Anti-Corruption Policy: China's Tiger Hunt and India's Demonetization

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Abstract

This paper examines the different styles of anti-corruption strategy, particularly at the local level in China and India. In China there has been a central push with a role of anti-corruption agencies that have law-enforcement power. In India there has been a focus on institutional building together with a visible role of the civil society. China has had a top-down approach while India has more of a bottom-up approach combined with top-down initiatives such as demonetization. Interviews with 44 mid-career and senior officials investigate the two approaches and the impacts of anti-corruption measures in China and India. Interviewees support the approaches adopted by China and India but doubt their effectiveness and sustainability. The way forward, they suggest, is to reduce the influence of political parties especially in India and to enhance e-governance in both countries. Experiences of the two countries have significant implications especially on capacity building, institutional development, and law enforcement.

Introduction

China and India, the two largest developing countries, are struggling hard to address corruption. The anti-corruption efforts in both countries have not only aroused their domestic observers to investigate the effectiveness of corruption reduction measures, but also international observers to draw some lessons for countries ridden with corruption to learn from. There is little academic literature on comparing China's anti-corruption movement, especially Tiger Hunt in the past five years, with India's anti-corruption drive, most notably Modi's demonetization in late 2016. More importantly, little light has been thrown upon local governments and their public officials' perceptions and understanding of anti-corruption. Drawing on new institutionalism, this study attempts to explain the complexities and difficulties associated with anti-corruption in the two countries. Capacity building, institutional development, strict law enforcement, and civil society space for anti-corruption are highlighted in this study.

In recent years, the general public in the two countries have demanded cleaner government and better public services. Nevertheless, in terms of the corruption ranking, it appears that these two developing countries are at the same level. Particularly in the past decade, China's ranking appeared close to that of India based on Corruption Perceptions Index compiled by the Transparency International (see Figure 1). This suggests that the interviewees surveyed by the Transparency International in both countries generally view corruption as a serious issue.

The Chinese leadership has never denied that corruption is a serious issue. The heavyweights of the national politics refer to corruption as a life-and-death matter (Manion, 2015). Wang Qishan, one of the seven men in the previous Party Politburo Standing Committee and the former head of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) - anti-corruption agency within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) felt that "the Party faces severe challenges to change behaviour that has become so much a part of everyday life."[1] The current president of the PRC, Xi Jinping is determined with regard to anti-corruption. Under his regime, hundreds of senior leaders such as ministers, generals, provincial leaders, and the senior management of important state-owned enterprises have been investigated and jailed for corruption.[2]
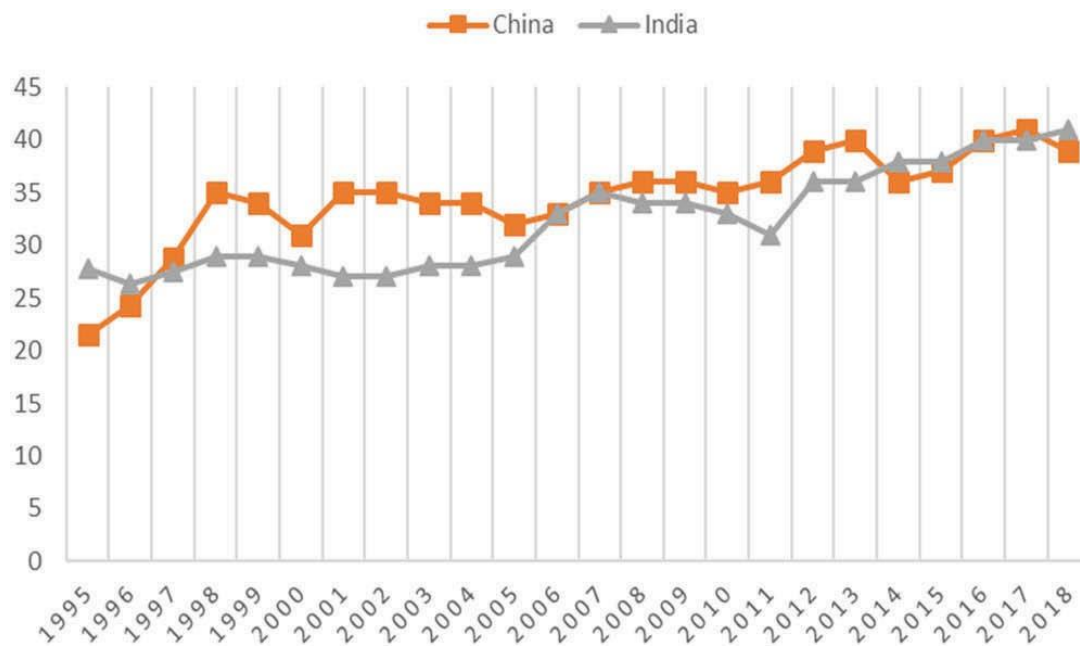
Figure 1. Corruption Perceptions Index, China and India, 1995–2018

Data source: Transparency International, https://www.transparency. org A higher score means a cleaner government. From 1995 to 2011, the score ranged between 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (highly clean); after 2012, the score ranged between 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (highly clean); In order to have a consistent figure, the scores between 1995 and 2011 were multiplied by 10.

In India, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has gained high popularity against the turbulent international and domestic environment. His anti-corruption initiative through demonetization has generated profound implications in India. Despite some issues related to non-transparency and disruption of the lives of ordinary people, Modi's demonetization has achieved partial benefits with regard to economic development and public governance in India among controversies (Chandrasekhar & Ghosh, 2018; Gopalan & Rajan, 2017).[3] In early 2000, Modi ascended to a key position at the state level (Chief Minister of Gujarat) due to his predecessor's alleged corruption and poor administration. Learning from the lessons left by his predecessor, Modi was strongly credited with anti-corruption initiatives. Owing to his performance in promoting economic development and curtailing corruption, he and his party – Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) gained popularity in the 2014 general election. In his first cabinet decision, Modi attempted to make a decisive move to fight corruption and a special team was introduced to investigate black money and associated corrupt behaviour.

Over a prolonged period, both China and India have been facing the same challenges, although the roots of corruption differ (see Doig & Riley, 1998; Ko & Weng, 2012). It is assumed that China is plagued by grand corruption involving high-flying officials at a greater scale while India is troubled by petty corruption involving lower-ranking public officials at a smaller scale. However, the recent reality suggests a much more complex situation.

Graycar and Jancsics (2017, p. 1015) reveal the concept of bribe giving as a "social function which keeps together social groups at different levels of society." A bribe is always a hidden non-transparent exchange and the presence of organizational resources in an informal transaction is a distinguishing criterion between gift and bribe (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017, p. 1021). With regard to anti-corruption solutions, China has heavily relied on the CCDI to battle corruption while tapping into campaign-style movements as the Chinese government has

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utilized them for law enforcement since the 1980s. In India, some bottom-up initiatives such as "I Paid a Bribe"[4] and the landslide victory of the BJP in the 2014 general election have moved anti-corruption forward. What is perhaps more noteworthy is that India has promoted institutional building through passing some important laws such as the Right to Information Act over the past decade.

China's Tiger Hunt (*dahu*) and India's Demonetization in recent years are impressive and have resonated throughout the developing world. Nevertheless, China is constrained by the authoritarian nature of the government and India by party politics. Authoritarian China has utilized a formidable party-state apparatus to reduce corruption; however, the experience does not suggest a rosy future. Democratic India has not performed better in terms of fighting corruption; demonetization has been criticized, especially on its hypothetical negative impact on economic growth. In addition, some studies confirm that the higher the levels of corruption, the higher is the negative effect on entrepreneurship, and, consequently, to the economy (Liu et al., 2019). Nevertheless, in India, our interviewees supported demonetization but pointed out that the state governments formed by the BJP tend to support central mandate on anti-corruption while other state governments do not. Drawing on new institutionalism, this study also investigates interactions between institutions and actors. Informal rules developed by actors could substantially curb anti-corruption efforts by the central governments in China and India; in the meantime, historical and structural constraints cannot be removed in the near future. The effectiveness of anti-corruption in both contexts remains to be seen.

Through a comparative study of anti-corruption strategies in China and India, this study uses structured interviews to evaluate whether, in the view of public officials, the state-driven anti-corruption initiatives work or not. Our findings suggest that the Chinese anti-corruption apparatus is good at capacity building while India is excelling at developing formal rules and promoting legislation. Both have problems in the implementation of anti-corruption policies. Nevertheless, civil society space for anti-corruption is much more developed in the Indian context. Latest anti-corruption experiences in these two countries shed light on corruption eradication in other developing countries as well.

This article proceeds as follows. The first section examines the background and drives of anti-corruption in China and India. The second and third sections discuss the theoretical framework used in this study and field interviews in both countries, respectively. The final section investigates the policy implications of this study.

China's Tiger Hunt and India's strike on corruption

President Xi Jinping launched his signature anti-corruption campaign when he became the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). He had vowed to crack down on both "tigers" and "flies" – referring to the corrupt high-ranking officials and rank-and-file civil servants – in his anti-corruption campaign. It is viewed as one of the largest anti-corruption efforts in the history of the PRC (Quah, 2015; Wedeman, 2014). In 2017, at the 19th Party Congress of the CCP, it was revealed that over the five years after 2012, about 1,537,000 party members (the CCP had about 89.5 million members in 2016) had been punished for corruption. About 1.72 percent of the party members were caught due to corruption-related issues (for example, in 2010, the percentage of party members who received punishments due to corruption-related offences was about 0.15 percent).[5] More significantly, about 440 high-ranking public

officials (provincial-level leaders or above) had been indicted.[6] It should be noted that amongst 1.5 million party members disciplined, roughly 58,000 people were referred to judicial bodies for prosecution and sentencing.

Executed largely under the direction of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), along with prosecutorial and judicial organs, the campaign was notable in implicating both incumbent and former national-level leaders, including former Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) member Zhou Yongkang (see Lee, 2018), the former President of the PRC Hu Jintao's top aide Ling Jihua, and former military leaders Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong.

Similar to the Chinese government's anti-graft efforts, the Indian government under Modi has also accorded great attention to anti-corruption. The latest initiative was the banknote demonetization in 2016, which shocked the world as much as China's massive anti-graft campaign did. In November 2016, the Government of India led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced the demonetization of all ₹500 and ₹1,000 banknotes of the Mahatma Gandhi Series. It was viewed that the Indian government attempted to curb illegally obtained cash, proceeds of corruption, and counterfeits. Among the three targets mentioned above, anti-corruption has been ranked highly (see Beyes & Bhattacharya, 2017). Modi stated clearly that "The magnitude of cash in circulation is directly linked to the level of corruption. Inflation becomes worse through the deployment of cash earned in corrupt ways. The poor have to bear the brunt of this. It has a direct effect on the purchasing power of the poor and the middle class."[7] This suggests that similar to some Chinese leaders, Modi attributed anti-corruption to a matter of life-and-death which will have an effect on the country's future.

To some extent, it was not surprising to envisage anti-corruption efforts by Modi. Prior to Modi's demonetization, civil society movement on anti-corruption had received great attention in India.[8] The India Against Corruption Movement (IAC) in 2011, led by a social activist Anna Hazare, made a significant impact on public governance and anti-corruption in India. The direct result of this movement was an introduction of the Lokpal at the central level, literally the protector or the caretaker of people – which is parallel to the office of ombudsman in the Western context. Starting from 16 January 2014, the anti-graft ombudsman in India has been mandated to prosecute all corrupt politicians, ministers, and senior civil servants. Remarkably, both the then ruling Indian National Congress Party and main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) endorsed the Lokpal in the public debate.[9]

Similar to the Chinese situation, India has been plagued by widespread corruption. At every level of government, bureaucrats engage in corruption. It was assumed that Indian bureaucrats were mostly involved in petty corruption. However, in recent years, grand corruption has received attention as well. Particular corruption associated with the allocation of 2G spectrum and coal blocks substantially damaged the regime under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The Robin Hood style of anti-corruption appeared to work well in the election campaign. The main message was carried when Modi assumed the national leadership.[10] However, more important structuring of the law and institutions for anti-corruption, such as transparency of the government and effective law enforcement against corruption, has not been introduced. Therefore, some criticize that the Indian government's anti-corruption strategies focus on winning voters by pleasing popular

demand.

An understanding framework – new institutionalism

New institutionalism, emphasizing institutions interacting with actors and society, can explain the complexities of anti-corruption in both China and India and shed light on policy implications deriving from China and India's anti-corruption efforts. Compared with traditional institutionalism, new institutionalism made six changes: "(1) from a focus on organizations to a focus on rules; (2) from a formal to an informal conception of institutions; (3) from a static to a dynamic conception of institutions; (4) from submerged values to a value-critical stance; (5) from a holistic to a disaggregated conception of institutions; and (6) from independence to embeddedness" (Lowndes, 2002, p. 97). As this research focuses more on interactions between institutions and agents (actors), we intend to adopt the definition offered by Lowndes – that is, "institutions are specific to a particular political or governmental setting, they are recognized by actors" (Lowndes, 2002, p. 103). As noted later, at the local levels of both Chinese and Indian governments, actors interpret and interact with institutions (particularly rules) differently from central leaderships.

Hay (2002) describes the key themes of new institutionalism as: "1) Institutions become embedded in routine and convention and are, consequently, difficult to reform, transform or replace; 2) The timing and sequence of events matter since history is 'path dependent'– large consequences may follow from small or contingent events; 3) Actors are socialized within institutional settings which define informal rules and procedures; 4) Logics of appropriateness may better explain political behaviour than those which assume instrumental self-interest; 5) The rigidity of institutions means that political time tends to be characterized by periods of relative stability, punctuated periodically by phases of intense institutional change" (Hay, 2002, p. 14).[11]

Our field research suggests that formal institutions, with the CCDI leading anti-corruption campaigns along with prosecutorial and judicial organs in China and the Lokpal at the central level with some other organizations such as Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in India, aim to reduce widespread corruption. Norms, as a kind of institution, also exist to reduce or worsen corruption. For example, in China, one of the informal norms is that the members of the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) (seven paramount leaders in China for the current government) cannot be investigated. This norm has in fact extended to provincial and sub-provincial levels in China; therefore, chief leaders in the jurisdiction cannot be probed unless higher-level party disciplinary commissions step in.

On the one hand, "institutions structure actions" (Clemens & Cook, 1999); therefore, given that the institutions on anti-corruption have been improved and reinforced, actors will comply with them eventually. On the other hand, the role of actors, who may modify and circumvent institutions, particularly informal norms, requires careful studying in both Chinese and Indian contexts. Nevertheless, it has been evident that although no one denies the importance of anti-corruption and clean government in both countries, anti-corruption drives have been much more complex than we anticipated as the interactions between institutions and actors could go in different directions.

It is better to investigate rules relating to anti-corruption rather than solely examine the organizations' set up to tackle corruption in the two largest developing countries. It appears that the Chinese government has a stronger capacity to build a formidable organization such as the CCDI to fight corruption. The Indian government, due to colonial history, places a strong emphasis on rules. New legislation has been enacted since the 2012 movement. However, in China, the anti-corruption movement has resulted in little legislation endorsed by the National People's Congress – the Chinese parliament.[12] Furthermore, new institutionalism, as Lowndes (2002) notes, emphasizes embeddedness rather than independence. New institutionalism accords great attention to "the 'bottom–up' influence of locally specific institutional constraints" (p. 1960). India's anti-corruption drive is complicated by local party politics; the influence of locally specific institutional constraints is visible. For example, as noted later, some state governments where the BJP is in power are fairly supportive of Modi's anti-corruption drive; however, the states where other parties dominate are not keen to fight corruption. In the Chinese case, based on our field research, locally specific institutional constraints seem to exist widely. For example, dukedoms (or fiefdoms) and local non- compliance of national mandates have been present at the local level for a while (Chen, 2004; Zheng, 2006). Often, local governments may not have strong incentive to fight corruption and implement anti-corruption regulations loosely. However, given that the central government currently emphasizes the homogeneity of the anti-corruption fight around the country, we still need to observe whether the implementation problems embedded in the local context can be solved in the fight against corruption.

Field research

We gathered primary qualitative information by using open-ended, in-depth structured interviews with 44 mid-career and senior public officials in China and India.[13] In China, a central province with average performance in economic development was chosen and civil servants training in a renowned, local university were asked to attend an interview in September 2017. Civil servants in their mid-careers filled in the semi-structured questionnaires within 1 to 2 hours, answering the questions about anti-corruption in China. Most of the interviewed civil servants worked in the core departments of the government in this province and their ranks ranged from section members to division heads. Some of them worked in the county government which provides most of the public services, such as basic education and healthcare. The topic is rather sensitive in today's China as the anti-corruption campaign is still ongoing. However, most of the interviewees were frank about their views on anti-corruption in China. Some of them pointed out the challenges and difficulties regarding anti-corruption at the grassroots level. In total, we interviewed 30 civil servants.

In India, the survey questions were e-mailed to the target middle-to-senior-ranking Indian civil servants and politicians through our connections in central India: 22 respondents including two politicians (one from the ruling party of the BJP and the other from an opposition party) and 20 senior Indian Administrative Services (IAS)/PCS (Provincial Civil Service) officers were approached in July and

August 2017. The economic development in the region was average as well. Both the politicians and 12 IAS/PCS officers holding different ranks in the government responded to our questions (in total 14 returned questionnaires). Though the number was not big considering the total number of IAS/PCS officers in India, it is difficult to gain access to government officials and politicians owing to some political and administrative reasons there. The access became more challenging as the subject of this study focused on the government's recent anti-corruption policy. In addition, these interviewees held important positions in the public service of India. The interviewed officers worked in important positions like Additional District Magistrate, Deputy Collector, Deputy Commissioner, and District Collector. Therefore, they provided valuable information and knowledge on anti-corruption in India.

The identity of the respondents in both China and India has been kept confidential upon request because the research topic is associated with anti-corruption drives and the governments' secrecy requirements. The same principles for coding were followed for both the Chinese and Indian interviewees. Nevertheless, in the below section, the statements and arguments of Indian interviewees come first while the Chinese ones follow. In some paragraphs, there is a mix of answers from Chinese and Indian interviewees; we indicate whether the interviewees are from China or India.

Overview on anti-corruption: interviewees' perspectives

The interviewees support anti-corruption drives in both countries but express some cautions as well. In India, we asked the question "How would you rate the overall effectiveness of anti-corruption via demonetization?" The responses from the interviewees in India sound very positive. Demonetization has delivered a positive message about anti-corruption in the Indian society. Interviewee No. 2 said:

> "The Modi government has taken the bold step of demonetization to curb terrorism, black money, counterfeit currency. There is widespread corruption at all levels of government. Corruption is a part of society. The economic implication of demonetization is inspiring the confidence of the international community that India is serious about its commitment to fight corruption. There will be popularizing of digital money slowly throughout India. I would rate it as fairly good as the country in this rare opportunity will ultimately cleanse the economy from the cancer of corruption."

Interviewee No. 8 echoed that although it may be too early to evaluate its overall impact on corruption comprehensively, the perception of success by demonetization is prevalent in the country. The interviewees also mentioned the initial negative impact of demonetization on economic growth; in the meantime, they argued that the economy has rebounded because of strong public support (Interviewee No. 9). Some also mentioned that demonetization has troubled ordinary people a lot as they need to spend extra time handling this issue (Interviewees Nos. 10 and 11).

The interviewed Chinese civil servants reported a positive evaluation of anti-corruption in China as well. They argued that although the means of anti-corruption can be debatable, the outcome is positive, as civil servants are very aware of anti-corruption

requirements and ethical issues related to their public- sector positions. Interviewee No. 20 mentioned that "anti-corruption has reached a new normal. It improves the relationships between the government and citizens and restores the credibility and legitimacy of the government." Some also discussed how anti-corruption impacted individual behaviour. For example, the anti-corruption campaign has reduced public spending on entertainment. Therefore, civil servants feel released by not attending a variety of official entertainments and dining – some civil servants said that they dislike official entertainment as they need to invest a substantial amount of their time and these activities do not benefit them professionally. Under-table dealings and illegal money transactions have been reduced according to some interviewees (Interviewees Nos. 9 and 23). Some also reported that administrative efficiency has improved as civil servants focus more on their daily duties instead of greeting public officials from higher authorities and dining with them.

However, some cautioned that although some tigers and flies had been caught, there is some gap between anti-corruption policy and real implementation. Some even suspected that many tigers and flies have never been touched and caught (Interviewee No. 15; Sun and Yuan (2017) also have a similar finding based on interview data). Although millions of public sector workers were punished between 2012 and 2017, very few of them were prosecuted. As noted by the Transparency International, China has set a threshold for prosecuting bribery – that is, if an individual pays RMB5,000 or below or a legal entity pays RMB200,000 or below to public officials, it would not be an anti-corruption target and the public officials involved will not be prosecuted.[14] The study of Ponomariov et al. (2018) pointed out that frequency and magnitude of bribery also have an influence on tax perceptions and corruption overall.

Field research also suggests that public officials in China are, to some extent, skeptical of anti-corruption movements.[15] As the central government launched anti-corruption campaigns, local officials think that they prefer investing in anti-corruption institutions or come up with new regulations or rules. For example, some argue for higher civil service pay to reduce corruption. They felt that anti-corruption campaigns would not be much more effective and long-lasting without institutional changes. Interviewee No. 16 noted that particularly corruption related to the public personnel system, sectoral monopolies (associated with corruption), and grassroots petty corruption are still serious and have not been addressed fundamentally in China. Public employees and ordinary citizens were not satisfied with the above-mentioned corruption-related issues which have fundamental implications for their daily lives. Interviewee No. 3 reported that "civil servants are much more careful about carrying out their duties and exercising their powers; however, they do not want to shoulder the administrative responsibilities in a bid to stay out of trouble; they prefer not to do more things and take the initiative but remain laidback."[16]

The quality of anti-corruption institutions

Indian interviewees doubt the quality of anti-corruption institutions and argue for greater independence and autonomy of anti-corruption institutions in India. Chinese interviewees are optimistic about anti-corruption institutions in China and propose some new ones.

The institutions are supposed to have a great impact on anti-corruption in different

contexts. The Indian anti-corruption institutions have grown slowly. The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 is India's principal legislation against corruption. The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 seeks to prevent money laundering. Right to Information Act, 2005 represents one of India's most critical achievements to fight against corruption. With NGOs and civil society organizations working tirelessly, the Right to Information Act has helped Indian citizens bring a substantial number of corrupt cases into the public domain and make the government much more transparent and accountable towards the general public.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) are the different anti-corruption institutions in India. Each and every one of these institutions has its own limitations. Some have powers to merely recommend but do not have the authority to investigate. Some are under government control and influenced by party politics. They are far from being autonomous and independent. Some prior sanctions of the relevant authorities should be obtained before anti-corruption agencies can take action to prosecute public employees.

The interviewees as public officials have no confidence in the independence of the anti-corruption agencies in India. They agreed that anti-corruption institutions are controlled indirectly by the ruling political parties at the different levels of government such as the central government and state governments (Interviewees Nos. 3, 5, 6, and 11). They advocate independence and autonomy of anti-corruption agencies in India.

In the meantime, they also reported that some ordinary people still have faith in the anti-corruption agencies. This is crucial for anti-corruption as international anti-corruption experience suggests. A caveat is in order. Many pointed out that some influential politicians and senior government officials were rarely convicted for corruption; therefore, public confidence in the political arena will depend on the government effectively tackling corruption (Interviewees Nos. 1 and 2).

The Chinese side commented very little on the institutional arrangements of anti-corruption. Rather they suggested some characteristics of the Chinese government: given that the leaders (including central leaders) pay attention to the problems such as corruption, all resources are directed to improve them. Anti-corruption is no exception (Interviewee No. 14). They also advocate that in order to improve the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures, transparency in the public sector must be achieved. Although China's Regulation on Open Government Information (effective in May 2008) has been introduced for a number of years (Interviewee No. 13 used "N" years to indicate that it was long time ago), internal transparency within the bureaucracy is not in place yet, let alone transparency and accountability towards the general public. Particularly decision-making tends to be kept dark with regard to government projects, public finance, and key personnel appointments. They are tightly associated with corruption and wrongdoings by public officials (Interviewee No. 13). Some also mentioned the introduction of e-governance; therefore, the room for corruption may be reduced (Interviewees Nos. 12, 20, 23, 29). Intriguingly, Interviewee No. 2 in India mentioned that "E-governance has considerably increased the speed of government services in a number of areas and reduced opportunities for bribery." Interviewee No. 9 echoed this point and mentioned that e-governance as a modern innovation in the public sector can help improve accountability and reduce corruption in the

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long run.

Effectiveness of anti-corruption at the local level

Our field interview suggests that anti-corruption efforts in both countries are embedded within complex central-local relationships and the effectiveness of corruption reduction hinges on the improvement of intergovernmental relations. It is suspected that the central policy on anti-corruption will remain stuck at the local level. Surprisingly, some of the interviewees held a positive view of Indian local authorities with regard to the anti-corruption drive. For example, some argued that under Modi's regime and demonetization, state governments are under pressure to support the initiatives of the central government. Therefore, they need to follow the anti-corruption drive at the central level (Interviewee No.9). Intriguingly, Interviewee No. 2 pointed out that "State governments where the BJP is in power are fairly supportive of Modi's anti-corruption drive. But in those states where other parties are in power, corruption has multiplied many-fold."

Interviewee No. 1 echoed that "Not every state but only the states with BJP rule, are trying hard to eradicate corruption. Some of the recent examples to prove this are Yogi Adityanath, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and Manohar Parrikar, the Chief Minister of Goa, who are really pushing very hard to eradicate corruption and help Modi with his anti-corruption drive. The state governments are also trying hard, but not to the extent they could, and they have appointed Lokayukta[17] at the state level and the CBI overlooks the central departments working in the state. But there is a lack of sincerity and determination as so many Lokayuta cases are pending and CBI cases are waiting for approval." If there are no speedy trials, justice cannot be maintained in reality, and the general public will not have faith in the anti-corruption drive. Several interviewees expressed this concern.

It should be noted that some view that state/local governments are not supportive of the central government's anti-corruption drive. "State governments are not supportive enough. They do not have the same drive as Modi" (Interviewees Nos. 4, 5, 7, 11, 13). They advocate that both (the central and state governments) should unite to make anti-corruption effective.

While the Indian anti-corruption drive has been tightly associated with party politics, the Chinese one is associated with traditional central-local relations. It is worth noting that local governments including sub-provincial governments accord great attention to the anti-corruption drive in China. Some mentioned the "Measures of the General Office of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee for the Accountability for the Selection and Appointment of the Party and Government Leaders" (effective in May 2010). They pointed out that if a serious case of corruption occurred in the jurisdiction, the leaders of that jurisdiction would be punished for the wrong selection or promotion of corrupt officials. Therefore, every leader has to pay attention to the anti-corruption drive (Interviewee No. 24).

It was also observed that public officials tend to report that provincial and municipal governments implement anti-corruption policies much more seriously than county governments (Interviewees Nos. 19, 21, 25).[18] Furthermore, internal monitoring and accountability are much more emphasized; external monitoring and checks and balances

between government departments are nonetheless much weaker. Therefore, in reality, some local governments pay lip service to the anti-corruption campaign (Interviewee No. 30). Surprisingly, one argued that "have you heard that corrupt officials (at the local level) support the anti-corruption movement? In the county government I served in, public officials have weaved a net with which they protect each other; it is hard to break the net and catch   the corrupt officials" (Interviewee No. 13).

Many interviewees observed that local governments tend to respond to anti-corruption initiatives by higher authorities through loose implementation of the anti-corruption policies (Interviewee No. 13). In the meantime, some also reported that public sector remuneration and fringe benefits have been conducted according to relevant regulations and government units do not use their small coffers to pocket public money. Therefore, welfare-maximizing corruption (see Wu, 2013, 2014) has reduced substantially at the local level of government. In addition, auditors have come to monitor the use of public money more frequently and regularly (Interviewees Nos. 17, 19, 23).

Solutions for anti-corruption in China and India and beyond

Our interviewees raised three solutions for anti-corruption in the Indian and Chinese contexts.

First, the government should reduce the influence of political parties on anti-corruption agencies. The Indian interviewees appreciate the benefits of democracy and party competition. Negative implications of party politics and patronage and favouritism have been noticed as well. Therefore, some suggested that the party control of anti-corruption agencies should be reduced. For example, Interviewee No. 2 argued that the control over the CBI should be stopped. All anti-corruption agencies need to work independently.

Second, transparency should be emphasized in the public sector. In the Indian context, many argued that after demonetization, there should be more transparency in a variety of transactions – a cashless society would be a good instrument in achieving clean government in India. Some pointed out that digitalization in the Indian public sector is a step towards it and needs to be implemented fully soon (Interviewee No. 7). Furthermore, both Indian and Chinese interviewees mentioned that e-government should be promoted wholeheartedly. As supported by few scholars, including Zhao and Xu (2015, p. 412), there are few empirical studies exploring the linkage between e-government and corruption and that, for instance, "e-government, measured as West's e-government scores and the United Nations' e-participation index, has a consistently positive impact on reducing corruption" (see Shim & Eom, 2008).

Third, severe and harsh punishments for corrupt behaviours should be emphasized in both contexts. Interviewee No. 1 said that "The government needs to impose very severe and harsh punishments for persons who are found guilty so that others think twice before engaging in corruption and there should also be speedy trials of corruption cases and it should be done on a day-to-day basis" (Interviewee No. 8 in India). This will restore the citizens' confidence in the government's anti-corruption efforts. People may report corrupt cases to the government in the future (Interviewee No. 9 in India).

Discussion

New institutionalism can shed light on anti-corruption drives in both contexts. As mentioned before, institutions structure actors. In the meantime, actors also can improve or jeopardize institutions. Ideally, anti-corruption should work on the direction in which the right institutions such as strong anti-graft agencies and sound legislation are put in place. Furthermore, actors such as local leaders should reinforce anti-corruption institutions and enhance the effectiveness of the anti-corruption drive. Nevertheless, poor institutions may be established at the very beginning. Actors, especially politicians and bureaucrats, also attempt to utilize these institutions to maximize their benefits. Although some attempts at reform have been introduced to improve institutions, actors, particularly those who benefit substantially from the existing institutions, may thwart any improvement of institutions. This is the case in both China and India.

First, as pointed out by new institutionalists, the institutional context shapes political behaviour fundamentally, as all political conduct unfold in the institutional context. In the Chinese scenario of anti-corruption, the institutional context has been the top-down CCP-dominated framework – that is, the CCDI taking the lead in anti-corruption. Rooting out corrupt behaviours or wrongdoings, at every level of government, is the responsibility of the party disciplinary commissions. The Party usually settles most of the cases, while a few cases are transferred to prosecutorial and judicial organs for handling. This framework sounds very efficient; however, there is a lack of transparency and accountability within the bureaucracy. The public does not have any say in this area although they applaud the anti-corruption movement by the central government. However, many of them also think that anti-corruption could be a part of power struggles within the Party. Furthermore, no substantial institu- tional change has occurred in the entire anti-corruption drive so far.[19] In sum, the Chinese anti-corruption policy has not formed a clear-cut structure, which aims to remove the roots of corruption from the lower level to the upper level. Therefore, as many interviewees pointed out, although many tigers have been caught and punished by the CCDI, flies are widely present and clean government and administrative efficiency will not be achieved, especially at the grassroots level.

Modi's demonetization has tapped into an existing structure, which twists the structure into an anti-corruption tool. Anti-corruption is an important mandate for Modi and the BJP which was handed to them in the general election of 2014. Modi's Robin Hood style anti-corruption is a tactic of killing two birds with one stone. First, as Modi claimed, demonetization will enrich the lives of poor people in India through invalidating black and corrupt money. Therefore, demonetization serves as a kind of redistributive tool as was suggested by Modi and his administration. Second, demonetization can remove corrupt behaviour substantially in the near future as corrupt officials cannot utilize the old channels to launder their money. Public officials and politicians need to ponder over the cost of corrupt behaviour. Nevertheless, a caveat is in order. As many interviewees pointed out, party politics and the party control of anti-corruption agencies are still serious at every level of government in India, most tigers have not been rooted out. More importantly, India's federated structure coupled with party politics complicates the process of anti-corruption. For example, states with pro-BJP governments may work harder fighting corruption while others may not. Therefore, the effec- tiveness of the

anti-corruption drive remains a serious open question.

Furthermore, both Chinese and Indian cases testify that, "Institutions become embedded in routine and convention and are, consequently, difficult to reform, transform or replace" (Hay, 2002, p. 14). In China, anti-corruption institutions are embedded in the Party routine and convention. Once the demand for anti-corruption has risen substantially, the Party bureaucracy can utilize the same institutions to fight corruption while the organizational capacity of prosecutorial and judicial organs has not expanded (to some extent, they have been weakened in recent years as the CCDI has become much more assertive[20]). In the meantime, the anti-corruption rules, emphasized by new institutionalism, are not developed substantially.

Second, history plays an important role in shaping the behaviour of institutions and actors. The legacy of the past still works for a while to affect the direction of anti-corruption and administrative efficiency. History determines the routes of anti-corruption in China and persistent path dependence exists in the Chinese context. China has relied on campaign-style anti-corruption for decades (Gong, 2006; He, 2000). Although a few observers have claimed that the campaign-style anti-corruption drive has gone, it has been restored strongly in recent years. The CCP under President Xi Jinping has launched the campaign in a high-profile manner and although, some of the common citizens are skeptical about it,[21] most embrace the movement as they can see the stepping down of tigers and high-flyers. To some extent, it shores up the legitimacy of the CCP and the state.[22] Therefore, it in turn strengthens Xi Jinping's determination to fight corruption in China. The past record on campaign-style law enforcement has not been particularly optimistic (He, 2000).[23] It is entirely possible that the current anti-corruption campaign, no matter how colossal, will follow the trajectory of past experiences.[24]

India seems to have less interest in campaign-style law enforcement. Rather, India relies on the democratic machine to address the existing or emerging problems. The BJP won the general election of 2014; therefore, it became mandatory for them to fulfill their promise regarding anti-corruption. Nevertheless, given the fragmented nature of India's central and state governments, the divide among different parties at the different layers of government and the anti-corruption drive led by Modi might have been diluted on many fronts. Political parties in India generally lack the incentives to boost the autonomy of the anti-corruption agencies such as the CBI. Therefore, a serious effort is required to enhance the capacity of anti-corruption agencies in the future. So far, as indicated by new institutionalism, whether some small events in the anti-corruption drive in India will really result in large changes, remains to be observed.

Third, actors matter substantially in enhancing or deteriorating institutions. Actors "define informal rules and procedures" (Hay, 2002, p. 14). In both Chinese and Indian contexts, political leaders at the central levels have great political will to fight corruption. More importantly, some local leaders also treat anti-corruption as a crucial mandate. In the meantime, they pursue their own interests while fulfilling other objectives such as regime stability and the maintenance of staff morale. Actors in China appear much more homogeneous than their counterparts in India, as party members and bureaucrats know that the CCP at the central level has accorded great attention to anti-corruption. However, due to some dysfunctions within the bureaucracy, particularly the anti-corruption drive in China has not been conducted through building up substantial formal

rules. Furthermore, actors such as local leaders can still come up with informal rules and procedures, which can significantly hinder the anti-corruption effort led by the central government (containing Sangong spending[25] also results in entertainments and lavish banquets attended by public officials in a hidden way). Intriguingly, there is a big question mark over whether some actors, particularly some determined central leaders and their loyalists at the local level, can change the landscape of the anti-corruption campaign in China.[26]

Actors in India are much more sophisticated. They are party functionaries, state bureaucracies, and judicial functionaries. Their efforts may not point in the same direction. Although there are several negative factors, which affect India's anti-corruption drive, the popularity of the Modi government has remained very high. The survey by the Pew Research Center in early 2017 suggested that 88 percent of Indians had a favourable view of Modi.[27] Modi's political strength may help the anti-corruption drive consolidate and deepen in India although some critics remain cautious about Modi's anti-corruption efforts. In general, policy implications allow other developing countries to learn from China's tiger hunt and India's anti-corruption drive through demonetization.

First, China is good at having a strong capacity of anti-corruption agencies embedded in the party-state apparatus; India has an advantage at introducing some institutions and new legislation, although the implementation is problematic in the anti-corruption drive. Echoing Zhu et al. (2019), legal institutions need to be strengthened in the Chinese context while India should learn from China and strengthen its organizational capacity for anti-corruption agencies.

Second, informal rules and procedures developed by political and administrative actors need to be reduced. Some observers praised Xi Jinping and Wang Qishan for breaking an informal rule of not prosecuting current or former members of the PSC and sending one of the former members to jail. Nevertheless, the best solution for anti-corruption in China is developing more formal rules and procedures instead of working on informal rules.[28] The firm implementation of formal rules and procedures demands enhancement.

Third, the role of civil society needs to be strengthened in the Chinese context. President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption drive is largely a top-down effort without substantial input from civil society. As noted previously, India's Right to Information Act, 2005 has a strong root in the civil society anti-corruption movement. The role of civil society in anti-corruption in India will grow continuously while echoing the Transparency International's concern, and civil society space in China should be safeguarded to improve the sustainability of China's anti-corruption drive.[29]

Conclusion

While aspirations at the highest level of administration in both countries are for curtailment of corruption, this study cannot directly answer the question of whether these moves have been successful. Party politics in India has led to differential implementation and exploitation of opportunities by politicians, while in China, the central approach has affected some tigers but many of the flies flying under the radar have avoided detection or sanction. Institutionalism suggests how embeddedness, rigidity, path dependency, organizational inertia, and self-interests pursued by actors in the fight of corruption, manifest in both contexts.

This is the first attempt to examine local actors' perceptions and understanding of anti-corruption in these two largest developing nations.[30] There can be no definitive assessment of which approach is more effective, if either is effective at all. This study has provided information based on the views of insiders and a framework for analysis for observers as the complexities of corruption in China and India unfold with enormous policy implications for public administration in the developing world. As noted by Graycar and Villa (2011), the dire consequence of corruption is the loss of governance capacity in different contexts. As both countries are eager to enhance governance capacity,[31] effectively reducing corruption is a prerequisite for improved governance capacity and public administration in the developing contexts.

Notes

1. Transparency International, Anti-corruption: Changing China, 31 October 2014 https://www.transparency.org/ news/feature/anti_corruption_changing_china.

2. See the full names of senior leaders investigated after the 18th Party Congress of the CCP, 11 July 2018. http:// district.ce.cn/newarea/sddy/201410/03/t20141003_ 3638299.shtml.

3. The Modi government itself has changed the demonetization narrative from fighting corruption to moving towards a cashless or less cash society (Gopalan& Rajan, 2017).

4. See a detailed account of this movement and online activism, Ang (2014).

5. See news report about the share of party members punished in China, 7 January 2011. http://www.china. com.cn/policy/txt/2011-01/07/content_21690357.htm.

6. Zhu (2015) notes that the low probability of corruption being detected and investigated, particularly among high-ranking public officials, casts doubt on the Chinese government's anti-corruption efforts. However, the Xi administration has especially targeted many high-ranking public officials.

7. PM Modi's address to the Nation, 8 November 2016, http://www.narendramodi.in/text-of-prime-minister-s- address-to-the-nation-533024.

8. Klitgaard (1997) points out the importance of institutions of civil society in anti-corruption in the developing context.

9. The implementation of the law has not been actualized. See Waiting for the Lokpal, 22 April 2017 http://www.the hindu.com/opinion/op-ed/waiting-for-the-lokpal/arti cle18186362.ece.

10. Modi's leveraging anti-corruption in the election campaign is similarly seen in the strategy of a grass-root movement-turned party, the Aam Aadmi Party (lit- erally "common man's party"), which made it the incumbent ruling party in Delhi in 2013.

11. Slightly adapted by the authors.

12. It is said that the National Supervision Law will strengthen the power of the CCDI while human rights observers worry that detention without informing lawyers and family members of suspects will harm human rights. See China: Revise Draft National

Supervision Law. New Anti-Graft Body Threatens Abusive Detentions. 10 November 2017. https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/ 10/china-revise-draft-national-supervision-law.

13. Although central leaderships play an important role in fighting corruption nationwide, local leaders and ordinary public officials in China and India are of crucial importance in making the anti-corruption policy effective at the local level (similar to other policy areas noted by Gilley (2017)). Furthermore, the study of corruption, as Wang (2016) suggests, should pay close attention to local con- texts. Intriguingly, as it will be elaborated later, some local contexts related to anti-corruption told by our interviewees provide a nuanced understanding of anti-corruption in both countries.

14. See Note 1. Transparency International suggests that "China should remove the threshold for bribes."

15. As Lams (2018) notes, Xi's campaign-style anti-corruption is not new. He has, however, stepped up the movement compared with his predecessors.

16. In the Chinese context, there is a long-lasting debate of allowing public officials modest corruption acting as the lubricant of smoothly running machine. This argument sees that if public officials are constrained by rules and regulations and, particularly, if they are refrained from modest corruption, they cannot pro- mote public services actively and ambitiously.

17. The Lokayukta is a state-level anti-corruption ombudsman organization while the Lokpal has jurisdiction over all Members of Parliament and employees in the central government.

18. In total, there are five layers of government in China: central, provincial, municipal, county, and township.

19. Guo (2014) notes that some anti-corruption experts in China argue for the introduction of institutionalized anti-corruption measures (*zhidu fanfu*).

20. The National Supervision Law passed by National People's Congress in March 2018 is supposed to rein- force this trend.

21. On the effectiveness of campaign-style law enforcement in different contexts such as environmental law enforcement, please see Liu et al. (2015).

22. Zhang and Kim (2018) note that the general public will increase their trust in government with a time lag. Therefore, corruption convictions and tiger hunts in China may boost citizens' trust in government in the future.

23. He (2000) remarked that "the current anti-corruption campaign is quite inadequate in combating corruption" (p. 269).

24. As the Chinese Constitution has removed the presidential term limits latterly, leadership stability seems to be positively related to corruption control (see an empirical study on the relationship between leadership stability and corruption control at the local level in China (Zhu & Zhang, 2017)).

25. Sangong refers to job-related entertainments in the Chinese public sector, see Gong and Xiao (2017) and Fu (2015).

26. Wang Qishan, a big driver of this anti-corruption campaign since 2012, stepped down

after the 19th National Party Congress in China. Many doubt the sustainability of this anti-corruption effort.

27. Narendra Modi continues to ride the wave of popularity as India's PM, 16 November 2017. https://www.ft. com/content/c3eff47c-c9eb-11e7-ab18-7a9fb7d6163e.

28. It should be noted that Chinese civil servants also value rule of law in public administration, like the Western counterparts (Yang & Van der Wal, 2014).

29. See Note 1. The Transparency International argues that "space for civil society to operate is essential for the public to be able to hold corrupt officials to account and to have a genuine independent voice against graft."

30. The limitation of this small-n, perception-based study of corruption is acknowledged. As noted by Araral et al. (2019), corruption research should accord attention to different data such as individual-level, large-n data versus country-level, small-n data.

31. A big vaccine scandal in July 2017 reveals the consequence of corruption and the loss of governance capacity such as safety regulations in China. A decade ago, Mr. Zheng Xiaoyu, the former head of State Food and Drug Administration in the PRC was executed due to corruption in drug administration. see China's vaccination system has been tainted by corruption, weak regulations and staff shortages. 24 July 2018. https:// www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/ 2156525/three-cancers-attacking-health-chinas-vaccine-system.

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Disclosure statement

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