corruption campaigns under Jiang or Hu. Xi led the norm-breaking prosecution of several “big tigers” since 2013, though he reportedly consulted party elders before starting the first investigation against Zhou.

Taking a more positive view of Mao-era politics than his immediate predecessors, Xi has also been responsible for the campaign's use of harsh Maoist tactics.³⁷⁴ “Complete with

³⁷² Author's interview with a professor at a Party School, February 2019.

³⁷³ Author's interviews with two Chinese corruption control experts, February 2019.

³⁷⁴ For example, his statement that the party's pre-Reform and Opening experiences should not be negated: <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2013/1108/c1001-23471419.html>; There is some debate as to how his experiences in the Cultural Revolution shaped Xi's views on Mao and the Mao era. Andrew J. Nathan, “Who is Xi?” *The New York Review of Books*, 2016/5/12.

discipline inspection teams, self-criticisms, and public denunciations,” Xi’s campaign “displays the unmistakable imprint of earlier Maoist anticorruption campaigns,” Prasenjit Duara and Elizabeth Perry argue.³⁷⁵ Though this trend has alarmed many Chinese, including some party members, it is part of Xi’s return to “seemingly anachronistic tools” of governance.³⁷⁶ While few believe that Xi can become a second Mao, his power consolidation, party-first agenda, ideological and anti-Western rhetoric, and wide-ranging crackdown on dissent are all reminiscent of Mao.³⁷⁷ One interviewee old enough to remember the Cultural Revolution told me that “older Chinese are more scared of Xi” than younger Chinese who do not remember.³⁷⁸

Backed by a powerful state apparatus, Xi has used an authoritarian playbook reliant on power centralization, disruption of existing institutions, tightened top-down control, and regime propaganda.³⁷⁹ Fu Hualing explains that Xi and Wang Qishan “significantly reinforce[d] central control over regions within the Party structure...by transferring corruption investigation powers from provinces, ministries and SOEs to the Party’s Central Committee for Disciplinary Inspection (CCDI).”³⁸⁰ Xi’s campaign bypasses governmental and legal organs that theoretically

³⁷⁵ Prasenjit Duara and Elizabeth J. Perry, Eds., *Beyond Regimes: China and India Compared* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), p. 24.

³⁷⁶ Anna L. Ahlers and Matthias Stepan, “Top-level design and local-level paralysis: Local politics in times of political centralization” in Sebastian Heilmann and Matthias Stepan, Eds., “MERICS Papers on China: China’s Core Executive,” June 2016, p. 37.

³⁷⁷ “Does Xi Jinping Represent a Return to the Mao Era?” Discussion at Asia Society New York on May 21, 2015, *ChinaFile*: <http://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/features/does-xi-jinping-represent-return-mao-era>; Zhao Suisheng, “Xi Jinping’s Maoist Revival,” *Journal of Democracy*, July 2016.

³⁷⁸ Author’s interview, February 2019.

³⁷⁹ The authoritarian playbook is a broad term intended to have cross-national applicability, meaning that it covers variation in policy styles. For example, the authoritarian playbook may or may not involve mass mobilization. The CCP’s anti-corruption efforts are shaped by its own “guerrilla policy style,” which is not shared by most other authoritarian regimes. See: Sebastian Heilmann and Elizabeth J. Perry, Eds., *Mao’s Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

³⁸⁰ Fu, “Wielding the Sword: President Xi’s New Anti-Corruption Campaign,” p. 142.

should be central to anti-corruption work, like the judiciary, by working primarily through party disciplinary authorities.³⁸¹ The new NSC has absorbed the anti-corruption functions of two governmental (meaning non-party) agencies: the State Council Ministry of Supervision and the Supreme People's Procuratorate. Discipline inspection committees under the NSC can “annex 1/5 of the agents and staff of the procuratorates nationwide,” Li Ling writes. “An inter-institutional personnel transfer of this scale is unprecedented in the recent history of the People's Republic of China.”³⁸² The law governing the NSC, the Supervision Law, does not put the NSC within China's legal system, but rather makes it “ultimately accountable only to the CCP.”³⁸³

As part of the authoritarian playbook, top-down enforcement has been strengthened to allow the campaign to pierce local protectionism.³⁸⁴ The party has taken several measures to enhance the CCDI's control over provincial and lower level discipline inspection committees, such as advancing the “dual leadership system.”³⁸⁵ Ad hoc inspections are also a way to get around obstructionist bureaucracies and local governments. The obstruction-evading power of anti-corruption investigators is reflected in the use of the term “paratroopers,” meaning investigators who are “dropped” from the central government into lower-level party or government units to fight corruption.³⁸⁶ Local governments have been shaken by the campaign's

³⁸¹ Carl Minzner, “Legal Reform in the Xi Jinping Era,” *Asia Policy* Vol. 20 (2015), p. 7.

³⁸² Li, “Politics of Anticorruption in China,” p. 62.

³⁸³ *The Diplomat*, 2018/5/30, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/whats-so-controversial-about-chinas-new-anti-corruption-body/>

³⁸⁴ Guilhem Fabre, “Xi Jinping's Challenge: What Is behind China's Anticorruption Campaign?” *Journal of Self-Governance and Management Economics* 5(2), (2017), pp. 7–28.

³⁸⁵ *Caixin* [财新], 2014/7/21, opinion.caixin.com/2014-07-21/100706819.html; Guo Yong and Li Songfeng, “Anti-corruption measures in China: suggestions for reforms,” *Asian Education and Development Studies* 4.1 (2015), pp. 23–27.

³⁸⁶ *Caixin* [财新], 2016/5/19, <http://china.caixin.com/2016-05-09/100941493.html>

intrusiveness, with “paralysis” and “fear” being common symptoms.³⁸⁷ At the individual level, while enforcement has been far less violent than in some previous campaigns and torture is theoretically banned, reports have come out detailing coerced confessions, torture, and suicides by officials suspected of corruption.³⁸⁸ The campaign has taught the world the Chinese abbreviation *shuanggui*, which is a disciplinary procedure in which suspects are held indefinitely, incommunicado, and without the presumption of innocence. As one former CCDI member explained in an interview: “Sometimes there’s no other way. I used [*shuanggui*] sparingly because it was extralegal...history may judge us for it.”³⁸⁹ While the recently passed National Supervision Law appears to do away with the practice, it in effect means that *shuanggui* has been normalized and even strengthened.³⁹⁰

Regime propaganda has played an important role in building the party’s narrative about the campaign and drumming up support for it. A flood of official media coverage of the campaign has sought to instill several messages: that anti-corruption efforts must be led by the party, that corruption is a personal moral failing rather than a result of perverse structural incentives, and that resisting the party’s campaign is futile. The propaganda department helped create a television miniseries called *Always On The Road* (永远在路上) (2016) that trumpeted the party’s anti-corruption successes and aired emotional confessions by officials under arrest.³⁹¹

³⁸⁷ Ahlers and Stepan, “Top-level design and local-level paralysis: Local politics in times of political centralization.”

³⁸⁸ “China: Secretive Detention System Mars Anti-Corruption Campaign,” Human Rights Watch, 2016/12/6, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/12/06/china-secretive-detention-system-mars-anti-corruption-campaign>

³⁸⁹ Author’s interview with a former CCDI member, February 2019.

³⁹⁰ Author’s interviews with several scholars in Beijing, February 2019.

³⁹¹ On the uses of televised confessions, see: Christian Sorace, “Extracting Affect: Televised Cadre Confessions in China,” *Public Culture*, Jan 2019, Vol.31(1).

To drive home the idea that corruption is wrong and corrupt officials are bad people, sentencing documents often include “lurid details” about mistresses and extravagant spending.³⁹² In addition, Xi has revived the party tradition of “democratic life meetings,” which are criticism and self-criticism sessions used to create psychological pressure to confess crimes and report others.

Xi’s administration has moved away from any possibility of a more democratic approach to corruption control. Citizen activists with the New Citizens Movement, which has campaigned for governmental transparency on officials’ assets, have been detained and harassed.³⁹³ Chinese journalists report a closing space to cover corruption, saying that the government is reporting less information on cases, defense lawyers are more wary of talking to independent journalists, and independent journalists are more careful about what they write.³⁹⁴ One independent journalist I interviewed said that they had solid leads on corruption by more than one Central Committee member, but were not allowed by their superiors to investigate further.³⁹⁵ One corruption control expert argued that the regime has “made anti-corruption more convenient” for itself by undermining its own legal procedures with suspects. In the Hu era, high-profile defendants would appeal their cases—now they tearily confess their crimes for documentaries used in party propaganda.³⁹⁶

8. Conclusions

³⁹² “Visualizing China’s Anti-Corruption Campaign.”

³⁹³ NYT, 2013/4/22, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/22/world/asia/china-expands-crackdown-on-anticorruption-activists.html>; “World Report 2015: China,” Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/china-and-tibet>

³⁹⁴ Author’s interview with three Chinese journalists, February 2019.

³⁹⁵ Author’s interview with an independent (private media) Chinese journalist, February 2019.

³⁹⁶ Author’s interview with a Chinese anti-corruption expert in Beijing, February 2019.

Having applied this study's theoretical framework to the Chinese Communist Party's major anti-corruption efforts, I submit two takeaways about Chinese corruption control.

While many argue that China needs to take a more democratic approach to corruption control and/or that political liberalization in the 1990s and 2000s was promising in this regard, I find that it actually took greater authoritarianism to curb corruption under Xi.³⁹⁷ Nor was this a fluke—Xi's campaign is effective for some of the same reasons and with some of the same tools as the Three Antis–Five Antis. Even the CCP's many Failed Reforms between these two successes made some contributions, punishing wrongdoing and perhaps keeping corruption lower than it otherwise might have been. This is not to say that a democratic approach taken by some future democratic China would not be more consistently successful. Modern democracies with high state capacity and high wealth per capita virtually all have low levels of corruption. Exceptions, like Japan under the 1955 system, seem to be democracies with prolonged dominance by one political party. As Christian Göbel argues and I discuss further in Chapter Six, the alternation of power between political parties is often the trigger for anti-corruption reforms after democratization. Speculatively, then, we can say that if a democratic China continued to get richer, retained high state capacity, and managed at least one handover of political power, it would be in a strong position to reduce corruption.

In addition, this chapter's analysis complicates the commonly proposed dichotomy between a relatively clean Mao era and a rampantly corrupt post-Mao era.³⁹⁸ This dichotomy can

³⁹⁷ Manion, *Corruption by Design*, p. 201.; Pei, *China's Crony Capitalism*, p. 267.; Ko and Weng, "Structural Changes in Chinese Corruption."; Fu Hualing, "Stability and Anticorruption Initiatives: Is There a Chinese Model?" in Susan Trevaskes, Elisa Nesossi, Flora Sapio, and Sarah Biddulph, Eds., *The Politics of Law and Stability in China* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014), pp. 176–201.

³⁹⁸ Tang, "Official Corruption in a Developing Country," p. 58.; Kwong, *The Political Economy of Corruption in China*.

lead to the misimpression that ideological zeal or perhaps poverty will keep corruption low. But when corruption rose in rural areas in the early 1960s, Mao's ideological zeal actually hindered implementation of the Four Cleans. Ideological zeal was at its height in the Cultural Revolution, but failed to prevent the embezzlement and looting that took place during its turbulent early years. While a country's poverty assures that corruption will be small in objective terms, the illicit sums involved may not be so small as a percentage of state expenditures or as a percentage of officials involved. Moreover, Xi's effective anti-corruption campaign links back to early PRC successes, bridging the divide.

Chapter Five

Around the Authoritarian World

1. Introduction

This chapter examines authoritarian anti-corruption efforts and rhetoric in 14 regimes not discussed in Chapters Two, Three, and Four, with a focus on Cuba, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, and North Korea. It shows that neither anti-corruption efforts nor successes in nondemocracies are limited to East Asia. I find that these cases provide preliminary evidence for the global applicability of the theoretical framework laid out in previous chapters, including the importance of unconstrained leadership, state capacity, and revolutionary or developmental goals. Additionally, my argument that quasi-democratic institutions will not help authoritarian regimes curb corruption is bolstered by the scarcity of positive examples around the world. The analysis in this wide-ranging chapter is primarily based on secondary sources and interviews with scholars who have expertise in specific countries, though primary-source research was necessary to elucidate little-known North Korean anti-corruption efforts.

I focus on corruption control in these five regimes because each sheds light on a different aspect of the relationship between authoritarianism and corruption, sometimes confirming and sometimes complicating the proposed theoretical framework. In revolutionary Cuba, Fidel Castro's early successes align with the theory's expectations, but the failure of reforms in the Rectification Process in the late 1980s does not. Singapore's much-cited success story under the People's Action Party (PAP) conforms to theoretical expectations in some ways, but also raises a challenge to the proposed dichotomy of democratic and authoritarian approaches to corruption control. The Vietnamese Communist Party leadership's reform efforts in recent decades have

often been blocked by conservative elites, suggesting that consensus-based collective leadership can hold back much-needed anti-corruption reform. In Malaysia, corruption grew unchecked and eventually contributed to the fall of the long-ruling United Malays National Organisation, despite the regime being seen as a model of authoritarian durability with quasi-democratic institutions. North Korea today seems to be the stereotypical authoritarian regime that does not care about corruption control, but this has not always been the case. Anti-corruption campaigns in the 1950s under revolutionary leader Kim Il-sung have largely been overlooked.

Table 5.1:

Authoritarian Anti-Corruption Efforts Beyond East Asia¹

Regime and Dates	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
The Philippines 1975				Failed Reform
Mexico 1976–77			✓ ²	Failed Reform
Iran (Pahlavi) 1977–79		✓	✓	Failed Reform
Mexico 1982–83			✓	Failed Reform
USSR 1982–84	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Cuba 1986–89	✓	✓	✓	Failed Reform ³

¹ North Korean anti-corruption efforts, which were not discussed in previous chapters, are included here as well.

² Mexico is described as having a medium level of state capacity in Miguel Angel Centeno, Atul Kohli, and Deborah J. Yashar, Eds., *States in the Developing World* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 109.

³ Red indicates that the case's outcome does not conform to my basic theoretical expectations.

Table 5.1 Continued: Authoritarian Anti-Corruption Efforts Beyond East Asia

Vietnam 1986–89	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Malaysia 1997–2004	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Vietnam 1998–2001	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Cuba 2004–?	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Iran 2005–2009			✓	Failed Reform
Saudi Arabia 2017		✓		Failed Reform
North Korea 1955–58	✓	✓	✓	Unclear, limited information
Ethiopia 2001–2005?	✓	✓	✓	Limited Victory
Cuba 1959–66	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough
Singapore 1960–66?	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough
Rwanda 1999–?	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough

This chapter is divided into six substantive sections: five sections which each cover one of the five main regimes and one section that surveys anti-corruption activity—both efforts and Empty Gestures—in others countries.

2. Revolutionary Cuba

Table 5.2:

Major Anti-Corruption Efforts in Cuba

Name and Dates	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
“Purification” 1959–66	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough
Rectification Process 1986–89	✓	✓	✓	Failed Reform
“Campaign Against Privilege” 2004–?	✓		✓	Failed Reform

One of the early achievements of Fidel Castro’s revolutionary regime in Cuba was curbing the country’s infamous corruption. Scholars consistently describe former president Fulgencio Batista’s regime and other preceding governments as deeply corrupt, and say that this was a key reason for Batista’s delegitimization and eventual fall.⁴ Castro promised to “purify” the country—a goal many Cubans supported him in hopes of achieving.⁵ The revolution had “a strong puritanical streak,” with action “against gambling, immorality, corruption.”⁶ Law 732, passed in February 1960, imposed harsh penalties for public graft, and, by categorizing graft as

⁴ Susan Eckstein, *Back from the Future: Cuba under Castro* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 17.; Ricardo Puerta, *Corruption in Cuba and How to Combat It: a proposal for social auditing. / Corrupción en Cuba y Cómo Combatirla: una propuesta de auditoría social*, (Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina; Probidad, 2004), p. 28.; Lars Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: the United States and the Cuban Revolution* (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2009), pp. 36, 86.

⁵ Eckstein, *Back from the Future*, p. 17.; Julia Sweig, *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the Urban Underground* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 177.; Antoni Kapcia, *Leadership in the Cuban Revolution: The Unseen Story* (London, United Kingdom: Zed Books, 2014), p. 65.

⁶ H. R. Trevor-Roper, “Puritans -- From Calvin to Castro,” NYT, 1960/3/20.

counterrevolutionary crime, put offenders at the mercy of revolutionary courts.⁷ On the issue of corruption, at least for a time, Castro delivered.⁸ As Hugh Thomas wrote in 1971:

“The majority, too, believed that for the first time the government, if intolerant, was at least not corrupt...the break from corrupt officials, corrupt judiciary, corrupt politicians, corrupt unionists and corrupt men of business was, in the minds of the majority, a stark, extraordinary, maybe baffling but wonderful contrast. The sleazy world of prostitution, police protection rackets and clip joints had also almost vanished.”⁹

Jorge Domínguez similarly concludes that the revolutionary regime “has already punished miscreants even in high positions. The evidence of outright corruption is fairly rare, certainly rarer than in prerevolutionary Cuba.”¹⁰ Conduct by public officials was much improved, and “corruption is not a serious problem.”¹¹ The revolutionary government “can claim to have eradicated that [high-level corruption] which it found, not fallen into the patterns of corruption found in Eastern Europe’s socialist states, and vitally, not allow any hint of impunity on the issue.”¹² “Even its bitterest critics have not accused it of the most glaring defect of previous regimes: a scandalously pervasive dishonesty in all branches of government.”¹³

This achievement did not land all at once. Governance was evolving in the early 1960s as revolutionary organizations merged in 1962 and formed the Communist Party of Cuba only in 1965. Then, in 1966, the firing and imprisonment on corruption charges of Efigenio Ameijeiras,

⁷ Luis Salas, *Social Control and Deviance in Cuba* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), p. 112.

⁸ Author’s interview with several scholars of Cuba, fall 2018.

⁹ Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: the Pursuit of Freedom* (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1971), p. 1344.

¹⁰ Jorge I. Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 230.

¹¹ Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, p. 233.

¹² H. P. Klepak, *Raúl Castro and Cuba: A Military Story* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 69.

¹³ William P. Glade Jr., “Castro and Cuba—The Politics of Economic Development,” United States House of Representatives Congressional Record, 1960/6/15.

a hero of the revolution and member of the party's central committee, led to dozens of other arrests and a "far-reaching 'cleansing' of the revolutionary government and party."¹⁴ Armando Acosta, long-time "Communist boss of Oriente [Province]," was among those purged.¹⁵

Castro's willingness to follow through on his promises to curb corruption followed from his radical state-building goals. "Fidel Castro has also long believed that he has a historic mission."¹⁶ His commitments to anti-colonialism and communism demanded a remaking of Cuban politics, economics, and society—goals which made anti-corruption reforms a necessity.¹⁷ The new regime needed to curb the debilitating corruption of the Batista regime to break with the pattern of pre-revolutionary Cuba and to build a new Cuba.¹⁸ Ideology aside, the economic and military challenges posed by the United States in the early 1960s, including a trade embargo, the Bay of Pigs invasion, and several assassination attempts, were reason enough to pursue defensive state-building.

Fidel Castro had unconstrained leadership in pushing for reforms and a disciplined state apparatus. His personal power derived from his tremendous authority in the regime and within society. The revolution, Domínguez argues, "has rested much of its legitimacy on the routinization of Fidel Castro's charisma."¹⁹ As one early supporter put it: "Fidel's popularity

¹⁴ Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, p. 232.; Thomas, *Cuba: the Pursuit of Freedom*, p. 1467.

¹⁵ Thomas, *Cuba: the Pursuit of Freedom*, p. 1467.

¹⁶ Jorge I. Domínguez, "Revolution and Its Aftermath in Cuba," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 43(2), 2008, p. 227.

¹⁷ There is some debate, however, as to when exactly Castro became a communist. NYT, 1986/10/19, <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/10/19/magazine/fidel-castro-s-years-as-a-secret-communist.html>; James Nelson Goodsell, *Fidel Castro's Personal Revolution in Cuba: 1959–1973* (New York, Knopf, 1975).

¹⁸ Hugh Thomas, "Cuba Is Often a Matter of How You Look at It," NYT, 1965/7/11.; Sweig, *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, p. 178.; Kapcia, *Leadership in the Cuban Revolution*, p. 64.

¹⁹ Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, p. 233.

bordered on madness.”²⁰ Especially in the early years of the regime, Castro intervened personally in numerous matters of governance and enforced ideological homogeneity in the country.²¹ Revolutionary struggle and post-revolutionary consolidation produced a “powerful and cohesive” ruling party, though more slowly than in other cases judging by scholarly assessments of the Communist Party of Cuba’s consolidation process.²² Unfortunately, much remains unknown in the literature about how specific reforms took place in the early revolutionary period.

As in almost all other authoritarian cases, anti-corruption success in Cuba eroded over time. “Post-1975 changes,” including a new acceptance of “limited consumerism,” “partial decentralization,” and the opening of the party, “had all fused to create unprecedented opportunities for patronage, privilege, and small-scale corruption.” Antoni Kapcia argues that “while this was hardly corruption on, say, the Mexican scale under the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party) after 1976, it nonetheless had clear implications.”²³ The old, pre-revolutionary corruption was mostly gone, but new forms of corruption emerged. “Corruption in revolutionary Cuba primarily, but not exclusively, takes the form of using power to obtain access to other things; it does not often involve money...power itself became the currency of corruption.”²⁴ With so much of its legitimacy staked on probity and

²⁰ Rhoda Pearl Rabkin, *Cuban Politics: The Revolutionary Experiment* (New York: Praeger, 1991), p. 41.

²¹ Samuel Farber, *Cuba since the Revolution of 1959: a critical assessment* (Chicago, Ill.: Haymarket Books, 2011), Chapter 1.

²² Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, p. xiv.; Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, “The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes,” *Journal of Democracy* 24, No. 3 (2013), p. 8.

²³ Kapcia, *Leadership in the Cuban Revolution*, pp. 144, 145.

²⁴ Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, p. 232.

moral rectitude, the revolutionary government “could not afford to allow” a return to the bad old days, meaning that “corruption once again became an emblematic issue, as powerful as the related ‘bureaucratism’ had been in the 1960s.”²⁵

The related trends of liberalization and rising corruption eventually provoked a backlash in the form of the Rectification Process: a conservative reform spearheaded by Castro starting in 1986 to bring illicit economic activity, including corruption, back under control.²⁶ The Rectification, with echoes of “radicalism of the late 1960s,” was against bureaucratism, profiteering, inefficiency, market incentives, the Soviet Union’s economic model, and other “errors and negative tendencies.”²⁷ Castro “railed against mid-level corruption, misuse of government property, and [the] inefficiency of government officials in preventing illicit enrichment.”²⁸ A new emphasis on “socialist legality... suggests the regime is still trying to recover from... recent instances of corruption.”²⁹ The Rectification is reminiscent of Mao Zedong’s counter-reforms in China against the grassroots growth of markets and low-level cadre corruption in the early 1960s. Like Mao, Castro sought to recover the revolution’s original spirit and shore up his own personal authority in the process.³⁰ “Increased centralization of power and

²⁵ Kapcia, *Leadership in the Cuban Revolution*, p. 145.

²⁶ Eckstein, *Back from the Future*, pp. 60–70.

²⁷ Philip Brenner, Marguerite Rose Jiménez, John M. Kirk, and William M. LeoGrande, *A Contemporary Cuba Reader: The Revolution under Raúl Castro*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), p. 52.; Aviva Chomsky, *A History of the Cuban Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), p. 61.

²⁸ Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Jorge F. Pérez-López, *Corruption in Cuba: Castro and Beyond* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), p. 164.

²⁹ “Cuba: Implications of the Third Communist Party Congress,” Central Intelligence Agency, an Intelligence Assessment, Apr. 1986, p. 9.

³⁰ Carmelo Mesa-Lago, “Cuba’s Economic Counter-reform (rectificación): Causes, Policies and Effects,” *Journal of Communist Studies* 5, No. 4 (1989), pp. 98–139.

government re-monopolization of the economy were other major hallmarks of rectification.”³¹ At the same time, to avoid bureaucracy, the Cuban regime re-introduced “micro-brigades:” “workers temporarily released from their work centers and people who were not otherwise employed.”³² These brigades “had fallen out of use...[but] by the end of 1987, Havana was expected to have about 30,000 micro-brigade members, who would address, among other things, the deteriorating housing situation in that city.”³³

The Rectification Process was unsuccessful in both corruption control and economic retrenchment, despite Castro’s unconstrained leadership and strong state capacity. The Rectification seemingly failed because of the drop-off in Soviet aid, which triggered an economic crisis. Early Rectification measures did rein in the “market opening” of past years by curbing private enterprise and closing farmers’ markets, and “notoriously corrupt” private housing construction.³⁴ The summer of 1989 saw “widespread dismissals” for corruption in “agencies dealing with tourism and foreign trade,” the arrest of “several senior military and security officials for drug smuggling, and the execution of four officers, including Cuba’s legendary Division General Arnaldo Ochoa.”³⁵ Cuban leaders “envisioned that rectification would go on for many years. In 1989, however...Cuba’s effort was dramatically intruded upon

³¹ Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba: A History* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2014), p. 172.

³² Susan Eckstein, “The Rectification of Errors or the Errors of the Rectification Process in Cuba?” *Cuban Studies* 20 (1990), p. 69.

³³ Frank T. Fitzgerald, *The Cuban Revolution in Crisis: From Managing Socialism to Managing Survival* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994), p. 137.

³⁴ Eckstein, *Back from the Future*, pp. 60–70.; Fitzgerald, *The Cuban Revolution in Crisis*, p. 135.; Martínez-Fernández, *Revolutionary Cuba*, p. 173.

³⁵ Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 164.; Brenner et al., *A Contemporary Cuba Reader*, p. 46.

by the beginning of the collapse of Soviet-bloc Communism.”³⁶ The decline in the Soviet Union’s critical economic support, which accelerated as the regime weakened, began “in the first nine months of 1987.”³⁷ Without plentiful Soviet assistance, the Cuban government did not have the luxury of a Rectification, and so it loosened economic controls to survive.³⁸ Both the economic crisis and the state’s “timid” and “piecemeal” responses in the early 1990s “produced new opportunities for corruption.”³⁹ “Such was the depth and breadth of the crisis termed the Special Period” that widespread low-level corruption came “back to Cuba as a generalized phenomenon.”⁴⁰ Ultimately, the blow that was communism’s collapse in Europe pushed corruption control off the agenda until the economy began growing again.

Fidel Castro passed leadership of the regime to his younger brother Raúl Castro in the early 2000s, but the latter did not inherit Fidel Castro’s tremendous authority and unconstrained leadership. “Fidel Castro's charismatic authority was replaced by a collegial arrangement.”⁴¹ The transition from Fidel to Raúl Castro was one of “depersonalization,” with party and government organizations becoming more important in decision-making.⁴² Raúl Castro “trusts and relies on established institutions in a way Fidel never did.”⁴³ Additionally, Raúl Castro’s leadership was

³⁶ Fitzgerald, *The Cuban Revolution in Crisis*, p. 167.

³⁷ NYT, 1988/3/16, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/03/16/world/soviet-said-to-reduce-support-for-cuban-economy.html>

³⁸ Diaz-Briquets and Pérez-López, *Corruption in Cuba*, p. 93.

³⁹ Marc Frank, “Anti-corruption Drive Signals Change in Cuba,” *Financial Times*, 2004/7/6.; Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, p. 174.; Diaz-Briquets and Pérez-López, *Corruption in Cuba*, p. 165.

⁴⁰ Klepak, *Raúl Castro and Cuba*, p. 69.

⁴¹ Ramón I. Centeno, “The Cuban Regime after a Decade of Raúl Castro in Power,” *Mexican Law Review*, January-June 2017, Vol.9(2), p. 99.

⁴² Bert Hoffmann, “Bureaucratic socialism in reform mode: the changing politics of Cuba’s post-Fidel era,” *Third World Quarterly* (2016), p. 1730.

⁴³ Brenner et al., *A Contemporary Cuba Reader*, p. 35.

constrained by his credible promise, several years in advance, to step down as president in 2018.⁴⁴

The next period of major anti-corruption efforts began in 2004 under Raúl Castro, then Vice President and Defense Minister. The younger Castro created the National Commission to Fight Corruption and Illegalities and attacked “socialist entrepreneurs,” meaning officials who abuse socialism for personal gain.⁴⁵ He “organized literally thousands of courses on corruption, how to fight it, how to search it out and report it, and the like.”⁴⁶ And he attacked the “corruption-laden tourism industry” in particular, saying it was like “a tree born twisted that must be uprooted and planted anew.” Harsh new rules banned industry workers from receiving gifts and tips, and generally the party moved to reduce businesses’ organizational autonomy and “scrap executive perks such as expense accounts.”⁴⁷ In 2005, “several leaders of the Union of Communist Youth were dismissed” for corruption.⁴⁸ More measures were put in place after Raúl Castro became president in 2008 (he had been acting president since 2006). In 2008, civil servant salaries were raised in an effort to reduce incentives for bribe-taking. In 2009, the government established the Office of the Comptroller, again with corruption control in mind.⁴⁹ “Dozens of arrests and ministerial dismissals followed (the latter usually for a failure to act against

⁴⁴ NYT, 2013/2/25, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/25/world/americas/raul-castro-to-step-down-as-cubas-president-in-2018.html>

⁴⁵ Diaz-Briquets and Pérez-López, *Corruption in Cuba*, pp. 169, 241.

⁴⁶ Klepak, *Raúl Castro and Cuba*, p. 71.

⁴⁷ Diaz-Briquets and Pérez-López, *Corruption in Cuba*, p. 18.; Frank, “Anti-corruption drive signals change in Cuba.”

⁴⁸ Diaz-Briquets and Pérez-López, *Corruption in Cuba*, p. 143.

⁴⁹ William M. LeoGrande, “After Fidel: The Communist Party of Cuba on the Brink of Generational Change” in Brenner et al., *A Contemporary Cuba Reader*, p. 67.

corruption, such as the formerly high-flying minister of basic industry, Yádira García, dismissed in 2010).”⁵⁰

Now that Raúl Castro has retired, however, a look back at his anti-corruption efforts reveals little success.⁵¹ “Although sentences for yielding to this temptation are severe indeed, the leadership has not been able to stamp out the phenomenon by any means;” effects subsided “as soon as the pressure and the campaigning subsided.”⁵² Official Cuban media continues to openly discuss the troubling extent of corruption and how the problem potentially threatens national security and the legitimacy of the state.⁵³ The new president, Miguel Diaz-Canel, frequently discusses the need for new measures to address it.

3. The Curious Case of Singapore

Table 5.3:

Building Clean Government Under the PAP

Name and Dates	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
“Preventing Corrupt Practices” 1960–66?	✓	✓	✓	Breakthrough

⁵⁰ “Raúl Castro continues to crack down on corruption,” *Economist Intelligence Unit*, 2012. <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1476389731&Country=Cuba&topic=Politics&oid=51706389&flid=1929494177>

⁵¹ *The Cuban Economy / La Economía Cubana*, 2018/3/1, <https://thecubaneconomy.com/articles/2018/03/el-poder-politico-es-el-responsable-de-la-corrupcion-generalizada/>

⁵² Brenner et al., *A Contemporary Cuba Reader*, pp. 81, 210.

⁵³ *Cuba Debate*, 2018/2/26, <http://www.cubadebate.cu/especiales/2018/02/26/corrupcion-peligro-que-nos-afecta-a-todos/#.WsxwxNPwagR>

Singapore is a rare case of widely-acknowledged, long-term anti-corruption success under authoritarianism. The People's Action Party, led by Lee Kuan Yew (LKY), came to power on an anti-corruption platform in 1959. Many forms of government corruption were rife in Singapore in the 1950s, with profiteering and bribery being particularly common.⁵⁴ Since corruption was “one of the biggest issues” at the time, the public was pleased that “incorruptibility was the pivotal value which the PAP brought to governance.”⁵⁵ Once in power, it launched numerous reforms that effectively curbed corruption throughout the government.⁵⁶ Not only that, but the government actually continued enforcement in later decades. By the mid-1970s, Singapore had established the “enviable” reputation for cleanliness it still enjoys today, with “instances of corruption involving a large number of officers...nearly eliminated.”⁵⁷ It has “an honest and efficient government with officials who rank high by world standards in terms of quality, efficiency, and effectiveness.”⁵⁸

In the case of Lee Kuan Yew, unlike for most autocrats, scholars and commentators have little difficulty believing that his anti-corruption efforts were sincere and motivated by an ambitious vision of what kind of future Singapore should have. LKY is often cited as an example

⁵⁴ C. M. Turnbull, *A History of Modern Singapore, 1819–2005* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), p. 229.

⁵⁵ Richard Lim, Sonny Yap, and Leong Weng Kam, *Men in White: The Untold Story of Singapore's Ruling Political Party* (Singapore Press Holdings, 2009), p. 177.

⁵⁶ Jon S. T. Quah, “Learning from Singapore's Effective Anti-Corruption Strategy: Policy Recommendations for South Korea,” *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 6.1 (2017).

⁵⁷ “Minister of State, Wee Toon Boon, Charged with Corruption,” State Department cable, 1975/4/26.; Shang Ying, *Curbing Corruption: A Comparative Analysis of Corruption Control in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2002), p. 148. See also: Document 284, FRUS, 1964–1968, *Volume XXVI*, 1967/10/13.

⁵⁸ Ezra F. Vogel, “A Little Dragon Tamed” in Kernial Singh Sandhu, Paul Wheatley, and Hussein Alatas, Eds., *Management of Success: The Moulding of Modern Singapore*, (Westview Press; Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989), p. 1049.

of the rare “enlightened” autocrat, and his smarts and incorruptibility in particular have been the subject of praise from many diplomats and politicians who knew him.⁵⁹ LKY opposed both communism and Western liberal democracy, advocating instead authoritarian developmentalism and a “well-ordered” society with a foundation of Confucianism or “Asian values.”⁶⁰ These commitments explain why curbing corruption was so important. LKY wrote in his memoirs that in 1959: “We were sickened by the greed, corruption, and decadence of many Asian leaders... We were swept up by the wave of revolution in Asia... We had a deep sense of mission to establish a clean and effective government.”⁶¹ Another perspective would be that any Singaporean leader would have had good reason to curb corruption because of how heavily the city-state’s economy relies on being an international entrepôt; corruption would be very damaging if it drove foreign businesses away from the port.

The 1960 Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) provided the framework for anti-corruption efforts. Replacing weak laws from the colonial period, the PCA was more comprehensive in defining and listing corrupt acts, imposed harsher penalties for those convicted, and, crucially, strengthened the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB).⁶² The CPIB had been set up in 1952 but was understaffed and only focused on certain kinds of corruption cases.⁶³ The PCA built up the CPIB and granted it wide latitude to conduct

⁵⁹ “Lee Kwan Yew,” *The Wall Street Journal* [Eastern Edition], 2015/3/23.; See the quotations in Lim et al., *Men in White*, p. 573.

⁶⁰ This term is widely associated with LKY. Fareed Zakaria, “A Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,” *Foreign Affairs* 109 (1994).

⁶¹ Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story, 1965–2000* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), pp. 157, 158.

⁶² Jon S. T. Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asia: A Comparative Study of Six Countries* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003), p. 116.

⁶³ Oral History Interview with Richard Middleton-Smith (the first chief of the CPIB), National Archives of Singapore, 1999/9/27, Reel 4 of 5.

investigations, arrest suspects, and conduct searches.⁶⁴ The CPIB's director and "senior officers" have the authority to investigate any bank account and look at any government records on a suspect.⁶⁵ The PCA and the CPIB only grew stronger in later years as they were reformed to stay current, and impressed observers with their strict and impartial enforcement.⁶⁶

The PAP was aided in reforms by the highly capable Singaporean state. State capacity was partly a legacy of British rule and partly a result of the PAP's own organizational strength and unity, which in turn grew out of a period of complex revolutionary struggle.⁶⁷ Also, Singapore's small size as a country made it easier to achieve a comparable level of state capacity.⁶⁸ Britain established a well-organized, capable bureaucracy and meritocratic institutions that are often cited as factors in Singapore's later successes, including against corruption.⁶⁹ The PAP was formed in late 1954 as a "radical and anti-colonial coalition of democratic socialists and left-wing communist forces," with the moderate faction being represented by LKY and his associates.⁷⁰ But through years of infighting and a dramatic 1961 party split, LKY and the moderate faction came to dominate, suppressing the Communists and

⁶⁴ Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asia*, p. 116.

⁶⁵ Jon S. T. Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asian Countries: An Impossible Dream?* (Singapore: ISEAS Pub, 2013), p. 220.

⁶⁶ Quah, "Learning from Singapore's Effective Anti-Corruption Strategy," p. 1.

⁶⁷ On the PAP's "counterrevolutionary conversion:" Dan Slater and Nicholas Rush Smith, "The Power of Counterrevolution: Elitist Origins of Political Order in Postcolonial Asia and Africa," *American Journal of Sociology* 121, No. 5 (Mar. 1, 2016), pp. 1472–516.

⁶⁸ Amazingly, the CPIB had fewer than 50 investigators around the end of the 1970s. Source: Barry Newman, "The Clean Machine: Anti-corruption Squad in Singapore Keeps Civil Servants Honest," *The Wall Street Journal*, 1980/1/9. There were still only 84 investigators in 2003. Source: Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asia*, p. 117.

⁶⁹ Diane K. Mauzy and R. S. Milne, *Singapore Politics under the People's Action Party* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 27, 40.; Quah, "Learning from Singapore's Effective Anti-Corruption Strategy," p. 2.

⁷⁰ Chan, "The PAP and the Structuring of the Political System," p. 71.

socialists. Relatedly, the PAP dealt with race riots between Chinese and Malays and oversaw Singapore's secession from Malaysia in 1965. These early years "already reflected tendencies towards centralization of power and bureaucratization. Draconian measures developed initially to deal with the communists were institutionalized as features of the new political structure."⁷¹ In this tumultuous period, the PAP began "to exhibit the politically stabilizing effects of elite collective action that we associate with durable party dominance."⁷²

Lee Kuan Yew had unconstrained leadership through at least the mid-1980s. LKY was "virtually synonymous with the city-state he has largely created."⁷³ He won great legitimacy as the leader who defeated the Communists, guided the nation through fraught negotiations with Malaysia, and delivered true Singaporean independence in 1965.⁷⁴ As a result, he "so dominates Singapore politics that his personal style sets the tone for the government."⁷⁵ His personal example of incorruptibility, for instance, reportedly had an impact on those working under him.⁷⁶ Robert Rotberg includes LKY in the list of those leaders who with "unquestioned power...can change prevailing political cultures by fiat."⁷⁷

This claim that LKY had unconstrained leadership may seem to be at odds with Singapore having quasi-democratic institutions, but through the 1980s the regime was not nearly

⁷¹ Chan, "The PAP and the Structuring of the Political System," p. 78.

⁷² Slater and Smith, "The Power of Counterrevolution," p. 1501.

⁷³ "Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew: Is the Magic Fading?" Central Intelligence Agency, an Intelligence Assessment, Oct. 1985, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Vogel, "A Little Dragon Tamed," p. 1051.

⁷⁵ Vogel, "A Little Dragon Tamed," p. 1053.

⁷⁶ Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asian Countries*, p. 216.

⁷⁷ Robert I. Rotberg, *The Corruption Cure: How Citizens and Leaders Can Combat Graft* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 251.

as democratic as it is sometimes portrayed.⁷⁸ Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way score it as “fully authoritarian because restrictions on speech and association made it nearly impossible for opposition groups to operate publicly and because legal controls and other institutional obstacles prevented opposition parties from contesting most seats in parliament.”⁷⁹ Larry Diamond likewise writes that it does not qualify as a competitive authoritarian regime because “elections are largely an authoritarian façade, the ruling or dominant party wins almost all the seats...repeatedly over 95 percent.”⁸⁰ The regime became more authoritarian with Operation Coldstone, a security crackdown in February 1963 that saw the arrest of more than 100 opposition figures and leftists. The party and LKY in particular became so dominant that elections did not threaten his hold on power at all, and checks and balances existed but were among political bodies under him.⁸¹ Though Singapore was not a one-party state, the PAP monopolized power; from 1968 to 1984, it held every seat in the national parliament. “Lee was so disturbed by the decline [in the 1984 elections] that after the election he even suggested that the one-man-one-vote system may not be appropriate for Singapore.”⁸²

Is Singapore a case of an authoritarian regime that succeeded in curbing corruption by mimicking the democratic approach with its quasi-democratic institutions? Scholars have argued

⁷⁸ William F. Case, “Can the ‘Halfway House’ Stand? Semidemocracy and Elite Theory in Three Southeast Asian Countries,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 4, (Jul., 1996), pp. 437–464.

⁷⁹ Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁸⁰ Larry J. Diamond, “Thinking about Hybrid Regimes,” *Journal of Democracy*, (2002), 13(2), p. 32.

⁸¹ Chan Hung Chee, “The PAP and the Structuring of the Political System” in Kernal Singh Sandhu, Paul Wheatley, and Hussein Alatas, Eds., *Management of Success: The Moulding of Modern Singapore* (Westview Press; Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989).

⁸² “Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew: Is the Magic Fading?” Central Intelligence Agency, an Intelligence Assessment, Oct. 1985, p. 1.

that Singapore's success in reducing corruption is due to various factors: the country's small size, an unusually dedicated autocratic leadership with strong political will, particularly draconian anti-corruption enforcement, and British colonial legacies such as a separation of powers and a well-trained bureaucracy.⁸³ There are many factors here, but the key question is how much weight to give the regime's formally democratic institutions: its relatively strong judicial independence, rule of law, separation of power, etc.

Judged against the four indicators of the democratic approach and the authoritarian playbook discussed in Chapter One (see Table 1.1), the Singaporean case does not fit clearly into either camp. On the question of power centralization versus decentralization, Singapore should be seen as the former, suggesting an authoritarian playbook. Singapore's anti-corruption agency was often hailed as "independent," but it was only so from outside influence; as prime minister, LKY had direct control over it.⁸⁴ The CPIB "owes its success to being at the heart of political power, not to distancing itself from it."⁸⁵ The "separation of power," Ezra Vogel writes, was not "the pillar of good government" in Singapore.⁸⁶ On the second indicator, the question of strengthening laws and norms versus disrupting them, Singapore is more in line with the democratic approach. LKY did not use his discretionary authority to aggressively disrupt and remake major party and state organizations. Mostly, corruption control proceeded through normal, often pre-existing institutional channels, like those in the judicial system. The third indicator, about public engagement versus top-down control, points to the PAP using an

⁸³ Quah, "Learning from Singapore's Effective Anti-Corruption Strategy.," Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, p. 151.

⁸⁴ Martin Painter, "Myths of Political Independence, or How Not to Solve the Corruption Problem: Lessons for Vietnam," *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* 1, No. 2 (2014), pp. 273–86.

⁸⁵ Painter, "Myths of Political Independence," p. 278.

⁸⁶ Vogel, "A Little Dragon Tamed," p. 1053.

authoritarian playbook. Corruption was curbed through persistent and draconian enforcement of discipline by an integrity system accountable only to the top leadership.⁸⁷ To defeat corruption, the Lee administration borrowed “campaign-style mobilization” tactics from Malaysian Communists, bullied and tailed officials without warrants, limited the legal rights of defendants, punished civil servants more severely than private citizens, and often acted with the presumption of guilt rather than innocence.⁸⁸ “Corrupt officials, particularly high-ranking ones, are dealt with in Singapore with a severity rarely seen elsewhere.”⁸⁹ Besides sticks, there were also carrots—like pay raises for bureaucrats—but these were top-down initiatives as well.⁹⁰ The fourth indicator asks whether the regime allows transparency and governmental openness to outside investigations or promotes its anti-corruption efforts through a controlled propaganda narrative. Here, Singapore is closer to the democratic approach, although it somewhat paradoxically combines high governmental transparency with low press freedom. In sum, though quasi-democratic institutions were not responsible for curbing corruption in Singapore, neither did LKY rely fully on an authoritarian playbook.

I submit that perhaps LKY *did not need* to go so far as a fully authoritarian playbook to reduce corruption. While corruption was rampant when the PAP came into power in 1959, this was overwhelmingly at lower levels, whereas the upper ranks of the bureaucracy were already

⁸⁷ Tan Tay Keong, “Masters, Mandarins and Mortals: The Constitution of Singapore’s National Integrity System” in Simon Tay and Maria Seda, Eds., *The Enemy Within: Combating Corruption in Asia* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003), Chapter 14.

⁸⁸ Shang, *Curbing Corruption*, pp. 153–60.; Tan, “Masters, Mandarins and Mortals: The Constitution of Singapore’s National Integrity System,” pp. 304–305.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Quah, “Learning from Singapore’s Effective Anti-Corruption Strategy,” p. 21.

⁹⁰ Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asia*,” p. 110.

“almost totally free of corruption” and high quality.⁹¹ So despite the scale of corruption, the necessary changes to the already strong British institutions inherited by the PAP were relatively small, requiring mostly political will from the top to be carried out. This may help explain why simple fixes like raising bureaucrats’ salaries worked in Singapore but have been ineffective in other countries.⁹² Many autocrats abolish or undermine inherited institutions that could give the opposition channels to challenge them, but LKY and the PAP were so politically dominant in the early decades of their rule that these British holdovers did not pose a serious threat.

4. Blocked Reform in Vietnam

Table 5.4:

Anti-Corruption Activity Under the VCP

Name and Dates	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
Campaign to Purify Party Organization and State Bureaucracies 1986–89	✓		✓	Failed Reform
Regeneration Drive 1998–2001	✓		✓	Failed Reform
“Trong’s Cleanup” 2017–	✓		✓	To Be Determined

Government corruption has been a thorny problem for the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) at least since national reunification in 1975, especially after the pro-market reforms

⁹¹ Mauzy and Milne, *Singapore Politics under the People’s Action Party*, p. 27.

⁹² Shang Ying, “Regime and Curbing Corruption,” *China Review*, Oct. 2004, Vol.4(2), pp. 99–128.

known as Doi Moi (Renovation) began in 1986.⁹³ “A consensus gradually emerged among party leaders that bureaucratic profiteering was detrimental to economic reforms and challenged party legitimacy.”⁹⁴ As the CIA assessed in 1986, Vietnam suffered from a “bloated and inefficient government bureaucracy. Widespread corruption and criminal behavior.”⁹⁵ Anti-corruption efforts launched by General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh in the late 1980s and General Secretary Le Kha Phieu in the late 1990s both sought to restore discipline and effectiveness in the party and state—party/state-building—but faltered in the face of resistance from regime elites, resulting in Failed Reforms. This was despite the revolutionary legitimacy and proven state capacity that the regime had at its disposal, the damage caused by corruption notwithstanding.⁹⁶

As the new VCP general secretary in 1986, Linh launched efforts to rectify a regime that was increasingly “ossified, unyielding, corrupt, and uncompromising.”⁹⁷ “Widespread criticism of the party and its policies emerged in the local congresses of the party organization” in 1986.⁹⁸ In 1987, Linh launched the “Campaign to Purify Party Organization and State Bureaucracies.”

⁹³ Martin Gainsborough, Dang Ngoc Dinh, and Tran Thanh Phuong, “Corruption, Public Administration Reform and Development: Challenges and Opportunities as Viet Nam Moves Towards Middle-Income,” The United Nations Development Programme Viet Nam, May 2009, p. 11.; Lee Kang Woo, “Corruption & Anti-corruption in Doi-moi Era Vietnam,” *Southeast Asia Research*, 2008, Vol.17(2), p.123. / 이강우, “도이머이시대 베트남의 부패와 반부패,” *동남아연구*, 2008, 17(2), 페이지 123.

⁹⁴ John Gillespie, “The Political-legal Culture and Anti-corruption Reforms in Vietnam” in Timothy Lindsey and Howard W. Dick, Eds., *Corruption in Asia: Rethinking the Governance Paradigm* (Federation Press, 2002), p. 167.

⁹⁵ “Vietnam in Transition: Prospects for and Implications of Reform,” Central Intelligence Agency, Special National Intelligence Estimate, July 1988, p. 1.

⁹⁶ Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. xiv.; Mark Beeson and Pham Hung Hung, “Developmentalism with Vietnamese Characteristics: The Persistence of State-led Development in East Asia,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Aug. 2012, pp. 1–21.

⁹⁷ Lewis M. Stern, *Renovating the Vietnamese Communist Party: Nguyen Van Linh and the Programme for Organizational Reform, 1987–91* (Singapore: St. Martin’s Press; Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), p. 179.

⁹⁸ Thayer, *Political Developments in Vietnam*, p. 6.

He carried out a membership review of the party and purged corrupt and ineffective cadres; the results were soon portrayed in the state-run media as “surgical success of the campaign to eliminate...members who had cluttered the party’s membership rolls.”⁹⁹ The party rectification disciplined 127,800 members and expelled 78,200 from the ranks, though corruption was just one of several reasons for expulsion.¹⁰⁰

Unable to rely on the party to cleanse itself, Linh sought outside help. He took steps in 1987 to “liberalize the press and empower intellectuals” so that they would expose corruption and rally the public to his cause of governmental rejuvenation.¹⁰¹ He hoped public pressure would help him “pressure and cajole the bureaucracy” and “party and state officials who were blocking his reforms.”¹⁰² Some scholars have characterized this opening as part of a Vietnamese glasnost Linh led after 1986.¹⁰³ “His own version of glasnost has featured a vigorous attack on inefficient and corrupt party and government cadres.”¹⁰⁴ In 1987, in a major newspaper editorial entitled “Things Which Must Be Done Immediately,” Linh “railed against corruption” and other ills.¹⁰⁵ Another way in which Linh tried to rally support was by allowing the newly-organized Club of Former Resistance Fighters (CFRF)—a kind of “loyal opposition within the party”—to push for anti-corruption measures and other major governance reforms. Though it never

⁹⁹ Stern, *Renovating the Vietnamese Communist Party*, pp. 19, 29.

¹⁰⁰ Thayer, *Political Developments in Vietnam*, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ Zachary Abuza, *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam* (Boulder: Rienner Publishers, 2001), p. 17.

¹⁰² Abuza, *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*, p. 77.

¹⁰³ William Duiker, “Vietnam: The Challenge of Reform,” *Current History* 88, No. 537 (1989), p. 177.

¹⁰⁴ “Vietnam in Transition: Prospects for and Implications of Reform,” Central Intelligence Agency, Special National Intelligence Estimate, July 1988, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Carlyle A. Thayer, *Political Developments in Vietnam: From the Sixth to Seventh National Party Congress* (Canberra, A.C.T.: Australian National University, 1992), p. 6.

advocated multiparty democracy, the CFRF was a uniquely well-organized interest group in the VCP that “launched virulent attacks” on the party’s policy failures.¹⁰⁶ As a former Vietcong guerrilla who “directed the 1968 Tet offensive,” Linh naturally claimed to be trying to loyally improve the party and therefore governance of the country.¹⁰⁷

Linh’s personal power was constrained by the VCP’s tradition of collective leadership, which is unusual in communist regimes.¹⁰⁸ “Because of pressure from conservatives and the bureaucracy, Linh [had] trouble implementing the reform program.”¹⁰⁹ He “could not push beyond the conservative majority and his own faith and political beliefs.”¹¹⁰ Linh lacked the authority of his predecessor Le Duan, who had been the top decision-maker in the party since the 1960s, when revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh had suffered from health problems. Additionally, the entrenched “bureaucracy, which gained its power and privileged position in society by controlling the distribution of money and resources” was not eager to implement Linh’s liberalizing anti-corruption reforms.¹¹¹ Party elites “re-imposed party controls” on the press that had been allowed to criticize corruption relatively freely in 1989, sapping the campaign of its

¹⁰⁶ Abuza, *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*, pp. 168, 178, 171.

¹⁰⁷ NYT, 1998/4/28, <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/04/28/world/nguyen-van-linh-vietnam-s-ex-party-chief-dies-at-82.html>; *Vietnam News*, 2017/7/1, <http://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/272437/honour-for-party-patriot-nguyen-van-linh.html#TcT45vYeY701Bwhv.97>

¹⁰⁸ The general secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party is commonly regarded as holding the most powerful position in the regime, followed by the prime minister and then the president. However, the general secretary is at most the *primus inter pares* within the Politburo, which is the organ of collective rule.

¹⁰⁹ Abuza, *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*, p. 136.

¹¹⁰ Stern, *Renovating the Vietnamese Communist Party*, p. 179.

¹¹¹ Abuza, *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*, p. 17.

momentum.¹¹² Sporadic attempts to fight corruption continued in the early 1990s, but without leadership.¹¹³

A decade later, General Secretary Le Kha Phieu led a new round of efforts aimed at party rejuvenation, including corruption control. The public was demanding action, with corruption being the most common cause of protest in the late 1990s.¹¹⁴ Phieu “seem[ed] genuinely concerned” about the problem, argues Zachary Abuza.¹¹⁵ Phieu personally had “a very clean image. He was never publicly identified with graft and by all accounts he lived a modest lifestyle. Unlike most leaders, there were also no corruption scandals or nepotism allegations involving his family.”¹¹⁶ “Phieu launched a two-year ‘regeneration drive’ of criticism and self-criticism in May 1999 to restore the party’s soiled image,” expelling hundreds of party members and disciplining thousands more for graft and other economic crimes.¹¹⁷ A deputy prime minister and two provincial party chiefs were fired, but most high-level officials were safe.¹¹⁸ In February 1999, the VCP Central Committee “voted to enhance the authority of internal inspection and discipline committees, as well as the authority of law enforcement agencies, elected bodies, and the media over party members.”¹¹⁹

¹¹² Thayer, *Political Developments in Vietnam*, p. 7.

¹¹³ Lee, “Corruption & Anti-corruption in Doi-moi Era Vietnam,” p. 130.

¹¹⁴ Robert Templer, *Shadows and Wind: A View of Modern Vietnam* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), p. 150.

¹¹⁵ Abuza, *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*, p. 32.

¹¹⁶ Zachary Abuza, “The Lessons of Le Kha Phieu: Changing Rules in Vietnamese Politics,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Apr. 2002), p. 137.

¹¹⁷ Abuza, *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*, p. 222.

¹¹⁸ Adrian Edwards, “Closed Minds,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (Dec 9, 1999).

¹¹⁹ Abuza, *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*, p. 223.

Despite these measures and the concerns of many in the party that corruption was damaging, Phieu lacked the authority to enforce or follow through on reforms that went against the private interests of party elites. Phieu had been selected as leader as a “compromise candidate;” he was “constrained” from bold actions and needed to seek balance among elite interests.¹²⁰ It is unsurprising therefore that “senior officials originally indicted...disappeared from lists of defendants with no explanation” and fraud investigations simply lost momentum.¹²¹ Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, for example, was able to weather accusations of corruption from other senior officials, claiming publicly that corruption in Vietnam, unlike in other countries, did not reach the regime’s upper levels.¹²² Similarly, Politburo member Pham The Duyet was exonerated from “a high-level investigation into allegations surrounding graft and nepotism” despite his own calls for stronger anti-corruption efforts.¹²³

The trend of inaction against corruption continued into the new century, though malfeasance at the highest levels of the party is widely suspected. “At the 4th Plenum of the Central Committee in October 2012, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong and the majority of the Politburo tried but failed to discipline Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung for policy mistakes and corruption.”¹²⁴ Sporadic arrests did little to change officials’ incentives.¹²⁵ “For many

¹²⁰ David W. P. Elliott, *Changing Worlds: Vietnam’s Transition from Cold War to Globalization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 180.

¹²¹ Andrew Solomon, “Vietnam Talks Tough but Corruption Seems Ingrained,” *Reuters*, 1998/3/29.

¹²² Justin J. Corfield, *The History of Vietnam* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2008), p. 121.; Solomon, “Vietnam Talks Tough but Corruption Seems Ingrained.”

¹²³ Abuza, *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*, p. 223.

¹²⁴ Jonathan D. London, *Politics in Contemporary Vietnam: Party, State and Authority Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 41.

¹²⁵ “Vietnam: Corruption abounding,” *The Economist*, 2002/9/14.; “Vietnam: Corruption probes uncover 49 cases,” *Asia News Monitor*, 2012/7/3.

dissidents, the extent and scale of corruption in Vietnam is what ignited their disgust with the political system.”¹²⁶

Since 2017, however, a major new anti-corruption campaign has been under way. The main aim appears to be to reverse the delegitimizing effects corruption is having on the VCP.¹²⁷ The most high-level casualty of the campaign has been former Politburo member and CEO of PetroVietnam Dinh La Thang. His trial in early 2018 also included twenty-one of his subordinates from PetroVietnam.¹²⁸ The campaign involves legal measures that could improve monitoring of corruption, broaden the public’s access to information, and change bureaucratic incentives.¹²⁹ There is some disagreement as to the political background of this campaign. Some scholars argue that it coincides with a strengthening of collective leadership after an attempt to personalize power by former prime minister Nguyen Tan Dung, who stepped down in 2016.¹³⁰ Others see Trong consolidating personal power, especially after he became the President *in addition* to being the VCP General Secretary.¹³¹ From that perspective, the campaign is reminiscent of Xi Jinping’s moves since 2012. The VCP certainly watches and learns from developments in the Chinese Communist Party.¹³² So far there is “little documented reduction in

¹²⁶ London, *Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*, p. 104.

¹²⁷ Carlyle A. Thayer, “Vietnam: Do Recent Arrests Signal Chaos at the Top?” Thayer Consultancy Background Briefing, Aug. 2, 2017.

¹²⁸ Edmund Malesky and Phan Tuan Ngoc, “Rust Removal: Why Vietnam’s Anti-Corruption Efforts Have Failed to Deliver Results and What That Implies For Future Campaigns,” Unpublished manuscript, 2018, p. 2.

¹²⁹ Malesky and Phan, “Rust Removal,” p. 27.

¹³⁰ Author’s interview with Dr. Carlyle A. Thayer, 2018/9/12. See also: Carlyle A. Thayer, “Vietnam: Party Factions, Leadership and Policy Issues,” Thayer Consultancy Background Briefing, July 22, 2017.

¹³¹ *The Diplomat*, 2018/2/22, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/is-vietnam-going-the-way-of-china/>

¹³² Author’s interview with John Gillespie, 2018/10/4.

the corruption experienced by citizens or businesses in Vietnam,” but anti-corruption enforcement is more systematic than before and the campaign is ongoing.¹³³

5. Malaysia: A Test of Quasi-Democratic Institutions

Table 5.5:

Anti-Corruption Rhetoric and Action Under UMNO

Name and Dates	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
Mahathir calls for “clean and efficient government” 1982	✓		✓	Empty Gestures
“Reforms for National Integrity” 1997–2004	✓		✓	Failed Reform

The ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition began in a conservative mobilization against the threat of communist revolution in pre-independence Malaysia. This threat helped the BN’s leading party, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), to win remarkably broad support. It crossed communal divisions, attracted ethnic Chinese and other minorities as well as ethnic Malays, and drew leaders from among both traditional and new elites.¹³⁴ This political strength carried UMNO and its allies to smashing electoral victories in the early 1950s and

¹³³ Malesky and Phan, “Rust Removal,” p. 1.

For more information on the ongoing campaign in Vietnam, see various Background Briefings by Carlyle A. Thayer at Thayer Consultancy: “Vietnam: Party Factions, Leadership and Policy Issues,” July 22, 2017.; “Vietnam: Former PetroVietnam Official Extradited,” Aug. 1, 2017.; “Vietnam: Do Recent Arrests Signal Chaos at the Top?” Aug. 2, 2017.; “Vietnam: Ocean Bank Corruption Trial Verdict,” Sept. 29, 2017.; “Vietnam’s Anti-Corruption Campaign,” Dec. 22, 2017.; “Vietnam: Public Security Officer Charged with Revealing State Secrets” Jan. 3, 2018.; “Vietnam: Anti-Corruption Campaign Assessed,” Jan. 5, 2018.

¹³⁴ Slater and Smith, “The Power of Counterrevolution,” p. 1493.

through Malaysia's independence in 1957. Though the threat of revolution receded, the coalition held together to the mutual advantage of the various groups. A combination of successful economic policies and manipulation of the electoral system secured UMNO and its allies continued victories. As Dan Slater and Nicholas Rush Smith argue, counterrevolutionary consolidation produced an "exceedingly durable" political order.¹³⁵ But the BN did not use its dominance to quash all opposition; Malaysia had semi-competitive elections and relative political openness compared to fully authoritarian regimes. Malaysia was a competitive authoritarian regime with a multiparty legislature from 1959 onward, and one that was "much more competitive than Singapore has ever been."¹³⁶

Under BN, corruption increased from one decade to the next.¹³⁷ In "the late 1950s, the growing concern of the United Malays' National Organization over its heavy financial dependence on the Malaysian Chinese Association led party leaders to establish covert 'special funds' to which firms could make regular contributions." Further enhancements to party financing became necessary when the coalition almost lost in the 1969 general election.¹³⁸ UMNO increasingly supported itself by engaging in illegal business ventures and through patronage networks among politicians and the wealthy, especially after the launch of the New Economic Policy in 1971.¹³⁹ Corruption then "spread exponentially" in the 1980s under Prime

¹³⁵ Slater and Smith, "The Power of Counterrevolution," p. 1472.

¹³⁶ Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*, pp. 21, 22. The quote is from the author's interview with Dr. William Case, 2018/8/10. Dan Slater has said he disagrees that Malaysia and Singapore were of different levels of political competitiveness, but that was before the surprising ouster of UMNO through elections in May 2018.

¹³⁷ Author's interview with several scholars specializing in Malaysian politics and economy.

¹³⁸ Edmund Terence Gomez, "Monetizing Politics: Financing Parties and Elections in Malaysia," *Modern Asian Studies*, 46.5 (2012), p. 1382.

¹³⁹ Edmund Terence Gomez and K. S. Jomo, *Malaysia's Political Economy: Politics, Patronage and Profits* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 25–27.

Minister Mahathir Mohamad, including the “rampant use of cold hard cash” to buy elections.¹⁴⁰ Personal and factional rivalries within the BN were a major cause of the campaign finance arms race.¹⁴¹ Another factor was that over time Mahathir lost the ability to discipline party members who maintained personal patronage networks beyond his reach, leading to a diffusion of corrupt campaign activities.¹⁴²

Despite overseeing an increase in corruption, Mahathir was committed to a modernizing, developmental mission. “From the very day that he began his tenure of office it was made clear that one of his primary tasks would be...the nation-building process.”¹⁴³ He wanted to build a modern, industrialized, high-growth Malaysia, and “much of what he did, or did not do, could be explained by devotion to this cause.”¹⁴⁴ Believing traditional Malay culture to be causing laziness and poverty, Mahathir “sought to promote values such as hard work, discipline, and efficiency, and...holds up Japan and South Korea as models for Malaysian development.”¹⁴⁵ His “general program for ‘modernization’,” spurred him to raise standards for the civil service to bureaucratic excellence, for example.¹⁴⁶ In the 1990s, Mahathir promoted his modernizing ideas

¹⁴⁰ Barry Wain, *Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 142, 326.

¹⁴¹ Gomez, “Monetizing Politics,” p. 1385.

¹⁴² William Case, “New Uncertainties for an Old Pseudo-Democracy: The Case of Malaysia,” *Comparative Politics*, 37.1 (Oct., 2004), p. 92.

¹⁴³ Chandran Jeshurun, “Malaysia: The Mahathir Supremacy and Vision 2020” *Southeast Asian Affairs* Vol. 20, (Jan 1, 1993), p. 203. See also: “Malaysia’s Mahathir: The Man and His New Election Mandate,” Central Intelligence Agency, an Intelligence Memorandum, Apr. 1982, p. 4.; “Malaysia: Mahathir Under Pressure,” Central Intelligence Agency, an Intelligence Assessment,” Jan 1984, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ Wain, *Malaysian Maverick*, p. 88.

¹⁴⁵ “Malaysia’s New Generation of Political Leaders: Is Change Ahead?” Central Intelligence Agency, an Intelligence Assessment, Nov. 1986.

¹⁴⁶ Diane K. Mauzy and R. S. Milne, *Malaysian Politics Under Mahathir* (Taylor and Francis, 2002), p. 170.

under the slogan “Vision 2020,” which was about the impressive development Malaysia could theoretically achieve by 2020.¹⁴⁷ Despite pushing privatization in some areas, Mahathir embraced building up the power of the state to guide development. Scholars debate how similar Malaysia in this period was to the paradigmatic developmental states in East Asia.¹⁴⁸

Mahathir repeatedly promised to combat corruption during the 1982 general election campaign. “Money politics” was becoming “institutionalized in UMNO” and top leaders were criticizing its evils in speeches, so Mahathir pushed for a “‘clean and efficient government’ movement”¹⁴⁹ Mahathir put forward ideas with the potential to address corruption, such as that there should be “leadership by example” among civil servants, but it is unclear what if any follow-through there was on these words.¹⁵⁰ The mid-1980s instead saw the emergence of corruption scandals that embarrassed the ruling party.¹⁵¹ Overall, Mahathir’s movement was little more than Empty Gestures.

Mahathir personalized power in the 1990s, but did not end the regime’s quasi-democratic institutions, leaving a major constraint on the full exercise of autocratic leadership. Slater argues convincingly that Mahathir had “transformed” the Malaysian system by the late 1990s by

¹⁴⁷ Mauzy and Milne, *Malaysian Politics Under Mahathir*, pp. 165–66.

¹⁴⁸ James V. Jesudason, “The Developmental Clientelist State: the Malaysian Case,” *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, Vol. 23, No. 1/2, ASIA (1997), pp. 147–73.; T. J. Pempel, “The Developmental Regime in a Changing World Economy” in Meredith Woo-Cumings, Ed., *The Developmental State* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 161 (ft. 64).; Jeff Tan, “Can the East Asian Developmental State be Replicated? The Case of Malaysia” in Robert Springborg, Ed., *Development models in Muslim contexts: Chinese, ‘Islamic’ and neo-liberal alternatives* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2009), Chapter Seven.

¹⁴⁹ Wain, *Malaysian Maverick*, pp. 61, 142.

¹⁵⁰ Shafiqah and Mohamed, “Insight of Anti-Corruption Initiatives in Malaysia,” p. 527.

¹⁵¹ NYT, 1985/1/8, <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/01/08/business/malaysia-discloses-details-of-bank-scandal.html>;

“packing, rigging, and circumventing” regime institutions to expand his personal power.¹⁵²

Mahathir purged Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in 1998 and had him jailed in 1999; Mahathir had the “absolute loyalty of the police.” This was personalization, however, within a “pseudo-democracy or ‘competitive authoritarianism’.”¹⁵³ Mahathir continued to face semi-competitive elections, which meant the need to build broad coalitions of supporters to win—which in turn required fundraising, deal-making, policy concessions, patronage, and other forms of compromise.¹⁵⁴

Vineeta Yadav and Bumba Mukherjee argue that the Malaysian government successfully curbed corruption with a series of reforms between 1997 and the mid-2000s.¹⁵⁵ Mahathir certainly made a show of reform, saying: “I have tried asking nicely, begged and even cried...money politics is the worst kind of disease which can cause UMNO to rot from within.”¹⁵⁶ Accordingly, he oversaw the passage of the path-breaking Anti-Corruption Act of 1997. This was followed by the National Integrity Plan, the Integrity Institute of Malaysia, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, and other laws, plans, and organizations.¹⁵⁷ The motivation for these anti-corruption measures, Yadav and Mukherjee contend, came from organized pressure in the legislature from opposition parties and business interests.

¹⁵² Dan Slater, “Iron Cage in an Iron Fist: Authoritarian Institutions and the Personalization of Power in Malaysia,” *Comparative Politics* 36, No. 1 (Oct. 1, 2003), pp. 83–84.

¹⁵³ Slater, “Iron Cage in an Iron Fist,” p. 83.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in Case, “New Uncertainties for an Old Pseudo-Democracy,” p. 92.

¹⁵⁵ Vineeta Yadav and Bumba Mukherjee, *The Politics of Corruption in Dictatorships* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), Chapter Seven.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Case, “New Uncertainties for an Old Pseudo-Democracy,” p. 92.

¹⁵⁷ Yadav and Mukherjee, *The Politics of Corruption in Dictatorships*, Chapter Seven.

This anti-corruption success, however, is highly questionable. Transparency International's CPI, which Yadav and Mukherjee use in their statistical analysis, does not show any clear trend for Malaysia in the period that they examine.¹⁵⁸ Many scholars, including some cited by Yadav and Mukherjee, do not describe the regime as having cleaned house at all. Several call corruption rampant and cite failures on this front by Prime Ministers Mahathir Mohamad and Abdullah Badawi.¹⁵⁹ Nor did foreign media coverage in this period look positively on the regime's handling of the issue.¹⁶⁰

The political consequences of widespread corruption rose precipitously after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. "In the 1999 elections, waged in the aftermath of economic crisis, social grievances over the UMNO's corruption helped weaken its electoral appeal."¹⁶¹ Rising support for opposition parties had "to do with wanting a moral compass in a widespread perception of the travails of modernity and the corruption, cronyism, and nepotism that many Malaysians...rage[d] about since at least the election campaign of 1999."¹⁶² We can speculate that government corruption was easier for Malaysians to accept when the economy was doing well, though numerous factors affect how public anger at corruption translates into political change.

¹⁵⁸ Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, <https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>

¹⁵⁹ Wain, *Malaysian Maverick*, p. 311.; Noore Siddiquee, "Combating Corruption and Managing Integrity in Malaysia: A Critical Overview of Recent Strategies and Initiatives," *Public Organization Review*, 10.2 (2010), pp. 153–71.; Nur Shafiqah Kapeli and Nafsiah Mohamed, "Insight of Anti-Corruption Initiatives in Malaysia," *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 31 (2015), pp. 525–34.; William Case, "Stress Testing Leadership in Malaysia: the 1MDB scandal and Najib Tun Razak," *The Pacific Review*, (2017) 30:5, p. 639.

My interviews with three specialists in Malaysian politics confirmed this generally negative impression.

¹⁶⁰ "Asia: Cleaning up?; Malaysia," *The Economist*, 2007/3/24.

¹⁶¹ Case, "New Uncertainties for an Old Pseudo-Democracy," p. 92.

¹⁶² Patricia A. Martinez, "The Islamic State or the State of Islam," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, (Dec. 2001), p. 483.

Corruption played an important role, though it was far from the only factor, in UMNO's eventual ouster in May 2018. Prime Minister Najib Razak's reputation was fatally weakened by revelations of large-scale corruption. Najib is accused of having syphoned hundreds of millions of dollars from the state investment fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad into his personal account. Around 7.5 billion dollars went missing from the fund in total. The public was incensed by the lurid details: "a 22-carat pink diamond necklace...for his wife," "paintings by Monet, Van Gogh and Warhol," a "megayacht for a family friend," etc.¹⁶³ The fractured opposition unified around the theme of corruption and the goal of throwing Najib out. The BN still went into the 2018 elections with confidence and its time-tested strategy of handing out money (hundreds of millions of dollars) to secure the necessary political support.¹⁶⁴ But this time, the political minuses of corruption outweighed the pluses for the incumbent regime.

The failure to control corruption in Malaysia came despite quasi-democratic institutions, strong state capacity, and Mahathir's commitment to modernization and development. The first of these may even have had negative effects if BN or opposition party politicians were motivated to engage in corruption to finance legal and illegal campaign activity for semi-competitive legislative elections. While the counterfactual of how corruption control would have turned out in a fully authoritarian Malaysia is hard to know, without quasi-democratic institutions Mahathir would certainly have had unconstrained leadership, which I argue was a key missing factor.

6. North Korea

Table 5.6:

¹⁶³ NYT, 2018/5/15, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/15/world/asia/malaysia-najib-razak-fall.html>

¹⁶⁴ NYT, 2018/5/15, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/15/world/asia/malaysia-najib-razak-fall.html>

Anti-Corruption Activity in the 1950s and Today

Name and Dates	Strong Motivation?	Unconstrained Leadership?	High State Capacity?	Anti-Corruption Outcome
Anti-Corruption and Anti-Waste Campaign 1955–58	✓	✓	✓	Unclear, limited information
Kim Jong-un calls for a “war” on corruption 2012–		✓	✓	Empty Gestures

This section discusses North Korea’s anti-corruption campaigns in the 1950s under Kim Il-sung (KIS) and reform rhetoric in recent years under Kim Jong-un (KJU). These early anti-corruption efforts are worth analyzing if only because there has been virtually nothing written about them in English. Informational constraints unfortunately make it difficult to judge whether anti-corruption efforts in the 1950s were successful or not, though the theory put forward in this study suggests that they should have been. Jumping to the present, KJU’s anti-corruption rhetoric has done little to suggest that North Korea will change its current image as one of the most corrupt countries in the world.

In 1952, in the midst of the Korean War, KIS launched an “anti-corruption and anti-waste” campaign.¹⁶⁵ The effort was explicitly modeled on the Chinese Communist Party’s Three Antis Campaign from the previous year.¹⁶⁶ As in that campaign, there was also an attack on

¹⁶⁵ *Hwanghae Ilbo* [황해일보] (hereafter HHIB), 1952/4/5, Box 1214, Record Group 242: National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, 1675 – 1958. Note: The records cited from Group 242 in this chapter are from among those captured by United Nations forces during the Korean War.

¹⁶⁶ Xu Dongwan, “The Korean War’s Influence on North Korea’s Society and System,” *Kwanhun Journal*, 41(2), 2000, p. 260.

徐東晚, “6·25 가 북한사회·체제에 미친 영향,” *관훈저널* 41(2), 2000, 페이지 260.

bureaucratism, which KIS was concerned had made the leadership in party and state organs ineffective.¹⁶⁷ Often, the same Three Antis slogan from China was used: “a struggle against corruption, bureaucratism, and waste.”¹⁶⁸

KIS announced that this campaign would raise the quality of party members, support the war economy, and ultimately help ensure military victory.¹⁶⁹ A political knowledge handbook from 1952 captured by United Nations forces reveals what KIS wanted to tell his party members and soldiers about the issue. In it, he is quoted as criticizing the growing trend of corruption, misuse of resources, and collusion with “dishonest merchants” both in government and society. KIS cited the case of a rubber plant in Pyongyang where there had been “manipulation of production statistics and then selling based on those false numbers, stealing from the national finance.” “Many party members in the factory failed to report and criticize this action at the appropriate time,” he lamented. Therefore, KIS claimed, there was a need for “strict statistics and control...systematic inspection of expenditures...and sharp criticism and self-criticism.”¹⁷⁰

Despite continued references to corruption cases in official media in the following years, it is not clear what became of this campaign, or even whether it amounted to enough to be considered an anti-corruption effort by the standards of this study.¹⁷¹ It is unknown, for example,

¹⁶⁷ HHIB, 1952/9/20 and 1952/10/3, Box 1224.; HHIB, 1952/3/27, Box 1214.; *Rodong Sinmun* [로동신문], 1952/2/20, Box 1211, Record Group 242: National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, 1675 – 1958.

¹⁶⁸ *Democratic Youth* [민주청년], 1952/7/9, Box 1224, Record Group 242: National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, 1675 – 1958.

¹⁶⁹ “*Political Knowledge* No. 3, 1952.5, (Central Committee Propaganda Agitation Department).” / “《정치지식》 제 3 호 1952.5 (중앙위원회 선전 선동부),” pp. 6–9, Box 1223, Record Group 242: National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, 1675 – 1958.

¹⁷⁰ “*Political Knowledge* No. 3, 1952.5,” pp. 2–8.

¹⁷¹ “Translations of North Korean Newspapers,” 1953/10/5, General Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, pp. 6–7, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80S01540R003000050012-6.pdf>

how many people were punished for bribery and embezzlement. Article 192 of the North Korean penal code, which was promulgated in 1950, states that bribery can be punished with “up to three years of forced labor.”¹⁷² A report from the Polish Embassy in North Korea from 1952 relates that “two groups of 5 people each, including the deputy to the general prosecutor of the Republic, have been executed by firing squad for theft and squandering of state property, while the general prosecutor was also dismissed and imprisoned. The total amount of losses incurred by the state through the criminal activity of only one of these groups reached 130 million wons [sic].” The report concluded that “there is no question that the current action of purging the state and economic apparatuses is strengthening them.”¹⁷³

The campaign recurred, or perhaps continued, soon after the ceasefire in 1953. At the Tenth Korean Workers’ Party’s (KWP) Central Committee plenum in April 1955, KIS launched an “anti-corruption and anti-waste” campaign and an accompanying “self-confession” campaign, which aimed to elicit voluntary confessions of wrongdoing.¹⁷⁴ In launching the anti-corruption and anti-waste campaign, KIS sought to strengthen party and state institutions to lead the post-war recovery and implement a socialist rapid-growth agenda.¹⁷⁵ It would be “a mass movement to improve cadre management of businesses and remold thought in the whole nation”—the first

¹⁷² “Crime and punishment: a brief history of North Korea’s penal code,” *NKNews (NK Pro)*, 2018/1/25.

¹⁷³ “Report from the Embassy of the People’s Republic of Poland in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea for the Period of 25 June to 25 July 1952.,” *Wilson Center Digital Archive* (hereafter WCDA), 1952/8/8, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114935>

¹⁷⁴ “Concerning the Self-Confession Movement in the DPRK,” WCDA, 1955/12/21, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115704.pdf?v=646698a3ecb4f7227f6777274c29a523>

¹⁷⁵ Shin, “The Evolution and Character of North Korea’s ‘Anti-Corruption, Anti-Waste Struggle’.”; Xu, “The Korean War’s Influence on North Korea’s Society and System,” p. 260.

such movement after the end of the Korean War.¹⁷⁶ The self-confession campaign, similarly, was meant to contribute to the economic recovery and improve bureaucratic discipline, as well as to increase coercive social control.¹⁷⁷ In his closing speech at the plenum, KIS reportedly called for “the establishment of daily monitoring and strict discipline in the expenditure of financial resources and materials, and a national struggle against theft and embezzlement.” He continued by claiming that “approximately 1/3 of all resources and materials is being wrongly spent and partially looted in all sectors of the state and cooperative economy.”¹⁷⁸ The campaigns continued for three years, ending in August 1958.

KIS consolidated personal power in the mid-1950s, meaning during the anti-corruption campaign.¹⁷⁹ KIS purged hundreds of high-ranking officials between 1955 and 1958, quashing the KWP’s Soviet faction, the domestic faction, and the Yan’an (Chinese) faction in favor of his guerrilla faction.¹⁸⁰ Charles K. Armstrong notes that after the utter failure of KIS’s critics to unseat him in the August 1956 Incident, it was only foreign intervention by the Soviet Union and China that “temporarily forced Kim and his allies to relent and reinstate the critics.”¹⁸¹ Shen

¹⁷⁶ Shin Dae-won, “The Evolution and Character of North Korea’s ‘Anti-Corruption, Anti-Waste Struggle,’” *Korean Studies Research Paper Collection* Vol. 43 (2008), p. 215.

신대원, “북한 ‘반탐오, 반낭비 투쟁’의 전개와 성격,” *한국학논집*, 제 43 집 (2008), p. 215.

¹⁷⁷ Yi Ji-su, “The Self-Confession Movement,” *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture* [translation given], 2009. 이지수, “자백운동,” *한국민족문화대백과사전*, 2009, <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0066702>

¹⁷⁸ “Record of Conversation with Chairman of the Jagang Provincial People’s Committee Illarion Dmitriyevich Pak,” WCDA, 1955/4/5, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116309>

¹⁷⁹ Balazs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953–1964* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹⁸⁰ Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea, 1945–1960* (London: CHurst, 2002), pp. 78–82.

¹⁸¹ Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1992* (Cornell University Press, 2013), p. 94.

Zhihua and Xia Yafeng conclude that Kim “was successful in establishing his personal authority over all the factions in the KWP” even before the August 1956 Incident, but that “dissenting voices within the KWP were not completely eliminated.”¹⁸² At the absolute latest, it is clear that from March 1958 onward “Kim ruled without any public challenge.”¹⁸³

Despite the devastation of the Korean War, North Korea had high state capacity in the mid-1950s. The Korean War crippled North Korean infrastructure, to say nothing of the human toll. The U.S. bombing of North Korea was so intense, with no target thought to be too small, that it ultimately left “hardly a modern building standing.”¹⁸⁴ But the country recovered with amazing speed; rebuilding was largely finished by 1956.¹⁸⁵ This achievement can be attributed to the revolutionary KWP’s strong organization and centralized control over a supportive population. North Korea also benefitted from Chinese and Soviet aid. Furthermore, the KWP was able to build on its prior industrial base and successful land reform in the late 1940s to prepare the country for socialism. The 1960s and 1970s would be the golden age of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, relatively speaking. The regime oversaw rapid economic modernization and realized social stability through effective repression.

We know enough about the anti-corruption measures taken between 1955 and 1958 to conclude that they were more than Empty Gestures and qualify at least as a reform effort. More than 2000 people were reportedly disciplined for corruption and waste by the Anti-Corruption and Anti-Waste Committees that had been established at various levels of government to monitor

¹⁸² Shen Zhihua and Xia Yafeng, *A Misunderstood Friendship: Mao Zedong, Kim Il-sung, and Sino–North Korean Relations, 1949–1976* (Columbia University Press, 2018), p. 89.

¹⁸³ Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak*, p. 95.; Shen and Xia, *A Misunderstood Friendship*, pp. 126–27.

¹⁸⁴ Bruce Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, 1st ed., (W W Norton & Co Inc., 1997), p. 298.

¹⁸⁵ Michael E. Robinson, *Korea’s Twentieth-Century Odyssey* (University of Hawaii Press, 2007), pp. 150–51.

them. In Pyongyang alone, more than 400 officials lost their jobs or party status, and some were executed.¹⁸⁶ “In 1955 more than 70% of all court cases were connected with the theft, misappropriation, and waste of state and cooperative property, and bribery and squandering of state and cooperative money.”¹⁸⁷ The self-confession movement focused on theft of national assets and other “impure activities” during and after the war, especially in the “commercial distribution department and economic institutions.”¹⁸⁸ Much of what was confessed in the self-confession movement was small; “for example, 12% of all the members in a producer's cooperative of the province of North Hwanghae confessed to theft and squandering.”¹⁸⁹ The campaigns were accompanied by mass propaganda and lengthy educational meetings of the kind that would have been familiar to people living in Maoist China.¹⁹⁰ Finally, at least a few high-ranking officials were arrested for corruption. Kim Yeol, who had earned the nickname “king of swindlers” during his tenure as Chairman of the Party Committee of South Hamgyeong Province, was brought down by criticism from party members shortly after the launch of the anti-corruption campaign.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ *North Korea Overview, 1945–'68* (Seoul: Institute for Communist Issues, 1968), p. 183.

《北韓總鑑, 1945–'68》(서울: 공산권문제연구소, 1968), p. 183.

¹⁸⁷ “Report from the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs to A. A. Okhotin, ‘Some Issues of the Domestic Political Situation in the DPRK’,” WCDA, 1956/4/14, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120798.pdf?v=97d0808165c484881a4f0bd530bd11e8>

¹⁸⁸ *North Korea Overview, 1945–'68*, p. 183.

¹⁸⁹ “Report from the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs to A. A. Okhotin.”

¹⁹⁰ *NK Chosun* [NK 조선], 2013/10/30, http://nk.chosun.com/bbs/list.html?table=bbs_23&idxno=3749&page=9&total=247&sc_area=&sc_word

The prospect of enlightening comparative studies of the CCP and the KWP is just one reason scholars should hope that it will one day be possible to do more in-depth work on North Korea’s formative 1950s.

¹⁹¹ “Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK V. I. Ivanov for 7 December 1955,” WCDA, 1955/12/7, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120764.pdf?v=2f19cde85d7d50d42b142a573bca8021>

Whatever the outcome of the post-war campaigns, we know that corruption in North Korea grew substantially in the 1980s and 1990s. An influx of foreign capital and the growth of black market activity in the late 1980s led to a rise in “bureaucratic deviance,” which “typically appeared as corruption, such as bribes and embezzlement.”¹⁹² The loss of critical Soviet aid and the North Korean Famine (1994–98) greatly exacerbated embezzlement by officials and petty corruption across society, whether these actions were motivated by greed or—in many cases—desperation.¹⁹³

Since coming to power in December 2011, KJU, KIS’s grandson, has repeatedly called for tougher measures against corruption.¹⁹⁴ Under slogans like “war with corruption,” his administration has ordered several rounds of inspections and investigations in party and state organs.¹⁹⁵ In November 2012, KJU instructed prosecutors to “strengthen the legal struggle against the phenomenon of corruption and waste of national assets.”¹⁹⁶ KJU consistently raises

¹⁹² Kim Sung Chull, *North Korea under Kim Jong Il: From Consolidation to Systemic Dissonance* (SUNY Press, 2006), p. 77.

¹⁹³ Park Hyung-joong, Chun Hyun-joon, Park Young-ja, and Yoon Chul-ki. “The Real Situation of Corruption in and Anti-Corruption Strategies for North Korea: The Search for Economic Cooperation,” Korea Institute for National Unification, (2012), p. 171.

박형중, 전현준, 박영자, 윤철기, “북한 부패 실태와 반부패 전략: 국제협력의 모색” 통일연구원, (2012), 페이지 171.

¹⁹⁴ Interestingly, Kim Jong-un has started using the word for corruption that is most commonly used in South Korea, *bupae* [부패], which was not previously how most North Korean authorities had referred to the problem. This linguistic change reflects recent foreign influence on the regime and the public affecting how they understand political and economic issues. Source: Author’s interviews with South Korean experts on North Korea, January 2019.

¹⁹⁵ *KBS News*, 2015/3/4, <http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ref=A&ncd=3030474>.; RFA [Korean language version], 2015/5/20, https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/nk_nuclear_talks/corruption-05202015160649.html

¹⁹⁶ “Dear Leader Kim Jong-un sent a letter to the participants of the National Judicial Prosecution First Team Enthusiast Assembly,” *Democratic Korea*, 2012/11/27.
“경애하는 김정은원수님께서 전국사법검찰일군열성자대회 참가자들에게 서한을 보내시었다,” 민주조선, 2012/11/27.

corruption, bureaucratism, and related problems in his important New Year's addresses.¹⁹⁷ In late 2018, the issue of corruption reportedly prompted the party leadership to order "all cadres" to write "self evaluations."¹⁹⁸ These measures are partly in response to public complaints about cadre corruption, which are now common.¹⁹⁹ Bronwen Dalton notes that having to bribe officials is the single most common complaint North Korean women make about the government, which is highly relevant because women are more likely than men to engage in market activity.²⁰⁰

Accusations of corruption also featured in the dramatic elite politics of KJU's early years in power, during which he purged some 140 high-ranking officials, executing many of them.²⁰¹ KJU's purge of his uncle-in-law Jang Song-taek was justified in part by accusations of corruption. Jang allegedly spent 4.6 million Euros in a "foreign casino" in 2009.²⁰² More importantly, Jang's extensive corruption allowed him to create within the regime a "small kingdom that no one could touch."²⁰³ KJU has reportedly complained of corrupt "small

¹⁹⁷ *Daily NK* [데일리 NK], 2017/1/1, <https://www.dailynk.com/2017年-북한-김정은-신년사/>; *Unification News* [통일뉴스], 2016/1/4, <http://www.tongilnews.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=114996>

¹⁹⁸ RFA [Korean language version], 2018/12/18, https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/20181218_2-12182018083618.html

¹⁹⁹ *Daily NK* [데일리 NK], 2018/5/10, <https://www.dailynk.com/평양-거주-등록에-1만달러-꿀꺽-北-간부-부정축재-검/>

²⁰⁰ Bronwen Dalton, *NKNews Podcast* ep.33, 2018/8/20, <https://www.nknews.org/2018/08/how-women-are-driving-change-in-north-korea-nknews-podcast-ep-33/>

²⁰¹ Ministry of Unification: North Korea Human Rights Portal, 2018/4/23.

통일부: 북한인권포털, 2018/4/23,

http://www.unikorea.go.kr/nkhr/news/report/?boardId=bbs_000000000000070&mode=view&cntId=54367

²⁰² "The explosion of the soaring anger of 10 million people. Firmly punish the rebellion," *Democratic Korea*, 2013/12/13.

"천만군민의 치솟는 분노의 폭발. 만고역적 단호히 처단," *민주조선*, 2013/12/13.

²⁰³ Ken E. Gause, "North Korean Leadership Dynamics and Decision-making under Kim Jong-un: A Second Year Assessment," Center for Strategic Studies, 2014/3, https://archive.org/stream/DTIC_ADA598497/DTIC_ADA598497_djvu.txt

kingdoms” beyond his control at other times as well.²⁰⁴ This is similar to the recurring issue of “independent kingdoms” under the CCP leadership in China.²⁰⁵

But despite heightened rhetoric regarding corruption control and accusations of corruption against purged elites, there is little evidence that KJU’s regime has gone beyond Empty Gestures on reform. If investigations have actually been carried out widely in the bureaucracy, punishments applied, and new monitoring rules put into place, this has not been reported outside the country. As for the elite purge, corruption was among the accusations leveled against some of the offenders, but was not a defining theme; most elites were at least nominally brought down for various different offenses. Jang’s long list of supposed crimes ran from counterrevolutionary acts to factionalism to improper relations with women. And generally speaking, KJU’s purges were not broad or systematic enough to suggest a motive beyond the obvious: weakening potential rivals for power consolidation in a hasty leadership transition after his father Kim Jong-il’s death.

KJU has the unconstrained leadership and state capacity to carry out a major anti-corruption campaign, but lacks a strong motive. Despite early predictions to the contrary, the “Supreme Leader” is firmly in charge of North Korea. KJU has made some stylistic changes in how the country is led, but he continues his grandfather’s and father’s tradition of one-man rule.²⁰⁶ State capacity suffered during the famine, even resulting in the breakdown of the public

²⁰⁴ RFA [Korean language version], 2016/12/14, https://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/ne-ms-12142016083706.html

²⁰⁵ Chapter Four discusses how the Three Antis–Five Antis Campaign targeted independent kingdoms in the 1950s. More recently, the term has been used to describe Bo Xilai’s rule in Chongqing and raised by the CCDI as an issue in the current anti-corruption campaign.

²⁰⁶ Lee Hong Yung, “North Korea in 2012: Kim Jong Un’s Succession,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (January/February 2013).

distribution system, but has greatly recovered.²⁰⁷ Unlike KIS in the 1950s, KJU is not faced with the urgent task of post-war reconstruction. Nor is he, despite the endless speculation by foreign observers, leading North Korea in a Chinese-style Reform and Opening or any other kind of state-led developmentalism.²⁰⁸ His anti-corruption rhetoric and the small steps taken so far appear to be motivated by several goals: to placate public opinion; to prevent private wealth accumulation from evolving into a challenge to his rule, as in the case of Jang Song-taek; and to make sure money earned in foreign trade is passed to the central government rather than ending up in the pockets of officials working as intermediaries or private entrepreneurs.²⁰⁹ While these motives are unlikely to take corruption control far, North Korea's strong leader–strong state combination suggests that KJU would be able to significantly curb corruption if he believed it necessary.

7. Anti-Corruption Activity Elsewhere: A Spectrum of Outcomes

This section briefly covers authoritarian anti-corruption efforts and rhetoric in other countries and gives preliminary assessments of their accomplishments, if any. I discuss Empty

²⁰⁷ Park, “The Real Situation of Corruption in and Anti-Corruption Strategies for North Korea,” p. 171. Though state capacity has recovered, the public distribution system has never returned to full strength.

²⁰⁸ Some scholars, like Paik Nak-chung, believe that North Korea's leadership has now dedicated itself to economic reform and will advance as soon as the United States guarantees the country's security. Source: Author's interview with Paik Nak-chung, January 2019. This argument, however, understates the tremendous domestic political risks that economic reform would entail and skates over the strong possibility that these risks are the reason why North Korea's leaders have not embraced Chinese-style economic reform. This view is explained persuasively by Andrei Lankov in Chapter Three of his book *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (2014).

²⁰⁹ The regime's concern over intermediaries siphoning money from foreign trade earnings was previously evident in Kim Jong-il's surgical anti-corruption strike in late 2007 and early 2008. Kim Jong-il targeted two organs involved in inter-Korean relations: the United Front Department and the National Economic Cooperation Council. See: *North Korea Economy Watch*, 2008/2/11, <http://www.nkeconwatch.com/2008/02/11/north-korea-launching-massive-anti-corruption-drive/>

Gestures in Indonesia and Russia; Failed Reforms in Mexico, the Philippines, the Soviet Union, and Saudi Arabia; a Limited Victory in Ethiopia; and a Breakthrough in Rwanda.²¹⁰

In Indonesia, President Suharto came to power in 1967 “promising to end corruption.” He had the slogan “not only good government, but also clean government.” But Suharto’s follow-through on that promise was almost entirely limited to using investigations to smear former president Sukarno’s administration.²¹¹ The legislature passed a law in 1971 that at least clarified that corruption was criminal activity, but it could not be used to prosecute the military or any high-level Suharto allies.²¹² Transparency International’s Global Corruption Report in 2004 listed Suharto as the single most corrupt leader in the world, with an alleged haul of \$15–35 billion.²¹³ By around the time of Suharto’s resignation in 1998, despite economic growth during

²¹⁰ This leaves a few cases listed in Table 5.1 undiscussed. On the three Iran cases, see:

Kate Gillespie and Gwenn Okruhlik, “Cleaning Up Corruption in the Middle East,” *The Middle East Journal*, Winter 1988, Vol.42(1), pp. 71, 75.; Kate Gillespie and Gwenn Okruhlik, “The Political Dimensions of Corruption Cleanups: A Framework for Analysis,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Oct., 1991), p. 89.; Kate Gillespie, “The Middle East’s Corruption Conundrum,” *Current History*, January 2006, Vol.105(687), pp. 44.; Fakhreddin Azimi, *The Quest for Democracy in Iran: A Century of Struggle Against Authoritarian Rule* (Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 212.

“Iran press: Columnist criticizes delay in anti-corruption campaign,” BBC Monitoring International Reports, Nov 15, 2005.; Evaleila Pesaran, *Iran’s Struggle for Economic Independence: Reform and Counter-Reform in the Post-Revolutionary Era*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 109, 168.; Michael Axworthy, *Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 354.

Ali M. Ansari, *Iran under Ahmadinejad: The Politics of Confrontation* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 73.; Mohebat Ahdiyyih, “Ahmadinejad and the Mahdi,” *Middle East Quarterly* Fall 2008, Vol. 15, No. 4.; Ali Alfoneh, “All Ahmadinejad’s Men,” *Middle East Quarterly*, 18.2 (Spring 2011), p. 79.; Tohid Atashbar, “Iranian Disease: Why a Developing Country’s Government Did Not Listen to Economists’ Advices,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, July 2013, Vol.72(3), pp. 732–60.

²¹¹ Fiona Robertson-Snape, “Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism in Indonesia,” *Third World Quarterly* 20, No. 3 (1999), p. 589.; Vishnu Juwono, *Berantas Korupsi: a political history of governance reform and anti-corruption initiatives in Indonesia 1945–2014* (ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, 2016), p. 137. Meredith Woo-Cumings, Ed., *The Developmental State* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 19.

²¹² Juwono, *Berantas Korupsi*, p. 142.

²¹³ BBC, 2004/3/25, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/3567745.stm>

his long rule, corruption was “probably *the* major political issue” in the country, with a major reform movement calling for an end to “KKN” (corruption, collusion, and nepotism).²¹⁴

In Russia, in a more recent example, President Dmitry Medvedev (2008–12) repeatedly vowed to address the country’s well-known corruption problems.²¹⁵ His administration wrote clean government plans and established an Anti-Corruption Council, but anti-corruption prosecutions actually declined during his presidency.²¹⁶ Medvedev himself admitted in 2011 that there were “very few successes in this direction.”²¹⁷ After Vladimir Putin became president (again) in 2012, the campaign could only advance with “full support and free rein [given] by the president.”²¹⁸ But Putin relies too heavily on support from powerful business tycoons and high-level officials who “believe that they are entitled to rob the country blind. Indeed, it is an essential part of their informal contract with Putin.”²¹⁹ The real pressure for clean government reforms in Russia has come from activism; opposition leader Alexei Navalny has led nationwide protests against high-level corruption.

²¹⁴ Damien Kingsbury, *The Politics of Indonesia* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 15.; Michael R. J. Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics Under Suharto: the rise and fall of the new order*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 5.

²¹⁵ Leslie Holmes, “Corruption in Post-Soviet Russia,” *Global Change, Peace & Security* 24, No. 2 (Jun. 2012), p. 235.

²¹⁶ Ann Hollingshead, “Deal or No Deal: Is Medvedev’s Anti-Corruption Campaign For Real?” *Financial Transparency Coalition*, May 2011, <https://financialtransparency.org/deal-or-no-deal-is-medvedevs-anti-corruption-campaign-for-real/>; Ivan Krastev and Vladislav Inozemtsev, “Putin’s Self-Destruction,” *Foreign Affairs*, June 2013, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2013-06-09/putins-self-destruction>

²¹⁷ *Reuters*, 2011/1/14, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-medvedev-corruption/medvedev-acknowledges-graft-progress-scant-seeks-law-idUSTRE70C5WS20110113>; See also: Holmes, “Corruption in Post-Soviet Russia.”

²¹⁸ Leslie Holmes, “Corruption in Post-Soviet Russia,” *Global Change, Peace & Security* 24, No. 2 (June 1, 2012), p. 235.

²¹⁹ Krastev and Inozemtsev, “Putin’s Self-Destruction.”

In the Philippines, President Ferdinand Marcos (1965–86) was deeply involved in corruption and distributed monetary rewards to key elites to shore up his authoritarian regime.²²⁰

As U.S. Ambassador Henry Byroade explained to President Richard Nixon:

“As I see it, Marcos is a product of the political system here, and not the cause of that system. His training in that system here has been in fact nearly all of his adult life—through the Congress, the Senate and now the Presidency. The whole atmosphere has been one of public expectancy that anyone able to move through these ranks would capitalize financially on their positions—and anyone who did not would be considered naive indeed—if not down-right incapable.”²²¹

Marcos justified his imposition of martial law in 1972 on governance grounds, writing: “...it was recognized on all sides that the nation was in the throes of a political paralysis and on the verge of a complete collapse. The economy was at a standstill. Crime and corruption were rampant. The country was fragmented into a number of private armed encampments.”²²² What Marcos did not say was that he was at the very same time consolidating his position as the country’s “supreme godfather.”²²³

Marcos took one shaky step toward corruption control in September 1975 when he dismissed around 2,000 officials, including prominent judges, prosecutors, bureau chiefs, and others. He announced the purge in a dramatic speech with some of the dismissed sitting on the podium with him or in the audience. It was his “harshest statement on corruption and privilege thus far.”²²⁴ This shift in policy created “pandemonium” in the government, however, so Marcos

²²⁰ Gary Hawes, *The Philippine State and the Marcos Regime: the politics of export* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1987), pp. 130–31.; Paul Hutchcroft, “Oligarchs and Cronies in the Philippine State: The Politics of Patrimonial Plunder,” *World Politics*, Vol.43(3), (April 1991), p. 414.

²²¹ Document 219, FRUS, 1969–76, *Volume XX*, 1970/5/13. See also on corruption: Document 362, FRUS, 1964–1868, *Volume XXVI*, 1967/12/7.

²²² Document 321, FRUS, 1977–1980, *Volume XXII*, 1978/5/3.

²²³ Wurfel, *Filipino Politics*, pp. 148, 152.

²²⁴ “Martial Law Day: A Rededication?” U.S. State Department cable, 1975/9/19.

backtracked.²²⁵ He “promised to purge the military of corrupt elements. The military viewed the promise as a threat, however, and several top officers authorized Secretary [Juan Ponce] Enrile to submit their resignations to the President; so the plan was dropped.”²²⁶

In Mexico, presidents Jose López Portillo and Miguel de la Madrid cracked down on corruption at the start of their terms in 1976 and 1982 respectively, but lacked the commitment and the unconstrained leadership to follow through. Anti-corruption campaigns under the PRI, which involved arrests, purges, and new laws, “tend[ed] to come in the first year of each new administration.”²²⁷ In both of these cases, measures “clearly failed to curb the incidence of corruption” and were allowed to fizzle out later in the presidential term.²²⁸ De la Madrid glorified his efforts as a “Moral Renovation,” but his administration was consumed by other issues.²²⁹ After inheriting an economy on the brink of collapse, De la Madrid implemented sweeping neoliberal reforms, including major privatizations and an unpopular austerity program. While the resulting changes in the economy affected patterns of corruption, for example by changing the balance of power between state and society, De la Madrid’s reforms should not be thought of as effective corruption control.²³⁰

²²⁵ David Wurfel, *Filipino Politics: Development and Decay* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 136–37.

²²⁶ Wurfel, *Filipino Politics*, p. 148.

²²⁷ Dan A. Cothran, *Political Stability and Democracy in Mexico: The “Perfect Dictatorship”?* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1994), p. 144.

²²⁸ Stephen Morris, “Corruption and the Mexican Political System: Continuity and Change,” *Third World Quarterly* 20, No. 3 (1999), p. 628.

²²⁹ Stephen Morris, *The Causes, Consequences and Dynamics of Political Corruption in Mexico* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1988), p. 5.; NYT, 1982/05/28, <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/05/28/world/once-again-a-mexican-leader-tilts-at-corruption.html>

²³⁰ Nubia Nieto, “Political Corruption and Narcotrafficking in Mexico,” *Transcience* (2012) Vol. 3, Iss. 2, p. 27.

In the Soviet Union, General Secretary of the Communist Party Yuri Andropov's (1982–84) anti-corruption campaign was promising, and might have even succeeded had Andropov not died of natural causes in February 1984. Breaking from his predecessor Leonid Brezhnev's "cosmetic" anti-corruption measures, Andropov "identified corruption as the country's number one problem" and launched what Luc Duhamel calls the USSR's "last campaign against corruption."²³¹ After leading anti-corruption work in the late 1970s as head of the KGB, Andropov impressed the country with the speed and force of his campaigns as soon as he came to power.²³² "It was very important for Andropov to prove that he could successfully handle this issue, which had become a serious threat to the Soviet political system."²³³ Anti-corruption investigations had several purposes: to alleviate economic problems, to rejuvenate government by replacing ineffective officials, and to consolidate Andropov's own power.²³⁴

Expert assessments suggest that the campaign initially reduced corruption and improved discipline, especially among lower-level officials, but lacked institutional follow-through.²³⁵ The CIA assessed that "the party itself has been rejuvenated to a degree."²³⁶ "Years later, a sizable group of Russians, perhaps even a majority, continued to look back at Andropov with respect

²³¹ "The Soviet Anticorruption Campaign: Causes, Consequences, and Prospectus," Central Intelligence Agency, an Intelligence Assessment, Aug. 1985, p. 2, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP86T00591R000300380001-0.pdf>; Luc Duhamel, "The Last Campaign Against Corruption in Soviet Moscow," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56:2, (2004), p. 187.

²³² "The Soviet Anticorruption Campaign: Causes, Consequences, and Prospectus," pp. 1, 5.

²³³ Duhamel, "The Last Campaign Against Corruption in Soviet Moscow," p. 187.

²³⁴ William A. Clark, *Crime and Punishment in Soviet Officialdom: Combating Corruption in the Political Elite, 1965–1990* (Armonk, N.Y.: MESHARPE, 1993), p. 150.

²³⁵ Leslie Holmes, *The End of Communist Power: Anti-Corruption Campaigns and Legitimation Crisis* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993), p. 45.; Duhamel, "The Last Campaign Against Corruption in Soviet Moscow," p. 190.

²³⁶ "The Soviet Anticorruption Campaign: Causes, Consequences, and Prospectus," p. 1.

and nostalgia.”²³⁷ President Mikhail Gorbachev, who succeeded Andropov, “believed that, since the anticorruption campaign had carried out much of its mandate under Andropov, it should now be reined in and its pace slowed.”²³⁸ Government corruption remained widespread throughout the 1980s and, at the risk of understatement, was not curbed in the 1990s under the new Russian government.²³⁹

In Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) surprised the world in November 2017 by suddenly detaining hundreds of elites, including eleven princes, other members of the royal family, dozens of high-ranking current and former officials, and scores of prominent businesspeople. Many were charged with corruption or other abuses of power by the government’s newly formed anti-corruption committee, which MBS headed. More than 2,000 bank accounts were frozen and the government later claimed to have recovered \$100 billion in illicit funds from these targets.²⁴⁰ Competing narratives quickly emerged over whether this mass detention was the beginning of MBS’s modernizing reforms for the Kingdom or a cynical power grab and disciplining of potential challengers.²⁴¹ Despite the drama of these arrests, specific new

²³⁷ Vladislav Martinovich Zubok, *A Failed Empire: the Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 273.

²³⁸ Duhamel, *The KGB Campaign against Corruption in Moscow*, p. 91.

²³⁹ Mark Levin and Georgy Satarov, “Corruption and Institutions in Russia,” *European Journal of Political Economy* 16, No. 1 (2000): 113–32.

²⁴⁰ *Reuters*, 2017/11/20, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-arrests-kingdom-holding-exclusi/exclusive-saudi-prince-detention-holds-up-loan-to-investment-firm-sources-idUSKBN1DK1W6>; *Reuters*, 2017/1/30, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-arrests-corruption/saudi-arabia-says-it-has-seized-over-100-billion-in-corruption-purge-idUSKBN1FJ28E>

²⁴¹ Andrew Leber and Christopher Carothers, “Is the Saudi Purge Really About Corruption?” *Foreign Affairs* 2017/11/15. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2017-11-15/saudi-purge-really-about-corruption>; Stig Stenslie, “The End of Elite Unity and the Stability of Saudi Arabia,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 41:1 (2018), pp. 61–82.

anti-corruption rules and institutional constraints on future wrongdoing have not emerged. So far, the purge cannot be considered an anti-corruption success.

In Ethiopia, more lasting corruption control—likely a Limited Victory—was achieved under the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Unlike many other authoritarian regimes in the region, the EPRDF’s “aspirations go beyond a short-term resource grab, as they use the state to centralise resources and create and/or strengthen a robust edifice of control.”²⁴² Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (1995–2012) was an “illiberal state-builder”—an autocrat who led a transformation of the state and economy after a deadly civil war. Zenawi was an earnest student of former Korean president Park Chung-hee’s; he traveled numerous times to South Korea to learn about the country’s developmental model.²⁴³ Like Park, Zenawi grew increasingly powerful within his regime over his long tenure.²⁴⁴

In May 2001, Zenawi established the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, which aggressively pursued more than 1,000 cases in the first two years, especially in state agencies crucial for development, such as the Ethiopian Privatization Agency and the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation.²⁴⁵ This was part of broader reforms by the EPRDF in the early 2000s aimed at building the public sector and improving public confidence in government. There was “a highly publicized campaign of party ‘renewal’ (tehadso),” and the “phase from 2001 to 2005 saw

²⁴² Will Jones, Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, and Harry Verhoeven, “Africa’s Illiberal State-Builders,” Refugee Studies Centre, Working Paper Series No. 89, Jan. 2013.

²⁴³ Author’s interview with Dr. Harry Verhoeven, 2018/9/12.

²⁴⁴ Author’s interview with Dr. Harry Verhoeven, 2018/9/12. Moses Khisa calls it a personalist regime in *The Institutional Transformation of Africa’s Personalist Regimes* (2016).

²⁴⁵ Moses Khisa, *The Institutional Transformation of Africa’s Personalist Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, and Uganda* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), p. 302.

new emphasis on the developmental state as party structures were...brought more clearly beneath a single apex of control.”²⁴⁶

The EPRDF’s reforms curbed corruption in the bureaucracy and state-controlled enterprises. The Bertelsmann Transformation Index’s country report for 2006 argued that “some progress has been achieved in combating corruption and improving the capacity of the administration.”²⁴⁷ An extensive World Bank report on the country’s state sector in 2012 concluded that “corruption does not appear to be as pervasive in Ethiopia as in other [African] countries...Many private stakeholders argue that corruption in Ethiopia is comparatively controlled; first-hand experience is that it is much lower than elsewhere.”²⁴⁸ Tilman Altenburg concludes that the regime has been “focused on creating an efficient civil service” and “corruption does not seem to be as pervasive as it is in many other poor countries.” He notes that Transparency International’s view of corruption in Ethiopia is more negative, but finds that “most other sources paint a more favourable picture.”²⁴⁹

Finally, **in Rwanda**, there has been a Breakthrough success in reducing corruption. After leading the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) to victory in 1994 and ending the Rwandan genocide, Paul Kagame became the de facto leader of the country. “On and off the battlefield, the Rwandan Patriotic Front had gained a reputation for discipline, tight organization, superior strategy and strong ideology.” Much of this has to do with “the vision, leadership and training...particularly

²⁴⁶ Sarah Vaughan, “Revolutionary democratic state-building: party, state and people in the EPRDF’s Ethiopia,” *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 5:4 (2011), p. 620.

²⁴⁷ “BTI 2006 | Ethiopia,” Bertelsmann Transformation Index, https://www.bti-project.org/fileadmin/files/BTI/Downloads/Reports/2006/pdf/BTI_2006_Ethiopia.pdf

²⁴⁸ Plummer, Janelle, Ed., “Diagnosing Corruption in Ethiopia: Perceptions, Realities, and the Way Forward,” (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2012), pp. xv, 34.

²⁴⁹ Tilmann Altenburg, “Industrial Policy in Ethiopia,” Bonn: Germany Development Institute, Feb. 2010, p. 13.

by Paul Kagame from 1990 onwards.”²⁵⁰ Kagame took over formally as president in 2000, but by then his developmental agenda was already underway. He announced that Rwanda could follow Singapore’s lead in terms of economic growth, political order and stability, and clean government.²⁵¹ The RPF’s developmental mission has its roots in the “waves of political violence following independence,” which “led to widespread instability in the early 1990s” and “eventually culminated in genocide.” The RPF “came to see itself as the only actor capable of preventing further bloodshed,” which it did by exerting “a strong grip over the country,” making “mass social payments to reduce potential unrest,” and prioritizing growth.²⁵² The political leadership is motivated to avoid “corruption that might divert resources away from developmental needs.”²⁵³

Kagame led post-war political and economic reforms as a relatively unconstrained autocrat with a capable state apparatus at his disposal. Despite having built up a strong legal order beneath him, Kagame brooks no opposition and is given deference as a revolutionary hero.²⁵⁴ Rwanda’s government restricts civil liberties and emphasizes “order” above political openness.²⁵⁵ Unlike for the majority of African states, “the scholarship on Rwanda reflects the

²⁵⁰ Colin M. Waugh, *Paul Kagame and Rwanda: power, genocide and the Rwandan Patriotic Front* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co. 2004), p. 147.

²⁵¹ *The New Times*, 2013/1/14, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140320185433/http://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/index.php?i=15237&a=62797>

²⁵² Laura Mann and Marie Berry, “Understanding the Political Motivations that Shape Rwanda’s Emergent Developmental State,” *New Political Economy*, (May 2015), p. 121.

²⁵³ Mann and Berry, “Understanding the Political Motivations that Shape Rwanda’s Emergent Developmental State,” p. 124.

²⁵⁴ Khisa, *The Institutional Transformation of Africa’s Personalist Regimes*.

²⁵⁵ “Rebooting Rwanda: A Conversation with Paul Kagame,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/interviews/2014-04-01/paul-kagame-rebooting-rwanda>

idea that the country's state is powerful, hierarchical, and quite effective at controlling the population."²⁵⁶ In addition, the RPF contributed some of its own advanced organizational capacity when it took over the state. Phil Clark writes that "internal party cohesion and low levels of corruption (factors lacking in most other African rebel movements) meant the RPF could focus on rebuilding national infrastructure, political and judicial institutions."²⁵⁷

In October 1999, Kagame began high-level anti-corruption purges, including of cabinet members.²⁵⁸ "Even cabinet ministers and longtime friends of the president have fallen into disgrace and worse for failing to meet the regime's rigid ethical standards."²⁵⁹ Kagame's consistent willingness to fire high-level members of his own ruling party has "surprised many observers."²⁶⁰ Institutional achievements include establishing the "Office of the Ombudsman, the Anti-Corruption Unit in the Rwanda Revenue Authority, the Auditor General, and the National Tender Board."²⁶¹ There are incentives for local officials as well—for example, "an annual competition and awards have been instituted for the districts at which, based on the marks they

²⁵⁶ Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 203.

²⁵⁷ Phil Clark, "After Genocide: Democracy in Rwanda, 20 Years On," *Juncture* 20 (4) (2014).

²⁵⁸ Waugh, *Paul Kagame and Rwanda*, p. 153.

²⁵⁹ Stephen Kinzer, *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), p. 236.

²⁶⁰ "Global Integrity Report 2009: Rwanda," Global Integrity, <http://www.globalintegrity.org/research/reports/global-integrity-report/global-integrity-report-2009/gir-notebook-2009-rwanda/>

²⁶¹ "Country Data Report for Rwanda, 1996–2014," The World Bank, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/733321468195836212/pdf/105555-WP-PUBLIC-Rwanda.pdf>; "Overview of Corruption in Rwanda 2009," Transparency International.; "A Decade of African Governance: Rwanda Insights," The Mo Ibrahim Foundation, http://s.mo.ibrahim.foundation/u/2017/03/08200303/Rwanda-Insights-2016-IIAG.pdf?_ga=1.93137245.1500410491.1490646492

attain for their work on anti-corruption and good governance, they are given national recognition by way of trophies and certificates.”²⁶²

Assessments by international analysts and scholars have been very positive. Aid and development organizations, including the World Bank, Transparency International, and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, have lauded Kagame’s leadership and judged his anti-corruption efforts to be successful.²⁶³ “Rwanda is fast gaining [a] reputation as a country under a corporate-like political system run by a CEO-like president who oversees a ‘tightly marked ship’ in which minor infractions by public officials are heavily punished and excellence in service takes precedent over short-term political calculations.”²⁶⁴ Rwanda is seen as unique in Africa for having “zero tolerance for corruption.”²⁶⁵ Typical of mainstream Western media’s coverage, *The Economist* raves that “no African country has done more to curb corruption.”²⁶⁶ That said, Rwanda clearly still has a long way to go to rival Singapore’s reputation.

7. Conclusions

In this chapter, I demonstrated the extent of authoritarian anti-corruption reform as a global phenomenon and argued for the applicability of this study’s theoretical framework to diverse cases. This is not to say that all cases conformed to theoretical expectations. Cuba’s Rectification Process in the mid-1980s should have been an anti-corruption success, but failed. I

²⁶² Baffour Ankomah, “Rwanda, a star in fighting corruption,” *New African Magazine*, (Mar 2013), pp. 50–52.

²⁶³ “Overview of Corruption in Rwanda 2009.”

²⁶⁴ Khisa, *The Institutional Transformation of Africa’s Personalist Regimes*, p. 23.

²⁶⁵ Patricia Crisafulli and Andrea Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.: How a Devastated Nation Became an Economic Model for the Developing World* (New York City: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 24.

²⁶⁶ “Africa’s Singapore? A country with a bloody history seeks prosperity by becoming business-friendly,” *The Economist*, 2012/2/25.

posited that the drop-off in Soviet aid was a shock that fatally undermined the RP, though of course the existence of such a factor does not prove that the RP would otherwise have succeeded. Also, the case of Singapore is a major exception to my theory. This is not because the regime succeeded in curbing corruption, but because it did so through a hybrid method between the democratic approach and the authoritarian playbook.

Despite its usefulness, this chapter's survey of authoritarian corruption control has methodological limitations. Case studies this brief and based largely on secondary scholarship can only yield preliminary conclusions about any specific case. Also, I do not claim to have presented an exhaustive list of authoritarian anti-corruption efforts. In particular, there are many Failed Reforms that have gone unexamined.

Chapter Six

Democratic Taiwan and South Korea

1. Introduction

This chapter explains how democratization affected corruption control in Taiwan and South Korea. In it, I advance three arguments: 1) Taiwan's relative political openness and competition during democratization in the late 1980s and 1990s led to a temporary but substantial rise in corruption, 2) in both countries, full democratization brought a reversal in how corruption control was carried out, and 3) democratic anti-corruption efforts were successful, despite persistent trouble areas in both systems. The first argument provides additional evidence for my finding that quasi-democratic institutions generally do not reduce corruption. Fully democratic from 2000 onward, Taiwan undertook useful reforms after the Democratic Progressive Party came into power at the national level. The new government launched the "Program for Sweeping Away Organized Crime and Corruption" under the Ministry of Justice, severed many of the inappropriate KMT-state financial ties, passed laws to clean up elections, and strengthened laws against conflicts of interest. In South Korea in the 1990s, opposition leaders-turned-presidents Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung attacked the corrupt practices of the authoritarian past and launched legal reforms that became foundational for clean government.

This chapter is divided into three sections, which analyze corruption and anti-corruption reforms in transitional Taiwan, democratic Taiwan, and democratic South Korea.

2. Transitional Taiwan

In the late 1980s, Taiwan's gradual liberalization became a more thorough opening with the acceptance of organized political opposition and the lifting of martial law in 1987.

Democratization continued as Lee Teng-hui, Chiang Ching-kuo's vice president, smoothly succeeded CCK as president after the latter's death in 1988. The DPP emerged as a real opposition party that could contest KMT power across the island, though one heavily disadvantaged by the KMT's disproportionate control over state resources, the media, and social organizations.¹ Another rival was the New Party, which formed by splitting off from the KMT in 1993 after some party members grew disgusted with President Lee's autocratic tendencies and with the party's increasing reliance on corruption.² Overall, while some scholars see Taiwan as being democratic from the late 1980s, others are more accurate in saying that it was still competitive authoritarian until the 1996 elections or possibly until the transfer of power to the DPP in 2000.³

In many countries, democratization does not immediately make democratic institutions effective at curbing corruption. If the state is weak, the country is poor, or both, then a high level of corruption is likely to persist even after democratization is complete.⁴ Scholars have noted that many new democracies experience first rising and only later falling corruption.⁵ Michael Rock

¹ Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 315–17.

² Dafydd Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan: Party Change and the Democratic Evolution of Taiwan, 1991–2004* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005).

³ Chu Yun-han and Larry Diamond, "Taiwan's 1998 Elections: Implications for Democratic Consolidation," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 39, No. 5 (Sep. - Oct., 1999), p. 808.; Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*, pp. 316–17.

⁴ Kurt G. Weyland, "The Politics of Corruption in Latin America," *Journal of Democracy* 9, No. 2 (1998), pp. 108–21.; H.-E. Sung, "Democracy and Political Corruption: A Cross-National Comparison," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 41, No. 2 (2004), pp. 179–93.; Sun Yan, and Michael Johnston, "Does Democracy Check Corruption? Insights from China and India," *Comparative Politics* 42, No. 2 (2010).; Milan Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

⁵ Nicholas A. Lash, "Corruption and Economic Development," *The Journal of Economic Asymmetries* 1, No. 1 (2004), pp. 24–25.; Michael T. Rock, "Corruption and Democracy," *The Journal of Development Studies* 45, No. 1 (Jan. 2009), pp. 55–75.; Yu Chilik, Chen Chun-Ming, Juang Wen-Jong, and Hu Lung-Teng, "Does Democracy Breed Integrity? Corruption in Taiwan during the Democratic Transformation Period," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 49, No. 3 (2008), pp. 167–84.; Christian Göbel, "Warriors Unchained: Critical Junctures and Anticorruption in Taiwan and South Korea," *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 7, No. Supplement 1 (2013), pp.

uses cross-national statistics to estimate that the turning point from rising corruption to falling corruption is at around 10–12 years after the onset of political liberalization.⁶ Christian Göbel argues that democratization alone was not enough to reduce corruption in Taiwan and South Korea; the critical juncture in both countries, he notes, was the first alternation of power between parties.⁷ Samuel Huntington also believed that the opening of new political opportunities breeds corruption, though his main thesis on the topic was that modernization breeds corruption.⁸ The reason for this increase in corruption, scholars note, is that new political competition and openness invites a flood of money to compete over power. The autocrat’s harsh regime of control is failing or gone, and with it go any constraints the autocrat might have imposed on corruption. Meanwhile, democratic institutions are not yet strong enough to replace them. Hsueh Chao-Yung argues that “countries in a situation of political and economic transition are the most corrupt. When authoritarian control is challenged and destroyed through economic liberalization and political democratization, but has not yet been replaced by democratic checks and balances or by legitimate and accountable institutions, the level of corruption will increase.”⁹ This is not true in every case of democratization, but Hsueh describes a common phenomenon.

Taiwan’s transition period saw precisely these problems; to keep winning against now serious electoral challengers, the KMT began to engage in corruption in ways it had not for

219–42.; Michael Jetter, Alejandra Agudelo, and Andrés Hassan, “The Effect of Democracy on Corruption: Income Is Key,” *World Development* (Oct. 2015), p. 286. Li Shaomin, Ilan Alon, and Jun Wu, “Corruption May Worsen in Democratizing Economies: But Don’t Let It Erode Our Faith in Democracy,” *Modern China Studies*, 2017, Vol.24(2), pp.184–88.

⁶ Rock, “Corruption and Democracy.”

⁷ Göbel, “Warriors Unchained.”

⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968), p. 68.

⁹ Hsueh Chao-Yung, “Power and Corruption in Taiwan,” *Issues & Studies* 43, No. 1 (Mar. 2007), p. 15.

decades. The KMT regime had managed to keep corruption relatively low for a long period of time following the successful KMT Reconstruction, but there is “a widespread perception that corruption...actually worsened during the transition to democracy.”¹⁰ “As elections broadened after 1990, the scale of vote buying increased, as did the price for bribing voters.”¹¹

Democratization “unfortunately unleashed burgeoning corruption as both business and gangsters were able to gain access to the increasingly expensive political process.”¹² This favored the KMT because it had superior access to illicit funding through its incumbency advantage and control over the state.

To defeat opposition parties and rival factions in the 1990s, the KMT “relied on its links to corrupt local factions and big business.”¹³ The regime “distributed state credit, licenses, and concessions to friendly businesses, which contributed ‘huge sums’ to the party in return, and tax audits were used to punish businesses that backed the opposition DPP.” Local factions of the KMT “were granted contracts or oligopolistic concessions in sectors such as transportation, construction, utilities, and banking; in exchange, they channeled a portion of their profits back into party coffers.”¹⁴ The growing power of the legislature, rather than checking this corruption, facilitated the strategic contract granting.¹⁵ KMT anti-corruption measures, such as the 1993

¹⁰ Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, p. 55.; Yu et al., “Does Democracy Breed Integrity?” p. 167.; Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, *The Quest for Good Governance: How Societies Develop Control of Corruption*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 150.

¹¹ Bruce J. Dickson and Chao Chien-min, Eds., *Assessing the Lee Teng-hui Legacy in Taiwan’s Politics: Democratic Consolidation and External Relations* (M.E. Sharpe, 2002), p. 81.

¹² Murray A. Rubinstein, Ed., *Taiwan: A New History* (M.E. Sharpe, 2007), p. 505.

¹³ Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, p. 56.; Christian Göbel, “Beheading the Hydra: Combating Political Corruption and Organized Crime in the KMT and DPP Eras,” *China Perspectives*, No. 56 (2004), p. 18.

¹⁴ Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*, p. 315.

¹⁵ Kong Tat Yan, “Corruption and the effect of regime type: the case of Taiwan,” *New Political Economy*, 9:3, (2004), p. 356.

“Public Functionary Assets Disclosure Law” and the crackdown on vote-buying in 1994, which were aimed mostly at KMT legislators, could not reverse the boom in election-related corruption.¹⁶

Besides misusing state resources, the KMT also engaged in corruption by colluding with criminal elements. In the early 1990s, the KMT nominated numerous “black gold” candidates for parliament. These were candidates linked to local criminal gangs but who brought in enough money to win seats. While the term initially meant political funds tainted by crime, black gold later came to refer generally to political corruption.¹⁷ “Bid-rigging, along with vote-buying, election violence, mafia politicians, and official corruption are the five major areas of ‘black gold’ politics.”¹⁸ Academia Sinica President Lee Yuan-tseh estimated in 1999 that a stunning half of all elected representatives in the country had criminal backgrounds.¹⁹ Other scholarly estimates were less extreme, but still very troubling.²⁰ In 1984, the government had carried out a cleanup (一清專案) of gangster activity using harsh tactics to arrest and prosecute thousands. But many of those arrested were later released and successfully went into politics, such as legislators Zheng Taiji and Luo Fuzhu. Similarly, Milan Vaishnav explains that parties in India and some other democracies may nominate known criminals for public office because these shady characters can bring in much-needed funding.²¹

¹⁶ Göbel, “Beheading the Hydra,” pp. 19–22.

¹⁷ Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, p. 69.

¹⁸ Chin Ko-lin, *Heijin: Organized Crime, Business, and Politics in Taiwan*, (M.E. Sharpe, 2003), p. 70.

¹⁹ *Sina* [新浪], 1999/9/20, <http://news.sina.com.cn/china/1999-9-20/16182.html>

²⁰ See chart in Chin, *Heijin*, p. 15.

²¹ Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays*. See also Chin, *Heijin*, p. 18.

All this corruption helped keep the KMT in power throughout the 1990s, but simultaneously damaged the party's brand. In the 1980s, corruption was a minor political issue, and not one the nascent opposition emphasized. But at the same time as Taiwan was strengthening its democratic institutions, corruption became "arguably the most salient political issue." The KMT was torn—it felt it had to rely on collusion with businesses and exploitation of state resources to win elections, but also understood that "such corrupt links were unpopular with voters."²² The DPP began to talk about political corruption "far more than any other issue."²³ This is not to say that the DPP was not engaging in corruption. The DPP needed to compete with the KMT, which incentivized some similar behaviors, much to the dismay of longtime supporters.²⁴ Over time, however, the DPP's attacks succeeded in tarring the KMT and "the opposition's anti-corruption campaigns were a critical factor in the KMT's fall from office after ruling Taiwan for over fifty years."²⁵ The KMT did stay in power through the end of the 1990s, but You Jong-sung is not far off in saying "the KMT's reliance on clientelistic strategies backfired."²⁶ The DPP's Chen Shui-bian (CSB) won the presidency in 2000 in large part on his promises to "root out corruption," though it also helped that the right split their votes between two candidates.²⁷

²² Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, pp. 55, 58.; Tien Hung-Mao, Ed., *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave* (Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 15.

²³ Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, p. 24.

²⁴ Author's interviews with Steve Tsang and Linda Arrigo, summer 2018. See also Linda Gail Arrigo, "From Democratic Movement to Bourgeois Democracy: The Internal Politics of the Taiwan Democratic Progressive Party in 1991," *Working Paper*, March 1992.

²⁵ Hsueh, "Power and Corruption in Taiwan," p. 2.; Mungiu-Pippidi, *The Quest for Good Governance*, p. 150.

²⁶ You Jong-sung, *Democracy, Inequality and Corruption: Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines Compared* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 114.

²⁷ Hsueh, "Power and Corruption in Taiwan," p. 2.

3. Democratic Taiwan

The DPP's anti-corruption reforms combined new legal measures, investigations and arrests, and governmental reorganization. Three key legal measures were: the "Public Functionaries Election and Recall Law...to bar organized criminals from running for political office in the future, the Civil Servant Services Act was...amended to forbid civil servants from accepting gifts or donations, and the Criminal Law was [passed] to punish repeated offenses more severely than before." Over the objections of the KMT, the DPP also managed to pass three "Sunshine Laws," which aimed to prevent conflicts of interest, restricted political donations, and regulated lobbying.²⁸ "In 2002, when Chen had consolidated his position, he set up a Special Investigation Unit...to target high-ranking politicians suspected of corruption."²⁹ The Ministry of Justice carried out most of the anti-corruption work through several bureaus, including the Investigation Bureau and the Government Employee Ethics Department.³⁰ Between July 2000 and March 2008, the administration prosecuted 4,269 corruption-related cases, with 11,513 people involved in those cases. Among those, 672 were described as "high-level" officials. In all, 30.7 billion yuan, (around \$990 million USD) was seized. The statistics also show that the indicted include officials at various levels, different departments, and in different geographical areas, as well as private citizens.³¹ As for governmental reorganization, "the allocation of public

²⁸ Göbel, "Warriors Unchained," pp. 231–32.

²⁹ Christian Göbel, "Taiwan's Fight Against Corruption," *Journal of Democracy* 27, No. 1 (2016), p. 134.

³⁰ Ministry of Justice Agency Against Corruption: <https://www.aac.moj.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=381187&CtNode=40067&mp=289>, Accessed, March 4, 2019.

³¹ "Performance Statistics of the Ministry of Justice Implementing the 'Clean Up Black Gold Action Plan' (93 months)," Ministry of Justice, 1997/5/2. "法務部執行「掃除黑金行動方案」成效統計(93個月)," 法務部, 1997/5/2, <https://www.moj.gov.tw/cp-21-49554-af5f2-001.html>

finance was centralized.” “Legislators had been able during the KMT era to ‘recommend’ the financing of small-scale construction projects...which in fact amounted to a sizeable pork barrel.”³²

CSB pushed for these reforms as president, but he did not have unconstrained power; the driving force of reforms was public pressure on the whole political system. Reforms were demanded by voters and maintained in part through public engagement.³³ “Under the DPP government, a plethora of participatory channels were opened up for movement activists. Unlike the KMT, which was used to a top-down style of governance and inclined to view citizen groups as troublemakers, the DPP was much more prepared for broadly based participation.”³⁴ DPP members had individual electoral incentives to support anti-corruption rules, even if these rules would constrain them and not just the KMT. So the DPP, not just its leadership, had broad interest in reform. Another departure from the authoritarian playbook was that the DPP worked within the existing legal framework in its relationship with the state—it did not “declare war” on corrupt state organs and replace them. While many in the KMT were resistant to the DPP’s anti-corruption efforts, they were only able to stop some of the proposed reforms. Soon, KMT “leaders began shifting their efforts from blocking anticorruption moves to projecting a ‘clean’ image of their own.”³⁵

Reforms in the early 2000s went some way to decoupling the state and the political party in power, meaning that corruption control was not just anti-KMT but could be enforced against

³² Göbel, “Warriors Unchained,” p. 232.

³³ Author’s interview with former Ministry of Justice anti-corruption investigator.

³⁴ Ho Ming-Sho, “Taiwan’s State and Social Movements under the DPP Government, 2000–2004,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 5, No. 3 (Sept. 2005), p. 408.

³⁵ Göbel, “Taiwan’s Fight Against Corruption,” p. 134.

the DPP as well. Accusations of corruption against CSB led to a mass protest movement in 2006 with the self-explanatory name “A Million Voices Against Corruption – President Chen Must Go.”³⁶ He managed to complete his term, leaving office in 2008, but then was charged with “graft, forgery and money laundering” and was sentenced to “20 years in prison and fined NT\$250 million.” “Prosecutors also charged Chen’s wife, son, daughter in-law and 11 other family members or former aides in connection with the web of suspected financial crimes, which have been investigated for more than two years.”³⁷ High-profile cases like these may make it seem as if the DPP’s anti-corruption measures were disingenuous, and therefore little progress against corruption had been achieved, but this is not the case. Presidents may be symbols of the government or even the country, but their personal performance in office does not necessarily reflect or correlate with the performance of the average bureaucrat, the strength of a state’s institutions, or a country’s level of democratization. CSB’s fall did not stop the Ministry of Justice from continuing to enforce anti-corruption laws and prosecuting violators.

The fight against corruption has continued to see gains in the last two administrations, as power has alternated between the KMT and the DPP. Ma Ying-jeou (MYJ), former Justice Minister under Lee Teng-hui and mayor of Taipei, ran on an anti-corruption platform in 2008 and was elected president in part due to his image as “Mr. Clean.” In 2011, his administration established the “Ministry of Justice’s Agency Against Corruption, the first organization [exclusively] responsible for preventing and eradicating civil service corruption in Taiwan.”³⁸

³⁶ Shih Fang-long, “The ‘Red Tide’ Anti-Corruption Protest: What Does it Mean for Democracy in Taiwan?” *Taiwan in Comparative Perspective*, Vol. 1, Nov. 2007.

³⁷ *Reuters*, 2008/12/12, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-indictment/taiwan-ex-president-chen-charged-with-corruption-idUSTRE4BB1L020081212>; *Taipei Times*, 2015/1/24, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/01/24/2003609973>

³⁸ *Taiwan Today*, 2011/7/20, <https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=2&post=1910>

After the end of his term, MYJ was indicted on charges of illegal wiretapping and several cases related to the mismanagement of state and party assets, but was not convicted.³⁹ After regaining control of the Legislative Yuan in the 2016 elections, the DPP seized the opportunity to pass the “Act Governing the Handling of Ill-gotten Properties by Political Parties and Their Affiliate Organizations,” which aims to investigate historic and continuing corruption in the KMT.⁴⁰ “In August, the [Executive Yuan] established the Ill-gotten Party Assets Settlement Committee, which moved swiftly to freeze KMT assets and launch a far-reaching investigation of KMT-related organizations.⁴¹ These measures led the KMT, once one of the richest political parties in the world, to claim that it was “struggling to pay the bills” and to request emergency aid from donors.⁴² Meanwhile, high-profile individual criminal cases continue to emerge.⁴³ In 2017, for example, former head of the Legislative Yuan Lin Hsi-shan was slapped with a 16-year sentence for “corruption, receiving kickbacks, being in possession of assets of unknown origin and other offenses.”⁴⁴ In December 2016, the legislature passed the Money Laundering Control Act, part of Taiwan’s plan to bring its anti-corruption framework up to global standards in all areas.⁴⁵

³⁹ *Taiwan News*, 2017/3/15, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3116650>

⁴⁰ *Taiwan Times*, 2016/7/26, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2016/07/26/2003651800>

⁴¹ David G. Brown, “Governing Taiwan is Not Easy: President Tsai Ing-wen’s First Year,” Brookings Institution, May 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/governing-taiwan-is-not-easy-president-tsai-ing-wens-first-year/>

⁴² *Bloomberg*, 2017/9/27, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-27/once-worth-billions-long-ruling-taiwan-party-now-short-of-cash>

⁴³ *Taiwan News*, 2017/7/1, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3201029>

⁴⁴ *Taipei Times*, 2017/5/6, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/05/06/2003670053>

⁴⁵ *Focus Taiwan*, 2018/3/12, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aipl/201803120026.aspx>; *Epoch Times* [大紀元], 2018/3/30, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/18/3/30/n10263770.htm>

The success of Taiwan’s clean government reforms since 2000 can be seen in the scope of prosecutions, institutional advances, and improving perceptions. Both KMT and DPP administrations have allowed high-level prosecutions to move forward, including against suspected wrongdoing in their own ranks. When a major corruption scandal involving three High Court judges and a prosecutor broke in 2010, it “prompted President Ma Ying-jeou to set up a new anti-corruption watchdog,” which he did in 2011, as mentioned.⁴⁶ In 2015, New Taipei City deputy mayor Hsu Chih-chien (KMT) was indicted for bribe-taking.⁴⁷ Overall, “fierce competition between the political camps, aggressive reporting and an educated and highly sensitive population ensure that high-profile corruption charges receive much publicity.”⁴⁸

From an institutional perspective, there have been noticeable advances: new anti-corruption legislation is being enforced and organizations for monitoring government officials have been strengthened. “In Taiwan, engaging in acts of corruption is far riskier now than it was twenty years ago...Investigators, prosecutors, and judges have become far more professional and independent, and less likely to be swayed by influence or money.”⁴⁹ The corruption-linked organized crime that entered and flourished in mainstream politics especially in the 1990s has receded.⁵⁰ “Black gold...was seen as a major stain on Taiwan’s early efforts at democratization,” but today “police officials and criminology experts say that these gangs, after being targeted for

⁴⁶ *Taipei Times*, 2011/7/1, <http://www.taipeitimes.com.tw/News/taiwan/archives/2011/07/01/2003507146>

⁴⁷ *Taipei Times*, 2017/12/8, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/12/08/2003683630>

⁴⁸ “BTI 2018 | Taiwan Country Report,” Bertelsmann Transformation Index, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/twn/>

⁴⁹ Göbel, “Taiwan’s Fight Against Corruption,” p. 136.

⁵⁰ Author’s interview with a senior Taiwanese researcher and corruption expert. See also: *The Economist*, 2014/9/4, <https://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2014/09/taiwanese-gangsters>

decades, no longer have the resources to run sophisticated criminal operations.”⁵¹ “Since 2000, all major parties have tried to keep their distance from local politicians with corrupt reputations.”⁵² Increasingly, legislators take notice of how NGOs like Citizen Congress Watch rate their job performance on a variety of indicators.⁵³ And anti-corruption regulations continue to be used to prosecute corrupt officials.⁵⁴

Taiwan’s reform achievements are confirmed by positive outside perceptions. International experts and businesspeople have been convinced by reforms.⁵⁵ The Office of the United States Trade Representatives’ annual National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers stopped listing corruption in Taiwan as a barrier to trade as early as 2004.⁵⁶ According to surveys, however, Taiwanese people see less positive change.⁵⁷ Public perception may be

⁵¹ Timothy Ferry, “Is Taiwan’s Organized Crime Receding or Going Deeper Underground?” The American Chamber of Commerce in Taipei, May 2016, <https://topics.amcham.com.tw/2016/05/mob-receding-or-going-deeper-underground/>

⁵² You, *Democracy, Inequality and Corruption*, p. 120.

⁵³ Author’s interview with Taiwanese political scientist, August 2018.

⁵⁴ See for example: *Taipei Times*, 2017/12/8, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/12/08/2003683630>; *Taipei Times* 2017/5/6, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/05/06/2003670053>

⁵⁵ *Taiwan Today*, 2015,4/7, <https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=2&post=3622>; *Focus Taiwan*, 2018/2/22, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201802220007.aspx>; *Taipei Times*, 2018/3/23, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2018/03/23/2003689863>; “BTI 2018 | Taiwan Country Report,” <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/twn/>

Visiting the Transparency International chapter in Taiwan in June 2018, TI chairperson Delia Ferreira Rubio noted how pleased she was to be there. Many other countries that host her, she related, complain to her about their anti-corruption ratings. The author attended TI’s annual event in Taipei at Shih Hsin University.

⁵⁶ “2004 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers,” United States Trade Representative, https://ustr.gov/archive/assets/Document_Library/Reports_Publications/2004/2004_National_Trade_Estimate/2004_NTE_Report/asset_upload_file998_4799.pdf

⁵⁷ Yu Chilik, Chen Chun-Ming, and Lin Min-Wei, “Corruption Perception in Taiwan: Reflections upon a Bottom-up Citizen Perspective,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 22, No. 79 (Jan. 2013), pp. 56–76.; “Global Corruption Barometer | Taiwan,” Transparency International, 2013, <https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/country?country=taiwan>

more negative because the public's standards have risen, because citizens' experiences differ from those of foreign businesses, or because the media has increased reporting on corruption.⁵⁸ However, the fact that the issue of government corruption has "faded in importance" in Taiwanese elections suggests that the public implicitly acknowledges improvement from 15 or 20 years ago.⁵⁹ Some remaining, widely-acknowledged trouble areas are judicial corruption, commercial corruption, and corruption related to the after-effects of the KMT's historic control over state assets during the authoritarian period.⁶⁰ President Tsai Ing-wen's administration is trying to take up all of these issues.

4. Democratic South Korea

South Korea held its first democratic election in 1987 following massive protests against Chun Doo-hwan's military regime. Because the opposition vote was split, CDH's chosen successor, Roh Tae-woo (RTW), was able to narrowly win the presidency. RTW distanced himself from his predecessor, in whose regime he had served, by promising various democratic reforms. Despite public anger over corruption, it was not until Kim Young-sam (KYS) became president in 1993 that the democratic period's first major anti-corruption reforms were undertaken. As in Taiwan, therefore, it was the alternation of power to the opposition that spurred anti-corruption efforts.⁶¹ But unlike in Taiwan, the transition period between the

⁵⁸ Dafydd Fell made this last point in an email exchange with the author.

⁵⁹ Rubinstein, *Taiwan: A New History*, p. 504. Rubinstein's comment here was perhaps too early to apply to presidential elections considering Ma's anti-corruption platform in 2008, but since then is increasingly accurate.

⁶⁰ "2011 Annual Work Report," Ministry of Justice Agency Against Corruption, (2012), p. 136. / "100 年度工作報告," 法務部廉政署, (2012), p. 136.; "BTI 2018 | Taiwan Country Report," Section 15.

⁶¹ This point is made in Göbel, "Warriors Unchained." KYS did not become president with his own opposition party in 1993, however, but instead merged with the authoritarian successor party.

beginning of democratization and the first alternation of power did not see a spike in corruption. One reason for this is perhaps that CDH's regime was already corrupt in the extreme. It is also possible that there was no clear rise in election-related corruption because legislative elections were already semi-competitive and awash with money.

Anti-Corruption Reforms

The Kim Young-sam administration took dramatic steps against corruption almost at once. Former presidents CDH and RTW were arrested and convicted of various crimes relating to the coup in 1979, the brutal crackdown on the Kwangju Uprising, and corruption.⁶² The new administration passed the Public Officials Ethics Law, which required 7,000 top politicians and civil servants to disclose their assets and make annual follow-up reports.⁶³ KYS set the tone by disclosing his own and his family's assets and pledging to take no political donations, which was possible because the presidency is limited to one five-year term.⁶⁴ Besides arresting the two former presidents, the administration discharged 13 generals and jailed three sitting members of the National Assembly.⁶⁵ Kim Jae-soon, former speaker of the parliament, retired.⁶⁶ His successor, Park Jyun-kyu, was "forced out of the ruling party."⁶⁷ The first 100 days saw a wave

⁶² Corruption charges came first and then the others were added. See: Young W. Kihl, *Transforming Korean Politics: Democracy, Reform, and Culture* (Armonk, NY, MESHARPE, 2005), p. 130.

⁶³ Hoon Shim Jae, "South Korea: Whirlwind honeymoon," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (Jun 24, 1993). Other sources say the law only applied to around 1000 officials.

⁶⁴ John Kie-Chiang Oh, *Korean Politics: The Quest for Democratization and Economic Development*, (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 139.

⁶⁵ Lee Chong-Sik and Sohn Hyuk-Sang, "South Korea in 1993: The Year of the Great Reform," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (Jan. 1994), p. 3.; Hoon Shim Jae, "South Korea: Stolen thunder," *FEER*, (Jun 24, 1993), p. 23.

⁶⁶ Hoon Shim Jae, "South Korea: Assets and anxiety," *FEER*, (Apr 8, 1993), p. 20.

⁶⁷ Hoon, "South Korea: Whirlwind honeymoon."

of “arrests of retired generals, politicians, bankers, policemen and underworld figures on corruption-related charges.”⁶⁸ For KYS, as one journalist noted, “high-profile arrests are the easy bit.”⁶⁹ Many were caught by the rule that unexplained wealth would be treated as evidence of corruption; the chief justice of the Supreme Court, the prosecutor-general, the head of the National Police, some high-ranking bureaucrats, and “more than 100 tax officials...could not explain the sources of their wealth.”⁷⁰ In total, “over 1,000 senior officials were officially reprimanded, sacked or jailed.”⁷¹ To aid enforcement, KYS set up an Anti-Corruption Measures Committee within the pre-existing Board of Audit and Inspection.⁷² While charges of corruption were no doubt often accurate, many accusations were against leading politicians close to RTW or critical of KYS, sparking accusations of political bias.⁷³ The public was very supportive, however, with approval for the president at “90% in April...and 79.2% in August.”⁷⁴

Besides the new ethics law, corruption control was advanced through a real-name banking system and two new election campaign laws. In the 1980s, CDH had failed repeatedly to enforce the use of real names for bank accounts and other financial dealings. So in 1993, when according to the Ministry of Finance some 10 percent of the country’s financial assets were “under fictitious or borrowed names,” KYS set a deadline in October for full implementation of a

⁶⁸ Hoon, “South Korea: Stolen thunder,” p. 23.

⁶⁹ Ed Paisley, “South Korea trade & investment: Cleaning up the act,” *FEER*, (May 27, 1993), p. 40.

⁷⁰ Lee and Sohn, “South Korea in 1993,” p. 2.

⁷¹ *The Economist*, 1993/11/13, pp. 37–38.

⁷² Kihl, *Transforming Korean Politics*, p. 111.

⁷³ Hoon, “South Korea: Assets and anxiety,” p. 20.

⁷⁴ Lee and Sohn, “South Korea in 1993,” p. 4.

real-name system.⁷⁵ “Some 97 percent of false-name accounts were transferred to real-name accounts by the end of the grace period, apparently without causing significant financial dislocation.”⁷⁶ With the passage of the “Election Malpractice Prevention Act,” which had “277 articles and 12 addenda” South Korean “election laws [became] very strict and state a clear limit on both the sources of funding and campaign expenses.”⁷⁷ “It was forbidden to reward campaign workers in cash, and vote mobilization by government officials was made illegal.”⁷⁸ Violators of the law could be banned from public service or running for office for ten years.⁷⁹ The “Political Fund Law raised the ceiling for political contributions by individual persons...and made the reporting of such contributions to the Central Election Management Commission compulsory.”⁸⁰ Finally, KYS tried to control corruption through his Administrative Reorganization Plan (1994), which has been praised as the “largest reduction of the administrative apparatus” in the nation’s history.⁸¹

KYS’s crusade lost some momentum—and his presidency a great deal of public support—when the Hanbo Scandal broke in early 1997. KYS was revealed to have accepted campaign donations for his 1992 run from the Hanbo Group, a large chaebol, in exchange for

⁷⁵ Peter McGill, “Kim proves to be a radical reformer,” *Euromoney*, (Sep 1993), p. 243.

⁷⁶ Oh, *Korean Politics*, p. 142.

⁷⁷ Oh, *Korean Politics*, p. 143.; Verena Blechinger, “Report on Recent Bribery Scandals, 1996–2000,” Transparency International, 2000, p. 3.

⁷⁸ Göbel, “Warriors Unchained,” p. 233.

⁷⁹ Kim Myoung-soo, “Regulation and Corruption” in Cho Yong Hyo and H. George Frederickson, Eds., *The White House and the Blue House: Government Reform in the United States and Korea* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997), p. 255.

⁸⁰ Göbel, “Warriors Unchained,” p. 233.

⁸¹ Kim “Regulation and Corruption,” p. 89.

government approval and loans of “about \$6 billion [US] for the construction of a steel mill.” It also came to light that “his youngest son, Kim Hyung-Chul, was involved in the Hanbo Scandal and also in other cases of influence-peddling, such as the acceptance of bribes in return for support in getting licenses to set up TV stations.”⁸²

KYS’s successor, rival authoritarian-era opposition leader Kim Dae-jung (KDJ), vowed to push anti-corruption reforms forward.⁸³ “In 1998, he declared the ‘War on Corruption’, and one year later established the Presidential Commission on Anti-Corruption (PCAC), an advisory body to the president.”⁸⁴ “In February 2000, revisions of the National Assembly Law, the Political Fund Law and the Political Party Law obliged, among else, candidates for public office to lay open their military service and tax [records].”⁸⁵ Then came the Anti-Corruption Act, the two-part Money Laundering Prevention Act, Code of Conduct for Maintaining the Integrity of Public Officials, and the Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption, which replaced the PCAC and “in 2008 was replaced by the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission [ACRC].”⁸⁶ Like KYS before him, KDJ also tried to reduce governmental malfeasance through the administrative reorganization of corruption-prone sectors, this time under a newly formed Regulatory Reform Committee (RRC).⁸⁷ “Excessive regulations encourage corruption as businessmen are prepared to bribe the relevant officials to bypass the cumbersome and tedious

⁸² Blechinger, “Report on Recent Bribery Scandals,” p. 6.

⁸³ Kihl, *Transforming Korean Politics*, p. 205.; John Larkin, “Graft-busters hit the streets,” *FEER* (Oct 4, 2001), pp. 36–37.

⁸⁴ Göbel, “Warriors Unchained,” p. 234.

⁸⁵ Blechinger, “Report on Recent Bribery Scandals,” p. 2.

⁸⁶ Göbel, “Warriors Unchained,” p. 233.

⁸⁷ Kim, “Building National Integrity through Corruption Eradication in South Korea,” p. 140.

procedures for obtaining a factory permit...After its first year of operations, the RRC abolished 5,226 or 48% of 11,125 administrative regulations.”⁸⁸ In sum, the KDJ administration built on the KYS administration’s successes and set up the “major basic pillars of [South Korea’s] anti-corruption infrastructure.”⁸⁹

The following three administrations, of Roh Moo-hyun (RMH), Lee Myung-bak (LMB), and Park Geun-hye (PGH), were less focused on corruption control and all had their own scandals.⁹⁰ Still, there have been some recent advances. In the mid-2000s, the RMH administration enacted several anti-corruption measures that incorporated citizen participation, including strengthening the ability of citizens to sue, to recall officials, and to hold referendums, improving e-government, and “expanding the disclosure of administrative information.”⁹¹ LMB’s government “created [the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission] in 2008 by integrating the Ombudsman of Korea, the Korea Independent Commission against Corruption, and the Administrative Appeals Commission.”⁹² The ACRC has since been the “control tower” and “primary institution in charge of fighting corruption.”⁹³ A former head of the ACRC, Kim

⁸⁸ Jon S. T. Quah, *Curbing Corruption in Asian Countries: An Impossible Dream?* (Singapore: ISEAS Pub, 2013), p. 81.

⁸⁹ Kim Suk Pan, “Building National Integrity through Corruption Eradication in South Korea” in Clay Wescott and Bidhya Bowornwathana, Eds., *Comparative Governance Reform in Asia: Democracy, Corruption, and Government Trust* (Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2008), p. 142.

⁹⁰ Jon S. T. Quah, “Learning from Singapore’s Effective Anti-Corruption Strategy: Policy Recommendations for South Korea,” *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 6.1 (2017), p. 23.

⁹¹ Sam Youl Lee and Jung Kwangho, “Public Ethics and Anticorruption Efforts in South Korea” in Evan M. Berman, M. Jae Moon, and Choi Heungsuk, Eds., *Public Administration in East Asia: Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2010), p. 414.

⁹² Quah, “Learning from Singapore’s Effective Anti-Corruption Strategy,” p. 23.

⁹³ Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC), <http://www.acrc.go.kr/en/board.do?command=searchDetail&method=searchList&menuId=02031602>, Accessed March 2, 2019.; Thomas Kalinowski, “Trends and mechanisms of corruption in South Korea,” *The Pacific Review*, Aug. 2016, Vol.29(4), p. 636.

Young-ran, proposed a bill that was passed by the legislature in 2015 as the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act. The act aims at “widespread practices of solicitations and entertainment” and imposes strict price limits “on food, gifts and congratulatory or consolatory payments.”⁹⁴ Because of its broad scope and high penalties, the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act has been described as “the strictest anti-corruption law in Korea’s history.”⁹⁵ Finally, NGOs have become powerful political actors, often in alliance with political parties. There are several major NGOs in South Korea working to address government corruption, including the People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, the Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice, the Korean YMCA, and the Young Korean Academy.

Corruption Control Outcomes

Despite negative public perceptions of the South Korean government’s anti-corruption efforts and recurring presidential scandals, corruption has been significantly reduced since democratization.

South Koreans generally have negative perceptions of their government’s anti-corruption efforts. Among citizens of 16 Asian countries surveyed between 2015 and 2017, “people in South Korea were most likely to rate their government as doing badly at stopping graft. Over three quarters rated their government badly (76 per cent).”⁹⁶ However, public perceptions may be based on higher standards than in the past or than in other countries. South Korea’s “vibrant civil

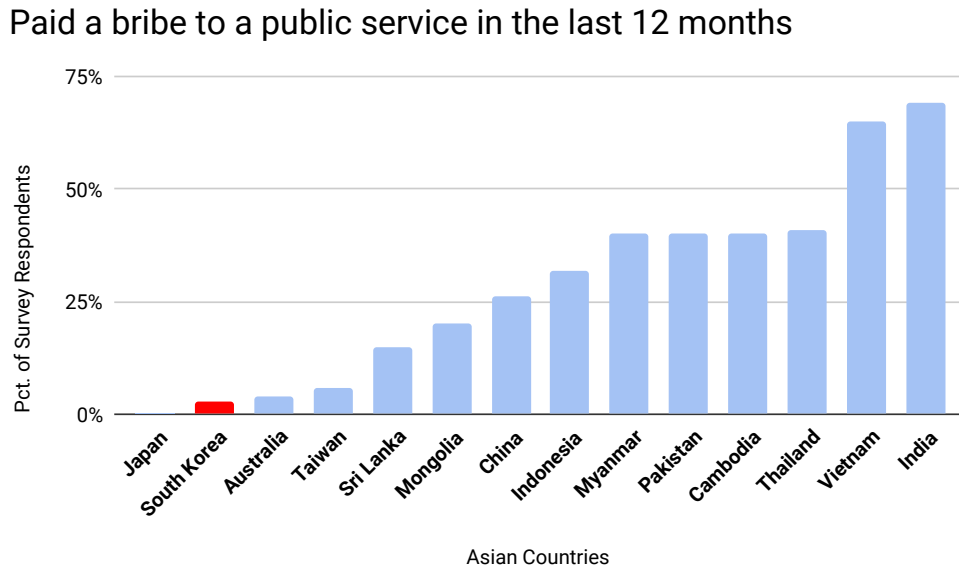
⁹⁴ “Improper Solicitation and Graft Act took effect on September 28,” ACRC: <http://www.acrc.go.kr/en/board.do?command=searchDetail&method=searchDetailViewInc&menuId=020501&boardNum=61628>; *Korea Times*, 2017/9/25, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2017/10/198_236971.html; *Korea Times*, 2018/4/19, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/04/251_247542.html

⁹⁵ Kim Dongryul, “Political Economy of Bureaucratic Corruption Networks in Korea,” Working paper presented at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

⁹⁶ “Global Corruption Barometer 2017 - Asia Pacific,” Transparency International, p. 10.

society organizations and...watchful public are very sensitive to signs of corruption.”⁹⁷ The public’s self-reported use of corruption to obtain public services is low both objectively and relative to the rate in many other Asian countries.⁹⁸

Figure 6.1:



Data Source: Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer 2015/16/17

One reason for South Koreans’ negative perceptions must be the seemingly unbreakable pattern of corruption in the Blue House. The record of the last seven presidents on corruption is remarkably poor: Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo were convicted and later pardoned, Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung were embarrassed by their sons going to jail, RMH committed suicide while under investigation, LMB saw his brother convicted in 2013 and was sentenced to

⁹⁷ “BTI 2018, South Korea,” Bertelsmann Transformation Index, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/kor/>

⁹⁸ Kalinowski, “Trends and mechanisms of corruption in South Korea,” p. 627.

15 years in jail himself, and PGH is currently in jail serving a long sentence. This record is bad enough that for many it could dash any thought that South Korea has improved.

However, presidential scandals actually tell us something positive about anti-corruption enforcement in South Korea. It is significant that presidential corruption is uncovered and legal action is pursued. Unlike in many countries, high-level South Korean officials do not in the main enjoy political protection from investigations, regardless of party affiliation. Political partisanship is strong, and can influence anti-corruption investigations, but has not been so strong that corruption on one's own side is excused.⁹⁹ Anti-corruption activists see the 2017–18 candlelight protests that led to PGH's ouster as an impressive mass movement against governmental wrongdoing in the tradition of the April 19 Movement in 1960 and the June Struggle for democracy in 1987.¹⁰⁰ Göbel argues that South Korea is in the "paradoxical situation of anti-corruption efforts that are improving the quality of the bureaucracy, enhancing public accountability and powerful enough to take even presidents before court, but...insufficient in deterring political leaders from engaging in bribery in the first place."¹⁰¹ Moreover, as noted earlier, presidents are not representative of the whole of government.

Expert assessments agree that corruption has been significantly reduced, if incompletely.¹⁰² "In particular, the first civilian President Kim Young-sam...successfully

⁹⁹ The United States under President Donald Trump would be a current example of a society with polarization intense enough to outweigh credible corruption charges. During the Cold War, ideological polarization made corruption a lower political priority in many countries. Laurence Cockcroft writes that "the international policies of Western governments during the Cold War tolerated corruption on a huge scale, on the grounds that an anti-Communist position trumped all others." Laurence Cockcroft, *Global Corruption: Money, Power and Ethics in the Modern World* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Author's interview with former anti-corruption activist in South Korea, Summer 2018.

¹⁰¹ Göbel, "Warriors Unchained," p. 237.

¹⁰² Lee and Jung, "Public Ethics and Anticorruption Efforts in South Korea," p. 409; BTI: Korea 2014 and 2016.; Kalinowski, "Trends and mechanisms of corruption in South Korea.;" You, *Democracy, Inequality and Corruption*, p. 112.

implemented important reforms.”¹⁰³ The ACRC’s Integrity Assessments, based on reviews of government projects and laws and in-depth surveys of policy experts, bureaucrats, and the public, show strong and continuous improvement overall. The 2017 report shows that useful anti-corruption laws have not only been passed, but also continue to be enforced and updated in later administrations.¹⁰⁴ The bureaucracy, already less corrupt than the government, remains merit-based and high-quality in the democratic era; You cites the decreasing percentage of disciplinary cases that have to do with corruption as evidence that “bureaucratic corruption has been substantially decreasing” into the late 2000s.¹⁰⁵

That said, reforms in the 1990s did not sever “the corrupt links between politicians and big business.”¹⁰⁶ Current president Moon Jae-in’s (MJJ) anti-corruption plan promises the same, but chaebol impunity is still common.¹⁰⁷ Even when heads of chaebol are tried and convicted of corruption, they often receive only a slap on the wrist and return to lead their companies. For example, despite being convicted of bribing PGH, Samsung Vice Chair Lee Jae-yong, “the de facto head of South Korea’s largest conglomerate,” has already been released and may be returning to lead the company soon.¹⁰⁸ As in the authoritarian period, the importance of the

¹⁰³ Kalinowski, “Trends and mechanisms of corruption in South Korea,” p. 628.

¹⁰⁴ “Integrity Assessment 2017,” ACRC, <http://www.acrc.go.kr/en/board.do?command=searchDetail&method=searchDetailViewInc&menuId=020504&confId=64&conConfId=64&conTabId=0&currPageNo=1&boardNum=50201>

¹⁰⁵ You, *Democracy, Inequality and Corruption*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁶ Larry Diamond and Kim Byung-Kook, *Consolidating Democracy in South Korea* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ “President Moon says anti-corruption should be first priority of new government,” ACRC: <http://www.acrc.go.kr/en/board.do?command=searchDetail&method=searchDetailViewInc&menuId=020501&boardNum=67059>

¹⁰⁸ *Nikkei Asian Review*, 2018/2/17, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Policy-Politics/South-Korea-grapples-with-cycle-of-corruption-and-pardons>

chaebol to the national economy makes them hard targets for any administration's anti-corruption efforts.

After PGH's particularly shocking corruption scandals and removal from office in March 2017, MJI pledged to "eliminate accumulated ills" and make corruption a "top priority." His administration launched a new round of anti-corruption activity, beginning with regular crackdowns by investigation squads under the Prosecutors' Office and the announcement of a 50-point strategic plan against corruption over his five-year term.¹⁰⁹ MJI is aiming at private sector corruption, which has been a weak point of previous anti-corruption efforts, as well as well-known trouble areas like the National Intelligence Service, defense industry contracting, and the military in general.¹¹⁰ The campaign has already opened investigations into many dealings of the PGH administration; top officials like former finance minister Choi Kyung-hwan and former spy agency chiefs Nam Jae-joon and Lee Byung-kee have been arrested or are being investigated.¹¹¹

5. Conclusions

The dramatic changes in corruption in these two countries during and after democratization show the importance of political factors in determining corruption control outcomes, but not in a simple "democracy reduces corruption" narrative.

¹⁰⁹ "President Moon says anti-corruption should be first priority of new government," ACRC.; *Economic Daily* / [경기일보], 2018/4/18, <http://www.kyeonggi.com/?mod=news&act=articleView&idxno=1466347>

¹¹⁰ *Korea Times*, 2017/7/18, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/07/356_233186.html; *Korea Times*, 2017/10/23, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/10/356_238113.html

¹¹¹ *Financial Times*, 2017/11/20, <https://www.ft.com/content/ec3a6810-cda9-11e7-b781-794ce08b24dc>

The rise and fall of corruption in Taiwan during democratization, as well as the fact that South Korea launched substantial reforms only in 1993, suggests that within democratization the alternation of power in particular matters for reform. Quasi-democratic institutions created strong incentives for the ruling party in Taiwan to engage in corruption in the late 1980s and 1990s, which the KMT did. Taiwan's increasingly open and competitive political institutions allowed the opposition to credibly challenge the government at the ballot-box, which pushed the KMT to shore up support. This is true regardless of whether we view this period in Taiwan's political development as competitive authoritarianism distinct from the KMT's previous rule or simply as part of the transition to democracy. The DPP victory in 2000 was no panacea, but it brought major reforms.

Anti-corruption efforts in democratic Taiwan and South Korea departed significantly from the previous authoritarian playbook. Strengthening the rule of law and the separation of powers allowed governmental bodies to investigate corruption horizontally or even upwards, for example against the president. In both countries, presidents under investigation for corruption were not able to stop the investigation, even if it came from "their" judiciary or Ministry of Justice. Even as scandals weakened or ousted presidents in both countries, corruption-related prosecutions and enforcement of new laws continued.¹¹² In fact, inter-party competition for power has led to inter-party cooperation on anti-corruption legislation; parties with less political power seek to hold those with more power accountable and those in power seek to prove they are committed to corruption control.¹¹³

¹¹² Blechinger, "Report on Recent Bribery Scandals," p. 4.

¹¹³ Author's interview with an investigative reporter covering the Blue House, January 2019.

While democratization led to lower corruption in Taiwan and South Korea, many other countries that democratized in the late 20th century did not see such clear improvement. Brazil, Mexico, and the Philippines, for example, all remain high-corruption democracies.¹¹⁴ It is beyond the scope of this study to build an argument as to why some democratic transitions lead to a reduction in corruption and others do not. That said, high state capacity and high wealth per capita appear to be important variables.¹¹⁵ This is an area for further research.

¹¹⁴ The Philippines may soon no longer qualify as a democracy. On corruption: Timothy J. Power and Matthew MacLeod Taylor, *Corruption and Democracy in Brazil: The Struggle for Accountability* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011).; “BTI 2016 | Mexico Country Report 2016,” Bertelsmann Transformation Index, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/mex/ity/2016/itr/lac/>; “BTI 2018 | Philippines Country Report,” Bertelsmann Transformation Index, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/PHL/>

¹¹⁵ Yan and Johnston, “Does Democracy Check Corruption?”

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

This study has analyzed how and why some nondemocracies, playing against type, succeed in curbing government corruption. I have demonstrated that authoritarian anti-corruption efforts are most likely to succeed when unconstrained political leaders can command a capable state apparatus and are motivated by broad revolutionary or developmental state-building agendas. Authoritarian reform efforts succeed not by mimicking the democratic approach to corruption control but through an alternative approach that relies on the particular strengths of authoritarian government; centralized discretionary power challenges entrenched corrupt interests, disrupts and remakes corrupt institutions, and enforces top-down discipline in the state. Through this authoritarian playbook, autocrats can curb corruption without ceding power to democratic or quasi-democratic institutions.

These findings are based on my analysis of 30 anti-corruption efforts, nine of which I assessed to be somewhat or very successful. These numbers show that globally authoritarian anti-corruption efforts are common and even success cases are not rare. In order to establish this, I developed an empirical standard for anti-corruption efforts and a scoring system for anti-corruption outcomes based on several dimensions of discipline enforcement, rulemaking, and expert perceptions. A limitation of these empirical tests is that they only apply to national-level reform efforts, missing smaller but potentially consequential subnational efforts. While practical constraints prevented me from creating a definitive list of all anti-corruption efforts after 1945, the standard for inclusion and scoring system are meant to be applied broadly.

Beyond general findings, this study also makes specific contributions to our understanding of East Asian politics. Firstly, there is variation over time in the corruption control outcomes of every East Asian country from 1945 to the present, and often variation even under the same leader. This suggests that structural explanations focused on East Asian cultural traditions, regime type or origins, economic systems, or other relatively fixed factors cannot fully explain their corruption trajectories. Secondly, some anti-corruption efforts have been given short shrift in the literature despite their importance in autocrats' policy agendas: in South Korea, the General Administrative Reform; in North Korea, the Anti-Corruption and Anti-Waste Campaign; and in Taiwan, the Governmental Rejuvenation. And thirdly, this study has country-specific conclusions that result from applying the theory to the cases, such as that greater authoritarianism has helped Xi Jinping to curb corruption in China.

Despite not taking a cultural approach, my study does find that regional history has shaped corruption control outcomes in East Asian countries. Many of the region's autocrats since 1945 have been revolutionary and developmental state-builders, and state capacity has generally been strong. This concentration of factors conducive to authoritarian reform is unusual in the developing world and is not a coincidence. I have argued that Japan's imperial aggression sparked defensive but also emulatory responses in neighboring countries and contributed to the development of all of these factors. The Empire of Japan directly contributed to state capacity in Korea and Taiwan through its settler colonialism, triggered and facilitated the rise of three revolutionary parties that would later take power in the region, and inspired Chinese and Korean elites with its developmental model, among others. These colonial mechanisms are not dissimilar from those generally thought to lead to state capacity, revolutions, and developmentalism in

other regions, but I have argued that they were heightened in East Asia by the fact of Japan being the world's first non-Western great power and therefore a local force with deep ties in the region.

Even after the Empire of Japan's defeat and collapse, East Asian authoritarian regimes continued to learn from each other, whether as allies or enemies. Chiang Kai-shek studied the Chinese Communist Party as an organization to better reform the Nationalist Party, and Kim Il-sung modeled his anti-corruption efforts during the Korean War on China's Three Antis Campaign. While some of this cross-national learning was specifically about how to address corruption, more often it was about emulating a general political-economic model. The Japan model, the Singapore model, the South Korea model, and most recently the China model, though vaguely defined, have all been influential in the region and around the world.

This study suggests four main theoretical contributions. First, successful anti-corruption reforms help autocrats achieve state-building goals and can provide authoritarian regimes with a host of other political and economic benefits that contribute to regime durability. This is a counterpoint to the conventional wisdom that autocrats benefit from corruption and would have to cede power to curb it. While corruption certainly helps keep some autocrats in power, reducing it can also be a path to regime durability. Curbing corruption through the authoritarian playbook provides for more effective government, stronger economic growth, and less public anger over corruption. In fact, I suggest that anti-corruption reform itself can be seen as a demonstration of authoritarian durability; regimes show their ability to course correct and head off internal threats to their rule by combating "the enemy within." As several cases analyzed in this study show, widespread corruption can destabilize or even topple authoritarian regimes.

Second, unconstrained leadership is critical to authoritarian reform, and therefore is in many cases an asset for authoritarian regimes. Personalism in authoritarian regimes is

commonly—and correctly—associated with chaotic governance, economic mismanagement, and rampant corruption, among other negatives. This leads to the view that personalism is necessarily inferior to collective leadership.¹ However, the issue of corruption control reveals that there is a distinct subset of regimes in which personal power is an effective tool of governance and a boon to the regime. Personalists in this subset are committed to revolutionary or developmental agendas and can implement them with the aid of a capable state. I am not attempting to reprise a hoary argument for the “enlightened autocrat”—many of these leaders are ruthless toward their citizens and quash grassroots attempts to improve society—but rather noting that centralized discretionary power can be an authoritarian asset. By contrast, collective leadership can block much-needed reforms, as cases in Vietnam and elsewhere demonstrate.

Third, this study cuts against the view that quasi-democratic institutions strengthen authoritarian regimes and improve their durability. There is little evidence that quasi-democratic institutions help authoritarian regimes curb corruption, except partially in the case of Singapore. They therefore do not serve as a replacement for the democratic approach to curbing corruption in authoritarian regimes. Like collective leadership, quasi-democratic institutions often hinder top-down authoritarian reforms. In several cases examined in this study, their presence even incentivized greater corruption. In other work, I develop these points further to show that authoritarian regimes with quasi-democratic institutions are generally not stable, and that their corruption is often to blame.²

¹ See this summary of the literature on quasi-democratic institutions: Dawn Brancati, “Democratic Authoritarianism: Origins and Effects,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17:2.1–2.14, (2014).; Andrew J. Nathan, “Authoritarian Resilience,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2003.

² Christopher Carothers, “The Surprising Instability of Competitive Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy*, Oct. 2018, 29(4).; Christopher Carothers, “Democratic Institutions, Corruption, and Authoritarian Durability,” *Working Paper*, 2019.

Lastly, this investigation of authoritarian corruption control suggests a larger point about regime durability—even more than regime origins, the continuing ability of a regime to reform and strengthen itself is crucial. Many cases in this study show how corruption arises repeatedly as a challenge for authoritarian regimes. The ability to meet this challenge depends on whether the regime can overcome inertia or the status quo and reform from within. This ability to auto-reform is not the product of any one type of regime and even varies within regimes over time. When curbing corruption, democracies reform themselves by strengthening democratic institutions, whereas authoritarian regimes reform themselves through an authoritarian playbook. This is not to say that democratic and authoritarian regimes are equally good at curbing corruption—which in general is far from the case—but rather that what matters is each regime’s ability at that moment to draw on its own particular institutional strengths.

Despite these contributions, this study has methodological problems and limitations. Endogeneity is a concern in the causal argument. In some cases, unconstrained leadership is consolidated through anti-corruption efforts. In other cases, unconstrained leadership may exist before an anti-corruption effort but be difficult to observe until the anti-corruption effort begins. Both unconstrained leadership and state capacity, I have argued, aid anti-corruption efforts and can be further bolstered by them.

This study’s breadth brings potential analytical problems. One issue is that case-based research may not properly account for supranational changes that affect the domestic politics of corruption control.³ The most obvious example would be the end of the Cold War. While ideological polarization made corruption a second-tier political issue in many countries during

³ See the discussion of the problems with “methodological nationalism” in Prasenjit Duara and Elizabeth J. Perry, Eds., *Beyond Regimes: China and India compared* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018).

the Cold War, concerns over good governance became more prominent after its conclusion.⁴

Corruption scandals rarely brought down national leaders during the Cold War, but they are now among the most likely causes of exit from office before the end of a leader's term. Between 2013 and 2018, more than 10 percent of countries (21) have had a president or prime minister brought down by corruption—meaning resignation in the face of scandal, ouster through a vote of no confidence, or impeachment and removal from office.⁵ In short, while the political costs of corruption have changed over time for international reasons, this fact is not reflected in this study's case-based analysis.

Furthermore, this study makes several framing choices and assumptions that could be questioned. Anti-corruption efforts are treated in this analysis as nearly independent events, which is a simplification. For example, after the KMT Reconstruction successfully constrained high-level corruption in Taiwan, it seems that the later Governmental Rejuvenation only needed to address low-level corruption, limiting it by definition to a Limited Victory. Corruption is taken to be a unified phenomenon, when in fact differences among types of corruption may matter. Anti-corruption efforts are defined narrowly, not taking into account the possibility of corruption control as a downstream result of politically engineered economic or societal change. While I stand by my argument for the separateness of unconstrained leadership, state capacity, and state-building motivations, there may be interactivity among these variables that complicates the causal story. The democratic approach and authoritarian playbook for corruption control are ideal types; democratic regimes sometimes combat corruption through executive power and with

⁴ Laurence Cockcroft, *Global Corruption: Money, Power and Ethics in the Modern World* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 8. Accordingly, scholarship on corruption has boomed since the early 1990s. See: Bo Rothstein and Aiysha Varraich, *Making Sense of Corruption* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 7.

⁵ *Foreign Policy*, 2018/7/24, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/24/the-one-thing-modern-voters-hate-most-corruption/>

temporary organizations outside the normal bureaucracy that intrusively inspect lower levels of government. And perhaps most importantly, this study examines autocratic motives only in terms of whether they help an anti-corruption effort succeed, not to produce a theory of why authoritarian regimes launch anti-corruption efforts in the first place.

Finally, its limitations notwithstanding, this study raises promising paths for future research. Scholars of authoritarianism might further examine the relationship between corruption and regime durability, about which there are many open questions. Are authoritarian regimes that manage to keep corruption in check more durable than those that engage in it as a strategy of rule? Does promising and then failing to curb corruption weaken a regime's legitimacy? Does it weaken a leader's legitimacy? This study also raises questions about the effects of democratization on corruption control. Why does democratization lead to clean government in some countries but not in others? How, if at all, are anti-corruption efforts in a new democracy shaped by the country's authoritarian past? Another path for future research would be to study the role of the strong leader–strong state combination and the authoritarian playbook for corruption control in other areas of governance. To what extent is this also a formula for authoritarian regimes to carry out successful public goods provision or effectively manage social unrest? Under what conditions is collective leadership more effective than personalized leadership, or vice versa? Through these questions, and many others, scholarship can and should continue to enlighten us about the causes of stability and change in authoritarian regimes.

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Appendix A

Abbreviations for Sources

ACRC – Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (South Korea)

CCDI – Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (China)

CSIB – 조선일보 [*The Chosun Ilbo*]

DAIB – 동아일보 [*The Dong-A Ilbo / East Asia Daily*]

FEER – *Far Eastern Economic Review*

FRUS – *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Department of State)

HHIB – 황해일보 [*The Hwanghae Ilbo*]

KHSM – 경향신문 [*Kyunghyang News*]

LHB – 聯合報 [*United Daily News*]

NSC – National Supervisory Commission (China)

NYT – *The New York Times*

RFA – *Radio Free Asia*

RMRB – 人民日报 [*People's Daily*]

SCMP – *South China Morning Post*

WCDA – *The Wilson Center Digital Archive*

WP – *The Washington Post*

YHN – 연합뉴스 [*Yonhap News*]

ZDZYSS – 中国当代政治运动史数据库
[Database for the History of Contemporary Chinese Political Movements, 1949–.]

ZGSB – 中國時報 [*China Times*]

ZLWB – 自立晚報 [*The Independent Evening Post*]

ZLWZH – 中共重要历史文献资料汇编
[Compilation of Important Historical Documents of the CCP, Harvard University]

ZYRB – 中央日報 [*Central Daily News*]

Appendix B

Primary Sources

Materials for this study came from the following archival collections, libraries, and government agencies.

China:

Central Commission for Discipline Inspection

National Library of China

The Universities Service Centre for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, especially the Database for the History of Contemporary Chinese Political Movements, 1949–. (中国当代政治运动史数据库) [abbr. ZDZYSS]

Taiwan:

Academia Historica Archives

Academia Sinica, especially the Institute of Modern History Archives and the Joint Library of Humanities and Social Sciences

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission

Kuomintang Party History Archives

Ministry of Justice

National Central Library

National Taiwan University Library

The United States:

Compilation of Important Historical Documents of the CCP, Harvard University
(中共重要历史文献资料汇编) [abbr. ZLWZH]

Fung Library, Harvard University

Harvard-Yenching Library

The Central Intelligence Agency

The Department of Defense

The Department of Justice

The Department of State

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library

The Harry S. Truman Presidential Library

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library

The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

The Office of the United States Trade Representative

The Wilson Center Digital Archive

Tiananmen Square Incident Materials Collection, Harvard University
(天安门资料集)

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, especially the National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, 1675 – 1958

South Korea:

Central Officials Training Institute
Office for Government Policy Coordination
Ministry of Government Administration
Ministry of the Interior
Ministry of Unification
National Library of Korea
National Archives of Korea (Daejeon, Sejong, Seongnam, and Seoul branches)
Seoul Metropolitan Library
The Korea Institute for National Unification

Other:

National Archives of Singapore
WikiLeaks